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AN

ORATION,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

REPUBLICAN CITIZENS

OF NEWBURYPORT.

IN THE

REV. JOHN GILES MEETING-HOUSE,

ON THE

FOURTH OF JULY, 1808.

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BY NATHANIEL COGSWELL, Esq.

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Newburyport,

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1808.

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NEWBURYPORT, JULY 5, 1808.

SIR,

THE undersigned, appointed a Committee by the Republican Citizens of Newburyport to procure an Orator for the Fourth of July, tender their compliments and thanks for your very ingenious and instructive Oration delivered yesterday, and request the favour of a copy for the press.

We are, Sir, with the highest respect and consideration,
your most obedient humble servants,

JAMES PRINCE,
JOSIAH SMITH, } COMMITTEE.
JOSEPH O'BRIEN,

NATHANIEL COGSWELL, ESQ.

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NEWBURYPORT, JULY 5, 1808.

GENTLEMEN,

IN compliance with the request in your polite Note of this date, I herewith transmit a copy of the Oration pronounced before the Republican Citizens of Newburyport, on the 4th inst.

The very short time which I had for preparation, might, alone, be a sufficient excuse for not submitting so hasty a production to the inspection of the public; but as it has been a prevailing custom to publish Orations delivered on the anniversary of our National Independence, a refusal, on my part, might, possibly, be the occasion of some particular observations and animadversions.

I am, Gentlemen,

with the highest respect and consideration,
your most obedient and very humble servant,

NATHANIEL COGSWELL.

Messrs. JAMES PRINCE, JOSIAH SMITH, JOSEPH O'BRIEN, Esq'rs.

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ORATION.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS,

IT has been the custom of all nations, through every grade of political existency, from the lowest state of savage barbarism, to the highest and most refined pitch of civilized society, to celebrate, by solemn and distinguished acts of commemoration, the annual return of those great and extraordinary occurrences, which have stamped a peculiar and momentous importance on the page of their political history.

We, my friends, are this day assembled to commemorate the anniversary of our national existence.

This event is the most illustrious and splendid epocha in the annals of the world. The wide, the extended range of the history of nations, in their multifarious variety of changes and situation, through the long extended succession of nearly six thousand years does not furnish a single parallel. Other nations of the earth have arisen by slow degrees, and progressively advanced from insignificant tribes, and banditti, to the rank of great and powerful empires. But America was born in a day !

Four millions of people, inhabiting a country which embraces the various climates of the earth's extended atmosphere, instantaneously arise, from the degradation of oppressive vassalage, and, in one day, assume the rank of a free, a sovereign, and an independent nation. The first and only independent nation on the fourth quarter of the globe.

The causes which led to that great and glorious epocha, are delineated in the immortal Declaration of Independence.

Turn back your thoughts, with me, to the period of seventeen hundred and seventy six.

Some of the venerable Patriots of that time, who were instrumental in achieving the magnanimous work, are now before me.

You, my fathers, can easily bring to your recollection, though language is too feeble to paint, the apprehensions, the difficulties, the troubles, the dangers, the distresses, and the horrors of that hour.

On one side, hope animated your noble hearts palpitating with a generous solicitude in the cause of suffering humanity. Buoyed up by the principles of eternal justice, you looked forward with tremulous anxiety, fondly anticipating the glory, the freedom, and the happiness of your country. You saw, in perspective, millions of souls rescued from the deadly grasp of tyranny and oppression. Raised from the ignominious slavery of despotism, to the exalted rank of freemen ; and, in the sunshine of

prosperity and happiness, sitting under their own vines, and their own fig-trees, teaching their children, and their children's children, to lisp forth your praises in accents of gratitude, of love, and of admiration.

But, on the other hand, you saw your extended line of sea coast blockaded by an implacable and deadly foe ; your beautiful sea-port towns and villages laid in dust, and in ashes ; your extensive chain of frontier settlements exposed, an easy prey, to the merciless savages of the wilderness ; armies of veteran soldiers, provided with every means of direful and deadly carnage, occupying your principal cities, and possessing the strongest and most important posts in the heart of your country. On which side soever you turned your eyes, batteries of impregnable difficulties presented.

On the sea shore---hostile fleets, armed with the thunder-bolts of ferocious war, vomiting forth ruin and devastation.

On the south---veteran armies furiously advancing, with fire and sword, spreading far and wide, all the atrocious enormities of vindictive warfare.

On the west---hordes of barbarous savages, instigated by the sanguinary and diabolical policy of a British cabinet ; and, invited in the horrific words of Col. Johnson, a famous Indian partizan in the pay of Britain, "*to drink the blood and feast on the bodies of the Bostonians,*" were waging a cruel and

remorseless war of general and indiscriminate extermination, rioting in the murder of defenceless innocence, their tomahawks and scalping knives glutted with the blood of every age, sex, and condition.

On the north---an army of twelve thousand men, threatening, from the lakes, to overwhelm you like a whirlwind of desolation.

All this you saw. And opposed to these mighty phalanxes of dreadful calamities, you saw only a handful of brave, but undisciplined militia!

In this hour of terror and dismay---In this hour of perturbation and horror, when the stoutest hearts were appaled, and the wisest heads confounded; when fell despair had seized on the minds of a virtuous people struggling in the cause of freedom and righteousness---then it was, that He who rides upon the wings of the wind, holding the nations, and the armies of the earth, in the hollow of his hand, and who will not suffer a sparrow to fall to the ground without his notice, made bare his arm, and plucked a desponding nation like a brand from out the burning.

It was He, who, turning despair into hope, wrought the national mind to a pitch of enthusiastic patriotism beyond the limits of circumscribed humanity. It was He, who silenced the tremendous thunder of the British lion. It was He, who turned aside the bayonets of the British and Hessian

troops. It was He, who rescued your wives and your children from the bloody tomahawk and scalping knife of the devouring Indians. It was He, who turned back upon itself the whirlwind of desolating destruction. And it was He, who encompassed the United States with a wall of fire by night, and went before them in a pillar of a cloud by day.

The cause of freedom, my hearers, is the cause of God. Thousands of instances, in the course of our astonishing revolution, of the miraculous interposition of providential assistance, must convince the most hardened and inveterate infidel.

At length, after wading through rivers of blood, and surmounting incredible difficulties, in a tremendous conflict of seven years duration, carried on with such inveterate malignancy, and under such distressing circumstances, that its whole history is but the narration of one continued campaign, the Declaration of our Independence is acknowledged by all the nations of the earth.

Great Britain herself, who had carried on an unnatural and infamous war, for the avowed purpose of reducing us to slavery and bondage; who had brought into requisition every engine of hellish destruction to effect her sacrilegious purpose; who had set a price on the heads of our best and most beloved citizens; and who had deluged our country with a torrent of blood, is, at last, such are the

mysterious ways of providence, compelled to lay the cap stone on the pyramid of America's glory, by acknowledging the United States to be a free, a sovereign, and an independent nation.

Every opposition and impediment to our independence miraculously overcome and subdued, a free, a happy, and a grateful people have, for a series of years, been sitting under their own vines, and their own fig trees, teaching their children, and their children's children to lip forth the praises of those who, under providence, achieved the heavenly work, in accents of gratitude, of love, and of admiration.

Time will not permit me to particularize the numerous heroes and statesmen of our revolution. Every soldier, enduring, as they did, with undaunted fortitude and patience, the numerous privations and hardships which they were doomed to suffer, was a Hero. Every citizen was a Statesman.

The name of WASHINGTON, however, must not be passed over in silence.

WASHINGTON was the friend, and the father of his country. He stood like a mighty Colossus, in the midst of a sea dangers, a whole nation looking up to him for political salvation. Their hopes were not disappointed. His country's happiness was his only aim. Great and good as a Man ; unparalleled as a Warrior and a Statesman, his name is engraven on the heart of every American.

The administration of WASHINGTON as President of the United States of America, was necessarily an administration of trial and experiment. It was a new field, and an untrodden path. It was an exalted and sublime situation, of care, difficulty, and awful responsibility. The event has shewn to the world that, in every situation of life, he was the great and wonderful Man, and the magnanimous Hero.

The seven years administration of the great and good JEFFERSON, whom we revere as the author of the Declaration of our Independence, and whose achievements were as momentous in the cabinet, in the time of our direful struggle for liberty, as those of WASHINGTON in the field, has been one continued series of conformity to the principles that animated the bosoms of our fathers in seventyfive.

It is with pleasure, and with pride, we understand, that the late President of the United States has had the magnanimity to declare, that the policy of JEFFERSON would be the salvation of America.

No measure of Mr. JEFFERSON's administration has excited more animadversion than the Act laying an Embargo ; and perhaps no one act of his illustrious and beneficent life has done more honor to his head and to his heart. It has preserved millions of property to our fellow citizens, and has saved us from a war with the great belligerent powers of Europe.

After the opinion of the virtuous and independent *John Quincy Adams*, one of the most enlightened statesmen that our country can boast ;---of *William Gray*, the first merchant in America, if not in the world ;---and of our leading characters, and truest patriots, that the Embargo was a wise and necessary measure, and the *only alternative* between us and a war ; where is the man, that will stand up and say, that he prefers the desolating calamities of remorseless warfare, to the inconveniencies of a temporary Embargo ?

My friends and fellow citizens, we are now enjoying the superlative blessings of a liberal and a free Constitution. It is our pride, and our boast, that our country is the secure and the happy asylum of the persecuted and oppressed of every nation on the globe.

Under our beneficent government, the generous sons of Erin, whose endearing hospitalities, as a nation, are eulogized by the whole world ; but who, through the atrocious and heinous policy of a Pitt, in opposition to the enlightened magnanimity of a Fox, have seen their charming and delightful country a prey to every licentious enormity, torn and lacerated to the quick, and steeped in the best blood of their fellow citizens, here find a resting place from malignant persecution, in the bosom of our beloved country. Every true American feels it his

duty, and his delight, to receive, with open arms, the generous and oppressed sufferers. It is but discharging a debt of gratitude for the illustrious services of Generals *Montgomery, Starks, Sullivan, Cilley, Reed, M'Clary*, and a long list of Irish heroes, who stood foremost in obtaining our freedom and independence.

It has frequently been observed, especially in the course of a few years past, that Republics are turbulent, factious, and ungrateful; and do not give that security and protection, which monarchical governments afford.

Let us examine the correctness of these observations by recurring to the general history of Republican and Monarchical forms of government.

The most important nation, in many points of view, that ever existed on the face of the globe, was the ancient Hebrew or Jewish nation.

It was most important in possessing a language which, as it is said, was the mother tongue of the world.

It was most important in being chosen by God to be his own peculiar and favourite people; and in being delivered from bondage, in the land of Egypt, by the outstretched arm of omnipotence, and planted in the land of Canaan, the garden of the world, flowing with milk and honey.

It was, at that time, most important as a nation, numbering *six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty* men, above the age of twenty, who were able to go forth to war.

It was most important in possessing a Republican or Theocratical form of government, divided into twelve tribes, inhabiting as many distinct territories, each enjoying particular municipal privileges, tho' united together by general laws, and regulations, not greatly dissimilar to the organization of the United States. Indeed, the exact coincidence, in point of numbers, of the tribes of Israel, with the thirteen United States, at the commencement of our national existence, is very remarkable. The tribes of Israel consisted of thirteen; but, the tribe of Levi, which was set apart for the ministry, was not numbered with the men of war.

It was most important in enjoying, for a long series of years, the blessings of freedom, prosperity, and happiness, down to the days of Samuel, when, at their repeated request, God, in anger, gave them a King, which was a prelude to their overthrow and dispersion.

This transaction including the lesson on government which it inculcates, is the most important ever given to man; for it was delivered by God himself! It ought to be engraven on the heart of every person in existence! It is as follows:

‘ And it came to pass, when Samuel was old,
 ‘ that all the elders of Israel gathered themselves to-
 ‘ gether, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said
 ‘ unto him, make us a King, to judge us like all the
 ‘ nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when
 ‘ they said, give us a King to judge us. And Samuel
 ‘ prayed unto the Lord.

‘ And Samuel told all the words of the Lord
 ‘ unto the people that asked of him a King ; and he
 ‘ said, this will be the manner of the King that shall
 ‘ reign over you ; he will take your sons, and ap-
 ‘ point them for himself, for his chariots, and to be
 ‘ his horsemen ; and some shall run before his char-
 ‘ iots. And he will appoint him captains over
 ‘ thousands, and captains over fifties ; and will set
 ‘ them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest,
 ‘ and to make his instruments of war, and instru-
 ‘ ments of his chariots. And he will take your
 ‘ daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks,
 ‘ and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and
 ‘ your vineyards, and your olive yards, even the *best*
 ‘ of them, and give them to his *servants*. And
 ‘ he will take the tenth of your seed, and of
 ‘ your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to
 ‘ his servants. And he will take your men ser-
 ‘ vants, and your maid servants, and your goodliest
 ‘ young men, and your asses, and put them to his
 ‘ work. He will take the tenth of your sheep : and

‘ ye shall be his *servants*. And ye shall *cry out* in
 ‘ that day because of your King which ye shall have
 ‘ chosen you ; and the Lord will not *bear* you in
 ‘ that day. Nevertheless, the people refused to obey
 ‘ the voice of Samuel,’ which was the voice of God ;
 ‘ and they said, Nay ; but we *will* have a King over
 ‘ us.’

What astonishing perversity and hardness of heart ! And how great, though just, have been their sufferings ! After experiencing all the horrors of the prediction, they have been scattered over the face of the whole world, as a continual memento to the nations of the earth, of the divine vengeance inflicted on a people for this, and other enormous acts of disobedience, to the express declaration of the Almighty.

From the ancient Jews, we proceed to the ancient nations of India, who, according to Arrian, an author of veracity, enjoyed a free, that is, a republican form of government.

From them we proceed to the ancient Carthaginians, whose government was Republican, consisting of two magistrates chosen annually, called, Suffetes, and a tribune of one hundred and four senators. They enjoyed, according to history, domestic peace and civil liberty, under this form of government, *six hundred and seventy-seven years*. What a monument of the stability and blessings of

a free government ! They were at last overcome and destroyed by the Romans.

From ancient Carthage we proceed to ancient Greece. ‘ At the name of Greece,’ says the author of the Elements of General History, ‘ our spirit
‘ seems to rest from its labour, and the brilliant pe-
‘ riod of history begins to shine forth ; true Heroes,
‘ celebrated Sages, immortal geniuses, the master-
‘ pieces of perfection appear, and we, already, have
‘ a foretaste of the pleasures derived from admiring
‘ the wonderful effects of *liberty* on the human mind !’

Greece enjoyed the blessings of a free government for more than *one thousand* years ; the natural consequence of which, was the production of an immortal constellation of heroes, statesmen, poets, historians, sages, and philosophers, which have astonished the world. The names of Homer, Xenophon, Demosthenes, Plato, Solon, Apelles, Euripides, Plutarch, Aristotle, Lycurgus, Pythagoras, Socrates, Archimedes, Hippocrates, Epaminondas, Phocion, Diogenes, and a long list of splendid et ceteræ, we have all heard of, with wonder and admiration. And these were all Grecians !

In short, Greece has been to all the useful and elegant Arts and Sciences, what the sun is to the world, enlightening and vivifying the whole. What a glorious monument to Republicanism ! A monument, which time, that destroys every thing else,

erves but to brighten ; and can only end, when time is no more !

From ancient Greece we proceed to ancient Rome.

Rome was founded by Romulus, and for the first two hundred and fortyfour years of her existence, was governed by seven Kings ; two of whom died a natural death, one was dethroned, and the other four were assassinated. A proof of the wonderful stability of kingly governments ! ! !

From this time to the seven hundred and twentyfourth year of the foundation of Rome, that is, for about five hundred years, she enjoyed the sublime felicity of a Republican form of government, and under it became the mistress of the world, till Monarchy was established on the ruins of the Republic ; and so compleatly annihilated did the national character appear to be, by the change, that the *last* of the Republicans, BRUTUS and CASSIUS, have ever since been called the *last* of the Romans.

From this time to her fall and subjugation, a period of about five hundred years, Rome was governed by a monarchical form of government.

Let us compare the five hundred years of republican, with the five hundred years of monarchical, Rome. Under the auspices of the former, she rose to the highest pitch of glory and happiness, pro-

ducing a long list of illustrious heroes, statesmen, poets, sages, and philosophers, who, excepting those of Greece, are unrivalled in the annals of the world.

The Scipios, the Gracchi, Cincinnatus, Cato, Cicero, Fabius, Ovid, Virgil, et ceteræ, were all nourished with the milk of freedom. While, on the contrary, scarce one solitary instance of extraordinary merit appears in the reign of the Emperors, which, with some few exceptions, was a reign of one continued series of rapine, murder, and devastation, of such horrid and abominable import that the tongue trembles to relate, and humanity shudders to hear related. Such was the depravity, that the empire itself was put up to auction and struck off to the highest bidder, Didius Julianus, who enjoyed his purchase sixty six days, and was then beheaded !

Caius Caligula, one of the emperors, was a monster in human shape, who, after bathing himself in the blood of thousands and thousands of innocent victims, at last ejaculated the awful and tremendous wish, that the whole Roman people had but one head, that he might strike it off with one blow !

Nero, another emperor, and another monster, who, after committing the most atrocious excesses in every species, of abomination, defying both God and man, ordered the city of Rome to be set on fire,

while from a tower, surrounded by his courtiers, he sung, danced, and caroused at the conflagration ! More than two thirds of this immense city, which was twentyone miles in extent, was consumed by that fire, which lasted six days !

History informs us that in the five hundred years of the Roman monarchy, there were one hundred and sixty six emperors ; *one hundred and forty-nine* of whom, perished by the hand of violence, principally by assassination ! Such is the stability ! such the security ! and such are the blessings ! of monarchical forms of government ! ! !

From Ancient we proceed to Modern History.

The Republic of Venice, consisting of fourteen States, or Provinces, was formerly one of the most powerful commercial and maritime States in Europe.

It flourished under a Republican form of Government for nearly FIFTEEN HUNDRED YEARS, and has been dignified with the appellation of the *stable form of Government*.

I trust that enough has been said, and, that to extend the examination further would be an intrusion on your patience, and on your politeness.

Our own happy form of Government stands unrivalled in the history of the governments of nations.

It possesses all the excellencies of ancient and modern Republics, without their faults ; together

with many improvements, particularly in the representative system, with which they were not so well acquainted.

It possesses, if I may so express myself, the seeds of eternal duration.

An enlightened, independent, and virtuous yeomanry, form the great body of the people; and so long as they retain and own the soil which they cultivate, so long are our liberties on a sure, a certain, and immoveable foundation.

Some of my respectable audience have grown grey in the cause of freedom; others are just entering upon the theatre of action. Let me conjure you, one and all, that having put your hand to the plough, look not back. You are engaged in the cause of *eternal truth* and *righteousness*. It is a cause that will bring comfort and consolation in the dark hour of adversity and distress.

It is a cause that will tranquilize and smooth the elevated sunshine of prosperity. It is a cause that will, on reflection, afford the peaceful serenity of a good conscience, in the awful hour of exchanging time for eternity. And it is a cause that will endure 'till the great Globe itself shall dissolve, ' and like the baseless fabric of a vision, leave not a ' wreck behind.'

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