

*Chas. Harard Esq.*  
*from the Au*

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# ORATION,

PRONOUNCED IN THE BRICK  
MEETING-HOUSE, IN THE  
CITY OF NEW-HAVEN, ON THE  
FOURTH OF JULY, A. D. 1787.

I T B E I N G

THE ELEVENTH AN-  
NIVERSARY OF THE  
INDEPENDENCE OF  
THE UNITED STATES  
OF AMERICA.

By DAVID DAGGETT, ESQUIRE,  
ATTORNEY AT LAW.

*Per aspera ad astra.*

NEW-HAVEN,

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At a Meeting of a very large Number of  
Gentlemen, at the State-House, in New-  
Haven, on the 4<sup>th</sup>. Day of July, A. D.  
1787.

**V**OTED, *That the Thanks of the Gentlemen  
present, be presented to DAVID DAGGETT,  
Esquire, for the very instructive and elegant Orati-  
on, with which he was pleased, this Day, to honor  
the public celebration of the anniversary of the IN-  
DEPENDENCE of the UNITED STATES of AMERI-  
CA ; and that the Committee appointed to superin-  
tend and conduct the Ceremonials of the Celebration,  
request Mr. DAGGETT to favour them with a  
Copy thereof, for publication.*

ELIAS SHIPMAN,  
PIERPONT EDWARDS,  
RUSSEL CLARK,  
SAMUEL RUSSEL,  
TIMOTHY PHELPS,

} Committee.

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**T**HIS day completes eleven years since these United States became a free, sovereign and independent empire. This event, much conducted to the accomplishment of a revolution, which has been the favourite theme of the poet, the historian and the orator, and the admiration of surrounding nations.—In consequence of this, it has been predicted of America, that she would be the asylum for the oppressed, the seat of literature, and a theatre on which there would be the most illustrious displays of civil and religious liberty.

While with a prophetic eye, we could behold these things—how easy to write, how easy to speak, in the most elevated strains, in the celebration of the anniversary of American Independence : But unhappily for him, who is requested to speak on this day, those brilliant scenes are not yet realized, but are intercepted by an almost impenetrable gloom. And, though for myself, I believe God has designed this empire to be the most illustrious on earth, yet from present appearances, and in the eye of reason, the thought appears rather romantic.—

In describing what America was, and what she now is, you will witness for me, or against me, that I speak with truth, or misrepresent.—  
In describing what she will be, in future, you will permit me to range uncontrouled, and conjecture for myself.

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The discovery and first settlement of this country, are known to every one.—Observations on these subjects, would afford little entertainment; yet let it be remembered, that even in this early period of our existence, we exhibited some specimens of that fraud and injustice which has been too conspicuous ever since.—I mean in forcibly or fraudulently depriving the natives of their possessions.—We may now hug ourselves in the peaceable enjoyment of what descended to us from generation to generation, without enquiring into the validity of our title; but it is happy for us, that the denunciation of heaven, which says, “Curled is the man that removeth his neighbours land-mark,” has not also descended.—In general, our ancestors were simple in their dress, diet, and equipage—submissive to government, and religious, even to superstition. They were scrupulously punctilious in observing the duties of morality; yet, thro’ their great zeal, in many instances, carried into the most gross absurdities. As literature began to flourish, and commerce extend itself, luxury and its attending evils necessarily prevailed.—From our primæval simplicity of manners, we soon degenerated into that licentiousness which is ever to be found among the more polished parts of the world, and at the commencement of the late war, tho’ not as yet hackneyed in the ways of vice, we were by no means signalized for that sacred veneration for religion and the social virtues, which was so conspicuous a century or two before.—A happy people indeed we ought to have been, for our situation was, in many respects, truly eligible.—Now we look back, and speak of those glorious  
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days, which we saw antecedent to the war, and regret that they are fled.—We call it an age of liberty—of religion—of happiness—We compare it with the present, and pretend the deepest sorrow at the comparison.—But in thus speaking, in thus thinking, we exhibit a striking specimen of human weakness. The truth is, we were then far from being happy.—The same direful complaints were then heard from the farmer, the merchant, and the various other professions.—Our fields, in their estimation, were then laid waste, with the destroying insect, a drought or a flood.—Our navigation was fettered by foreign nations, or destroyed by hurricanes, and our political fabric tumbling from the corruption of its members. Could we, as a nation, like Proteus, assume a thousand different shapes, still a spirit of restlessness, and complaint would prevail. In extolling the early periods of our existence, as a people, we much resemble an individual, who is continually passing encomiums upon the days of his youth.—Nothing is more common, than to hear men say, “the happiest days I ever spent, were when a child.” This is to be ascribed to a passion we all possess, for being in some other situation than that in which we are.—

It is however to be conceded, that before the revolution, our circumstances were in various respects preferable to what they are at present. Our public character was much less tarnished—fraud was not then taught as a science, nor exhibited by our legislative bodies for the imitation of individuals. It only lurked in bye places—its influence being checked by a majority of the members



bers of the community.—Our government was then much more efficient and energetic.—We are told of the great liberty we enjoyed. Liberty it indeed was, but we were wise enough to distinguish between liberty and licentiousness. This state, and many others, were under a most perfect aristocracy.—The name truly we disowned, yet quietly submitted to a government essentially aristocratic.—

The minister, with two or three principal characters were supreme in each town.—Hence the body of the clergy, with a few families of distinction, between whom there was ever a most intimate connection, in effect, ruled the whole state. The loss of this happy influence of the clergy, in this country, is deeply to be regretted, and is to be ascribed to two causes—the increase of knowledge, and growing opposition to religion.—Knowledge has induced the laity to think and act for themselves, and an opposition to religion has curtailed the power of its supporters.

Thus we were, when the vile acts of legislation in a mother country reduced us at once to the dire alternative of tamely submitting to abject servitude, or commencing a war with one of the most potent empires of the world. The spirit of an American was too great to brook the former, tho' scarcely equal to attempt the latter. Petitions were preferred—and in the stile of supplicants, we earnestly solicited an enjoyment of those rights and privileges to which, on the principles of righteousness, we were entitled. But our adversaries, self-sufficient, and goaded on by an unappeasable thirst for dominion, were disposed

posed to decide the unhappy controversy only by the sword.—At this time too, many of our sages in the cabinet, doubtful of the apparently unequal combat, deserted us.

Look back, my friends, and ask, Was not the attempt presumptuous, beyond comparison? We, few in numbers, undisciplined in the field, and destitute of naval armaments, nobly dared to encounter a nation, whose arms had been the terror of Europe, and who, according to their own ideas, could crush us at a single stroke.

In taking a retrospective view of our situation, we can but stand amazed that despair did not divert us of our native fortitude, and render us easy victims to our assailants. Yet, by a kind of enthusiasm totally unprecedented, and equally inexplicable, we made an opposition formidable to our enemies, animating to the votaries of American liberty and astonishing to the world.—We were favoured with a happy union of wisdom and valour, in the cabinet and field, beyond what the warmest imagination could have suggested. In the midst of these brilliant achievements, however, we pursued a line of conduct towards those who thought differently from us, altogether inexcusable. It is futile to ascribe such acts of rigor as were then committed, to that patriotism which so justly marked this period. To say that we were so surprisingly virtuous, as to become vicious, is a finished absurdity. Honesty will fix it as a blemish upon our political escutcheon.

At length, on the 4th day of July, 1776, we  
 “ absolved



“ absolved the political bands, which had connected us with Great Britain, and assumed among the nations of the earth, that separate and equal station to which the laws of nature, and nature's God intitled us.” We declared ourselves **FREE** and **INDEPENDENT** states.

This declaration was made by as illustrious a body of men as ever graced the councils of America.—Examine the reasons which they urge for their conduct—see the singular firmness which they exhibit—Behold the peculiar solemnity of expression, and hear the undaunted appeals to heaven, in vindication of this transaction, and say was it not nobly done ?—Had we been at that instant destroyed as an empire, was it not nobly done ? But from that instant we succeeded in accomplishing a most glorious revolution, and was it not nobly done ?—

This event, if wisely improved, might have been of singular advantage to these states.—A nation, like an individual, while dependent, will forever be confined in its operations. No real incentives to great exertions, and strangers to enterprize, they drag heavily along, contented with a state of mediocrity. But the moment they assume a character for themselves, their mode of thinking and acting is changed : they feel an importance, which to support and dignify, will call forth all their dormant powers.

The independence of any people opens a field for great improvements ;—it erects a theatre on which men of abilities may display their talents with applause. Thus many, who otherwise, never



ver would have been noticed in the mass of mankind, are induced by a laudable ambition, to become eminently distinguished. An event of this nature, lays a foundation for a successful cultivation of the arts and sciences—for numberless improvements in agriculture, commerce and legislation, and for arriving to the summit of national importance.

It cannot admit of a doubt, that many individuals, of the first natural genius, have lived and died unnoticed, merely thro' want of opportunity, to exhibit their true characters. Why not many communities from the same cause? Yet, as many a giddy youth has embarked too early in life, and taken the helm before his prudence was sufficient to guide him, and finally been destroyed on some fatal rock:—Such we have just grounds to apprehend will be our fate, thro' our independence.

This event took place when the attention of every man was turned towards the war, in which we were engaged. It would have been madness then, to have thought of regulating our internal concerns, to the neglect of a far more important object; and yet it was destruction to omit them. And when our struggle was finally crowned with victory—a victory far exceeding our most sanguine expectations; we, elated with success, falsely imagined, our peace and prosperity permanently secured. We flattered ourselves that independence was liberty---was affluence---was government---was every thing---It did not occur to us that *then* was the *only* time for rendering our acquisitions permanently advantageous. Argu-  
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ing thus, we have become independent of almost every thing, and have only to solace ourselves in that independence.

It should have been a primary object with us, to raise a revenue adequate to the exigencies of our government. Congress aware of this, and seeing the exhausted state of our treasuries, and yet fearful of checking the industry of the agricultural part of our community by a land-tax, at an early period recommended an impost. A most wise and salutary measure, beyond a question! Some of the states thro' ignorance of its tendency, and others from motives of self-interest, refused a compliance.---Rhode-Island, as a specimen of what she could do, and a prelude of greater things yet to come, opposed the measure. New-York is still in the opposition.---Here congress in this politic, in this laudable attempt to extricate us from debt, and rescue us from that ingratitude, that dishonesty with which we now stand chargeable, were entirely frustrated.---Here too how apparent is the inefficiency of our federal government!—What an absurdity in politics!—We vest congress with a power of making war, and of concluding peace, and acting as our fœderal head in every respect, and yet deny them the means of discharging their sacred obligations.—The reason is obvious; our governments were formed when the name of power was terrible to us.—The people had been taught, that *vox populi est vox dei*, and that all power originated in them; and practising on those ideas, cautiously avoided delegating enough to the supreme authority to enable them to exist in that capaci-



ty, and yet, strange to tell! when this truth is become as evident as that two and two make four, and when we have already felt the unhappy consequences of it, in an eminent degree, our legislative bodies are still wishing to curtail the powers of congress, and make them more complete in insignificance!—Thus, by rendering the grand council of these independent states the most dependent body in the universe, we are totally incapacitated to improve those advantages which resulted from our separate state of existence.—But we cannot expect national prosperity, so long as fraud and injustice are supported by the sanction of public bodies.—God forbid, that this charge should be applicable to all the legislatures of the states!—I shall only take the liberty of stating facts, and conscience will take the liberty of making the application.

It is an agreed point, that the officers and soldiers of the late army, justly merited the applauses, gratitude, and generous reward of their country. Their bravery was indeed applauded, and some of us possessed grateful hearts towards them:—But did we give them that ample recompence which their noble services deserved?—Justice says, no—honor and honesty say, no—and nothing strange, if the ghosts of those departed heroes, who fell gloriously in the cause of liberty, the cries and distresses of whose helpless children, and disconsolate widows, have already entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, should arise, and also say, no.—We may plead our poverty, we may attempt an extenuation of our conduct, but the fact stands recorded against us, in the register of our national iniquities.—Our refusing, or neglecting to pay  
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the public securities, according to their nominal value, is impiously unjust. The great argument for annihilating or scaling those securities, is, that they have been exchanged at a discount of 50 or 75 per cent.—I ask, does this circumstance invalidate the obligation on the part of government? A full consideration has been received—a solemn promise has been made—a sacred obligation has been executed—Has this obligation been cancelled?—Has the other party consented to any alteration from the original stipulation? No---Then the public are bound to pay it to the uttermost farthing; unless independence has inverted all our ideas of contracts—unless justice, when applied to fifty, a hundred, or a nation, and when applied to an individual, is essentially different. People, however, never will be reasoned out of this idea, for they never reasoned themselves into it. It was “conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity.” If we have any regard to morality or religion, we never shall, by a stretch of unwarrantable power, nullify past contracts.---Should I ever see such manifest iniquity practised so openly, I should consider the nation on the verge of destruction.---How could we expect honesty among individuals, if fraud were thus sanctified by those who ought to be patterns of all that is worthy of imitation! And yet, is not this the case?---is not a procrastination of payment---is not a neglect in attempting to pay what is due, as dishonest as refusing to pay at all; and are we not chargeable with both?—

And yet, by no means would I wish to see the poor oppressed, or industry checked. If our inability prevent at present, let us exhibit a disposition



position of honesty, and our creditors will patiently wait.---If, however, there is not a sufficiency of property in the country, I would project a plan to acquire it.---Let us repeal all the laws against the African slave trade, and undertake the truly benevolent and humane merchandize of importing Negroes to christianize them. This has been practised by individuals among us, and they have found it a lucrative branch of business. Let us then make a national matter of it.---We should have the sublime satisfaction of enriching ourselves, and at the same time rendering happy, thousands of those blacks, by instructing them in the ways of religion.---This would be no innovation.---This country permitted it for many years, among their other acts of justice; but their refusing to pay sacred and solemn obligations, is not of so long a standing.

The war from which we have so lately been extricated, also, necessarily brought on a long train of evils. It vitiated the morals of the people at large.---It destroyed that virtue which is so essentially necessary to a popular government.---It introduced luxury, that bane of civil society.---It drained us of our wealth, and left us as some convulsive and racking malady frequently leaves the human constitution.

Many thousands of our inhabitants had been employed in the various departments of the army and navy—some indeed returned to plentiful fortunes—some to peaceful industry.—Yet, many, destitute of property, and the means of acquiring it, could only think of supporting themselves by the sweat of the brow.—This idea was intolerable.

able.—It led them to despise their country, dispossessed them of their patriotic sentiments, and fitted them to sow the seeds of civil discord ;---others had thro' the war, aggrandized themselves by the fluctuating state of property, and rioted upon fortunes acquired by a single exertion, or a fortuitous concurrence of circumstances.—These soon found the scene changed, and that an industrious pursuit of some constant employment would alone support them. This they could not submit to, and ascribed the declension of their fortunes to the badness of the times, scarcity of cash, and a thousand other causes.

The alarming state of our finances, compelled the legislature to lay heavy taxes.---This caused the most bitter complaints.---They parted with their property with the utmost reluctance. Is this liberty—is this independence, say they—How preferable the years of 1772 or 73!---We were told during the struggle for freedom, of happy days--of a quiet enjoyment of our possessions--of “ sitting under our own vines and fig-trees—But how different the situation !—

Thus have arisen contentions and civil discord in almost every state in the union.---Massachusetts has long been torn with intestine factions, and their government almost prostrated by a despicable banditti. This state has not yet experienced a civil war.---We are, however, very contented, while New-York is rioting on thousands, annually drained from our coffers.--Rhode-Island has acted a part, which would cause the savages of the wilderness to blush.---Fraud and injustice there, stalk openly.---Nay, they enter their legislative



lative bodies, and are there fondly fostered and cherished.---Witness their whole system of public proceedings for twelve months past.---That little state is an unruly member of the political body, and is a reproach and bye-word among all her acquaintance.

In short, the whole nation is now languishing under all those evils which have originated in consequence of systems of wretched policy---flagrant acts of injustice, and an impoverishing war.---The whole political frame is convulsed and threatened, from external attacks, and its own natural imbecility, with an immediate dissolution.

The eyes of all Europe are fixed upon us.---Their writers and orators, who extolled our success, and predicted our future greatness, now laugh at our folly---burlesque our policy, and condemn our dishonesty. They respect us for what we have been---admire us for what we might be, but despise us for what we are.

A Shays, an ignoble contemptible Shays, without abilities, without influence, has, for a while, prostrated government, in the three western counties of Massachusetts. And what if a greater than Shays, a CROMWELL or a CÆSAR should arise ;--where are our bulwarks against the attack? If we look up to congress, they are chained and fettered in impotency.---If to foreign nations---they will retort with propriety, Where is your gratitude, for past favours, and your recompence for past services?---Where is your faith and honor in discharging obligations for money generously loaned you when in the deepest distress?---  
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If we invoke the assistance of our countrymen, we shall call in vain.---Patriotism is fled.---The days of 1775, we cannot recall.---We cannot inspire our citizens with that disinterested love of their country, which caused them to encounter imprisonment,---exile,---slavery and death.---If we appeal to heaven---the cries of the widow and orphan, whom we have wickedly robbed, have already entered there, and called for vengeance! Will not then the righteous Lord, who loveth righteousness, “laugh at our calamity, and mock when our fear cometh?”---Shall then some insinuating courtier, or some formidable desperado, blast the hopes of this young empire? Shall they here erect a tyranny or a despotism more to be dreaded than death, in her most hideous forms? Was it for this, COLUMBUS to explore this new world, surmounted every obstacle,---braved death, in ten thousand different shapes, and finally expired in reproach and contempt? Was it for this, our venerable ancestors left their native country, and in defiance of millions of savages, and in hazard of every earthly pleasure, in a desert wilderness, layed the foundation of this empire? Was it for this, the brave sons of Mars, made that memorable opposition to our assailants, at Lexington? Was it for this, the immortal WASHINGTON quitted the enchating scenes of domestic felicity and by a series of military achievements, equal to those of any hero of ancient or modern days, rescued us from that destruction with which we were threatened? Was it for this, that the brave, the heroic MONTGOMERY, nobly fell a martyr to liberty, before the walls of Quebec? Was it for this, that illustrious BODY OF SAGES,



at Philadelphia, in defiance of British menaces, declared us INDEPENDENT, and nobly fixed their names to the declaration? Was it for this, we exulted in the reduction of Burgoyne and Cornwallis, those signal victories, which prostrated the exalted hopes of our haughty foes? Was it for this, we saw thousands of our youth, the hopes of their parents and their country, boldly embrace death? Was it for this, we saw whole villages sacked, beautiful towns laid in ashes, and almost whole states depopulated? Was it for this, we waded thro' seas of blood, to establish ourselves in that peace, and independence which promised us lasting honor and immortal felicity? Was all this done, I say, were we thus elevated to a summit of glory, which was the envy of all the empires of the world, only that we might exhibit a more complete scene of wretchedness and misery, and finally sink deeper in infamy and contempt? Forbid it heaven! Forbid it, oh my country!

From this melancholy picture of our political affairs, let us turn aside, and enquire, if there is not ample ground for joy and festivity, even on *this* day.--We have heretofore seen many gloomy days.---Our ears have heard the din of war, and found of arms.--Ye parents, how often have your tender children been wrested from you, and exposed to death in the field of battle!--How often have we in this city, been filled with dismay, at the approach of our merciless adversaries! Do you recollect, my fellow citizens, the memorable 5th of July 1779, when the British troops made a descent on this beautiful town?---Did the bells ever convey such melancholy tidings, as when they rang the alarm of that inauspicious morning?---

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Did the thunder of cannon ever appear with such awful solemnity?--Do you recollect the confusion which every where appeared?--Do you recollect seeing here and there, a weeping mother, with her dishevelled locks, wringing her hands, and enquiring with anxious solicitude, for the partner of her bosom, or the dear son of her delight?--Do you recollect, you, who boldly went forth to oppose the enemy, with what heart-felt anxiety you looked back upon your peaceful habitations, your tender children, and your fond wives---doubtful whether you should ever return to them? And ye, my venerable fathers, do you recollect how you beheld your numerous progeny, and with parental fondness wept over them?--There the unrelenting foe, with more than hellish malice, assaulted a venerable, a respectable old man, plunged a poignant dagger in his body, and left him languishing, and languishing he died!--Here one of your neighbours was in a moment struck dead!--and yonder you saw one, whom you had long known, weltering in his blood, till his agonizing struggles had stretched him a breathless corps!--Such scenes we have beheld, and such have been realized in many other towns.---Nay, how often have these states been on the verge of destruction! Yet we have risen superior to all these embarrassments!--We have once beheld ourselves the conquerors of a most powerful kingdom! Has not then America ever been the peculiar favourite of heaven?--and may we not, by an alliance in the same protecting hand, still be a happy people?---We have an extensive country, which embosoms an unfailing source of wealth. We have a climate peculiarly salubrious, and admirably



mirably calculated to the rapid population of our territory.---We have men, justly signalized for their literary, political and theological knowledge. The arts and sciences have here made a most surprising progress.---Their votaries and patrons are numerous.---Great encouragements are given to improvements in agriculture and manufactures, those sure mines of riches.---It affords the highest pleasure to the friends of these states, that at this alarming crisis, industry is so visible.—It was urged not long ago, by many, that so long as we could purchase foreign commodities, cheaper than we could make them, we might neglect manufactures; but the absurdity of this idea is too apparent to need an illustration.---By importing the articles of our own consumption, we at the same time put an effectual check upon industry, and drain ourselves of cash.---Manufactures however, have certainly become an object of much more attention than three years ago; and if I am rightly informed, in this state, and many others of the union, the earth never wore so many marks of cultivation, as at present.---Sad experience has convicted us of this truth, that the sources whence we must derive our affluence, are within our own country.

OEconomy in our domestic concerns, must be considered as an important matter. The community is composed of individuals--by their joint exertions it is maintained.

These objects should claim the particular attention of the ladies. You, my *fair friends*, are possessed of a kind of magical influence over the other sex. Let those who are so very complaisant as to wait on you in the morning, and enquire with earnest solicitude

licitude after your health, find you employed in graceful industry, and they will go and do likewise--they will call at a more leisure hour.—You can establish fashions, or destroy them, by a single smile or a frown. It is with you to promote œconomy and industry, or luxury and extravagance at your pleasure.—By attending to the former, you will yield an essential service to your country—by doing the latter--you will become partners in the guilt incurred by its destruction.—You will not hesitate to exert yourselves, for the happiness of an empire which owes its existence to one of your sisters.—It was thro' the influence, the generous influence of ISABELLA, queen of Spain, that America was ever discovered.---You will feel a peculiar pleasure in cherishing and fostering the child of so memorable a female personage.

That fire of patriotisim, so necessary for the accomplishment of worthy and illustrious actions, must reanimate our breasts.—While the interests of our country are secondary objects with us, our exertions for its welfare, will be feeble and fruitless.—If we have a fortune in view—If we are in the pursuit of the gratification of some favorite passion, our whole soul is engaged---the springs of action are all in motion, and the whole man appears.—But we have acquisitions worth ten thousand fortunes to protect,--we have the interests of millions to secure.—We have an empire to rescue from approaching dissolution; and can we be unconcerned? Can we be inactive?

Our national character must be freed from that reproach with which it stands justly charged. Faith and honor will sufficiently arm us against every em-



embarrassment arising from poverty.---If a man once establishes a character for integrity, he remains unshaken tho' misfortune takes him for her own.---His reputation is an exhaustless fortune.---The same observation will equally well apply to states or kingdoms.---Great-Britain cannot pay half her debts in cash ; yet she has a credit sufficient to discharge the whole.---

We must consent to a change of government.---Whether this change shall be partial or general, is not for me to say.---A more energetic, a more coercive power than at present is felt, must be vested in some public body.---This matter is submitted to a convention of the states, now sitting at Philadelphia. The unanimity of the states, in choosing delegates to this convention, is a forcible argument of the full conviction that the people feel of the weakness of the present system.---This measure has justly exalted the hopes of every patriot.---A measure from which we have nothing to fear, but every thing to hope.---At their head, sits the illustrious WASHINGTON, in description of whose finished and complete character, language fails.---There is FRANKLIN, whose penetrating mind, looks thro' all the works of nature.---There are GERRY, SHERMAN, MORRIS, CLYMER, WILSON, READ and WYTHE, who made a declaration of that independence which we this day celebrate, and whose fame is coeval with our national importance.---Why need I particularize any ?---Such a band of venerable personages, baffle all description !---Yet I must not omit to congratulate Connecticut on the happy choice of her members.---This state can boast of many worthy characters, and we are peculiarly

ly happy in our representation in this great council of the states.

There is the collected wisdom of the community.—There is virtue enough to incline them, and knowledge enough to direct them to adopt a system calculated to make us a happy people.—Could we once see a government firmly established over us, which should adapt itself to the genius, manners, customs and peculiar situation of this country, we might bid defiance to the malice of our enemies!—It is impossible for societies to exist without an energetic, coercive power; and the same principle which induced men, while in a state of nature, to enter into compacts, will soon compel these states to a change of government.—Shall we then suffer this change to be effected by our fellow citizens, by those who are with us, to enjoy the felicity of a well regulated society, or with us to experience the horrors of anarchy? Or shall we submit this alteration to capricious fortune?—We cannot hesitate in determining this question, unless we are stupidly inattentive to our own happiness, and criminally negligent of the interests of unborn millions.

Whether we of this age shall see the present commotions quelled--the present discordant sentiments and interests reconciled, and peace and tranquility established, I do not pretend to say.-- Yet the whole history of this country destines it for future greatness.—Nay, at this period, is there any part of the world where happiness is so generally diffused as in these states?—We have wantonly sported with privileges of inestimable value—we have richly deserved every national calamity, and our  
political



political affairs wear a gloomy aspect.—Yet point me to a spot on this globe, where the whole body of the people enjoy so much prosperity as the inhabitants of this empire!—England may justly pride herself upon a most excellent constitution; we may also hear of the parade, brilliancy, and grandeur of her nobility: But where is that equal distribution of property, and that general diffusion of knowledge which so effectually prevent oppression and slavery? The plodding industry of Holland, secures them a reputable station among the European nations; while the French are justly admired for that politeness of manners, and brilliancy of genius which is so characteristic of them. Indolence and haughtiness are cardinal virtues in Spain; and misery and wretchedness are picturesque of Ireland.—Look through all Europe, which is justly called the most civilized part of the world, and where is the kingdom whose situation we ought to envy?—But extend your views to the wilds of Africa—there behold millions of savages, who only vegetate—plunged in ignorance and barbarity— sunk in the most abject servitude, they apparently exist but to be miserable.—Traverse the immense region of Asia—see the pomp of an Asiatic despot—see him sporting with the liberties and lives of his subjects—a stranger to every tender feeling of the soul—he only lives to exhibit the wickedness of his nature.—There is a quarter of the world, which contains five hundred millions of inhabitants. Asia, tho' once the nurse of the world—tho' it contained the garden of Eden, and tho' there were the most magnificent displays of divine wisdom, is now buried in luxury—in the most gross superstition

stitution and idolatry.—The fragrancy of their spices, their costly gems and the magnificence of their monarchs, scarcely deserve to be noticed, when we contemplate five hundred millions of immortal minds uncultivated, depressed and enervated; yet capable of ceaseless expansion; capable of successive improvements in felicity thro' millions of ages!—

If then, as a nation, we are so eminently distinguished—if nature has been so peculiarly lavish in bestowing her gifts upon us; with what elevation of mind ought we to reflect on that important transaction, by which we become an **INDEPENDENT EMPIRE**!—

This event, and the subsequent revolution, have already disseminated much useful knowledge thro' the world.—Hence have originated just ideas respecting the rights of human nature; the ignorance of which, hitherto, has enslaved three quarters of mankind.—Our independence, if rightly improved, will afford much felicity to individuals, and greatly dignify this young empire.—Millions yet unborn, shall celebrate this event.—The pleasing story shall be handed down from generation to generation, and future ages shall rise up, and for this transaction, call us blessed. In view of such a glorious revolution as we have accomplished—in view of such a valuable country as we possess—in view of such scenes of magnificence as may hereafter be realized, and of such happiness as we now enjoy, let us unite in the innocent festivity of this day:—Let us cordially join in all laudable exertions for the glory of America, and in love and gratitude to HIM, who is the source of all felicity.

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