

# ORATION,



DELIVERED AT

DOUGLASS, *July 5th*, 1802.

AN  
ORATION.

DELIVERED AT

DOUGLASS,

MONDAY, JULY 5th, 1802.

THE DAY ASSIGNED

FOR

CELEBRATING

THE

ANNIVERSARY

OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

  
By JOHN CRANE, A. M.  


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July 16th, 1802

DOUGLASS, JULY 5th, 1802.

*AT a meeting of a large number of Gentlemen of this, and the neighboring towns, convened to celebrate the anniversary of American Independence.*

*VOTED,—That the Hon. BEZALEEL TAFT, AARON MARSH, BENJAMIN ADAMS, EZRA WOOD, JUN. DAVID BATCHELLER, and the Hon. SETH HASTINGS, Esqrs. be a committee to wait upon the Rev. JOHN CRANE, and present him the thanks of this meeting for his spirited and patriotic ORATION, delivered by him this day, and request a copy of the same for the press.*

BEZALEEL TAFT, { Moderator.



DOUGLASS, JULY 5th, 1802.

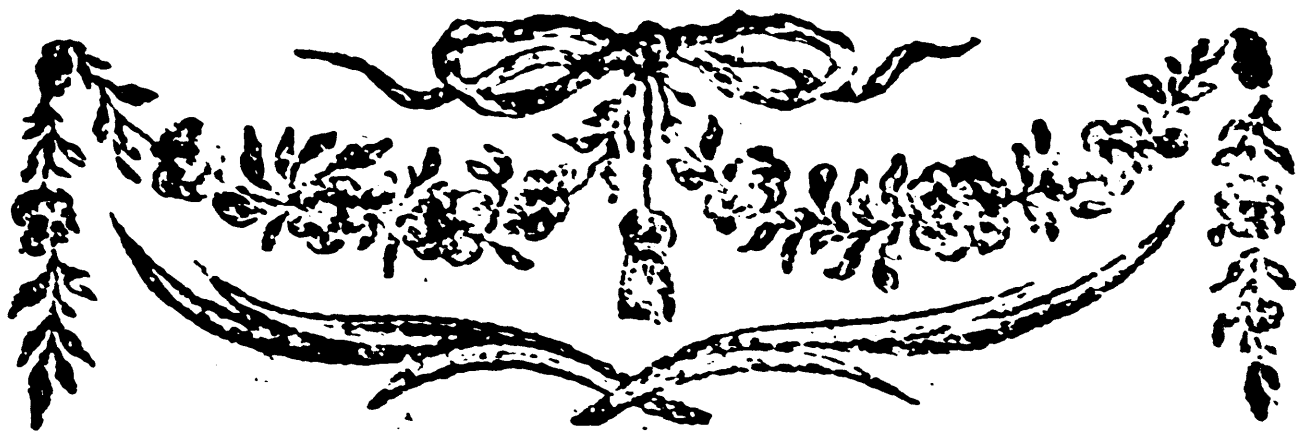
GENTLEMEN,

*WITH your request I readily comply. I beg leave to add, that the honor, which you confer upon me, in the polite attention, you have now paid me, cannot fail of deeply interesting me in your happiness, and also in the prosperity of the large and respectable assembly who listened to the speaker, with decent and almost profound respect.*

*Gentlemen, I am your obliged*

*and most humble servant,*

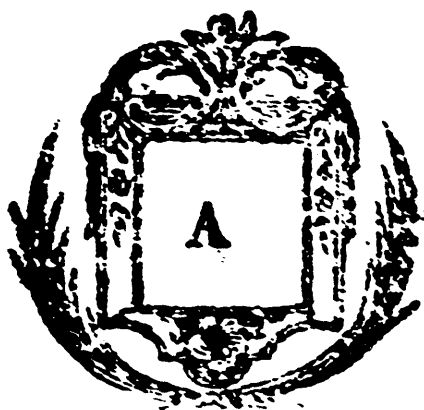
JOHN CRANE.



A N

# O R A T I O N .

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**T**a period, so critical as the present, it is truly difficult, to call your attention, to the most material and interesting part of the subject, which claims a place, on this occasion.

Twenty-six years have elapsed, since our fathers *nobly dared*, to deliver to the world, the *declaration* of American Independence. The fourth of July, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six, has been recorded the *Birth-Day* of our national sovereignty. The return of this day bids us remember the memorable era, when, the United States of America assumed a rank among the independent sovereignties of the world. Juvenile animation, joined to the brilliant talents of an informed mind, would undoubtedly have added to the hilarity of this festival, the only one, which is set apart for commemorating our political

pativity. But juvenile ardour is not expected, in one, who has passed the meridian of life ; neither can we calculate upon receiving high entertainment, from him, who has been confined, almost wholly, to pursuits, foreign to the present theme of declamation ; and by situation, as well as profession, has been secluded from the means of information. The speaker of the day, feels a sensible regret that his auditory must be deprived of the instruction, which none but adepts in politics, can afford. He therefore, claims a portion of candour, which would be scarcely pardonable, in his hearers, to grant, even to ordinary civilians.

Human nature, in similar circumstances, is almost uniformly the same. Like causes are usually accompanied with like effects ; and what has happened, to men, in any particular situation, may happen again, when the same causes shall exist.

Among all the different forms of civil government, which have been instituted, it must be confessed, that each one has its peculiar advantage and disadvantage. The monarchical, the aristocratical and the republican systems comprehend, all the different civil establishments, which have been in operation, among the nations of the earth.

But the republican government, is the only one, strictly speaking, which is consonant with reason and divine revelation. The perfection of a human government contains these two essential properties ; Namely, an equal and exact balance between tyranny and

anarchy, and an ability to support itself independently of its subjects. The republican constitutions do, or ought to contain these properties. Governments constructed, upon republican principles, of all others are the most friendly to human happiness. They deliver to the citizen his rights and privileges. They free him from the oppression of the despot, and have evidently the superior advantage of all other forms, by putting men into a situation for enlarging and extending the noble mental powers. By tracing the effects which the several forms of civil government have had upon the minds of men, we must adopt a conclusion highly in favour of republicanism. The little republics of ancient Greece, contained many enlightened citizens. In some of them the arts and sciences were cultivated ; and in all them the inhabitants were raised to a degree of civilization above the level. But the people who now occupy those regions, are degraded to a state of inactivity and effeminacy, which renders them contemptible. The sun, moon, and stars, with all the planets, rise and set, on the same quarter of the heavens, they used to do, when the Grecian republics were in the Zenith of their Glory. To what cause then must be ascribed this change in its inhabitants ? Certainly not wholly to a natural, but a political one.

The influence of tyrannic power, in those once enlightened States has benumbed the human mind, and taken from it all its stimulus to noble exertions. This observation must be felt, in its whole weight, when we

consider the progress and advance, which has been made, in the useful arts, since the United States have existed an independent nation. Few instances, it is presumed, can be found in the records of antiquity, which furnish us with such convincing evidence of the energy of the human mind, when it is once released from its imprisonment, and placed in a situation favorable for drawing forth its native worth.

The struggles for American Independence proved a nursery for warriors and statesmen. During the arduous conflict, which for a long time subsisted, between this country and one of the strongest powers in Europe, many of our citizens, till then unknown on the list of fame, were formed for rendering extensive services to their country, in the cabinet and in the field. Had it not been for this arduous contest, which cost our fathers so much blood and treasure, many of our illustrious patriots would have passed to the grave in obscurity, and their names not have been enrolled among the worthies, who will be had in honor, as long as men shall dare to be free.

Since our Federal Constitution has given energy to the national arm, and rescued the character of Americans from contempt, our country has been rapidly advancing in wealth and in the useful arts.

The Father of mercies had raised up a WASHINGTON, and qualified him to take the command of his countrymen, and direct their Councils and their arms. *Illustrious Patriot!* whose name and worth will employ the pens of historians, poets and

orators, while liberty remains precious, or the Independence of America has advocates.

But the business of this Day is less to feel, than to reason. This anniversary has returned, when addresses to the passions might heighten the joy of the occasion. With the varying ~~changing~~ situation of our country, the theme of declamation may change. To think coolly and reason correctly should form the prominent features of our political harrangues.

Let us then forget the Festival and the song. Let us pass from fanciful excursions and romantic descriptions to serious subjects.

Free Governments, like ours, are surrounded with certain dangers, to which others are not exposed. While republics have preference to all other forms of civil government, they are more in danger too, than others. Human nature, ever true to itself, is capable of deceiving and of being deceived; and the pleasing delusion, insensibly and imperceptibly robs the nation of freedom and independency. *dit.*

The two great causes of danger, to which free states are exposed, are deception and division.

Our national sovereignty will probably never be destroyed by the arms of foreign powers. Situated, as this country is, remote from formidable enemies, we have but little to fear from their hostile bands. Could we promise ourselves, that the United States would always be united in councils and in the fields; and that none, but true enlightened patriots would have a share, in the administration of civil govern-



ment, we might safely conclude, that our independence would continue, till the last shock of time should terminate the existence of empires and nations.

Designing ambitious men have ever found themselves the most successful, among a free people. The common people of every country are too ready to be imposed upon by fair pretensions.

Fond of liberty, they are liable to be cheated out of their national independence, by embracing and caressing the very *creatures* of their own destruction.

In all countries, there have not been wanting men, who have wished to make innovations, in state, with a view to promotion; and to accomplish their designs, it has been a popular step with them, to make the people believe they were oppressed, and were in danger of being reduced to slavery. Nothing, more readily arrests the feelings of ignorant and uninformed men, than suggestions of their danger from men, in the first seats of power. Jealous, in the extreme, of men in authority, the artful demagogue is sure of success, by giving circulation to stories which prejudice the public mind against the very best of civil rulers. Jealousy flies from man to man, and in a moment, the people are alienated from the Saviours of their country, and their confidence is lodged with men who meant to deceive.

Degrading as it is, facts compel us to testify, that aspiring men are base enough to practice all the arts of falsehood and misrepresentation, in order to secure to themselves supreme power. They are

ready, on every occasion to excite the fears, and kindle the jealousies of the people against any class of men, who stand in the way of their advancement. This spirit of deception has given currency to falsehoods. It has railed on men who deserve the esteem and confidence of their country. It has endeavored to blacken the characters of every man, who could, possibly be the means of impeding them in the prosecution of their villainous projects. For what purpose have the Clergy of Massachusetts, been denounced, through all this region, as the movers of sedition and rebellion, and pronounced more deserving the *halter*, than the ordinary traitor of his country? Was it not to drive them out of public view? Was it not to put them in fear of acting with an independence, becoming enlightened citizens? Was it not to destroy their influence, their reputation and their usefulness, and sink them into contempt? In a word, was it not, to take them out of the way, that designing men might the more easily, make a conquest of the people?

All civil governments, in their operations either incline towards absolute monarchy or compleat anarchy. Few, if any civil systems, have ever yet been adopted and balanced so exactly, as not to preponderate to the one extreme, or to the other. Their progress might be gradual, and for a while imperceptible, but during the lapse of time their tendency has been discovered.

Our excellent government has not leaned towards monarchy. No sober considerate citizen has feared monarchy, from any thing visible, in the operation of our Federal Constitution ; and yet such is the power of delusion, that men have pretended to believe, that our past administration was calculated to swallow up our liberties in despotic power. Strange that men of sense could believe so contrary to facts. The truth is, our government, all along has leaned the other way. Instead of being sufficiently energetic to give it the tone of monarchy, it has rather needed the nursing hand, in order to keep it in proper tune.

Experience, in many cases, is our best guide. The fall of free independent States will point out to us the dangerous consequences of political deception. Tyrants have overthrown the liberties of their country, and reduced their people to slavery by means of political delusion.

Rome, while she was rising towards universal dominion, always offered her alliance to the people whom she intended to conquer. This noble pretence of securing liberty to her allies gave the independence of free States into her hands, and reduced Sovereign dominions, to tributary provinces.

Cæsar elated with victory and proud of conquest, returned from Britain and Gaul to Rome. And what did he say to the Roman people ? Was it, that he wished to enslave them ? no ; said he. Dictatorships and imperial crowns had no charms

with him. In the cause of liberty he had drawn his sword ; and his love to the Roman people induced him to move toward Rome, at the head of his hostile army. When he had once freed the people from the tyranny of the senate, he would surrender his authority, his laurels and his arms at their feet, and return to the condition of a private citizen. How pleasing the harangues of such a general at the head of such an army ! The battle at Pharsalia put the conqueror in possession of Rome ; and the people were soon made to feel, that his promises were deceptions. **Cæsar** was now the tyrant and they were his slaves.

But we need not waste your time, in searching remote antiquity for instances of political deception. Modern times furnish us with examples of it, in abundance. France in all her mutations, has practised upon the model, which antient tyrants have used with success. What a deception on the world was the French revolution ? What astonishing infatuation and delusion were poured into the minds of unhappy Frenchmen ? The leaders in her revolution told the people that they were slaves, and they told them the truth. The sound of liberty and equality was circulated through all France till political frenzy was enkindled into a blaze. The people were made to chant the song, and celebrate the Festival of liberty. All this was done to prepare the people to change their tyrants. Thrones, aristocracy and priesthood, were demolished, under the pretence of erecting the standard of liberty ;

but after all, the people in France have only changed the name and the form of tyranny. This deluded people are made to believe that they have a free government, while the first Consul of France has the disposal of life, liberty and property. *Consummate delusion !*

But we need not go so far from home to find examples of political deception. The whole system of British Parliamentary proceedings towards these, then colonies was calculated to cheat us out of our civil rights, and subject us to a state of vassalage.

The opposition of France to our complete independence on the nations of Europe, was but mere deception, which eventually intended to make us tributary to her will. During the late convulsions on the other side of the Atlantic, every art has been employed, which was practicable, to interest us in the troubles of the old world.

Many have taken sanctuary in America who emigrated from regions, where aristocracy, anarchy, rebellion and tyranny have held their dominions. These men have been reading lectures to free born Americans upon the principles of civil liberty, and teaching the *sons* of freedom how the United States ought to administer their government.

These men furnished by the Philosophy of the new school, the apostles of modern liberty, have *swarmed* in our country, and infused the public mind with those poisonous sentiments, the influence of which, has convulsed the European nations.

The great object of these pretended republicans is to play off upon United America, that political deception, which has been the means of robbing the independent States of Europe of their sovereignty.

We proceed no further in telling you what political deceptions have been practised upon the sons of freedom. In telling what has taken place, we are reminded of our greatest danger. What more interesting can now arrest your attention, than a bare recital of some of the means of security against the destructive engine of political deception !

Among the means of securing us from the fatal snare, must be mentioned our firmness to resist innovations. Revolutions ever endanger the morals, as well as the sovereignty of a nation. Changes though gradual, and almost imperceptible may draw along with them, a train of destructive consequences.

The propositions, which meditate some change, in politics or in religion, may seemingly promise some immediate advantage, but its main design may be concealed. Men, in some cases, when they cannot accomplish their wishes at once, are willing to put things in a train for the completion of their designs, and wait the event.

Sure of success, they give the fatal blow to the *creature* they hate, and are content to see it die a lingering death. Innovations are ever dangerous, especially where little or no advantage can result from them.

Nearly akin to this sentiment is the importance of maintaining our Federal Constitution, on which, the safety, the glory, and the sovereignty of the United States depends. Though, it be possible to amend and change it for the better, yet the chances of losing all are so great, as to render it imprudent to hazard so much for the sake of gaining but a little.

Experience, in the political world has proved, that it is absolutely necessary to the existence of free States, to preserve distinct and independent, the judicial, the executive, and the legislative branches, which are the organs of national power. When either of these constituted branches by any means, acquires a controlling influence over the others, it becomes a formidable engine, which will ever endanger the liberties of any country. In this supposed case the government may be styled republican, but if the moving and controlling power reside in an individual, it is truly despotic, and may prove tyrannical. In the rage of delusion a free people may unfortunately surrender their dearest rights to the hands of a domestic, or foreign tyrant, by electing such men to the national legislature as shall be the *creature of his will*. When it so happens, that the majority of those, who compose the national council, shall move under the direction of any sovereign, the liberties of the people are laid prostrate at his feet.

For one, I am ready to confess my admiration of the British constitution, which has made the several

branches of government, so completely independent of each other, as to prove a safe-guard to the liberties of the nation. Our citizens will do well to consider the importance of placing in the national legislature, men who will use their influence to preserve distinct and entire the several branches of our Federal Government.

When treating upon national independence, it is not foreign to introduce independence in thinking. This is our birth-right. This is the privilege of all our citizens ; and it extends even to the examination and inspection of governmental proceedings.

We reprobate the practice of misrepresenting and calumniating men who are in seats of power. This is a mode of conduct which is generally as pernicious as it is wicked. Indeed it is both our interest and our duty to speak evil of no man. But let us boldly assert our rights and our just claims. Let us submit, servilely to none. Civil rulers are only the servants of the people. Let us not resign the right of thinking and judging for ourselves, upon all subjects, on which we have sufficient information.

In many cases, it becomes us to behave with modesty, especially when we know our rulers have better means of information. Still we hold it, as the privilege of the free born citizens of America, to examine the measures adopted by civil rulers, and if upon the strictest enquiry, they find them faithful servants of the people, to give them their suffrages, if not to



withhold from them their hand, in reelecting them to seats of honor.

Weak, or wicked, is that man who would tell us, that we may not think what we please, and speak what we think, upon the proceedings of our national Government, provided truth and candor guide us in our speeches. To avoid the increasing of divisions and a party spirit is one means of our safety. When a party spirit runs high the passions of human nature take the lead, and when the passions have the ascendant, we are in danger of committing errors.

Division and a party spirit has not unfrequently prevailed in free States, and been the principal means of their overthrow. The enemies of our country would rejoice to hear, that a party spirit was prevalent and divisions were spreading through all the American States. This is the precious season with them, for practising the arts of deception with success.

Political, like religious deceivers address themselves to our warmest feelings, and when we are seized with a party spirit our feelings are usually the warmest. In these unguarded moments, we are in the greatest danger of becoming the tools of our own destruction.

In the rant of new Philosophy, we may be told, that we are slaves, because we are under the dominion of law ; that to enjoy the perfection of human happiness, we must be emancipated from all the restraints

of religion and civil authority. This demoralizing doctrine has its enchantment ; and our native fondness for liberty, in the excess, prompts us, to surrender ourselves to its direction. But the moment it prevails, the liberties of our country are laid prostrate at the feet of some bold usurper. After all the best means of defence against the arts of deception is an informed mind, joined to a love of virtue. A virtuous patriotic spirit is the best security we have against the attacks of artful designing men. That disinterested patriotism, which induced the *Great WASHINGTON* to sacrifice his domestic ease, for the salvation of his country, would be a safe-guard to our independence.

To maintain the dignity of free born Americans, it becomes us to spurn every attempt, that is used to bring us under foreign influence. Let us know, that our honor and our interest forbid us to take a part, in the politics or the quarrels of any foreign nations. Remote from the dominions, which have long been versed in political intrigue, we are bound by a regard to our national honor to take no part in their contentions.

Neither is it honorable for us to copy their manners and customs. Servile imitation may subject us to inconvenience, and even endanger our sovereignty. For when subtil politicians shall find us submissive to their maxims, they will deem us, fit subjects of deception, and when they know themselves able to

give laws to manners, they will think themselves also able to give laws to our country.

To our shame is the introduction of foreigners to our public councils. *Such misguided and ill judged promotions will give other nations an influence in our Federal Government, which may greatly accelerate our ruin.* It is placing the agents of foreign powers, in a situation to accomplish purposes, which their arms would never be able to effect. Let us remember that it concerns all our citizens, to exert themselves, in defence of their sovereignty and national glory; to keep in mind, that without those virtuous habits, which raised us to an independent State, our national honor cannot long be maintained.

A power adequate to the purposes of regulating and controlling the lawless passions of mankind, must exist and will exist. To keep this power in the hands of them, to whom our Federal Constitution has assigned it, is unquestionably the direct means of supporting our station, among the independent sovereignties of the earth.

To take this power from *their* hands, to whom, by Federal compact, it is committed, may despoil us of some, or of all our valuable privileges and lodge us, in the hands of some foreign despot, or domestic demagogue, who once having laid his feet upon our neck, may claim the honor of treating us mildly, because, he treats us better than we had reason to expect.

Or should this power fall into the hands of the mob, perpetual war, would be the state of civil society. A recollection of the *fate* of ancient and modern republics makes us tremble for our own. Must it be, that the hard earned inheritance of our ancestors shall be taken from their posterity, because they were too weak or too wicked, to preserve it ?

Must it be, that so many illustrious Heroes, have fought and died in defence of American liberties, that they might become a prey to some bold invader ? Is America, or is it not, the only residence of civil liberty ? nations there are, who style themselves free : states which boast of the honor of being republicans. But what do they enjoy ? who rules them ? Who makes their laws ? What if, the first consul of France give back to the nation, those unalienable rights, which nothing but tyranny and usurpation could take away ? What shall we call him ? will not the great nation bless him for his liberality ? Will they not think that they are tasting the sweets of liberty, when they are favoured with so good a depositary of their privileges. If it be so, that the United States afford the last retreat to civil liberty, let us then ; for the honor of humanity, the happiness of succeeding ages, and our own glory, resolve to be free, and in executing this resolution, we must maintain those virtues, which are the great preservation of our national glory. If we all cultivate that patriotic and philanthropic spirit, which becomes the good man and the citizen, and

demean ourselves, as the subjects of that moral government, which extends over all the nations of the earth. If we consider ourselves to be entrusted with a legacy, which is to be transmitted, without diminution to unborn generations. If we govern our practice, in obedience to him, who controls the designs of wicked men, we shall have reason to hope, that we shall never be cheated out of our fair inheritance. The occasion, upon which, we have convened will be rendered less honorable and less beneficial, if in partaking of its joy, any of our Fraternity, should become the votaries of *Bacchus* or of *Venus*. The festival we keep, on this day, ought to be a religious festival. No wise and good men will abandon themselves to indecent mirth, or immoral practices. They will submit themselves to the government of reason, and proceed no further than they find themselves supported by her decisions.

But after all, should we be unfortunately given up to political deception, and eventually lose our birth-right, and the glory of our nation. Should it be our unhappiness to see the fair inheritance our *Fathers* gave us, extorted from our hands, and ourselves without the means of recovering it. How degrading and mortifying to the sons of Freedom !

If we were, to recall to view the mighty exertions of our *Fathers*, in support and defence of our independence, their anxiety and their prayers, their days of fasting and humiliation in addressing the Throne of

Grace, for Divine protection, and salvation, it might enkindle in our breasts, a sensibility, which would have a happy influence upon our deportment, and at the same time furnish us with fresh ardour to make a noble stand against all the foreign and domestic foes of our country.

To them, who saw and experienced the troubles of the American Revolution the recollection of past scenes would be affecting.

May United America never want heroes and statesmen, who shall be qualified to defend the interest of our country. May all our citizens be endued with wisdom and resolution, sufficient to transmit to posterity, the freedom and sovereignty which we have received, that the United States of America, may furnish the world with an example of a nation, who so well understood the value of civil liberty, as to be able to defend it with honor. May our nation continue to grow in wealth, in power, in knowledge and in virtue; and may our public councils be directed in wisdom.

May righteousness be the glory of our age and nation, and may patriotism and virtue be cultivated by all the citizens of this land of liberty, till kingdoms, states and empires, shall be absorbed in the reign of the prince of peace.