

AN
ORATION,

DELIVERED IN

WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS,

ON THE

FOURTH OF JULY, 1808,

IN COMMEMORATION OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

BY MAJOR ESTES HOWE.

"Submission never yet far be industries to encroachments.
"If we must fall, let us fall freemen—if we must perish, let it be
"in defence of our rights."

Hon. J. Q. ADAMS.

WORCESTER

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1808.

WARREN, July 4, 1862.

THE Undersigned, a COMMITTEE appointed by the REPUBLICANS this day convened at Warren for the celebration of the Anniversary of AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE, in their name, express to Major Howe a high gratification with his spirited, independent and dignified performance, and request a copy of his ORATION for the Press.

Major Howe.

MERRICK RICE,
TIMOTHY WHITING,
LEVI LINCOLN, Jun.

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July 4, 1862.

GENTLEMEN,

IN complying with your request, I sacrifice many personal considerations, which ought to have forbid a publication of the enclosed sheets, written under peculiar embarrassments.—With this remark I surrender them to your disposal.

I am Gentlemen with respect,

Yours, &c.

E. HOWE

The COMMITTEE appointed, &c.

ORATION.

HAIL Independence, the birth day of our National existence, hail ! Let not the sons of patriotism, the sacred votaries of freedom, profane this day, by engaging in the secular concerns of life ; but let them devoutly commemorate the intrepid courage and resolute determinations of our ancestors on this our Anniversary.

We would dwell with pleasurable remembrance upon those scenes which led to the security of our privileges, our peace and Independence : But to recount to you the courageous achievements of those who fought our Revolutionary Battles—To depict to you the turpitude and barbarity of those whose object it was to continue us under the thralldom of slavery, the more effectually to secure to themselves their tinsel'd greatness—To pourtray to you the almost indescribable scenes of cold hearted cruelty, which exhibited itself in ten thousand varying forms upon the heights of Charlestown, where many brave and god-like Heroes fought, and alas ! where they fell—To paint to you the wanton fury and unheard of treacherous baseness, which characterized the incendiaries of Falmouth and Fairfield, where neither the widow's shrieks, nor the plaintive cries of the orphan, could check them in their mad career—To relate to you the lamentable situation of the City of New-York ; how the enterprizing

merchants were compelled to evacuate their private dwellings, to make way for those pillagers of human happiness; where even the temples of sacred worship were profanated, by being converted into prison houses, the awful receptacles of our brave countrymen, and where hunger, thirst, and disease sharpened the paroxysm of expiring nature,—would at this time be unacceptable, when events, vast and momentous in their effects, are daily passing in review before us.

A RECITAL of this nature would tend rather to depress, than exhilarate your spirits and mar the delights of the day: It would tend to probe the wounds of extreme anguish, which long since, the veil of forgetfulness has covered from remembrance—But publicly to express our profound gratitude to those, who braved the fatigues and perils of '75, is a debt we cheerfully acknowledge, and is only to give loose to those feelings inherent in the breast of every patriot.

THE present situation of our country demands our first and serious consideration. National festivities, like ours, are to perpetuate the glorious principles of freedom, to cement in bonds of unity the friends of Liberty, the more effectually to repel any encroachments upon our rights, whether domestic or foreign. To be lukewarm in the defence of our unalienable privileges and immunities, established only by the price of blood, is worse than sacrilege. Vigor, energy and decision are wanting to quell this unnatural opposition, and to secure from the unhallowed grasp of the infuriated assailant, and transmit unmutated, that fair fabric, formed and fashioned by the hands of wisdom, the American Constitution, to succeed.

ing ages. A Constitution, at once the wonder and admiration of the world, brought into existence by the profound erudition and legislative skill of a band of patriots and sages, and re-uniting in bonds of union, thirteen different confederacies, once trembling on the precipice of civil destruction. The blessings we have been made the recipients of under its benign influence, convince us, that it is not to be bartered or sold only at the price it cost: and though the exclusive friends to order, the American Triumvirate, have met in conclave to concert expedients for its subjugation, that on the tomb of Republicanism may be erected majestic splendor and long wished for nobility:—though wonderful efforts have been made to reassume the reins of government, that they might “Drive us, like wrecks, down the rough tide of power”; yet the honest indignation of integrity and patriotism has repelled them in their grand attempts. Their momentary triumph in Massachusetts, gained by stealth and stratagem, instead of affording courage and consolation, is like the last stages of a consumption, portending their own certain and speedy dissolution. Principles, bottomed upon self-interest and self-aggrandizement, cannot, as yet, germinate in a country like ours. There is too much intelligence in the citizen to surrender his rights, even for splendid vassalage. Every federal draft upon the privileges of the people, will be manfully opposed by correct Republicans. The boasted preponderance of wealth, talents and religion is not to dispossess us of our Independence; we will never bend the knee to the sovereign pleasure of an American Prince or Potentate, or do homage by compulsion, to hereditary greatness. Here distinction alone has its origin from real virtue and estimated merit—The names of Duke and Marquis have no place in the Re-

publican Nomenclature—We have no star or garter, the tinsel'd playthings of ideots and fools.

But notwithstanding we have such a glorious Constitution, the ark of our political safety, a government energetic, through the medium of lenient and efficient laws, which if duly administered, shelters and protects the life, the respectability, the property, the civil and religious rights of every individual member of the community, a country flowing in rich profusion, with all the conveniences, and even luxuries of life, yet there are some, too many, it is feared, who have been, by the suffrages of a great and enlightened people, promoted to some of the first offices of trust and emolument in the Union, who have become traitors to good principles, and the avowed profelytes of treason and rebellion. We are called upon in charity to apply that most excellent maxim, that every man is presumed innocent, unless by his peers pronounced guilty.

THAT Burr and his confederates in their accursed plot of destruction, have passed through several trials, and that the crimes charged against them have been fairly proved, never can, no, never will be questioned. But the same demoralizing spirit that instigated them to commit the offence, rescued them from merited punishment.—Painful and calamitous as it may be to the mind of every American, this monster treason, and the whole herd of crimes and misdemeanors, her wedded friends and votaries, are permitted to stalk through the country, spreading far and wide, their deadly pestilence ; to march with impunity into our temples, dedicated to justice ; to set at naught and defiance the administration of the same : nor

is this the only place of their resort : we discover them sitting in our great National Councils, clothed with the dignified robes of office, and every attempt to remove or expel this public nuisance proves abortive.

'To whom do these conspirers against their country's happiness flee for aid and refuge ? Who is there among us that has the hardihood and baseness to espouse their cause, unless their breasts are poisoned by a partial embracement of similar motives ? Why are they suffered to traverse the land, sacred to freedom, gaining satellites by their subtlety and cunning ; in proffering to the poor the glittering trappings of wealth and splendor, to the rich titles of supremacy and greatness ; thus by numbers acquiring majesty and strength, to carry decidedly into operation a plan, which would deprive millions of their present ease and happiness.

But have they not had foreign as well as domestic aid ? Does not the expedition of Miranda, seem like the prologue to Burr's would-be tragedy ? Are they not component parts, which, when blended, make a perfect whole ? The former, as well as the latter, have met with a similar fate. The one has been detected, and his nefarious designs in some measure frustrated, by the watchful vigilance of intelligent freemen ; while the other, even the elements of Heaven conspired against him, and rendered impossible the grand plan of co-operation. The one, as well as the other, was manifestly under the influence and complete control of the British Ministry, whose policy is, and always has been, to confuse and interrupt the harmony of every nation by their pretended friendly interference. By their plausible insinuations, the King

of Prussia had like to have lost the royal ensigns of office, and the blood stained fields of his dominions, witnesseth the destruction of his subjects. A similar fate awaited the Russian nation ; when on the eve of interminable ruin, she regained by honorable negociation, what the battles of Austerlitz and Jena, in prophetic language, declared she must lose.

Thus have they tampered with *our* national dignity, and trampled upon our neutral rights.

They have set at defiance the laws of Nations, and interest alone marks the bounds of their justice.

Thus wantonly has that nation committed depredations upon our commerce, by plundering our ships, and the impressment of our seamen. Public armed American ships, floating within our own waters, are not exempted from their piratical grasp—The attack upon the Chesapeake was as unprincipled as outrageous. The capturing of our seamen aboard of her, native citizens of the United States, passing them through a sham trial, and even hanging one of them at the yard arm, for the express purpose of cloaking their brutal and unjustifiable conduct, exactly comports with true British honor, and is characteristic of the British nation. Let a Berkeley command, and Humphreys is ready to execute the mandate, if stamped in blood. For his courageous attack upon a ship making no resistance, he is now enjoying what Whitby, the murderer of Peirce did, applause and promotion.

For a moment, when the mind was not shackled by bias or prejudice, when it viewed the aggression, not the hand which committed it, when the sanguinary tale was

rehearsed, garbed in truth, the blood of every American ran pure in his veins : all as one, proclaimed an injury added to insult : All as one, demanded reparation for this violation of justice and hospitality. Prompt and decisive measures were adopted by the Executive, to prevent a return of a similar calamity. He issued his proclamation couched in bold and energetic language, expressive of the love he bore his country's good. But the restless and aspiring demagogue beheld in torment the unanimity of our fellow-citizens in properly resenting this national insult upon our dignity.

THE trump of slander and crimination was sounded, and many listened to its hideous yell ; while the somnific *Rosé* was presented, bearing the appellation of *Embassador Extra*. that we might under its genial fragrance, sleep into oblivion, that malignant, premeditated attack.

MANY are dozing away the abuse in all the luxury of stupidity. Many under the magic influence of British gold, are adopting every expedient to convince the world, that it is no crime to rob and plunder our property, because other nations have been guilty of similar piracies.

IN this embarrassed situation of our country ; our dignity and Independence, the pride and boast of every patriot, was to be preserved. It is uniformly conceded, that the commerce of the United States is not to be arrested on ordinary occasions. Great and important events alone are sufficient to dispossess us of this invaluable privilege. But when we view the contending Empires of Europe issuing their blockading decrees, both wicked and preposterous, not founded in justice, principle, or the laws

of nations, subverting at once the right of neutrality, operating as a *damper* upon our country's enterprize, we were reduced by the imperious hand of necessity to make our election, either to surrender our liberties, and become again colonial dependents—to declare war, not against *England* or *France* independently, but against *both*, for they are *both* aggressors upon our rights, and are *both* pursuing schemes hostile to our interests, which inevitably would have proved the destruction of the extensive property of our merchants, floating upon the navigable waters of the world, or to resort to the EMBARGO, which has protected and wasted it safe to our shores.

THE Embargo, operating as a temporary check upon our national prosperity, is not to be set in competition with the horrors and evils of war, by which the lives and property of our fellow-citizens, would be put in requisition. I need not portray to you the loss of our choicest men; the burning embers of ruined cities; the painful prospect of millions being hurried from ease and affluence, to beggary and want, the certain effects of federal policy, when there are many, who can experimentally disclose to you the tale of the American Revolution! Many under the influence of a spirit foreign from my power or inclination to define, are firmly established in the belief, and are promulgating the sentiment with unusual zeal, that to have our commercial concerns under the exclusive protection and guidance of the British, would operate the consummation of our National wealth and happiness; making their capricious whims and inordinate desires the rule and measure of our conduct—they commanding what shall be transported, the place where, and affixing the price both of the property vended and purchased!!—Is

this the fruit of an eight years conflict, in which the lives of many veterans were sacrificed, and the country itself beggared, to gain a mushroom sovereignty, the curst panacea of liberty, and its appendages? Does this look like National Independence, or has it the appearance of Colonial servility? Is it that boasted pride and patriotism, which fired almost every breast in '75; or is it that overgrown fondness, which caused many to abandon their property and friends for the courtly smiles of a British Monarch? Pecuniary sacrifices are to be cheerfully made when the good of our country requires: war is to be the dernier resort. The man that has the temerity and boldness to proclaim "WAR and NO EMBARGO," plots the ruin of the government.— "That there can be no question in a mind truly American, whether it is best to send our citizens and property into certain captivity, and then wage war for their recovery, or to keep them at home, and turn seriously to that policy, which plants the manufacturer and husbandman side by side, and establishes at the door of every one, that exchange of mutual labors and comforts, which we have hitherto sought in distant regions and under perpetual risque of broils with them," is the language of one who enjoys the first place in the heart of Republicans.—It would have produced the happy effect designed, had it met with that united support, that the measure demanded. Instead of that peaceful acquiescence and determined adherence due from the ruled to the ruler, we hear the mad ravings of disappointed ambition. Every exertion has been made to render imbecile the outstretched arm of authority, & bring into contempt every national act.

SENATOR Pickering's malignant and inflammatory letter, addressed to his Excellency the Governor of Mas-

Massachusetts, prefiging terror and dismay, met with momentary success. The time and concurrent circumstances under which it was communicated, unfolded the depravity and turpitude of his heart, thus to enforce upon the understanding the belief of facts which he knew never existed. But we recognize his conduct on the 19th of April, at the battle of Lexington. We have seen him attempting to embarrass the administration of the *Ex-President*, as well as that of our illustrious chief. We have seen him making use of every measure to sow the seeds of discord and contention among his fellow-citizens, regardless of his country's good. We have seen him give support to the worst of men in the most dangerous of times. He has by his vote, given a sanction to the principles of insurrection and rebellion.* “Titles and preferment to a man of such little worth, are like a false medium to an object of sight, they magnify him in appearance, but not in reality”—“as coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife.”

THOUGH Mr. PICKERING has perfected an imaginary triumph over his colleague, still his greatness is of ephemeral duration, while that of Mr. Adams is already deeply registered in the breast of every friend to his Country. “He gained by losing, and by falling rose” in the estimation of his fellow-citizens. His letter is a splendid exhibition of talents and integrity, which deserves unlimited applause. It contains the creed of every Republican—it contains the sentiments on which depends our National salvation.—It convinces you, there is no foreign influence in the Executive Department; that the illustrious Jer-

* On the question of the expulsion of John Smith from the Senate, for his participation in Burr's Treason.

PERSON is not metamorphosed into an ambitious Frenchman; that his happiness is united with his country's prosperity, and the promotion of the one accelerates the other—"Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence, the jealousies of a free people ought to be constantly awake... Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalship in interest, humour or caprice?... Harmony, liberal intercourse with all nations, are recommended by policy, humanity and interest; but even our Commercial policy should hold an equal and impartial hand; neither lending nor granting exclusive favours or preferences."

May God deliver us from the contagious politics, which have convulsed the old world... We wish not the deadly embrace of Gallic friendship, or the corrupted influence of the British cabinet; for the moment either become intermingled with our policy, from that moment we may date the defection of our national prosperity and happiness. If you wish for an example, look at the ill fated Helvetic Republic. Tho' assailed by force without and struggling with difficulties within, her virtue long preserved her from the sad catastrophe which awaited her, but at last she drank of the polluted intoxicating draught, and fell asleep: She awoke incumbered with chains!

The fallen liberties of the East, speak to you in a language unutterable, to shun the vortex, which has swallowed them in interminable ruin.

THE love of our country is a god-like affection, yet

* WASHINGTON'S farewell Address.

it has its boundaries, beyond which it degenerates into a fault. It should not be so ardent as to swallow up those sentiments of justice and benevolence, which we owe to mankind. If it progresses beyond this point, it becomes party spirit, that malignant fiend, that saps the foundation of every government. Beware how you encourage a spirit so hostile to your best interests. In her rage for devastation, she destroys whatever is wonderful in genius and dignified in virtue. Friendship, harmonious and social intercourse is interrupted, and like the touch of the torpedo, it benumbs, it paralyzes the vital spirit of freedom, which ought to palpitate with ardor in every breast.

A GENERAL diffusion of knowledge among all classes of citizens, constitutes the only barrier against the violence of this political rivalry. Improve the mind, and it forms an accurate estimate of principles, of measures, and of men. Ignorance and superstition are the heirs apparent of monarchical and aristocratical forms of government; but universal dissemination of information is the life, the stamina of a Republic.

THE liberty of the press, though often prostituted to the vilest purposes, is one that claims a high and distinguished rank among the privileges that we enjoy. 'Tis one of the main props of our political existence. 'Tis a tribunal, where all men, clothed with the robes of office, must expect to be tried, and their conduct minutely investigated, and where they either will meet with the censure or approbation of the impartial inspector. Reason, matured by education, marks the comparative difference between the cloistered inventions of a bribed hireling, and the lucid sentiments of a candid political writer. Ty-

rants and despots, whose strength materially depends upon the ignorance of mankind, are substantially enemies to the freedom of the press. To grant a privilege of this sort, would be like laying the axe to the trunk of their greatness.

RELIGION forms another essential aid to the well-being of a Republican government. It has a tendency to quell party animosities, by the strict injunction of charity and brotherly love. It urges respect to our laws, and our civil rulers. It gives solemnity to an oath. It is the solemn foretaste of future enjoyments.

THE well organization and correct discipline of the militia of our country, supercedes the necessity of a standing force in a time of peace. Liberal patronage is to be rendered to the citizen who is inspired with that honorable pride and ambition, which constitutes the warrior. If the legislature does not interfere and remunerate the noble exertions of the soldier, the sweet approbation of having faithfully discharged the duty required of him, will be equal to a never-fading laurel.

REPUBLICANS ! Call forth that energy which the glorious cause you profess to support, deserves ! The stolen march and partial defeat of the last spring, require all that vigilance, which only can give life and tone to that Heaven born freedom, the sacred bequest of departed heroes. Let private animosities and selfish views be absorbed in the promotion of Republican prosperity. Let a mausoleum this day be erected over the relics of discord, and let the union of Republicans be engraven thereon in capitals of gold. Whilst patriotism urges perseverance—Whilst corruption and recrimination are imputed to our forbear-

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ance—the noblest principle, the God of Liberty invites our union. United, we disclaim the power of domestic ambition; we dread not the power of Europe; we may bid defiance to the world. Then, and not till then, shall extend from the utmost recess of the forest, to the billows of the ocean, that Republican spirit of Independence which will perpetuate the liberty of the nation! Awaken then from your slumbers!—UNITE—BE FREE!

FINIS.