

AN
ORATION,

DELIVERED AT

PORTSMOUTH, NEW-HAMPSHIRE,

ON THE

FOURTH JULY, 1804.

BY *JOHN WENI WORTH, ESQ.*

“MERSVS PROFUNDO PULCHRIOR EVENIT.”

PRINTED AT PORTSMOUTH, BY SAMUEL NUTTING.

1804.

ORATION.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS,

INVITED to address you this memorable day, a solicitude to justify you in your choice must naturally produce a sensation of diffidence in any person selected for this important occasion. The topics of an oration on the 4th of July, have been so frequently and ably treated, by those who have preceded me, as to leave little of novelty or interest for abilities humble and ill proportioned as my own, to the high and gratifying theme, the public display and developement of the principles of American liberty ; but, my countrymen, it is a subject ever dear to us, incorporated and identified with our very natures, we cannot suppress our admiration of our favorite idol, or cease to celebrate the liberty we adore with encreased enthusiasm and devotion, on this annual commemoration of our political happiness ! Yet it should seem, fresh sources of new and momentous interests not hitherto presented, are opening to the view of the patriot and philosopher, an untrodden ground, a region unexplored, and theatre of action not realised in ancient or more modern times, is now reserved for us to act upon, to exhibit to the world a scene of political grandeur and superiority over the nations of the earth, without a parallel to be found in the page of history ; the seeds have been sown, and the fruits have appeared

to disclose principles that may emphatically and exclusively be called those of American liberty. No nation now does, ever did, or ever can enjoy that transcendent blessing more fully and amply than the American people at this day, which must continue whilst we preserve our elective franchise, a free and delegated representation. It is this peculiar and happy feature, free election, that differs the whole question as to the similitude to any other nation, through which all the comparisons with other nations fail, and strikingly distinguishes the American constitution, character, and genius. This invaluable free privilege has recently delivered us from the complicated system of tyranny and corruption, we have so lately shaken off, and already enabled us to dissolve the charm and spell that was conjured up, and to burst asunder the chains that were forging at the same time. This right has placed the people's choice in the presidential chair. All the intrigue, intimidation, art, violence, allurements and negociation practised by the very *able negociators* in the system of corruption has not tainted or contaminated the public mind. America has risen superior to herself, as if providence had asserted her own prerogative, and assisted the lovers of liberty to give full efficacy to the principle that tends, in no small degree or remote view, to promote and effectuate, the emancipation of the enslaved part of the globe---by her bright and glorious example---her political exertion for the salvation of her principles---to perpetuate them, ---to annihilate the practice and doctrine of tyranny and corruption, and her teachers together; "that the voice thereof might no more be heard in a free land, among a people determined to be free. Liberty, as op-

posed to tyranny, is freedom from lawless and excessive power. By nature we are all free, we all enjoy liberty. The frailty of our natures, and the excesses of our passions, give rise to the necessity for a power, or government, to moderate and restrain them---some branches of the government, fix and distinguish the lines of right and wrong as it regards our property, and our personal liberty. This government however is of our own making, our own concoction---we are the sovereignty, we are the people, from whence it originates. Government is only the modification or administration of the power : What is not delegated or imparted, remains with us---our delegates are so far responsible to us immediately that we can soon remove them, and place others in their stead. This is the cardinal salutary check ---this preserves to us our constitution, so long as we preserve our political virtue : if we lose it, we lose our free elective franchise, liberty, and our constitution too ---that is, when we become corrupted, then we are not acting for ourselves, but for the person who corrupts ; if a part of the people set about to corrupt the other part, great or small, and effect it in any degree, so far a people may be said to lose their virtue---you are not voting for yourself to preserve your liberty and your franchise --you are voting for another to destroy both.--- This was the attempt made by the last administration upon the American people ; the snare of corruption laid for them ; an attempt they virtuously resisted and succeeded, purely from the blessings of a delegated representation in the exercise of their franchise, the basis of " their political liberty." Had Mr. Adams, or rather Mr. Hamilton, obtained the Presidency for life,

Mr. Hamilton would, in effect, have been president ; he would have had the *army* and *huge funded debt* to pay the army ; and the *bayonets* of the army to keep the people in awe ; a powerful navy at sea ; taxes after taxes enormous ; and collectors after collectors to get in the taxes---the surplus of the people's labour---prevent them from talking politics, for which a sedition law is an excellent antidote---from buying newspapers, that they may be ignorant of what goes on in Ireland, or France, or (what was much more material) what was going on at their own door.

The increase of the number of judges created at a time when they were not wanted : at the latest moment, when Mr. Adams' administration expired. Surely some great national necessity must have existed for an increase of Judges to the number of sixteen. This was an alteration in the judiciary, as to number, for some purpose ! was it for deciding a vast variety of causes in their circuit then pending. The astonishing certainty is demonstrated beyond all possibility now to doubt, that in the several circuits they made there were no causes pending---nothing to do. We need only look at the same court in New-Hampshire---what had they to do but adjourn the court ? May we not insist there must have been some bad object ? Lenity almost forbids to name it---You are not at a loss to conjecture---The undermining of our liberty, the destruction of it--the introduction of persons to aid and assist in a traitorous prosecution of a system, began and to be continued, (if not in one shape, to be tried in another !) Still you find these attempts abortive ! Imbecility marks the character of a tyrant in a free country.

We could here animadvert, if it were only to censure ; but let us leave the acrimony, the virulence, and the poison to those who chuse to fix with these points their weapons. We have likewise our sovereign antidote, our manifest specific--tis our free delegated representation--in other words, Liberty. We are FREE ! FREEMEN ! Every individual of common virtue, feeling, sentiment and American pride, with reverence to our country, and a duty to himself, has the power to say---I am a free man and no slave ! And it ever will be vain for federalists, or Federal Republicans, Washingtonians, Jeffersonians, or any other denomination of a self denominated party to trample on the rights or shake the free principles of Americans, so long as we are politically virtuous.

Is this deviating from the argument of corruption of the principle of liberty ? Were not these measures I have hinted at, the direct certain effects of a deviation from the principle ? Are the assertions well founded ? If not, let them be retracted. Are they not known and felt ? Is there a man who doubts it ? If there be, have we not a man among us at this moment who can authenticate the fact ? (That it was better to have a president and senate for life,) on whose veracity, fixedness and patriotism it would be idle to doubt---A man who has been one of the prime objects of their system of corruption : to his honor we here stand ready to witness he is impregnable, because he is an American---Thank God we are all Americans, we have the same unalterable, fixed, steady principle ; we are clothed with it ; it is our shield, our banner, our fast hold. In-

tegrity is the American principle ; and virtue is its operation.

It was at one time the fashion of the federal party to decry, deride, and despise republican principles, altho' they seem now to be so fond of taking our name, and pretend to adopt them. Crimination and recrimination was the consequence, accompanied with every disgraceful and disgusting epithet malice and fury could invent, and now worked up to such a pitch of impiety and blasphemy in a New-England print, that one is almost ashamed to be considered to belong to a spot where such wickedness is tolerated. In justice to this town, we are lately comparatively free from the odious personalities of the print alluded to, that ought never to be renewed or countenanced. That print is the common hangman hired for an execution. No decent editor could be found to usher such abominable filth ; the scum of the earth could alone be raked for untruths so fiendlike and hellish ; such palpable lies and liars, to disgorge their last impure and venomous digestions. This severity is strictly justifiable on such an editor ; for no print to the westward of New England has since the election of Mr. Jefferson been found to bear comparison with the New-England prints for this empty, malicious, though impotent abuse of our good and amiable President. Apology, there can be none devised for the conduct of such editors : a very poor reason given, is, that Mr. Adams' and Mr. Pickering's personal friends are determined to die hard in this quarter, where alone, they have a shadow of effect or influence. They have lost Rhode-Island, Vermont and New-Hampshire, in swift succession---Which of the two states, Connect-

icut or Massachusetts will first return "to their first love," is uncertain ; most likely both together. And the conduct of the infuriated men of their party will accelerate the accession of the Union by those means, sooner than all the pains that all the republicans in the Union united, could take to answer or repress : for it is a maxim as certain in public as it is in private life, when an individual is wantonly and profligately slandered, the investigation follows, the result is perfect conviction that the enemy is a libeller and slanderer : it roots and confirms the innocent and the good, tenfold more rivetted in the affections and consideration of all good men, for whose opinions alone we ought to be solicitous. To go a little further with this bold editor : He is the first that has been heard of (except a member in Congress) who has dared intimate the thought of a division of the New-England, from the southern States. Empty thought ! Have you any hopes in Rhode-Island ? in Vermont we can assure you none ; in New-Hampshire there is not even one federalist who would give it place in his breast a moment. Rather let Maine be separated and become a sister state of herself—"Her natural position" and Massachusetts left a small parallelogram on the map of the United States, and the name of the town of Boston be changed to a Nobility Hole for the few factious to remain in, as a monument of the emptiness and stupidity of a flagitious editor, and those who can countenance such an editor, and attempt, like a storm in a puddle, to stir up rebellion against our sacred union, and our auspicious government.

These prints have been constantly asserting, that the democrats, or republicans, are indebted to foreigners,

(called by them imported patriots, renegadoes, desperadoes and persons without property or talents) to compose the ranks of Jacobinism. Let us only look around us, to falsify the assertion. That printers, and editors of prints, with and without talents, both English and Irish, put out their newspapers through the union, is true, but that they are all Jacobins, and leave their own country from poverty, or to fly from justice is not true. They are more likely to be the best republicans ; if Mr. Emmet, or Mr. Arthur O'Connor had arrived in America from Ireland, and escaped the axe, for what they call patriotism, and our enlightened federalists call jacobinism ; could we refuse an asylum to such men of vast fortunes, envied talents, and professing the purest republicanism ; in other words, searching that liberty which is freedom from corruption and tyranny ! But how well founded is the fact ! Among ourselves we can scarcely point out a single foreigner, except the French, who is not a federalist. We have from the North of Britain, (where they cry "*Who wants me,*") to the south to attend the town meetings, and other meetings, clamouring like rooks and crows, that a native or townsman among us, till lately, could hardly be civilly heard. The reason is clear, that the federal party, then promoted and supported by the British, embarked all this description with them. British credit was found to be very effectual to get federal votes, and no doubt was so employed. Now that the British cultivate a neutral friendship with us, these persons become so far neutral that they can now do no harm, as they never did any good. Their exclusive claim to all the property and talents they are welcome to, (though that is not

a fact ;) I will not except a few commercial rich men in the union, who give this federal credit, the republicans will oppose, man to man, for property and talents ; and the slightest knowledge of the Union evinces it.

Innovations and profligacy are connected by grave characters, to keep up the corps d'esprit in their social toasts---The innovation is upon the common law !---What is the common law of New-England ? I have heard a leading federalist to a jury call it " that common law and law of nature, to which we are born not bred" ---it was impossible not to feel a coincidence in the justness and aptness of the sentiment ! What is the common law of England but a rule of construction here ? Have the United States made it more than admitting reasonable customs antecedent to our independence. The principles of law are the same in every portion of the civilized world, where ideas of commutative and distributive justice prevail. What analogy is there between English and American practice in our courts---then what but the New-England common law has place, namely the custom---and that is the English common law, the unwritten law, their customs---and one rule is, that their customs must be founded in reason, must be reasonable---would it not be contrary to all reason to apply their customs to the New-England practice, or grounds of decision where they vary so much. Nineteen twentieths of the rules of the common law or customs of England are cut down in America---their tenures, modes of descent---conveyance, feuds and dependencies from which spring the course of practice and the foundation of the common law are as unknown in America as Lord Coke's (or to speak more accurately-

ly Littleton's) et cetera's---that is to say not practised upon---or reasoned upon by analogies to the custom, principle or practice ! In the name of common sense what have we to do with them ? or why should the country be confused with such sentiments as innovation, on the common law ? words without meaning or application.

Now let us succinctly review the measures of the illustrious man and republican administration they calumniate as connected with our subject---in the fore ground stands the repeal of the judiciary---it has already been said that they had nothing to do that was one good reason for the repeal ; but let me ask if the addition of sixteen unnecessary judges with an addition of near 40,000 dollars per annum, was not alarming ; if so, the repeal was a necessary measure. Next the taxes are taken off that was to pay these very judges, standing armies, building navies, the whole tribe of officers that accompany these hopeful establishments---and here again let me ask, if one copper was taken off the beer, the common beverage of the people of England, what joy, bonfires, and illuminations would run through the country : they would be looking for political salvation and returning happiness. Reverse the scene as it is, they can barely live ; the richer sort of families lay down their carriages, and curtail their stile of living, their taxes are so enormous---that is, if a man has one hundred dollars per annum to live on, government takes fifty. Contrast this with America, where the taxes are swept away, together with the establishments and principles they were raised to support, and to carry into effect. Well may the British members exclaim " an

Englishman now has only to regret his not being born in America." Mr. Jefferson, who has been blamed for only being civil to the French nation, with whom they were in amity, and contributed to our independence, within a short four years, has raised his country to a pitch of glory unexampled and unparalleled in the history of nations ! This is their language; he has knocked down the base of corruption "taxes" by taking away the necessity for them. Instead of fifty thousand troops to be constantly drilled by Mr. Hamilton, to assert the dignity of America---that is, to assert "with no less tenderness, than elevation" his own dignity, over the liberties, and at the expense of the blood of Americans---this crusader for dignity (I am told he comes from Santa Cruz) is now in the back ground, left to contemplate what the real republican administration has achieved. The overflowing undivided praise of the wise statesman and politician in every nation. The daring attitude of a great free country, depending upon her constitutional force and resources, in lieu of hired drilled mercenaries to meet the most formidable attack that could be meditated on her independence--- Those New-Englanders, that General Burgoyne said would fight like tygers, and dispute every inch of their native clod. It is liberty that inspires this sensation ! what can the soldier under a monarchy, fighting for the glory of his master, know of the spirit and fire of a son of liberty, fighting for himself and his country, where he knows none superior, where he is the monarch and the master, and obedient only to the common voice of his country ?

And here let me pause ; and recal to your minds the blood stained fields, bathed with the ruddy gore of our brethren, the heroes who fell and suffered in the immortal cause, the unnatural contest of a cruel mother, and her infant offspring, to strangle us in our struggle for liberty ! Great God ! can it be possible, that I should see amongst us one unfeeling American, whose heart is not touched with this lively and lamentable recollection---the martyred streams freshening and crimsoning our native plains---the fond mother bedewing with tears the corpse of her manly, youthful son, trucidated by an unnatural barbarous enemy, expiring and falling for her protection, to save her who pressed him, a lovely babe, to her maternal bosom---The aged sire whose grey hairs subjected him only to insolence and brutality, instead of veneration and respect, borne down and broken hearted to lose the stay and prop of his remaining life---The tender endearments of the most beloved in life, separated ; the social duties of neighbor and friend broken up ; the savage tomahawk let loose upon us ; those savages that an English peer to the eternal disgrace of his name, said " God and nature had put into their hands to subdue rebels." These were the horrors of the American war and the instances familiar to us---Let the generation amongst us just rising into life, be taught to reflect upon these sections of our history whilst now they have the opportunity of seeing, feeling and realising the awful mementos in every part of the union, instead of political dictionaries composed for them, to rear them in faction and treason---Let them ascertain and appreciate the awful period of the war. What compensation this side Heaven can satisfy the

blood and treasure lost, and trials sustained in that perilous critical period ? What compensation, I had nearly said, but our American liberty, have we for our towns blazing under the cannon's roar---distressed families chased from their natural homes to seek the hospitality of our neighboring towns---our war-worn soldiers contesting the severities of the northern cold, with naked, sometimes half frozen feet, marching thro' depths of winter's snow, and the dark impenetrable forest. Americans ! Americans ! where has been your feeling ! What torpid sense has now benumbed your noble souls ! have these men fully experienced the full protection of our late government---No ! They have on the contrary been marked for British or federal vengeance. The federal cockade has been the signal for English retribution. Brave veteran Americans on shore---and on the waves, a Decatur, for matchless heroism, stands now the boast of his country, who has already reaped the reward of his valor, through an administration ever alive to the just claims of their meritorious brethren !

Next let us consider the recent accession of Louisiana---and here indeed I find the inadequacy to my duty this day, whether most to admire the consummate ability of the negociation, the master stroke of policy in the achievement, or the incalculable riches and resources of this great territory ; effected at the period exactly when, if ever, the French nation could have been dangerous to us as a neighbor---with a great politic statesman and imperial hero at the head of his conquering armies---at a period that gave America the happy opportunity to check the proud domination of the English over the seas---boldly to reclaim our impressed seamen,

and challenge our maritime rights,* enabled us to destroy that foreign pestilential influence over the councils and interests of America---and to make friends of those who were our secret yet known enemies. But above all praise the negociation that spared the blood of our fellow citizens, and saved millions upon millions of the hard earned fruits of our industry and labour---That negociation for a territory which promises resources commercial and agricultural beyond the ability of any other nation ever known or read of---a circumstance alone that must unite and bind the union by the strongest ties of mutual interest, and interchange of the various products of the clime, and commodities for sale. Ranging over the greatest portion of the western hemisphere, under a mild tho' efficient government, unknown to the inhabitants of the old world---inviting them to participate of our blessings the fruits of freedom, and the just administration of our political and civil affairs. What reason have we to adore the supreme author of all goodness for this interposition of his kind providence---dispelling the temporary gloom that hung over us like a fullen cloud ; that has brought forth salvation to his chosen people in America---to bless us with rulers of our own choosing, and filling them with wisdom and virtue---that he has reserved for us so good and great a man as JEFFERSON, to follow so good so great a man as WASHINGTON---uniting the profound powers of the philosopher with the skill and ability of an acute statesman, unrivalled in all the excellencies of classical and moral erudition--his heart filled, supported and animated by the greatest virtues---magnanimity, constan-

* Through Mr. Forbes the American Consul at Hamburgh.

ty of mind, serenity, temperance and benevolence, the features of this our revered patriot our American republican ; if ever the great man, the “ omnis homo ” of the ancients was conceived in its true spirit, I should select THOMAS JEFFERSON for that man. The Man of the People. Heaven preserve to the people his inestimable life, pour on him her choicest blessings, and the greatest of all sublunary blessings, the full fruition of a great mind contemplating the love of a grateful country. Oh for the pen of Sallust to chastise his enemies and swell his praise ---a Hume or Robertson to record with faithfulnets in the luminous page of American history, what I now so faintly offer. Therefore, with sentiments of exalted patriotism, let us all endeavour to imitate a WASHINGTON and JEFFERSON, as the models of the Americans to dwell upon in all their imitable perfections---the great lessons they inculcate to preserve and cherish ; like WASHINGTON---to frown indignantly on the wicked and audacious man who advises to sever us from our beloved union. Let us cultivate our minds and employ our talents, in the measure God has been pleased to bestow upon us in a life of public and private utility. Let those who have drank more deeply of the spring of science strive to excel in a practical, as well as philosophical display of her general principles---to embellish and adorn society with benevolence, which is true politeness ---to discard unworthy thoughts of each other, which generate ill breeding and moroseness---to leave the jarring voices of the factious to themselves---and our political differences to those heads to adjust, to whom we have committed our great interests to preserve our political virtue as the polar star of direction to political hap-

piness---above all to follow the precepts of our holy religion, of which the foundations are too firmly laid by its divine founder to be shaken of vain, frail, sceptical man. Then may we hope to lull the voice of party that has raged in and disgraced our New-England country---soften the asperities of the disappointed and aspiring---insure to ourselves the administration of justice in our courts, unbiassed by the deadly feud--feel a warmth of common charity and good neighborhood---in a reciprocity of kindness and good offices to one another---banish all animosities---bind up all wounds---forgive as we expect to be forgiven. These are branches of political virtue---“*Menses profundo pulchior evenit,*” we shall then rise more beautiful from the lowness and depths of faction, party, and passionate bickerings; and by teaching the doctrine, and practising the principles of public virtue, we shall raise our country to her true ascendant---offer the proudest example on earth of a country proud of her political standing---a great nation of happy freemen---when the sentiments and intolerance of aristocrats will become as unfashionable as they are unpalatable to the taste of an American. These are the principles of American liberty, of American Republicanism, the theme and subject of the hour.

What congratulations may I not offer you on the return of those principles to New-Hampshire, that was always predicted need only to be understood; When federalism, “like a harpy, would take wing and fly away”---I congratulate you that from the highest authority, those are Washingtonian principles; and that the federalists begin to understand their own principles. Let us now invite them to a nearer approach to us, and the

next point we shall all arrive at, will be American principles, Washingtonian or Jeffersonian, or any other great name or factitious importance they may please to attach to them.

Thus have I with alacrity, though with haste, obeyed your summons (this flattering mark of your kind partiality.) I have not taken the time to perfectionate a studied composition: with the candid it will excuse me. I have endeavored to avoid a frothy declamation, thinking more plainly to point out the practical benefits arising from our republican government---that experience has evinced and must subdue the most obdurate to the opinion, that republicanism is not only the best possible, but the best practical, of all governments. I could easily show that the analogy between the ancient democracies, and our own improved American republican representation does not hold; with sensible and learned men I should only be thought ostentatious, to prove what is so universally admitted. Few among us can be candidates for the highest offices, because so few are capable of administering them. Rivalship will always exist to a degree in an elective government---it is the evil attendant upon all human institutions; and indeed for that reason government itself is said to be a necessary evil. The only point is, what is the best government: and, it would be wasting time to raise a doubt in America that republicanism is the fittest in all its considerations for the state of man. Then as governors and governed, as parents and heads of families, as neighbors, brethren and friends, let us all firmly unite in the support of our republican institutions; in hastening towards the closest union with our sister

states, to cling with the most affectionate ardour and gratitude to our beloved President ; whose life and labours have been so instrumental, and are now devoted to promote the greatness and glory of America---to chase from us the demon, who, with damned envious look repines at our happiness, and would divide us to lessen it---to regard with tendernefs and allowances such men, whose sentiments are anti republican, and who have been born and bred in the corruptions of monarchy, protect them without allowing them to share in any offices of power ! remembering that it is chiefly through their instrumentality so much misfortune was brought upon us as to divide as into parties !---to view with jealousy any lurking plan of seducing us from our rulers as springing from the same source ! and tending to alienate our national partiality for the union.

With these guards, and with an honest, well directed zeal in the preservation of our political virtue ; it discovers little share of penetration to foresee and foretell, that as individuals of the vast mass of the aggregate of the nation ; and as a nation itself, the American people have the most felicitous prospect, with which the Almighty has ever favored the race of man ; and I now close with the solemn prayer and latest wish, this side the grave, that the rights, liberties, and independence of my country may be perpetual under the **AUSPICES OF REPUBLICANISM.**