

AN
ORATION,

PRONOUNCED

July 4, 1800,

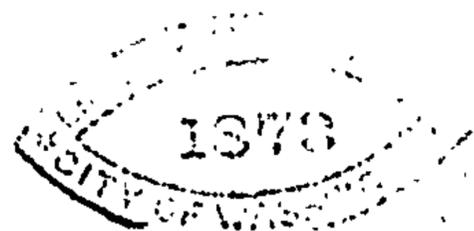
AT THE REQUEST OF THE

INHABITANTS OF THE TOWN OF
BOSTON,

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE ANNIVERSARY OF

American Independence.

By JOSEPH HALL.



Boston.

FROM THE PRINTING-OFFICE OF MANNING & LORING, SPRING-
LANE.

1800.

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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. 1800:

On motion, *Voted*, That the Selectmen be, and hereby are appointed a Committee to wait on JOSEPH HALL, 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 that great National Event—and to request of him a copy for the press.

Attest. WILLIAM COOPER, *Town-Clerk.*

BOSTON, *July 4, 1800.*

GENTLEMEN,

THE political sentiments by me expressed this day, as they were dictated by serious conviction, are freely submitted to your disposal.

With great respect,

I am, Gentlemen,

Your most obedient Servant,

JOSEPH HALL.

The Selectmen of Boston.



O R A T I O N.

DISTINGUISHED for loyalty, industry, and for manners which adorn and support the purest state of civilized society, animated with the feelings of men accustomed to the sweets of freedom, you were impelled, Americans, from principles of justice to yourselves and your posterity to resist the encroachments of British policy.

ATACHMENT to constitutional rights, not a rage for innovation, stable not revolutionary principles dictated your resistance. In vain did you entreat, petition and remonstrate. You were compelled to arm. Friendless and unaided you entered the field against the veteran troops of a mighty nation supported by veteran auxiliaries.

When

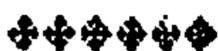


When thus engaged in the arduous conflict and thus unfriended, in presence of the Great Arbiter of nations, you solemnly pronounced your claim to Independence. You firmly resolved at every hazard to support it. This great effort the hostile measures of Britain imposed upon you. This gloriously successful effort has been called a revolution; and the war on your part a revolutionary war, though by you undertaken and supported upon anti-revolutionary principles.

In this all important contest, the Court of Versailles were not prevailed upon to assist you until a powerful and well appointed army, commanded by an experienced and favourite general, were vanquished and made captive by the native valor of free-born Americans. Encouraged by this event, France ardently embraced the long wished for opportunity of humbling a formidable rival. With you, she entered into a defensive treaty. She furnished you succours by land and by sea. Her deranged treasury was exhausted by her naval and military exertions. At your solicitation, she supplied you with money though almost destitute of it herself. The favours and assistance you received from her were seasonable and important. They served to bring the contest
to

to a more speedy issue, and probably lessened the expense of your own blood and treasure. The nature of our obligations to France for her assistance and those arising from our defensive treaty, may be ascertained by a very notable precedent.

FROM motives similar to those which prompted her aid in our war with Britain, she assisted the Seven United Provinces to throw off the Spanish yoke. After a truce of twelve years between Spain and the Provinces, Cardinal de Richlieu with true diplomatic skill persuaded the latter to enter into a treaty for the conquest and partition of the Spanish Low Countries. Open and unsuspecting republicans, their animosity against Spain made them at first blind to the insidious designs of the French Court. They were at length roused to a sense of their real danger. The dictates of self preservation compelled them to withhold from France the supplies stipulated by treaty. Interest and duty obliged them in the face of this treaty to make a separate peace with Spain. The commissioners who concluded this peace and the Dutch patriots who advised and supported it, were charged by the French minister with being bribed and corrupted by Spanish gold. A celebrated author who has written expressly
upon



upon the subject censures the French government and justifies the conduct of the United Provinces. In their behalf he dictates a remonstrance to France of the following tenor.* “We shoo off the Spanish yoke in order that we might be free. In this object you assisted us, on account of its tendency to humble an ambitious enemy who had long disturbed the repose of your provinces, and who had frequently invaded them. As your favours to us in the assistance thus afforded were of a *political* nature, have the justice to require of us only a return in kind. Be satisfied with a *political* gratitude. If it gives you offence because we prefer the neighbourhood of the half-conquered Spaniards to that of a nation rendered formidable by their contempt of danger and by their very services in our favour, you will then be to us what the Spaniards were heretofore. It will become our duty to hate you.”

An apology may be expected for this dull detail of facts and dry exposition of principles. But facts and principles tending to elucidate national rights and duties, ought to be received with the force of novelty, and to make a deeper impression because sanctioned by experience. The peculiar

* Des principes des negociations par M. l'Abbé de Mably.—Page 135.



liar applicability of the subject to our own times recommends it to our particular attention.

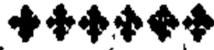
IN support of the neutral policy adopted by the immortal WASHINGTON, and pursued by his able patriotic Successor, in refutation of pretended treaty obligations, and of idle claims of gratitude to France, we have here the written, deliberate opinion of a political writer of the first eminence. This writer was a Frenchman.

IF, however, reasoning from the nature of things, we should not remove that scepticism in relation to the sinister views of France, which has been so frequently manifested since the revolution in that country; if some should yet maintain the generosity of the motives to our alliance which actuated the magnanimous French monarch, still the proceedings in the Congress at Paris are sufficient to open the eyes of blindness and prejudice itself. Pursuant to the policy of Turgot, as displayed in the secret memoirs* of the French cabinet, Vergennes not only recommended the relinquishment of our fisheries, the nursery of our seamen; he even advised us to treat with Great-Britain without an express recognition of our Independence. To the disgrace of our annals, our Commissioners

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missioners

* Les politiques de tous les cabinets de l'Europe. Tome II. fol. 395, &c.



missioners were then enjoined by public authority to consult the French minister, and to be governed by his counsel. The firm and enlightened ADAMS and JAY revolted at the idea. And though assured by Vergennes, that Britain would never cede either of the two points, and though (to use a mild phraseology) *meanly deserted* by one of their colleagues, our Commissioners succeeded to accomplish the treaty of 1783.

UPON the attainment of peace, those of our countrymen, who with valor and success had fought the battles of freedom, retired from the tented field to the bosom of their friends and families, unremunerated but by the proud consciousness of having deserved well of their country. Their modest Chief, accompanied by the grateful admiration of his countrymen, withdrew to the mild retreats of Mount Vernon. Of Timoleon and Paulus Emilius it is recorded, that they were so famous, equally for their virtues and success, as to leave it doubtful whether their great achievements were due to fortune, or to their own prudence and conduct. The character, the services, the virtues of WASHINGTON, are indelibly impressed upon the bleeding hearts of his surviving fellow-citizens. In the attempt to portray them,

them,



them, the pencil of genius itself has despaired of doing him justice.

THE feebleness and inefficiency of the confederated system, by which our national affairs were conducted during the war, were unfolded in all their impotence at the return of peace. Making due allowances for the burthens and expenses of an eight years war prosecuted too in a manner derogatory to the national character of our enemy, did plenty, did the encouragement of useful industry and commerce bear any proportion to the resources of our country? Instead of general regulations to embrace these important objects, each State was governed by a narrow, selfish policy; and under pretence of supporting her own trade and manufactures, carried on a commercial warfare with her sister States. In pursuit of this policy, some men of talents and distinction were so conspicuously active, as to acquire a degree of popularity, and an influence over their fellow-citizens, which a subsequent unrelenting opposition to our present national system has not yet wholly dispossessed them of.

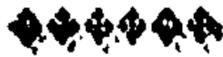
HAD Congress been vested with adequate powers during the war, many serious inconveniences, experienced at its termination, would have been prevented. Our meritorious army
would



would have received reasonable compensation. A more just apportionment of the burthens and expenses of the past eight years would have taken place between the States and amongst individuals.

THE humiliation we were exposed to, for years after peace, must have gratified those proud monarchs, who falsely viewed our contest as the conflict of Republicanism with Monarchy—Falsely viewed, because our object was to preserve and to perpetuate rights and immunities to which we had a constitutional claim, confirmed by prescription. We never entertained the mad project of revolutionizing the world. Fortunately for ourselves and for our posterity, we were unlettered in the mazy lore of modern philosophy. The belief of a Supreme Being, the practice of religious and moral duties, we never viewed as uncongenial with the nature of our civil and political institutions. Nor were we such fanatics in philosophy to court hostility with a nation for a difference of creed in religion or politics. Other nations might be governed by one or more despots, by a Consul or Directory. To us they were unimportant. If they interfered not with our rights, it was our duty and our policy not to intermeddle with their affairs.

FROM



FROM a very natural digression, which none but wild enthusiasts will frown at, I proceed to consider the estimation in which we were holden by European nations, when so much funk in our own. Our foreign trade depended upon courtesy and the momentary caprice of a minister. Louis XVI. conducted in this respect with honorable though not disinterested liberality. His policy towards us was more beneficial than all the friendship and protestations of his unprincipled, short-lived successors. Hitherto their friendly proffers have been uniformly accompanied with every species of hostility.

THE continued though ineffectual efforts of our first Envoy to the Court of St. James to effect a commercial treaty with Great-Britain, prove how lightly she esteemed us. In plain language we were told, "you have not a national government capable of enforcing on your part the observance of a treaty." Our separation from her doubtless mortified her pride. Our disunion and jealousies gratified it. Nor ought we to be surprized if, at this period, she anticipated a re-union. Here, my fellow-citizens, let us pause to reflect upon the perils of our political situation at this anxious crisis. We were distracted by jealousies and disunion. Public credit was destroyed. Every



ery effort to revive it was fruitless. Opposition to its revival, if made by talents, was a sure road to popular favour. The public creditor was beggared by public default. Foreign creditors were pressing, without effect, for the payment of loans made when our all was at stake. This is but a faint sketch of the humiliating picture. We were apparently doomed to all the horrors of anarchy, to become a prey to each other, to become the vile dupes of foreign influence and intrigue.

THIS sad destiny, the Tutelary Genius of America has hitherto averted. By her genial influence, a form of government was by the voice of the people adopted and established, upon "a consolidation of the union of the States." Upon its adoption depended "the prosperity, felicity, safety, perhaps national existence, of the American people." The Constitution, thus adopted, evidenced their virtue and good sense, as it resulted "from a spirit of amity, and of that mutual deference and concession, which the peculiarity of our political situation rendered indispensable." This Constitution thus approved of and adopted by the people of all the States, explicitly vested in the General Government *all the attributes of National Sovereignty*. It as expressly *divested the State Governments* of each and every of those attributes, and particularly prohibited their exercise



exercise of *any act of National Jurisdiction*. Thus was a radical cure provided for the many evils and disorders then experienced; and thus a preventive was furnished against the more serious ills with which we had been menaced.

A POLICY so liberal, so enlightened, so calculated to diminish the influence of men whose popularity and title to public confidence had for their basis specious professions rather than sound political principles, popular appeals rather than public services, was sure to meet with their disapprobation. The sentiments of the people evidenced in favour of the Constitution at the time it was adopted, stifled for a moment the spirit of opposition, and compelled some of its opponents to give their voices in its favour. But I appeal to your sober recollection, and to your present serious conviction, whether that spirit has not burst forth with virulence against every important constitutional act of our national government.

WITH an affectation of regard for the officers and soldiers of our highly deserving "patriot army," these champions of State sovereignty inveighed with bitterness against the funding system, and urged the impracticable scheme of discrimination.

WHEN



WHEN neutrality was enjoined by proclamation, they censured the measure as inconsistent with our treaty obligations, and as the highest pitch of ingratitude to France, then in their view the great model of Republicanism.

WHEN in perfect consistency with our interest, with our dignity, and with good policy, an Envoy was dispatched to Great-Britain to demand reparation for her aggressions, they represented it as unmanly and dishonorable. Of every thing calculated to provoke hostility they were the ready advocates. In the true spirit of gasconade, they attempted to bully Great-Britain with commercial resolutions. They constantly opposed every measure of defence, or of military preparation, tending to enforce the claims of our Envoy, or to express our own sensibility.

WHEN that instrument "pregnant with so much evil," the British treaty, was ratified by the Senate, and so *honorably* disclosed to the public by an *honorable* Senator, they made every exertion to mislead the minds of the people upon the subject. A little modesty and reflection upon this occasion would have dictated on their part a different line of conduct. In proportion as the treaty was unfavourable to the American interests, they



they should have considered themselves responsible for its defects. In proportion as a clamorous opposition prevails in our free government, we shall necessarily lose our influence when treating with any foreign nation. With deep regret I utter it, the affiliated societies of Genet were almost an overmatch for our constituted authorities, when Mr. JAY's nomination took place. Such mistaken principles then actuated many of our citizens, that had our territory, like that of the then free and happy cantons of Switzerland, been contiguous to France, we should have shared their since wretched, remediless fate.

THE French government were soon advised of the strength of the treaty opposition. Happily for our country, they mistook the ebullitions of the moment for an invincible attachment to their disorganizing principles. In order to countenance the phalanx on whose support they depended, and to fulfil the predictions of some of our unworthy citizens, they commenced a predatory war upon our commerce. They insultingly told us, the motives of their conduct were to teach us *respect for our neutral rights*. They censured our administration in every particular that had been urged by their supposed partizans.



These insults and outrages began to produce their natural effect upon an intelligent, high-spirited people. Our overweening attachment began to be superseded by manly resentment. This salutary effect was checked, and the cause of Jacobinism was promoted in our country by a nation, whose blood and treasure had been profusely expended to prevent its deleterious influence in Europe. The unwarrantable capture and condemnation of our vessels in the British West-Indies justly exasperated Americans. This fresh aggression was disavowed by the British cabinet, and imputed to the mistakes and errors of subordinate officers. Changing the source of the aggression neither diminished the responsibility of the British government, restored our property, nor softened our just resentment at the moment. But French depredations continuing, our minister to France not only unaccredited, but treated with a petulance unbecoming the dignity of any government, three Envoys were appointed with full powers to adjust all matters of difference. The contumelious manner in which they were treated, the insidious attempts to persuade them to sacrifice the dignity and interests of the United States, the public anxiety occasioned by the long delay and extra-official intercourse of *one of those Envoys*,
are



are recent in your recollection. The indignation then kindled in every true American bosom ought not to cease to operate, until a *real spirit of amity* on the part of France shall in some measure atone for her past outrages.

AFTER her repeated rejection of the Olive Branch, after experiencing from her new and aggravated hostilities, our government resolved upon the protection of our commerce. Our trading vessels were suffered to arm. Public ships of force were equipped and commissioned to convoy our trade, and to capture the French vessels that annoyed it. The beneficial consequences that have resulted from these indispensable, though expensive measures, have been felt and recognized throughout the whole American nation. Millions have been saved by them from French rapacity; and the labours of the mechanic, the tradesman, the husbandman and the merchant, been essentially promoted. Yet these important measures, so promotive of our solid interests, were opposed violently by some of our citizens. If they were actuated by mistaken, not perverse principles, we ought to forgive them. But, until the desolating war, which convulses Europe to its centre, be terminated, we ought not to forget them; much less ought we to testify our gratitude for their

patriotic



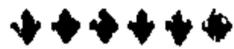
patriotic services by electing them our **Governors** or **Legislators**.

WHEN we consider the difficulty of forming a Constitution of government for five millions of freemen, scattered over an immense territory, of different habits, accustomed to different laws and usages, of strong local prejudices, naturally jealous of the governors even of their own choice, we could not rationally expect our national government to be administered without opposition.

WHEN we reflect that it scarcely began to operate before the fascinating jargon of modern French principles were propagated throughout our country, we are struck with admiration of the virtues and intelligence of our countrymen.

WHEN we review the wanton provocations to hostility which we have received, as well from Great-Britain as from France, though not in equal degree, we feel a pride, as Americans, in the prudence, moderation, wisdom and sound policy of our National Administration.

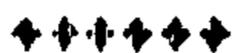
WHEN we contemplate the consequences which have resulted from our Independence, and from the operation of our national government, which alone can support it, gratitude to Heaven compels us to ascribe to the God of our fore-
fathers



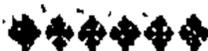
fathers the innumerable blessings we enjoy as a people.

If we contrast the gloomy period between 1783 and 1788 with the brightening prospect which our existing national system has continued to develop, we shall find abundant reason to revere its wisdom and efficacy, to persist in its support, and to pursue the steady policy by which it has been directed. Notwithstanding the depredations we have suffered externally ; although a mortal pestilence has repeatedly ravaged our cities ; and although two unprovoked rebellions have enormously augmented our expenditures ; yet our public credit stands upon an unshaken basis, our commerce has extended, our manufactures have advanced, our agriculture is improved, our wealth and population have increased in an unparalleled manner. Such have hitherto been the happy results of our wise national policy. But in the apprehension of some good men, clouds and darkness await us.

WE hear gloomy predictions of the probable consequences of our mission to France, as respects our interior and foreign concerns. Should a free intercourse now take place between her and us, it is feared that her former partizans in our country will supplant in the public confidence its long-tried,



long-tryed, stedfast friends, and materially change its policy. It is to be hoped that the understanding and virtue of Americans will prevent so great a public calamity. We are induced to cherish this hope, when we reflect that even in those parts of our Commonwealth most disaffected to our national policy, opposition candidates are studious to disavow any partiality to France, and loudly to vaunt of their federalism, the better to support their pretensions to public confidence. With respect to our foreign concerns, it is apprehended that an adjustment with France during the European contest will excite the enmity of Britain. Let us not, by opposing our administration, or by predicting the hostility of Britain, invite it. If we remain true to ourselves, and continue to place a manly confidence in our national government and administration, we shall have no reason to dread the frowns or hostility of any nation, however potent ; more especially of a nation that is generally governed by wise maxims of policy, and that has so lately denounced to the world the unprincipled interference of France in the affairs of other nations. Be the consequences of the mission favorable or otherwise, it has been adopted by constitutional authority, and as good citizens we are pledged to abide the issue.



THE future destiny of the American empire depends upon the constancy, intelligence and virtue of the American people. To render it truly great and glorious, they must continue cordially and constitutionally to support our national government, renouncing the absurd, destructive, unconstitutional doctrine of State sovereignty.

The pernicious influence of foreign incendiaries must be controlled by Alien Acts. The tongue of foul slander against our public functionaries must be curbed by wholesome Seditious Acts. To the honor of my native countrymen be it spoken, few indeed of them have been convicted of sedition. The operation of the act against this dangerous crime has been chiefly confined to the punishment of *foreign renegades*. This circumstance alone proves its *expediency*. The constitutionality of both acts remains unimpeached, maugre the elaborate report to the Virginia Legislature, drawn by the misdirected pen of the specious Madison. Had such salutary laws been adopted by the free republics of Greece, neither the emissaries nor the gold of Philip would have sapped their freedom.

THE situation of our territory, from north to south embraced by the ocean, the abundance and the variety of its productions, the industry
and



and hardy enterprize of its inhabitants, direct our destiny as a commercial people. Dear-bought experience instructs us, that we can look to ourselves alone for the protection of our commerce. We have witnessed the operation upon neutrals of the *jus gentium*, as recognized by great maritime nations, who are never neutrals themselves when any maritime power is a belligerent. We have witnessed how little favorable to the rights of neutrality are the opinions of their learned judges and civilians. Hence we see the absolute necessity of a respectable naval establishment,† not for the purposes of foreign conquest or of annoyance to the trade of other nations, but solely for the protection of our own.

“ Let us observe good faith and justice towards all nations ; let us cultivate peace and harmony with all,” as far as we can consistently do it ; let us pursue a steady system of policy, without which no nation can become respectable ; let us respect ourselves and our own institutions, and we shall not fail to command the respect of foreign nations.

† As our exports principally consist of the produce of the farmer's industry, his peculiar interest in the support of a navy must be obvious to the slightest observer.