

AN
ORATION,

PRONOUNCED AT

NEW-LEBANON,

ON THE 4th OF JULY, 1810,

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE ANNIVERSARY

OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.


BY A. L. JORDAN, ESQ.


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AN ORATION.

FELLOW-CITIZENS,

UNDER the auspices of Heaven the freedom of America has survived 'till the present day. This morning is the anniversary of that on which America declared herself an Independent Nation; and inspired by motives of gratitude and love of country, we have assembled for the purpose of celebrating this glorious occurrence, and of contemplating on objects presented before us by the unprecedented state of our dearest country.

WE have lately arisen in the glory of our strength, and shown to an admiring world that error and delusion can find but a transitory residence in a land of liberty like ours; and the genius of republicanism, high on the pinions of triumphant rectitude, calls forth her votaries to commemorate the day that gave her America.

THE duty which involves on me I conceive to be of an important nature, and far beyond my ability to fulfil; but called on by the voice of my much respected fellow-citizens, I could scarcely decline, and that *Amor Patriae*, which burns in the bosom of every real American, stimulates me to action. Though I should render the subject very partial justice, I trust that deficiency and diffidence, which grow out of inexperience, will furnish ample apology to a liberal audience. The field of investigation lies open and wide before me, and with difficulty I choose the course to pursue, under the full conviction that the substance of an oration at this time will depend more on the disposition of the performer than on local circumstances.

WE might revert to the original settlement of the colonies, and recount the toils and dangers which our forefathers encountered in preparing for us a land of happiness

and liberty, when the Atlantic surges and their infatuated mother Britain on one side, and the howling and relentless savages on the other, were sufficient to appal the stoutest hearts.

WE might pursue the subject to the time of our revolutionary struggle, when our self-styled parent, on whose lap the legitimate child of freedom had been strangled, was renewing her efforts to complete a dark and malignant design; and should fancy flutter in her wildest regions, she could pourtray no enormities greater than were perpetrated in this sanguinary contest. But these, fellow-citizens, are subjects which have been largely and ably dwelt upon; our attention, therefore, will be directed to those of a different nature.

UNITED AMERICA, the land of our inheritance, is now the only acknowledged republic under the whole heaven, the sanctuary of tortured and afflicted humanity, where happiness spreads her cheering mantle over the persecuted sons of freedom who fly to her for protection. In viewing the transcendant enjoyments with which we are blessed, it becomes necessary to consider the *cause* of these enjoyments, which, under the supreme majesty of heaven alone, are the institutions of a republican government.

THE constitution of our country breathes forth a spirit of freedom, which exhilarates the vital principle of political existence, and like the morning sun, dispenses its benignant rays upon a wide extended republic. Under this sacred protector of the rights of freemen, the immutable principles of justice and religion are preserved from violation and restraint. Our seminaries flourish, and irradiate with celestial beams this happy soil, chosen for the empire of reason, and no nation on the globe can boast a more rapid advance of the useful arts, or a more general diffusion of literary refinements. The sun of science arose with effulgence when the concentrated energies of the American people threw off the yoke of foreign dominion; and while we continue to appreciate the blessings of that government to which we profess an attachment, the clouds of despotism and ignorance will never be suffered to gather and rest in our political atmosphere; Agriculture, Manufactures and Commerce may be carried to the greatest extent. We are

in possession of an immense territory, stretching itself from the great lakes on the North to the sea of Mexico on the South, from the Atlantic on the East to the Pacific Ocean on the West, embracing an ample variety of soil and climate. In this wide extended field are dispensed the richest gifts of nature; we behold a grateful display of hills and vallies rising and sinking beyond each other in agreeable succession, rendering salubrious the other blessings requisite to the preservation of the animal economy—here no stagnant pools, fostering contagion, pestilence and death—here no morbid air wafting a thousand formidable diseases to the vitals of man. On the contrary, an unbounded field of bliss lies opening itself to the view of a great and wealthy nation; and while the haughty tyrants of Europe are bartering blood for imaginary honor, the joyful sound of liberty gives speed to the American Plough.—The husbandman enjoys the culture of his farm unmolested, in possession of a beloved family, his rising hopes have daily gratification. The soil productive supplies him with every necessary and luxury of life. The biessed institutions of religion teach the tender offspring to reverence that God whose goodness created and preserves them. The various literary establishments implant in the tender mind the genuine principles adapted to a free and happy people. The virtuous citizen sees the objects of his affection rising before him, and rejoices with parental solicitude, that when the messenger of death shall summon him to the mansions of immortality, his offspring are left under the benign influence of a republican government.

WHEN we pursue the subject further, we see the most ample provision for carrying on a trade with the whole world. The venerable oak of the forest, “the golden sheaf,” and the hemp of the low lands contribute to the purposes of the enterprizing merchant—he spreads his canvass on the ocean—the nations are taught to respect him as a free commoner of the world, his jurisdiction the Globe, and his master the King of Heaven—a citizen of that enviable clime where the exercise of religious rites is untrouled—where the equal and imprescriptible rights of man are respected and preserved—where the rich and the poor, who have not forfeited their privilege by contempt of justice and the laws of their country, hold an equal share in the government—where no pecuniary greatness is made a

mask for corruption—where no imperious lord or effeminate tyrant holds the scourge of hereditary power over the free-born sons of a happy soil. Such are the high prerogatives of freemen ; of men designed by heaven to be free, and possessing a spirit compatible with the design. But turn your attention for a few moments, fellow-citizens, to the sister nations in the Trans-Atlantic world and behold the melancholy contrast—from the frozen regions of the Arctic Pole, to the burning deserts of Africa inclusive, you will discover a continued scene of despotism. Those countries, once celebrated as the land of science and liberty, have come within the rapacious grasp of Kings and Tyrants.—The fields of Europe are smoking with the blood of thousands, and almost from the earliest ages have constituted a scene of promiscuous carnage.—The British navy and its concomitant press-gangs have sundered the conjugal union, and torn the affectionate father from the embraces of his children to fight for ambition's sake and mingle his blood with the waters of every sea.—The plains of Italy and Austria have trembled to their foundations, while the God of Battles mingled the horrid din of war with the thunders of Heaven.—The ancient city of Alexandria, the Pyramids of Egypt, and the plains of Palestine will bear to the eastern continent an eternal testimony of misery and devastation.—Ambition has usurped the empire of justice—the cringing subject shrinks from the lash of an imperious master, and wades thro' blood to the performance of his merciless task.—The regions of Asia are overwhelmed with a barbarous ignorance, which degrades humanity and sinks it beneath itself. The subject is too servile and the prince is too wicked and ignorant to enjoy the bounties of nature.—Africa partakes of her wretchedness in a preeminent degree, and adds a dark and sickly shade to human misery.

AMERICA, then, is the last refuge of insulted justice—America is the only ark of safety to which the genius of freedom can fly for protection.

FROM the ancient Grecian republics she was pursued, and Athens and Sparta too late might lament the loss of their liberties. Rome with open arms received the smiling goddess borne from the place of her persecution in the east, on a beam of the morning sun ; and altho' this daugh-

ter of Heaven and sister of national and individual felicity has been harassed from the earliest ages by the infuriated gorgons of monarchy, aristocracy, and despotism, and their attendants, misery, vice and corruption; yet, as the favourite of heaven, she has ever found a place for the sole of her foot. She has been stepping over kingdoms and directing her course thro' the labyrinth of ages to find a welcome residence on the shores of Columbia as long as time shall last. Let us then, fellow-citizens, bid freedom a hearty welcome; let us watch with a jealous eye over those sacred rights guaranteed to us by the Constitution of our choice; let us assemble at all times around the altars prepared for the sacrifice of our liberties, and indignantly scatter the coals which have been raked together by the fingers of faction. And while we prize our independence, let us spurn at the dastardly attempts of ambitious demagogues to mount upon the shoulders of the people to supreme command. Who wish to establish a monarchical government upon the ruins of the republic, and who wish to plunge us into a war with France and a disgraceful alliance with Great Britain.

THAT such a party does exist in the bosom of our country is a melancholy truth. A monster of frightful mean, adapting itself to the exigence of its mission is stalking thro' the republic, waiting only an opportunity to prey upon the vitals of our liberty and gnaw asunder the heart-strings of the constitution.

INDULGE me, fellow-citizens, in the investigation of this subject, which, tho' of a lengthy nature, I shall render as brief as possible. In attempting this, I shall take the liberty to travel back to that important period in the annals of America when the constitution was adopted.

No fact is more obvious, than that two distinct parties have existed in the field of politics from that momentous crisis. These parties are denominated, at present, by the terms federal, and republican—the distinction of which, in *principle*, is as obvious as that of day and night. In examining the efforts and measures of the federal party, we perceive a clear and unquestionable tendency to a monarchical government. Mr. Hamilton, the atlas of federalism, presented to the convention a form of constitution

embracing its deepest principles, and in every step may be discovered a steadfast and undeviating opposition to the true principles of Republicanism. Tho' to deceive the community this sacred name was profaned by those who were striving to subvert the reality. And I hesitate not to declare, fellow-citizens, that this implacable and unjustifiable hostility, this deadly and unconquerable animosity toward France, was imbibed by the federal party during the French revolution.

THE manifest tendency of the revolution in France was to a free and independent republic, and possessing a heart-felt opposition to the triumph of a republican party, they strove with unremitting ardor to accomplish their supreme design. They strove with a desperate vigilance to wrest from the bosom of WASHINGTON that garland, which united nations had woven with pleasure, by endeavouring to inflame his mind against the cause of humanity, and against a nation, which a few years before had contributed largely to our own felicity. They exerted every factious energy to draw the sword of America against France, to check the progress of the revolution, and destroy the tender buddings of independence; but Washington, the illustrious chief and benevolent statesman, spurned at their foul attempts to degrade the dignity of his noble nature, their attempts to lead him into a war with France, for no other purpose than to gratify their hellish propensity to mutilate the institutions of freedom and stop the progress of Liberty.

The bosom of this God-like man was fired with a spirit of freedom, when his lips communicated these important sentiments :

“ My sympathetic feelings and my best wishes are irresistibly attracted, whensoever in any country I see an oppressed nation unfurl the banners of freedom; but above all, the events of the French Revolution have produced the deepest solicitude as well as the highest admiration. To call your nation brave were to pronounce but common praise.

“ *Wonderful people!* ages to come will read with astonishment the history of your brilliant exploits. I rejoice that the period of your toils and of your immense sacrifices is approaching.”

THESE were the words of the immortal Washington, and had these sentiments have fallen from the lips of Mr. Jefferson, even at that time, when circumstances would

have justified them, with what alacrity would the **HOUNDS OF FACTION** yet snuff the scent and howl to their implicit followers a dismal alarm! But such was the preeminent greatness of our then chief magistrate, as to silence the most turbulent faction and wrest from the trumpet of calumny the indignant blast. The federal party conspiring with the minions of monarchy to sap the foundation of republican principles and lay the axe at the root of our government, were now confounded and dismayed; they despaired of ability to bring about those glorious ends which were to place them and their offspring in the different departments of state, secure from that *Monstrous Deity*, the majesty of the American *People*.

BUT the affairs of our government now took a different turn. The election of Mr. Adams to the presidential chair called forth the silenced energies of the federal party. New scenes were now to be exhibited to the public. A man, virtuous in principle and intentionally good, was surrounded by the congregated spirits of federal ambition.— His suspicions were raised for a while by the infidelity of his most prominent and confidential counsellors. His jealousy was excited and his feelings inflamed against the republican party; and we shall find in his administration the “blessings” of a “national debt” heaped upon us in profuse abundance. If ever a people were supremely happy in seeing themselves sinking into the bottomless vortex of national calamity, then were the United States blessed at that time.

DURING the ten years of the federal administration rising of nine millions and a half of dollars accrued to the public debt, and twenty-six millions were borrowed for the “blessed” purpose of paying the usury of *Eight per cent!* In addition to this, the most violent and aggravated system of oppression was carried on, and the devoted sons of *freedom* had brought us to the threshold of those transcendent liberties, which are the sycophantic boast of the English nation. Our carriages, houses and lands were subjected to taxation; a standing army was raised for the purpose of awing us into subjection; and the most rapid strides were taken to rivet the chains of bondage which had been recently broken, with a double security. Then followed the Alien Bill, the Sedition Law, and the Stamp

Act, with a numerous retinue of happy attendants to complete the ranks of federal freedom ! The most invidious rancour was streaming through the United States in every possible direction, fomenting a spirit of hostility against the French republic ; and the convocated powers of an infernal junto were hovering round the executive department, desperately determined to supplant or control the chief magistrate of the United States. In this distracted state of the nation, a negotiation was to be carried on with France. The streams of justice were corrupted ; the officers of government were leveling a decisive blow at the creature of reconciliation ; and such was the conduct of that party to throw us into a state of confusion and debasement, that the indignation of the people was awaken'd against them. Mr. Adams roused from the talismanic charm of federalism and the scales fell from his eyes.

“ HE was convicted of the existence of British influence and a projected despotism. He dismissed with disgrace from office Timothy Pickering, who had so shamefully abused his confidence. He declared, without reserve, the organization of the British faction, and denounced Alexander Hamilton as a leader.”

IF any doubts should remain in the mind of the most scrupulous politician of an unjustifiable and groundless hostility toward France, and a criminal co-operation with Great Britain at that time, I will refer him to the correspondence of president Adams, where the mind of every honest man must be convicted of the fact. In his letter, dated May, 1809, speaking of the time when Mr. Liston was the British minister at Philadelphia, he says :

“ THERE were not wanting insinuations and instigations to me to confer with Mr. Liston on the subject of an *alliance with Great Britain* ; and Mr. Liston himself repeatedly suggested to me, in very modest terms however, his readiness to enter into any explanation on that head. I always waved it with as easy a politeness as I could ; but my system was determined, and had been for more than twenty years, that is to enter into no alliance with any power in Europe.”

I NOW ask, fellow-citizens, what evidence more conclusive can we have than the words and authorities of Mr. Adams on this subject ? He was placed in a station of high responsibility, and his situation enabled him to know the fact. We must, therefore, take it as a substantial truth, that a *British faction* does exist in the heart of our country, and under these impressions let every man inves-

igate the conduct of that faction, that he may conceive a sufficient detestation for their outrages committed upon the dignity of the nation.

WHILE the wars in the East have rased the kingdoms of Europe from their foundations, America has endeavoured to pursue a dignified neutrality. Our sage and patriotic Jefferson was placed at the helm of state to regulate the tottering bark of Government and smooth the tumultuous waves of intestine commotion. Conscious of his rectitude, and possessing a laudable assurance that the dashing surges of faction would be unavailing, he steered his course undisturbed through the stormy ocean of contending politics. He strove with a manly fortitude to rescue his country from that distruction which awaited her. He disbanded the standing army—he abolished taxation, and the alien and sedition laws expired with the administration that created them. Under the auspicious reign of this beloved patriot, our country resumed the bloom of her former spring. He directed his attention to the real interests of the nation. He cultivated the most rigid economy in the expenditures of the government, and restored an exhausted and debilitated treasury to a state of life and energy. He purchased the city and territory of New-Orleans, and the immense province of Louisiana, for the proportionate trifling sum of fifteen millions of dollars. And altho' this has been denounced by the rant of federalism as a weak and visionary measure, yet this solitary trait in the administration of Jefferson, when prejudice shall cease, will be considered the most sagacious prudence and discernment.

THUS we find a contrast in the two administrations as great as the principles which dictated them. The federal administration sinking our country in the deepest solicitude for her departing welfare. The republican administration raising her from a melancholy despondency, and dissipating the bleak and baleful clouds portentous of impending ruin. But to what moment in this elapse of time can we point in which the federal party have not opposed the measures of government with "all their might" and strength? They have slandered with the most virulent aspersions our beloved chief magistrate. They have invited aggression by opposition to our own government and

the most cordial unity with Great Britain, as though determined to pluck the last remains of honor from the brow of America.

THE time had now arrived when Great-Britain resolved to carry her naval supremacy to the most flagrant pitch of injustice. Irregular and unauthorized captures and condemnations succeed each other in their most aggravated forms. The sloop *Driver*, and the frigate *Cambrian*, left the Halifax station apparently for no other purpose than to sport with the dignity of America. They resisted in a haughty and insolent manner the execution of our laws; they impressed our citizens, and left unexplored no source to instruct them in the diabolical arts of injury and insult.

OUR ship *Chesapeake*, representing the honors of our country by bearing her standard, was attacked by the *Leopard* in the most violent and outrageous manner.—The flag of the United States was prostrated within the jurisdiction of our own waters; some of our seamen were forcibly impressed, and others were killed and wounded! Thus were the veins of America opened by the haughty tyrant of the ocean, while with impious thoughts, forgetful of their God, they trampled on the tomb of murdered justice—while yet their tarnished honor and violated innocence were blotted with the blood of *Pierce*, which had stained the waters of America. Laying aside all earthly power, shall such enormities escape the eye of Heaven? And let me ask, oh God of retribution! how long shall justice slumber on her post? And let me ask you, Americans, how long will you persist in justifying the flagrant enormities of the British navy? Such, however, is the awful and deep seated depravity of faction, that the most solemn appeal to their consciences would be useless and ineffectual. For though the spirits of our departed heroes should arise from their graves to reform them, they might retire to the silent shades as fruitless missionaries. And it is deeply to be lamented that the energies of republicanism have been suffered to relax, so far as to grant them a temporary and partial triumph.

SINCE no act of injustice can be committed by the “omnipotent” thunderer of the ocean too great for them to swallow, and since no abomination which cries to heav-

en for vengeance is too enormous for them to palliate, it would be trifling with time for me to enter into a defence of the measures of our government against this corrupt and venal faction. The charge of *French Influence* has been diligently reiterated throughout the union, but this worn-down courser of political apostacy has not been able to trample on vanquished reason. That we *once* possessed a cordial friendship for France is no more than truth. That Cain was *once* entitled to the friendship of his brother, and Satan to a seat in the kingdom of Heaven are also truths; but when the causes ceased, so also have the effects. The deluded sons of France have been led into bondage by the usurper of his country's rights. The ambitious and wily Corsican has grappled his strong claws upon the kingdoms of Europe—he has aimed a blow at the rights of America, and our government are ready on every occasion to repel with a due resentment the encroachments of his boundless ambition. Shall more be done? Shall our government plunge us into war for the *mere* purpose of gaining a temporary and illusive smile from our most inveterate foe? When this be done, that malady takes its seat on the vitals of our country, which terminates her political existence! May heaven avert the impending evil.

AND let us rejoice in the means of our salvation in the last election, which was a general diffusion of correct intelligence. *Vermont* kindled the fire of republicanism, and *New-Hampshire* communicated the flame to *Massachusetts* and *Rhode-Island*.

THE devoted sons of freedom, surrounded by virtue, their national life guard, assembled, and by their suffrages threw down the temporary fabric of tyranny, which had been erected on the basis of delusion. The "Angel" of our preservation "descended from Heaven and laid hold on the Dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan," and after his short season of triumph has bound him "forever."

Connecticut, the hitherto impenetrable fortress of federalism has been shaken in her "steady habits." One year more, it is most fervently hoped, will complete that happy period when American will be truly united, and

never again, I trust, will the states of *Massachusetts* and *Connecticut* be disgraced by their dissenting councils; never again will their Legislatures step aside from their constitutional duty to censure the General government; never again will a rebellion be cherished against the constituted laws of the union. And I humbly trust the stronghold of Connecticut federalism, the confederated league of Priest craft, will be exposed in all its deformities. No longer will the ecclesiastical sway of old Connecticut be acknowledged to the disgrace of the United States.

If the support of my indigent family be wrested from me to satisfy the demands of my spiritual teacher; nay, if my body is confined in a dungeon in the name of justice allow me the liberty of my political conscience.—I respect the christian discipline—I reverence the character of the divine, and explode with all the energies of my soul the idea that would suggest a mutilation of religion; and in short I am too humble a follower of the precepts contained in the blessed word, to cherish as a preacher the man who mounts the sacred desk, and with his hand upon the humiliating volume of the gospel, impiously calls for vengeance—who hurls from the elevated station of the pulpit the shafts of invective, and lets forth a Hell of calumny against the constituted dignities of the land.

BUT, fellow-citizens, the charm is broken—the beast has received its wound from the patriots of New-England—that disorganizing monster, which reared its ghastly front in the Eastern part of the union has retired to its former place among the spirits of darkness.

THE sun that rose in the East, has beamed intensely in the zenith of his revolution. The state of *New-York* has redeemed herself from that desolating torrent of corruption, which was bursting upon her, like the bowels of Etna, for destruction. The transitory conflagration of federalism has lost its terror in the union—and the spirits of our departed heroes, whose bones are bleaching on the field of battle, may look with pleasure on the exertions of our cotemporary patriots. But few of that venerable band remain upon the stage of action, who rallied at the sound of invasion and drove the sword of Britain back to its bloody scabbard. Shall those whose presence graces this convo-

cation of Americans, walk down the evening of life apprehending a base resignation of those rights for which they bled? Shall those who are young and vigorous look tamely on while the hoary locks of our revolutionary fathers become a sport for the winds of faction? Heaven! Gratitude! forbid. May this arm stiffen into marble and drop from an unworthy source—may they leave their country in that situation in which their valour placed her, and as “the arm of Heaven was made bare for their support” in the field of battle, may the bosom of heaven be opened for their eternal felicity.

AMERICANS! the eyes of the world are upon you. In a happy moment you revolted from the dominion of Great-Britain—you plucked from the brow of majesty its most “precious jewel”—the spirit of a haughty nation was wounded, and they only wait a favourable moment to execute vengeance upon your country. They look on our growing consequence with a jealous eye.

“Base envy withers at another’s joy
“And hates that excellence it cannot reach.

And altho’ France is aiming a blow at the rights of America, in vain may the begotten son of ambition attempt to extend his dominions West of the Atlantic—and Great-Britain, unassisted by a head strong and desperate faction, never will trample on the ruins of American liberty.

THE star in the South is arising to add its lustre in the constellation of freedom. The fogs of Spain shall no longer becloud the Western Continent. Universal America was designed by the God of nature to be a land dedicated to the immortal genius of freedom; and while our bosoms heave with sympathy for our bretheren in the South, and our hands co-operate for the perpetuity of freedom in the North, the great Washington looks down from the battlements of Heaven, to smile on every action—his guardian spirit hovers round the palladium of our country’s rights, inspiring his followers with a laudable zeal—he points out the man of faction and warns us of his intentions—he invokes the majesty of the people to prepare an obscure and contemptible retirement for the man who openly derides the spirit of a republican government—at the hands of an enlightened republic he demands the safety of that country for which he spent his life. He applauds, in the

highest terms, the dignified impartiality of our government toward the belligerents of Europe—he impresses on our minds the language contained in his farewell address, in which he tells us, that “nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations and passionate attachments for others should be excluded.” From this, however painful it may be to relate, we discover a palpable dereliction in the federal party hankering after the royal favour of the crown, and applauding the magnanimity of the British king! they have become slaves to their passions and enemies to their country—they oppose the energetic measures of our government to restrain the mad ambition of Europe, and preserve our rank among the nations of the earth.

MAY, then, our political situation remind us of the importance of unity in the republican ranks—let our exertions be vigilant and universal to *silence* the *leaders* of faction, and to show to their deluded followers the mark of the beast, and the inscription written upon the forehead of the woman of their affections, “THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS and abominations of the earth,” who is “drunken with the blood” of nations.

LET us admire the magnanimity of our rulers, who have conducted our affairs in the plenitude of human wisdom; who have shaken the British viper from their hand, and repell’d with a competent energy the insolence of a blood stained monster, whose brows are yet scorched with the *flames of Copenhagen!* Republicans? the care of your country lies on your hands. Your *injured* country has been bleeding at every pore—you have commenced the sovereign application, which alone can affect her cure—and may heaven assist you to bind her broken veins and stop the sluices of her blood—may the mist of anarchy dispel as the clouds of the morning—may the aged lie down in peace and the youthful flourish as the “garden of God”—may our soaring Eagle bear her rising brood beyond the artful leap of the British Lion, or the frantic fury of the Gallic Tyger—and may our union stand unshaken as the rock of ages, ’till crumbled by the last convulsions of expiring nature.