

AN

ORATION,

DELIVERED ON THE 4th OF JULY, 1810,

**IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, IN EAST RUTGER-
STREET, BEFORE THE FOLLOWING**

SOCIETIES;

**TAMMANY, TAYLORS', HATTERS', HIBERNIAN PROVI-
DENT, MASONS', SHIPWRIGHTS', CARPENTERS',
AND COLUMBIAN.**

BY DR. CUMING,

FROM THE HIBERNIAN PROVIDENT SOCIETY.

**Published at the request of the COMMITTEE of
ARRANGEMENT.**

**" Thy spirit, INDEPENDENCE ! let me wear,
Lord of the Lion Heart and Eagle Eye,
Thy steps I follow, with my bosom bare,
Nor heed the storm that howls along the sky."**

SMOLLET.

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JULY 30, 1810.

ORATION.



FELLOW CITIZENS!

IN presenting myself before you on this interesting occasion,—an occasion, which, to do it justice, would require abilities of a much higher grade than I possess—one too, which has been so frequently noticed, that it would appear to be exhausted, were it not of such high moment, of such vast importance to the happiness of man, as to be a theme of inexhaustible praise. I have to offer, as my only apology, that nothing but an ardent love of this my country—a reverence for its free institutions, and a sacred veneration for those exalted men who achieved the Independence and Liberty of these happy States, could have induced me so far to forget my own inability to do justice to so GLORIOUS a Cause, as to have accepted the call made me by the Society to which I have the honor to belong.

What cause is of equal importance?—or what æra can Freemen so laudably celebrate? If we cast our eye over the page of history, and travel through the horrors which it relates, and too frequently palliates, if not justifies; and see the countless miseries the majority of men have endured, through all ages, by the follies, the crimes and the mad ambition of tyrants—who that hears me but must acknowledge the infinite superiority of a festival in honour of an event like the one we now celebrate, over any thing which the slaves of despotic power observe in commemoration of the birth or marriage of their master, or which serve to record some of his atrocious acts of carnage and desolation?

On the accession of the present king of G. Britain to the throne, these States were in connexion with, and subject to that great power. There were many here who, either themselves or their fathers, had fled to this country to avoid the religious and political persecutions that prevailed, with greater or less ferocity and injustice from the reign of Elizabeth—but the distance intervening between what has been called the mother country and this, together with its then infantile state, producing little inducement to plunder, left those hardy and virtuous first settlers an opportunity of framing just and equita-

ble regulations for their own government. Speaking, generally, the same language, and of habits nearly allied, ages might have rolled away ere separation had been thought of. America, however, soon after became of importance, and, in the eye of G. Britain, a fit subject for taxation. I shall not dwell on the different causes that led to resistance, which taught a lesson to tyrants, and will show to future generations the power that MEN possess to right themselves, when labouring under oppression; and which terminated in the establishment of **OUR GLORIOUS INDEPENDENCE.**

But who can reflect on the different conditions of the conflicting parties, in the great contest that established our Independence, *without acknowledging the interposition of an over-ruling Providence in our favor.* On the one hand, we behold a population scarcely three millions, principally farmers and men ignorant of the art of war, spread over a widely extended territory, many of whom were attached to the government of G. Britain—with Governors and Judges appointed by, and in the interest of that country. On the other, we see a powerful and great empire, of fifteen millions of inhabitants, with numerous armies, disciplined and flushed with former successes, and ready, at the orders of their

commanders, to execute the FELL purpose for which they were deputed by their cruel tyrant—to strangle *Liberty in its birth*, and establish *ferocious Despotism on its ruins*. Disdaining submission to taxation without being represented, and appealing to heaven for the rectitude of their intentions, these champions of Freedom, determined on *Liberty or Death*, met the mercenaries of haughty Britain, and successfully resisted even the hired Hessian and the merciless Indian, both employed by the cruel foe, in their works of devastation and death. Dreadful was the contest! the half-armed, half-clothed American, inspired by the genius of a FRANKLIN, a HANCOCK, and an ADAMS, rushed to the field—and, headed by a WASHINGTON, finally prevailed.

Hail! illustrious men—departed spirits, hail!—and ye, too—*Warren, Montgomery, Mercer, and Gates*—departed sages and warriors, ALL hail!—Your names, with other countless worthies, with you confederated in this glorious contest, who have descended to the silent tomb, will be handed down to remote posterity as the benefactors of the human race. With you compared, what claim have the *Alexanders, the Cæsars, or the Bonapartes*, to renown?—the fame of *these* is built upon the wide-spread miseries

they have occasioned by their mad ambition ; but *yours*, more solid, more durable, will be felt by generations yet unborn ; who will bless your memory as the authors of the happiness they enjoy.

And ye survivors, whose exertions have equally contributed to your country's independence, what gratitude does not that country owe you ! Thou Author of the Declaration of Independence, just read, illustrious *Jefferson* ; what pleasing sensations must thou not experience, each revolving year, when reflecting on the mighty good done to millions, by thy labours : Posterity will do thee justice. In the language of the Poet I would exclaim :

*“ For he who soars to an unwonted height,
 “ Oppressive dazzles, with excess of light
 “ The arts beneath him ; yet, when dead, shall prove
 “ An object worthy of esteem and love.”*

It was not to be expected that every man who espoused the cause of American Independence, would entertain correct or similar views of the best mode of government for the people, when the war had ceased ; it was one thing to be a soldier, and another to entertain just notions of Liberty, founded upon the RIGHTS

of MAN. And accordingly we find that not a few of those engaged in this honourable warfare, would have been satisfied with a frame of government not essentially differing from that of G. Britain: This England saw; and those she could not conquer by her arms, she wished to corrupt with her arts; and predicted that intestine division would ultimately destroy us. The loose ties by which the different States were held together during the war, began, now that the war was ended, to be felt; and the predictions of our insidious foe appeared on the point of being fulfilled. But the Guardian Angel of America once more appeared---a Convention was called, and the people of these States exhibited to astonished and admiring Europe the grand spectacle of the formation of a legitimate government, by the people, without bloodshed.

It was now, however, that the seeds of those political parties were sown, which have since grown to so alarming a height, as to threaten destruction to the noblest work of Man. The enemies of freedom beheld with secret satisfaction and delight, the jarring contentions of the different parties that distracted the land, and, *Satan-like*, malignantly smiled at our divisions.---France, however, struck with the successful example of America, burst asunder the

chains in which she had been for ages bound, and effected a glorious revolution---a revolution which, had it not been for the coalition of the despots of Europe, might have terminated in the establishment of liberty, and at the same time not accompanied with the horrid crimes that followed in that ill-fated country ; crimes, justly attributable to their unjustifiable interference in the concerns of an independent country, to prevent the extension of those principles that would ultimately have destroyed their usurped power, and established rational forms of government, more conducive to the happiness of the people, in its stead. But, alas ! after torrents of blood had been unprofitably shed, France has again submitted to the domination of a master ; and, losing the prospect of Liberty, which seemed *once* within her grasp, has now now no other consolation for the loss, than that of exchanging the character of free citizens for conquering warriors ; and thereby becoming more effectual instruments of retributive justice, in the hands of ambition, for punishing the Machiavelian parties to the treaty of Pilnitz, who were the original conspirators against their efforts for freedom, and the *true* authors of the crimes which unhappily followed them.

But, altho' France has submitted to a military despotism, and the hopes of the philanthropist are blasted for the present---although Europe seems to be more removed from rational freedom than before that important æra, when France rose in her might, and broke her chains on the heads of her oppressors---although Humanity has little to console herself for the wanton expenditure and waste of human blood which has for years deformed and disfigured the fair face of Europe, and which still continues to cover it with tears : Yet, may we not fondly anticipate, as some counterpoise for the sufferings of man in Europe, that an order of things has arisen in South America, which may ultimately lead to the establishment of more rational forms of government than have heretofore prevailed in those delightful countries. Fame, on her wings, has carried the glad tidings to the North !---and what freeman's heart does not expand at the news ?---Who can reflect, without exultation, upon the probability of the Fire of Freedom, which is lighted up at the Caraccas, communicating its exhilarating and vivifying influence over the Southern Continent of America, and of those immense and fertile regions becoming independent of Europe ; forming alliances with this, and ex-

changing, for the mutual advantage of both, the redundancies of each?---Then will the Amazon and the Oronoka be filled with our friendly vessels, and the Mississippi, Delaware and Hudson, in return, receive the barks of the adventurous mariner of the South. Ah! too happy, if, imitating our Republican systems, that hitherto darkened portion of the world, would shake off the trammels in which she is bound by the MONSTROUS UNION of Church and State---a Union which is incompatible with the Liberties of Man!

Thrice happy, we! where no such unnatural union prevails---where no ministers of any favored persuasion are permitted to exact the fruits of the poor man's toil, to support religious opinions in which he has no faith. Long may Americans guard against this *liberticidal* Union; and, though the "Mosque or the Synagogue*" be the first to be assailed, remember that should this first attempt be *unresisted*, it may eventually lead to the establishment of some favored sect, at the expence of the liberties and happiness of all.

During the deadly contest between the two most powerful states of Europe, what Ameri-

* See Governor Trumbull's Speech.

can but knows the wrong^s sustained by this country, in the unjust attempt of BOTH, to make us parties in their quarrel. Preferring peace to war—the happiness of the people to their misery—our government has hitherto maintained its neutral position. Altho' insulted abroad, and vilified at home—altho' a section of the Union raised its voice against the government, and thereby afforded an opportunity to our *earliest* foe, to persevere in her unjust conduct towards us—altho' the presses teemed with the most abominable falsehoods to deceive the people, respecting that much-abused measure, the *Embargo*; a measure, which, if duly persevered in, would have compelled *haughty Britain* to rescind her unjust Orders in Council—to have made reparation for the *murderous* attack on the Chesapeak—to have restored our impressed seamen, and to have desisted from future violence or spoliations. We should not have been insulted with an agreement entered into and afterwards disavowed, nor an ambassador sent to *beard* our government. Neither would *France* have *burned* our ships at sea, nor the merchant have to lament his losses by the *unjust and rapacious seizure and condemnation* of his vessels in her ports and those of her dependencies:—better far had he, yielding to a re-

strait which the injustice of the Belligerents had occasioned, and which restraint was necessary to prevent a war which we could not wage with any prospect of advantage—better, I say, to have turned his capital into the channel of manufactures, and, by *their establishment*, to have contributed to rendering his country independent of Europe; and thus, by giving a strenuous support to our government, to have convinced the powers of Europe that we were a *united* people, against whom their wanton injustice could not prevail. But

“ *O ! cursed hunger of pernicious Gold !* ”

“ *What bands of Faith can impious Lucre hold !* ”

What remains to the citizens of these free States to perpetuate the inestimable blessings of SELF-GOVERNMENT?—Fathers of the rising generation, in what an eminent and responsible situation do you stand!—what obligations do you not owe to your predecessors for the political distinction you enjoy?—and how can you more worthily repay it, than by educating your children in a reverence for your enviable Constitution, and those principles upon which it is founded; always remembering that *obedience to the WILL of the MAJORITY*, constitutes its bright-

est feature ;—and as your truly noble predecessors sealed our liberty with their blood, let us guard it as the Roman Vestals did the sacred fire, and hand down to our posterity the inestimable deposit.

But, hark ! the pleasing sounds of heavenly union strike the ear !—MASSACHUSETTS awakes ! and again rises in her might ! She will no longer be governed by an *Essex Junto* ! No longer will she suffer her great weight to be placed in the scale of hostility to the federal government, but by one *mighty effort*, has *flung* the *Caitiff Toryism* to the ground.

Art thou awake, England ?---or drest thou, France ! to conquer us ? Go, call to your minions here for aid, and see if they will come when you do call ?—

No, by the *Manes* of the *Mighty* fallen in battle in their country's cause ! By the *Shades* of the venerable Men who have since descended to the silent tomb ! By the *just Renown* of the few Survivors who yet adorn our land ; let us **SWEAR**, that we will **SUPPORT OUR GOVERNMENT**, and hand down, unimpaired, to posterity, **OUR RIGHTS---OUR LIBERTIES**, and **OUR SACRED INDEPENDENCE !!!**