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AN  
**ORATION,**

DELIVERED AT THE TOWN OF

**CLAVERACK,**

ON THE

**Fourth of July, 1801.**

By **THOMAS P. GROSVENOR.**

Published at the request of the Committee of  
Arrangements.



“ Nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice.”

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# ORATION.

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**A** RECOLLECTION of that auspicious event, which we are now assembled to celebrate, excites in the mind emotions both pleasant and mournful.

WHEN we reflect that, on this day, those chains which bound us to Britain, were burst asunder and our country raised from the humble station of a province to a rank pre-eminent among the nations; when we reflect, that, for twelve successive years, this anniversary has found us free, prosperous and happy, enjoying, under the mild auspices of WASHINGTON and of ADAMS, that rational independence, which was the object of all our toils and dangers, our minds must expand with that proud delight, which none can feel but freemen.

BUT, we turn the page, and the scenery is changed. We behold those glorious efforts, which secured our independence, diverted from their proper object and applied to further schemes visionary and destructive. We behold those aged patriots, who, in times which tried men's souls, boldly stepped forth, to lead us to victory, trampled from their dignities by mushroom politicians. We behold that "narrow path" of policy, which WASHINGTON had chosen, deserted, and our country swiftly advancing in that broad and tempting way, which leads down to destruction. These are

tions embitter that joy, which this day was wont to inspire, and excite in the mind a painful solicitude for the future destinies of our country.

THE late revolution in our administration, although a plain consequence, flowing from the very nature of our government, was attended with such extraordinary and portentous circumstances, as to become the cause of serious alarm to every friend of order. In this revolution, that *Political Delusion*, which, from the fall of Adam, has led mankind into deeds of confusion and transcendent horror, has been playing a deep and a fatal game. Perhaps, the short time allotted, cannot be more beneficially spent, than in exposing some of those deceptions, which have produced this unfortunate event.

IT has, I am sensible, been the uniform practice of the Federalists, to consecrate this day to the Genius of Liberty. While their political opponents were waging violent and successful war, they were contented to recount the glorious actions of their Fathers. Perhaps, something of this kind, may now be expected. But at an æra like the present, while in some countries, Liberty, cloathed in sack-cloth, is weeping over the ruins of altars and civil institutions—while in others, she is trembling at the stern frown of some cruel tyrant; and even in this, her last assylum, she is tottering on the verge of anarchy, it surely cannot be proper to trifle away the time, in splendid eulogies or flimsy descriptions.

BY recurring to the writings of any enthusiastic patriot, I might describe the Goddess Liberty, in all her charms. By recurring to the historian, I might tell you, to what happy country, she owes

her birth—who rocked her cradle, and reared her to maturity. I might tell you, even when an infant, with what giant exploits, she astonished the universe. By long and laborious researches, I might, perhaps, point out to you the very path she travelled, in her rapid progress, from the degenerate east, through the vast and savage forests of the west. I might describe her flight from the tyranny of kings—her voyage across the Atlantic, to her final settlement in this happy land. These things I might recount; and add one more unmeaning panegyric, to that long catalogue, which owe their birth to this anniversary. But, when liberty is disturbed, in this, her last Asylum—when her enemies are rudely violating her only sanctuary—it, surely, becomes her friends, instead of worshipping her charms, to gird on their armour and defend her from pollution. At such a time, I, at least, will not disgust you with idle theories on the “abstract qualities of liberty and equality,” or “the perfectability of human nature;” but, with that plain and unreserved language, which is the birth-right of a Freeman, proceed to unveil some of those delusions, which have so lately triumphed.

THAT duty, which you owe yourselves, your families, and your country, calls on you, seriously to consider, if haply, some little part of that good, which was the object of our independence, may yet be snatched from the ruffian hand of licentiousness. The grand stroke of delusion, by which this radical change in our administration has been produced, was the creation of a belief in the people, that the policy of the late administration was pernicious; that your ADAMS was deserting the principles of the revolution, and that his whole system of conduct was injurious and destructive to his

country. If this be true; if it be fact, that the man who boldly pronounced our independence,\* while others trembled at the very thought; who deserted the pleasures of affluence and ease, and delighted to grow grey in your service—if it be true, that this man has betrayed his country, then sacrifice his character and consign it to eternal infamy. But, remember! on the same altar, you immolate the reputation of WASHINGTON. It is in vain to discriminate between them. However the rancor of modern democracy, fearful to assail the rock-like reputation of WASHINGTON, may strive to make ADAMS the only victim, yet, be assured, in their view, WASHINGTON is no less guilty.

He drew the federal chart, selected the course, and commenced the voyage, when his Maker summoned him to heaven. His successor pursued the course which he had chosen, and through storms and agitated billows, was safely and ably conducting the vessel into harbour, when a deluded crew hurled him from his office.

It is easy to calumniate the wisest policy. The vilest reptile in nature, may assassinate the fairest reputation. As, by incessant friction, water will wear away the hardest adamant, so falsehoods, boldly and incessantly reiterated, will destroy the

\* This fact is not generally known — The clamor which the friends of Mr. JEFFERSON have incessantly raised about his "Declaration of Independence," has deluded many honest people into a belief that he was the original mover. — The truth is, while some few of the most resolute of his associates were circulating it among themselves, and a great mass of them were slow to think of it, Mr. ADAMS, with an indomitable firmness, tenaciously paralleled, brought forward the motion to Congress. Mr. JEFFERSON was probably the man who drafted it with language; and WASHINGTON was certainly the man who established it with his sword.

reputation of the most virtuous and indefeasible patriot. The speculative philosopher may also, even while retired in his closet, overthrow the fixed systems of policy. Convinced of this, the Leaders of the opposition to the past administration, despairing ever by other means to reach the objects of their wishes, made use of every art to lead astray the people. Not a measure, indicative of constitutional energy, was adopted, but the toxin of opposition was sounded, and every effort was made to stamp it with popular odium. Learning, eloquence, ingenuity, were pressed into the service of delusion. Falshood, calumny and intrigue, dressed in the honest guise of patriotism, were sent forth to delude the honest, and to inflame their passions. Funding Schemes, standing armies, national debts, sedition laws, mines and manufactures, were incessantly hurled through the continent. Even the thread-bare, absurd tale of British influence, though scoured by every rational man, became a powerful engine in the hands of those Leaders in delusion. Orators, swelling with the phrenzy of modern democracy, were annually, pouring floods of rage upon the past administrations. Aristocracy, tyranny, power and persecution—lords, dukes and ministers, “damned through their Ayle, in all their mazes of intellectual confusion.” Pamphlets, loaded with scurrility, in a style fascinating and easy, and precisely calculated to delude, were hawked through every village. The people, honest themselves, could not believe, that all this clamor was contrived—they could not believe, that such deep depravity dwelt among their fathers. Hence, the nation triumphed—hence they became the objects of

democracy—hence they destroyed the federal administration, and raised, in its stead, one, which is justly feared and dreaded.

THE time will not permit an exposition of every delusive practice of the party; nor a particular vindication of the past administration. To those, who, with candor, have viewed their conduct—who, with the poet believe, that “to err is human, to forgive divine”—to those who have fairly estimated the difficulties with which that administration has constantly struggled—who have marked the integrity, the firmness and the independence with which they have uniformly conducted, a vindication would be superfluous.

BUT, to such as have pre-condemned every thing, which bears the stamp of energy and order—to such as are in the habit of yielding implicit confidence to the vile calumnies of the Aurora—to such, in fine, as have bowed the knee to the Dagon of modern democracy, a vindication would be worse than thrown away. You might as well place the landscape before the blind—you might as well present music to the deaf, as to present truth and reason to men, prejudiced and inflamed by recent triumph. Suffice it to say, that all their clamors against federal policy—all their calumny of federal measures, were for the purpose of delusion. The true tests of systems is their tendency and effect on society. If they are pernicious, there it will be apparent—for they will disturb and destroy. If they are excellent, they will, in their application, diffuse prosperity and happiness.

To discover, then, the true merits of federal policy—to learn the full extent of that delusion, which has so lately triumphed, we will briefly examine

that æra, when WASHINGTON was first called to the presidential chair, and compare it with the situation of our country at the present hour. After our independence was achieved, these States became the prey of those disorders which ever attend weak and wicked governments. Through the whole union, oppression, anarchy and licentiousness, like roaring lions, stalked abroad, seeking whom they might devour.

THE confederation, weak in itself, and rendered still weaker by those lofty and somewhat visionary notions of liberty, which thousands had imbibed, had, at this time, become only the semblance of a compact, and bore only the shadow of power. Credit, both public and private, had become a spectre, haunting those places, where it once had flourished. Justice, deserted by all her friends, had fallen on her own sword; and licentiousness, having assassinated liberty, assumed her beautiful garments, and was worshipped. Commerce, neglected and despised, was drooping and dying. In the forcible language of an eminent Statesman—  
 “ While foreign flags waved triumphantly above the tops of our highest houses, the American stars shed a few feeble rays around the humble masts of river sloops and coasting schooners.”\*

WHEN our political horizon was thus gloomy, the wisdom of those sages, whose magnanimity had secured our independence, framed a constitution, which snatched us from impending ruin. For twelve years, under this constitution, although struggling with obstructions of every nature; though the whole foreign world has made every

\* Governor Jay's Address.



effort to involve us in all the miseries of war; though, in the very bosom of our country, a hardy faction have been kindling the embers of discord—WASHINGTON and ADAMS have conducted us almost to the acme of prosperity.

CAST, then, your eyes around, and say, what has been the effect of federal policy? Do you discern one trace of that oppression, that tyrannical spirit, that imbecility and wickedness, in the past administration, which our self-styled Republicans have so delusively described? Do you find the farmer, sinking beneath a load of debts, his fields turning into forests; and his thatched hut incapable of sheltering him from the inclement blasts of winter? *Travel to countries oppressed with unequal laws and weak and wicked rulers, and these scenes will every where meet you.* Do you find our merchants, void of credit and of money, unable to visit with their ships the most distant climes? Do you see them loll away life in their counting-houses, or idling daily through the streets, while meagre want is seated in their aspects? *Travel to countries where oppression reigns, where taxes are exorbitant, or property insecure, and these scenes will, every where, stare you in the face.* Do you find the mechanic, unable to find employment, or laboring for a pittance, insufficient for his sustenance? Do you behold privileged orders, trampling, with impunity, on the most sacred rights of man? When you look around, do these scenes meet your eye—or, through this extensive continent, can you discern one symptom of weakness or oppression in the past administration? But, if, under the mild auspices of the past administration, none of these scenes were visible; if agricul-

ture and commerce have flourished, and still continue to flourish, beyond a parallel; if the American Farmer, by a sure and ready sale of his produce, has become opulent and independent; if, along our shores, cities rise, stores thicken, and streets are crowded with traffickers to every quarter of the globe; if our mechanics, constantly employed, generously and punctually paid, have generally become opulent and respectable; if the arts and sciences are protected; if schools are nurtured, and general knowledge every where diffused; if, in fine, every village or city, however remote from the ocean, has felt the fostering hand of government, and all ranks have shared in a prosperity, unparalleled in the annals of the world, then talk to us, no more, of the imbecility, oppression and tyranny of the federal administration. It is as impossible, that this prosperous state of things should exist, under the benumbing influence of oppressive laws, and of weak and wicked rulers, as, that pure and wholesome waters should issue from the poisoned fountain. Surely, *ye self-styled Republicans*, these facts are more than sufficient to lay open that depth of delusion, which ye have played upon your country—surely they must check those floods of calumny which ye are daily showering upon the past administration.

BUT here, an objection meets us in the threshold: One of those self-elected, self-styled republican committees, which are ever prompt to preach the exclusive claims of their party to every thing honest and honorable, in the plenitude of its wisdom, has gravely published to the world, that, for this prosperous state of things, our citizens are indebted, not to their government, but

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to the smiles of Providence and to their own industry. One would suppose, from the very color of this objection, that, in the number of their exclusive rights, sagacity was never ranked; else, surely, some little portion would have rested on this sage committee, and restrained this effusion of their folly. Yes—we are indebted to the smiles of a kind Providence, for every blessing. And that smile, which framed our constitution, which placed it under the guardianship of a WASHINGTON and an ADAMS, was the salvation of our country. Yes—we are contented—nay! proud to acknowledge, that the same God, who led our fathers to fertilize a wilderness; who reared up a WASHINGTON to guide our armies, has also showered floods of prosperity upon the policy of the federal administration.

It is admitted by all, that, without industry, our country never could have become opulent. But history, reason, and common sense demonstrate, beyond the power of doubt, that, under a government, inequitable, weak, or oppressive, industry could never reside. From the government, flow all laws, and that energy, which is requisite to execute them. If those laws are unequal and oppressive; if their execution is still more weak and partial, property will become insecure. Industry will, consequently, droop and die, and the whole country become a scene of idleness and dissipation. But, if the reverse is granted—of what avail is industry without the fostering care of government? Had not the wisdom of the federal government saved us from a participation in that bloody drama, which has desolated Africa, created unheard-of miseries in Asia, and rendered

Europe one great human slaughter-house, of what avail would have been our industry? Our produce, unable to find a vent, would have mouldered in our harbors, or, if shipped for transportation, would have become the sure prey of that giant navy, which renders England empress of the ocean. Is it then true, that we are not indebted to the wisdom of our government for our prosperity? The common sense of every plain, unlettered man gives the lie to this shallow trick of political delusion.

THUS, I have briefly recapitulated and exposed some of the most prominent features of that delusion which threatens destruction to the "world's best hope."

YOU will now, naturally, ask, who are the Authors of these wretched deceptions which have produced so radical a change in the administration; and for what purpose has *this change* been effected?

IN every country there are a certain class of men, who, without sufficient honesty and credit to obtain the suffrages of their fellow-citizens, can never hope, while all is peaceful and prosperous, to rise into authority. Hence they incessantly strive to weaken the energy of the government, and to stamp with popular odium the lawful rulers—hence they strive on every occasion to let slip the dogs of anarchy and *civil confusion*—hoping, in the general scramble, to obtain the objects of their ambition. From this general curse of nations, our country had no reason to expect an exemption. Our revolution, which procured us so many, and so great blessings, produced its evils likewise. It generated whole swarms of those idle

and unprincipled men, who, at its close, ranked themselves in this ambitious class. And when, under the present constitution, the people raised to office those, in whom they could repose confidence, these men, finding themselves neglected, became the Pioneers of opposition.

PANTING for revenge, and hungering for the loaves and fishes, they formed a grand confederacy, resolving to gratify their ambition, though the destruction of their country was the consequence. This confederacy, constantly strengthened, by that mass of corruption, which Europe annually poured upon us—by a strict adherence to that fiend-like dogma, “*the end sanctifies the means,*” became, at length, formidable to our government. These are the authors of that delusion, which you have seen and heard, and the effects of which you have yet to feel. That many joined this grand confederacy in the works of delusion, with motives perfectly pure and honest, none can deny. These are generally enthusiastic worshippers at the shrine of liberty. They love the human race. They wish to see them free and happy. Warmed by these generous wishes, and affected with that cruel levity, with which, Tyrants have murdered millions, they are prone to look with too severe an eye on every thing, which bears the stamp of energy. In the fervor of their feelings, they seem to forget, that, *man*, fallen as he is from moral rectitude—hurried into crimes, as he is, by his passions, still demands the severe restraints of law and energetic government. They seem to forget, that the noblest virtues, which ever adorned the human character, when carried to excess, may render *that character* deformed and hateful—that,

though, liberty, when protected by just and equal laws, and wise and virtuous rulers, may happily any country, yet, when degenerated to licentiousness, becomes the reluctant instrument of crimes and miseries, beyond the reach of human conception. Thus, the very virtues, which they possessed, rendered them victims of *delusion*. The intrigues of a few artful Leaders, roused their passions and led them to oppose that administration, which, through the perverting medium of their own fears and jealousies, appeared to be destroying the independence of their country. Many of this class were men of strong talents, excellent dispositions, and unspotted characters—hence they were the most innocent, as well as the most dangerous part of the opposition. That, there are, thousands, who, without any definite motive, were borne along the current, and induced to join the clamor, is equally true. But, the great body of their *Leaders* had designs, and designs of the most vicious and sordid nature. They designed, on the ruins of those characters which their daring calumnies might destroy, to assume the powers, and grasp the reins of government. This is the *reason*, that our government must meet a change. This is the end of all their efforts, all their calumnies, and all their delusions. Do you ask for proof of this? I refer you to their characters, their writings, and their conduct. Is it probable, from the notorious characters, of the great mass of those High Priests of democracy, that they should act disinterestedly? Or, is it not rather the sure result of experience, that, in all their *public* actions, they have some *latent* object? But view their writings. There, under the mask of patriotism, honesty and

zeal, you may see ambition, couching, to spring upon his prey. But, from their conduct, since their recent triumph, the fact is proved beyond a possibility of doubt. The inaugural Speech of Mr. JEFFERSON was fair as the morning. It portended peace and unity. It seemed to banish from the horizon those angry clouds, which threatened universal devastation. The party, which had opposed his election, tired with a conflict, in which, the enemy called to their aid every weapon, which God and nature had placed within their reach, and almost willing to be deceived, sheathed their weapons, folded their arms, and sunk into a sluggish security. They hoped, they trusted, that they had been deluded; and every where declared, that in an equitable and mild administration, Mr. JEFFERSON should never want their utmost support. But the morning which shone so brightly, was succeeded by a gloomy and boisterous day. The Federalists started from their trance. They beheld the full extent of their misfortunes. They saw that the philosophic temper of the President, which had been trumpeted through the continent, as mild, peaceful and philanthropic, was become subordinate to the fiery passions of party spirit and resentment. They saw the dark clouds of a political intolerance, "as despotic, as wicked," gathering in the atmosphere. They beheld the malignant spirit of persecution scowling through the gloom, and menacing their peace and safety. These things they saw, and were convinced that the Speech of Mr. JEFFERSON, so mild, "so full of goodly prospects and harmonious sounds," was a prime stroke of delusion—a gilded net to catch the confidence of his opposers. Roused, at length,

from their stupid slumbers, they wonder at their folly. They see a WATSON, a GILES, a DUNHAM, a HUMPHREYS, and a LINGIN, with a host of others, whose swords are still red with the blood of our enemies, become the victims of principle; dismissed from their offices, to make way for the striplings of democracy. To these men, not a shadow of fault has been imputed—No! their only crimes were, that they were Federalists; that, in a free country, they dared to act like freemen; that they would not couple the name of WASHINGTON with corruption; that they reposed confidence in ADAMS, and refused to join with those who strove “to bring down his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.”

No sooner, was it known, that this *place-mau* policy was established, than the whole party were in commotion. Those who, a short time since, preached up to the people the merits of their disinterested efforts—who boisterously declared, that they were contending for principles and not for their own emoluments, are now daily flocking to the capital, to participate in the harvest. Scarcely a newspaper arrives from the south, but contains numerous applications for the most trifling offices. Scarcely a man among the party, who has learned the routine of democratic jargon, but deems himself qualified for the most important offices. Do not these facts demonstrate, that, the object of all their clamors, was the attainment of individual power and opulence? And do they not tell us, in pointed language, that for at least four years, we must suffer “a political intolerance, as despotic, as wicked, and capable of as wicked persecu-



tions," as Genevan counsels can devise, or the tools of power can execute.

BUT the great engine, by which all these delusions have been successfully played, remains yet to be considered. It is the press. Without the aid of printing, all the efforts of our opponents must have been ineffectual. When first this infant country threw down the gauntlet and defied the British Giant to the combat, the *press* was the prime instrument of her triumphs. By it, that enthusiastic spirit was excited, which prompted the American farmer to brighten his musket, to rush to the combat, to conquer, or die. But no sooner did the blood of our warriors cease to flow; no sooner was a government erected, which promised to protect the good, to restrain or to punish the vicious, than those very presses teemed with obloquy and rebellion. And their editors, altho' they have made every effort to corrupt our countrymen; though, with systematic perseverance, they have labored to subvert the government of our choice, have never wanted patronage, even in the councils of our country. Hence we trace those public and impudent efforts, for the introduction of French principles. Hence we trace those malignant slanders, which weekly have polluted our country. Not a man, hostile to faction and friendly to religion and government, though his name were as white as purity herself, escapes the venom of their prostituted presses. Nay! even the ashes or the venerable WASHINGTON have not been permitted to slumber in peace. They have pursued him into the tombs of his fathers, and called his exalted spirit to answer accusations, the very mention of which, would, once, have con-

signed their names to eternal infamy. And who are these impious scribblers, who dare thus insult us with their calumnies? They are the *refuse* of Europe, and the degenerate hirelings of America. They are *United Irishmen*, *sans-culotte* Frenchmen, and reforming Englishmen, who have stolen from their retirements at Cayenne and Botany-Bay, again to flourish as democrats and demagogues. They are the worthless natives of this country who are making every effort to introduce a general scramble; who profess to believe, that the *immaculate mantles* of France are commissioned, by the fates, to bear abroad the standard of liberty and equality—to revolutionize the world, and to pull down, from his throne, the *Ruler* of the universe. They are those high-born philosophers, who are wriggling themselves into every office, with the professed design to weaken the laws, relax the energy of government, and to promote that specious liberality, which is the worst of licentiousness. You, who call yourselves *Republicans*—who, in the plenitude of your vanity, deem yourselves champions of the rights of man—have ye reflected on the issue of all these things? Have ye reflected, that, when the flood-gates are hoisted, and the great deep of licentiousness rushes upon society, what scenes of tumult and destruction must ensue? Unfortunate, ill-judging men—not less unhappy than guilty—in what are your designs to issue? On whom is this licentiousness to prey? You will answer, on your opposers. I admit the answer. It will aid you to obtain *their spoils*. But on whom will it then prey? I answer for you—on those who shall then possess *those spoils*—on you, and on your children. Oa

whom did the phrenzy, excited by DANTON, fasten? First, on LOUIS the XVI.—then on BRIS-SOT, his own coadjutor—then on himself. On whom did the jacobinism of ROBESPIERRE satiate itself? On him, and on his associates. The same spirit has unceasingly gone on to destroy all who were viewed as possessed of power, wealth, character or influence enough to be worth destroying. Human nature is every where the same. A licentious spirit, when once unchained and aroused, cares not who or what shall become its victim; but only looks for that which shall be worth destroying. It is a work of immense labor to establish, and of labor, daily immense, to preserve, liberty, order, peace, safety, and virtue, in a country, and those institutions, by which, alone, they can be secured. Let, then, the enemies of our peace remember, before it is too late, that, if they finally succeed, they will have *feeli*, that they have, but prepared the means for their own destruction. And let the friends of order, and of our country also remember, that, if they wish to transmit the present happy state of things, together with our excellent Constitution, unimpaired, to posterity, they must, with fearless and indignant energy, meet the monster licentiousness. In one firm phalanx, they must set their faces against the enemy, **RESOLVED TO DEFEND THE CITY OF THEIR GOD, OR BE BURIED IN ITS RUINS.**

E N D.