

by the

AN
ORATION,

PRONOUNCED

JULY 4, 1801.

AT THE REQUEST OF A NUMBER OF THE
INHABITANTS OF

WRENTHAM;

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE ANNI-
VERSARY OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

——
BY DOCTOR JAMES MANN.



WRENTHAM,
PRINTED BY NATHANIEL HEATON, JUN.

1801.

VOICE OF THE MEETING.

At a meeting of a number of the inhabitants of the towns of Wrentham, Medfield, and Franklin, at Whitney's Hall in Wrentham 4th day of July A. D. 1801.

ON motion, Voted that Major BERIAH BRASTOW, Doctor JAMES GERALD, and Major MOSES KNAPP be, and hereby are chosen a committee to wait upon Doctor JAMES MANN, and thank him for his well adapted ORATION this day delivered at their request, upon the anniversary of the INDEPENDENCE of the UNITED STATES of AMERICA; and to request of him a copy for the press.

*Attest JAIRUS WARE Clerk of
the Meeting.*



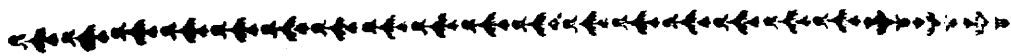
GENTLEMEN,

THE flattering testimony of the approbation of the gentlemen, at whose request I pronounced the Oration, after a very short notice, is a sufficient inducement for me, to comply with their request; sensible at the same time that their candor will apologize for all its imperfections. With sentiment of respect

I am your very
obedient servant

JAMES MANN.

To Maj. BERIAH BRASTOW. }
Doct. JAMES GERALD. } *Committee.*
Maj. MOSES KNAPP. }



AN
O R A T I O N .



CITIZENS and TOWNSMEN,

YOU are convened this day, neither to commemorate the birth, nor the coronation of a prince, nor of a king. The capricious, or cruel tyrant has no charms to subdue your passions, to his control. For you realize that you are men, exalted superior to that servile fear, which, the base sycophants of crowned heads express, at their master's frowns.

The fascinating splendors of a brilliant court, chain you not to the footstool of an imperious lord. You do not submissively kiss the dust, upon which he scornfully treads.

Sole possessors of the soil, which you cultivate, you enjoy unmolested, and in tranquility, the produce of your farms; for you do not meanly tremble, lest either the fruits of your laborious hands, or ever a tenth of your frugal earnings, should be wrested from you, to gorge the pampered ecclesiastic, or glut the coffers of insatiate civilian lords.

Fortunately you are destitute of all those orders of men, privileged by birth, to riot upon the hard-earned savings of the industrious citizens.

You are not subjected to be forcibly dragged, from your peaceable retirements, from within your own vineyards, and from under your own figtrees, to take up arms to gratify the desires, of an ambitious monarch.

You possess in complete security, the riches, which your lands, in beautiful profusion, are annually repaying you for your toils, while in their cultivation.

Such are a few of the blessings, which, you now experience, produced by that glorious revolution, which, you this day celebrate.

But, CITIZENS, *this* is not the natal day merely of your own independence. Nations yet in servitude and bondage, will hail *this*, as their birth of freedom, and independence. Even nations, where the American emancipation from oppression, is not as yet known, will at some future period, have abundant reason to join with you, in congratulations of joy, upon this auspicious day.

It possibly may be expected by my audience, that we should revert to those causes, which, through a long series of events, have finally led the United States of America, to that important crisis, when, they were declared free, and independent.

Upon your account, aged citizens! who have taken a conspicuous part, in the arduous, and haz-

ardous conflict, either in person, or by your influence, or by your property, it is quite unnecessary, to rehearse them in detail; while the recent annals of your country, are amply copious, and explicit for the information of those, who are too young, to have been at the time of your celebrated revolution, upon the theatre of action.

For these reasons, as well as on account of the brevity of our time, we shall only observe, that the *privileged orders of Great-Britain*, in whose hands the reins of government are always held, become jealous, and feared, lest those principles of *liberty, independence, and equality*, which had at first been implanted in AMERICA, by your enterprizing progenitors, should increase, so as to grow formidable, if not dangerous, to arbitrary systems.

It was readily conceived by the *British court*, that in order to subjugate your spirits to their wills, it was only necessary, to divest you of your property; so that while depriving you of your liberties, they would grasp the whole income of the American World; from which they had, in consequence of your unexampled, and rapid increase of population, calculated a large increase to their revenue. How frequent it is, that those events, upon earth, which are of the most importance to mankind, are often caused by the most trifling, sometimes by the vilest intentions of men!

But these measures of *that infatuated court*, artfully conceived, and unwisely adopted, to be carried into execution by force of arms, excited a resistance which confounded their wisest politicians, a resistance, which repelled eventually their hostile armies, and a resistance, which by its consequences, astonished, at the time, the world of mankind, and has since caused the globe to tremble to its center.

Hence, the effects of this resistance did not cease in America.—Nations, who were coadjutors in the American revolution, and nations, who were mere spectators of the sanguinary contest, which the UNITED STATES supported, having caught the infectious principles, which were the basis of the American revolution, cherished them, and adopted them, as their own. While these principles having thus extended themselves far and wide, do, at this very moment, continue to prevail, to the awful destruction of tyranic power, and its base supporters.

But, while you have cause to rejoice at the downfall of tyranny, and at the dawn of rational liberty, when the mind enveloped no longer in clouds of error, is free to expand itself, and uncontrolled by civil, or ecclesiastical subordination, may open its views, into the regions of speculation, and investigation, far beyond mean, contracted considerations, you should lament that degraded state of savage, and barbarous degeneracy, which still exists within

the breasts of men, and, which is the occasion of so much blood-shed and slaughter.

Although crimson rivulets have been made to flow in the support of the cause of humanity; yet it is to those miscreants only, who have driven men to this bloody extremity, you are to look for the source of all this calamity; while, on account of their criminal outrages committed against nature, they finally will perish by their own indiscreet measures.

Connected with your independence, is that ever memorable DECLARATION OF RIGHTS, which announces all men to be equal, and free. It has its foundation in truth, and reason, not in vague and speculative opinion. Its principles were first engrafted into the nature of man, and after being lost, in consequence of his depravity, were again promulgated with the gospel of Christ. It has since been published for your benefit, and the happiness of mankind.

An annual renovation of these principles will serve as a monitor to your memories. This declaration of the rights of men, which cannot be too much celebrated, has ever since its publication, been viewed by republicans, as the great charter of the human race; and, while it contains the political creed of freemen, it should be constantly retained in their hearts; it should be taught to youth, as

a lesson of lasting importance; even the infants should be made to lisp it, from their tongues; while its principles imbibed with their mother's milk, will durably impress their tender minds, not to be effaced; except with the loss of life, and with which, than these principles, they will sooner part. Even every act authorized by whatever name, ennobled or not, or however dignified to divert the citizens of these their inestimable privileges, will be viewed not only *unjust* but *oppressive* and *hostile*.

Mankind prone to idleness, and too indolent to think for themselves, have in times past, received their instruction, civil and ecclesiastical, from those who interested themselves, to keep their pupils subject to ignorance, and superstition. Passive obedience to superior authority, whether just, or unjust, and nonresistance to civil, and ecclesiastic laws, whether right, or wrong, have been the themes, upon which, the privileged orders, with indefatigable zeal have harped.

But, such are not the precepts taught by our holy religion. From the divine instructions of the LORD, we have the genuine principles of republicanism clearly opened to us. He himself has set us for our imitation, precious examples of liberty, and equality.

The debasement of the self-exalted, and the exaltation of the meek and humble are, every where

announced, in that sacred volume, which should be the rule, and guide of our faith, and practice.

Is it not then incontrovertably evident, that exclusive privileges belong to no class, or orders of men? Public offices of course, are the sole property of the nation, and they themselves only have a just right to dispose of them. What are salaries, but mere rewards adequate to the labors, and services done the public? While he, who is the most faithful servant, is the only one deserving of the future confidence of the people. When a citizen is invested with authority, to act; it is neither from himself, nor for himself that he officiates. The law must govern his administration, and direct his measures, not whim, caprice, and passion. The law is the voice of the nation, and that man, whether in office, or out of office, who will not obey its mandates, will, in hours of cool reflection, be esteemed an enemy to the republic, a traitor, or an usurper.

The historic pages of the American revolution are replete with instruction, and wisdom, as well as outrage and violence. From them, may be collected a knowledge, not only of ourselves, but of men. From them, may be learnt, in what manner, republicans, with a tone, *philosophical, dignified, and manly*, addressed the usurpers of their rights, and with what language, fraught with insolent abuse

they replied to their moderate requisitions. Therein, on one hand, we behold rising into view tyrants struggling for increase of empire, conflagrating cities, devastating villages, demolishing temples of worship, wantonly murdering the decrepit, and aged, and, even in cool blood, with savage barbarity, butchering infants at their mother's breasts. While, on the other we see men sage in wisdom, firm in patriotism, uniting their energies to counteract hostile measures, seconded by a band of intrepid republicans, with a fortitude and prowess which would do honor to veteran soldiers, contending in unequal battle, and conquering by perseverance.

At various periods of the revolutionary war, many patriots rose into view, who more engaged than their associates in arms, have rendered themselves conspicuous, in the front of the terrible contest, and by deeds magnanimous, and heroic have immortalized their names down to the remotest ages of posterity. Would time permit, we would pass all of those celebrated characters in review before us. A few, however, as examples for your emulation, must, for the present, suffice.

Among the first, who made a voluntary sacrifice of his life, for his country, was a WARREN. Every time he is named, the heights of Bunker rise to my view. I see the minions of tyrants rushing on to hellish slaughter; and I see mercenary soldiers, and

self devoted citizens promiscuously biting the ground, their garments rolled in blood ; and to heighten the terrific scene, I see fell destruction, robed in sheets of fire, and with wide conflagration stalking over the devoted town of Charleston.

I would willingly quit the subject of these sanguinary scenes, but my haunted imagination presents under every form, and in successive prospects, battles, flames, slaughters, and death ; and hark ! —while I am now speaking, methinks I hear the hollow, and deep mouthed thunder of the god of war, from the plains of distant Quebec. For there it was, where MONTGOMERY early in the cause greatly fell, and lavished away his useful life ;—a chief, who gloriously expended his precious blood for freedom and his country.

Shall I relate where WOOSTER fell ; and how the intrepid MERCER led on the front of battle, when he received his mortal wound ; and how young LAWRENS emulous of honor rushed on to certain death ? Their names with their enterprizing exploits are already enroled upon the imperishable annals of fame.

But, these are only a few of those exalted heroes who have fought, who have bled, and of their country, have well deserved ; and while it is agreeable to our feelings, to bear their names in grateful remembrance, upon our minds, the cause for which,

they contended, demands it of us. To applaud deceased virtue, is an incense due to the meritorious. May the altars of freedom ever teem with the fragrant fumes of praise, whose refreshing odors will ever ascend to heaven and be there received as an acceptable offering presented, as a sweet smelling favor, by suppliant mortals.

The brilliant exploits of men engaged in their country's cause should be preserved; that they may exist, as so many examples worthy your imitation. They will excite your children and your children's children to an emulation of them.

Americans! have you not abundant cause to render thanks to heaven, that you were not left to have been destitute of men, capable of bearing the burthens incident to the revolution; and even willing to sacrifice their ALL, for the public benefit?

But, it is not from the field only, you are to call up to recollection characters, whose names the trump of fame will never cease to resound. For in the cabinet, you have had a FRANKLIN, a HANCOCK, the ADAMSES, a JEFFERSON, a RANDOLPH, a TRUMBULL, a LIVINGSTONE, with a crowd of patriots, too numerous, for us particularly to notice. Suffice it to remark, that the cause for which AMERICANS contended, roused the latent spark into activity; for like the flint, without attrition, the fire of genius might have continued dormant, and obscure.

In order, CITIZENS to excite the rising generations to the practice of virtuous deeds, it has been usual to have recourse to examples, noble and disinterested. But, to recur to the records of antiquity for such, is quite unnecessary. The illustrious actions of your own countrymen, are already sufficiently numerous and brilliant to stimulate your youth to an emulation of them. Why then, would you ransack the annals of ancient *Greece* and *Rome* for examples, so long, as, your own possess a WASHINGTON? What age, or what country can boast a *hero*, a *patriot* or a *politician* his equal. In the field, he conquered; in the closet he surpassed the wisest. Indeed, he had not a competitor in either. The combined virtues of a FABIUS, of a HANNIBAL, of an ALEXANDER, and of a CINNATUS are inadequate to finish the sublime character of a WASHINGTON. For, after subduing the enemies of his country, and supporting its independence, he conquered himself.

Ambition is the sovereign passion of man, especially of prosperous man. Of all the heroes of antiquity, we have called to recollection no one, who having had the supreme authority for seven years in his power, yielded it up without a request, and from the exalted station of a commander in chief after having accomplished a most brilliant work, no less than bringing a nation into existence,

reduced himself to a private citizen. Such a man was WASHINGTON.

But, these are the astonishing effects of *principles* — *principles*, which are congenial with the souls of men contending for their liberties, in opposition to an inordinate, and an ambitious thirst for power.

The refulgent son of liberty, after a long season of darkness revisited this western hemisphere, it retrogrades eastward, to enlighten other climes, and having illumined the whole terrestrial globe, may some JOSHUA, like the seer of old, say to that glorious luminary, stand thou still, and command that it shall never sit. Americans ! Although this benignant planet has arisen with you and has commenced its renovating course, it has not half accomplished its brilliant career. Hence, how important it is, that even while its resplendent rays continue their influence, every citizen should become a soldier, and that every soldier become a sentinel. In proportion to the increase of wealth, so, will be multiplied the sources of corruption. Did not the chosen disciple of the LORD, betray his master, for a few paltry pieces ? Can we expect a more general disinterested conduct, in this age of degeneracy ? To cure a disease, it is necessary, that we know its nature. Is it not of the highest consequence then, that republicans should ever be upon

their watch, to check that itching desire to an increase of power, which, all in office, are wont to possess.

Man has always a disposition to become a tyrant. This is discoverable early in his infancy; it increases with his growth, and it strengthens with his capacity. A child is a tyrant to an insect. An ambitious man would lord it over the whole heritage of God.

A republic is a government of laws and not of men; but, how soon do freemen loose sight of *this object*, and see, in their supreme executive, all the energy, which belongs only to the law itself.

You yield up imperceptably your liberties, by quietly submitting to the will of an individual. Hence, the administration of a virtuous chief magistrate, may lay a foundation for succeeding misery in a nation, provided a vicious magistrate should immediately follow in office, by inducing an apathy and a state of carelessness concerning the public welfare. For, it is always difficult, sometimes impossible, to divest men of indolent habits once induced. While you cannot inculcate the *laudable* principles of reformation, without exposing yourselves to all the horrors attendant upon revolutions.

But, still the constitution of the United States has the means, to check the evils, which spring from usurped authority, while it is fully adequate to curb the spirit of insubordination.

AMERICANS ! blest with such a government, and with such a country as you now possess, your condition is truly enviable. Situated as you are, too remote to suffer from the intrigues of despotic courts, you have little to fear from their arms ; while your connections with them, are *commercial only*. Do you but attend to your internal police, you may triumphantly bid defiance to all external force.

Should your administration be opposed to the law, *the remedy*, you always possess. Use it seasonably, and the business is accomplished. Hence, of how much importance it is, that republicans, do not by their negligence, loose their *only* opportunity of filling the offices of government, with men, who possess, not only sufficient wisdom, but rigid integrity, to administer in conformity to the law.

AMERICANS ! you have the vast Atlantic rolling its boisterous waves, on one side ; extensive, and impenetrable forests on the other, the barriers of nature, to protect your blessed land, from foreign invasion. In the known world, there are no people, so independent, as yourselves, having within your own bosoms, the productions, in profuse excess, of the various climes of the globe. What the heart of man could have desired, you do already possess.

AMERICANS! your name is respected from home, as well on account of your country, as for your wisdom, and for your courage. You still can boast of your *chief magistrates*, and of your *senators*; of your *military* and *naval officers*. Your militia, which you must view always as the great bulwark of your country, for their organization, and regularity, may be put in competition, with the best disciplined soldiers, which the tyrants of the earth can produce: while it is to these hardy, and intrepid sons of your land, instead of idle, mercenary, standing armies, those harpies of nations you are to look for your defence against all your foes.

To your natural advantages, we will add your improvements. Your agricultural interest which is the internal strength of a nation, is in a promising condition; while useful discoveries are daily making, in this important art, so necessary for your existence, and happiness. In the mechanic arts, you are scarcely behind the most ancient nations, while the liberal arts, and sciences, are in a flourishing state. Your foreign, and inland navigations already vie with those, of the most powerful, and wealthy kingdoms of the world: and, how necessary, and important are they, to export the surplus


of your luxuriant soil ; for it is, from commerce, that your wealth, and foreign importance grow. But, CITIZENS ! the brevity of our time prevents an enumeration, of all those natural, and acquired advantages, which, you so eminently enjoy ; particularly such as arise from your insulated situation, as it respects the nations of the earth ; from your extensive sea-coasts, so favorable to commerce ; from the variety of climates, which produce a rich variety of the conveniences, and the luxuries of life ; from the redundant productions of your soil, from which, you select a vast supply, for exportation ; from your extensive forests, for the growing of which, it would be politic, to give encouragements, being so necessary for most of the arts, particularly for ship-building ; from your mild laws, and impartial administration of them ; all of which are peculiarly favorable to the population of your country, by inviting into this retreat of peace, and happiness, emigrations from foreign lands, as well as, by encouraging early matrimonial connections. But, above all from a free toleration of religious opinions ; and from a liberal, learned, and benevolent clergy, who faithfully administer to their several flocks, portions of sacred truths, agreeable to

their own ideas of them, without breathing forth, anathemas against those of their neighbours, who may be of a different sentiment.

Such a land, so dearly purchased, and such a government, so laboriously erected, and wisely established, you AMERICANS! will never voluntarily relinquish. Wherefore is it not of the highest importance, that you should annually, and with solemnity, and cheerfulness renew by public celebrations, the day of AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE, and that declaration of the RIGHTS OF MAN, which has laid the foundation of a REPUBLIC which bids fair to rival, within the short space of the life of man, the most populous empires of the world?

These, my COUNTRYMEN! are only the feeble marked out lines of the glorious advantages, which you now enjoy. This sublime subject needs the accurate, and life delineating pencil of a Raphael to give it in all its colors a representation adequate to its merits.

Did I but possess the all-persuasive pen of a CICERO, and the eloquent thunder of a DEMOSTHENES, I would impress the importance of it upon your hearts.



To be then as completely happy, as this transitory world can render you, it is only to know that you are blessed. May the God of heaven continue to prosper your labors, for it is from him you derive every good, and perfect gift. May the Lord continue to bless you here, and hereafter crown you with glory and honor.

THE END.