

**AN**  
**ORATION,**  
TOGETHER WITH AN  
**ADDRESS**  
TO THE  
**IPSWICH LIGHT INFANTRY,**  
PRONOUNCED IN THE  
**SECOND PARISH**  
AT  
**IPSWICH, (MASS.)**  
ON THE  
**ANNIVERSARY**  
OF  
**American Independence,**  
JULY 4, 1807.

By **REUBEN D. MUSSEY, M. B.**

The nation which indulges towards another an habitual hatred,  
or an habitual fondness, is in some degree a slave.

WASHINGTON.

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*Published at the request of the Hearers.*

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## AN ORATION.



MY COUNTRYMEN,

**WE** have assembled to celebrate American Freedom; to pay a tribute to the memory of those Patriots whose wisdom and valour achieved our liberties, and by whose united energies a “nation was born in a day.” Deep is the debt of gratitude we owe them. Dauntless and firm they stepped forth. In contempt of the allurements of bribery, and in open defiance of the menaces and insults of Britain, they declared the United States *Independent*; and through pain, and toil, and blood, led us to the peaceful enjoyment of a rational and glorious liberty.

But we will not awaken a righteous indignation, by tracing the causes which led to our revolution, nor prey upon the tenderest sensibilities, by recounting the struggles which rescued Columbia from the iron grasp of European oppression. The contest is over. We are the victors; we are free. Let us then take a view of our condition, contrast it with that of other nations, and examine the means of preserving our privileges.

Nature seems to have made America her darling child. She has stretched out an almost immeasurable extent of country, and given it all the desirable varieties of climate, soil and production. Along our shores she has thrown safe and spacious harbours, and planted the interior with vast lakes; and by outlets connected them with mighty rivers which roll to the ocean; all conspiring to form a basis for the most commodious foreign and domestic trade. She has done more. She has spread three thousand miles of ocean on the east, and ten thousand on the west; separating us from the jarring interests and fighting claims which perpetually embroil and harass the jealous dynasties of the old world.

A good government is begun here. What better evidence of this do we wish, than the high improvements in agriculture and the arts, and the rapid growth of commerce, since the federal constitution was adopted?

From the singular bestowments of nature, and from the establishment of a government in its outlines so well corresponding with her intentions, politicians have flattered themselves, that at some future day, the most perfect human government and the happiest condition of society would be found here. Ever since creation, empire, like the equinoxes, has been travelling westward; and is it extravagant to hope that her last, best resting-place will be America?

For a moment, suffer your imagination to range the eastern continent. Asia, the country of Paradise, the birth-place of human existence, the theatre of the sublimest revelations from Heaven to man, exhibits all the painful varieties of human degradation. The chieftains of clans, or the commanders of armies, have warred; and despotism, on a smaller or larger scale, has dealt usurpation and death, through the long revolution of ages from

Nimrod down to Genghis Khan and Tamerlane. Even the most polished nations of this vast region are so sunk in ignorance, so darkened with superstition, and so chained down by unfeeling despotism, that a native American cannot view them without feeling the sympathies of his nature roused, and his heart touched with the miserable condition of his fellow men.

Persia may glory in a rich soil, but must mourn its want of culture. Torn by the revolutions of upstart pretenders for her crown, she has lost her ancient greatness, and jealousy and distrust have mingled themselves with her far-famed politeness and hospitality.

The Chinese bows to a wooden idol at home, and to a haughty mandarin abroad, and thinks himself a freeman so long as he is allowed to call the tyrant of the empire, *great father of his people*.

Ask a Hindoo what is liberty. He will tell you, it is to wash away his sins by bathing in the Ganges, to kneel in a pagoda before a dumb image, and to acknowledge a Brahmin as his spiritual guide. Do you envy the Siberian wandering along

the confines of the icy sea, pursuing a fox or a hare by the pale light of the northern aurora? Or a resident of Thibet, fondly whispering his evening prayer to the great spirit, which he stupidly believes dwells in the Grand Lama, begging protection for his flocks and herds against the depredations of the wild beasts of Ararat and Caucasus?

The tea plant of China, the rich dates of Persia, the cassia, spikenard and cinnamon of Arabia, would not tempt you from the fruits of your native soil. Not even the delightful vale of Cashmere, the rapture of travellers and the song of poets, with all its plane-tree beauty and rosy fragrance, has charms sufficient to draw you from your verdant fields, while it groans beneath the barbarous oppression of an Afghan master. Not the riches of Mocha can tempt you. Would you be a merchant travelling from Aden to Mecca? Accustomed to breathe the pure air of your green hills "essenced" with liberty, you would fall before the dark red blast of the desert, the *noxious samiel*: or the lurking Arab would rob you, and retire with his plunder behind the stupendous columns of Balbec, or the mouldering ruins of Palmyra.

Africa is a wide waste of wo. From Gondar to the Gold Coast, the pained eye often turns to drop a tear at the aggravated wretchedness of human creatures. A horrid commerce opens on the view: a commerce where the harmless possessours of the soil are "themselves the staple commodity." If, from the sickly siroc, you seek a retreat in an Abyssinian temple, you find it hung round with the black curtains of pagan superstition, admitting but here and there a faint ray of the true religion, which, like the twilight of evening, has glimmered on Æthiopia ever since the "Spirit caught away Philip, and the Eunuch went on his way rejoicing." Not a drop of Numidian blood runs in the veins of an Algerine, or a particle of Carthaginian valour quickens the nerves of a Tunisian, or he would burst the cords of tyranny, and scorn to lay down his life at the silent, capricious nod of a petulant dey or bashaw.

Enter the Mediterranean, and Sicily charms your eye. But can her rich fields and loaded vineyards compensate for the terrour of her earthquakes? A citizen of Catania may riot in the profusions of

his soil, but he sees the peak of *Ætna* in the back ground, threatening to pour down a river of fire on his city, and overwhelm her walls, temples and fruit yards in the melting ruin.

Pass up the Archipelago till you make the south-eastern promontory of Attica. At your right hand are scattered the islands of Samos, Ceos and Ios, the native spots of Pythagoras and Simonides, and the site of the tomb of Homer. On your left, stretches the Peleponnesus, where the Spartans trained their hardy youth to valour and fame. Before you slow rises the hill of Mars. There the courts of the Areopagus long preserved the virtue of Athens. There liberty, learning and industry once reared their heads high; but vassalage, ignorance and effeminacy now stoop to a Turkish lord.

Proceed further. Set your foot on the main land, survey all the magnificence of Constantinople, and say, would a world of wealth draw you into the cringing suite of the Ottoman Porte? The bloated and arrogant titles of *Brother to the sun and moon*, *Disposer of all earthly crowns*, sit no better on the Grand Sultan than they would on an Eskimaux Indian.



What consolation can gold and silver give a Spaniard, while the dagger of a bandit silently pursues him through town and country? Or where is the enviable condition of an Italian? Long sunk in indolence and enervated by luxury, he pays his substance in tribute to a foreign tyrant; and if perchance he obtains any "loose change," he gives it to an opera singer for a lullaby to soothe his oppression.

You would shun Germany as you would a pestilence. There a beautiful champaign, thick set with walled towns and rich villages, is sacked, pillaged and trodden down by Gallic freebooters.

You would not be an Englishman. You might indeed solace yourself with the *liberty of speech*, but it would be that kind of liberty which a sick man uses when he talks of his pains. A most oppressive system of taxation would lie like a dead weight upon you; a weight which you could never shake off.

Would you shine at the Court of St. Cloud? There every sixth man is a spy; and should a single breath escape your lips without wafting "long live the emperor," an arrest from Fouche would get you

down in the wilds of Cayenne, or shut you in the temple never more to be seen or heard of, or procure you the honour of being shot without trial, as the Duke d'Enghien was, or it would twist your limbs on the rack, and leave you to perish in a filthy, deep dungeon, one of the *oubliettes*.

America is the happy nation. Able politicians framed our constitution. Their object was to compress the wisdom and energy of other forms into this. Here we are not required to venerate the whimsical decypherings of eastern mythologists, nor compelled to subscribe to the lies of Mahomet; but, thanks to Heaven, we have "a more sure word of prophecy." Here no idle, fawning minion "hangs on princes' favours," and no ignorant tool of power flutters in the starched ribbands of fancied greatness. The Star, the Garter, and the Legion of Honour, do not disgrace our liberties. An American may rise to notice and fame by genuine merit. He would not exchange his country for any other on the earth. My countrymen, let us maintain the privileges which so much exalt us above other nations.

*Virtue* has justly been considered a corner-stone in popular governments. When a spirit of integrity and a regard to real worth do not guide elections, men will rise to office by bribery and cabal. And when effeminacy creeps into the national councils, it opens a door to an ambitious neighbour. After Athens had so far relaxed as to be more willing to pay her money in support of a theatre than of fleets and armies, she fell an easy prey to Macedonia; nor could the eloquence of Demosthenes awake her to the designs of Philip. Religion alone can give strength and durability to virtue, and secure the permanent possession of republican freedom. The notion that any salutary government can long exist without either of these, is childish, is Utopian. It may amuse a lover of legend, but can never convince a sound politician. The experiment has been made. France drove virtue from the nation, and voted there was no God in the universe. What was the consequence? She was a theatre of crimes and blood. Murder was the work of the day during the reigns of Marat and Robespierre; and under their *enlightened* and *patriotic* auspices, torture and death gained almost

all the improvements they were capable of receiving. It remained for Napoleone to add the finishing stroke, to complete the system of terrour which they had begun. And as he can avail himself of all the experience of his predecessors, his reign must last longer than theirs.

A general diffusion of *knowledge* is a powerful auxiliary to virtue. Where the mass of the people have some acquaintance with the first principles of government, demagogues have less ground to work upon.

*Union* is an essential article in elective governments. When internal divisions rise to a certain height, there is an end of liberty. The factions which tried their strength at Pharsalia, gave a tyrant to Rome: and in spite of the valour of Kosciusko, Poland, split by the factions of an election, was divided between her ambitious neighbours.

*Vigilance is indispensable.* We should be jealous of our liberties. We should watch the secret breath of treason, and the silent emotions of envy. A disappointed, or outrivalled ambition will always be at work to draw off the hearts of subjects from their allegiance. The watchful Cicero saved the

Roman commonwealth from the bloody, fiery plots of a Catiline ; and the vigilance of our government has hitherto baffled the efforts of treachery and insurrection.

We must watch against foreign influence. No aspiring and wicked nation can long rest easy, while she beholds another quietly and virtuously rising to greatness. "Against the insidious wiles," said our beloved Washington, "Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence, (I conjure you to believe me, fellow citizens) the jealousy of a free people ought to be constantly awake ; since history and experience prove, that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of a republican government."

Within the past fifteen years, the tragical effects of listening to foreign influence have been most severely felt on the other side of the Atlantic. Thrice happy had Europe been, if that spirit of change, that rage for political experiment, which worked up the most astonishing revolution ever known or heard of, had rested on the frontiers of Gallia. But it could not rest. Clothed in the bright robes of liberty, it travelled over the Alps,

talking of *freedom, rights of man, perfectibility of human government*; and by “good words and fair speeches,” stole the hearts of thousands, and led them to slavery and torture.

Where are the liberties of those republics which were scattered on the plains of Italy, around the sides of Mont Blanc, and among the German Low Lands? They are swept away. Who can read the story of the destruction of Helvetic liberty, and not be moved?

The Swiss had long enjoyed independence under the auspices of a government well adapted to their situation. Walled in by mountains, they seemed destined for perpetual freedom. But, what mischief cannot a cloaked, wicked policy accomplish? Unaccustomed to dissimulation, they were ill qualified to hear the specious declarations of French emissaries. Mengaud, the tool of the Directory, arrived with the most solemn protestations of good faith and inviolable friendship on the part of his nation. It was philanthropy which induced them to send an armed force there. They themselves had tasted the sweets of the best government in the world, and they wished their neighbours, their dear friends,

to share with them. Their enlightened eyes saw the rubbish of the Helvetic Confederacy, and they had come to clear it away. A little renovation would put the Swiss on an equal standing with the Great Republic! All this sounded plausibly to these plain, honest mountaineers. They received it as the language of friendship, and felt secure. But the invaders soon changed the tone of brotherly affection to that of authority and menace. At length the cloud which had been fast gathering, seemed to break. The gallant spirit of William Tell had not wholly deserted the Bernese. They awoke from the common lethargy, rallied all their forces, collected all their might, and stood with their whole strength in support of their tottering liberty. They stood too late! The storm again thickened, Berne fell, and Switzerland was no more. The bones of these plundered republicans now whiten on their native rocks, and the rank weeds of despotism and desolation now overrun those gardens, which once smiled with blossoms or bended with fruit, and poured a regaling fragrance along the "declivities of the mountains." The waters of the Tesino and Rhine, should they,

six thousand years longer, roll their white torrents over the bold cliffs of Uri and Appenzel, could not wash out the deep-stained guilt of those merciless tyrants, who scattered "arrows, firebrands and death" among a happy people, and immolated thousands of freemen on the altar of "havock and spoil." A righteous tribunal awaits them, beyond the confines of this world.

Happy America! she was an idle spectator of these scenes. We saw the cloud hang in the eastern horizon, we heard the distant thunder roar, while ours was a bright sun, and a smooth wave. May this country never fall a prey to that dæmon of uproar and desolation, who delights to walk over the ruins of liberty. He is a restless, implacable spirit. He cannot be soothed or purchased into peace. Treaties cannot bind him, oaths cannot hold him. Nothing but strength can successfully oppose him. It was the gigantic arm of Jason alone which could tame the fiery bulls.

Amid these convulsions which have dismembered the strongest governments, and buried republics from the view of nations, what Christian does not look forward with a transporting hope of brighter



scenes? The winged messenger, girded with the gold of Uphaz, who met the aged Hebrew on the banks of the Hiddekel, told of these things. He told of a power that should have indignation against the holy covenant; and though he "enter into the countries, and overflow and pass over," yet "he shall come to his end, and none shall help him." A long, fair, happy day will follow this night and storm.

AMERICANS, be virtuous, be united, be vigilant. Resist the enervating power of luxury, and bury party names in your love for the common weal. You are under obligations to no nation, you will show partialities to none. Your Washington has told you that "Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none, or a very remote relation;" and, that "there can be no greater error, than to expect, or calculate upon real favours from nation to nation. It is an illusion which experience must cure, which a just pride ought to discard."

Beware of those who would tease you with the notion that your government is a bad one. Be they English, French, or your own native sons,

thrust them from you; they are the foes of your liberty. Beware of kissing patriots. While they whisper liberty in your ear, and with one hand press you to their bosom, with the other they would rivet on your chains, or bury a dagger in your heart.

Mark him who would lull you to sleep with the persuasion that your freedom can never be in danger. Is there then no avenue to destruction for such a government as this? Would to Heaven there were none. But you can never believe it, so long as the fate of other republics is not blotted from your memory. The poisonous principles of Voltaire, Condorcet and Diderot, if fostered here, like the snakes of Laocoon, would pollute your temples, and destroy yourselves and your children. Though the war-whoop of the savage does no longer start you from the slumbers of midnight, yet the wolves of illuminism may awake you, too late perhaps awake you, with their horrid howl. They have fattened on the blood of some of the finest republics, but are not satiated. They *may* draw the current which flows in *your* veins.

Let your constitution, the charter of your rights, sealed by the blood of thousands of your brave countrymen, be sacred as the ark of the covenant was to Israel. Then, should invasion like an overflowing Jordan meet your way, at the approach of this, while free from the unhallowed touch of innovation, the waters will divide, and the nation will pass through "dry shod." You have the sublime doctrines of Emmanuel. Let them be supported and taught in their purity. They can preserve a commonwealth longer than the flame of Vesta could, and will deal responses more infallible in peace and war than ever did the oracle at Delphi. You have fathers, and mothers, and wives, and little ones: you have the ashes of patriots, and the urn of Washington. Let all these rest secure and undisturbed "behind the lightning of your steel." And should your foes approach, the foes of your God and your country; should they stretch along your shores, and like a cloud of locusts darken your whole coast, a whirlwind of freemen shall rush from your mountains, and sink them in the sands, or ingulph them in the ocean.

## AN ADDRESS.



GENTLEMEN OF THE  
LIGHT INFANTRY,

I AM happy to address you on the present occasion. The patriotic zeal, the generous ambition, the noble ardour, which prompted you to unite, and devote to the acquisition of military skill, more time and expense than usual, have met the applause and best wishes of all your friends. They view with pleasure the spirit of harmony which has prevailed among you, and the handsome improvements and respectable appearance you have made. They have the fullest confidence that you will always

maintain the honourable ground you now hold, and that your deportment will always draw admiration and respect from your military brethren.

May no weed of envy spring up to poison the union of so happy a band of brothers. Sacrifice individual attachments and little prejudices to the good of the *Light Infantry*. Thus will you offer a glorious example to the tender youth fast rising to manhood around you, and resemble a compact community, united, invincible and happy.

Much of the safety of a free people depends on such men as you; I mean, on a well disciplined militia. It is undoubtedly a true maxim, that "the way to keep peace is to be ready for war." You will not suffer idleness and amusements to unstring all your powers, and prepare you for base servitude. Study the "hardihood of antiquity," and cherish those masculine habits, which give firmness and strength to the body, resolution and ardour to the soul. Cincinnatus could drive the Volsci and Æqui from his country, after hardening his muscles at the plough.

May you never be called into action, and may the din of battle never again be heard on the fields of

**Columbia.** But you have enemies who watch your freedom as a panther watches a roe ; and the voice of your country may cry " to arms, to arms." You will not then hesitate. Your Eagle and Indian will be the place of rendezvous. You will rally round that standard, and pour out your blood before it shall be touched by the polluted hand of despotism. Let yours be the cause of religion and genuine liberty, you need not fear. Remember the trophied glories of Marathon. There a handful of gallant Athenians put to flight the vast legions of Persia. Remember Leonidas and his three hundred intrepid Spartans, who, at the narrow pass between Thessaly and Phocis, cut their way into the midst of the millions of Xerxes, spread terrour, like a cloud, over his whole host, and saved their country from fire and sword.

Think of the dear bought liberties you now possess. Think of Lexington, Bunker-hill and Monmouth, and the many patriots who fell in the heat of battle, or sunk away amid the tenfold horrors of a lingering dissolution in loathsome prison-ships. Look round on this assembly. Behold your venerable fathers, whose locks, now white with years, once

“whistled to the wind of British bullets.” They  
“braved the storm of many a battle,” to purchase  
the independence you now celebrate, the festive joys  
of this day. You cannot, you will not part with a  
gem for which such a price has been paid. Let  
your enemies come. Undaunted, you will plant  
your little column in the midst of the thunder of  
their artillery, and stand the shock of battle like the  
young oak of the forest, that “rears his head to the  
storm, and laughs at the tempest.” And may you  
conquer; may you never be slaves: and may the  
sons of Columbia shout liberty and independence,  
till the loud notes of retribution shall peal from the  
trumpet of Gabriel.