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ORATION,

PRONOUNCED

ON THE

TWENTY-SIXTH ANNIVERSARY

OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,

BEFORE THE

Franklin Literary Association.

BY THOMAS HUBBARD, JUNIOR.

**PRINTED AT
NORWICH:
JULY, 1862.**

MR. THOMAS HUBBARD, JUN.

SIR,

FEELING sensible of the obligations we are under to you, as the Committee in behalf of the youthful citizens, take this opportunity of testifying our high regard for your person and principles;—We assure you Sir, that your Oration has met with uncommon testimonials of respect from the aged part of the community, and commands our cordial approbation — We therefore, in compliance with the request of the audience in general, solicit a copy for the press.

We have the honor to be, Sir,

with every sentiment of respect and esteem,

Your most obedient Servants,

MATTHEW O'BRIEN,

DAVID NEVINS, JUN.

ERAS!US COIT,

NAHUM HALL.

CHARLES CARPENTER,

GEORGE HOUSE.

JULY 6th, 1802.

Chelsea, July 7th, 1802.

GENTLEMEN,

YOUR obliging favor of yesterday commands my most sincere and grateful thanks. While my heart overflows with gratitude for the many distinguished marks of attention and respect received from yourselves in particular, and the other gentlemen who participated with us on the ever memorable æra which gave us National Liberty, I most cordially reciprocate with you the generous expressions of respect and regard for my person and principles. I cannot but feel an inward degree of happiness at the general approbation of my production delivered before you on Monday— and altho' I feel a diffidence in laying it before the public eye, I shall nevertheless transmit you a copy to-morrow, in humble confidence that my fellow-citizens will review it with candor; at the same time withholding that criticism for which I fear there is ample scope.

I am, Gentlemen,

with the most sincere esteem and respect,

Your Humble Servant,

THOS. HUBBARD, JUN.

Messrs. O'Brien, Nevins, Coit, Hall, }
Carpenter, and House. }



AN ORATION.

Friends and Fellow-Citizens—

SENSIBLE of my inability to perform the duties assigned me this day, I rise with diffidence to fulfil the task with which you have been pleased to honor me. But relying on the candor of my brethren of this Institution, and of this respectable assembly in general, I proceed to offer a few ideas, perhaps not wholly in consonant to the feelings of Americans, assembled to commemorate the auspicious day which gave them the rights of freemen ;—The day, on which we burst the chains of slavery, and dared to be free.

This country, rising with such rapid strides to so high a station among the nations of the earth, it must be remembered, was discovered but about three hundred years ago. At that time, and

for many succeeding years, its surface was covered with a dreary wilderness. Where now are seen our capital cities, stately edifices, and cultivated plantations ;—Where we now behold millions of industrious citizens, pursuing the busy scenes of commercial and agricultural cares, the beast of the forest, and the ferocious savage, then held their uncontrouled empire. The waters, which we now view with rapturous delight, whitened as it were with myriads of ships, conducted by the adventurous mariner to the remotest climes, were then only occupied by the monsters of the sea, and the bark canoe of the Aborigines :——I say, when we view these transcendant scenes, our hearts are ready to leap from their casements, and return thanks to Him, who has conducted us in safety, thro' so many dangers and difficulties.

This continent, discovered by that intrepid seaman, *Christopher Columbus*, presented nothing but a dismal waste, inhabited only by warlike Indians, and

ferocious quadrupeds.—With the events which took place between this period and the landing of our forefathers at Plymouth, in the year 1620, not a single son of Columbia, it is presumed, is unacquainted.

When we contemplate the hardships, fatigue and danger, which our venerable ancestors encountered on landing on the inhospitable shores of this now rising republic, we are lost in astonishment and gratitude; our palpitating hearts glow with grateful fervor, and pour forth praises to Him who is the God of Nations!—Yes, fellow-countrymen, our unhappy forefathers, persecuted in their native land, on account of their religious persuasions, dared to brave the briny ocean, crowded in crazy barks scarcely sufficient to skim the surface of untroubled waters.—At length ashore on the memorable Plymouth rock, they fell prostrate before the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, and the air resounded with their thank offerings—Nought to shelter them

from the inclemency of a tempestuous season, but the wide, extended canopy of Heaven; nor had they where to rest their weary heads, but the rugged surface of a dreary wild!! But nothing was sufficient to appal the hearts of men who put their trust in our all merciful parent.

Continually harrassed by the native tribes, yet their vigor remained undiminished. Tho' rapine, carnage, and devastation marked the course of the tawny Aborigines, our pious forefathers continued to persevere in their meritorious outset, until their ferocious enemies were driven into the interior, or forced to submit.—A succession of years now rolled on, while the new world was rapidly advancing in population and consequence. A long and bloody war with the French and Indians ensued, in which we proved our attachment to our natural mother, G. Britain.

But the English government at length

lost, through her tyrannical proceedings, the fairest portion of her dominions ! The colonists, with patient suffering, bore the oppression heaped upon them by a country unto which they in vain looked up for that protection, which as children they expected to receive from a parent. Remonstrance after remonstrance, petition after petition, dictated by the earnestness of humble intreaty, were put up with humility to the throne of King George the Third for redress.—Still deaf to the voice of reason, and to our supplications, the oppressed Americans cast aside all idea of accommodation, the generous flame of liberty burst from its bondage with tenfold vigor, and they declared themselves independent !—— Yes, fellow-citizens, twenty-six years this day, the fathers of our infant empire threw off our allegiance to the English monarch, and ushered into existence an independent nation !

From this period, a dreadful war ensued with unabating fury for seven long

years ; presenting a scene unparalleled in the annals of mankind. It displayed a spectacle the most solemn that can possibly be exhibited. On one side was beheld fraud and violence laboring in the service of despotism ; on the other, virtue and fortitude supporting and establishing the rights of human nature.

Entirely defenceless, without arms, without ammunition, without cloathing, without ships, without money, without officers skilled in war, with no other reliance but the bravery of the people, and the justice of our cause ; we had to contend with a nation great in arts and great in arms, whose fleets covered the ocean, whose banners had waved in triumph thro' every quarter of the globe.—However unequal this contest, our weakness was still farther increased by the enemies which America had nourished in her bosom. Thus exposed on the one hand to external force and internal divisions ; on the other to be compelled to drink the bit-

ter cup of slavery, and entail it on unborn posterity—In this sad alternative we chose the former.

However great the injustice of our foes in commencing the war, it was by no means equal to the cruelty with which they carried it on. The course of their armies is marked by rapine and devastation. Thousands, without distinction of age or sex were driven from their peaceful abodes, to encounter the rigors of inclement seasons ; and the face of heaven hath been insulted by the wanton conflagration of defenceless towns. Their victories were followed by the cool murder of American soldiers, no longer able to resist. Thousands of our fellow-countrymen, worn out with fatigue, hunger and sickness, terminated a miserable existence in the loathsome dungeons and prison-ships of our inveterate enemy. How were those unfortunate men treated, whom the chance of war put into our power ?

Were they not treated with tenderness and humanity ?

Our barbarous enemy threatened to let loose against us whole hordes of savages, whose rule of warfare is promiscuous carnage, who rejoice to murder the helpless infant, smiling in its mother's arms, to inflict on their prisoners the most excruciating torments, and exhibit scenes of horror from which nature recoils. Nor was this the outrageous barbarity of an individual, but a system of deliberate malice, stamp'd with the concurrence of the British Legislature and sanctioned with all the formalities of law.

A lengthy detail of events until the close of peace, is not appropriate to the present occasion ;—they are fresh in the memory of every son of Columbia. Faithful history has transmitted them down to posterity ; who will ever dwell with reverence and delight on the glorious exploits performed by their valorous countrymen.

Who does not remember the heroes who fought and bled in defence of our liberties? Who has forgotten that our independence was achieved by a Washington, a Warren, a Mercer, a Montgomery, a Putnam, and a band of other courageous veterans—Are the groans of our dying countrymen hushed amid the blaze of our present prosperity? View the plains of Lexington, of Monmouth, of Yorktown, and a myriad of other places, stain'd with the blood of our slaughtered citizens.—But, we conquered!!

To the transcendantly illustrious WASHINGTON are we principally indebted for our present happiness. Calm and serene in the midst of danger; brave in the greatest peril, he conducted us thro' all our trouble, to the most exalted glory.

Suffice it to say, that we at length brought our enemy to terms, and an honorable peace was concluded in the spring of 1783.—Our army disbanded,

each war-worn veteran, from the General in Chief to the private soldier, laid aside the weapons of destruction, and returned in peace and quietness to the agricultural cares of which he had been so long deprived. No confused tumults, no jarring riots occurred to mar the pleasures of industrious plenty.—To use better words than my own, they were “good soldiers one day, and good citizens the next.”—All America, from the hoary sage to the beardless stripling, were in anxious solicitude to enjoy what she had so long contended for—the time “when every man shall sit under his own vine and under his own fig-tree, and there shall be none to make him afraid.”

Happy in this idea, the affairs of America rolled on under a confederate government, until the year 1789, when it became necessary to adopt a new mode of government. A Chief Magistrate of the Union was requisite. WASHINGTON was the man design-

nated for this important station, by his grateful and admiring countrymen. Every voice, every heart united in one grand strain to pronounce him President of the United States of America. Conducting us in prosperity to the year 1797, he resigned his important trust, and retired amid the acclamations of the whole world, to the peaceful shades of Mount-Vernon. America enjoyed, under the administration of this illustrious personage, all those advantages which result from the prudent policy of a virtuous chief magistrate. The peaceful system which he pursued, repaired, in a great measure, the injuries sustained by a long and expensive civil war. His interests and passions were the same as those of the people, and a constant communication of good offices kept alive their attachments.—Altho' he be humbled in the dust—tho' he is covered with the cold clods of the valley, yet in the breasts of Americans, his name can never die.—And here, while we drop the manly tear for his irrepar-

able loss, let us exclaim with the pious Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away,—blessed be the name of the Lord." Let us remember with gratitude that it was the Lord God of Armies, who conducted us thro' our arduous struggle ; who raised up Washington the Great ;—Washington, the Father of his country ; Washington "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen." Let us recollect that this same beneficent being still extends his parental eye over this infant country ; and will, if the exigency of our affairs demand it, raise other heroes to take the helm of our national vessel, and conduct her in safety through the troubled billows of contending nations.

Alas ! my fellow-citizens, what a transcendant satisfaction should I feel, could I close here ; or say, with a strict adherence to truth, that America has continued to enjoy the same advantages, the same prosperity, the same har-

mony, as at the eventful period when Washington left the helm of state.— (God forbid that this sentence should be construed into a disrespect for the government immediately succeeding, or the present.)

The bane of nations, the moth of empires, the *Antipodes* to the dignity and interest of the United States, *party-spirit*, sprung up among us to blast the laurels acquired in our revolutionary struggle. Partizans, warm adherents to the causes of France and Great-Britain, already immersed in contention, rose up in the bosom of our happy country, and threatened to convulse and overthrow its very foundation. Too long have we nourished the venomous poison in our once patriotic bosoms. Whatever may be our present feelings and opinions of our own country, it is an irrefragable fact, that our present turmoil and confusion are attributable to these causes. It may have degenerated, but the origin is the same. What in the name of Heaven

have we to do with France, England, or any other nation on the globe, farther than "*Peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none.*" "Let the hand be withered, that would plume either the British crown or the French cap with a feather pluck'd from the American Eagle. What benefit could accrue to mankind, from the aggrandizement of Britain or France? The safety of minor nations consists in the rivalship and equipoise of those gigantic empires. If one of them should subdue the other, the conquering nation would give law to the world. It would bestride the earth like a vast Colossus, and other nations would stand like pigmies at its feet. Shall Americans, then, throw up their caps and exult, whenever one or the other of those proud, aspiring nations gains a victory?—When the corpses of thousands of poor wretches who were reluctantly dragged into the service, are strewn over the field of battle, or immersed in the

sea, shall we shout because a foreign General or Admiral has gained honor by the action? Are we so stupid as to think that a trophy gained by a Bonaparte or a Nelson is a feather in our own cap? Let us cast aside such foolish and servile attachments"—Let us be united, independent Americans. National friendship is a mere phantom; fluctuating as chaff before the winds of Heaven. Let us place reliance on ourselves, and on ourselves alone. Let us wholly discard all intestine divisions. Be assured, if we continue to nourish faction in our bosoms, she will eventually sap the very foundation of our national fabric. We shall tumble, piece by piece, until at length the whole edifice falls to the ground. Where now are beheld millions of Americans, free as air, will then be seen the troops of some powerful despot, taking possession of the fair heritage gained by the blood and treasure of thousands.

Kindly separated by nature, from the despots of Europe, by an extended ocean, possessing all the blessings within the scope of mortals to enjoy, let us rally around the palladium of our liberties, that master-piece of human wisdom, the Constitution. Let us support, respect, and venerate the laws, and the law-givers. Did we not contend thro' a long and bloody war for a representative government? The blood of our citizens flowed in copious streams to secure the boon. We obtained it.— Then why not unite in its support? Our rulers are appointed by the voice of the whole nation, and are liable to be dismissed at short periods. If their conduct does not exactly comport with our ideas of government, let us remember, that they are set upon the high places, that they are centinels on our political Watch-Tower.

Our commerce, extending its whitened clouds to every clime on the globe, presents us with a profusion of the

products of foreign lands. Altho' in jeopardy from the Barbarians in the Mediterranean sea, yet there our flag now floats triumphant, under the protection of our infant Navy. Columbia's valiant seamen have already chastised their insolence ;—the peals of our thundering cannon have already resounded on the coast of Africa.

Blessed with a country expansive as the ocean, fertile as the Garden of Eden, we are capable of maintaining fifty millions of inhabitants. Here is offered a peaceful asylum for oppressed Europeans. We invite them with open arms to the bosom of our country. The peaceable emigrants from every nation on the globe, will find in Americans the powerful protectors of human nature. An ample field is here open for the pursuits of agriculture. Forests as yet unexplored, are to fall at the feet of the axe-man as soldiers in a battle.—During the late European contest, we have enjoyed a quiet slumber. Our

agricultural brethren have reaped the advantage. Their habitations abound in peace and plenty. Ceres has extended in rich profusion, the bountiful crop, the abundant harvest. Our land o'erflows with milk and honey.—In short, fellow-countrymen, we have been the grainery of Europe, and her distracted colonies.

Americans ! Let not the sacred fire of patriotism be extinguished in your breasts ! Keep alive that public spirit which characterised us in our Revolutionary struggle. Support, I beseech of you, an energetic government. Altho' young in years, let us prove to the Universe that we are old in patriotism. Let us convince the world of our unbounded love of liberty, and of our native land ;—that we will, in our country's cause, charge up to the very cannon's mouth in her defence ; and that whatever nation may assail us, we are ready to step forth into the embattled fields to support the liberties and

independence of Columbia. Let us recollect that our fathers have set us the noble example. Let us remember that with generous ardor, they secured to us and to our posterity the blessings of civil and rational liberty.

Above all let us bear in mind, and implant it on our hearts, that it is the duty of every good citizen to support the government of his country's choice. Let us not despise and condemn our rulers. Let us not heap scurrility and detraction on the fathers of our common country. I repeat it, let us be united. "United we stand, divided we fall."

Our commerce in prosperity, our manufactures flourishing, our agriculture productive, and our citizens peaceable friends to order, and rational government, we may defy the whole world to conquer us.

Pursuing this line of conduct with steadfastness we shall ever remain free and independent.——We may triumphantly chaunt,

“Columbians never, never, shall be slaves.”