

*Charles B. Brown
from his private N.*

AN

ORATION,

PRONOUNCED

July 4, 1805,

AT THE REQUEST

OF THE

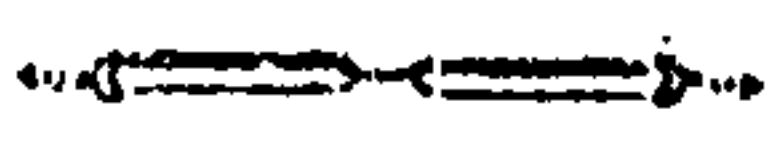
INHABITANTS

OF THE

TOWN OF BOSTON,

IN COMMEMORATION OF

American Independence.



BY WARREN DUTTON,



A. Newell, Printer, Devonshire Street.

VOTE OF THE TOWN.

AT a Meeting of the freeholders and other inhabitants of the town of Boston, duly qualified and legally warned in public town-meeting, assembled at Faneuil-Hall, the 4th day of July, A. D. 1805,

On motion, Voted, That the Selectmen be, and hereby are appointed a Committee to wait on WARREN DUTTON, Esq. in the name of the town, and thank him for the elegant and spirited Oration, this day delivered by him, at the request of the town, upon the Anniversary of the Independence of the United States of America; in which, according to the institution of the town, he considered the feelings, manners, and principles, which led to the great national event; and to request of him a copy for the press.

ATTEST—WILLIAM COOPER, Town-Clerk.

BOSTON, JULY 5th, 1805.

Gentlemen,

I resign, without apology, to your request, what invariable custom will not permit me to refuse.

With sentiments of respect and consideration,

your obedient humble servant,

WARREN DUTTON.

THE SELECTMEN OF BOSTON.

AN
ORATION.

GRATITUDE to those, who have conferred important benefits, is no less a duty, than a sentiment of the heart. While we dwell on the remembrance of their labours, their sufferings, their wisdom, and their valour; while the evidence of these is found in all we see, feel, and enjoy, we should likewise remember, that it is our sacred duty, as well as our interest, to preserve with care what has been given, in charge to our virtue.

The return of this day awakens a train of reflections, embracing all that is great or interesting in the condition and fate of men. If we look back upon the history of a few years, we find it crowded with those great events, which cast a glory upon the character of nations, and justly make men proud of their country; but when we look forward, the fear of what may come hereafter, throws an anxiety over the prospect, and creates a solicitude for the security of the blessings we inherit. The apprehension of losing them makes us feel their value. We look at the perils, which beset us, we examine the evils which

threaten us, not to furnish reasons for indolence, or excuses for despondency ; but to find out the means of controuling or subduing their force. A disposition to face these dangers, to explore the nature and tendency of these evils, carries healing remedies with it, by creating the resources, and exciting the virtues we need. In this way, we may make daily offerings of gratitude to the illustrious Fathers of our country ; and by our labours to preserve and transmit the inheritance, make their principles immortal. Leaving then to faithful history, the care of their achievements, in the cabinet and in the field ; I will attempt the less pleasing task of pointing out some of those evils, to which our systems are exposed, in the full belief, that to be convinced of the danger, is the best preparation for resistance.

Our government is so much founded in opinion, that errors in speculation will frequently produce practical mischiefs. Hence the importance of correct notions, and the utility of exposing prevailing and popular errors. Because the people of these states are enlightened, they have been told, that they are all intelligence ; because they are virtuous, they have been taught, that they have no vices. But while it is said with honest pride, that no people ever existed, whose habits, manners, and opinions could give such powerful aids to a free government ; it ought to be said with equal sincerity, that they are subject to like passions with other men. They consist of the rich and the poor, the simple, and the wise, the idle and the industrious, the virtuous and the depraved. They have prejudices, which are strong in proportion as they are unreasonable ; they have vanity, which may be flattered, and passions which can be excited. They are impatient of restraints, when they are felt ; they are credulous, of course, the prey of impostors, liable to sudden impulses, blind in their zeal, and violent in

their resentments. These all belong to human nature, and philosophy has not yet found out their cure ; till it does, governments must be suited to men as they are.

Recently escaped from the grasp of arbitrary power, and still smarting with the pain, the people of this country behold no dangers but in the form of monarchy. The prevailing sentiment is, that the people cannot have too much power, nor the government too little. While it is uncontrouled in their own hands, it is harmless, and becomes terrible only when exercised in the form of regular authority. Government is regarded as a matter of convenience, rather than necessity ; and as there is little need of any, it may be changed or new modelled without hazard. A revolution, therefore, carries no terrors with it, because it is considered as an experiment, which, like a prescription in medicine, may be safely tried till it succeeds. Such opinions are natural, as they are founded in a just abhorrence of despotism ; they are dangerous because they are extreme, and blind us to the approach of evils, more palpable, and nearer home.

Another popular error connected with this is, that the power of the people is their liberty, or that whatever they can do, they have a right to do. It is true, that every man has a right, by honesty industry, to grow as rich or as learned as his neighbour ; but every man has not the disposition or ability. Hence real distinctions will exist, which are entitled to equal protection ; but indolence and vice say, are not all men equal, and are we not poor ? The member of Congress from Pennsylvania, in his late address to his constituents, observes, that he has now returned to his plough, and shall use his best endeavours to prevent all rich men, and men of talents from being elected to office. If such sentiments prevail, neither the rich nor the wise can long hope to

remain in peaceful obscurity ; the property of the one will be confiscated, and the other driven into exile. The opinion is not new ; but not the less dangerous for that reason. It is in the very spirit of Jack Cade's project for reformation, of agrarian laws, and national decrees.

Liberty is not the creature of a day, nor can it be secured by merely making a new Constitution, or altering an old one. It is to the political body what health is to the natural ; the effect of a well adjusted system. It is the result of the moral sense or religious conscience of men, operating upon their thoughts and desires ; of known laws wisely made, and administered uniformly, without fear or partiality, supported in the last resort by the arm of government. Factions will exist, lawful authority will be resisted ; there must then be a power, which can be relied upon for the protection of rights, the suppression of insurrections, and the resistance of popular delusion. This security, without which there can be no liberty, ought not to rest upon the influence or popularity of any one man, however great or good.

The demagogue who collects five hundred followers, by abusing their credulity, or feeding their vanity, is to the extent of his power, a despot. It is true, he is satisfied with the name of servant, and leaves to them all the titles of sovereignty ; still he is the rival of the government, issues his orders like a chieftain, and receives an obedience as prompt as it is blind. If he seeks office, his followers are immediately put to their tasks. One is employed to blazon his supposed virtues, another to rub out the spots in his reputation. He is soon fitted and furnished to his station, and must preserve it, by the same means, he used to acquire it. He is therefore, a demagogue in office, more dangerous than before, in proportion as the empire of hypocrisy is enlarged,

and the means of spreading popular delusions multiplied. He opens his great ware-house of corruption where reputation is bought and sold, and thankfully receives the offerings of the pillory and the jail. He becomes of course, hostile to all subordination and just authority ; the enemy of that liberty, which permits every man to sit under his own vine and fig-tree, without fear of molestation.

Such is the tremendous difference between democracy and republicanism.

The abuse of language, or the substitution of names for realities, is one of the most successful instruments ever wielded in the demolition of governments. We must never forget, says MIRABEAU, the ablest of the revolutionary leaders, that words are things ; and surely it can never be forgotten, while memory holds her seat, or history is faithful to her charge. If experience made the world wiser, it might be useful to compile a dictionary, containing a number of words and phrases, with the revolutionary explanations, designed particularly for the use of free governments. Opening this book, and looking at the word "*economy*," we might read this explanation. A word used by demagogues in and out of office, to delude the multitude ; the art of growing rich without revenue, and strong without force,—also the maintenance of courts without judges ; the science of preventing war by tameness and submission, or a willingness to pay for what is one's own, provided the expense of fighting for it can be saved ; in fine, a disposition to save every thing but which is worth saving, or the exchange of national honour for immeasurable tracts of wilderness. "*Political toleration*," or equal and exact justice to all men ;—a phrase often used by men new in office, to gain the confidence of the credulous, and dissipate the fears of those, who can be made easy by their hopes—also the punishment of political her-

ely. "*Aristocrat*" or "*Federalist*," a term of reproach, applied to the ablest and most virtuous men of a country to render them unpopular. "*Independent Judiciary*" a phrase not to be found in this dictionary.

In popular governments such abuses will exist, in spite of all the power of argument, or the light of evidence. Indeed they are far beyond the reach or influence of either; for nothing is so hard as to reason a man out of what he was never reasoned into, or persuade him to look at evidence, when he has previously determined not to open his eyes. For such reasons demagogues are for the most part unanswerable. They avoid all explanation, when they wish to excite prejudice and hatred by the application of odious names. A man, whose influence is to be destroyed, is called an aristocrat, or monarchist; and with this application attached to him, he becomes the object of suspicion. The words are not understood in any definite sense, and those who use them, do not intend they shall be; but within their vast inclosure is found whatever is most feared and detested. The fathers of our country, the framers of our constitutions have been accused of a systematic design to destroy the work of their own hands, and erect upon its ruins the proud towers of monarchy. While the government was in their hands, these suggestions were employed to drive them from it; and they are now persisted in, to keep down the influence of their virtues. It is their only sin, and for that reason, they are never to be forgiven. The Athenian, who voted for the banishment of *Aristides* could give no reason, but that he was tired of hearing him called "the just." How then can such accusations be encountered, or with what weapons can such enemies be assailed? Do we say that all the feelings, the prejudices, the manners, habits, political and religious institutions of the

country, aided by its best sense and judgment, are opposed to this system? is it urged, that free governments never can encroach upon the people, through the medium of regular authority, because all its operations are known, watched, and even anticipated? is it declared, that the most hardy of their accusers have never dared to make the charge, where it could be met, and their reputation was staked to support it, by facts or arguments? it is in vain, the cause is lost, because the defence is too complete, and punishment must follow, because it is lost. Who then can eradicate such prejudices, which like the shrubbery on a barren plain defies the ploughshare, and yields nothing to the hand of culture? Who will enter this land of enchantment—this vast empire of nothing, and engage with these fiends of monarchy, who assume all the forms of terror, imagination can lend? Those, who are suffering under the tyranny of this power, who see nothing clearly, except in the twilight, and believe nothing but what is preternatural can find no relief in truth. The actual sufferings of men admit of many alleviations; but those inflicted by the power of fancy, are as incurable as they are intolerable.

It ought never to be forgotten, that popular governments are destroyed by popular means. Political dreamers, who love to inhabit the metaphysical worlds of their own creation, think nothing so unpropitious as stability. Projects of reformation, therefore, and experiments upon man occupy their thoughts, till they behold him issuing from the process, a gorgeous, renovated being, capable of self-government, without prejudices or passions, all light, and all energy. These are a numerous sect, who dislike the old modes of moral and political improvement, by repentance and legal restraint, and find it more convenient to varnish private vices with pub-

lic zeal, to sink secret slander in universal charity, and compensate for individual injustice, by a zealous attachment to the rights of man. Such men are the pioneers of anarchy, who smooth the road for men of less speculation, who having nothing to lose, and much to gain by confusion, pursue the business of plunder and vengeance. The timid and the neutral, who claim protection for their moderation, with the philosophers themselves, whether they yield, or resist are all victims alike ; till at length, these evils find their own sad cure in the authority of one, who must maintain by force what he has acquired by fraud and violence. All history teaches this melancholy truth ; it is a turnpike-road, where every milestone, is the grave stone of some Republic.

On this subject, even in this country experience is now inculcating her lessons. In Pennsylvania, democracy has already made progress enough to teach us wisdom. The project of a convention to new model the Constitution is powerfully supported by certain societies, who style themselves the friends of the people. This is the second class of patriots in that state, as hostile to the first, as both were originally to the Federalists. Governor M'Kean, and his friends, who have taken the less popular name of Constitutionalists, have been six years in office, obtained in the struggle with the Federalists, by arts, which have now "returned to plague the inventors." Then they affected to tremble at the deep-laid schemes of the Federalists ; now they tremble indeed, at the projects of their own pupils, who intend to have some practical benefit of their instructions. They know what this friendship for the people means, and they have more dread of it, than others, for they must be the first objects of its embraces. The weapon of the patriots is reformation. The present Government has too much of restraint

in it ; in some instances, it has kept ignorance and infamy out of office, and used the power of law to punish contempt, offered to the solemn tribunals of justice. For this Judges have been impeached, and the whole system of jurisprudence assailed. The avowed intention of the patriots is to reduce the powers of the executive and Senate ; to make the Judiciary dependent, and of course corrupt, and the popular branch supreme over all. Then frequent elections, universal suffrage, and universal arbitration will introduce the political millenium of Pennsylvania.

It is certain, that among these friends of the people, who now are trampling upon whatever is found in principle, or has been found useful in practice, are included the most ignorant men in the state, as well as the most desperate in fortune and in principle.— Who has ever heard of the talents, the virtues, or public services of the new candidate for the office of Governor ? Yet the fermenting spirit of revolution has thrown him upon the surface soon to disappear again, with the other bubbles of a day. Knowledge, which has been thought one of the pillars of a Republican system, is there treated as a disqualification for office ; and a large proportion of the popular branch is already composed of duly qualified members.

If in the few remarks, I may offer upon the spirit and tendency of the present Administration, I fall into errors ; they will be those of “ opinion and may be safely tolerated, where reason is left free to combat them.”

A quickness to resent, a readiness to redress injuries, or a punctilious regard to national honor is as necessary to preserve the Independence of Republics, as of Monarchies. It is this spirit, which constitutes the cheap defence of nations. It does not reject

all overtures of peace ; it requires nothing but justice, and it secures that, by being always ready to avenge injustice. It is not a quarrelsome spirit, which seeks opportunities of war ; but it keeps in awe such a spirit in other nations. It inspires confidence at home, and respect abroad. It has no partialities, no prejudices ; but is always erect, always dignified.— It is this spirit, so delicate yet so firm in its nature, which wins victories without a combat ; it is a giant always in armour, whom no threats can terrify no force subdue. But if national honor is made the slave of national wealth, and put into the livery of this basest and meanest of masters, it will always be known and treated as a slave. There is an economy, which makes a nation contemptible, without making it rich. The moment it stops to reckon the expence of vindicating its honor, which is always its true interest, it ceases to be free. It afterwards lives upon sufferance and takes as a favor what it ought to demand as a right.

The practice of turning men from office, for difference of opinion, is hostile to any form of free government. To create vacancies for the purpose of filling them with partisans is, to say the least, an abuse of power ; and to reduce men to poverty, who are chargable with no neglect or crime is a violation of the common sense of justice. To remove men, from office distinguished by their virtues, and their services, tends to obliterate, from the public mind, all sense of respect and gratitude ; to fill their places, with men, who have little but their political faith to recommend them, tends to confound all moral distinctions, all sense of merit and demerit.

It is admitted in principle, that the talents and virtues of a country ought to govern it ; but this system discourages the noblest exertions of the one, and tends to suppress the best influences of the other.—

The first magistrate necessarily puts himself at the head of a party, including all those, who expect favor or reward. His personal character becomes the only question of moment to such as are patriots by trade. They well know the condition upon which he will give, and they can receive ; and as their hopes depend on their success in making proselytes, they will be zealous. Such are orators by profession, who understand every thing by instinct, who defy all refutation and confound all sense. Yet such men are all powerful. But there is a class of men of larger views, of some talents and influence, who are stimulated by the hope of great rewards to make great efforts. They have little regard to the man they support ; they would desert him with triumph, and leave him to perish with infamy, to join one more popular or successful. They study his character as they would learn the use of an instrument ; they look to office and power, as the means of profit and revenge. The election of a President, then, will form the pivot on which every thing will turn. It will be felt in every corner of the country, giving new life and new directions to the great mass of corruption in it, till elections become the mere apology of usurpation.

There are other evils of a more threatening nature to be encountered, under the disguise of amendments to the constitution. Those, which have been made, and are already proposed will leave, it is to be feared little of the original frame or policy of the government. The union seems to be melting away, under the fervid influences of the dogstar of political philosophy. Its powers are already so much weakened, as hardly to reach or controul the great bodies in the system. The tendency seems to be towards anarchy in the members, rather than energy in the head.—

Those states, which were always too proud to have an equal, are about to reassume their powers, to make Federal Senators dependent on their will, and abridge the jurisdiction of Federal Courts. The Judiciary which compels the payment of honest debts even to foreigners, the Senate, which forms a check upon popular encroachment, and sometimes resists popular oppression, are a scourge to their pride and ambition no longer to be tolerated. Hence we find that the objections to the adoption of the constitution are renewed in the form of amendments, which in their effect, will introduce all the disorders of the old confederation. The evils, which all federative governments have experienced are likely to be repeated, under the tampering, rash hands of the men now in power. The great, as well as peculiar interests of the eastern states, are treated with the same contempt as their representatives; and although we are sure of our humiliation, we are not so of our protection. Yet surprizing as it may seem; there are men among us natives of New-England, who prefer the chains of an equal to the equality of the constitution.

Such representations are not made in the spirit of despondency, which says that nothing can be done; nor in that of over-cautious prudence, which says that nothing ought to be done; but in the persuasion, that the evils, which threaten the existence of our excellent institutions, are altogether of the popular kind, that they ought to be understood, and can be resisted. Those who will still borrow confidence from their hopes, and believe nothing which requires exertion, must continue in their slumbers, till exertions are useless. They will perceive the mischief when it has happened, and excuse their indolence, by expressions of idle amazement. The timid and the wary, who fear to act, lest they should

be acted upon, who hope to obtain favor for their neutrality will find that the evils of anarchy will fall indiscriminately, like the tornado which tears the oak of an hundred years from its foundations, and despoils the humblest flower of a day.

The present time demands all the talents the virtues and influence of men, who are engaged from principle and interest to support our truly Republican system of State Government. Popular errors should be exposed and misrepresentations corrected, with the same perseverance with which they are made, till truth becomes powerful, by being widely diffused.

Those, who administer our government have nothing to fear from the truth for it is their friend ; and as to the charge of non-conformity, the only one which has been brought against them, we consider it their highest praise, and are still impelled by all our hopes, and by all our fears, to confer honor where honor is due.

It is confidently trusted, that there is a redeeming spirit yet to arise from the sober sense and sound principles of New-England. The tyranny of democracy, though it wears a thousand disguises, will be laid bare to the eye before it is too late to resist ; and call into action all the energies, which resisted it in another shape in the memorable year of seventy-five. Then it was seen in the gigantic form of undisguised power ; now it approaches with smiles, in the light drapery of fancy, suiting its forms and hues, to the endless varieties of human passions.

As an important member of the Union, we ought never to forget, that we must preserve the best system of Government in the world, or submit to one of the worst. Those, who feel an interest in its preservation, united in sentiment, and acting in concert, should cling even to the last falling pillar of the Con-

utation. But we trust that extremes may yet be prevented. Time will be our friend; it will heal the breaches already made, and embody with facts, which all can feel and understand, the principles of a government, necessarily metaphysical. Enough of the work of WASHINGTON and ADAMS will remain to direct us in repairing the shattered structure, and enable us to leave it to those who may come after, established in beauty and order.

Finis.
