

AN ORATION

DELIVERED ON 4th JULY, 1809,

IN COMMEMORATION OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE;

BEFORE THE

INDEPENDENT GREENS,

AND

GERMAN FUSILEERS, OF CHARLESTON, S. C.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

BY B. A. MARKLEY,

Ensign of the Independent Greens.

**“ A day, an hour of virtuous liberty,
“ Is worth a whole eternity in bondage.”**

Addison's Cato.

CHARLESTON, (s. c.)

PRINTED BY JOHN HOFF, NO. 6, BROAD-STREET.

1809.

AN ORATION

ON

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

Citizen Soldiers,

IF I were addressing men solely occupied in deeds of arms I would confine myself to the tumults of the field. But as I am honored with the attention of those who unite the avocations of peace and war, who serve their country in the double capacity of citizen and soldier; the progress of our civil concerns will prove equally interesting. You frame laws like an assembly of legislators, you preserve them like a band of warriors. Since then the political transactions of your country are as much subjects for your consideration as military affairs, I shall devote one part of my discourse to the former, and the other to the latter.

Although I come unattended by Apollo and the muses, I walk with the genius of our land, the fair and new-born goddess of liberty. Although I may not lift your imagination on the wings of sublimity, or on the less tower-

ing but more gay plumage of beauty, I will travel with you through the political scenery of our country, and contemplate the stupendous work of our fathers; I will bid you listen to the storm which is heard from afar, and call upon your virtue to avert it from our peaceful plains. But when I view my subject, and behold the many paths which have been made by the well-guided footsteps of philosophers, and the innumerable plants which rhetoricians have robbed of their flowers, I cannot hope to find a way leading thro' novel scenes, or to cull a flower possessing unknown fragrance. The beauties of my theme have been presented, and every method of treating it exhausted. The poet has extracted its sweets, and the logician marked its distinguishing features. Yet as this earth varies its aspect, and sometimes a city sinks into an abyss, and a mountain starts from the deep; so does mutable time dissolve one state of society and produce another. The affairs of man possess the vicissitudes of the seasons, and are cloathed with joy and sorrow, as the year with the gaiety of spring and the melancholy of autumn.

This was the day, when like the phœnix rising to splendor from its ashes, we arose to independence from the troubles of our coun-

try. It is the birth-day of a great republic, which has adorned humanity with as many worthies as the fallen states of antiquity. It is a day which shewed a phenomenon to the world, a people convened to declare themselves free. But as it is more difficult to retain than acquire liberty, we should not indulge in mere effusions of joy. While the heart is warmed by the happiness of its country, the mind should search for and avoid causes which may injure its prosperity.

Our late situation has given rise to reflection, and enabled us to observe how much we are injured by the calamities of foreign kingdoms; and whether our prosperity so immediately depends on commerce, as to suffer with it? The face of our country answers these questions, and aided by the voice of nature, declares us an agricultural people. The mountains say, they will yield the vine and the olive; the fertile vallies, that they will cloathe themselves in golden harvests; and the streams, that they will aid the toil of man. But in vain do the mountains and vallies throw forth flowers of every hue, and the streams murmur to take our attention; they are disregarded, and the ocean declared the scene for our employments—That ocean on which we have suffered innumerable aggressions, where

many of our fellow-citizens have lost their liberty and lives, and our country has been insulted.

This opinion has a tendency to throw us into a state of society, for which we are too young, and which attends the fall and not the rise of nations. Man, in his first condition, pursues the game of the forest; in his second, attends his flocks and herds; and in his third, becomes the husbandman. It is not until the land is covered with a population it cannot support, that its inhabitants are obliged to seek sustenance in the productions of other countries, and to endure the inconveniencies and dangers of a mariner's life. Then they pursue employments detrimental to the happiness of man, and become a manufacturing and commercial people. Look into the busy scenes of trade the European shores offer, and behold the factories crowded with emaciated beings without an attribute of moral excellence. See the mariner who visits regions the most remote, and mingles with men of every custom and manner: after having borne to happy nations avarice and oppression, introducing to his native country the luxuries and vices of all. The sun throws his earliest beams on countries no longer joyful; where the fragrance of spicy winds, and the charms

of climate, are contrasted with the wretchedness of conquered Hindoos. And although commerce has enhanced the value of the western Indies, by diffusing luxury, it has caused cruelties which have outrun the pecuniary benefits. Agriculture inflicts no injuries, but gives each individual a little kingdom around his cottage, in which he enjoys the feelings of a freeman. It is the happy state of mediocrity from which the miseries of poverty and the voluptuousness of wealth are equally banished, the only situation in which liberty can be preserved. The pastoral life is subject to predatory wars, and the tyranny of the chief. The commercial makes money the governing power, and the indigent, slaves. But the agricultural, is that middle condition which affords equal liberty to all.

If then commerce is not attended by blessings, we may justly conclude, that want of intercourse with Europe can never injure our happiness. It may diminish our luxuries, and rob the rich of exterior ornaments, but the country would be chastened by these privations, as the tree is rendered healthful by pruning its excrescences.

I do not offer these reasons to shew the propriety of withdrawing from the world, but to render evident the few inducements we

have to become a commercial nation, or to complain of the policy of our late administration, which cherished the husbandman in preference to the merchant; and to render you, citizen soldiers, favorable to the only species of life consonant with liberty. When commerce shall be particularly encouraged, your cities will grow into importance, and your farms sink into insignificance. Like the multitude of imperial Rome, the mob of a single metropolis will dispose of the freedom of your widely extended territory. Like the commotions of Paris, a crowd of enthusiasts will shake the whole nation to its foundations. The country in which every excellence exists will be neglected and forgotten. The great city in which every depravity prevails will be elevated and distinguished. You will then discover that the multifarious inhabitants of a metropolis are as capricious as the winds, and that if your government depends on the fidelity of their minds, it will be subject to destructive revolutions.

But those who hold contrary opinions, bid you regard the great strength and splendid riches of commercial nations. Alas! it is a greatness which, like unnatural stimuli, strengthens for a moment, then leaves the constitution feeble and undone. It is a splen-

dor which, like the hectic glow of the cheek, is only the harbinger of decay. And are we to be deluded by the glittering of treasures and the appearance of power to the rocks of destruction? Are we to leave measures for the slow acquirement of decent wealth, to procure riches only equaled by their attendant misery; to leave the healthful and moderately productive fields of the temperate zone for the exuberance and pestilence of tropical climes? Reason forbids such a perversion of benefits. Though the inhabitants of Tyre, and Sidon, were cloathed in robes of purple dyes; though their cities glittered from afar, and the stranger who went to sell his commodities remained to gaze at their pomp, yet was their happiness merely exterior. Vice corroded and rendered them miserable; their infamy increased with their commerce, until the wrath of God swept them from the earth: and where the magnificent Tyre once glowed with sun-like splendor, the solitary fisherman now spreads his nets. Carthage remains on the records of history to be stamped with perfidy. And that sea-beaten island whose power without, has attracted the attention of politicians, and whose misery within, has excited the commiseration of the humane. Whose government is so perfect in theory, and so deformed

in practice. Whose faith is so established by law, and violated by conduct. That island which commits depredations equally on friends and foes, we are told, is an illustrious example. If to be illustrious, arises from hasty riches acquired with insatiable avarice and boundless licentiousness—If to be illustrious the rights of man must be destroyed, then that island is most illustrious, and thence we learn that a nation may be illustrious and most unhappy. May God preserve this country from such greatness, and our minds from the desire of inordinate wealth the precursor of misery.

As we are enabled by the divine will to forego those employments which are prejudicial, and to live without flying to foreign lands for support, we may consider ourselves truly independent. Not like the once populous plains of Italy, which were rendered desolate by a scarcity in Egypt; we have plenty, tho' all other nations are in distress. It is not only our constitution and laws which declare us independent, but also the truth-speaking voice of nature. She diffuses bounties, bids us attend to native goods, and to the trumpet-tongue of experience, which loudly proclaims, that to preserve ourselves incorruptible we should not solicit commerce with those who

are corrupted. History proves that no nation is too powerful to sink before the contaminating breath of enervated allies. Even the Spartans ceased to be powerful, when they communicated with the voluptuous Asiatics. Like the chaste snows which hold possession of the high regions of the Alps, that at the touch of the summer's sun leap tumultuously from their rocky beds to the soft bosoms of the vallies; they remained proud and elevated, until dissolved by the effervescence of eastern luxury, they sunk into indolence and effeminacy.

Thus admonished by experience, we see benefits but no injuries that can arise from the want of foreign relations. The dangers that threaten our beloved country are internal, and to be guarded against by the virtue of its citizens. When their indolence or love of conquest shall cause the establishment of an army, the hour of difficulty will be near, and our independence wounded. Then shall ambition convulse the foundations of the temple of liberty; and the flame upon the altar blaze with fitful lustre;—Our country's autumn arrives, her honors decay, and a dismantled form bespeak her gloomy condition.

While the disasters of the world excite sorrow, they afford useful lessons. They

teach us to avoid shoals on which many have been destroyed, and make history the great chart of humanity. They stand in the series of pages, as beacons of safety to direct our voyage, and protect us from surrounding dangers. In the great volume of story, we can trace the vicissitudes of human affairs from creation to the present. We can see man rising from the dust and covering the earth with his offspring; we can behold that offspring great and virtuous—feeble and contemptible; elevating their works to the skies, and groveling in slavery on the sands; at one time, conquering with irresistible and godlike power; at another, vanquished and sinking into contempt. It is thence we are taught that empires existed where desert sands are now outspread; that where the rank grass waves amid the ruins of Palmyra, throngs of busy men once dwelt, and in scenes now desolate and dreary, wealth and magnificence once held their sway. To teach the causes of this greatness and decline, is the end of tradition; and a young people who are springing into a mighty existence, without experience to guide them, should turn over the invaluable records of nations, and obtain from the sufferings of others those truths which youth and prosperity banish from their thoughts.

Judging from the events of this world, it may be declared with confidence, that on you, citizen soldiers, rest the hopes of your country—On your fidelity, as her militia, she reposes her defence in war; on your affection, as her children, her preservation in peace. As you unite the characters of defenders and supporters, and fight for that which shelters and protects you; your country is equally confident of your affection in seasons of ease and difficulty. Not like those unfortunate nations of the earth, who distinguish the soldier from the citizen, who give to one the instruments of war, and to another the utensils of husbandry, do you make the soldier a burden—But with wisdom, suggested by the ill fate of those who have acted otherwise; you unite the avocations of war with the exercise of civil concerns, and wisely retain the power to preserve, with the right of creating.

That republic, which has taken the attention of all nations, and produced men who have given to the painter and sculptor subjects instructive and august, was great until its soldiers became more powerful than its citizens. It was then, illustrious Rome, thy glory fell, and those towers which lift themselves to the skies ceased to tell thy greatness. It was then thy name, which struck the world

with terror, fell into contempt. Then a Cæsar, governed by ambition, passed the Rubicon, and destroyed thy liberties—thy temples streamed with blood; civil discord dyed the crystal streams of Italy, and contaminated its air with death. These were the horrors which attended the introduction of military distinction, and led to those events which stamped the Roman name with infamy. It was then each general aspired to the imperial throne, and monsters filled it, who delighted in the sufferings of humanity. And in the Gothic ages, when tribes were governed by contending families, men lived in a constant state of hostility and personal animosities, led to those catastrophes which are now produced by love of conquest; the noble believed the sword alone worthy of his attention, and those who cultivated the soil were regarded as menial vassals; freedom was unknown, the warlike governed, and the peaceful were slaves.

Unhappy France, on whom politicians look with wonder, would tell you a tale of sorrow, and bid you, to whom she was once so nearly allied, avoid the ways which lead to her destruction. She would bid you retain the sword from men, who are indifferent to your welfare, who in the habits of soldiers

have lost all idea of the freedom of civil concerns; who under an ambitious genius would strike your Constitution to the dust, and rear a warlike despotism. Such has been her fate. Anxious to imitate the example of our country, she awoke from her long sleep of slavery, and with groans, struggles, and convulsions, broke the chains from around her. Scarce had she arisen from her prostrate situation, when the kingdoms of Europe were startled at her power, and combined to reduce her. But she enrolled her sons and repelled them; she established military bands, and gave to the tyranny of an individual the liberty of a world. Then she sowed the seeds of that man's greatness, who

“———— doth bestride the narrow world

“Like a Colossus,”

Shakspeare.

and, with the potency of a god, wipes empires from its surface. At whose breath thousands bite the dust. Who adds to the genius of Cæsar the vast conquests of Alexander.

All Europe evinces the evil result of a military policy. There we see cities in flames, countries devastated, fields bleached with bones, unprotected age and virgin youth sinking in sorrow to the grave. But from these scenes of distress, turn to our country and con-

template the effects of peaceful establishments. Behold cities leaping into existence, countries rising to maturity, the smiles of content—and hark! “the world of sounds” which arise on this day to the genius of independence.

These are the blessings to be preserved by you, citizen soldiers. America depends on her militia, and should it prove indolent or corrupt, a standing army must be established and her liberties destroyed. You are the supporters of your country's prosperity. The secret ties of kindred blood, the venerated names of your ancestors, and the mandate of Omnipotence, are the bonds of your faith. If the spirits of heroes can visit this earthly mansion and breathe inspiration, descend lamented Montgomery, and warm our hearts with zeal. Tell us of the fields of Quebeck, where the blood of early patriots crimsoned the snows, and teach us how to toil and die for freedom. And thou, pure spirit of magnanimous Warren, leave thy wanderings around “the hill of thy fame,”* and impart to us how death may be rendered enviable. And illustrious Washington! thou immaculate emanation of the Deity, and father of our freedom, who art even now hovering around thy coun-

* Bunkers Hill.

try its guardian angel; descend upon us and inspire our hearts with patriotism; impart some of thy godlike worth, and foster by thy example the rising excellence of America.

These are heroes who glow in tradition like the sun in the heavens, tempt the flights of laudable ambition, and shew the temple of fame unprofaned by vices. They are examples of the virtue of soldiers, who have parents, wives, and children to preserve; which if imitated, will preserve our country from the profligacy and rapacity of mercenaries.

And when I see on one side a youthful corps, gigantic in its birth, and on the other a veteran band powerful in age, I may assert, that while America can boast of such militia, her freedom is not exposed to danger.

Independent Greens,

As your brother-soldier, I address you with a heart warmed by affection, although our connection is but young. With a mind zealous for distinctions, though hostilities must produce them. You are the soldiers of my choice, with whom I am to suffer the untried fatigues and dangers of war: with whom I am first to unsheath my sword in the cause of my country. As soldiers, we arise together into

existence, and this memorable day is the day of our birth. This day, which produced the independence of America, has also produced a band of soldiers to preserve its earliest offspring. With maternal solicitude it seems to have strengthened the legions which surround it, and added to experienced patriots the fire of youthful enthusiasm. To this day you are united by the double ties of duty and of birth: you are to venerate it as the day of your creation and your freedom; and as it has given you life and liberty, I trust they will live united as twin offspring; or that the death of the former may be to preserve the existence of the latter. Remember, my brother soldiers, that we are young on the list of warriors: that our swords are yet to be tried; our laurels yet to be obtained. But although we are in infancy, the enemy of our country would feel the bone of manhood, as the serpent felt the deadly grasp of the cradled Hercules. We are rising into existence with the gay blossoms of youth around us: we must endeavor to make the maturity of the fruit answer the promise of the bud. As our reputation as soldiers are yet to be formed, I need not say what circumspection is necessary, and with how much care we ought to select the characteristic traits of the virtuous warrior. *Honor and Discipline*

are the great excellencies of a soldier's character. They are the axis on which every action should turn: the never varying policy by which we are to direct ourselves; which lead to distinction and victory. Honor, the sacred bond of ingenuous hearts, the finely spun ligament of minds of sensibility, the mysterious fabric which is shaken by a trifle, yet firm when oppressed by violence. Honor, the magic word which has produced marvellous deeds; the inseperable attendant of civilization; the guardian of our feeling; the surety of our conduct,

“ The sacred tie of kings,
“ And noble minds distinguishing perfection.”

Addison's Cato.

Is the gem of the soldier, which if once sullied, loses its crystal purity forever. It is his distinguished excellence, his armorial ensign, which every feature should express, and every nerve defend. Discipline is the wise conductor of valor, without whose aid the soldier would be blind. It is the calm regulator in the hour of tumult and disaster, without whose attendance, war would be a system of murder, and zeal, depravity of heart. It is to soldiers what the sun is to our planetary system: It teaches them to move in order, and describes

their invariable path of duty. Destroy it, and in the stead of regulation and good-will, anarchy and bloodshed would prevail. Like a clue it simplifies the hosts of an army, and when lost, leaves the soldier in a labyrinth. It is the first virtue of a warrior; the flame which lights the path of glory, and illumines the temple of Mars. These are the illustrious virtues to which we aspire. For these we are to tempt every danger, to submit to every toil, and to elevate our souls to their high station. They can only be touched by the hands of indefatigable soldiers, and fly the puny grasp of indolence. To them I turn your eyes as the only ornaments for a warrior's brow—As glittering stars which offer themselves to your pursuit—As acquisitions which will ensure your distinction.

A soldier cannot be honorable, unless he is true to his God and his country. To his God, who is his father and protector, *his commander*, the ruler of all things. To his country, as his benefactor. To desert either would be equally base and ungrateful. He cannot be honorable, unless he attends to the duties of a man, unless he is kind to his fellow-creatures, and treats them with humanity in battle; with philanthropy in peace. A soldier cannot be a disciplinarian unless he obeys the

commands of his superior, and the regulations of war, otherwise he would act without authority; every death would be a murder, and every victory a lawless tyranny. His conduct would be that of a wanton barbarian delighting in blood, not of a virtuous patriot supporting his country. But to you, my fellow-soldiers, such details are unnecessary. You who were born with honor and educated to discipline; who render your thirst for glory subordinate to your feelings as men. In this land of independence, each bosom dilates with content, blesses our government as the author of its happiness, and in the fulness of its warm emotions, devotes itself to the defence of its benefactor. Your hearts need no additional motive; there breathes not a man among you who does not love his country—Love his country, did I say? Who does not adore it! Oh, my country! thou friend and father of my happiness; thou indulgent parent of affectionate children; thou hospitable entertainer of the wretched of all the earth; what well-strung lyre would I not resound to thy praise; what strains would I not effuse to tell the fervor of my affection! Thou who openest thy bosom to the persecuted of this afflicted world, who affordest the war-worn soldier an asylum for his wounds, who giveth to the widow

and orphan a refuge from oppression, and presenteth liberty to all who touch thy sacred soil; unimproved as thou art, I love thee with all thy rough mountains and shaggy woods—

“ Land of my sires,
 “ What mortal hand
 “ Can e'er untie the filial band
 “ Which knits me to my rugged strand.”

Scott's Last Minstrel.

But hark! the harp of Hibernia is making wild and melancholy music among the lonely willows; it seems to sigh for the misfortunes of its country. Oh! thou green island of the ocean, would to God thou hadst succeeded in thy endeavours to imitate the revolution of our country. Thou wert created to be free. Thy green mountains and long vallies tell how happy thou couldst be but for the iron grasp of tyranny. Thy beauties droop, but should liberty strike thy harp, they would lift their heads and smile; we would catch the strains and be electrified with joy. Thy sufferings have been sad and many; thy brave sons have either bit the earth, or been driven by oppression from their rural dwellings. How many hearts turn to your retreats and gaze with anguish on the ocean which separates them from their homes. Would to God thy Emmet had

proved thy Washington, and that this were the day of thy independence!—But we sink into sorrow—Let the trumpet sound its glad notes, for we are in the land of liberty; and our hearts throw off the sable garb and assume the mantle of joy, for we are citizens and soldiers of a free country. “The souls of our ancestors walked abroad in their own majesty, their bodies swelled beyond the measure of their chains that burst from around them; and we stand redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled by the irresistible genius of universal emancipation.”*

Soldiers of the German Fusileers,

Yours is a corps which has stood the perils of war, the shocks of a revolution. You have already formed a character, it remains with you but to preserve it. You have been distinguished for your firmness, and intrepidity in the cause of your country. You have shed your blood, and done those deeds which give to men the name of heroes. Yours is an existence of many years and the scythe of time has not decreased your numbers, for as the aged are swept to their graves, young soldiers arise in their stead. Born of one com-

* Carran's Speech in Rowan's case.

mon ancestry, you are doubly united by the ties of blood and the bonds of country. Having the examples of members who were slain in war, or who in peace paid the debt of nature, you would shew in the service of your country that energy by which they were distinguished. That worthy hero who fell before Savannah, who knew no fear, who when his brother soldiers were pressed back by the strength of their enemies, preferred death to retreat, will bring to your view the zeal of a patriot. There are men among you who can attest the bravery of Captain Shepherd, who risked their lives with that too courageous soldier, supported him in his dying moments, and saw the warrior grasp his sword in death as though he would retain it forever. But he who sheds his blood for his country shall never be forgotten. Though he moulder in the dust, his memory shall be embalmed by his virtues.

Turn your eyes to those veteran soldiers who breathe on canvass* before you. To the one who passed a long life in the camp. To the other, who when he had supported the in-

* The portraits of Captains Kalteison and Strobel, which adorn the German Society Room, in which this oration was delivered.

dependence we celebrate, returned the sword to its scabbard, and became the amiable citizen.

Captain Kalteison was a worthy member of your corps, and devoted to a military life. Even after the winter of age had sprinkled his head with its snows, he retained the zeal of a soldier. And that most excellent patriot;* your venerated and regretted captain; that worthy in whom

“ The elements

“ So mixed — that nature might stand up

“ And say to all the world—*This was a man!*”

Shakspeare's Julius Cesar.

must warm your hearts with the influence of virtuous example, and touch them with sorrow, that so much worth is no longer among you. Regard him amid the tumults of a camp, and you will see the industry and ardor of a soldier; observe him encircled by his family, and you will behold the meekness and virtue of a Christian. Amiable in every department of life; beloved by innumerable friends; in his old age, he sunk into the bosom of his God without a groan.

Such are the examples before you; and such were the men who formed the reputa-

* Captain Strobel.

tion of your corps, and have transmitted it to your care. Like them you will serve your country, and distinguish yourselves.

Thus, citizen soldiers, I have endeavored to shew the worth of the characters you are to create and preserve, the glory which attends the warrior's name, and the blessings which are conferred upon the patriot. On the one side, I see a youthful band, panting with ardor to shew themselves worthy of their country. On the other, a veteran body, zealous to extend its toils, and anxious to evince, that peace has not injured the excellence which appeared in war. Of the one, it may be asserted, that when an opportunity offers, they will meet with distinction; and of the other, it may be declared with equal certainty, that they will ever be distinguished. To you, juvenile soldiers, I speak of the future; to you, tried worthies, of the past. The one must look forward and anticipate; the other can look back and be pleased. May you, Independent Greens, have your heroism recounted to you years hence: and you, German Fusileers, continue to merit your praise through a series of ages.

And now, Citizen-Soldiers, let your feelings kindle into enthusiasm; for you have consecrated yourselves to the goddess of Liberty,

you have pledged yourselves at the sacred altar; you have fanned its flame with your vows, and now stand forth the phalanx of freedom. Firm as the deep-rooted foundations of the earth, you will array yourselves around the banners of your country; the eagles that wave their wings above you, shall acquire immortal glory, and nations yet unborn relate the valor of American citizens. Remember, on you your country reposes; withdraw your support, and she tumbles to the dust. Elevate yourselves by fidelity and valor, and her splendor will fill the Heavens.

F I N I S.

¶ To excuse the errors which may strike the eye of the critick, I am induced to mention, that this Oration was composed in parts of three days, and revised for publication with equal haste.

B. A. M.