
MR. PEPPER'S

ORATION.

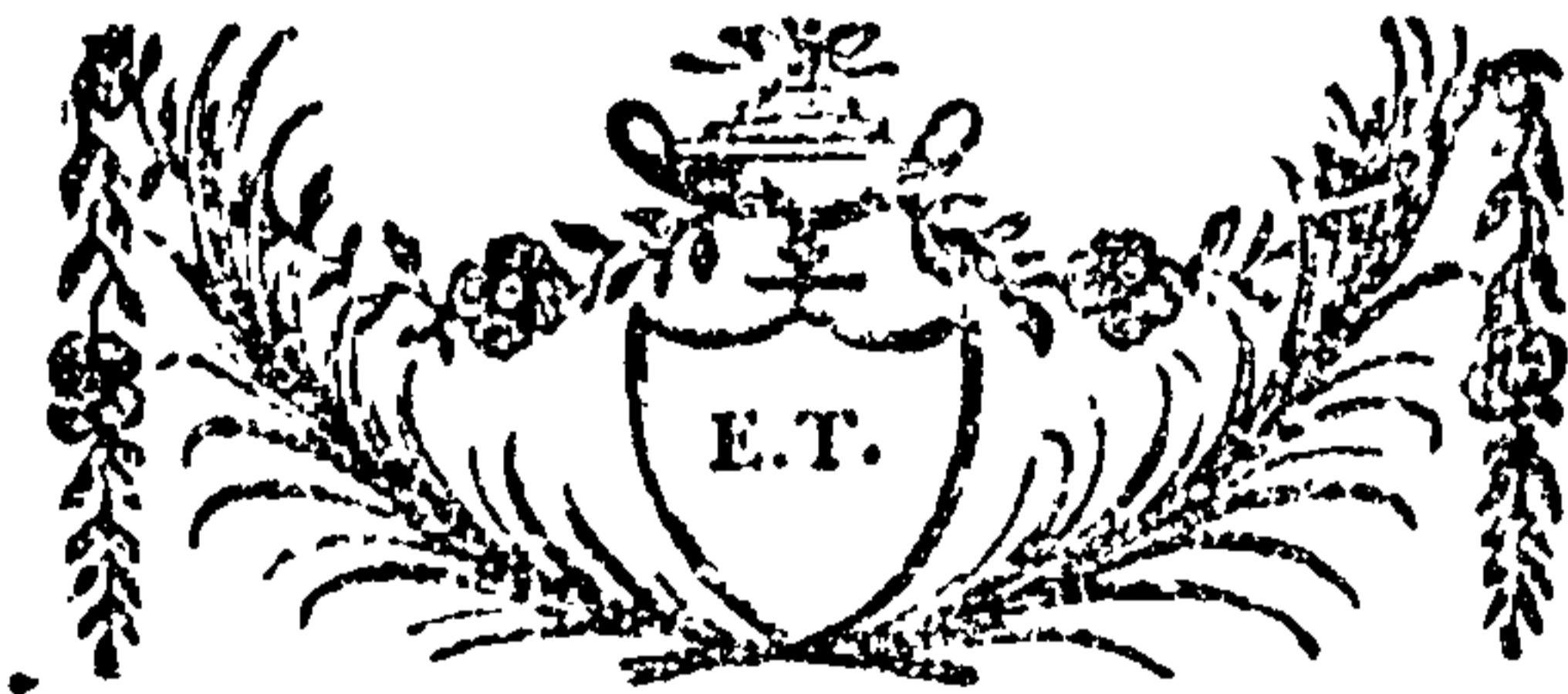
A N

O R A T I O N,

PRONOUNCED AT WILBRAHAM

ON THE 4th OF JULY 1810.

BY CALVIN PEPPER.



Government is instituted for the commⁿ good ; for the protection, safety, prosperity and happiness of the people ; and not for the profit, honor, or private interest of any one man, family, or class of men :—

Declaration of Rights.

P A L M E R :

FROM THE PRESS OF E. TERRY.

A N

O R A T I O N, &c.

FELLOW CITIZENS,

WE are convened not to celebrate the feats of a conquering Tyrant, nor the successes of an enslaving Despot: we are met not to celebrate the birth-day of Kings, nor the coronation of Emperors; for no such are among us: but, we are assembled to commemorate the remembrance of that auspicious day which gave freedom to our country and liberty to our citizens, that freedom and liberty which are enjoyed by us alone. Thirty-four revolving years have rolled away, since Americans were free, and bid defiance to the British Power.

The causes which gave rise to, and the effects which produced our glorious Revolution, tho' rehearsed ten thousand times, must ever be a pleasing theme for reflection.

Our pious Fore-Fathers, persecuted and afflicted in the land of their nativity, sought for security in the wilds of America; animated with the love of liberty and a hope of being secluded from the power of persecution, they forsook their friends, their relatives, and the country which gave them birth, and the place where they ought to have found protection, and committed themselves to the wide, boisterous, and then, unfrequented ocean, trusting solely on their God for future protection. On their first landing on these now happy and luxuriant shores, a great part of their number were swept away by cold, famine, and pestilential death: and to add to their sufferings they found themselves surrounded by an innu-

merable host of savage Indians whose clemency is death & whose compassion is torture : but amid all their sufferings, one divine consolation, the free worship of their God was their's ; for this they left their homes, by this they were comforted and preserved from sinking under the weight of their afflictions. Their infant colony rapidly increased, & soon they began to enjoy the blessings of peace, civil & religious liberty, security and domestic tranquility. But short were their days of prosperity--that same spirit of persecution, which drove the Fathers from Europe, followed the Sons to America : their liberties were endangered ; their charters were abolished ; trials by jury were impaired ; heavy duties were imposed, oppressive laws were enacted ; their dearest rights were threatened ; and their future slavery was confirmed. Against these they petitioned, they remonstrated ; but their petitions were slighted, and their remonstrances neglected : 'twas then we appealed to the God of Armies, to him alone we looked for help, our land became an *Aceldama* ; and our streams rivers of blood ; our citizens were butchered ; our towns were burned ; and some of our fairest possessions were demolished ! but those were the days of patriotism ; 'twas then, ye venerable Fathers, you astonished the world with your bravery ; in the midst of dangers ye were undismayed ; for, on the memorable **FOURTH OF JULY** Seventeen Hundred and Seventy-six, calling God to witness the rectitude of your intentions, ye did boldly and solemnly declare, "The United States to be a free and independent Nation." From that day are we to date our freedom : and in commemoration of that blessed era, are we now assembled ; that day, proud Albion ceased to rule, that day the towering Eagle spread aloof her wings and quitting every eastern clime, where long she'd been forlorn, perched on Columbia's lay : and having once resolved on freedom, 'twas not in British power to foil our purpose : her boasted troops, her mercenary host, her savage tribes, and tory bands were all subdued by Freedom's Sons ; and after exercising every species of cruelty and wanton barbarity, during an eight year's bloody conflict, Great Britain, herself, was induced to acknowledge our rights, and confirm our independence.

At the close of the revolutionary war, we have new cause for praise and admiration, especially, in the conduct of our illustrious Washington; for, where do we find that leader, who having by his skill and bravery, not only conquered his enemies, but completely won the affections of his followers, that would not have made himself their ruler? but not so with the illustrious Leader of our revolution: he took the sword, not for the sake of his own ambition or personal grandizement; but for the good of his country and to secure the liberty of his fellow citizens, and having effected his purpose, he hastened to retirement, and left the administration of government exclusively to the people; not long, however, was he suffered to remain inactive, for having found that our government was too feeble, Washington at the head of a chosen number, devised and adopted our excellent republican form of government, under which we have enjoyed so much prosperity and happiness.

Having laid aside our arms we forgot our resentment, and I am sorry to add, almost our prudence; for, I really believe, if we had not been so ready to forgive and pardon the whole mass of tories, and restore them to our confidence, we should not at this time, have witnessed such divisions in our country, and opposition to our government: not that I would be understood to believe, that the two great parties in our country, are the one composed exclusively of tories, and the other of true Americans; for I sincerely believe that a great proportion of those, who style themselves federalists, are well wishers to our government, and some, perhaps who style themselves republicans, are so in name but not in fact: but, I believe that if, at the close of our revolution, we had been freed from the British party, then, among us, we should not so soon have witnessed such unhappy divisions as now exist: for sure I am, the patriot, who risked his life, his all merely for the good of his country, would not so soon, have wished to see its liberties destroyed, and its government changed: and what surer way could be taken for our destruction, than by existing divisions and animosities among the people, and opposing our republican form of government: but, happy for our nation, we have always

had a Washington, an Adams, (a patriot in retirement) a Jefferson or a Madison for our chiefs.

Perhaps no time, since the days of seventy-five, so much required the vigilance and firmness of republicans as the present, on one hand, is France trampling on our rights, and in violation of every principle of justice, as well as against express covenant, confiscating our property, burning our ships and merchandize, and imprisoning our citizens, and although, we have an Armstrong who manfully exposes their crimes and refutes their false reasoning, yet, Bounaparte having power has forgot rights: on the other hand, is Great-Britain imposing unjustifiable restraints on our commerce, enslaving our citizens, and insulting our government; in the midst of us are French emisaries, British spies, old tories, would be nobles, and disappointed office seekers all plotting and wishing our ruin.

Citizens be on your guard; Do you expect protection from England? it will be such as they have given to their conquered and oppressed vassals in Asia, where millions have been slain without clemency or mercy, or without reason or excuse: it will be such protection as your murdered brethren found on board the Jersey prison ship: their plighted faith is hypocrisy, and their honour is deception: Do you expect safety from Bounaparte? it will be the safety of the oppressed inhabitants of Spain, Holland, Germany and Italy: and can you put confidence in those who justify either of those nations? beware of their devices; view them as traitors to their country; withdraw from them your confidence and support; for, if they get into power they will deprive you of your liberty, and rob you of your rights: no, give your suffrages to those, who only have regard for our own government, and partiality for no other. So long, as we take sides with any nation we shall incur the resentment of the others, and justly merit the contempt of that: there is no friendship in nations beyond interest, and by tamely submitting to one insult, only makes way for another. Have we no cause of complaint against England? Where is the friend to his country, who will not acknowledge, that the decrees

of both France and England were totally unjustifiable as it respected America? and whither the British blockade of the Elbe and Brest or the French decree of November eighteen hundred and seven was first, is not for us to enquire; if France injures Great-Britain, Great-Britain is not less excusable thereby for injuring America, and so on the contrary: but Great-Britain ever since she acknowledged our independence, has been aiming at our destruction and colonization: do you believe the possession of America is less desired now, than it was at the time, when we were so feeble as to afford the mother country little or no assistance? fellow citizens, were we once more to be subject to that power, we should be treated, not as a conquered country, but as rebel slaves; the resentment of her ministers would be kindled on account of the losses and defeats occasioned by our long and continued obstinacy, and care would be taken, that we should be so depressed, as never after to be able to throw off our allegiance—but, why do we talk of vassalage? we are a rising empire; the wealth and population of the United States have increased beyond a parallel, and we want nothing but unanimity and firmness among ourselves to resist the power of any nation on earth: although, we are surrounded with danger and in the midst of perplexities, yet, my fellow citizens, no nation, on earth, can compare with us in felicity; turn your eyes to Europe, there you behold nothing but slavery, oppression, carnage and death; and even the affluent and rich, are in a state of continual fear and dependence; for he who is in affluence and plenty to day, may be a vagabond or in prison, to-morrow. Husbands are torn from the bosoms of their wives, sons are separated from their homes and parents, and dragged into the field, not to fight for and secure their own liberty; but, merely to destroy and enslave their fellow men, to satisfy the ambition of some mighty conquerer; and, although, we the citizens of America have to witness some of our brethren dragged into prison and on board the ships of the two tyrants of Europe; yet within our own borders each one may sit down under his own vine and fig tree, with none to disturb or make afraid: and such is the happy clime in which we live, that we can be furnished with all the necessaries and most of

the luxuries of life within our own country, how much, then, does it behove us, at this time, to encourage our own manufactures? let us convince the depraudators of the East that we can live without their aid, and they will soon learn to respect our rights: it has been a question with some, whether the United States has been gainers, or losers by commerce? but, for myself I am in favour of commerce, where, it can be free from plunder and unjust restraints; but sure I am, that at this time, it is better to live entirely by ourselves than to expose our wealth to the depredation of Pirates.

Few things only, are requisite to secure our peace, happiness and prosperity, and hand our liberties down unimpaired to the latest posterity: have as little connexions abroad as possible; be at peace with all, but in alliance with none; encourage agriculture and support our own manufactures, thereby rewarding our industrious citizens, and furnishing at all times a supply for our necessities: but, above all, guard your liberties with a jealous eye, be constant at the polls, vote down these who are hostile to your liberties, or partial to your enemies—and here let me add that although, a great proportion of the federalists, have no doubt conscientiously opposed the measures of the republicans, yet the time is nigh at hand, in which we may reasonably conclude, that all the honest men of the party will be ready to acknowledge the injustice of their opposition; for, where now is the proof of French influence and partiality, which has been the theme of their aspersions? Is it to be seen in the late communications of Mr. Armstrong, in which we find, that the very measures which have been stated to be dictated by Bounaparte, Bounaparte has made as an excuse and reason for his unjust treatment of our countrymen. And further, if any disposition was supposed to be on the part of our government to prevent a friendly accommodation with England, the same must have vanished with the arrangement concluded with Mr. Erskine, and Great Britain herself does not presume to censure the dismissal of Jackson. And here I must be allowed to notice more particularly the conduct which has been pursued by the republicans, since the days of Washington; under the administration of that wise and

good man, our country flourished, and although many were then wishing to subvert our form of government and introduce a fixed monarchy, yet they durst not make known their sentiments, Washington was a republican in the extent, him therefore they could not expect to alter; he was the idol of the people, him they could not expect to degrade or debase; when Mr. Adams took the chair they began to effect their purposes; he was a patriot in the revolution, he was the friend and companion of Washington, and he equally enjoyed the confidence of a great part of the community; by the popularity of Mr. Adams did the friends of monarchy expect to effect their plans; he chose not then to expose their purposes, but only endeavoured to prevent their effects, wherefore, the whole odium of their acts, in a manner rested upon himself. Many republicans, then, clearly foresaw their liberties in danger, and not only opposed the just authors of their fears, but the venerable Adams himself; in New-England, particularly the former virtues and patriotism of their hero were fully known, and it was impossible to believe they were so soon eradicated; therefore the dangers that were threatened were not believed, and had not Mr. Adams lately rescued his own fame by the developement of the designs of the monarchical party, many would have still believed that he himself was a traitor, or which they thought most probable, that the professed republicans were in the wrong. Having succeeded in displacing Mr. Adams and with him destroyed the influence of the monarchical party, the government was conducted on the principles of liberty, and according to the pattern of Washington: but many sincere Americans confiding in the virtues and integrity of their Adams, could not believe in the sincerity of his opponents, and thus have continued the opposition of many who we may reasonably expect will hold out no longer.

Those acts of the republicans, which at the time of adoption, were animadverted with the greatest asperity, have now ceased to be openly censured: at the time, the repeal of the judiciary law was considered as an unconstitutional and oppressive act; but will any one, now presume to say, it was an injury to our country? have not eight years' experiment convinced us that the business

of our judiciary department, has been conducted as well without, as with those additional judges? if so? ought not their offices to be abolished? Where is the man now who can reasonably accuse the republicans of too great aversion to war? yet that was the theme of the opposition, in eighteen hundred and four, does any one now believe it would have been better to have declared war against France and Spain and fought for Louisiana than to have acquired it by peaceable purchase? or is there any one now who believes that its acquisition was a damage to our country? who will now say, peace on honourable terms might at any time be made with Great-Britain? for, was there any thing in the stipulation entered into by Mr. Erskine hard or unreasonable to be complied with on the part of Great-Britain? was it not rather doing less on their part than they ought? yet by our government it was ratified and by them rejected.

At no time, since the adoption of our federal constitution, has it been so difficult to determine what measures would best conduce to the general good of the community, as at the present, and during the last years of Mr. Jefferson's administration; yet, I believe, however unpopular they may have been; still those measures which were pursued, were those which were most likely to preserve our peace, and induce the belligerent powers to redress our wrongs; yet such is the disposition of men, that any future consequences will be hazarded for the sake of present gain. During the embargo the enemies of our government spared no pains to enflame the minds of the people, and excite them to open rebellion: but on cool reflection their reason returned, and by the recent elections in New-England, the yeomanry have expressed their approbation of the conduct of our rulers; and we find less opposition to the administration of Mr. Madison, than to any President since the days of Washington: our divisions are subsiding, New-York, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Newhampshire, within a year, have all expressed their confidence in, and returned to the support of our general government: and very soon, I hope to see the honest men of both parties unite in destroying the power of a British faction, French coalition and a monarchical

institution.

If we are to have war with France, let us unite as in the days of seventy-five, and convince the conquering tyrant of the east, that although he can destroy monarchies and upturn kingdoms, against freemen his arms and conquering soldiers can have no success ; if we are to have war with England, let us convince them that the same spirit which aroused the fathers to assert their liberty, will enable the sons to maintain theirs. If we are to retire from the ocean, and live within ourselves, let us do it with cheerfulness, and not desire peace but on just and honorable terms : above all let us strive to be in peace among ourselves, cultivate true wisdom, and maintain that virtue which exalteth a nation, and be free from those sins which are a reproach to any people : then will our liberties be secured, and millions yet unborn will hail with joyful acclamations the birth-day of our Independence.

F I N I S.