

AN
ORATION,
DELIVERED AT NEW-SALEM,
ON THE THIRTY THIRD ANNIVERSARY
OF
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,

BY

JOHN WALLACE, A. B.

Fremant omnes licet, dicam, quod sentio.

CIC. DE ORATORE.

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O R A T I O N.

NO event is calculated to inspire an American citizen, with a mixture of more lively emotions of gratitude and patriotism ; none can excite a combination of more grand and pleasing recollections, than the Anniversary of his country's Independence. The resentment which animated the Colonists at the insolent demands of the unfeeling ministry of Britain ; their indignation at the aggressions of her barbarous soldiery, and the noble enthusiasm that fired their minds, when they magnanimously swore to regain their liberties, or perish in the experiment, awaken a succession of correspondent emotions in every bosom, that claims a sympathy with the feelings of injured loyalty, or owns an alliance with the souls of exalted patriots. Fain would we, by description, recal to ideal presence every transaction in the dreadful conflict ; gladly would we review the splendid achievements of our brave and inexperienced armies ; pause on the crimsoned field of battle, and triumph in their victories or deplore their defeats :—but the subject has been so often illustrated by the ablest talents, so widely blazoned by the plaudits of admiring thousands, that the pen, attempting to preserve the spirit of the story, would but dishonour the events it designed to eulogise. Memory will furnish to *some* the disasters of those momentous times ; history has related to *others* the proceedings of that memorable period ; and the revolutionary soldier, like the veteran MARIUS, has shewn us *all*, “ the scars of those wounds which he has received in facing the enemies of his country ; he has exhibited the standards, the armour, and the trappings, which he himself has taken from the vanquished.” The day we celebrate is an evidence of the

glorious spirit that ruled the breasts of our illustrious Fathers, when they proclaimed their title to the privileges of an independent government ; the treaty of '83 attests the prosperity that attended their prowess in the field of Mars ; and the constitution of the United States declares the inestimable prize, for which they contended with the disciplined legions of the British Empire.

The spirit of freedom was not confined to the *Western* continent. Our European allies here beheld, with surprise, the better opinions, so often discussed with enthusiasm by their own literati, widely diffused among an extensive people. Here they saw, with astonishment, those very institutions of political freedom, which they had attached only to the dreams of a speculative philosophy, purchased with the price of patriotic blood, and reduced to operation by the wisdom of a legislative body. Their apprenticeship to the cause of independence did not pass without improvement. The ardour of liberty, kindled in the service of Columbia, was not extinguished by their embarkation from its congenial soil ; and with their persons, they transported their new-formed principles to the despotic shores of their native country. Unhappily, France was not prepared for the reception of civil liberty. Too long had her enslaved commons been depressed by the rigorous despotism of the house of Bourbon ; too deeply had the more enlightened been corrupted by the wild speculations of a turbulent band of disorganizing philosophers, to receive, with due ceremonials, the heavenly stranger within her benighted borders. The disciples of Voltaire embraced this, as a happy crisis, for the subversion of every civil and religious establishment ; and they resolved to introduce by means of the *sovereign canaille*, those mad schemes of licentiousness, for which their incendiary productions had pioneered the way.

However pure the motives which democratic char-

ity may assign to the *mild* philanthropists, who instituted the *gentle* plan of reform in the ancient government of France ; certain it is, that, from *whatever* cause, the French revolution generated a fermentation of the most savage passions that ever scourged humanity by their brutal operation.

Not long had the National Assembly been organized in Versailles, before the choice spirits of Jacobinism began to manifest their patriotic zeal, by a determined hatred to every constituted authority ; and commenced a most unexampled warfare with every thing *social* or *sacred*. With their love of order they could not but display their attachment to religion, and by a solemn vote of the convention, the *God of Israel* was declared the chimera of a superstitious brain, and Reason and Liberty were placed in the republican pantheon, as the only objects worthy the adoration of the illustrious advocates of the primitive liberty of man. With *such* sanctions, and with the auspices of *such* men as Robespierre, Legendre, and Marat, they commenced a career of such hideous barbarities, as the maddest plots of the tragic muse had never equalled, nor the warmest imagination conceived possible to be acted on any other than the theatre of Hell. The Historian had so completely exhausted his superlative epithets of detestation, on the outrages of other times, that, struck with the incomparable deformity of the mishapen monster of French Democracy, he laboured, in vain, to proportion a language of abhorrence, to the gradation of atrocious crimes, that purpled every scene in the bloody drama of revolutionary France. There Jacobinism lay at his enormous length ; for seven years he kept up his prodigious yell—he gorged himself with the entrails and the gore of the wretches that chanced within his fatal grasp—

..... atro cum membra fluentia tabo
manderet, et tepidi tremarent sub dentibus artus :—

and the bespattered pavements of Paris, like the huge

den of the Cyclops, floated with the blood of slaughtered Frenchmen. “*Domus sanie dapibusque cruentis.*” The excesses committed in the Thuilleries, on the ever memorable 20th of June and 10th of August, must excite in every mind, not steeled to the influence of humanity, the most lively sensibility for the sufferings of the unfortunate Louis, and the warmest indignation against the cruelty and indifference of the mock legislators, who controuled the destinies of France. The massacres of the beginning of Sept. afford an instance of a cold-blooded, preconcerted system of murder, that sets all powers of description at defiance, and, in point of enormity, stands unparalleled in the annals of ages. Incalculable as are the crimes which distinguished every period in the progress of French Democracy, it is no less astonishing that it found its apologists in countries neither on terms of alliance nor amity with the *Grande Republique*. The frozen regions of Russia were polluted by the influence of its baneful principles; in every circle of Germany it had made its proselytes; and even in England, the ever devoted victim of Gallic vengeance, there were organized bodies who formally congratulated the convention on the success of their arms, and openly avowed their attachment to the most infuriate proceedings of the Revolution.

Happy, thrice happy America, if French philosophy had stopped even *there*. The waves of the Atlantic opposed no barrier to its progress, and the late President of the United States, with many of highest estimation in his party, became its most early and enthusiastic admirers. Mr. Jefferson himself had once resided at the Court of St. Cloud; he there imbibed his violent prejudices in favour of Frenchmen; he was there initiated into all the mysteries of Atheism and Democracy, and returned to his native country, no mean proficient in the doctrines of the modern school. Yet his experience was confined to the

times of theory. He had not actually seen the sublime speculations of French philosophers reduced to practice : he must therefore have a character warm from the work of the guillotine to teach him their latest improvements in religion and politics. A passage in a public vessel is provided for the infamous Paine, and the hoary philosopher abandons, for a time, his Mammoth bones, and salt licks, to become a pupil to the vagabond Professor of the *rights of man*. The usurpation of Bonaparte did not conquer his attachment to the government of France. He readily forgave the Corsican this infringement upon the rights of the *Sans Culottes*, and transferred to his Imperial Majesty, the homage he once had tendered to the *sovereign people*. Like the maniac Parisians, who swore allegiance to every new constitution, that appeared from the pen of Seyes or Condorcet, he maintained his plighted faith to Frenchmen through the successive changes of the Revolution and the establishment of the house of Bonaparte. Hence the wretched and pernicious policy of the last Administration ; hence the mad attempts of a party to annihilate American commerce : hence the unexampled calamities, that, in sable horror, brooded o'er the plains of Columbia.

The independence of America was swept away by the same torrent, that overwhelmed the liberties of Holland, of Switzerland, and Italy. Though the conquering sword of Napoleon was never drawn within the borders of the United States ; yet the more successful instruments of bribery and negotiation subverted the liberties which his arms had never dared to assail. Intrigue has often gathered the laurels of victory, where Pallas' self could never urge the car of conquest. Though the tyrant of Gaul never gave us in vassalage to a Royal brother, he adopted one of our citizens into the Imperial family, and left a Viceroy, where a King could never be landed. Napoleon is too profound a politician to fight for the title of his servant, when the power and the fealty

are fettered : and indeed it is not to be doubted, whether he received more implicit obedience from the sovereigns of Westphalia and Naples; than from the cringing Prefect, who, for eight disastrous years, ruled the people and the *Congress* of the United States. Our distance from the scenes of contention and slaughter was our only advantage over the subjugated nations of Europe. *We* furnished with them our quota of the revenue, to support the cannibal armies of France : *we* were also compelled by the voice of the mighty Corsican, to close our harbours against the commerce of Britain. Napoleon, confiding in the pliability and loyalty of the American Chief, imposes repeated contributions on the American government. Mr. Jefferson, superiour to the narrow views of contracted statesmen who confine the expenditure of public money to the service of the country that delegates their power, unlocks the treasury-chest, and transmits to the Great Defender of Republicks, millions of dollars to accomplish the emancipation of Europe. Where slumbered the indignation of the American people, at the disclosure of these infamous transactions ? Had the genius of AMES then illuminated our national councils, in his own impressive language, he “ would have raised his voice to such a note of remonstrance, that it would have reached every log-house beyond the mountains.” He would have said to the inhabitants, “ awake from your false security ; your cruel dangers, your more cruel apprehensions are soon to be renewed.” Did a “ false security” prevail among that very people, who once had exclaimed from every quarter of the Union, “ millions for defence, but not a cent for tribute,” *that* lethargy was soon to be roused, by the exposition of Mr. Jefferson’s meanness and villainy, in his negotiation with the rival powers of Europe.

After seeing the duplicity of the late President of the United States, as manifested in the correspond-

ence of our Cabinet with the ministers resident in foreign Courts ; after witnessing his base attempt to suppress the documents that would infallibly awaken the American people to a sense of their degradation, none, but the barefaced advocate of an alliance with France, can withhold his conviction of the tame submission of our government to the will of the Imperial Gaul.

England alone maintained her independence among the nations of Europe : she alone of the world was inaccessible to the intrigue, uncontaminated by the influence of France. England was therefore obnoxious to every Frenchman, whether a native of France or America. The decrees of the Emperour are issued, subjecting to capture every vessel trading with Great Britain or her dependencies ; having on board an article of British manufacture ; or having been spoken to by a British ship. *The construction of these decrees, as avowed and executed, in the language of Mr. Madison, violated as well the express stipulations of the convention of 1800 as the incontestible principles of public law.*

When shall we look for a dignified and spirited resistance of this gross infraction of the treaty, this outrage on neutral and conventional rights ? where was evidenced the noble indignation of a patriotic Executive, alive to the insults and aggressions of France, and determined to resist her invasions on the independence of his country ? Was it manifested in the complacency with which he viewed the American commerce in flames, by French privateers in the West Indies ? Was it discovered in the half-petitioning, half-complaining, misnamed remonstrance, ordered to be presented to the government of France, to which not a syllable of reply has ever been deigned by the haughty Usurper ? Shall we find a spirit of opposition to French violations, in the execrable code of Embargo laws, that dismantled our ships, banished our seamen, outraged

our liberties, and beggared our citizens? These were but the effort of a systematic co-operation with the Emperour, *in repelling from all points the commerce of England.* (Note 1.) France would acknowledge no neutrals. Napoleon upon receiving the humble note of Gen. Armstrong, *praying permission to ask an explanation* of his decrees, declared “they should suffer no change, and that the Americans should be compelled to take the positive character of either allies or enemies.” Mr. Jefferson’s susceptibility to the displeasure of his trans-atlantic Master, would never permit him to assume the latter relation: he recommends an Embargo, disciplines the troops of the palace for the encounter, and barter the dearest rights of his country for the smiles of a Despot. In vain was information demanded concerning our foreign relations:—*deliberation*, the inalienable *right*, the most solemn *duty* of a legislator was avowedly renounced by the *infatuated* minions of the Executive, and the accursed measure is hurried through the nocturnal conclave—a literal progeny of darkness.

After the crafty chief was compelled, by the incessant demands of the patriotic minority, to surrender *all* the documents relating to the state of the nation, a letter, which had never been transmitted to Congress, written by the British Secretary to our minister at the Court of St. James, and containing the most unequivocal proofs of the duplicity of the American Cabinet, is published in the Columbian Centinel. “Detestable fabrication,” “impious falsehood,” “tory lie,” and the whole circle of Billingsgate rhetoric, is echoed through every Democratic press in the United States. Mark the event. All this clamour about “Federal forgery” is soon to be silenced by an acknowledgement of its authenticity, from the infallible chief himself. When state chicanery could no longer find a refuge for its black designs, an awkward message is foisted into Congress, accompanied by a copy of Mr. Canning’s communication, with the most

idle and ridiculous apology for its suppression. Mr. Jefferson knew too well the nature of his communications from foreign Courts, to commit them to the keen inspection of the Northern representation.—Giles might have been introduced into the closet, and Eppes permitted to peep through the lattice ; yet the contents of the Executive *escrutoire* were not to be exposed to the rude gaze of the “ profane vulgar.” One who was long the most violent partisan, and humblest panegyrist of the sage of Monticello has said, “ that a correspondence was maintained with Bonaparte’s Court which was *not* filed in the department of state, but in Mr. Jefferson’s private desk, and that the miserable pittance of this correspondence, which Mr. Jefferson permitted to escape from his lock and key, were *selected* by himself, *copied* by himself and communicated to Congress in his own hand writing.”

The Editor of the *Citizen* is not the only man who has deserted the crest-fallen sage. Once the object of Democratic veneration, he is now abandoned by all the honest of his party ; and if the most determined obstinacy in a ruinous system of administration ; the blindest favouritism ; the most pitiful plan of fortification and defence ; the most inveterate enmity to the interests of commerce ; and the meanest servility to the will of a blood thirsty tyrant, should entitle a man to the gratitude of his country, Mr. Jefferson most richly merits the hard-earned recompence. But he has “ passed away.” In the peaceful retirement of Monticello would we leave him. Now, that the equipage of office, the bustle of levees, and the fulsome adulation of dependants shall cease to inflate his vanity, we would express the wish, *however vain*, that he may not be denied the consoling balm of repentance—and that, like dying Voltaire, he may make a public recantation of his errors, a sincere acknowledgement of his crimes, as his *last, desperate* recompence for the injuries he has done his country.

After a long and dreary night of Democracy, we greet, with gladness, the returning sun of Federalism. It has beamed its bright effulgence in the East, and shed no feeble lustre on the darksome regions of the South. New England has already been gladdened with the splendid illumination ; and our Rulers have not been “ disobedient to the heavenly vision.” The political regeneration of New York is already completed. Even the State of Virginia, long the hot-bed of Jacobinism, begins to manifest an honest contrition for her political sins, and seven patriots are delegated to the national Councils, to make atonement for her apostacy from the principles of the illustrious Washington. We trust the period is not far distant, when Embargoes and Gun-boats shall never be substituted for Commerce and a Navy ; when the treasury shall not be plundered to fill the coffers of an Imperial Robber, or furnish “ sugar plumbs and capers” for a pensioned General ; when French partiality shall not be the only passport to office ; when, in fine, the United States shall again recognise the prosperous days of a Federal administration. We cherish the well grounded hope that the citizens of Massachusetts will never again be insultingly told by their Chief Magistrate, that, in the most alarming crisis, they have not the liberty to assemble in peaceful bodies for the purpose of public deliberation ; that, under the most enormous oppressions they have not the right of petitioning the General Government for a redress of grievances, and, that they are bound to submit to the most unconstitutional and oppressive laws, without the humble privilege of murmur or remonstrance. When a faction betrays so great a destitution of the *wise and honest*, that *such* a character, as Levi Lincoln, is supported a candidate for the highest office the Commonwealth can bestow, we may well presume upon the forlorn condition, and desperate prospects of the party. Citizens of Massachusetts ! You may well congratulate yourselves on the success

that has attended your efforts. By your exertions, a genuine disciple of the Washington school is elevated to the executive department of this Commonwealth. He never earned the confidence of a party by the lowest pursuits of avarice, or the infamous numbers of the *Farmer's Letters*. He does not found his claim to office on pleading *sugar causes*, or basely defaming the Clergy. From an undeviating attention to the public weal ; the most distinguished talents, and profoundest political science does he derive his pretensions to your unerring confidence and support. You have done well—continue to give your suffrages to *such* men, and no American shall have occasion to complain of the ingratitude of republicks. What though a croaking voice be heard from the fens of Braintree ? “ Can age itself forget that he is in the last act of life ? Can gray hairs make folly venerable ? ”

The demonstrations of joy on this anniversary will not be confined to you. Every friend to the peace and prosperity of his country will rejoice in the splendid prospects *now* presented to view. Heightened by contrast with the gloomy despondence of the past, the present prosperity is doubly brilliant. Indeed it revives some faint remembrance of the glorious times of Washington. No longer blockaded by *municipal regulations*, our canvass is again expanded to the winds, and our ships once more plough the ocean. Industry no longer pines in despair of meeting the recompense of his labour ; the New England citizen shall once more *gather his harvest on the sea*, and the hardy mariner, the pride of Columbia, is no longer condemned to roam an exile from the service of his native country, and sue protection and employment at the mercy of a foreign power.

To what cause are we to assign this happy reverse ? To the conduct of those spurious candidates for popular favour, who claim the merit of your restoration because they hurried you to the verge of ruin ? As

well might the highwayman, who had robbed your property, demand your gratitude, because he had spared your life. These self-styled republicans do not participate in your joyous feelings. It has ever been *their* determination to involve us in a war with England. Hear the sentiments of Giles, the boasted oracle of the party.

I am for War—if I cannot have War, I am for Letters of Marque and Reprisal, as they will inevitably produce a War.

Is this the language of a mild philanthropist fighting for the blessings of peace, or a ferocious tyger prowling for his bloody banquet? For eighteen months the “dogs of war” have howled, in vain, for their prey. The late orders of council began to revive their expectations of a cadaverous feast; yet the explanations of Mr. Canning and Erskine have completely blasted their hopes: and *now* they may sit down in despair that “France will either aid us by her councils in peace or her generals in war.” (Note 2) The late correspondence with the British Secretary will indeed be *wormwood* to the mercenary partisans of Napoleon; yet the bitter potion is not unmixed with a pleasing ingredient. The recent victory of Bonaparte on the Danube will be a grateful opiate to their sorrow at the prospect of our accommodation with Great Britain; be the exultation theirs—we envy them not their savage pleasure.

Federalists! To *your* unremitting exertions are we indebted for the present prosperity of our country. Your petitions to the late President of the United States; the unceasing efforts of the minority in Congress; and the patriotic proceedings of the state legislature addressed to the Administration a language which the most stupid could not misunderstand. State corruption had not arrived to such an extreme, as to treat, with entire contempt, the feelings of the people. It was well known that the brave descendants of *those* men who resisted the stamp act and the

port-bill would not resign, without a struggle, the liberties sealed by their Father's blood. Though they did not engage, like Pennsylvania democrats, in the "holy duty of insurrection"; they assumed a tone which compelled the Administration to abandon their ground. Far be it from us to detract from the merits of Mr. Madison. We would not, like many of his former adherents, basely attempt to steal his laurels and place them on another's brow. "Palman qui meruit, ferat." He has thus far acquitted himself well; and that man indeed must be an *incorrigible heretic* in civil policy, who would not reform, with such a predecessor for his constant *caveat*.

"Vice is a monster of such frightful mien

As to be hated needs but to be seen."

We might enter the doubtful field of speculation and conjecture concerning the measures Mr. Madison will probably adopt: but we forbear—time alone will divulge the secret. Suffice it to say, if he pursues the course of which his first official acts have *encouraged a reasonable expectation*, he will never want your cordial support. (Note 3.)

NOTES.

1st. After the Embargo was laid, the leaders of the democratic phalanx, began to seek some plausible pretext for the measure, to conceal its real origin from the people. No sooner had information of the orders of council arrived, than *these* were assigned as one of its prominent causes. That the most distant suspicion of their existence was not, at that time, entertained, we have the repeated declarations of Pickering, and others of the highest standing in congress. In a late speech of Randolph we find the following words: "When that (the Embargo) was laid, was the existence of the British orders in council known? It was *not*. The Embargo was laid on the receipt of the documents expressing the determination of the French government to enforce the Berlin decree, and the copy of the proclamation of the King of England, which last was

cut out of a newspaper—and it is an irrefragable proof, the President having sent us that paper, that he did not possess information official or unofficial on the subject of the order in council, when he recommended and we received the proposition of the Embargo.”

At *one* time, the Embargo was a measure of coercion on the belligerent powers—by driving thousands of American seamen into the British service. At *another*, it was a *mere municipal regulation* to preserve our property from the “licentious cupidity” of their privateers—and a supplementary act was passed to prevent the sleighs and waggons of Vermont, from being captured by the British fleet in the wilds of Canada. These despicable shifts and evasions, but too plainly betray its extraction.

2d. An observation in the *Washington Moniteur* urging the policy of an alliance with the French. The infamous Editor of the *Aurora*, “hunted for his crimes from Europe, from Asia, and from Africa,” whose attachment to Bonaparte Thomas Jefferson has rewarded with high promotion in “our public armies,” thus recommends the expediency of submitting to the power of Napoleon. “Our bane and antidote (speaking of England and France) are both before us, and after the examples of the nations of Europe who have first resisted and then succumbed to Napoleon, the people of the United States would be fools indeed if they did not see their course.” If offices of greatest trust and responsibility are to be prostrated to such venal, unprincipled wretches, we may soon exclaim like Pantheus, in the ruins of his country, *fuimus Troes, Ilium fuit*.

3d. The nomination of John Quincy Adams, as Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of St. Petersburg, will not be included in the number of Mr. Madison’s praise-worthy deeds. To reward an apostate dependent with a mere sinecure of 9000 dollars outfit, and the other expenses inseparable from an embassy, is an outrage on economy, and an insult on the nation. Apart from the personal disqualifications of the disgraced Senator, the United States no more need a Minister in Russia, than Jefferson a representative in Pandemonium.

It was thought expedient, a few years ago, when “France wanted money,” to enlarge our territories with the purchase of a wilderness in the West: as Alexander has become a faithful Ally of France, and his treasures liable to be exhausted in the war with Great Britain, our sagacious Senate may have discovered, that we are in immediate want of Siberia or Kamtschatka.