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M. Rogers

AN

ORATION,

PRONOUNCED AT WORCESTER,

IN COMMEMORATION OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,

JULY 4th, 1812.

BY ENOCH LINCOLN.

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BY HENRY ROGERS.....1812.

## ORATION.

**BLESSED** forever be the name of Columbus, the benefactor of man. To equipoise the unbalanced globe was his mighty conception. He completed the earth. He gave admiring nations opulence and power. He opened a boundless source of action and acquisition to the mind. In return he received from an envious, jealous and a faithless Prince, chains instead of honors, a dungeon for a nation and an unknown stone for a continental monument of fame. But little had availed his bold exertions; small indeed had been our vast, Columbian, boundless debt of gratitude, had not Liberty with divine beneficence completed the obligation. With **WASHINGTON** for her champion, and his brave compeers who have borne, in their "scars the hieroglyphic history of many battles" she redressed her wrongs by victory in the furious contest with the filicide. With the **ADAMSES, JEFFERSON, MADISON**, and other immortal sages for her council, she established her imperishable reign by a Constitution of government, pure as the charter of nature.

For such heroes and such statesmen to have appeared but for one revolution among men, was not enough. We are to see them arise to emancipate another realm ; to teach the other half of the new world to add their grateful benizons to ours ; to expiate the five millions of murders it has suffered ; to break the triumphal car of Persecution ; to extinguish the fiery bed of torture ; to give a people, who have been hunted like the deer of the forest, till the blood hound was gorged, a day like this.

FELLOW CITIZENS.....What a country has Liberty chosen for you : how immense have been her benefactions to it. We have a land, wide as the wish of avarice ;—a land like Canaan, flowing with milk and honey. Its mountains “lift the Heavens from Atlas’ laboring pride.” The vine shall bask around their sides. A thousand flocks shall crop their aromatic herbage. Cultivation shall follow their green tops into the skies. Their caves shall echo the songs of joy and their names shall be consecrated by the honors of a Monticello and a Vernon, connected with the event we celebrate, as Sinai with the promulgation of divine law.

BELOW, what a varied prospect of vales and hills : From their bosom, every flower and fruit and herb gathers beauty, nutriment and health. The scene is every realm’s epitome. Here the Indies are blooming beneath the sunny glow : There smiles the mild fruitage of France : Here groans the field with the heavy harvest of England : There flourish the hardy plants of the pole. The generous olio from his native soil nerves the laborer’s arm. Famine, prowling abroad around the meagre wretch—“ whose cries of hunger are stifled by the bayonet,” invades not here the humblest tenement.

OUR rivers freshen the ocean with their floods. As the sinews of strength, they bind the Union. Like inland seas, they roll around it. On their

wave, let Commerce spread the sail. No Imperial Decree shall stop the bounding vessel; no Order in Council shield the pirate; no infernal press-gang kidnap the mariner. He shall be driven, not by the tornado and the monsoon, but by the gales which have gathered fragrance on his native fields. With pride and with triumph as he passes the long, lofty, unbroken city which shall embank his way he shall exclaim; "Thank God, this is my country." Why then roam through every sea? Why waste his toils at a distance from his home? Why with vagrant avarice paralyze the arm of domestic enterprize. Be nobler objects his pursuit. Still let him strike the harpoon and draw the line. With the lavish bounty of our soil, let him range every coast from the capes at the South to the frozen billows of the North; let him associate with every nation; catch all their arts; adopt all their improvements; let the commerce of learning be free as the air; but Perish the Commerce of luxury and fashion and vice and folly! Are our hills whitened with the silky fleeces, of which the gain has almost atoned for Hesperian misery, that the loom shall be idle? Does the cotton plant flourish in exuberant abundance that the spindle and the shuttle may be at rest? Has nature planted here her Eden, and adapted it for fruits numerous as the rays, which warm and nourish and mature them, that we should be dependent as the helpless infant? No. It would be insult to her liberal beneficence. Industry shall draw from every field its harvest, and every production be consigned into the hand of Art. With the sound of every waterfall shall be joined the accordant hum of labor, and Invention continue adding improvement to improvement until happy Columbia be crowned the Queen of Arts. Such must be our upward progress to glory, wealth and happiness. It is the path of toil and enterprize and steady pur-

suit. If we choose it not;—if we go on in the butterfly chase of foreign speculation our fate must be uncertain as the gambler's fortunes. Now, the tide of successful adventure rushes in;—a moment, and the current reverts its course. Gay and promising as may be the hour of prosperity, the reverse must come and all becomes gloom. The clamorous din of complaint drowns the voice of reason; Government becomes timid and indecisive; confidence is destroyed, uncertainty prevails, public spirit loses its energy, and the future welfare of a nation is sacrificed to plans of private gain. To mourn the loss of Commerce may be permitted. Let the son of the feeble soul, when the smiles of his fickle mistress beam not on him, pine in fretful indolence and ennui: The man rises indignant from her wrongs, bursts from her endearments and renounces her forever. The same energy of character also becomes a nation. The momentary evil thus encountered becomes a permanent good. The observation is not speculative. It is history itself. We have realized its truth. Never was a nation more prosperous than is ours even at the present moment. The sublimest scene of grandeur in national interest is expanding before us, that ever was presented to the intellectual or physical vision. Ingenuity and enterprize are in restless action. They are rending open the recesses of the earth for the fossil objects of their labour. They are pushing their discoveries in every subject of improvement. They are cultivating every internal resource of useful profit. They are fast redeeming man from the primæval curse of gaining subsistence by the sweat of his brow. But they move with fear and trembling. Every moment, they apprehend the vindictive malignity of Federalism to blast their labors. But it must not be. Philanthropy would weep at the event. Patriotism swears it shall not be.

To give activity and permanent enjoyment to the natural advantages of our country, we have a *Constitution of Government* equal to the stupendous object. It is not a Constitution resulting from the stinted grants of a royal charter, from the uncertainty of prescription, or the arbitrary pleasure of an usurper; but it is a definite compact, originating in the consentaneous will of the people, and calculated to extend the circle of happiness in the widest range. It is the source of power; the limit of authority; the standard of law and the test of correctness. The legislator is bound by it, the judge must conform to it, the magistrate must submit to it, and none but the omnipotent people can change one tittle of it. The people are to watch over it with faithful love; to cherish and protect it; to see that no profane hand pluck a leaf from its sacred foliage:—a single leaf, and as from the myrtle of Æneades, blood shall flow through every bough at the wound. It is acknowledged by all that ours is the wisest in theory of all political establishments; but say some, and some would rejoice that their prophecy should become history, it cannot endure. It shall endure forever. Its ruins shall not be seen until annihilation shall sweep the universe, and time cease to wing his way into eternity. Other republics, it is true, have flourished, have produced every thing that was great and excellent and have fallen to rise no more. But the inherent principles which precipitated their overthrow are not found in our Constitution, nor if they are, will the precedent avail. In one soil, the deep rooted oak towers to Heaven; the eagle rests in its top, and the laurel flourishes in its shade. In another, all its honors shrink into the paltry shrub. A thousand grand, and ten thousand minute circumstances, have secret operation. Had the Cantons of Switzerland been protected by the broad barrier

of the Atlantic; instead of the glacier and the avalanche and the lofty cliff, the Gallic comet had not consumed in its blaze their little constellation.— Had the league of the Amphictions been composed only of republics, the ambition of Macedonia's madman had not wept for other states to conquer. Had not the States of Holland admitted foreign intercession, their independence had stood perhaps to this day, amidst the awful wreck around. If these Republics were not calculated to endure, have Monarchies been better adapted to perpetuity?— What, then, is the inhabitant of Babylon but the scorpion and the serpent? How fell the colonnades of Palmyra, and how came the hut of the wild Arabian in the palace of Zenobia? Did Republicanism cover Mount Sion with ruins, carry desolation into the thresholds of Balbec, produce the Tyrian purple's faded splendor, or prostrate the walls of Nineveh? Do the wars of modern times accuse a Monarch or a President of peopling the grave? Did the licentiousness of freedom or the corruption of a court open the passes of the Pyrennees to the Corsican Invader, stain the field of Corunna with the life-blood of the gallant Moore or cover the plain of Talavera with the corpses of warriors; or has the extravagance of freemen or aristocratic profligacy hung around the neck of the British Lyon the weight of *six hundred millions* of debt? To change, has been the fate of Empires. The natural and political worlds have been unstable as the ocean wave. The earthquake, conflagration, hurricane and storm which have disturbed the one, have whelmed the other in consequent destruction. But here it is not the ruin of one city, or the loss of one fortress, which can draw in their fall the destiny of the nation. A continent is to be overrun and garrisoned. Every tenant of the soil is to be massacred; (for while one remains, his life shall guard

his native fields,) before a foe shall triumph over our rights. The spot where liberty shall expire shall be beyond the confines of the Union. But where is the people powerful enough to undertake a work like this? Will the English be daring enough to attempt it again? Never 'till her thousand ships can fly with the impetuous courser on the land, or sail in buoyant lightness with the eagle in air. Will the French be desperate enough to send hither their armies? Never 'till the continent shall shrink into a span, 'till it shall furnish no room for a grave, and the soldier seeks the inglorious death of the invader. Nor can the conquest of America be more desirable than it is practicable by any foreign nation. So bloody an acquisition, so hazardous a possession, so expensive a preservation, would sicken avarice and frighten ambition. Courage would be appalled at the attempt. Constancy would fail in its progress. Aggression in the event would lament its rashness. The fear of conquest is the wild chime-  
 ra of a disordered fancy. It is the cry of weakness and folly. In defence of their country, can freemen be conquered? In avenging its wrongs shall they ever yield? It is impossible. Patriotic sentiment, more powerful than the wave in which Thetis dipped her son, shall guarantee invincibility to the citizen soldier. A sacred, a glorious cause only can enlist him. What to him are the seduction of Helen, the wrongs of an O'Rourke, the quarrels of chieftains or the order of successions? In that country, where the fruit of a good government fills his tenement with comfort and content, where the fear of rebellion or the protection of paltry game, does not tear from him his arms, his character is too dignified to permit him to be the servant of abused prerogative. When the cool decision of his chosen rulers shall, *as now*, sound the tocsin, be

the cry "To arms!" Union be the watch word,  
VICTORY OR DEATH the end!

MUCH as the happiness of man depends on the Constitution of Government to which he is subjected, and true as it is that happiness is our being's end and aim, yet age after age has rolled along and with the Stoic's apathy submitted to the infringement of right and all the evils which attend oppression. From the time when the deluge sailors were stranded on Ararat, to the glorious era when Freedom raised her standard in America, the great science of politics has been worse than stationary. The marble has received life from the sculptor, and birds have pecked at the picture of their food; "Heaven, Earth and Ocean" have been "plundered of their sweets," in the researches of Philosophy;—but the art of legislation has been but an *Utopian* project, a code of *Draco*, an Imperial pandect, or a Despot's rule. Abuse had not tended to correction,—Experience had not furnished instruction,—Error had not led to truth,—Nor personal suffering induced social reformation. The many had endured the misery and labour,—the few revelled on the spoil. Anarchy, forgetting that the rights of all men are equal, had disputed its rivalships with the sword,—the sword had given dominion to the law of force, and the law of force had violated every sanctuary of principle, made the citizen a slave, and in hereditary succession made Tyrants perpetual. The swaddled babe and the superannuated dotard have been hailed by prostrate sycophants with the title of your Most Sacred Majesties.—The infallibility and divine right of Kings has been blazoned on their escutcheon—Their parliaments have been servile—Standing armies have been at their disposal, and the wealth of their subjects at the disposal of their armies.—They have acted without restraint, and no responsibility has arraigned their conduct.

**HERE** at length we behold a reverse of the scene. The practice of *Equal Representation* is the powerful alchemy, which converts every thing to gold. It is unknown elsewhere in the world. It is the consolidation of the nation's strength and the organ of its sovereign will. It is the public feeling, regulated by collective wisdom. It is the acknowledgment of the Rights of Man. The grand effect is not the spasm of a member, but the impulse of the system and universal peace, order and harmony result from its action. *Equal Representation* is the power of millions, converging to a magnificent blaze of central light. The rays are prolific of life, growth and happiness. They furnish the great attraction which combines, and the powerful principle which propels the political spheres in their orbits. The natural gravitation of associated man has been to equal Representation. Half the moral calamities of the species have resulted from the malignant spell of repulsion which has driven them from it. Ignorant of the true point, in which their irregular vibration should settle they have yet tended constantly towards it. The Multitude have dashed the Mitre and the Diadem from the consecrated heads they adorned, and sought something like the general will, in their own tumultuous administrations. They have made their passions legislators, and acclamation has enacted their laws. Their deliberation has been in the huzzas of Faction, and their consultation with the demagogue and declaimer. They have rushed headlong upon ruin, until exhausted by their phrenzy, they have yielded to a master or sought a Revolution. In that Revolution, fearful of the dangers they had passed, they have been crushed by the very shield, under which they had hoped for safety. They have constituted their Conscript Fathers their privileged orders, their men of wealth and patronage into senatorial legisla-

tures, with no check and no balance, no limitation and no sense of dependence on popular opinion. These superior men have followed no pursuit but their own good, and waited their turn to be massacred in another revolution.

OUR national legislature is the creature of equal Representation. It is neither the delegate of privilege or the agent of rank ; but deputed from the whole people. The public welfare must be its object, or that people's voice denouncing its awful vengeance, the corrupted agent falls in impotence and contempt into the mass from which he arose. He is ever subject to an accountability, from which he cannot escape. His guard is the never-closing eye of public interest and patriotic jealousy, an eye which like Angels' vision compasses creation from the atom to the mountain. The moment he tastes of corruption, that moment the curse of an indignant people flashes in consuming wrath upon him. The interest of the legislator here is the same common interest of all. If he violates the law, his crime weighs not the lighter in the balance of blindfold justice, nor does the executive arm apply the scourge with feebler vengeance, because his own offspring is the injured object of his fault. But who is the wretch who will need such correction ? The miserable minion of party spirit, the selfish villain who is sold to foreign influence, the shallow minded dupe of intrigue, and the being who has no soul but interest, no God but wealth, no country but his coffers. Such characters there have been, and such there are ; but few we trust are such to be. The characters of our citizens are daily assimilating, their interests are rapidly identifying. The convulsive struggles of the party, who are resisting the amalgamating process, are the certain symptoms of speedy dissolution. The wounded monster rages, but his blood flows more freely

for his fury. We need not fear the adversary. The course of events is working his gradual but certain ruin. Soon will harmony prevail in our councils and universal content cherish public prosperity. Soon will arrive the time when a contemptible sycophancy on the one hand, or a vile abuse on the other, shall not recommend to public stations. Offices are the proud privilege of serving our fellow men. Who then shall be the Officer? The *People's Friend*. Who is the people's friend? He who knows their rights, who enjoys their happiness, who defends their interests. He is the philanthropist and the philosopher. No matter from what parentage he may have descended, what clime may have beamed on his youth or what Country gave him for our foster child. He may have entwined the flowers of science with the diplomas of Universities, or grown by himself, in the energies of mind and soul, and received the stamp of nobility from nature. The moment merit signalizes his character, he becomes the People's Man—He is no longer his own.—He is the Officer, the Patriot. To seek to be useful, is the duty of all. To have the means of being so is here the prerogative of all. Every source of information is open as the fountain to the thirsty traveller. No privilege confines it, no licence restrains—And never—In the name of universal love, I speak—*Never* let there be a thought to bind it. In the wild chase of error, of prejudice and imposture, what if a little licentiousness disturb the pursuit? Will you let the wild beasts go—because a transient uproar follows their desolated path? No! *Huntsman* away! Glory is the prize. Rush o'er the rocks, plunge through the deepest wave, leap the loftiest bar, seize the monsters, even in their dens, and tame, refine and humanize them.

AMERICANS, we must be tolerant to opinion.  
—With us no *Socrates* shall drink the poisoned

draught ; no *Galileo* groan in chains ; no *Sidney's* blood be shed. Sympathy's eye unclouded by a tear shall beam in radiant joy. Ere the trembling pen dared trace the rights of man, how long had liberty pined in solitude ? Freedom of thought and expression called her from her haunts, and "emancipation thundered from her tongue." But the politician is a slave until Religion also be free. Ere Luther dared to speak, how long had the Pontiff's sceptre hung terrible over nations. Freedom of thought and expression broke the iron weapons. To burst the shackles of the mind how much thro' every age has man endured, to the æra when the American Constitution bade enquiry be free, and illuminated reason dissipated the gloom of superstition. How sad has been the experience which warns of that rock, on which millions have been wrecked—a governmental establishment of Religion—Church, coiled like a strangling serpent, around State. That it was, which rushing to plunder and desolate dissenting regions, made Palestine a vast *Acelandama*, put the torch into *Omar's* hand to fire the treasury of Science, with solemn thanksgiving celebrated the slaughter of *Saint Bartholomew's* curst day, lighted the *Smithfield* flames around the stake, and with Christian, Pagan, Jew and Turk, has carried on the furious trade of human butchery. The sacrifice of Religion perverted to a State engine to a benevolent God, has been the devastation of kingdoms—its homage the cries of humanity—the Priest of its altar has been the destroyer and the persecutor.—The endowments of a Prelate have been the revenue of a Prince, and vice and licentiousness have celebrated their orgies in the cowl and the veil.—The *Te Deum* has been answered with groans, and the hallowed bread and cup been polluted with the lip of the drunk with blood.

In the mild and social character of Religion

here how altered she appears ! Supported only by her own loveliness, she pities frailty and corrects only by Reason. No excommunicating anathema condemns to penance and eternal perdition. No fiendish inquisitions ply their engines and their racks. No martyr's blood pollutes our ground. No wretch is writhing in the fire. No tests are to be taken ; no dogmas to be professed and no tythes to be extorted. The diversity of colors with which the Eternal Soul of nature has pictured himself on the human mind only shews the universality of the homage. The most perfect toleration will bring them all into our sphere of Liberty. The Jew shall fly to us to seek peace from the Gentile, and the persecuted Hindoo shall desert the banks of the Ganges, to build among us the Temple of Brama. The seventy-two sects of the Musselmen shall cease their pilgrimages to Mecca, and leaving their symmetars in the tomb of Mahomet, come to us to be reconciled with the Christian. The Laplander shall abandon the genii of the storm—the Persian leave his sacred fire, and the insulated Chinese desert the rude idol of his hands, to live with us. The Catholic shall unite with the Protestant, and sect with sect, and the nations of the earth meet in holy friendship.

ОТНА privileges and other obligations on this august Festival hover in the mind. They need not the tongue of the speaker for that eulogium, of which the heart of the audience anticipates the expression. Their influence is constant and benign as nature's munificence. The freeman lives in their protection ; accumulates, preserves, and distributes in their care. The father bequeaths them as his best legacy, the son looks forward to enjoy them. By the liberality and fidelity with which we shall maintain them, will appear at what price we value them. When necessity shall levy

its contributions, let not reluctant avarice refuse its pittance. But let not the gifts of labor be squandered by profligacy ; nor favorites, pensioners and sinecure placemen consume the substance of the poor.

UNALLOYED happiness is not on earth. We have enemies within and without. They have formed a diabolical union. The war cloud hangs black in our atmosphere. The hatchet is dug from its burial ; the tree of peace is torn up ; the battle's din resounds on our frontier. Our eternal enemy prowls around us for his prey. But the air is purified by the lightning's flash, and a calm succeeds the storm. To be firm, is to be safe. Let the strength of the nation go forth, and it shall scatter the foe as the dew is dissipated before the morning ray. To submit would be to invite aggression. Shall we suffer our path on the wave to be prescribed to us—our brethren to be torn into captivity—the continent to be interdicted our commerce ? Rather be the ocean a gulph of fire. We have heard of resistance to laws. *We will defend them.* Horrible, as it would be, that man who would not encounter the villain who should violate the majesty of the people, by rebellion to their laws, laws which the Judge has sanctioned, and the Majority approved, is not worthy of the Government he enjoys.

FELLOW CITIZENS ! While we cling to our natural and social rights, let us be faithful to our civil duties. So shall our country rise unrivalled in wisdom ; its population be numberless as the rays of the firmament, and Heaven alone exceed our felicity.