

AN
ORATION,

PRONOUNCED AT CHARLTON, MASS.

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE ANNIVERSARY OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,

JULY 4th, 1811:

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BY SAMUEL BRAZER, JR.

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1811.

ORATION.

Friends and Fellow Citizens,

EVERY revolving year renders the public commemoration of the Era of American Independence, more interesting and more essential. The patriots who planned, the heroes who achieved, this most glorious triumph of reason over prejudice, of liberty over tyranny, are daily called from their labors to their reward. Duty demands that we should carefully estimate the rich boon which they bequeathed us—Gratitude requires that we should pay a just tribute to the memory of those, who have departed—to the virtues and services of those who yet remain—and, above all, to that Almighty Being, who guided them through various perplexities, who shielded them from numerous perils, who prompted and smiled on their enterprize, ensured its success, and accorded to them the temporal rewards of well-doing in the protection and prosperity of their country.

THE great and solemn transaction, which we are assembled to celebrate, is unparalleled in the history of the world, as respects its origin and its consequences. Other Revolutions have been attempted and accomplished. Other nations have succeeded in changing the fashion of their fetters—and, too frequently, been wretchedly galled in the act of changing, and heavier loaded with their new, than their discarded shackles. But, the emancipation of *America*, was as wisely projected, as it was resolutely atchieved. The Declaration of Independence embodied a statement of our wrongs, of our patience in bearing them, of our various, decorous applications for redress, of the contemptuous rejection of these respectful remonstrances ;—and thus enlisted in our cause the better feelings of an impartial world, viewing and tracing the causes of events so new. It is an established axiom in the science of human nature and human politics, that resolutions, adopted on the most deliberate reflection, are ever maintained with the truest constancy. Our Revolutionary fathers had not estimated the price of liberty at a flourish of words, or the glitter of a pointed sentence. They knew, that although for a Nation to be “ free,” she must “ will it,”—this will was not alone “ *sufficient*.” They were aware of the dreadful struggle, which must ensue between pampered power, and newly-nerved patriotism. In their own words, they “ counted the cost, and found nothing so dreadful as slavery.”

How just were their anticipations, some of you witnessed, and all of us know. The privations, the distresses and the horrors of the Revolutionary contest should never be forgotten. That we may rightly prize our inheritance, we should never forget, how dearly it was purchased. None of all the nu-

merous modes of outrage and devastation was neglected. With the common fatuity of tyrants, the Ministry of the Nation, which claimed our filial love and obedience, attempted conquest, by exciting terror, and weakly imagined, we were to be persecuted into allegiance, and tortured into loyalty. Parental kindness enkindled the flames of Charlestown and Fairfield ; parental kindness administered the deadly potions to our captives in the Jersey—parental kindness, indeed, shewed, that whom she pretended to “*love,*” she was determined to “*chasten.*”

THE manly fortitude, the unbending spirit, the unshrinking devotion to liberty and their country, which supported and animated and invigored the hearts of our heroes and sages, are among the virtues, which great occasions only can summon into action. On such occasions, indeed, they seem to elevate the human character above the most favorable theories of human nature, in its ordinary appearances. When, unheeding danger, spurning the attempted bribery of wealth and power, discarding the enjoyments of quiet and retirement, actuated alone by the ethereal spirit of patriotism, great and eminent men erect their only claim to distinction, on the firm basis of services rendered to their country ;—Our tribute of gratitude and admiration is a debt, which it enriches us to pay.

MAY we ever delight to honor the names of those, who were made martyrs to the myrmidons of Britain—those, who survived—rested from their labors, under the protection of that National Independence, which they procured for us all ; and who since have joined their illustrious copatriots in the realms of bliss—and those who survived, to tell us the story of their conflicts, and animate us to maintain the freedom they gained. When Revolutionary

services cease to rank first among the titles to respect and confidence, the public mind will have become indeed deteriorated ; for ingratitude, in its very nature, involves every principle of baseness.

THE victory at *York-Town* in the capture of Cornwallis and his army by the forces of America, and our brave French allies, induced a misguided Monarch and Ministry to set their own seal, to the proof of their own madness. The contest ceased—Our Independence was acknowledged.—Still a system of Union and General Laws alone could protect, what the spirit of patriotism had gained. Again our sages assembled. That monument of political wisdom, the Constitution of the United States, evinced, that as we had “Sampsons in Combat,” we had also “Solomons in Council.”

A FAIR Review of the American History, from the adoption of the Constitution, to the present Anniversary, would be highly useful. But the necessity of the case, confines these useful examinations, (which to be just must be minute) to the closet and the private circle. Let it suffice us gratefully to confess, that if we have been menaced with dangers, we have found effectual preventatives. The Ship of State has safely sailed ; and if a treacherous pilot has, in one instance, withheld or falsified the log-book, the Commander detected the imposition in season.

INDEED, it is by comparison alone that we can suitably estimate our real situation, and be suitably grateful for our own advantages. It is for these purposes, and not to gratify the paltry and disgraceful feelings of self-complacent vanity, that it is useful to cast our eyes over a map of the world ; and ask ourselves, where could our Omnipotent Benefactor have “cast our lines” in more pleasant places, or

“given unto us,” a goodlier “heritage?”—Can any of our Fellow-Citizens ungratefully repine at partial evils; at events, which cause the tide of wealth, which has flowed in upon our country to intermit;—when they reflect on the Press-gangs, and rebellions of *England*—on the Conscriptiions of *France*—on *Spain* and *Portugal* converted into bloody arenas for contending gladiators—on *Holland*, sunk to an appendage of *France*—or *Ireland*, the hapless victim of *British* avidity and outrage?—Other States of Europe have preserved, at least their nominal Independence—but, by what great and dreadful sacrifices and struggles?—Is it in the first and fairest portion of man’s inheritance, in the fertile and delightsome climes of Asia, that we are to look for human happiness? Alas! Internal rapacity and tyranny were not sufficient scourges for the hapless inhabitants of India! British avarice transported hordes of craving blood-suckers;—and the persecuted Gentoos now lingers by the idol waters of the Ganges, to mourn a dear, but desolated land.

COMPARATIVELY enviable, as is our situation, we have been compelled, Fellow Citizens, within a short period to witness in our *Metropolis*, numerous specimens of a very novel and new-fashioned kind of *patriotism*. It was imported—for it bore no marks of American manufacture. It is much to be lamented, that it was not retained at the mart, whence it came, for it was much better calculated for *home-consumption* than an *American* market. The hawkers were loud in its praises;—but alas! it was flimsy; and, least of all, calculated for *country use*.

“THE fashion of this world passeth away.” Who that had studied in the school of the Revolution could understand the modern definitions of our new political school? In the time of the Revolu-

tion, attachment to our own country—obedience to the ordinances of Congress—an anxious desire to effect a real *Independence*, by diminishing that consumption of foreign luxuries, which ever introduces an actual *dependence*—and above all, a high and pure and unmixed devotion to national freedom; these traits of character were then allowed to constitute Patriotism.—But our *modern, modish, Boston* Patriotism is of a newer stamp. Bitter and contemptuous satires on our country, like the lampoons of WALSH or MOORE or DENNIE—rebellion against National Laws—an enthusiastic love of Britain—sneering and damping discouragements of American manufactures—and, above all, a rancorous and implacable hostility to the rulers, who have secured the confidence of a vast majority of the Nation—these are the vaunting claims of our caucusing patriots. Does candor interpose to ask a more favorable interpretation of motive—No! Candor has nothing to urge in behalf of our Pseudo-patriots; too long have they neglected, insulted and spurned her.

THERE is one topick, Fellow Citizens, which many consider it dangerous or impolitic to discuss, and which yet involves in its consequences the very preservation of our government. I allude to the party Sermons, which, the last year more especially, were delivered by some of our religious Teachers. Grateful as we are, for *the glad tidings of great joy* proclaimed by the Heralds of the Redeemer; we have too much veneration for his holy precepts, for his spotless example, to recognize as his successors or disciples, men who in practice despise the one, and neglect the other. Did the Saviour of Men ever tell the Inhabitants of Judea, his persecutors and his murderers, that they “*congregated with—devils!*” Did he ever tell his Disciples, that “*Resistance*

was their only security ?” Did he not, on the other hand, pronounce and inculcate the most important distinction, that ever was pronounced and inculcated, “—*Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s, and unto God the things which are God’s.*” To the dereliction from this injunction, may we not trace more than half the dissensions, which for four Centuries have agitated the world; curdled the milk of human kindness, and caused cruelties and persecutions, too affecting to dwell on? We are told the Bible is a rule of faith, and a rule of conduct. We are happy to believe it. We adopt it as our standard; and we invite those, who profess as we do, to join us in deploring the monstrous aberrations from the strait path marked out by the meek and lowly Jesus. There is not a precept nor a line, recorded from the lips of the beneficent founder of Christianity, which does not support the principles we profess. He had Scribes and Pharisees to deal with. There were then, as now, men who pretended to erect monuments to the memory of those, whose most prominent acts have been to them “*as manna and bitter herbs.*” How just and how awful is his denunciation! “*Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees! Hypocrites!--because ye build the tombs of the Prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the Righteous, and say, if we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore, ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are children of them, which killed the Prophets!*”

AMONG the public means of diffusing knowledge are--our Colleges. An implied immunity, as sacred and as awful, as that which has sheltered from merited censure the “evil things” of the *pulpit*, has frequently screened from like reprobation the

worst fruits of our most ancient University. An alliance, in truth, *offensive* as well as defensive, has seemed to exist between them. And the recesses of Literature, where, of all other places, we should resort for a peaceful abstraction from party broils, have resounded with the din of faction—alas ! from Reverend lips. The good objects of the literary institutions of our Ancestors, heighten our regret that they should ever be prostituted. Is it not a truth, obvious and acknowledged, that they have been thus prostituted ? Have not the malicious rantings of an *Osgood* been disseminated among the people, by the agency of the College Government, through the medium of a *solicited solicitation* ? The cause of the Revolution has been “wounded in the house of its friends,” by unworthy successors.

THE influence of the very earliest part of Education on the future character, was probably more practically shewn in Ancient, than in Modern Republics. The Matrons and the Maidens of *Sparta* and of *Rome* were imbued with the same love of country, which has rendered immortal the fame of their fathers and sons and brothers ; and, like them, have left behind them exalted examples of Republican virtue. It is neither expected nor to be wished, that every female should aspire to the renown of a *JUDITH*, a *CORNELIA*, or a *JOAN of Arc*. Yet, even in the nursery, impressions may be made, which in after times may prove the safety of the state. That love of Truth, Simplicity and Sincerity, which forms the basis of the freeman’s character, cannot be too early nor too deeply impressed on the opening mind. Our female friends have, therefore, their appropriate duties, and they will delight to perform them. Their peculiar and effective influence on the mind will be exerted in the cause of their country—--their domes

tic industry will conduce more to public prosperity than expensive armaments—and the distaff and loom form stronger bulwarks than towering battlements.

AFTER various and conflicting opinions, as there will ever be on a subject of primary consequence, it seems to be fully ascertained and understood, that the extension and patronage of American Manufactures are among the most important means of perpetuating Independence. The cavils of theory have been overthrown by the effects of experience. We have at last learned, that the predicted neglect of Agriculture, as a consequence of the prosecution of manufactures, was erroneous. Formerly, ere Neutrality became a delusive word ; and instead of a *Palladium* of safety for commerce, was changed to a *Syren*, which lured it to destruction ; the avails of Agriculture, enhanced in value through the medium of Commerce, served to enrich the country beyond previous calculation. But he must have been a negligent observer, who has not perceived a marked change in the mode of warfare, between the two great Belligerents. From direct attacks on each other, the system has been altered, to fighting their battles on the ground of other nations, and prosecuting their commercial hostilities, at the expense of neutrals. To confine ourselves, therefore, to the enlargement of our resources at home is now the soundest and truest policy. Every day's experience demonstrates the wisdom of the plan ; and should it not be continued, till some at present almost hopeless change should occur in the situation or the disposition of the Governments of France and England ?

THE safest and the surest bulwark of a nation against foreign invasion is a brave and well organized Militia. In no country on Earth, except Amer-

ical, has this system been fairly tried. Excellent in theory, the capture of *Burgoyne*, and most of the other Revolutionary achievements proved its perfect competency to every object of internal defence, till a more permanent draft should be rendered necessary, by a protracted warfare. The improvements in the discipline and the equipments of our Citizen Soldiers, evince a just emulation and a righteous ambition. Let such sentiments continue to guide, and such a spirit remain to animate them ; and they constitute the safest conductors to render harmless the thickening thunderclouds of foreign enmity. We have the evidence of the annals of '76 and '77, to shew that every vale would become a *Thermopylae*, and every soldier a *LEONIDAS*, if the " signs of the times" should require. Party, on such an emergency, would be changed to fealty--for though we sometimes may jar, we allow no foreign interference in our bickerings.

FORTUNATELY there is one subject, interesting indeed, on which the restless jealousy of party has not dared to raise a direct distinction of opinion--the immense importance of a general diffusion of that knowledge, in particular, which "*maketh wise*" unto political "*salvation.*" The very life and vigor of a Republican government is the intelligence of the people. The only safeguard of despotism is a natural or induced state of political ignorance or indifference. It has sometimes been very fashionable to sneer at popular elections and to ridicule dependence on the will of the people. The "*many headed monster,*" as Aristocracy has termed the paramount authority, (from which all other authorities are derived, or our Constitutions are waste-paper) has endured the lash of many a professed wit, and real blockhead. The people, however, have usually

had sense and spirit enough to vindicate their rights. Did the distinction exist, which is so strenuously urged, we might well ask these Dictators, why they interfere in elections, the control and the event of which rest with the people. They have either no right to interfere, or that right is held in common with those they so proudly contemn. It is justice to own, this contemptuous and contemptible language is used only by the weakest of our opponents. It were ridiculous to resent it. But the right to a free and general suffrage implies a duty to exercise that right with discretion and judgment. To this end, correct information should be widely diffused and eagerly sought. It is, to be sure, some trouble to gain correct information--but is it not a greater evil to sleep in indolence, and wake in chains?

It is a consoling consideration, that however Republican principles may suffer a temporary depression, they are sure eventually to triumph. Their intrinsic truth and merit ever has, and ever will secure to them a certain, though sometimes a delayed preponderance. The heated steam-machinery of faction may, for a time, bear us counter to the current and tide of truth, when put in action, by interested mechanists and steersmen--but artifice in the end must give way to justice, and artful management to simple right. In our own State, we have indeed seen most singular specimens of Federal moderation and consistency. When, by dint of clamor and misrepresentation against the General Government, they had effected the choice of Governor GORE, what was their language and what were their measures? Was not that *yearling* Administration marked by outrageous denunciations and party preferences? Were not new appointments of Federalists to office made, with an eager and anxious rapidity, and were

not Republicans denied a renewal of their functions ? These questions are asked with a simple and single object—to induce you to mark and examine men and motives. Federalists, in this state, have long seemed to consider the possession of office, as a vested right. Had they not so palpably abused the incidental influence of official stations, in opposition and attempted rebellion to the National Government, the case would have been somewhat, though not essentially different. As it now stands, the only reason for noticing the subject, is to expose the naked and absolute and ridiculous inconsistency, of these pretended monopolizers of all the good sense, learning, consistency, honor and religion.

NEITHER would such topics have been introduced by the speaker, as connected with the solemnities and festivities of the day ; had not the adverse faction industriously introduced them on every similar and every practicable occasion. Acting on the defensive, the speaker has been compelled to allude to objections so strenuously urged against the principles and acts of those ; whose principles he has conscientiously adopted, and whose acts he conscientiously believes intended and adapted to advance the most important interests of his native state and country.

THE *Union*, which forms our several sovereign States into a sovereign Nation, is indeed “ the sheet anchor of our peace at home, and our safety abroad.” It is impossible to overrate the immense importance of preserving the *Union*, not merely in form, but in fact. Among the dangers, which most strongly impressed the prescient mind of the illustrious and departed WASHINGTON, the deepest and the direst was a spirit of disaffection and disunion. His solemn and earnest adjurations clearly shew ; that to his

view, every other evil lessened into insignificance in the comparison. The "local jealousies," which his prophetic wisdom had foreseen as the principal instruments of faction, have, since his departure, gradually assumed an open and obvious character. The pretended admirers of his memory have industriously excited those *Southern and Northern, Atlantic and Western* feelings, which WASHINGTON was so well aware might be pressed into the service, as well of disappointed ambition, as abandoned treachery. These suicidal efforts have not been confined to desperate and wandering adventurers. In men, distinguished for talents and acquirements, has an overweening ambition stifled the remonstrances of duty. In men, once honored by the confidence of their country, has disappointed resentment given indulgence to feelings, language and measures, at war with their chosen name of distinction—at war with the precepts of that great man, whose character they pretend to venerate to the verge of idolatry ; to language and to measures, *Anti-Federal and Anti-Washingtonian*.

WERE it in the nature of passion to take counsel of reflection, the men, who have attempted to weaken the bonds of the National Union, must perceive, that they themselves could not find refuge from the ruin they would produce. The Temple, they strive to overthrow, would bury them, like Sampson, in its wide desolation. Anarchy, with all its mischiefs, Civil War, with all its horrors ; are but the natural and necessary consequences of a dissolution of the National Compact. Real "*Friends to Order*" cannot but shudder at the very thought of such deplorable effects. Wearied and wasted in discordant struggles, we should eagerly long for a despotic calm ; and gladly kiss the scep-

tre of the first Master, who would kindly interpose to save us from each other.

THIS gloomy picture, we trust, will ever remain a picture of fancy. It rests with ourselves to realize brighter destinies. The great Ruler of all hath committed our own destination to our own custody. An awakened spirit of true patriotism pervades our land. The frightful phantoms of disunion and terror have flitted before us, only to wake us to our duty. To the calls of duty, then, let us be sedulously attentive. Thus will it be the distinguished honor of America to have refuted the degrading doubts of the practicability of self-government—to have perpetuated, as it raised, the truest Temple of Liberty—a Temple, “not made with hands,” but erected on the firm bases of a Nation’s intelligence and a Nation’s integrity;—and whose appropriate worship is equally conducive to safety, profit and delight.