

AN
ORATION

DELIVERED BEFORE THE
YOUNG REPUBLICAN GENTLEMEN
OF
CONCORD AND ITS VICINITY,
ON THE
FOURTH OF JULY, 1809,
BEING THE
THIRTY-FOURTH ANNIVERSARY
OF
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

.....
BY CHARLES G. HAINES.
.....

*" O LIBERTY ! Heaven's choice prerogative,
True bond of law, thou social soul of property,
Thou breath of reason, life of life itself,
For thee the valiant bleed."*



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ORATION.



YOUTHFUL AMERICANS,

WE are at this time assembled to commemorate an event, which has afforded a conspicuous subject in the annals of modern history. We are at this time convened to celebrate the happy return of that ever memorable day, July 4, 1776, in which the United States of America were declared "free, sovereign and independent!" What a joyful theme of congratulation!

To recal to our remembrance the patriotic deeds of our illustrious ancestors, to call to our minds their virtues and their long accumulated sufferings, must prove a delightful occupation to every lover and supporter of sacred liberty. To view the means by which a lonely wilderness was converted to a fruitful paradise, to review the occurrences which led the feeble colonies of America to Independence, and caused them to burst asunder the galling shackles of slavery, and assert their birth-rights amid the cannon's thunder and the din of war, must create a thrill of enthusiasm in the bosom of every juvenile American.

Three hundred and seventeen years have elapsed since the immortal Columbus, fired with a celestial genius, discovered the extensive fields of America.

Notwithstanding the favorable representation of its first discoverers, notwithstanding the adventurous spirit which then animated the nations of Europe, one hundred and sixteen years were numbered posterior to the discovery of Columbus before the fertile regions of the Western Hemisphere received cultivation.

In the year 1608 one hundred and ten persons emigrated from the shores of England, and established a colony at Jamestown in the state of Virginia. The prospect of this feeble colony must have been gloomy beyond expression. Placed far from their native country, they had no resource in time of peace, nor could they look for protection in time of war. They had to encounter the inclemencies of a different climate from that of their nativity, and disease and death found means to enter their habitation, and destroy one half of their original number. But these impediments did not damp the ardor of our worthy progenitors: they were embarked in a just and glorious cause; they were preparing a refuge in the howling wilks of America for the unhappy sons of persecution.

Twelve years after the colonization of Virginia, another company thought proper to abandon the soil of the old world, and seek a habitation in the new. In the year 1620, one hundred and one persons landed at Plymouth in the state of Massachusetts. This was the first settlement ever made upon the shores of New-England. Language can but faintly paint the obstacles that opposed the progress of this pious band of puritan adventurers. Three thousand miles from the country which gave them birth...on the one hand they beheld the roamings of the benighted Indian, on the

other the prowling beast of prey ; before them, the howling blasts of Æolus....behind them, the wintry waves of Neptune.

Before the completion of one year after their landing, pestilence and famine swept an alarming proportion of their number from the face of existence. But that God, in whose almighty power rests the destiny of nations and empires, caused them to prosper amid these trying scenes. They had fled from the blood-stained shores of oppression for the purpose of enjoying the principles of freedom, and of diffusing the blessings of virtue ; and in these supremely excellent undertakings, our venerable forefathers were not unsuccessful.

For many years after their first sufferings, they had the pleasing satisfaction to behold their offspring enlightened by wisdom, cherishing virtue and benevolence, and, above all, nurturing the immaculate principles of a holy religion. How pleasing their prospect ! how flattering their hopes ! But their horizon of happiness was at once o'erclouded with woe....they beheld the portentous cloud of darkness arise....they saw the lightning flash, they heard the thunders roar !

In the year 1757 the war between the French and American colonies first made its inhospitable appearance. At this unhappy era, our ancestors suffered misfortunes before unknown. They had not only to contend with the warlike troops of France ; but the ferocious Savage rushed from the wilderness with all the hellish fury of his own vindictive nature. The aged sire and the youthful son fell victims to the cruel

wrath of his unprovoked vengeance ; the infant was murdered in its slumbers, and the mother consigned to roam uncovered with her cruel captor.

This war, though fatal in a great measure to the population of America, presented to Britain the plumes of glory. Her victorious legions at this period became the terror of the Eastern Continent, nor did her ardor for conquest and dominion spare the remote corners of the Western. Almost the whole of North America became tributary to her vast domain. But haughty Albion was like Athens of old....while the terror of her arms caused distant nations to tremble, she found her treasure expended.

Great-Britain was fully sensible that her splendid fame could never be supported, unless some annual revenue should contribute an increase to the exhausted coffers of her treasury. She turned her attention to her faithful American colonies : here commences the shameful tale of taxation.

It was not enough for our valiant ancestors to flee from the ruthless spirit of persecution, and plough the trackless ocean to seek an asylum ; it was not enough to have the laurels which they had justly earned woven in the crown of Britain's royal despot ; it was not enough to have them settle in a gloomy wilderness free from the aid and assistance of their mother country, and then to acknowledge her sovereignty ;....no ! all this was not sufficient to exempt them from that insatiable thirst of domination and love of universal empire which has ever characterized Great-Britain, and which has justly branded her crowned heads with the odious name of tyrants.

The people of England appeared determined that America, who had bled and suffered in her wars, should defray the vast expense, by submitting to tribute and unconstitutional taxation.

In the year 1765 was passed the famous *Stamp Act*; a law that happily separated our country from the "iron fangs" of despotism; a law that awakened the freeborn sons of Columbia from their inglorious slumbers, and called them, either ignominiously to kiss the rod of slavery, or gloriously to embrace the heavenly boon of Independence.

VIRGINIA, the birth place of the American HERCULES, was the first State that nobly asserted the rights of man, by remonstrating against the unjust decrees of a tyrannical nation.

MASSACHUSETTS, the theatre of action upon which the immortal HANCOCK and ADAMS displayed their captivating eloquence in favor of liberty and freedom, speedily adopted the energetic resolutions of her sister province.

The example of those great and powerful States was soon followed by the others, and the banners of the thirteen stars were unfurled in defence of their dearest rights, and in opposition to these oppressive edicts.

My friends, let us for one moment consider the situation of our country at this eventful period.

On the one part we behold a feeble undisciplined yeomanry, rushing to war without a leader, without arms, and without funds to succor them in the hour of disaster; the cold earth their only pillow for repose, the starry canopy their only shelter from the storm. On the other part we behold a well

regulated army, an army inured to the hardships of a military life, whose arms had often been drenched in human blood, and whose hands had often been bedewed with the falling tears of the widow and the orphan.

While our countrymen daily beheld these menial offsprings of the "British Lion" flocking into their cities and ravaging their fruitful fields, sad to relate...the Gauls of the wilderness again sallied from their clandestine abode, and inhumanly marked their pathway with the blood of expiring innocence. How great the contrast between the contending armies! But do we not observe a superior contrast in the cause which summoned them to hostility?

The colonial inhabitants were contending for their natural rights. They were disputing for those invaluable privileges which the great Creator of the Universe hath ever granted to all mankind, from the existence of our first parents in the full enjoyment of paradise down to the present day.

When man first arose in the order of nature, he found himself in the full fruition of liberty; he knew no master,

"Save creating Heaven,
Or those whom choice or common good ordain'd;"

neither did he know any servant but the brute that was designed for his benefit.

Our forefathers considered man as the equal of man, and this judicious opinion had often been instilled into their youthful bosoms by the parents that watched over their expanding years. They considered a constitution as the proper *king* to rule a nation; not a constitution, wherein the happiness of a community was liable



to be vested in the hands of a tyrant or a traitor ; not a constitution wherein the rights of unborn generations were given away ; but a constitution wherein the authority was reposed in the will of the people ; wherein the rights of conscience were unrestrained, and wherein the degrading names of *prince* and *subject* reposed in oblivion. But the disposition of the British army was not animated with such truly elevated ideas : though panting for the blood of their brethren, and though sure of victory in imagination, they were not engaged in the cause of justice : they had crossed the wide Atlantic, to shed the blood of a nation who had never perpetrated a crime. They had arrayed themselves under the crimson banners of their sovereign, to commit a deed, which was not only against the dictates of humanity and the laws of nations, but equally against the divine mandates of the omnipotent Jehovah.

Lexington, whose name is impressed on the remembrance of every true hearted Columbian, was the first soil that was moistened by the blood of our injured countrymen. Although our little squadrons were there put to flight, they felt an inspiration that can only be felt by freemen. Let us now display those scenes of desolation and carnage, where our valiant fathers fell in the days of revolutionary peril. We shall behold the town of *Charlestown* flaming in the air, while its streets resound with the cries of guiltless victims ! We shall here behold the awful transactions of *Bunker-Hill* ! It was here that the youthful heroes of America repulsed the superior troops of Britain's royal tyrant ! With wonder and surprise they here beheld the soldiers who had formerly been the objects of their scorn, advance

against their haughty battalions, with the courage of Grecians, and the intrepidity of Romans. It was here that the great WARREN achieved those worthy deeds, that will never be forgotten but with the expiration of his country's liberty. His actions were like those of a HANNIBAL, his fall like that of LEONIDAS ; he lived to his country's honor, he died to its glory.

While our bosoms palpitate at these godlike achievements of our fathers, let our imaginations pass to scenes still more affecting. Let us view the fields of *Trenton* and *Princeton*, the plains of *Monmouth*, the mounts of *Yorktown*, and the heights of *Bennington* !—These are the famed theatres of American heroism. If this should not satiate our love for instruction, let us consult the hoary headed veterans of our country ; they will speak a tale that will even congeal the blood that circulates in our veins ! They will present to our minds the emblazoned spires of *Fairfield*, the ruined domes of *New-London*, the fallen fabrics of *Danbury*, and the bloody streets of *Groton* !

But shall not the Generals who led our armies into the hostile fields of battle claim our respect at the return of this joyful anniversary ? Yes, the names of *Montgomery*, *Green*, *Mercer*, *Stark* and *Sullivan*, are deeply engraven on the tablet of our hearts. WASHINGTON, whose deeds are recorded in the annals of fame, and whose virtues are preserved in the archives of Heaven, this day draws forth the themes of unaffected gratitude. In his many bosom were concentered the wisdom of a Socrates, the virtues of an Aristides, and the bravery of an Epaminondas. The green plants of nature that now encircle the silent mansions

of his tomb, shall be watered by the tears of ages yet unborn.

After seven years of ineffectual warfare on the part of Britain, she was taught a lesson, that nothing but the unceasing hand of time will obliterate from her memory. She learned to her regret, that by her repeated deeds of injustice she had only learned the inhabitants of America to become the more fervent supporters of humanity, the more generous adherents to freedom.

In the year 1776 our sovereignty was acknowledged, and our once subjugated country became independent and free ! Although the name of the "new born republic" at this time resounded throughout the four quarters of the habitable globe, there still remained a faint ray of hope to cheer the drooping spirits of distant tyrants and domestic traitors. They conjectured that for a nation to abandon a Constitution, which they had long been accustomed to revere, and suddenly to adopt a new code of laws for their future government, would create a difference in opinion, and thereby raise the voice of contention ; and hence America would fall before she had established her plan of empire.

But their hopes were founded on illusion. Like the sun clothed in all his heavenly splendor arose the federal compact, and diffused its benign influence over the united sons of America. When we for one moment consider the toils, the treasure and the precious blood of our departed countrymen, shed in the purchase of our sacred rights, we must that moment consider ourselves bound to transmit those rights unimpaired to posterity.

The republics that once exulted in our prosperity, that once lamented our misfortunes, have successively fallen a prey to that mighty conqueror who now sways his bloody sceptre in the eastern world.

The genius of Liberty has forsaken the climes of the East, to seek repose amid the verdant hills and fruitful vales of the West ; and, like Noah's dove, she has here plucked the olive leaf, she has here found the place of rest. While the clarion of war continues to summon the nations of Europe to destruction ; while kings and princes are hurled from their stations, and their magnificent dwellings float in " seas of crimson ;" while the temples of christianity are razed to the dust by the hands of some merciless banditti ; " while the seats of science are overturned and the Muses weep ;" America still enjoys the blessings of peace....she still remains a protector to the persecuted exile. We are now in the possession of a Government that is not only sublime in its formation, but pure in its practice. It is here that freedom is fostered by the hand of a bountiful Providence, and supported by the voice of a grateful people : it is here that the altar of religion may " smoke with the purest incense," and it is here that literature finds a patron.

Although our national happiness has been threatened by foreign tyrants ; although our union has been disturbed by the domestic partisans of rebellion and treason ; the patriotic JEFFERSON has penetrated their dark designs, and defeated their vile machinations. That noble statesman, whose wisdom has ever proved a shield against the shafts of malignity, has preserved our honor when surrounded by troubles and misfortunes. His character, when weighed in the scale of rea-



son, will never be found wanting ; viewed by the eye of justice, his reputation will never fade.

While under the auspicious administration of the great and good MADISON, let us imbibe the true republican principles of our parents....let us firmly maintain that dignity which they have supported, and let us carefully retain that charter of Independence, which we have received from their hands.

Let us ever remember that in our patriotism is confided "the repose of the aged and the hope of the infant ;" and that if we sink to indolence, our country sinks to ruin.

Yes, my youthful companions, should we, who have been rocked in the " cradle of freedom," and nursed at the bosom of liberty ; should we suffer Monarchy to raise its baleful head, and rule this favored land, the injured shades of those fallen martyrs, who sacrificed their lives for their country's Independence, would rise from their sepulchres, and even haunt us in our midnight slumbers.

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FINIS.

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