

AN
ORATION,

DELIVERED IN THE
FRENCH CALVINISTIC CHURCH,

ON THE FIFTH OF JULY, 1819;

(*THE FOURTH BEING SUNDAY*)

IN COMMEMORATION OF
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE;

BY APPOINTMENT OF THE

Charleston Disfennet,

AND PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST.

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*A Member of the Corps.*

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1819.

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AVAILABLE

ORATION.



LET the voice of exultation sound high! Let shouts of triumph and gratitude echo from Maine to Mississippi, for the Birth Day of American Freedom has again arrived. Again do millions of freemen assemble in commemoration of an event, which, for boldness of design and importance of its consequences, has never been surpassed, never equalled. It was when the night of despotism had settled on the world, when tyranny inflated shook his iron sceptre, and the Genius of Liberty, indignant at the degradation of man, was about to wing her flight to her native clime, that our Fathers declared, that they “were, and of right ought to be, free and independent.” The brilliancy of this act irradiated the gloom of despotism and recalled the fleeting Goddess to the earth. What spectacle can the imagination depict, more magnificent and sublime, than that which our Fathers exhibited on this occasion. Magnificent in virtue, sublime in patriotism, they boldly stood forth the champions of Independence—the foes of tyranny. With no resources but their love of liberty—their ardent valor and a firm reliance on the God of battles, they unfurled the standard of defiance, and prepared to oppose the most powerful and wealthy nation of Europe. To the number, discipline and resources of the enemy, they opposed courage, patriotism, and a determination to live free, or willingly to yield their lives in support of that determination.

The Ministerial faction of Great Britain labored under a fatal delusion. In vain did the discrimination of Chatham discover their errors; in vain did his warning voice sound in their legislative assemblies; in vain did he predict the issue of their mad schemes. Arrogant of their power, disdainful of what they presumptuously dared to term the puny efforts of a rebellious child, they disregarded our complaints, our appeals for justice. They added injury to injury, and insult to insult. There is a point at which forbearance becomes crime, resistance virtue. That point was reached. It was then that the spirit of our Fathers, springing with elastic force from the weight of oppression, rose in opposition. The conflict commenced; dreadful was the scene. Every art which ingenuity could devise, every cruelty which revenge or anger could suggest, was practised by this *merciful Mother*, against her erring child. The Savage Indian, (the natural, and perhaps justifiable enemy of the white man) was excited to deeds of horror; the blood of innocence purpled our fields, the shrieks of our mothers and appealing cries of infancy mingled in every breeze from the frontier. The domestic was urged to raise his vengeful arm against his owner. Confusion, anarchy and murder stalked in triumph o'er our country. Yet were our Fathers firm. Their estates were wasted—their friends, their brothers fell by the sword—still Liberty was their cry—Liberty or a glorious death. The cause of freedom and of justice was at length triumphant. America stood “redeemed, regenerate and disenthralled,” a nation of the earth. Delightful spectacle! cheering to the heart of the patriot and philan-

thropist. Here is an asylum for the oppressed of all nations. Here they may be in safety and bid defiance to their enemies. Here the wanderer may find a resting place—the persecuted be in peace. Here the Man of God may worship his Creator without the restraint of form or superstition. Here “the mild spirit of Christianity appears in the character of her precepts, breathing the air and robed in the beauties of the world to which she would lead us; with no argument but love; no look but peace; no wealth but piety; her creed comprehensive as the arch of heaven, and her charities bounded but by the circle of creation.”

Fain would we eulogise the heroes of '76; fain would we add our weak tribute of praise, but we know not whom to select, what action to panegyris. Bunker's Hill, Trenton, Yorktown, are all worthy commemoration: Greene, Marion, and Moultrie, all deserve a nation's praise, a nation's gratitude: but there are other scenes of American valor and skill, and other examples of personal worth, which crowd upon my mind.

Amidst our Fathers there was one, however, who rose conspicuous above his brothers: Yet who can speak his praise? what language shall we use, and do his virtues justice? **WASHINGTON**, the great and good! In battle the thunderbolt of war, he carried desolation in his path—in peace he appeared as the rainbow, mild and beautiful, in contemplating whose serenity, we forget the dark cloud that had lower'd, the thunder's roar and lightning's gleam. He was the friend of humanity—

he loved to ameliorate the condition of his fellow beings. The captive blessed him and wept at the recollection of having borne arms against the friend of freedom and of man. The widow and the orphan mingled his name in their orisons, and invoked a blessing on his head. Yet he was ambitious, but his ambition was not that "whose grasp is fate, whose flight famine, which reposes on earth's pinnacle and plays with heaven's lightning:" it was an ambition to be eminently distinguished for his virtues, his justice and his patriotism. He did not pant to rule a land of slaves, but to live the brother—the benefactor of freemen. Say, ye sons of ambition—ye votaries of false glory—ye, whose laurels derive their verdure from the blood of your fellow beings, where is now your fame? where your glory? History records your actions—posterity reads, and as it reads, curses the demoniac fury which impelled you to such murderous deeds—but thy actions, Father of our Liberties, live in the hearts of all mankind—thy fame is the fame of virtue—the Sons of Freedom adore your memory and tyrants tremble at the name of WASHINGTON.

Patriotism is at all times interesting, always delightful to contemplate. But when woman, tender and retiring woman is governed by its influence; when, regardless of calm tranquility, she renounces all the comforts which habit renders necessary—assumes the patriot and braves all the horrors of war, poverty and famine; it then becomes a virtue so resplendent, that the mind regards it with a mixture of enthusiastic admiration and pride, that would arm a coward for the field, and sink the

traitor into a hell of anguish and remorse. Such were the feelings which the conduct of our fair countrywomen excited. The mother taught her son to love his country, the wife girded on her husband the sword of freedom; and the blushing maiden, as she sighed an adieu to her lover, would have rather seen him borne back a lifeless corse, than to have heard him stigmatized as a coward or a traitor. When victory crowned the exertions of our fathers, they were received by the fair, with smiles of congratulation and triumph. When wounded or defeated, they soothed the pillow of distress and rendered the bed of pain an enviable situation. Yes, "the hour of adversity is woman's hour—in the full blaze of fortune's rich meridian, her modest beam retires from vulgar notice, but the clouds of woe collect around us, and shades and darkness dim the wanderer's path; then that chaste and lovely light shines forth to cheer us, an emblem and an emanation of the heavens."

At the conclusion of the contest, America exhibited a specimen of genuine patriotism. In the formation of a new government, it was natural to conclude, that men who had been educated under a monarchical form, whose prejudices might reasonably be supposed enlisted in its favor, who had entered into the contest not to overthrow monarchy, but to restrain its encroachments—it was natural to conclude, that the ambition of some and the partialities of others, would have led to the establishment of a regal government. But they had discovered that the general happiness depended on equality and freedom, and there was not found an individual

so selfish—so corrupt as to hint at Monarchy. A form of government was established essentially republican—preserving every right consistent with the welfare of society, and banishing every distinction that was not created by pre-eminent virtue and talents.

It is in this country that we have the proud privilege of being governed by “Rulers, themselves subservient to the Laws.” We tremble not at the frown of a tyrannic despot. Every citizen, however humble his station, has his rights guaranteed and secured to him. General suffrage affords an equal and just system of representation. We have no fear of laws being passed oppressive or injurious. Our Representatives are chosen from and by the people, (the only legitimate source of power) and on them they depend for support. If misled by ambition, pride, or erroneous opinions, they are responsible to the high tribunal of the people; and if found guilty, disgrace and dishonor must ever after be their concomitants.

In vain do the timid or disaffected cry aloud that republics are of short duration. In vain do they point to Greece and Rome for examples. The difference between those republics and that of America is essential. Rome, towering in pride, glittering in glory and boasting of her stability, was never free. A powerful aristocracy, overwhelming in its influence from the immensity of its wealth, had often a preponderating weight in the community. Continued struggles between them and the commons, produced imbecility and

weakness, clogged the wheels of government, opened a road for foreign invasion, and cherished the demon of domestic warfare. Hence, worn out by contentions and harrassed by their enemies, they were glad to obtain temporary security by any means in their power. Designing and ambitious men, profiting by the distresses of their fellow citizens, strode with paracidal ingratitude o'er the prostrate energies of their country, and became her tyrants.

In Greece there was too much left to the people at large. Popular assemblies are generally tumultuous—their passions easily excited—they have not the power of understanding all the purposes and causes of political actions. Men of talents and eloquence directed the passions of the Grecian mob at pleasure; hence their measures had no settled purpose, but varied with the favorite of the day. It was not then to be expected that a Government, thus organized, should be of long duration.

We turn from the consideration of those defective institutions, to view the constitution of these United States; to view that constitution whose base is virtue, whose superstructure happiness. Is there a Government in existence? has one ever existed to equal it? I defy a parallel. The general equalization of property guards us from the undue influence of wealth. The absence of titles and hereditary distinctions, preserves us from the dangers of aristocracy. The system of representation, whilst it affords us every advantage of popular assemblies, protects us from the dangerous tumults and vacil-

lating measures incident to them. The frequency of elections shields us from the ambition of individuals. The Executive possesses sufficient energy, and yet is within control. In fact it is a Government granting to the citizen every right necessary to his happiness, and possessing sufficient power to protect those rights from foreign or domestic violation.

After the Revolution had eventuated in the establishment of our rights, industry rose triumphant on the ruins of war. Those fields which but a short time before had been ravaged and laid waste, were now filled with all the productions of the earth. The sea was whitened by the sails of commerce, and happiness smiled o'er the land. Whilst the Western hemisphere exhibited this beautiful picture, Europe was writhing in anguish—the demon of war was howling o'er the coast—nations were rocking to the centre and the political world tottered in the blast. What master Spirit is that who rides sublime amid these convulsions, who glories in the storm, and smiles at danger? 'Tis Napoleon! that man of fate, before whose ardent mind all difficulties vanish as the mist of morning from the effulgence of a summer's sun—He, before whose gigantic genius, kings and kingdoms crumbled into dust. But he has fallen! dark and dreary is the night which has succeeded the brilliancy of his day of glory: Its light may dawn again. 'Tho' his fall may have been ruin—he may rise in vengeance. Tremble ye advocates of legitimacy—do not glory in his destruction, or boast of your *mighty deeds*. A combination of Princes, Kings

and Emperors, backed by thousands of their parasites, with the wealth of almost the whole world at command, have, after a bloody conflict, torn a hero from the throne and placed a pageant in his stead—torn from a magnanimous people the leader of their choice and elevated a creature of their own to act from the impulse which they give. *Magnanimous action! Illustrious exploit!* Oh! unhappy country. Insulted, injured France, will you still submit—is the spirit of freedom entirely extinct? Will you not rise in all the might and majesty of an indignant people and hurl this despot from the throne? You have a Tarquin, where is your Brutus? Will posterity ask the reason of this combination—it was to establish the cause of legitimacy. Is there a freeman present whose blood does not boil at the debasement of his fellow men—is there one who does not laugh to scorn the idea of a natural, a legitimate superiority of one individual to another? It is too absurd to need comment.

Let us return from this digression, to the consideration of our own country. Ushered into political existence amidst tumult and confusion, she became more firm from opposition, more powerful from her infantile struggles. At first the nations of Europe might have been influenced by admiration of the wonderful work that had been completed; but they soon regarded us with a jealous eye.—They saw a nation suddenly arise which threatened to rival them in every branch of commerce and agriculture. To Great Britain especially this was no agreeable consideration. She saw a people whom she had affected to despise, advancing with

rapid strides to power, wealth and distinction.—It was too much to bear. She had not only been deprived of her colonies, but those very colonies were assuming an aspect, not only respectable, but perhaps dangerous to her. Her rulers determined to exert every art and strain every nerve in harassing our trade, limiting our resources, and, if possible, in rendering us contemptible. Too long was this borne—too long did the pacific disposition of our Government submit. In vain would our fathers have shed their dearest blood, if their descendants had suffered their rights to be violated and their privileges infringed. The spirit of '76 was not extinct—it still animated the sons of America.—War was declared in 1812. And here a new scene of American triumph and glory was exhibited to the world. Is there any one who doubts the justice of this war? I point to the decks of the Chesapeake.—I point to her decks stained with blood of freemen—of *American* freemen.—I point to the floating dungeons of Great Britain. There your citizens, your brothers were immured—there did they often yield their lives in support of a cause they hated; and I feel the blush of indignation kindle on my cheek whilst I relate, that there, Americans were compelled to bend beneath the lash of their oppressors, and in an agony of spirit exclaim Oh my countrymen, avenge my wrongs! These are not half our injuries; but, to the mind of feeling they are more than sufficient. The day of party-spirit has passed by.—Far be it from my intention to revive, for a single instant, these distinctions: whatever opinions may have been entertained, as to the propriety of the war, we all concur in the sen-

timent that it was a war of resplendent glory and renown to the American name.

The cabinet of Great Britain affected to despise the exertions of America. A partial success at the commencement encouraged their presumption, and they began to hint at unconditional submission.— Unconditional submission—degrading, disgraceful thought! sooner than have acquiesced, we would have abandoned our homes, burnt our dwellings, and retired to our mountains and fastnesses, those natural strong holds of Liberty. But America demonstrated, in the language of an eloquent fellow-citizen, the superiority of the valor of freemen to the tactics of slaves. Our land forces were repeatedly distinguished for their valor and intrepidity.— Novices in war, they possessed the firmness of veterans. York, Fort Meigs, Orleans, are monuments of their renown. But why select single instances, when in every action, altho' not always victorious, our countrymen were always encircled by a halo of glory.

From the crowd of heroes whose courage and skill entitle them to rank high on the escutcheon of fame, it is a delicate task to select individuals. Yet who can contemplate the youthful Croghan with his band, surrounded by enemies ten times their number, defending the post entrusted to his care against their combined efforts—relying alone on the resources of his mind, the firmness of his own heart and of those he commanded.—Who can view the aged Jackson, exerting all the energies and enthusiasm of youth—animating his troops and leading them to

triumph. Who can remember our beloved Pike—who reflect how prodigal he was of his life-blood—who can regard him breathing his last sigh in a noble and patriotic sentiment, and not delight to dwell with rapture on their names; not exclaim with proud feelings, these are my countrymen. The impetuous Scott, the intrepid Miller, the gallant Appling and a host of others, are all equally conspicuous for their services. The lustre of these services is perhaps dimmed by the splendor of our naval achievements. We had been so long accustomed to hear of the victories of the British Navy, that many of our best citizens felt a secret dread, when our vessels left their ports. The boasted mistress of the Seas, she “whose march was on the mountain wave, whose home was on the deep” was soon to encounter a rival, destined to tear from her reluctant grasp, the trident of the Ocean.

“ See! See! the mystic Stripes unfurl'd
By Liberty's inspiring breath,
Shall wave defiance to the world,
Inscribed with freedom, or with death.

The first victory was that of the gallant Hull: with a degree of valor and skill which could be equalled by nothing but his humanity and modesty, he brought low the Cross of Albion—The Star-spangled Banner floated in triumph. The Lion was humbled—the Eagle soared sublime. This was but the dawn of meridian splendor; a rapid succession of victories, equally glorious, ensued. Jones, Decatur, Bainbridge, Perry and McDonough gave by their actions additional testimony of the fact, that the British Navy is not invincible. As Carolinians, we must feel an additional pride,

when we reflect on the intrepidity and skill which characterized our fellow-citizens, M. Call, the Shubricks and Tillinghast. They proved that they were animated by a love of liberty, of glory and their country. They proved that in the hour of danger, the sons of Carolina were ready to devote their lives in the service of the Republic.

Even our defeats were glorious. Porter sustained for a length of time, an action against an enemy of twice his force; and the unfortunate Lawrence! Who does not admire his heroism? Who does not mourn his melancholy end? When mortally wounded, when the life-blood was ebbing fast from his heart; what was his conduct? The glory of the Flag he defended was alone before him. His life was to him only a secondary consideration; but that the purity of his reputation should be sullied, that the lustre of his country's fame should be tarnished, was agony beyond endurance. Under these feelings he uttered that noble exhortation to his crew, which has since been the signal of victory. He died surrounded by those who were his enemies, but he died honored, respected and revered even by them. Peace to thy ashes, gallant hero! your country exults in you, and your memory is embalmed by the tears of valor, patriotism and beauty.

To have been more minute in the consideration of this war, would have been unnecessary. Actions so recent and so glorious must still be fresh in the memory of all who hear me.

Goaded by the injuries of Britain, we entered into the war. Experience has proved that our unwillingness to do so, did not arise from inability to chastise our enemies. Our Government had no private ambition to gratify. They were only anxious to preserve unsullied the national character, and although glory attended our arms and victory perched on our banners and beckoned us to deeds of renown, we cheerfully acquiesced in an honorable reconciliation. Peace now spreads her guardian wings o'er our country and they who were our enemies are now our friends. The sentiment of our political fathers, "that we hold them as we hold all others, enemies in War, in Peace friends," should be firmly engraved on our hearts.

The light of freedom has dawned in the South. The spirit of '76 is among them. Breast to breast, arm to arm, they urge the mortal strife. Every sinew is strained. They struggle for liberty or honorable death. Oh! for a Wallace, a Kosciusko! to animate them in the fight. Oh! for a Washington to lead them in the field and instruct them in the cabinet. They must—they will be free. How delightful to anticipate the meridian splendor of the sun of freedom; when the gloom of despotism shall have been dissipated by his genial rays. How delightful, my Countrymen, to hail them as our brothers, and join in songs of triumph for tyranny o'erthrown. May the God of battles grant them the victory! May they be free and virtuous, and they must be happy.

With what rapture must the American patriot reflect on the brilliancy of our career, and antici-

pate the future destinies of our country. Yes, America shall reach a height beyond the ken of mortals. Formed by a beneficent creator to be the world's "last treasure and best hope," he has extended it in every clime, and afforded it every natural advantage for composing a great and mighty people. It abounds with luxuriant plains, filled with the spontaneous productions of the earth, groaning under the weight of majestic trees, intended to form a barrier around us and protect us from the envy or hatred of the world. Broad, mighty and navigable rivers intersect the country, on whose placid bosoms the riches of the interior float to the sea board. Formed for the land of freedom, he has afforded us mountains and fastnesses as an asylum in the hour of adversity. Destined for the land of happiness, he has decorated it with all that is delightful to the sight, and endowed it with all that is beneficial to man. With all these natural advantages, he has peopled her with men of firmness, enterprise and patriotism. Here shall be seen statesmen, and warriors, and patriots, surpassing the rest of the world in disinterestedness, courage and virtue. Here shall Poetry ascend the sublimest, highest heaven of invention; and her sisters Painting and Sculpture equal, nay, surpass all that Greece, all that Rome e'er boasted. Here, will an admiring world exclaim, is the land of "FREEDOM, ARTS and ARMS."

Is there one among you, Fellow-Soldiers, who does not feel his heart dilate with proud emotions on the recurrence of this day—who does not, as he contemplates the deeds of our ancestors, instinc-

tively grasp his arms, and long to have lived in that age of heroes? Who does not writhe with anguish when he hears of the wrongs they suffered? Who does not triumph when he reflects how completely, how nobly these wrongs have been redressed? No, there cannot be! these are the sentiments of republican soldiers.—These are sentiments we should delight to cherish: For when the return of this day shall cease to be hailed with enthusiastic rapture—then may we tremble for the safety—the glory of our country. We may anticipate the rapid fall of our independence and happiness. When such a day is hailed with cold and morbid feelings, the minds of the people must be enervated—their moral faculties debased—their love of freedom degenerated. Virtue and patriotism are the foundations of republican governments. Without them, victories may dazzle, wealth may glisten—but liberty is no more.

It is your boast to be the soldiers of freedom. Honorable, enviable distinction! When the tocsin of war shall sound, you will seek the field of battle with animated feelings. You will not be dragged from your families to gratify the ambition of a despot—you will arm in the cause of liberty—you will fight for all that is dear to man—you will raise the arm of vengeance, in defence of your homes—your wives—your children—your parents. Palsied be the coward's arm, who would shrink from the foe, when danger threatens his liberty or his native land.

You compose a species of troops peculiarly American. They were first organized in this coun-

try, and have been repeatedly distinguished for their services. During the revolutionary struggle, the gallant Morgan, with his sharp shooters, spread terror in his path; and in our last contest, Forsythe and Appling demonstrated how much the enemies of freedom should dread the valor and skill of American Riflemen. It has not been your fortune to encounter the enemies of your country. Whenever it is, I am confident, from your alacrity, in obeying every order, from your attention to discipline, and your emulation to excel—from the confidence you repose in your officers, and from your love of country, that you will not disgrace the name you bear—and that you will always be ready to shed the last drop of your blood in defence of **FREEDOM AND AMERICA.**

