

AN  
ORATION,

PRONOUNCED AT

HARTFORD,

*BEFORE THE SOCIETY OF THE*

CINCINNATI,

FOR THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT,

*CONVENED TO CELEBRATE THE ANNIVERSARY*

OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

JULY 4th, 1804.

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BY JUNIUS SMITH.

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HARTFORD:

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1804.

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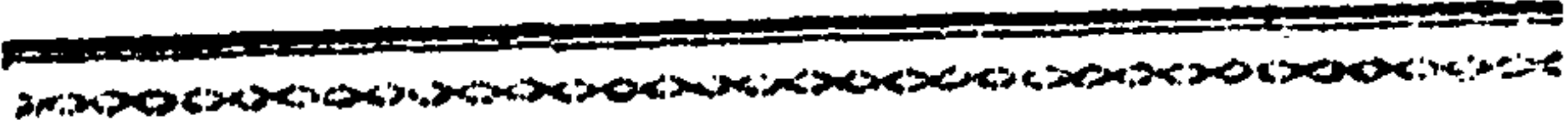
*At a meeting of the CONNECTICUT SOCIETY of CINCINNATI on  
the 4th day of July, A. D. 1804.*

**V**OTED, That Colonel BENJAMIN TALLMADGE, and  
Mr. NATHAN BEERS, be appointed a Committee to present  
the thanks of this Society to Colonel DAVID HUM-  
PHREYS and JUNIUS SMITH, Esquire, for their Ora-  
tions delivered this day, and to request copies of them  
respectively for publication.

*A true copy of Record,*

JOHN MIX, SECRETARY.

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# AN ORATION.



GENTLEMEN OF THE CINCINNATI,  
AND MY FELLOW-CITIZENS,

**I**T is an established maxim in political science, that nations derive no instruction, in the art of government, from the experience of others.

PASSION, controlling the judgment, leads one nation to imitate the excesses of another, and betrays both to inevitable ruin. With regard to the United States this maxim is peculiarly just. Disjoined from the corrupt courts of Europe, and elevated to the rank of an independent nation, we have been warned to arm ourselves against those sanguinary principles, which in Europe have burst through the restraints of religion; the ties of natural affection; and in their progress have swept away liberty and law. But so far from learning wisdom by the experience of European governments, we seem, as a nation, to be vehemently pursuing the same wayward course.

PLACED in this situation; guided by unstable theorists; and exposed to all the evils of revolutionary principles, it is the duty of those who enjoy the means of information; it is especially the duty of

the honorable Cincinnati, professedly the guardians of the rising generation ; the defenders of truth, and the patrons of virtue ; attentively to watch, from their lofty eminence, the signs of the times, and seasonably sound the trump of alarm.

NOTWITHSTANDING the unconcern with which we are prone to regard the experience of other nations, I flatter myself that we shall not be found altogether blind, to that of our own. Experience is the test of political systems. A *single* transaction accompanied with its immediate and more remote consequences, exhibits the excellence or futility of any system of government, more effectually than the profoundest arguments of the logician, or the most dazzling effusions of imagination. But when we take into view a *series* of political transactions, growing out of the same system, and examine the ultimate tendency of the whole, it will require no uncommon exertion of intellect, to form an opinion, upon the merits of that system, which can scarcely be erroneous.

As the decision of this point, in relation to the general government, is of momentous concern to the interests of *Connecticut*, a brief examination of the new system and its inseparable effects, may possibly throw light upon a subject, which has given rise to various opinions.

THE first principle of the new system, manifested in the election of rulers, and running through its numerous, multiform branches, is so repugnant to our ideas of right and wrong, that the mind of an honest man startles at the thought of its being adopted in practice, and sanctioned by the voice of a christian people.

THAT errors, of one species or another, should creep into government, and that others, which have no real existence, should be imagined, is consistent

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