

ORATION,

PRONOUNCED AT

TEMPLE, (N. H.)

IN COMMEMORATION

OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,

BEFORE

THE INHABITANTS

OF

*TEMPLE, NEW-IPSWICH, PETERBOROUGH, AND
WILTON,*

AT

THEIR UNITED CELEBRATION,

JULY 4, 1809.

BY SOLOMON KIDDER LIVERMORE.

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AMHERST, N. H.

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1809.

TEMPLE, JULY 4, 1809.

S. K. LIVERMORE, ESQ.

SIR,

WE wait on you to present the thanks of the audience for your candid and patriotic Oration, delivered this day, and to request a copy for the press.

EBENEZER EDWARDS, *President.*

BENJ. CHAMPNEY, *Vice-President.*



EBENEZER EDWARDS, }
AND } *Esquires.*
BENJAMIN CHAMPNEY, }

GENTLEMEN,

AT your request I submit the following copy of my performance of this day to your disposal, and to the candor of the public. I pray you, gentlemen, accept assurance of my high respect.

S. K. LIVERMORE.

Temple, July 4, 1809.

ORATION.



LET this day be sacred to liberty. Let joy irradiate every countenance. Let the flame of patriotism ascend from every heart. Let jealousy, malevolence, and discordant passions be banished. Let friendship and philanthropy predominate in every breast. Let virtue and social harmony preside over our conviviality.

We are assembled, my respected fellow citizens, not to shout reluctant wishes of long life to a usurper, nor to offer servile devoirs at the levee of a despot. No sceptred tyrant is enthroned in our land. No engines of war hurl destruction to our cities. No hostile armies display their banners over the face of our beloved country. No conquering sword drinks the blood of our fathers, our brethren, and our friends. The verdure of our hills and the luxuriance of our vallies is unsullied by trampling of horses, caparisoned for battle. Our flocks and herds range the mountains in safety, and fall not before a rapacious soldiery. The husbandman ploughs in peace, and reaps the reward of industry. Clouds, that lately gathered blackness over our heads, are dispersed. Error appears in retrogradation, while truth advances. Anarchy, which lately appeared with hideous aspect in our frontiers, and like ancient wizards "peeped and muttered," seeks oblivion. Justice, although sometimes reproached and threatened and buffeted, serenely sits, and holds her equal balance.

Surrounded by the smiles of nature, cheered by returning prosperity, blessed by heaven's benignity; it is laudable to turn aside from our private business to keep this festival. Thirty three years has this anniversary been considered by the people of the United States of America, as their great national jubilee. Millions have assembled at the festive board. By millions have gratulatory songs been sung. Illuminations have dispelled the darkness of night. By thundering artillery and

shouts of exultation have the joy and gratitude of Americans for emancipation from arbitrary power been reported to the skies.

We commemorate "the times that tried men's souls;" the conflicts, the ardor, and the magnanimity of patriots; the fortitude and achievements of heroes; the breaking of tyranny's yoke; and the triumph of Liberty. Let us contemplate the past and present conditions of our country, and her future prospects. May this celebration animate our love, and stimulate our exertions to promote her prosperity.

A few fleeting years have passed away, since forests covered our fields, and the places of our habitations were haunts for wild beasts and retreats for uncivilized man. Our fathers, oppressed by power and scourged by superstition, sought refuge in the wilds of America. *They saw the land that it was pleasant, and bowed their shoulders to bear fatigue and hunger and watching and nakedness.* They encountered perils of the deep, perils in the wilderness, and perils among barbarians. But "their bow abode in strength." Forests bowed, wild beasts became their prey. Barbarous tribes retreated before them. *The wilderness and solitary places rejoiced and blossomed like the rose. The land of their pilgrimage became like a well watered garden and like a field, which Jehovah had blessed.* Commerce joined with agriculture to augment their wealth. The arts and sciences flourished. Civil and religious liberty crowned their exertions.

While these United States were colonies, they acknowledged Great Britain, as their parent, and yielded to her filial obedience. But Great Britain divested herself of natural affection. She seemed to envy her children's prosperity. *If a son ask bread of a father, will he give him a stone? If he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?* Yes. Great Britain snatched from her children's mouths the bread, they had earned, and sent serpents, to bite and devour them. Treated like slaves, not like children, they remonstrated, but in vain. They committed their cause to him, *who judgeth righteously*, and on the fourth day of July, one thousand seven hundred and seventy six, solemnly disclaimed allegiance to their parent, asserted their right of self government, and declared themselves free, sovereign and independent.

Shall we spend time to recount the interesting events of that period? Shall the speaker attempt to delineate before you, whose gray hairs testify that ye have seen the lapse of many years, scenes, that never can be effaced from your memories? He would rather *refrain talking, lay his hand upon his mouth, and listen, while ye speak.* Ye felt your country's wrongs, and participated her remonstrances. Ye took weapons of war and marched to the contest. Ye saw the "tented field and bloody arena." Ye beheld, when the mighty fell; when the ruthless sword made many widows and fatherless; when many on the verge of life tottered, mournful, to their exit, having bid a last, a sad adieu to the hope, the joy, the staff, of their declining years. Ye heard the "confused noise" of battles; dying groans and shouts of victory. Ye rejoiced in your country's joy at the acquisition of independence, and returning peace.

Do your ardent minds, my coevals, thirst for knowledge of the sentiments and transactions of those days? Consult history. Repair to the tombs and monuments of your fathers. There you may learn what statesmen were pre-eminent; what heroes bled in vindication of their injured country. The war-worn soldier will recount his marches, his retreats, his rencounters, his dangers and his escapes. Recollecting the wounds, he received, while inspired with intrepidity by the beloved chief, whose memory is dear to every true American; his mind will be inflamed with enthusiasm. Forgetting his infirmities, he will assume the vigor and activity of youth. That you may learn how cities are won, the enemy repulsed, and victory obtained; he will fight "his battles o'er again, and thrice" will slay "the slain."

If ever public spirit generally prevailed in the United States, it was during the revolutionary war and at its close. Having acquired independence, it was essential to their prosperity, and indispensable to their honor to establish a government, which would secure enjoyment of those inestimable privileges, for acquisition of which, they had with unexampled firmness accomplished a most arduous warfare. In political deliberations the most selfish scarcely dared to manifest sinister motives. The united energies of wisdom and virtue were called upon to frame a constitution. Ancient republics had vanished. Existing governments were despotic, mon-

archic, or aristocratic. Of all, then extant, the government of Great Britain approached nearest to freedom. From that the United States copied a form with improvements. Having adopted a constitution, to whom should the people entrust its administration? To its enemies? It had open and avowed enemies. Does the shepherd commit his fold to the care of wolves? Does the husbandman set swine to guard his fields? Does the citizen kindle a fire on his house top to prevent a conflagration? To appoint men to administer a government, who are in principle or practice hostile to its system or institutions, would be equally incongruous. The people were not then chargeable with such absurdity. Their eyes were directed to those, whose ability, fidelity, public services, and undeviating adherence to republican principles had rendered them worthy of confidence. These could not be hid. Their lustre had shone not under a bushel, nor under a bed, nor in a corner, nor in a cave; but as on a candlestick. Their fellow citizens had seen their light, and rejoiced in its radiance. In the first exercise of the elective franchise subsequent to the adoption of the constitution the people, unbiassed by prejudice or misrepresentation, manifested soundness of judgment, and correctness and consistency of conduct. The *chosen* were also *tried and faithful*.

From Washington's first accession to the chief magistracy till near the close of Adams' administration, the administrators adhered to a uniform, wise, and beneficial policy. Public utility was their object. The constitution they viewed, as an inviolable barrier against encroachments upon the people's rights. Of the "full tide" of success in our experiments of republicanism, our internal prosperity and advantageous foreign intercourse; our peace at home and respectability abroad, were plenary evidences.

But from the beginning of Washington's presidency there was a gradually increasing opposition to the prevailing policy, till, at the close of Adams' administration, a great change had taken place in the politics of the nation. To trace the source and instruments of this change would appear to some invidious, and we think is inexpedient. Jefferson was promoted to the chair of State. In the exultation of popular favor he declared that we were "in the full tide of successful experiment: at

peace at home and respected abroad." But Jefferson and his adherents adopted a policy different from the former. They tried new experiments. Whether equally successful, equally advantageous and honorable to the nation with those of their predecessors, perhaps hereafter, when party spirit shall have subsided, we may more safely judge. Future historians will do justice to the subject. "Jefferson's administration has passed away," and his policy seems to be not far in the rear. He has retired from public life. We wish that his reflections in retirement may be profitable to himself, and, if possible, useful to his country.

We come not here to criminate any individual nor any political party. Already has party zeal become intemperate. Already has it marred much of our happiness. From this have originated great public inconveniences, and private animosity. It has interrupted the harmony of families and neighborhoods, estranged brethren from each other, and turned love into hatred. By its influence we have seen public disorganizers elevated to stations of the highest responsibility. The most faithful public servants, whose lives were devoted to their country, have been deprived of scanty subsistence, derived from emoluments of offices, to make room for men, whose only merit is their obsequiousness and activity in the service of their aspiring patrons. The veteran soldier, who bled for his country, and whose scars are honorable tokens of his valor, has been reproached with want of patriotism, and attachment to a foreign nation by those, whose public spirit never extended beyond their flocks and herds, their threshing floors and their cider presses. An Adams has been stigmatized by the appellation of hoary-headed incendiary. A Washington—O ingratitude, where is thy remorse? "O shame, where is thy blush?"—A Washington has been pronounced a traitor and a monarchist. "My brethren these things ought not so to be."

It is time to abandon party names, party distinctions, and party contests. Who are wise? Who are virtuous? *Who are honest? Who are capable? Who are faithful?* Select such only, to be invested with authority. Do we acknowledge governments of men? or of laws? If of men, our constitutions are of no validity. We are gov-

erned by caprice and submit to arbitrary power. If of laws, our constitutions ought to be the criterion of our animadversions upon public functionaries. Our constitutions are the primary laws of the land. They are indeed our governments. If we oppose rulers, who exercise legitimate authority only ; if we counteract wise and just laws, sanctioned by the constitutions ; we thereby oppose government, and are worthy of censure, as disorganizers and enemies to our country. But if we oppose rulers, who acknowledge no law but their own whims or caprice, and who transgress legitimate authority ; if we oppose laws, repugnant to the constitutions, impolitic and unjust ; we thereby support government, and merit approbation, as friends of order, and advocates of republicanism.

We ought to guard against the doctrine, sedulously inculcated by some, that it is always expedient for administrators of the state governments to coincide and cooperate with those of the national government. The independence of each state is recognised by the national constitution. National rulers may sometimes wilfully or inadvertently adopt measures, oppressive to an individual state, and subversive of its most essential rights. Should that state then forbear ever to remonstrate ? Under the influence of strange infatuation the people may elect rulers void of honesty or mental energy, who, actuated by love or fear of a foreign power, or by ambitious views of personal aggrandizement, may endanger the peace, prosperity, and honor of the nation. If this ever happen, a minority of the states might possibly by dignified and determined opposition to such rulers, effect a change in their policy, rescue the union from dissolution, and the nation from ruin.

After a long, "unprofitable contest" between parties, a President is elected, of whose wisdom and fidelity in office, although he was not the people's unanimous choice, we entertain sanguine hopes. Of his talents and political acquirements none, acquainted with his character, will doubt. Of the constitution at the time of its adoption he was a powerful advocate. If he has subsequently deviated from its principles ; if he has entertained chimerical theories ; if he has favored erroneous policy, we hope that from experience he has derived salutary knowledge. He has had sufficient opportunity to

learn that national strength is essential to national safety ; that foreign belligerents will not be induced by dictates of justice only to respect neutral rights ; that to prevent insults, aggressions, and outrages, we should be prepared to repel them. He has begun well. *If he doeth well, shall he not be accepted?* May the United States under his auspices be blessed by returning unanimity.

Wisdom and virtue, diffusion of knowledge, and acquaintance with civil polity, are absolutely necessary to perpetuity of elective governments. Under the influence of these, people will not give their suffrages to promote the ignorant, the unstable, or the profligate. Rulers will diligently and faithfully perform their incumbent duties, knowing that their constituents are capable of discerning good and evil. If "the powers that be" violate the fundamental laws of the land ; if they arbitrarily and wantonly "infract" the unalienable rights of the people ; if they are impious and licentious ; if they confer honours and emoluments upon the unworthy ; how can they be *respected as God's ministers, ordained by him for good? to be a terror, not to good works, but to the evil ; to bear the sword not in vain, but to execute wrath upon evil doers.* Vice and ignorance are baneful to all communities, and especially to republics. These generate disorder, insubordination, confusion, and anarchy ; till despotism with iron sway quiets the tumult of the people.

To restrain turbulence and corruption and lust, whence wars and fightings and dissolution to the bonds of society arise ; to inspire brotherly love and unanimity, benevolence and justice, patriotism and philanthropy, religion is of primary efficacy. That persuasion of its divinity ; that its benign power may be unlimited ; to you, ministers of the gospel, we look for instruction in its sublime truths, and for examples of sobriety and godliness. As heralds of the Redeemer, "servants of the most high God," soldiers of the King of glory, we revere your characters. We bow before the conqueror, under whose banners ye fight. We venerate the wisdom, whose precepts ye inculcate. This is the celestial wisdom, by which *kings reign and princes decree justice, by which nobles rule, yea all the judges of the*

earth. We would not forget your *works of patience and labors of love.* We would not forget the magnanimity and public services of the clergy at the illustrious era of our emancipation. It was not then deemed derogatory from the clerical character for those, *the weapons of whose warfare are not carnal, but spiritual,* to speak in freedom's cause. *What carefulness, yea what indignation, yea what zeal,* did their exhortations, and their admonitions produce? Who can forget that ornament of the christian character, that pious instructor of our infancy, that exemplary companion of our maturity, that follower of the Lamb of God, whose venerable presence we lately anticipated in this assembly? whom his Lord and Master has called to banquets of celestial freedom.* May this people, among whom have shone the resplendent beams of reason and revelation, never *make obeisance* to infidel, idolatrous, atheistical or multi-theistical rulers, who, like the apostate Joash, would cause to be stoned the sons of their benefactors, bold reprovers of the obliquities and aberrations of wandering stars.

Fellow-Citizens in Arms,—We celebrate the deeds of warriors, who fought, and bled, and conquered. Reflecting upon the virtue and courage and perseverance of your military fathers, do not your breasts glow with enthusiastic admiration? At your country's call what man of you would not with martial ardor hasten to her defence? While eager to be distinguished for prowess, no soldier should neglect his duties and privileges, as a citizen. By careful attention to these, necessity of an appeal to arms may be prevented. Military should always be subject to civil authority. When the former gains ascendancy over the latter, liberty will "expire in a convulsion." A well organized militia, regulated and controlled by the civil arm, is the legitimate defence of a republic. It is her glory to unite in one the citizen and the soldier. Remember your illustrious exemplar. While invincible in arms he did not disclaim amenability to his fellow citizens. Though his country's father, having led her armies to victory and renown, he laid his laurels at her feet, and became as one of her sons.

* *The Rev. STEPHEN FARRAR, of New-Ipswich died suddenly a few days previous to this celebration.*

Daughters of America,—In you our hearts are deeply interested. Every day witnesses your ascendancy over them. From your influence society may derive inestimable blessings. It is peculiarly your province to cultivate infant minds and to implant first principles. Germs, inserted in early life, will flourish in manhood, and bear fruit in old age. If you exhibit examples of virtue and piety; if you discountenance immorality and irreligion; who would not become virtuous and religious? From such examples even the unprincipled cannot withhold respect. Will you smile upon the licentious? Will you wink at impiety? Will you bestow your hearts upon atheists? *Cast then your pearls before swine. They shall trample them under their feet, and turn and rend you.*

When we contemplate the nations of Europe, drinking *the cup of fury*, our hearts bleed for their calamities. The scourge of God has gone abroad to chastise them. Their fields have become *Aeldamas*. *The inhabitants of the land faint. The shields of the mighty are vilely cast away.* With peculiar sympathy we deplore the fate of Spain. But is not the justice of heaven even there displayed? Is not that nation suffering punishment for national crimes? Has not its character been stained by blood and violence? Witness the papal inquisition, and the conquest of South America. The Spanish nation waxed powerful, wealthy, and luxurious, by spoils unjustly taken. *They have condemned and killed the just. They have lived in pleasure and been wanton. They have nourished their hearts as in a day of slaughter. Behold, the treasures of Peru and Mexico have cried, and the cries of the Mexicans and Peruvians have entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.*

Although "Jehovah hath sent the rod of his anger and the staff of his indignation" against nations and kingdoms and empires, "to take the spoil, to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets;" Bonaparte "meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so. It is in his heart to destroy, to cut off," and to tyrannise over "nations not a few. For he saith, are not my princes altogether kings? Shall I not, as I have done to" Europe and her governments, "so do" to America and her government? "Therefore when Jehovah shall have accomplished his whole work upon

the nations of the earth," may we not expect that he "will punish the fruit of the stout heart of" Napoleon, "and the glory of his high looks? For he saith, by the strength of my hand have I done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent; and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man." What further work of vengeance is to be performed by the conqueror time will develope. Great Britain only has successfully resisted his power and artifice. At present we rejoice in her strength, because we believe it an effectual barrier against invasion of our country by the armies of Napoleon. But how long shall we confide for protection in the British navy? This may prove to us "the staff of a broken reed." When nations have arrived at their zenith of grandeur, they remain not long stationary. Declension soon succeeds. Long has Great Britain flourished in power and magnificence. But her fall may be near. "She saith I shall be a lady forever. I shall not sit a widow; neither shall I know the loss of children." But "in a moment, in one day," she may experience "the loss of children and widowhood." At the demise of her present king a change may take place in the policy of her government, which will facilitate her subjugation.

Separate from the turmoils of Europe, possessing peace and leisure to "manage our affairs in our own way," having none to molest us; ought we not to occupy this propitious opportunity in strengthening our nation, and in preparing for self defence? The Omnipotent can indeed save us. But he usually saves by means. If we neglect the ample means of self-preservation, placed within our reach, we have no right to expect his aid. Is it not stupid beyond measure to depend for safety upon the contingency of European wars? Peace in Europe, or conquest of Great Britain might expose us to mighty assailants. The republic calls upon every man to lay down the weapons of domestic dissention, to invest himself with the "armor of righteousness," the armor of his country's love, both on the right hand and on the left," and with vigilance to guard against foreign influence, foreign insults, and foreign usurpation.—But if we turn away our ears; if we exercise our art, our wit, and our sapience, to reproach and calumniate, to "bite and devour one another;" *If we have bitter enoyings and strife*

in our hearts ; let us not glory ; let us not lie against the truth ; for we are not virtuous ; we are not patriotic.

If by love or fear of any foreign power, by fallacious professions of friendship, by imbecile policy, by false economy, or by injudicious security, we suffer ourselves to be deluded, and betrayed into the grasp of the potent robber of the world ; if by intrigues and cabals and intemperance and tumults and insurrections we cause the republic to become like a tempestuous ocean, till the troubled waves subside into the sullen calm of despotism ; if for momentary honor, or emolument, or applause, or popularity ; if for a discordant song, composed by ambition and sung by infatuation, we vend our dearly purchased privileges ; we shall be more inexcusable than *Esau, who sold his birth right for a little pottage, a morsel of meat.* This anniversary, this festival, this jubilee, this day of rejoicing and shouting, will become a day of shame and humiliation and fasting and mourning and useless lamentation. Spirits of departed worthies will blush to own their descendants. Ere such degradation may the seventh angel sound his trumpet.

Man is prone to error. Change is inscribed on all human systems. Public opinion is extremely versatile. Pride, ambition, envy, love of flattery, and inclination to rule, are inherent in human nature. Ingratitude to benefactors, although most odious, is very common. It has been considered in republics a notoriously prevailing, popular vice. Propensity to listen to slander, and to attribute good actions to unworthy motives, is too much indulged. How apt are we to countenance, enforce, and propagate suggestions of sinister motives for the most disinterested acts of our competitors ? How apt are we to accuse our political opponents of stupidity ; of hypocrisy and falsehood ; of schemes to ensnare, to oppress, and to subjugate ? As apt are we to listen with full credence and fond complacency to those, who profess to be devoted wholly to our service ; especially if they accompany their professions with a little luscious flattery of our acute discernments, unconquerable virtue, enlightened understanding, and profound judgment. The grossest digressions of our favorites we readily attribute to veniable misconception ; to errors of the head, not of the heart ; we deem them sufficiently excused by reflec-

ting that in man's present state perfection is not attainable. These errors, passions and propensities, corrode the stamina of republics, and produce their dissolution. So universally, and so fatally have they existed in free states, that wise politicians deem it impossible to eradicate them, or to check their growth, so as to prevent their eventual fatality.

Having in view the rocks and whirlpools, where others have been wrecked and overwhelmed, let us make one effort to shun them. By the memory of heroes and statesmen, who sleep ; by respect for those, who are not yet divested of mortality ; by regard for posterity, with whom our examples will live, when we are dead ; by the glorious and animating prospect of a people, numerous as the stars of heaven, inhabiting this vast territory, and uniting their energies to disseminate universal happiness, let us be induced to discard every sentiment, and every motive incompatible with man's primeval excellence. Let us bring back the glory and dignity and felicity, which have departed. May the year now commenced, be distinguished in the annals of these United States by expulsion of error and discord, and restoration of truth and unanimity. May this beauteous heritage descend unincumbered from generation to generation till the end of time. Then will the history of our republic be worthy to be read with admiration in journals of angels.

To angels keep journals!