

W. W. W.
O R A T I O N

DELIVERED IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH,

AUGUSTA,

ON THE

FOURTH OF JULY, ONE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED

AND NINETY-EIGHT,

BEING THE TWENTY-SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

By WILLIAM J. HOBBY, Esq.

AUGUSTA:

PRINTED BY JOHN ERDMAN SMITH.

MDCXC VIII.

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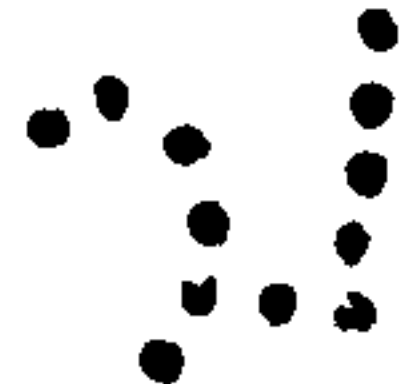
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THE following address was prepared and delivered by WILLIAM J. HOBBY, Esq. in St. Paul's Church on the 4th of July last, at the particular request of the Volunteer Artillery and Light Infantry Companies of Augusta, and was received with general applause, not only by those companies, but by a very large and respectable audience. From the peculiar fitness of the address to the present situation of our country, many persons expressed a wish that it might be published, and a Committee of the Companies requested of Mr. Hobby a manuscript copy thereof, which he politely furnished.

EDITOR.

Augusta, August, 1798.



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AN ORATION, &c.



FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS,

WE are assembled at this time to celebrate our national birth day---to commemorate the event which gave the United States an important rank among the nations of the earth, and secured to millions of people the blessings of freedom and independence. The design of celebrating this anniversary, is not to preserve national animosities, or to revive national enmities; but to unite us in sincere acknowledgments to the benevolent Parent of Nature, for the signal benefits conferred on our country---to bring to grateful remembrance, that our liberties are under Heaven the effects of our own exertions---bought with the blood of our fellow citizens: And by this annual assemblage, we, in a manner, mutually agree to guard our sacred rights, and tacitly pledge ourselves to each other, that although we can recur in recollection to the time when our independence commenced, we resolve *never* to see the time when it shall cease to exist.

It

~~It would be trespassing on your patience to at-~~
tempt a review of the various circumstances which
led to the emancipation of our country, or to
conjectures on the consequences which will pro-
bably result therefrom; But a few cursory re-
marks on past events, concluding with some ob-
servations on present appearances, will, I trust,
be excused by the candid audience I have now
the honour to address, and particularly so, by
those respectable volunteer companies, whose
request imposed on me a task to which I feel my-
self inadequate.

THE American Revolution did not originate in
that restless uneasiness so natural to the human
mind; but resulted from virtuous exertions ex-
cited by rational reflections: When we discovered
the government to which we had been accus-
tomed, pursuing a system of policy hostile to our in-
terests, and manifesting a determination to reduce
us to a state of vassalage inconsistent with the dig-
nity of man: That a vast extensive continent,
possessing all the varieties of soil and climate,
should be subject to the controul of an island, at
three thousand miles distance, appeared a politi-
cal absurdity to every rational mind; and philo-
sophic characters were expecting, with confidence,
the approach of the period, when America should
assume the station destined for her by the God of
Nature: The unjust aggressions of Great-Britain
hastened her rise to glory; and a decree of parlia-
ment of their right by law "to bind the Americans in

all cases whatsoever," gave occasion for the practical exercise of those principles which had before been the subject only of theoretical reasoning: The flame of freedom was kindled in our land, and its rays darted with the rapidity of the electrical fluid, from one end of the continent to the other---the sound of liberty vibrated on every ear ---thrilled through every heart, and the people rose, in a mighty mass, determining to sacrifice their lives, or liberate their country from foreign dominion. For well they knew---

" That wanting VIRTUE life is pain and woe,

" That wanting LIBERTY, even virtue mourns

" And looks around for happiness in vain."

THOSE venerable sages and fathers of the land who composed the American Congress in 1776, on the 4th day of July declared the United States free and independent; which declaration was received with universal rejoicings by the American people, and resounded with loud shouts and *feu de joie* from the American army: And a seven years following war, successfully sustained against the strenuous exertions of the most powerful nation in Europe, confirmed the sincerity of the declaration, evinced the impossibility of subduing men who preferred death to slavery---and in letters of blood recorded this important truth, that the Americans have the will and the capacity to defend their rights against any foreign foe whatever.

PEACE being established, the American people
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on reviewing their confederated system which had been adopted as it were on the spur of the occasion, found it incompleat, calculated only for a time of general danger, and wholly insufficient to preserve the dignity of the nation, and to secure the diversified interests of an extensive community. This gave occasion to an event new in the political world---a peaceful revolution in government, scarcely less surprizing than the violent one which preceeded it. A delegation from the several states convened at Philadelphia, and after wise deliberation, “in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and posterity” ordained and established the Federal Constitution. To see a whole people laying aside their government from a conviction of its insufficiency to secure the blessings contemplated to result from the social compact---returning as it were to a state of nature---and suddenly adopting a new system, was a singular display of national wisdom; and while mankind waited the issue in silent suspence, the new government was organized, and the great and good man, who had led our troops in war, was called on to take the helm in peace, and guide our political barque to the haven of safety and happiness.

Thus was the revolution compleated, and thus the seal of permanency affixed to our independence.

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THESE combined events have given to the United States a conspicuous station among the independent nations of the earth--and have opened new sources of comfort to the benevolent heart; they have also imposed on us a lasting obligation, to be ever ready, in imitation of the departed heroes of the revolution, to sacrifice our lives in defending the rights, and in vindicating the honour of our country; they have advanced to perfection the science of legislation, and instructed mankind in the principles of rational freedom.

TYRANNY shall here never feast on the blood of the innocent, and ambition shall never succeed in any endeavours to trample on the rights of the people.

THE Sun of Reason has arisen on our land and dispelled the clouds which have heretofore obscured the mind of man--Rational toleration has liberated religion from the shackles of superstition, and preserved in its purity the worship of God. Literature, patronized by virtue, has extended, and is extending its delightful influence: The arts and sciences, planted in the soil of freedom, flourish and grow with singular luxuriance: And the architects, the historians, the poets, the orators, and the legislators of our country are preparing to transcend the splendid exhibitions of genius in the Eastern World. Philosophy has established here her throne of wisdom, and with complacent countenance, she bids the genius of liberty

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join with truth and reason, in extending universal knowledge, and in advancing to perfection the moral virtues : While the American Eagle, with its new constellation, soaring on the wings of commerce, establishes a peaceful intercourse with remote nations, and diffuses through our country the productions of all the earth.

GLADLY would we devote the present time to eulogiums on the characters concerned in the American revolution, and in anticipating the future glory and happiness of these states ; but scenes, less pleasing, though not less important, demand our attention, and without aspiring at elegance, permit me to attend to facts, as we turn our attention to the present situation of our country in its relation to foreign powers.

THROUGH the wisdom of her administration, America has preserved a neutral situation during the commotions which have for years agitated the European World, and still wishes to preserve it by an inflexible adherence to existing treaties, and a due observance of the law of nations : And though efforts have been made by the two principal contending powers to draw her into the tumultuous vortex, she has undeviatingly attended to the principles of justice, and shewn no preference, and given no assistance to either, incompatible with strict neutrality ; and when injuries committed by those powers created between them and her a difference, she wisely sought

an accommodation by pacific negociation. In this, with Great-Britain, she was happily successful; but her pacific overtures to France have been treated with contempt, and the evident designs of that nation, bid us prepare for a state of hostilities with them.

THE time once was when the French nation possessed our sincere friendship, our best wishes: When their object appeared to be to establish for themselves a government on the principles of reason and natural justice, we wished them success; but when we see them forcibly prescribing governments for other nations, and wishing to give law to the world, we cannot but pray for a check to their mad career.

NATIONS, with respect to their internal police, are to each other what individuals are in a state of nature, totally independent, and at liberty to establish such rules for their own regulation, as their own wisdom shall suggest, so long as they do not disturb the quiet, nor intrude upon the rights of others. And as no individual has a right to interfere in the personal or domestic concerns of another, so no nation has a right to interfere in, or prescribe, the constitutional regulations of another; every nation having an inherent right to regulate its own concerns, and to establish its own government. If one nation establishes a monarchical, and another a republican form of government, they both exercise their
natural

natural privilege, and neither is authorised to censure or controul the other; each being in this respect sole and absolute judge of the government best suited to its own condition, and at liberty to adopt it. And from the right of establishing a government, necessarily results the right of altering it: Human nature is subject to various vicissitudes; and the condition of man is so perpetually changing, that the most perfect system to-day, may, from the mutability of temporal concerns, become imperfect to-morrow, and, in a short time, totally defective; and a *power* of change must therefore be reserved, or the government *vainly* attempted to be founded on principles of such pliability as to accommodate itself to every variation. But government, when formed, is intended for durability, and when established, and during its continuance, ought to be inflexibly adhered to, and energetically administered: Still there must be a *power reserved* of even laying it aside and adopting another; otherwise man at *one time* possesses a right which at another time he cannot enjoy. But the power of change reserved, by no means argues the propriety of frequently exercising it, and rational men, and sound politicians, will be extremely cautious, how they attempt the dangerous experiment of altering an established system of government, the good effects of which they experience; lest by an over-readiness to remedy imaginary inconveniencies, they introduce serious evils, and place it in the power of the discontented

vented to introduce political fluctuation, where the utmost stability ought to obtain.

THE principles here suggested are, with others equally important, preserved in full perfection in the Federal Constitution, which is unquestionably the most perfect social compact the wisdom of man has hitherto devised. Most of the governments of the Old World are founded on conquest, and to this day exhibit some proofs of their violent origin; our government founded in reason, and the free choice of the people, possesses the perfections, without the defects, of former establishments, and provides a constitutional mode of amendment when a change in our condition shall require an alteration.

THIS obvious right of nations, to form their own regulations, was acknowledged by the French republic in the early period of their revolution, when they decreed, with a semblance of sincerity; that they would not interfere in the government of other nations, nor suffer other nations to interfere in theirs: But this principle they soon abandoned, and we now see them manifesting designs hostile to the natural rights of all mankind; their troops invading surrounding nations---plundering defenceless cities---ransacking sacred temples---levying unjust contributions---overturning social compacts and robbing unoffending people under the vile pretext of giving, or enforcing upon them, a free government; that
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is, a government free from all ingredients of their own choice, and such only as these tyrannic *liberators* please to prescribe. France has exhibited the strange political folicism of republican tyranny---a tyranny which sets parallel at defiance, and makes despotism blush for its former moderation. Turn your eyes to the European World and see the horrid desolation, the scenes of general distress, the anarchy, confusion, and unequalled sufferings of those countries, where French troops have enforced the acceptance of French politics, as well as those, where the desire of innovation has countenanced and admitted French principles. Wherever the troops of the directory have marched as foes, destruction and death have followed their course; and wherever they have been received as friends, with the fraternal embrace they have introduced misery and ruin, resembling the traitor Judas who betrayed the Holy Saviour with a kiss. And not content with the diabolical progress they have made throughout Europe, they now turn their attention to our country, and make war upon our rights: We now see them, regardless of their plighted faith, transgressing the sacred rules of justice---violating the laws of nations---capturing our ships---interrupting our commercial intercourse, and rejecting our ministers of peace: Their repeated injuries and insults have been borne with a moderation bordering upon impropriety, and pacific measures have been pursued from a wish to avoid those evils, which war in a
greater

greater or less degree, is sure to bring upon contending nations. But our pacific overtures have not only been rejected and our ministers insulted, but the sum of thirty millions of dollars is in fact required to be advanced---not as the price of peace---of security---of uninterrupted liberty or of French friendship, but as the price of being admitted to an audience with the dread directory; to be told by them what further insults we must submit to; what further sums they will graciously please to demand.---Their ears are shut to the voice of justice, and every spark of virtue appears to be extinguished in that deluded country: Intoxicated with success, they deem their troops irresistible, and look forward to the day, when the independent nations of the earth shall become tributary to, or appendages of, the *Terrible Republic*.

THE directory charmed with human misery, elated with recent successes, and deeming themselves the arbiters of fate, are fast accelerating the ruin of their own country---their banquet will hereafter be the confusion and distress of their own citizens---their music the tremendous groans of an expiring republic: Already having passed their splendid meridian, and abandoned the virtue necessary to their existence, they will suddenly be involved in darkness, and the hour unexpectedly approach, when France, like imperial Rome, shall be left to stalk with melancholy aspect, among the ghosts of perished nations.

THE United States uniformly adhering to the
principles

principles of justice, have in no instance given to France the least cause for those violent abuses and piratical depredations, which she has authorized and committed; but readily afforded her all the assistance consistent with neutrality, and manifested for her a friendship from the commencement of her revolution, till her infamous policy and inconsistent conduct declared her, in unequivocal terms, to be the enemy of the human race. From the commencement of their troubles have the French government in one way and another endeavoured to involve these states in European commotions. Do we not all recollect that a French minister, before he was received by our government, commissioned privateers in our ports, and afterwards attempted to raise troops in our country, assuming a dictatorship over our president, and upbraiding him with insolent language, because he had construed a treaty different from the construction given to it by his own heated imagination? The long and interesting correspondence which then took place between the secretary of state and Mr. Genet, though it did not silence that hot-headed character, saved the United States from the intended evil, and convinced the world of their determination to discharge their *relative* duties to mankind, and their *absolute* duties to themselves.

WHILE at that important period we view our then great and beloved President, the head and representative of a free people, we see new traits of wisdom embellish his character, and reiterated

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love for his country, adorn and regulate his conduct---we see him steadily pursuing the good of the Union, observing faithfully existing treaties, submitting his conduct to the examination of his constituents, still preserving his own respectability and the dignity of the nation. With singular pleasure do we dwell on his character. Through a long and an arduous war, he led our armies to battle and to conquest, and when peace extended her olive wings, he was again called by his country, to public life; and though he might safely have retired with a character un sullied, and a reputation unequalled, yet at the sollicitations of his fellow citizens, he left his peaceful retirement and again embarked on the troublesome ocean of political life; where he exhibited the same brilliant talents, the same disinterested patriotism, which distinguished his former conduct: And after seeing his country by his wise administration rise with unprecedented rapidity to wealth and greatness---possessing the confidence of his fellow citizens and the admiration of the world, he voluntarily retired, to enjoy in the evening of his days, that domestic peace, tranquility and happiness, which are the never failing attendants on a life of virtue. While the Sun shall continue with his beams to make glad the earth---While freedom shall be dear to man, even till the "Angel shall stand, one foot upon the water and one on the land, and declare that time shall be no more," shall the name of WASHINGTON be held in dear remembrance and his character contemplated with gratitude and joy.

GENET'S scheme, though defeated, was not abandoned by the government he represented, and the insidious policy which he pursued, has been uniformly continued to the present day, and unwearied efforts have been made to establish a difference between the American people and their government; till finding their dark machinations counteracted by the watchful vigilance of the federal executive, the unprincipled directory now unveil their designs, and not only acknowledge their determination to subdue this country, but tell us, with insolent confidence, they have here a large party, who will aid their nefarious purposes. But in this, I trust, they are deceived; the citizens of these states will not readily abandon the government of their choice---a government which secures to them the full enjoyment of all their rights, and affords to all, the *equal* benefit, and *equal* protection of law.

IN a country so extensive as ours, possessing such a diversity of character and interest, it is not astonishing that there should be found friends and enemies of many of the ordinary measures of administration, and superficial foreigners may imagine the freedom of their political discussions evidence a desire of change---But though there may be found here as in all governments, persons who do not in every instance approve the measures of administration, yet whenever the question comes to be between the *United States* and a *foreign power*, there will, I trust, be found few enemies to our country.

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THE rage for experiments--the jealousy of rulers, the desire of adopting things new, because they have *not been* tried, was never before perhaps carried to such an extravagant pitch as at the present day: But it is presumable *we* have not attained such a height of political folly as to desire to lay aside our government, merely because it is established, and to adopt in its stead the visionary whims of fanatic revolutionists. Our government is the result of the concentrated wisdom of our country, and approaches so near perfection, that there can be little doubt but a change by *consent*, would be for the worse---a change by force, would destroy our freedom.

IF however there are any still wedded to revolutionary principles, still dissatisfied with their government, and disposed to favour the aspiring views of the French directory, to them permit a few concluding observations.

WE, my friends, are all brothers---members of the same political family, the head whereof is the government, which, with parental care and affectionate solicitude, watches over our interests, guards our rights, and secures to us the free and uninterrupted enjoyment of all our priviledges; and could our situation be bettered were a foreign foe to succeed in destroying our family compact and in depriving us of our family inheritance? Think you that hostile troops will, at the risque of their lives, cross an extensive ocean and invade a neutral power, for the purpose of rewarding their friends, or of diffusing general happiness? Can you live in society without government, and if you are displeas'd with

a government of your own choice, founded on virtue, will you be better satisfied with a government forced upon you by military power, and founded on the destruction of every moral principle? Be not deceived by the friendly professions and pretensions of the agents of France, nor imagine the French nation have your interests at heart. Disinterested friendship of nations is an imaginary phantom which never yet had existence in fact; their own aggrandizement is the object of the directory of France, to effect which they would trample, as they do trample, on all laws human and divine: And could the man who would assist in their wicked designs against this country, justify his conduct to his fellow men—his conscience—or his God? On the one hand we have every thing to loose—on the other hand nothing to gain. For were success to attend the schemes of the directory against this country, could they bring to us one additional blessing? Could they liberate us from any thing but order, happiness and liberty, could they reward us with any thing but confusion, distress and slavery?

ARE not our rulers, from the highest to the lowest, of our own choice, periodically elected, and subject to all the regulations which they prescribe? Are they not our fathers—brothers—friends and fellow citizens; united with us in the *same* cause—bound by the *same* interests and influenced by the *same* principles? Is not our beloved Federal Head the tried friend of his country? Was he not an early advocate for, and an active assistant in establishing American liberty? And together with the great talents
with

with which the Benevolent Author of Nature has endued him, has he not the acknowledged character of an honest man? Is it within the limits of possibility that the American administration should have interests separate from the American people? Are not our government and our people the same, and would not the ruin of one prove the inevitable destruction of the other? To be dissatisfied then with our government, is to be dissatisfied with ourselves, and to be jealous of our rulers, is to question our own integrity.

WHEN we see the gloomy scenes exhibited in the Old World, and observe the spreading of principles which have shaken to the foundation the governments of Europe---When we view the destructive progress of the French abroad, and observe their detestable policy at home---when we see their troops spreading desolation far and wide---city after city falling a prey to their ambition, and town after town pillaged for their avarice---when we see undefending nations subdued and neutral powers destroyed---the temples of God overthrown---religion and moral virtue trodden under foot: When we see the once flourishing states of Holland undone---Venice blotted from the map of the world, partitioned out and no longer a nation---Switzerland invaded and its inhabitants cruelly massacred---Portugal offered for sale, offered to be bartered with Spain for territories in the vicinity of the United States, and America threatened with chastisement for injuries---not that she has done, but for injuries received; can we desire an increase of the general calamity, and wish to introduce

roduce destruction into the bosom of our country? O Americans! Guard against foreign influence, and set your faces against principles which tend to destroy every social comfort; show a united attachment to your government, discover the firmness and energy manifested by the executive of the United States, and resolve to support the constituted authorities of your country; then will the clouds which appear to be gathering in your political horizon be dispersed, or should the impending tempest burst on your shore, it will spend its rage in vain, and leave you as unhurt as the solid rock which has for ages resisted the dashing of the waves.

BUT if a love of peace, of order, of *individual* security and happiness, will not attach you to your government, let the love of your wives and your children---the solicitude you must feel for the welfare of the fair daughters of Columbia, warm and animate you to active exertions for *their* security. What would be your sensations, O husbands! to see your wives---what your reflections, O fathers! to see your daughters---what your feelings, O brave American youth! to see your amiable and beloved female companions, without whose delightful society life is not worth enduring, to see them subjected to a foreign foe, placed within the power of those lawless hordes, who have reduced iniquity to system, sanctioned immorality, and openly denied the influence of religion? May your readiness to protect them show you deserving of their friendship, and may no enchanting smile delight, and no fair hand make happy the man who in the hour of danger will desert his country's cause.

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IN these southern states, my friends, we have not only common incitements to guard against those disorganizing principles which overturn social compacts, and introduce that impiety, immorality and infidelity, which will eventually destroy a people; but our local situation and circumstances may render us subject to a repetition of the horrid massacres of Fort Dauphin and the barbarities of Cape François; and should these ever make their appearance here, let not the man who has favoured or countenanced the evil expect to escape the general calamity. For, be assured, should the noble fabric which has been raised by united exertions, founded on virtue, and cemented by the blood of our country, be overthrown by the fraud or the force of a foreign foe, the man who has meanly aided the destruction, with him who has nobly opposed, will alike be buried in its ruins. But the ardour and military spirit discoverable in all parts of the Union---the pleasing military appearance now before our eyes, inspire a firm and confident belief, that the wisdom and bravery of the American people will forever guard the rights---vindicate the honor, and defend the government of their country; and should the directory of France, in pursuit of universal dominion, attempt by force the liberties of these states, they will find here a virtuous phalanx successfully resist every encroachment, whether impelled by an individual despot or a five headed tyrant: And I doubt not but almost every American bosom this day, secretly resolves, *never* to abandon that independence, the anniversary of which he rejoices to celebrate.

MAY

MAY the Almighty Ruler of Heaven and Earth, who holds the scales of universal empire, and overrules the fate of nations, unite the hearts of our citizens in an unshaken attachment to the cause and the interest of their country : And may the United States forever remain unequalled in the virtue of their rulers, the prosperity and happiness of their citizens—the security and peace—the freedom and independence of their government.



X

Isaac Malone.

Augusta

Georgia

Mr. S.