

AN
ORATION,
IN COMMEMORATION
OF THE
ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

DELIVERED IN BOSTON,

JULY 4th, 1809,

AT THE REQUEST OF

THE BUNKER-HILL ASSOCIATION.

BY WILLIAM CHARLES WHITE, ESQ.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AN INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS,

BY DAVID EVERETT, ESQ.

..... Forever
Shall this bless'd day be kept a festival !
To solemnize this day, the glorious sun
Stays in his course, and plays the alchemist ;
Turning with splendour of his precious eye,
The meagre clodding earth to glittering gold.

STANFORD.

BOSTON :
J. BELCHER, PRINTER.
1809.

BOSTON, JULY 4, 1809.

AT a Meeting of THE BUNKER-HILL ASSOCIATION—
Voted, That Mr. JOHN KUHNS, Maj. JOHN BRAZER, and Capt. SAMUEL
HEWES, be a Committee to wait on WILLIAM C. WHITE, Esq. and
thank him for the truly patriotic Oration delivered this day at their re-
quest, and ask a copy for the press.

Voted, That the same Committee wait on DAVID EVERETT, Esq.
and thank him for the Address delivered by him this day, and request a
copy for the press.

Attest—

BENJ. HOMANS, Sec'ry.

BOSTON, JULY 5, 1809.

Gentlemen,

WHILE I comply with your flattering request, I cannot but re-
gret the unusually short notice at which my Oration was prepared.

I am, gentlemen,

Your obliged fellow-citizen,

W. C. WHITE.

To the Committee.

ORATION.

MAY the glory of this memorable day never be extinguished. May the fulness and vivacity of its joys dissipate the sullenness of party, and drown the hollow and repining voice of faction; may it ever be an awful monitor to tyrants, and the delightful remembrancer of freemen; and may the period arrive when it shall be consecrated as the grand jubilee of an emancipated world.

The precepts of morality and religion enjoin it upon us to forgive, if possible, the wrongs of our old oppressor; but we should be treacherous to ourselves and to posterity if we suffered them ever to escape from our remembrance. We ought not, however, to cherish their recollection for the inglorious purpose of national antipathy, but for the sublime view of inspiring our children with a veneration for that liberty which was purchased with the toils, and battles, and blood of their fathers.

You need not, in imitation of Amilcar, take your children to the altar, and make them swear eternal hatred to Britain; but you may nevertheless be per-

mitted to tell them a simple and affecting story, which will touch every chord of their little hearts, and make them vibrate with conflicting emotions, when they perceive the forbearance, the magnanimity, the philosophy, and the heroism of their ancestors, obtaining a gradual and glorious triumph, over the rashness, the insolence, and the cruelty of Britain.

In the recital of this interesting and instructive story, you need not be apprehensive of swelling into rhetorical exaggeration, or of gliding into poetic fancy—No.—On this great subject the wings of FANCY are not swift enough to overtake TRUTH, but TRUTH has, for once, made FANCY ashamed of her tardiness.

Tell them, then, of that venal and profligate parliament, which strove to degrade us to the base condition of tributary vassalage. Tell them of the meekness, of the forbearance, with which these outrages were endured. Describe to them, if you can, a persecuted and insulted people, bending in a humble and suppliant posture, before the throne of a haughty and unfeeling monarch, who only laughed at their prayers, and mocked at their distresses. Exhibit, then, to their already affrighted fancies, the rapid and long succession of illustrious crimes, which pollute while they swell the hated annals of a tyrant !

Having thus excited the virtuous indignation of your little auditors, by a recital of the abuses of the throne, you may now address yourselves

to their pride and their gratitude, by presenting them with the animating picture of American triumph! You may now shew them the alienated and mortified, but impenitent monarch reluctantly acknowledging that **INDEPENDENCE**, which it is our happiness, this day, to commemorate!

Our governments, which were the happy consequences of this interesting revolution, are erected on the deepest and most substantial foundations; and will, we hope, eternally remain the proud and splendid monuments of the dignity of human nature.

Almost all other governments sprang from fraud and usurpation, and therefore exhibit little else than a mean and miserable system of artifices calculated to enslave the popular mind, and to make one great bridge of the necks of the multitude for tyrants to ride over.

In the midst of an abused and deluded nation, and on a high and imposing pedestal, a pageant is exposed, fantastically tricked out in all the dazzling drapery of a royal puppet, and called by the mystical and magical name of **KING**. Before this glittering image, thus set up for popular adoration, like the golden statue of Nebuchadnezzar, the people are told to prostrate themselves and worship. The high priest of despotism who officiates at the altar proclaims to the gaping and deluded populace that this idol of purple and of diamonds can do no wrong, nay, cannot think wrong, but that he is in all things absolute perfection. The multitude are made dizzy by the fascinations of the gaudy spectacle, they grow

wild with the witchery of its enchantment, and, raising their arms to heaven, swear to it eternal fealty. Then follow the shouts of maddened millions, who rend the air with acclamations of **GOD SAVE THE KING !!!**

Such is the ignorant mummerly attendant on regal governments ; but this is indeed among the most innocent of its follies. And would to heaven that such governments were chargeable only with follies : But they have their vices, they have crimes of the most deadly shade, which blacken the page of history, and furnish a mortifying and dreadful proof of that awful climax of wickedness to which vice, when united with power, is capable of attaining.

It is impossible to peruse the history of monarchies without wondering at the patience or stupidity, with which the people have endured the most monstrous impositions, and flagitious cruelties. If, however, we trace this political phenomenon to its cause, we shall find that it has its origin in that vacuity or obliquity of the intellect which the policy of tyrants has made the perpetual inheritance of slaves. Intelligence is the destroying angel of despotism. Despotism, therefore, in being the foe of intelligence, acts only in defence of itself.

Alas ! what horror fills the mind at the recollection of those political abuses by which poor human nature has been borne down to the very earth. Who can reflect with a tame and equal temper on the thousand accursed inventions to debase and torture man—man, whom the Divinity has fashioned after

his own great image. Bastiles have been erected to shut him from the light and air of heaven—and inquisitions have been instituted for the vile purpose of placing an impious guard over his conscience and his understanding.

Bending beneath the weight of this accumulated and all subduing tyranny, man exhibited a lamentable and repulsive picture of human misery and degradation. By habitual slavery, he had become unconscious of that exalted rank in the creation to which nature had given him a proud and hallowed title. The feet of Kings having so frequently trampled him in the dust, it is no wonder if he thought he was born for no other purpose than to give impulse to their contempt; and popish arrogance having claimed the empire of his mind, and having long waved over it the gloomy and terrific sceptre of superstition, it is indeed no wonder if he had not the audacity to think without a license from his confessor.

Such has been the condition of poor, insulted, degraded and persecuted man. Nature had no charms for him;—it only reminded him of his wretchedness. The deer that bounded along the mountains, and the eagle that winged his ambitious flight to the sun, served but to force upon his attention the mortifying and distressing contrast between their liberty and his own vile bondage. He saw not heaven in his prayers, nor comfort in his penitence. A hooded and cassocked monk was the austere and gloomy idol before whom he bowed and worshipped;

and his own blood, streaming from self inflicted wounds, was the awful signal of his repentance.

But let us hurry from this disgusting spectacle of human debasement ; and view man in that attitude of all attractive dignity in which he appears under the wisest and happiest of governments.

It is the pride and boast of Americans, that they live under constitutions and forms of government founded on the broad and stupendous bases of natural justice and political philosophy. The essential and ultimate sovereignty of the states and of the nation, resides, therefore, in the people, who are either directly or indirectly the disposers of their authorities ; and whose *will*, therefore, is but another name for those laws by which they are governed. If, on the one hand, these laws be tyrannical, the people must blame themselves ; for they are virtually and substantially of their own enacting. If, on the other hand, they are wise and humane, the people may, with propriety, take all the glory to themselves.

We are no less distinguished for our religious than for our civil freedom. The sanctuary of conscience is unprofaned. And as a belief in God and a future state, constitutes the foundation of every religion ; so every citizen, who has this foundation, may erect upon it what superstructure he pleases. With the Hebrew, he may worship in the synagogue, and anticipate in fond imagination the coming of his long looked for Messiah ; or, with the deist, he may explore the immense volume of creation, and “look through nature up to nature’s God.” With the qua-

ker, meek and unostentatious, he may sit in mute but solemn reverence, and contemplate in silence the God whom he adores ; or, with the fervid and impassioned catholic, he may kneel at the altar, and chaunt "*Te Deum*" before the crucifix.

Such is the happy, and splendid, and glorious condition of Americans. It is the proud acquirement of superior virtue, and is an acquisition which can never be lost till stupidity and vice seize the empire of the republic.

It is the rage of party and of avarice which alone threaten the destruction of American liberty.

Party is scarcely any thing but an ignorant, illiberal, and furious zeal about trifles. Yet to accomplish its little and insignificant purposes, there is no expedient, however dreadful or desperate, that it will not seize upon. A red rose and a white one may excite it to a madness, which the blood of a whole nation will hardly appease. It looks at every thing through the bedizzened and deceptive medium of prejudice. It palliates the enormities of vice, or exaggerates the failings of virtue, as best accords with its own selfish and guilty purposes.

By its magic power of metamorphosis, it can transform a demagogue into a patriot, or a patriot into a demagogue ; a philosopher into a fool, or a fool into a philosopher, as best suits the humour of its madness. To-day, it makes a passive and unresisting obedience to government the infallible criterion of patriotism ; to-morrow, it reverses its system of politics, and hurls, with remorseless hand, the arrows of

persecution against every one who does not fly to the standard of rebellion. It is a fiend of accursed malignity which fixes its baleful glances on social and domestic joys, and like Beelzebub, first seduces their innocence, and then triumphs in their destruction.

Avarice is also another formidable foe to virtuous liberty.—The peculiar characteristics of this vice are stupidity and meanness. The avaricious man loves nothing but money, and money he will have, how detestable soever may be the means of its attainment. He can tread with heavy and sluggish step over the consecrated ground of genius, without putting off his shoes, in imitation of Joshua, and without feeling any troublesome sensation of reverence or of awe; and he can vacantly stare and gape at the monuments, which rise in proud magnificence around him, with no other wish than that the money which they cost were securely in his pocket. He will sit down to his sordid arithmetic, and calculate, with most ingenious precision, how many dollars, cents and mills, reputation is worth, and what it ought to sell for to the pillory or the whipping-post. And he will speculate, and speculate, and speculate, till he has speculated himself into the fathomless abyss of infamy.

Put such a man in golden chains, and he will dance in them. Give him but a golden prison, and he will gladly be your captive for life. Only let your shoes be of gold, and he will eagerly embrace your feet, though they should spurn him.

To talk with such a man on patriotism and the love of country, would be like delivering a philo-

sophic lecture on the theory of colours to a man born blind. Ask such a man which he should prefer, peace or war, honour or disgrace, slavery or freedom, colonial submission or national independence, and he could not answer you without first consulting his arithmetic or his price current. These are the grave and infallible oracles to which he fondly and credulously appeals for a prophetic solution of all his doubts. It is from them that he has learned his politics and his taste, his ethics and his religion.

Thus much for these two vices so inimical to our republic, the spirit of party, and the spirit of avarice.

But it would be unbecoming this joyful and splendid anniversary to brood over those gloomy and sickly causes which may one day retard the prosperity, or accelerate the decline of our freedom. Let us rather indulge the proud and sublime confidence that heaven has decreed that our liberties shall be immortal. The mere belief of their immortality may preserve them from, at least, a premature dissolution. So long as we possess the genuine spirit of freemen, so long may we challenge the united power of kings and of conquerors.

What though the Gallic legions, headed by their terrible Napoleon, should attempt to invade us, we would, with one voice, bid defiance to them, and, in the animated tones of the gallant Hotspur, exclaim,

“Then let them come
 And, to the fire-eyed maid of smoky war,
 All hot and bleeding will we offer them.
 The mailed MARS shall on his altar sit,
 Up to the ears in blood.”

What, though Britain should become mad again, and again attempt to enslave us ;—Suppose her fleets should hurl their thunders at our cities, and her armies should again rush into the bosom of our country—Suppose again the hellish works of rapine and lust, of conflagration and murder ! Suppose the worst that the most terrific fancy can present to a half-distracted mind—Suppose the decisive blow given, and the insolent and cruel foe about to raise the shout of victory—Suppose the preparation of a dreadful pageant, destined to lead yourselves, your wives, and your children in the triumphal procession of the conqueror—Suppose the chains and the cords prepared that are to bind you forever—Suppose the whole vile complicated machinery of bondage before you—Ha ! your souls half sink within you—You look around you, and behold your wives and your children—Your wives and your children bend towards you as if to leap into your arms for protection—The divine spirit of your own Warren starts up before you—The holy blood of Bunker reddens on your fancies—A sublime emotion seizes you—You make resistance to the enemy—You rush into the thickest and hottest of the battle—And, in the tremendous language of triumphant patriotism, exclaim, **TAKE, TAKE OUR LIVES, YE BLOOD-HOUNDS, FOR WE SWEAR NEVER TO SURVIVE THE LIBERTIES OF OUR COUNTRY.**

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS,

BY DAVID EVERETT, ESQ.

THE Anniversary of our Independence, like the day of our nativity, can never be a subject of indifference with true-born Americans.

We shall either continue to celebrate it with festive rejoicings, so becoming a free and united people; or, like Job, bereft of every earthly blessing, exclaim in the anguish of our hearts, "*Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it.*"

We have recently seen the ship of state reeling beneath the weight of the tempest, scarcely able to keep its course; and to increase our alarm, mutiny prevailing, when nothing but united efforts would promise its safety.

By the pilot's skill, it has reached the destined port. In the land of peace, of plenty, and of freedom, we now meet to participate the pleasures and the pride of freemen.

While sullen treachery retires to its congenial gloom and broods over its disappointment in silent chagrin—while heedless opposition, of late clamorous and vindictive, lights up a forced smile from the tinder of its

consumed patriotism, and with harmless impudence demands credit for the abortive labour of folly ; let it suffice that the peace, the honour, the independence, and the union of our country, are preserved.

Let the history of the past be called to mind, not as the invidious voucher for the triumph of republican men ; but as proof of the wisdom and success of republican measures—Not to disgrace those who have been honest, even in opposition ; but as the epitome of that experience by which folly may correct its past errors, and become wise for the future.

It may not be impertinent to take notice of that malignant fiend—party spirit, which has gorged upon our ambition, our vices and our folly ; till, pampered to loathsome disease with its sickly food, it excites disgust, abhorrence, and contempt ; and promises, at worst, its reformation—at best its speedy dissolution.

On this and every other occasion, which brings us to the contemplation of the common interest and dangers of our country, the mind should be elevated above its own sordid passions. Whatever may be the difference of opinions, every fibre of the honest heart should vibrate to harmony of sentiment.

But for the sake of salutary admonition, I would not remind you of that rancor—that illiberal asperity, so unbecoming the manners of the gentleman, so incompatible with the dignity of the patriot, and the sanctity of the christian, that has so frequently disgraced even this anniversary—An anniversary intended to celebrate, and which will, I trust, in spite of the little contemptible organs of party rage, perpetuate the glory of America.

If our Reverend Doctors of Divinity deem it their duty to insult their auditors and defy their God, with the bitterness of their political rancor; let our laymen set a nobler example, when they ascend the sacred desk, and purge it of its pollution, by their purer precepts.

I have made these introductory remarks, not so much at the call of strict propriety, as of my friends and associates in this celebration, who wish on this, as well as every other occasion, to manifest the liberality of their views, as well as their firm adherence to the principles of our revolution, the support of our government, and our union.

In this brief intrusion on your patience I am confident I speak the sentiments of the *Bunker-Hill Association*—sentiments, which I hope will become extensive, and well founded, as the fame of yonder *sacred hill*, consecrated by the blood of our Warren, and his compeers in glory, to that Independence which we enjoy and now unite to celebrate, and to make *perpetual*.

After the exercises at the Meeting-house, the Bunker-hill Association, joined by a large number of Republicans from Boston and the adjacent towns, assembled at the New State-House, where the following procession was formed :

MILITARY.

Sergeant.

PRESIDENT OF THE DAY.

Sergeant.

CHAIRMAN

OF COM : OF ARRANGEMENTS.

Marshal.

COMMITTEE.

Marshal.

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT.

ORATOR AND CHAPLAIN.

A YOUTH

*Two
Soldiers.*

BEARING STANDARD OF UNITED STATES.

Two

A YOUTH

Soldiers.

BEARING CONSTITUTION OF U. STATES.

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT.

FIELD PIECE,

PRECEDED BY A SERGT. OF ARTILLERY

AND FOUR MATROSSES.

THIRD VICE PRESIDENT.

Marshal.

TWO FARMERS,

Marshal.

CARRYING CORN AND OIL.

PLOUGH.

Motto—" God Speed the Plough."

TWO BOYS,

CARRYING IMPLEMENTS OF HUSBANDRY.

Marshal.

FOURTH VICE-PRESIDENT.

Marshal.

PUBLIC OFFICERS.

SHIP

UNITED  STATES.

*Eight
Artillerymen.*

Full rigg'd, drawn by 13 white horses,
guns mounted :—

*Eight
Artillerymen.*

From this Ship several salutes were fired in the
course of the procession.

MILITARY.
Marshal. **FIFTH VICE-PRESIDENT.** *Marshal.*
A YOUTH,
 BEARING STANDARD OF MASSACHUSETTS.
A YOUTH,
 BEARING CONSTITUTION OF MASSACHUSETTS.
SIXTH VICE PRESIDENT.
A LOOM.
MECHANICS WITH BADGES.
MEMBERS OF THE
Marshal. **BUNKER'S HILL ASSOCIATION.** *Marshal.*
FIELD PIECE,
PRECEDED BY A SERGEANT OF ARTILLERY,
AND FOUR MATROSSES.
7th and 8th VICE PRESIDENTS.
MARSHAL.
MILITARY.

This procession, accompanied by a band of music, proceeded from the State-House, down Park-street, through Winter-street, Marlboro'-street, Cornhill, Market-square, Union-street, Middle-street, Prince-street, Charles River Bridge, Charlestown-square, to a festive bower, where about seven hundred citizens partook of a sumptuous repast.

This procession was the most attractive spectacle that has been witnessed in this town, since that which was formed in celebration of the adoption of the federal constitution. The streets through which it passed were crowded with spectators.

*“ You would have thought the very windows spake !
 So many greedy looks of young and old
 Through casements darted their desiring eyes.”*