



Mr. FULLER'S Oration.



AN

ORATION,

PRONOUNCED IN THE MEETING-HOUSE

AT AUGUSTA,

ON THE FOURTH DAY OF JULY,

1804,

BEING THE TWENTY-EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY OF

AMERICAN FREEDOM.

—○○○*○○—
BY H. WELD FULLER, A. B.

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AUGUSTA, PRINTED BY PETER EDES.

1804.

Mr. H. WELD FULLER,

SIR,

THE Committee of Arrangements thank you for your candid and elegant Oration delivered 4th July instant, in which the principles and feelings that led to the establishment of our Independence, were so handsomely delineated—and request a copy for the press.

ARTHUR LITHGOW,
JOHN DAVIS,
PETER T. VOSE,
THOMAS BOWMAN, } Committee
of
Arrangements.

AUGUSTA, 5th JULY, 1804.

GENTLEMEN,

YOUR polite request for a copy of my Oration pronounced yesterday, claims my warmest acknowledgments—I comply with your request, trusting it to your candor. The unusual short time allowed for preparation, is the only apology I shall offer for its imperfections.

H. WELD FULLER.

To ARTHUR LITHGOW, JOHN DAVIS,
PETER T. VOSE, and THOMAS BOW- } Committee
MAN, Esquires, } of
Arrangements.

AUGUSTA, 5th JULY, 1804.

AN
ORATION.

FELLOW-CITIZENS;

THE occasion of our assembling here at this time, is in commemoration of that glorious era, which emancipated THREE MILLIONS OF PEOPLE from the degrading and galling chains of British tyranny.—It is in commemoration of that day which gave birth to our liberties—secured to us Independence—and gave us a respectable establishment among the nations of the earth.—The anniversary of this day ought to be celebrated by us, as the transactions of it are the most important that can ever be recorded on the pages of American History—Future ages shall notice it;—and by the Sons of Freedom it shall ever be gratefully remembered.—May your children's children enjoy the fruits of it, bless you for the liberties you transmit them; and on each anniversary celebrate the natal day of American Freedom.

It has been usual on this day to recount the events which occasioned our national existence—first roused the drowsy minds of our citizens—armed them in defence of those rights dearer to them than life—taught them boldly to come forward, untutored as they were in military discipline; without provisions and without money, form themselves into an army, by which was effected, a Revolution unprecedented in the annals of the world—a Revolution which terminated our connection with Britain, and registered the name of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA on the list of nations. To particularize these events, would employ more time than at present is allotted me. It would be an idle description of scenes, in which, perhaps, some of my Audience were actors; and which others have heard repeatedly described by men of information and talents, who took active parts in the transactions of the day. It would be a repetition

tition of those scenes of cruelty and oppression, which would rouse your indignation against the aggressors—and while it caused the tear of sensibility to glitter on your cheek, for those who suffered and perished in defence of your liberties, the final issue of the contest would agitate your bosoms with emotions of gratitude to that Being, whose guardian care preserved our country from impending ruin.

There was a time when Europe was filled with religious dissensions ; when the fanaticism of man led him to those extremes of Religious Intolerance, that there was neither parent or child, who dissented from the prevailing creed, but were either condemned to a cruel and ignominious death, or suffered a punishment more terrible than that of the Inquisition. To escape the terrors, and to avoid the persecutions of an ignorant, credulous and superstitious people, our pious ancestors, with unexampled fortitude—unappalled by the dangers that would surround them on an unnavigated ocean—not intimidated by the perils of landing on a shore inhabited by none but savages of the wilderness ; relinquished the dear connections of their early years ; left their country and friends, and fought in America a refuge from persecution—a place where they might enjoy liberty of conscience, without fear of punishment.—Their sufferings after their arrival were past description.—Destitute of the necessaries of life ; surrounded on every side by treacherous and barbarous Indians, whose savage yells were sufficient to strike terror into the hearts of the most daring—after having lost near half their number by famine and sickness, they established a settlement, which, by gradual accessions from the mother country, soon became of so much consequence, that Britain, though she had persecuted them at home, thought proper to claim the right of governing them.

Resistance to Britain, while the American settlements were in their infancy, was useless ; but as they increased in strength, and Britain in arrogance, resistance became necessary.—The privilege of Representation was claimed by the Americans as their undoubted right ; and they were determined, that no tax should be imposed and collected of them, till this was granted—On the other hand, *absolute, unconditional submission* was demanded by Britain—America, unused to war, and unwilling to engage in a contest she thought unequal, had recourse to every expedient for a reconciliation, that was consistent with her honor and dignity—Unprepared as she was to avenge her
violated

violated rights, yet she gloriously preferred, “*a day, an hour of virtuous liberty, to a whole eternity of bondage.*” She indignantly refused to submit to the yoke an imperious Monarch had fitted for her neck—and neither the audacity of British Ministers, or the high-toned language of her Parliament could exact compliance.

America petitioned—she remonstrated—she argued in defence of her rights; but reason and argument were unavailing—Their answers to her remonstrances against their measures; to her petitions for redress of grievances, was in language that could not be brooked—“If,” they reply, “seventeen thousand men cannot bring you to subjection, fifty thousand SHALL.” After such language, Americans, was it not time to assume the habiliments of war? Was it not time to draw the sword from its scabbard, and at one blow sever in twain the cord that connected us?

The cruelty and rapacity of the British soldiers during some parts of the Revolutionary War, must be still fresh in the memory of some of you—Had their insolence terminated when they had pillaged and destroyed your houses and laid waste your fields, you could have borne it; but when you saw them, with more than savage barbarity, insulting your hoary headed fathers;—when you heard the distressing cries of your female connections—your feelings must have been roused to a pitch that would *baffle the attempts of description.*—But these scenes of inhumanity, which disgrace the name of man, we shall pass in silence.

At the commencement of our Revolution, Britain entertained a contemptible opinion of American bravery; and in language the most opprobrious and insulting, vainly boasted, that the “fight of a Grenadier’s Cap would be sufficient to put an American Army to flight.” But subsequent events soon convinced them of their error, and taught them to revere American valour as equal to their own. In the long and well fought battle of Bunker’s Hill, every inch of ground was disputed by our raw and undisciplined soldiers against the well martialled troops of Britain.—American firmness and intrepidity displayed on that day, cannot be too highly applauded, and will stand recorded to her honor. It served to convince Britain, that were every pass a THERMOPYLÆ, every American would prove himself a LEONIDAS.—On that day, fighting for the freedom of his country,

try, and covered with wounds, the immortal WARREN fell. The traits of humanity and goodness which were conspicuous in his character, had endeared him to all who knew him. When he saw the liberties of his country endangered and her rights trampled on by a haughty and overbearing Monarch ; when Britain “ cried havoc and let slip the dogs of war,” he relinquished his profession as a Physician, left his connections and friends, and proffered his services in support of the violated rights of his country.—“ *Peace to his shades—may no rude blast disturb the Willow that nods o’er his tomb.*”

The situation of America at this time, convinced as she was, the contest could not be of short duration, made it necessary for her to find some person qualified to discharge the important duty of Commander—some person, in whom she could confide, and with whom she might intrust the glory, the honor and safety of his country—This sacred charge of leading her armies to glory, and establishing the INDEPENDENCE of his country, happily devolved on WASHINGTON—Under him the army soon began to wear the aspect of regularity ; and order seemed to rise out of confusion.

To detail to you the various fortunes which attended the American arms during the Revolution—to exhibit to your view the different scenes of American valor, is, at this time, unnecessary.—Suffice it to say, that after a struggle of eight years ; after Britain had seen the destruction of two armies, and expended near a *hundred millions of money*, she was obliged, however reluctantly, to acknowledge our Independence, and renounce her right of governing us.

The names of those PATRIOTS and HEROES who were instrumental in the establishment of AMERICAN FREEDOM, and bled in its defence, are recorded by the Annalist of our country—They shall live in your memories—their virtues and examples shall be copied by you ; and their names shall long survive the perishable monuments raised to their memories.

After the struggles of war were over, the crazy form of the old Confederation, which had brought our country to the confines of anarchy, was found insufficient, thrown aside, and our present happy CONSTITUTION adopted—a Co.NSTITUTION founded on the principles of Liberty and Equality ; under the administration of which we have attained a degree of national importance and respectability envied by the kingdoms of Europe.

After

After the adoption of the FEDERAL CONSTITUTION, which was every way suited to the genius and habits of the people, you once more committed your CHART and your COMPASS to your beloved WASHINGTON—To him *who was ever foremost in the battles of his country*—led her armies to victory—conducted her through a long and perilous war, and secured to her the blessings she now enjoys. Under his, and his successor's administrations, while the Eastern World was convulsed by wars and civil commotions, you enjoyed peace and prosperity at home and acquired respectability abroad. While FRANCE threatened subjugation to EUROPE, and menaced our country with destruction, our FEDERAL ARTILLERY, fronted by WASHINGTON, bid defiance to the power of French Diplomacy.

Should our *political horizon again darken*—should WAR again threaten us—where is our WASHINGTON to lead us to glory—Where is he, whom our fathers stiled “First in WAR—First in PEACE, and First in the hearts of his COUNTRY.”—Should you seek him in our National Cabinet, he is not there—Should you go to the shades of MOUNT VERNON—*alas ! he is not there !* NO, AMERICANS ! your Friend, your Protector, your beloved WASHINGTON is no more to be found in the habitations of the living.—He has completed his warfare—*he has flitted to regions of bliss*—he has put off MOR-TAL, and put on IMMORTALITY—His country recognized in him every virtue that could be attached to the HERO, the STATESMAN and the CHRISTIAN. Among the toils and dangers of WAR, he remembered that BEING to whose providence he was indebted for existence ; and when the day of his departure came—when the lamp of life was nearly extinguished, and was sinking in its socket, he trusted for salvation in the merits of HIM who was crucified on CALVARY.

- “ From VERNON’S MOUNT behold the HERO rise,
- “ Resplendent forms attend him through the skies ;
- “ The SHADES of war-worn veterans round him throng,
- “ And lead enwrapt their honor’d Chief along—
- “ A laurel wreath th’ immortal WARREN bears,
- “ An arch triumphal MERCER’S hand prepares—
- “ Young LAWRENCE erst the avenging bolt of WAR,
- “ With per majestic guides the glitt’ring car—
- “ MONTGOMERY’S godlike form directs the way,
- “ And GREENE unfolds the gates of endless day,

“ *While ANGELS trumpet-tongued proclaim through air,
“ Due honors for the first of men prepare.”*”

As a Warrior, and as a Statesman, and I might add as an Orator, the world has not produced his equal. The successes of CÆSAR, and the triumphs of ALEXANDER, may be applauded by some ; but the victories of WASHINGTON shall be celebrated by posterity, and receive the merited eulogiums of future ages. Though you have him not with you to counsel and direct you, he has left with you an invaluable Legacy for your instruction—He has left you his benedictions—He has given you the advice of an affectionate parent.

You enjoy advantages, Americans, superior to any nation on the globe : you possess an elective *Republican Government*—a government free from the oppressions of an *uncontrolled Monarchy*, the *intrigues of an Aristocracy*, and the evils of an *ungovernable Democracy*. Your Constitution was formed by the united exertions of your wisest legislators—*Resist all innovations of it*—If you suffer it to be mutilated, you will soon see it reduced to a skeleton, a mere form without substance ; cherish and support it, and you will enjoy every blessing you can wish as a nation.—Obedience to the laws of your country, and a proper respect to those placed in authority over you, is essentially requisite for your political existence.

If you wish to preserve your present Constitution ; if you wish it should be enjoyed by posterity, discountenance every species of vice and immorality—Government and Religion go hand in hand ; to enjoy the one, you must support and protect the other. Abandon your Religion, and from that moment you may date the fall of your Republic—History proves this a fact that cannot be controverted. The preservation of your Religion depends on the encouragement you give to the introduction of LUXURY into your capitals and houses. The allurements of grandeur, the unsatisfying pleasures of luxury, will weaken your government, and cherish principles destructive to republican existence—it will make your daughters copiers of WOLLSTONECRAFT, and your sons disciples of VOLTAIRE and BOLLINGBROKE—It has been the luxury of Rome, the riches of Indostan, the pomp and parade of PARISIAN Courts, that nurtured men who disavowed the existence of a Deity.—If you hold in estimation your own happiness ; if you value that of your children, you will never commit the administration of your government to atheistical, *infuriated* and venal Philosophers.

You

Your beautiful fabric is also liable to be destroyed by harboring the *rices* and *flatteries* of foreign Courts : It was these which finally prostrated the Mistress of the World, and nurtured in her bosom her Catalines and her Neros.

Your Constitution is of inestimable value to you ; but it is not imperishable—consider it as the political ark, with which you can stem the torrents of innovations which have annihilated the Republics of Europe, and overwhelmed them in the *depths of destruction*. While your Constitution is preserved intire—while the different parts of it are rightly balanced, that they can move in unison—while there is virtue in the people, your union will be indissoluble. Peace will establish her standard on your shores and pronounce America happy. You will insure yourselves the friendship of the world, and extend the “olive-branch of peace” to every nation on the globe. Pursue the same means you have heretofore pursued, and you will enjoy the same happiness ; and when the Annalist shall record our country’s history, his pages shall not be stained with the details of civil wars and internal commotions ; but on the last page of his volume it shall be written, “VIRTUE PRESERVED HER.”—With rapture then, may the reader exclaim, as he closes the perusal of America’s History, “O ! FORTUNATOS” AMERICANOS, “NIMIUM SUA SI BONA NORINT.”—All this happiness you may enjoy—you may realize it—it depends on your own exertions, on your own firmness and stability, on the practice of those with whom you entrust your government.

To be sure of happiness, is to deserve it—Intrust your government with those who in “times that tried men’s souls” stood foremost in the preservation of your liberties ; if you place it in the hands of those who seek the establishment of their own *measures*, unmindful of the *means*, you will see your National Councils distracted by parties, your Constitution the *sport of the winds* and levelled to dust, by the irresistible power of an ungovernable faction ; if you regard men and not measures ; if personal attachments supersede public virtue, you will soon see your Constitution torn in pieces by the spirit of anarchy.—You have your “bane and your antidote both before you ;” *the one secures to you existence ; the other brings you to an end.* The cities of Liberty and Equality may be founded in your ears by disorganizing partizans, by the very persons who would enslave you, by men who are implacably opposed to the Federal Constitution.

The administration of our National Government has been such for a number of years past, that we have enjoyed unexampled prosperity.—It is not for *me* to say, whether we owe this national prosperity to the present ruling party, or to those from whom the administration has been wrested—on this subject I should be compelled to exceed the bounds of cool discussion ; it would excite feelings which would rouse your indignation, and lead me to observations at this time improper—it would be painting scenes in which would be conspicuous the intrigues of an insolent and tyrannical faction.

Complaints have arisen against both the former and present administrations—how well founded they have been, I leave for the more experienced to decide ; and if, judging from those feelings which are the effects of sober reflection, you can assure yourselves you *now* enjoy the same prosperity at home, and respectability abroad, you *once* experienced.—If the great bulwark of your national liberty remains inviolate, and justice is impartially administered, you ought cheerfully to unite in support of your present Rulers ; but if, instead of reformation, the measures of our present Rulers tend to encourage the dissemination of those undermining principles, which have been indulgently fostered by the unprincipled demagogues of France, and have been cherished and supported in our country, by men *high in authority* ; if *irreligion* and *infidelity* mark their footsteps and threaten the subversion of all moral principles, we shall soon see, unless its progress is opposed, our Religion and Government perishing together, and sinking in their political graves. If our present administrators pursue those measures, which, in effect will render the Independence of our country nominal ; if servile obedience is required by them ; if they have destroyed our Army and reduced our Navy, and needlessly extended our Territory ; if their leading measures tend to destroy the *balance of influence between the States*, we cannot oppose them with too fixed a resistance. If such is the practice of your present Rulers, and you suffer such men to be in authority, how greatly have you deviated from the path pointed out to you by your Political Father—How wide is the difference between the principles inculcated by WASHINGTON, and those practised by the *Philosopher of Monticello*.—By the principles of the one, your Political Bark would waft you safely to the goal of prosperity ; while by the practice of the *other*, you will see your Constitution, which is now the “*admiration of the world*,” wrecked on the quick-sands of Despotism, and in the “*convulsive*

vulstve agonies of dissolving nature," your REPUBLIC will expire—and in the language of FRENCH PHILOSOPHY, her death shall prove an eternal sleep—Then shall the spirit of your departed WASHINGTON look down on you and exclaim—“O LIBERTY! O VIRTUE! O MY COUNTRY!”

F I N I S.

