

An
ORATION,

DELIVERED AT

BOLTON,

July 4, 1808.

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“Be mindful of your Ancestors, for the example they
have left you calls for your utmost ardor.”



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AN
ORATION, &c.



THE history of the world, is a history of revolutions. Nations, like individuals, have their rise and fall.

Where now is Greece, once the renowned seat of science and of arts ?

Where now is Rome, all conquering Rome, once Mistress of the world ?

These are questions familiar to your ears, and the answers, that they are now no more, are equally familiar.

But these are among the revolutions of ancient days, the revolutions of our own times, more forcibly attract our attention. Look back but two centuries. What then was the situation of these United States ? A wide wilderness, resounding with the howls of wild beasts and the war-whoops and wild dances of men, as uncultivated as the wilderness thro' which they roamed.

To persecution and a slavish submission of the rights of conscience in their native land, our Ancestors, with the true spirit of freemen, preferred this country, rude and inhospitable as it then was.

A recital of the hardships, the toils and dangers which they endured, while contending with the wilderness, and at the same time, with a subtle, savage and blood-thirsty enemy, would be but a recital of scenes, to which some of you were eye witnesses, and to which all of us have often listened, with enthusiastic admiration, while they have been related to us with pleasure, by our venerable Fathers.

But, to complete their triumph, in the cause of civil and religious freedom, it was not enough that they caused, *the wilderness to bud and blossom like the rose*, it was not enough, that they subdued and drove from their habitations, those hords of savages, whom deadly revenge and unrelenting cruelty had often prompted to exhibit before their eyes the melancholy spectacle of women and children weltering in their blood.

Trials and perils more severe, were still to be encountered.

That nation, whose intolerant, persecuting spirit, had driven the first settlers of this country from their native shores, sat a quiet spectator of their infant struggles. So long as they had woods, and their savage inhabitants to subdue, so long they had nothing to tempt the avaricious and oppressive spirit of the mother country.

But, the moment they began to become rich and powerful, the moment they began to enjoy the blessings of that liberty for which they had so nobly, so valiantly contended, that moment, the mother country, with the avarice of a miser,

and the disposition of a tyrant, commenced her schemes of future usurpation.

To effect her object, she assumed the right of taxing these then American Colonies, without their consent. This right, unfounded and oppressive in the extreme, was asserted and maintained by the British Parliament.

To men, who for the quiet enjoyment of civil and religious freedom, had preferred a howling wilderness, to their native land, who in that wilderness "exposed themselves to almost all the hardships to which human nature is liable," these oppressive and tyrannical acts of the British Parliament, could not fail to excite the warmest feelings of indignation.

The colonists had now but two alternatives left. Submission and passive obedience, or a noble and manly resistance.

A crisis more important seldom occurs in the history of nations.

The Genius of Freedom, hovering over the world, having visited the various kingdoms of Asia, Africa and Europe, and found no place to erect her standard, had crossed the atlantic, and was now beholding, with anxious solicitude, the conduct of her beloved colonists, in a crisis, which was to decide, whether she should find a residence among the sons of men, or revisit her native skies.

Inured to hardships, fearless of danger, and inspired almost to enthusiasm with the love of liberty, they determined, with a resolution and bold-

ness, which commanded the admiration of the world, never to part with their rights and liberties, but with the last drop of their blood. This spirit, calm and unmoved by the power and terrors of the British Lion, stood collected in its own conscious rectitude, and on the fourth day of July 1776, solemnly declared and published to the world, that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be **FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES.**

The genius of freedom smiled with complacency, and heaven approved the declaration.

This, Fellow Citizens, is the day which we are assembled to commemorate. This is that Anniversary which we have ever hailed with rapture, and which millions of unborn Americans will continue to hail, so long as the principles which led to it are cherished and encouraged. Let it ever be celebrated as a day of Jubilee throughout the United States. On this day, let all private animosities and party spirit be sacrificed at the altar of Patriotism. Let gratitude for the successful issue of the hazardous and bloody contest which ensued, and for the rapidly increasing prosperity of the country, since this ever memorable era, ascend unto heaven, with fervent prayers to him, in whose hands are the destinies of nations, that the melancholy period may never arrive, when the enemies of liberty, with a scornful smile, will say, America once was Free.

As this deplorable time may come, it will not, I hope, be deemed improper, to point out, and warn you of the danger. It is not, however, my intention, by allusions to present, or unreasonable presages of future evils, to mar the pleasure and festivity which you anticipate, and which well becomes this joyful anniversary.

But history informs us that nations are subject to revolutions, and the lessons we have received for a few years past, confirm the melancholy truth, that the modern revolutionary vortex, far exceeds that of ancient times. Let us, for a moment, contemplate the nature of these alarming revolutions.

Experience has taught us, that under the garb of the purest and most exalted principles of liberty, are concealed daggers, waiting a favourable opportunity, to stab her to the vitals. These pure and exalted principles were professed by the late revolutionary leaders in France. Some of them, no doubt, were sincere, but facts and events have shewn, that the establishment of civil and religious freedom formed no part of the real object, which induced the majority of those leaders, to subvert the established government of their country.

Do you believe, that Danton, Marat, Robespierre, and the other sanguinary leaders in France, were actuated, in their pretended hatred to kings, by their respect to the principles of Liberty ?

Do you believe, that these blood-thirsty monsters, who by a single dash of the pen, nay, even by a wink or a nod, consigned thousands of their fellow citizens, citizens far better than themselves, to the Guillotine, were actuated by any regard to the rights and freedom of the people ?

As well might you believe, that wolves, dressed in sheeps cloathing, would neglect a favourable opportunity to satiate their blood-craving appetites.

In justice, however, to the great body of the French people, we are willing to believe that their intentions were good, and that they really desired

a more free and less oppressive government. But their ignorance, their habits, and their noted fickleness and enthusiasm, rendered them incapable of distinguishing between real *Liberty* and *Licentiousness*, between a *general levelling Equality*, and an *Equality* founded upon *Worth* and *Merit*. People of this description, and in this situation, are easily wrought to any pitch of madness or extravagance, to which the ambitious designs of aspiring, unprincipled leaders would wish to carry them:

Need we, then, wonder, that the Revolution of France, the professed object of which was, to establish **FREEDOM** upon the downfall of **TYRANNY**, has terminated, in the establishment of complete **DESPOTISM**. Need we wonder, that this fickle people, disgusted with continual scenes of riot; of open and extravagant dissipation, tired with frequent dissensions and divisions among their leaders, shocked with the recollection, and apprehensive of a renewal of the horrid appearance of their streets red with the blood of their murdered citizens, should willingly enlist under the Banners, and submit to the Will of a **BONAPARTE**.

Mark, Fellow Citizens, the conduct of this astonishing man. It will give you the picture of the greatest, the most dangerous enemy of Liberty, which the world ever produced. Of a man, whose *professions* have been as changeable as the colors of a *Cameleon*, and as different from his *actions*, as light is from darkness. Within the course of a few years, you have seen him in the character of a Republican in Italy, of a Mussulman in Egypt, and of a Cromwell in Paris, seizing with Republican professions the reigns of government. You

have seen him with one hand lifted to heaven, swearing in his own name and in that of his fellow soldiers, that the French people should have a Republic, founded on the right basis, Civil Liberty and National Representation ; you have seen him, at the same time, with an all conquering sword in the other, procuring titles, dominion and power for himself, his relations and friends.

From a first Consul for years, you have seen him change to a Consul for life, and from a Consul for life, to a Consul with power to nominate his successor.

You now behold him, with the titles of **NAPOLÉON** 1st. **EMPEROR** of **FRANCE**, **KING** of **ITALY**, and **PROTECTOR** of the **RHENISH CONFEDERACY**, with unlimited power to controul the wealth, the resources and the armies of the nation. You now behold him, as the Conqueror of Austria, of Prussia, of Portugal, of Spain, and, I had almost said, of the extensive and powerful Russian Empire.

That being, who says to the sea, *hitherto shalt thou come and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed*, can alone tell, what nations must next submit to the yoke of this mighty conquerer.

Such are now the titles of him, who once swore eternal hatred to kings.

Such is now the power of him, who once declared that *Liberty was dearer to him than life*, and that *as soon as the liberties of his country were out of danger, he would abdicate the command with which he had been entrusted*.

Do you believe the ambitious schemes of this man are confined to the other side of the Atlantic?

Does the fall of the Kingdoms and Republics of Europe, which have followed each other in rapid succession, excite no apprehensions, that it may be our turn next?

Let me not by these remarks disturb the joy and festivity of the present celebration.

No, Fellow Citizens, if the revolutions of Europe, if the conquests of Bonaparte, excite your alarms; seize this occasion, when your hearts are filled with glee, and your souls animated with the recollection of the heroic achievements of your ancestors, so to conduct, that they, if on Earth, would proudly own you as their sons, as the sons of freemen. The Spirits of Warren, Montgomery, Mercer, Green, Schuyler, Knox, Hamilton, and above all of your illustrious Washington, call upon you to defend the noble inheritance, which their virtues and valor have won, and transmitted untarnished to you their posterity.

Hamilcar caused his son Hannibal, at the age of nine years, to swear eternal hatred to the Romans. Think not that I would request of my countrymen, an oath of hatred against any nation whatever. Such an oath ought never to be made; because acknowledgement and honourable reparation, ought always to restore "harmony and social intercourse between nations."

But at this alarming crisis, when a revolution that seems destined to sweep from the face of the

Earth, every principle of moral and political rectitude, has already overrun almost all Europe, and begins to approach these yet happy shores, the safety of the country, the spirit of your fathers. even the tombs, where are deposited the remains of your departed heroes and statesmen, call upon you, in the most solemn manner, to swear. on this anniversary, and in presence of the Almighty Ruler of the Universe, eternal hatred to the enemies of your Independence.

Yes, my Fellow Citizens, if we are not determined to take, if we are not determined, with our lives and fortunes, to support this oath, let us at once forget that in the history of America, there was ever such a day, as the fourth of July 1776.

In private affairs, temporary adversity, is often advantageous; and prosperity, the source of evils. In public affairs, adversity and prosperity, often have the same operation.

The United States of America since the declaration of Independence, and the adoption of the Federal Constitution, have enjoyed an unexampled degree of prosperity.

She has rapidly increased in wealth, in knowledge and in population. As evidences of these facts, we need only to view the Country, and behold her numerous schools, academies and seminaries of Learning; the bustle, magnificence and splendor of her cities; the rapidity with which she has extended her settlements; and the rich and well cultivated farms which every where meet our eyes.

To these evidences of her prosperity, it is with deep regret we are not permitted to add, and the Ocean whitened with sails, transporting to foreign climes, the superabundant produce of her industrious Farmers. It is with still deeper regret, we are obliged to add, that her late prosperity has received a severe check, and that her future prospects are, at least, dubious.

The reflections, which I intended to have submitted to your consideration upon this all important subject, would carry me beyond the limits of a discourse of this kind, and your patience, already fatigued, would be completely exhausted. Permit me, however, for a few moments, to direct your attention to the follies and vices which have reduced us to our present alarming situation.

Have we not, like the unreflecting heirs of a rich man, who imagine their wealth can never be exhausted, been too profuse and liberal in our enjoyment of the blessings of a Free Government, and too inattentive to the truth of the maxim, That the preservation of a blessing requires as much care, as much wisdom, and as great exertions as the attainment?

Have we not suffered, nay, have we not wantonly aided, in sowing the seeds of discord among ourselves?

Have we not protected and patronized European renegadoes, who in the language of an eloquent statesman, "have left their ears on the whipping posts of their respective countries, or who have come to this country to save their ears," in

vilifying, abusing and menacing the wisest and best characters in the United States? Have not the public Newspapers, edited by these abandoned wretches, been filled with continual falsehoods and calumnies, and to the infamy and indelible disgrace of the American name, with slanders upon the character of the great and good Washington? That man, of whom a celebrated statesman has said, "I might degrade, by attempting to eulogize this illustrious character. The work is infinitely beyond my powers. I will only say, that as long as exalted talents and virtues confer honor among men, the name of Washington will be held in veneration." Do you respect the memory of this illustrious man? Then imitate his example, and follow his precepts.

The fears which I entertain for the safety of my country, arise not from the strength and menaces of foreign nations, so much as from our own vices, our own deplorable want of union, energy and real patriotism.

Can we expect that our liberties will be secure, when we suffer foreign emissaries, aided by the friendship and protection of domestic traitors, to create an unreasonable foreign influence in the country? When we suffer, "demagogues, who carry daggers in their hearts, and seductive smiles in their hypocritical faces," to be rewarded with the honors due only to real, unaffected merit?

Can we suppose that our liberties are in no danger, when we suffer ourselves to be actuated by a persecuting, political party spirit, as intolerant as the religious persecution which drove our

Ancestors from their native land ; and which now drives from the councils of the nation, her wisest and most enlightened citizens ?

From these political vices, the effects of sudden prosperity, and the too common evils of Republics, let us turn our thoughts to the virtues which will secure our Independence, and establish our Liberties on a more solid foundation.

The Constitution of the United States, formed under the most favourable auspices, by the united wisdom of the heroes and sages of the Revolution, should be the first object of our study and attachment. We should guard it from violation, protect it from the secret and open attacks of its enemies, and rally round its standard, as the ark of our political safety. One important principle of this excellent constitution, is the privilege which it secures to the people, to elect from among their fellow citizens, the persons who are to carry its provisions into execution. On the prudent and right exercise of this privilege, depends, in a great measure, the preservation of our Liberties. As well might we commit the Constitution to the flames, as to the hands of ignorant or unprincipled men. Let us, then, in all our elections, throw aside party feelings and prejudices, the bane, the deadly poison of republican governments, and choose no men to office, whose understandings are not enlightened with the rays of wisdom, whose actions do not correspond with their professions, and who would not faithfully, boldly and honestly discharge their duty, in opposition to the most violent passions of popular prejudice.

.. Ignorance and Liberty are seldom united. Promote then as another important object, the education of your youth. Instruct your children early in the history of your country, and in the principles of your government. Above all, direct their attention to the principles of virtue and religion, for without these essential supports, no government can long be secure.

It is an ancient and true political maxim, That a wise and provident government, in times of peace, will always prepare for war. Seize, then, the present moment, when a dark and portentous cloud, appears gathering in the East, to prepare for the storms and tempests which may suddenly burst upon you. Delay not, an instant, to call forth the energies of the nation. Let the battles of Bunker-Hill, of Bennington, and indeed all the battles of the Revolution, teach the Militia, the pride and boast of their country, that much is expected, and much will be required of them, in the hour of danger.

Permit me, if your patience is not already exhausted, to direct your attention to another important political maxim, That a nation, which deserves to be slaves, will never long enjoy the blessings of Freedom.

While then you encourage charity and benevolence, while you encourage a love of peace and harmony with all nations, encourage, at the same time, national pride, national spirit, and especially that exalted sense of national honor, which would prefer all the horrors and calamities of war, to a dishonorable or purchased peace.

So long, Fellow Citizens, as we avoid the vices, and cherish, encourage and practice the virtues which have been enumerated, so long, with the blessing of heaven, we may reasonably hope, that the UNITED STATES will remain **INDEPENDENT and FREE.**

THE END

