

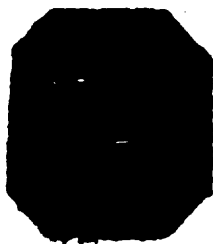
AN
ORATION,

PRONOUNCED AT WESTBOROUGH, (MASS.)

ON JULY 4th, 1804.

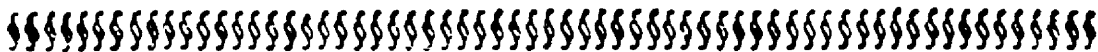
IN COMMEMORATION OF
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

~~By~~ EBENEZER BELKNAP MORSE, A. B.
~~Author~~



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1804.



A P O L O G Y.

THE AUTHOR of the ensuing performance solicits the patience of the Public for a few moments, in excuse for its late appearance, and in apology for its appearance at all. He cordially despises the foppery of affected diffidence, and the ostentation of pretended modesty. Yet he feels it a duty to himself, and to those who have patronized the production, to state, in extenuation of its faults, that it was composed under peculiar disadvantages. To account for its appearance at last, "*wish all its imperfections on its head,*" he deems it necessary to shew, that he was *compelled* to the publication.

A POLITICAL contention respecting the choice of the Orator on the occasion, terminated in the election of the AUTHOR, a few weeks before the day of celebration. He was then making preparations for a long and necessary journey. Although convinced that this *tour* would detain him, 'till a very few days previous to the time of delivery, gratitude for the *exertions* of those who advocated his appointment (for he is above the affectation of denying that under other circumstances the choice would have been agreeable to him) —and respect for their persons, would not suffer him to decline the proffered invitation. He accepted it. He executed the task assigned him, under these disadvantages. From the circumstances of the case, he expected, even from those opposed to his sentiments and inimical to his person, if not the mildness of indulgence at least the manliness of candor. He was disappointed. Arts the most pitiful were employed with unwearied assiduity—~~falsehoods~~ the most glaring were disseminated with unblushing effrontery—slanders the most base were circulated with malignant industry—and all this, to gratify the feelings and the friends of a rival candidate for the trivial office of a *July Orator*!

NOTWITHSTANDING these arts, these falsehoods and these slanders, the celebration was attended and the Oration delivered. The AUTHOR then hoped to "*rest from his labors*"—perfectly content that his "*works should follow him.*" As respected his *Oration*, having calculated on neither honor or fame from so hasty and unfinished a performance, he was willing that it should sink to the quiet of oblivion, and rest in peace and obscurity. An application by a Committee of the company for a copy for the press was rejected. This furnished a new pretence for the *oppugnations* of the slaves of malice. It was eagerly seized. The AUTHOR endured anew the

buffetings of faction. The stations of some of the chagrined minority gave added effect to their strictures. Some were men "in high and consecrated places." Even the sanctity of the *Priest* was lost in the bitter rancour of the partizan. The AUTHOR and his friends were constantly assailed with clamorous charges, that he was ashamed of his *Oration*, gabbled misstatements of its contents, and bullying challenges to give it publicity. To this day, the "*busy hum*" continues.

ON this cruel and ungenerous warfare, the AUTHOR will not make a single remark. He replies to the unexampled virulence with which he has been attacked, only by the publication of his Address. He now appeals from the rash and passionate sentence of angry and prejudiced enemies, to the fair and impartial decision of the proper tribunal of a Republican, the PUBLIC. To their censure, he will bow with respectful deference. He asks for indulgence, because he knows he needs it. Yet does he not deprecate condemnation, for he has learnt to expect and to bear it. From the liberal and the candid he humbly hopes, that, if he be not acquitted on trial by their judgments; at least from their mercy a free pardon will not be denied him.

WELTBOROUGH, October 1, 1804.

A N

O R A T I O N.

THIS day is consecrated to the cause of Freedom. Rejoice, Fellow Citizens—'Tis the glorious day of your emancipation. The sun of Liberty, a long time obscured by the dark cloud of oppression, on this day, burst in full splendor on our land. The innate spark of freedom was enkindled in every *American* bosom. All with uplifted hands hailed the heavenly light.

An event like this well warrants the festivity, the manly joys of a grateful people. And while enlightened Citizens throng their temples to commemorate their Independence, they will not forget, in the transport of their joys, that this invaluable prize was the price of blood. They will turn their thoughts back to those gloomy days, when our ancestors, borne down by the cruel hand of ecclesiastical oppression, braved the tempests of the deep, and sought conscientious liberty in the wilds of *America*. The Rock of *PLYMOUTH* first presented its rugged, tho' unpolluted clift, to receive the wearied limbs of Freedom's votaries. Landed in a wilderness, surrounded by every obstacle the imagination can paint, weakened by hunger and fatigue, thinned by pestilence and disease, unprotected, and far distant from the possibility of succour;—even then, their grateful souls, in humble devotion, blessed the day of their pilgrimage. Such was their ardor for Liberty, they thought no hardships too tedious to be borne, no perils too dangerous to encounter.—The very defects of nature, in this chosen asylum,

were to them beautiful. To them, the strength and independence of the sturdy oak was far more pleasant than the elegant spire of a tyrant's palace.

WITH these impressions, and under all these difficulties, these pious emigrants, by long and incessant labors, smoothed the rugged face of nature, converted the uncultivated wilderness into fruitful fields; and under a Government mild, peaceable and religious, they grew and flourished. A firm and undeviating attachment to the rights of man, with a desire to transmit them to their latest posterity, were the principles which ever governed their conduct. To instil into the growing minds of their offspring the genuine principles of Liberty, employed their constant care and attention. With these, they taught the principles of humility, love, charity, and every social and religious duty. Inspired with these noble sentiments their children presented before them a rich reward. In the goodness of their hearts, the magnanimity of their souls, they forgot the cruel persecution, which drove them from their native shores. With filial affection they viewed their parent nation. United both by consanguinity and interest, their advancement was mutual, their wrongs were inseparable, and indignity to the one was direct abuse to the other.—“ Long and unremitting were their mutual labors in the advancement of wealth and honor—long did this harmonious intercourse continue, undisturbed by the encroachments of arbitrary power, or the discordant clamours of sedition.”* Britain was rapidly extending her conquests, and the Colonies increasing in population and knowledge. But, alas! At this happy period, when the eyes of every American sparkled with joy at the recital of British valour and success; and their hearts trembled with indignation at the least

infringement on the honor of their Sovereign, that accursed tyranny, which at first drove our Fathers to this inhospitable country, & which for a time had been still-ed by interest & ambition, burst forth with redoubled fury. Its ambition was aimed at the very root of Liberty; nor could any thing but the servitude, the slavery of the whole American Colonies satiate its infuriate cravings.

A BILL first conceived and fostered in the cold and tyrannical bosom of a TOWNSEND, and brought forward by the "foul and withered hand" of a GRENVILLE, was laid before a venal House of Commons. The insidious design of this bill was to subjugate the Colonies to a method of taxation, foreign to every principle of liberty. It involved in itself the right of disposing of the property of the Colonists without their knowledge or consent. However injudicious and impolitic, in this mercenary court of despotism a Stamp Act soon found numerous advocates. It was adopted—and the day appointed upon which its operations were to commence. Elated with success, these venal despots viewed their *Median* mandates irrevocable fixed.

BUT, happily for man, the essence of our fathers spirits still remained in the bosom of every *American*. With unshaken firmness, they opposed the arbitrary impositions of the British Tyrant. In bold and manly remonstrance, they protested against these unconstitutional procedures. Such was the firmness they exhibited, that for a time they baffled their insidious designs. *Britain*, seeing the determined spirit of her Colonies, finding her trade daily diminishing, and the unavoidable destruction of all intercourse between the two countries impending, at length revoked the fatal decree. But the reprieve was short!—The most hideous form of tyranny again appeared, threatening death and destruction to the lives and property of

Freedom's Sons. « A cruel and unprincipled army was sent hither to enforce submission to Laws, from which a *Persian* Despot would shrink with horror.— The peaceful walks of our worthy matrons were converted into the blustering parades of a brutal soldiery; our streets were soon bestrewed with the butchered carcasses of our inoffensive countrymen.

TIRED of vain expostulations, the *American* people arose, shook the manacles from their hands, “rent the dark veil of ancient days in twain, and the hot bolts of tricene vengeance hurled.” Though the heights of *Bunker* smoked with blood, and the flames of *Charlestown* gleamed on the face of heaven, yet their invincible souls remained firm and unshaken in the cause of freedom.

“If I had an hundred tongues and an iron voice,” I should not be able to recount the catalogue of wrongs that fired to rage these deathless defenders of their country. To paint the heroism, the magnanimity, the immortal achievements of our infant armies; and on the other hand, to describe the dastard cruelty, the dissolute barbarity and savage rapacity of those minions of despotism, those hireling desperadoes who plundered our country, would employ the unsuccessful labors of a poet's life. The ferocious brutality of their own inventions were not sufficient to devise the severest pangs of death. They called from the North the red sons of fierce *Areskoui*, whose frantic exultations stun the ear of humanity, “whilst they quaff, from embowelled captives, streaming life.”

WITH these infernal monsters of despotism, our infant country struggled—while at the same time, they had to encounter internal factions, and all the embarrassments of pecuniary necessity. But when sickness and desertion thinned their ranks, and fortune seemed to frown upon their enterprize, a single thought rekindled the flame of freedom, and anima-

ed to more noble exertions. But, notwithstanding the unwearied labors of our patriots, the unexampled bravery of our warriors, the cause of Liberty, for a time, was desperate; her feeble pulse, from quick succession, seemed to make a pause——“an awful pause, prophetic of her end.”——*Long-Island* was drenched in the blood of our unhappy countrymen——our northern forces were in a most disastrous situation——our little fleet blocked up, within our harbors——and our naked armies disheartened and dejected, daily diminishing. On the other hand, the enemies of Freedom, elated with success, and exulting in death and devastation, again applied to our enfeebled hands the shackles of despotism. Ere they were clinched, the scene was reversed. The bold and successful attempt at *Trenton*, the unparalleled bravery of *Princeton*, soon taught the foes of Liberty——she still survived; and that the sinews of *America* were still braced in her defence. From this time the successful tide of fortune flowed rapidly in upon us; and assisted by a brave and generous ally, we persevered in the glorious cause, till at length, the trembling monarch from his throne, confessed the *United States of America*, FREE, SOV EREIGN and IN-DEPENDENT!!

YE venerable Patriots! who witnessed this day, ye have your reward; for you have seen the triumph of Freedom. But, for those enviable and exalted beings, who died the “willing martyrs” to their country’s cause, as purest gold, their names inscribed on glory’s page, shall remain unsullied, amidst the glowing heat of those heaven-sent fires, which on one day, shall purge creation from its dross.

WASHINGTON! Sacred name!—"Solemn
 lence emphasize his due." Language is too feeble,
 the voice of man too weak to speak his praise.

"As well might gaze intent on yon gem'd spheres,
 Bring to one point of view the stars of heav'n!
 Bound every heart—and every bosom burn!
 Oh! what a scale of miracles is here,
 Its lowest round high planted on the skies,
 Its towering summit lost beyond the thought
 Of man ———— Oh that I could climb
 The wonderful ascent with equal praise;
 Praise ardent, cordial, constant, to high Heaven
 More fragrant than Arabia sacrific'd,
 Or all her spicy mountains in a flame."

He is gone!—Lo, he hath ascended. Kind na-
 ture formed him with her fondest care; and at his
 birth—she smiled propitious. He it was, who invin-
 cible to opposition, silenced the boisterous clamors
 of ambitious demagogues. He it was, whose vigilant
 eye foresaw approaching dangers, and by whose watch-
 ful care you were conducted through the tempestu-
 ous and bloody sea of tyranny, and landed on the
 blissful shores of independence. Faithfully he serv-
 ed his country in the field, and in the cabinet.
 Peacefully he withdrew from public life, and sought
 retirement in the scenes of rural happiness.

It then remained to fill the vacant chair of State,
 when an ADAMS was called forth—the history of whose
reign, with all his *mighty works*—are they not record-
 ed on the indignant page of every *Republican* bosom?
 But, it is not the business of this day, to harrow up
 the slumbering resentment of a happy people. The
 days of his *kingly* administration were few. In con-
 temptuous silence pass them by!

FELLOW CITIZENS! a greater cause for rejoicing
 in your independence never offered. You behold
 in the measures of the present administration, a strik-
 ing specimen of uninterrupted wisdom, patriotism

and economy. The *Royal Encampments of Oxford* have long since yielded to the superior force of Republican discretion. No longer do these appendages of monarchy devour the earnings of industrious peasants. The liberty of speech and of the press, privileges sacred to every freeman, are no longer abridged. A herd of unnecessary Judges have been dismissed; the great advantage of whom was only found, in the consumption of our Treasury, and in the establishment of one great and important point in the doctrines of former politicians, that the people ought ever to be taxed as far, at least, as their abilities in payment would admit. In the abolishment of internal taxes, our Administration have discovered the most profound wisdom, and the most exemplary economy. Its enemies, however, have represented even this measure in a most unfavorable point of view. You have been told, that the repeal of taxes upon pleasurable carriages, and refined sugars, are the most glaring abuses upon the poorer people of our country, while the rich, exempt from taxations, riot in their luxury. It requires but little sagacity to expose their sophistry. By repealing the taxes upon our own manufactories, they are encouraged. By continuing the taxes upon foreign imported luxuries, their quantities are diminished, and the burden of taxation rests only on the affluent. In proportion as our own manufactories increase, in the same proportion, our dependence on foreign nations diminishes. Happy is that nation whose resources are in itself.

IN the acquisition of *Louisiana*, the Government have acquired to themselves immortal honor, and to their country a prize of inestimable value. In this possession, you find a vast and fertile country added to your territories; and while it holds forth an incentive to diligence, it secures to you the uninter-

rupted navigation of the *Mississippi*, in which is involved our important commerce to the *West-Indies*. It is an impregnable barrier against invasion, and removes from our borders the pestiferous blasts of aristocracy, which, on one day, might taint the minds of our citizens, and prove the ruin of our country. In this, it seems, the Administration have failed only in the method of acquirement. The dignity of our country was violated, in the neglect of an immediate Declaration of War on the first abuse, from an unauthorized and inferior officer.—What! Is there indignity or dishonor in deliberation? Is there less honor or less honesty, in the fair and peaceable purchase of a territory, than in a conquest sealed with the blood of your distressed Citizens?

REPUBLICANS! Your cause must triumph. The God of Nature ne'er designed the free sons of *America* to become the dupes of intriguing hypocrisy. You have a Constitution modelled from experience. It embraces the advantages of every kind of Government in civilized society; while their errors are avoided, and their superfluous parts neglected. Each branch has a check upon the other and is an equal security to every class of citizens. Diligence determines your wealth—and merit your dignity. Each day brightens the prospects of *America*.—The affection of the people, have centered in the Republican JEFFERSON, and the grumbling murmurs of disappointed partizans are drowned amidst the exulting acclamations of applauding millions. Well may we anticipate the glorious era, when every gem of royalty shall be buried, when the social endearments shall be more generally cultivated, mutual kindnesses more extensively reciprocated, and the whole world be Love!