

AN

ORATION,

DELIVERED AT THE REQUEST

OF

THE CITIZENS OF DURHAM,

NEW-HAMPSHIRE,

ON THE

FOURTH JULY, 1805;



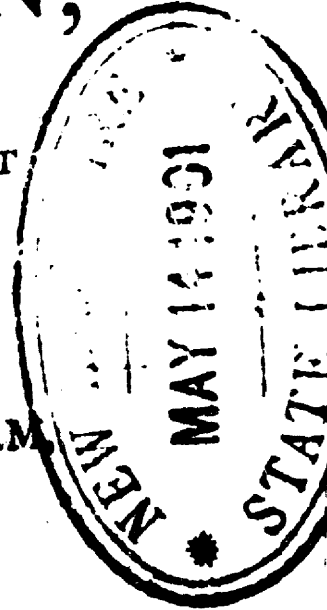
By JOHN FROST.

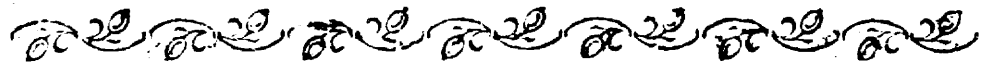
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DURHAM, JULY 4, 1805.

SIR,

I am desired by the Gentlemen in town, who met to celebrate the anniversary of American Independence, to present you their thanks, for your ingenious and patriotic Oration pronounced this day, and solicit a copy for the press.

BENJAMIN U. LAPISH, *One of the Board.*

To JOHN FROST, Esq.



To Mr. BENJAMIN U. LAPISH, *one of the board.*

SIR,

When I gave the committee my answer, I had expectation only of delivering a few sentiments to my friends ; in obedience to your and their polite invitation.

I still submit to your public will, in submitting this hasty production, with all its imperfections to be published.

With the most respectful considerations,

Sir, I am your obedient servant,

JOHN FROST.





AN ORATION.



My Fellow-Citizens,

IN obedience to your repeated solicitations, I come forward under many embarrassments, to join in celebrating this illustrious day, that gave dignity to the honest exertions of man. (May the mind of man explore the universe, and rise to his creator God.)

Our ancestors, the fourth of July 1776, laid the foundation of our present great enjoyments; they with the sagacity of prophets, foresaw evils of the greatest magnitude, extending to envelope us in obscurity and abject slavery, to a monarchical government; and all the train of European politics.

Great and trying as the scene was; to attempt in that gloomy period, a revolution; greater and nobler were their conceptions of the rights of man. Their souls disdained the meanness of descending to the situation of cringing slaves, to a petty tyrant; and the supporters of a dissipated nobility. They encountered hardships of every description with magnanimity, and the most determined perseverance; amidst the assaults of the calumniator; facing the horrors of war, suffering the pangs of famine, and the pains of a cruel death! But I forbear to open the wounds, to exhibit to you the grief, insults and cruelty they endured by the unfeeling wretches, that ravished our country.—It would be improper for me to relate in this place, all the sufferings our ancestors endured; to preserve their, and our just rights to liberty.

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To their peaceful retreat to heaven, may we follow them. While we live here, may we imitate their virtues, as the most sublime way of shewing respect to their noble, and dignified acts. To respect them, it becomes us as christians, and as members of a civil society in a land of liberty; crowned with all the blessings that descends from an enlightened, and mild government; to rejoice in a public manner under the dictates of christian reason; on the day that bursted the bands of tyranny, hurled tyrants into just contempt, and gave freedom to the scientific mind of man.

Heaven and a great part of the earth were united, to usher in the brightest blaze of the greatest characters of men, that ever adorned the earth, on the morn of our liberty.

The western continent is now dressed in her gayest colors. The palace, the garden, the field and the grove, yielding their brightest pleasures in the most bountiful profusion.

The whole animated creation in the glow of brilliant beauty, singing praises to their creator God. Yet obedient to man; man the sublime image, the noble work of Deity. His mind capacious, when left free to investigate his greatest good through the medium of the blessed Jesus; the protector and the divine Saviour of man.

Our government is in unison with (so far as human capacity is capable of imitating) the moral principles of deity. He has condescended to inspire us with just conceptions to form a constitution, as a rule to direct us through life. It sublimely soars over the stupidly contracted dogmas of monarchical governments. Ours happily calls forth the united talents of the nation, supported by its whole wealth. As

As far as we are capable of instructing, so far are we useful in our government ; and the good sense of the people, will ever lead them to make a judicious choice, in choosing the most capable and honest, to conduct their important concerns.

The good sense of the government will ever inculcate among the people, the habits of industry ; and punishing with suitable displeasure the dissipated and vicious idle. They ever ought to be viewed as dangerous citizens ; they are fit tools for designing men, to sap the foundation of our happily established constitution. But if they are encouraged, they will become springs to aspiring characters ; and at a future day they will trample under foot our just and equal proportioned government. If we destroy the present responsibility of individuals, we shall lay the foundation of aristocracy in our government and laws ; and once established, it would be hard to overcome.

History fully informs us, that aristocracy wades through oceans of crimes, till it arrives to monarchy. The artful, tyrannizes over the credulous ; not one in an hundred enjoys any of the civil rights. To prevent these evils, it is necessary that every man of common sense, should be on an equal footing to transact the commerce of his various concerns through life, equally protected ; and all compelled to pay due submission to our laws. But let our laws be clear and certain ; not left to the hazard of being interpreted according to the imperious mandates of imperious man, without regard to the long established rules. It is unjust to be entrapt by surprise. It is doubtful whether we enjoy in such cases, equal rights.

Our laws are too loose and uncertain, they should be clear and compact ; and then they would not be so doubtful ; neither would there be so much money expended, before our council would hit on the right procedure to obtain redress ; nor would there be such delay in the process, which is injurious to the parties ; and likewise to the increasing capital of the state, by the wanton waste of time attending on our courts ; burdened by the present crude code of laws.

May we aim to walk in the paths of wisdom, and as we increase in years, may we improve our minds, and make them convenient to gather instruction from history ; and rest in humble dependence only on the supreme disposer of events.

We as citizens of New-Hampshire, in unison with others, have reason to rejoice that we are relieved in a great measure, from the evils of party spirit ; far from indigence and want, blessed with every external enjoyment. May we learn to cultivate domestic happiness, feast on reason, and obey her mild and dignified commands.

Permit me to lead you in the paths of peace, pleasingly distant from the horrid troubles of war ! Followed by the clashing of arms, with innumerable multitudes doomed to slaughter—To the sublime conquest that reason obtains over the vicious folly of war, and monarchical governments.

Listen to the animated debates of patriotic legislators ; contemplate the greatness that flows from disinterested acts.—Think of him who is blessed by the almighty God of eloquence and understanding,

understanding, to effect peaceful negotiation, and cause it to triumph over the boisterous rage for war. Whose pen has obtained for his country greater victories, than the most renowned generals, recorded in ancient history. Let us behold him raised on the highest summit of reason; by the majesty of arguments he convicts; and astonishes surrounding empires, by his disinterested acts, so nobly performed.

Here is the warm and affectionate addresses to the American people in 1775, to animate them with the glow of ardor for liberty, to transact their own concerns; to make and ordain just and equal laws to be governed by, in opposition to the British mandates; which were highly pernicious to the welfare of this country.

There is the declaration of American independence; the pride of language, and the mighty strength of man. He then enters our conventions; foils the aristocratical faction, consigns Hamilton's plan of a limited monarchy, by the force of his reasoning, to everlasting contempt.

He dispelled the British clouds that hung over our western country; driving the thunder bolts of war from our peaceful land. He investigates the French pretences; strips them of their insinuating sophistry, hurls them back to the platform of reason.

But hark! the thunder rolls! the earth quakes! and the elements are in fearful motion! amidst the cry for arms! and the rage of strife.—

He as usual, under the guidance of almighty God, suffers not the tear of the untimely widow to flow; nor the orphan's cry, and the heart rending throbs of God's last and most delightful image. But in the brilliant march of peace
and

and love, he enters the western lands ! hails them as brothers and as friends.

To perpetuate the blessing that flows from our mild government ; it requires a spirited militia, well organized, and ready at a moment's warning ; to defend their wives, their children and their country, from the ravages of an invading foe.

The prosperity of our country, much depends on the strength of the militia. The fame of our warriors (as it respects our safety) must cease with them.

Nature has blessed us with many advantages ; yet it requires the fostering hand of government to improve those advantages, and bring them to perfection.

The science of war will be learned only by those, that nature has designed, to command the world by the blaze of genius.

In these licentious days, it is folly to expect a well organized militia, without the generous and spirited aid of the civil government.

The government of Great Britain were compelled to resort to their militia, in the fore part of the last century, as well as this, to protect them from a French invasion. If it were necessary to call on the militia to aid the standing army in defending a monarchical government ! How much more to protect ours ?—Instead of calling your attention to the situation of the militia in this part of the country ; it would give me heart-felt pleasure to pass it over, and let solemn silence pervade this house.—But the gulph of dissolution is gaping under us ; the durability of our government, the happiness of civil society, and our existence as a free people, depends

depends upon it as one part of the chain that encircles the Union—And as we supported a conspicuous part in the time of the revolution, may we never forfeit our justly acquired character for eminence in the field and in the cabinet.—Look at the once brave and happy Swiss—Cast your eyes over the whole creation, contemplate and view the cause of the rise and fall of empires, and you will find all depends on well disciplined troops ; let the government in all its other branches be clear and strong, this is the pivot on which it turns.

Oh ! my countrymen, can you brook the neglect and insult that was heaped on so important a science ! shall a science that gave existence to your liberties, want support ! No ! never let it be said, that you are so far stupified as to forget what made you great and free. But let your indignation be hurled on the authors of the exclusion bill.

But the day has dawned, and after a long period of darkness, the sun has again appeared on our horizon. You may expect much from our present patriotic Commander in Chief—Let rapturous joy now fill your hearts that the guardians of your rights and national existence, are now your commanders in chief. The virtues of our LANGDON, will ever endear his name to all the true lovers of equal liberty and laws, to the end of time. You will not have to look on and see the most pitiful instructors rewarded ; and the native, bold and generous defenders of all you hold sacredly dear in this world neglected.

Is there another branch of your government, but what is compensated, and every year advancing the compensation ? Is it just to neglect
this

this important branch ? Let the men that have been in power, blush at their vanity, when they thought to raise a nobility ! superior to this noble science. O confusion ! where are the exclusive privileges that you granted, in violation of the constitution ? I forbear to say more—— But the enemies of our free government have not been contented to sink the militia, for the want of equal support with other institutions in our government ; but the tyrant fashion has rendered generosity a crime.—When we call our troops together, it is not the importance of exercising them in the manly, robust evolutions of the science ; but to riot in vicious dissipation. By that and other means, our militia has descended far down from the zenith of honor, when they marched with a STARK, a LANGDON, a SULLIVAN and a WASHINGTON, to the field of glory.—But now they retrograde down to the low habits of debilitating their bodies, and viciating their minds by intoxication and sloth.—

May the wisdom of the present government, stop this growing and wide spreading evil. Let the citizen and soldier be one—May institutions adequate to the instruction of the militia be formed, and the soldier compensated for actual service, by the property of their respective towns.

“ Order, law and religion,” is the robe, the diadem and the sanctuary, for the child, the man and the saint. “ Order, law and religion” are only to be understood in the manner that you are educated ; they are capable of conveying as many ideas, as the mind is capable of receiving ; and varying through all the labyrinths of knowledge and ignorance, of hypocrisy and religion, in all its various forms and shapes.—

What

What is order in one country, would be disorder in another. The laws differ in proportion as the people differ in enterprize and understanding. Religion differs in name and in nature.

To shew the exact difference would take much time to understand ; and it would be needless to attempt in such a congregation. Sufficient my friends for you to know, that you live in a christian country, surrounded by the best lights to give information, how to obtain under the blessing of Almighty God, your happiness in this world, and eternal enjoyment in the next.

Notwithstanding it would contribute much to the felicity of society, if our public teachers of the meek and sublime doctrine of the cross, would with the " meekness of wisdom" exhibit through life, the sublime principles that it inculcates, and not degrade the profession by introducing politics, or the " hay wood and stubble" of their own cultivation. Charity, ever ought to be extended in the most liberal manner through society. The principles of our government are different from all before us ; and it requires the clear, firm and persevering mind to administer it in a just manner.

There are a multitude of human actions in private life, in civil and military governments, which have so many complicated circumstances with regard to time and place, that it is impossible for any one to pass a correct judgment concerning them, without entering into most of their circumstances, surveying them extensively and comparing them correctly.

The most of people never question the truth of what their family or their party profess. They clothe their minds with the same propensity as they do their bodies, after the fashion in

vogue. They are applauded for presuming they are in the right ; and as Mr. Lock saith, “ he that considers and enquires into the reason of things, is accounted a foe to orthodoxy.”

We ought to exert our skill and diligence about every subject, and question, in the just proportion to the importance of it. “ Though I confess that this sort of amplitude of the mind is much beholden to the gift of nature ; for some are born with much more capacious souls than others ;” yet all men of common understanding are capable of becoming useful members in society—And it only remains for you to know how to improve your respective stations. In the first place obtain information, which is paying the most respectful compliment to our republican government ; and by that means we shall pay that reverential respect to that highly important trust, of handing down to the next generation, the important privileges that we have received of our fathers. For the durability of our constitutive-government depends on the wisdom of the people, more than any other form of government ; and when they are enlightened, they are free and happy. When free and knowing, rulers or public agents dare not exercise oppression—Neither will the people withhold affectionate attachments to their rulers, when they conduct their important concerns in a faithful manner.

How happy is the wise and virtuous man, who knows how to enjoy tranquility with true dignity of mind ; and with perfect ease, independent of every thing around him.

This blessing of INDEPENDENCE, this day witnesseth, you may all enjoy in a greater degree than any other people of any nation on earth.

FINIS