

AN
ORATION,
DELIVERED ON THE
FOURTH OF JULY, 1812,
BEFORE THE
INHABITANTS OF MARBLEHEAD,
IN COMMEMORATION OF
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,

BY JACOB WILLARD, Esq.

*“How many ages hence,
“ Shall this, our lofty scene, be acted o’er,
“ In states unborn, and accents yet unknown!”*

SHAKESPEARE.

SALEM,
PUBLISHED BY WARWICK PALFRAY, JUNR.

1812.

JACOB WILLARD, Esq.

SIR,

THE Committee of Arrangements for the 4th of July, tender their thanks to you, (in behalf of themselves, and the Republicans of this town,) for the excellent Oration, delivered by you on that day, and request you would favor them with a copy of the same for publication.

In behalf of the Committee,

Respectfully, your humble servant,

Wm. STORY.

Marblehead, July 6, 1812.

To the COMMITTEE of ARRANGEMENTS for the Fourth of July.

GENTLEMEN,

In compliance with your wishes, (intimated through Wm. Story, Esq.) I surrender a Copy of the production requested—having no apprehensions that it will mislead or wound, though it should fail to improve or entertain.

With much consideration, Gentlemen,

I am your humble servant,

JACOB WILLARD.

Marblehead, July 6, 1812.

AN
ORATION.

MAN's earliest aspiration is for liberty. Her genial influences dilate the heart, expand the mind, and sublimate the spirit. The land, o'er which her banner waves triumphantly, may lay the surest claim to national felicity. To trace the nestlings of her infant genius, to mark her stern resolves against the lawless grasp of tyranny, to see her countenance indignantly opposed to power usurp'd, and to behold her potent arm hurl slavery's badges at the oppressor's throne, are objects worth the attention of the world, and meet to be review'd on this great day.

Let every uncongenial thought be here suppress'd: let chilling apathy's dull mood retire; and welcome every ardent sentiment, that Independence nourisheth. All-hallowed *Independence!* Thou, whose achievement hath exemplified a *death* and *resurrection*, the most glorious! A death of hated tyranny, of kingly power, of transatlantic rule: A resurrection, in this Western World, of all the beauteous theories of ancient Greece and Rome, well prun'd

of their excrescences and faults—a resurrection of the finest institutions, which have ever been incorporated with the multifarious lore of European politics. And these, when moulded by the nicest touches of Columbian genius, do constitute a sacred guaranty, to every citizen, of all the precious rights in freedom's catalogue—of all the blessings of a pure republic.

Does not the pulse in every patriot's veins, accelerated by so proud a view, beat high with joy? Does not the heart of every freeman swell with strong emotions of delight? Glows not the breast of every worthy son of Independence, with the consecrated fire of holy Patriotism—inducing the adoption of that noble sentiment—“'Tis glorious in one's country's cause to die;” so, by his death, such unappreciable blessings flow to future generations of mankind?

Two hundred years ago, our land was tenanted by rude, unletter'd savages; a race, but in a small degree remov'd from other grades of animal creation: The chase their livelihood, the trembling, blood-warm flesh their food, the bow and tomahawk their military arms. The finest specimen of architectural genius was an Indian wigwam. Society, both man and beast enjoyed alike: Alike, their government was nought but barbarous *force*.

Thrice, in this wild, unwelcome clime, a little colony was left, to be destroyed by men, and beasts, of prey! A fourth attempt was made, more happy

than the rest, and Jamestown rose upon Powhatan's banks. The remnant of a colony, diminished by the perils of the seas, o'ercome by hardship, wasted by disease, and almost sunk into despondency, soon after landed on the shores of Plymouth.

It can scarcely be conceived, that any thing could impel our forefathers, under such circumstances, to such an emigration, short of the most exalted sentiments of liberty. The nation, whence they came, enjoyed the reputation of possessing the finest government on earth. Still rottenness was in the heart of their constitution. Our fathers saw and felt it. The church and state establishments were their abhorrence. They fled the persecution, which they had not the pow'r to resist. They bravely encountered the dangers, which they could not avoid. They risk'd their *all*, in pursuit of those rights, which, in their native country, they could not enjoy.

We can more adequately conceive, than we can possibly describe, the hardship that attended the first settlement of our country. Perhaps the spirit of enterprize, which so strikingly characterizes the American people, may, in no small degree, be of hereditary transmission. From the indignation of our ancestors against tyranny, their fortitude in danger, their patience of fatigue and inevitable suffering, and their intrepidity in confronting the enemies of the wilderness, it may not be chimerical to suppose, the strongest lineaments of our national character

are derived. Of this inheritance, each citizen must feel a juster pride, than if nobility had marked his pedigree, e'er since the general deluge.

The rapidity with which the American settlements increased, the astonishing growth of the colonies, will bear honorable testimony to the achievements of courage and perseverance. Though agriculture was the source, whence the emigrants first derived their subsistence, the mechanic arts did not long remain neglected. And having imbibed much of the spirit of that nation, "Whose march is on the mountain wave," they were early actuated by a thirst for commercial enterprize. They had not toil'd eleven summers on New-England's soil, before they launched a vessel, called "The Blessing of the Bay;" and this their first and infant effort, as tho' portentous of a future commercial and independent nation, was launched on this auspicious day, the Fourth day of July.

Contemplate now, Fellow-Citizens, our population, increased beyond seven millions of inhabitants; our agricultural resources, yielding an abundance to the wants of this extensive population; and our commerce floating to every region, penetrating every sea, and visiting every foreign market, and behold a prodigy of national growth, prosperity, and blessing!

But, by what means has this astonishing growth of the American people obtained? Our infant settlements were left, like uncultured plants, to shoot

up in luxuriant wildness. Industry, frugality, and enterprize, were individual, as well as national virtues, and legible in every countenance. The powers, both of body and mind, were left to the most unlimited expansion; and nature seems here to have made an experiment of her most unembarrassed operation. Thus health, the parent of population, industry, the mother of wealth, frugality, the nurse of all the virtues, and enterprize, the origin of national prosperity, seem to have had a concurrent and simultaneous agency, in raising the glory of this western hemisphere.

The concern of Great-Britain for her colonies extended only to the monopoly of their commerce, and the creation and supply of factitious wants, with articles of foreign luxury, until her pressing exigencies required their military aid, and pecuniary assistance. Still all her drafts, most cheerfully they met. Nor was it until the British Parliament, wherein the colonies had no representation, most unjustly attempted to rivet on them an arbitrary system of taxation, that any disloyalty was discovered or generated. When the odious stamp act received the royal assent, and was promulgated in America, ten years before the independence, the colonies immediately took alarm: They each chose delegates—who convened, and with spirit remonstrated. The offensive law was repealed.

As every relaxation of assumed authority renders it the more impotent, while it confirms a half-deter-

mined resistance ; so this parliamentary assumption, founded, on experiment, to be untenable, and ultimately yielded to colonial remonstrance, weakened the authority of the mother country, rendered her an object of suspicion with the colonies, and strengthened their confidence, and desire of self controul. A crisis was fast approaching, when these sentiments, and this spirit, were to be developed, in a degree, alarming to Great-Britain, astonishing to the world, and hardly contemplated by the actors in the drama.

The British nation, at this time, although exulting in her splendid conquests in the Indies, had exhausted her finances, incurred a debt of one hundred and fifty millions sterling, and had nothing but bankruptcy in prospect. An adventurous, unfeeling, and corrupt ministry were determined to raise the fortunes and prerogative of the crown, on the prostrated rights of the people ; and a venal parliament opposed no barrier to their execrable designs. Hence originated another attempt, by the indirect mode of imposing duties on sundry articles of necessary use and consumption, to tax the yet unrepresented colonies. The exalted sentiments of the votaries of freedom resented this insidious usurpation, as equally insulting their understanding, and infringing their rights. The fatal pertinacity of the ministry, in adhering to this odious system, and the measures resorted to for its accomplishment, produced the horrid tissue of crime, so justly described, in that

ever memorable Manifesto, the Declaration of American Independence.

It was not agreeable to the economy of nature, that a world in the west should be subject to an Island in the east; and the hand of British tyranny, by pointing the musket at the American breast, and demanding "her money or her life," most impressively instructed her in the important secret. You need not, Fellow-Citizens, be told, for all of you have heard, many of you experienced, and none of you forgotten, the scenes of outrage, abuse, and violence, that broke the charm of colonial dependence. The voice of Patriotism burst across the Atlantic; proclaimed, to the Eastern world, America's injuries, and America's rights; and ascended to Heaven, in solemn appeal, for the rectitude of her intentions, and in supplication for an auspicious issue to her glorious enterprise. Freedom, Sovereignty, and Independence, on this day, were declared to be the rights of these Confederate States: Their venerable functionaries subscribed the immortal declaration, and pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor, for its support.

A long and trying contest—an eight-years war, discovered a degree of intrepidity, perseverance, and military ardor, which was no less astonishing to our opponents, than to the world, and which covered the heroes of our revolution with unfading laurels. In more than twelve pitched battles, did American valor contend with British arms, till victory declar-

ed itself on the side of justice, and defeat decided the fate of despotism.

The tortures of our brethren, who suffered martyrdom aboard the British prison ships—the streaming blood, the mangled bodies, of our slaughtered citizens—the blaze ascending from our towns in conflagration—the scalped victim, and the Indian sacrifice—the wasted fields, and desolated cities—the general wretchedness and suffering of our land, when made the theatre of war, betwixt Liberty and Tyranny, in contesting their Empire—These, indeed, are scenes of awful interest, too deeply engraven in every patriot's breast, to need delineation. Yes—*there* exists a lively recollection of this eventful period: *There* swells a noble gratitude to those great men, whom those great scenes produced. Illustrious heroes! You, by whom political Salvation was achieved! No words can tell your worth, no tongue do justice to your memory. Your names shall shine, with lustre, in the calendar of fame, and, with a talismanic pow'r, impel to every noble deed.

To us, Fellow-Citizens, remains an inheritance of incalculable value: A country of vast extent and resources, exhibiting here, a flourishing city, abounding in wealth, enlivened by commerce, and furnishing the necessary articles of importation to an extensive interior;—there, an example of agricultural industry, subjecting the earth to her annual tribute, for the supply of articles of the first necessity. Here, a people extracting a treasure from the deep, which brings them ease and plenty; and there, an infant manufactory, which promises a sure reward to la-

bor and invention:—An inheritance, comprising man's greatest blessing, a nation's highest glory, heaven-born Freedom; secured by institutions, liberal as wife, and wise as good:—A Constitution, of admirable structure, deserving well the high encomium, of being denominated worthy the great characters, by whom it was produced.

Our frame of Government differs from any, ever before constructed. The judicious balance, division, and distinction, of power and prerogative, in the Legislative, Judicial, and Executive, departments of our Government, give it a vast superiority over all the ancient Republics, and destroy all ground of comparison. Hence, no arguments can be drawn from their downfall, against our permanency. Yet, many assume thus to argue, and affect thus to believe. It is not difficult, says an author, deeply skilled in the science of human nature, for men to persuade themselves to believe, what they strongly desire; and nothing can be more true, than that what men believe, and desire, they are prone to utter. Let us then beware of characters of this description, who give more evidence of disaffection, than of attachment, to our republican institutions.

No government under heaven has long existed, without interruption. Are any prepared to say, that none can be devised, which shall be permanent? Ours possibly may be the only, and the favored one. A government founded on intelligence, must surely be presumed the best adapted for intelligent beings. It is not impossible, that the

nations of the world, at some future period of time, in the complexion of their government, may be assimilated to ours, and form one grand confederation. Then would the utmost sublimity of conception be exemplified, in the universal empire of reason.

The man, who indulges in himself, and attempts to excite in others, a disposition to criminate our national rulers, for the embarrassment attending our foreign relations; and, calling to his aid the temporary pressure thence resulting, endeavors to sow the seeds of disaffection and discontent, in the public breast, possesses either a *weak mind*, or a *wicked heart*. Compared with any nation in the civilized world, ours is a paradise. England, at war with almost all the world, while famine, insurrection, violence, and bankruptcy, cause hourly apprehension: Despotic France, cinctured with chains of military force—conscription, war, and slavery, her only heritage: Spain, made the wretched theatre, where these most deadly foes do give each other battle, and doomed, most probably, to struggle in a war of fell extermination: Russia, and Turkey too, in arms, under the auspices, and to support the claims, of tyranny and superstition: The states of Germany and Holland, fated to vassalage, mere satellites to the huge Gallic Empire: South America, subject alike to the horrible convulsions of nature, and of civil government! This is the dreadful prospect, that presents itself to our view from abroad. Compared herewith, is not our country happy?

In the abundance of our supplies, in the protection of our persons, in the controul of our property, and

in the enjoyment of our liberty, what cause have we to repine? Grateful for such blessings, let us be emulous to deserve them. Admonished by this view of foreign calamities, let us strive to avoid them. Conscious of our rights, and wedded to our liberties, let us determine to support them.

Though comparatively happy, it is believed, we are not so in the greatest attainable degree. In the collisions of the nations at war, our rights have been partially involved; whenever they have been involved, they have been disregarded, sacrificed. Assumptions of maritime dominion, totally at variance with the established laws of nations, and wholly inadmissible by a nation claiming the dignified attitude of neutrality and independence; a course of injury and insult, resulting from such assumptions, to the American people, which unresisted, unrepented, or unredressed, would argue a total destitution of national sensibility and honor, we have recently been called to witness, on the part of France and Great-Britain. From France, we entertain a hope, excited by the late diplomatic disclosures, of receiving indemnity for the past, and security for the future.

From England, hope is extinct. We have, for years, experienced from her a series of depredations on our commerce, abuse of our national flag, and nautical incarcerations, which have wrought up the minds of our citizens, to the acme of feeling. By sending detachments of her navy, which we find hovering on our coasts, cruising in our harbors, assaulting our national ships, and murdering our seamen; by sending Plenipotentiaries, one to demand

concessions from our Government, an abandonment of our municipal regulations ; another to wheedle and deceive, while the blackest perfidy lurked behind his mission ; and another, reeking from the atrocities at Denmark, to offer direct abuse and affront to our rulers ; by sending an authorized Spy, to seduce our citizens to co-operate in a project for the “ dismemberment of our Union,” “ a Northern confederacy,” and a recolonization of New-England ; the successful issue of whose mission would inevitably have been attended with the reign of terror, treason, and all the horrors of civil war ;—by these, and many untold enormities, the British government have excited, in the breasts of this peaceable and long-suffering people, a determination to avenge their wrongs, retrieve their honor, assert their rights, and claim adequate and immediate indemnity for all their injuries. Every effort for conciliation has been exhausted, and the fatal obstinacy of the British cabinet, equally deaf to the demands of justice, the interest and happiness of their own subjects, and the remonstrances of an injured, yet unoffending nation, render an appeal to arms our only means of redress.

In history shall it be told, that once our patriotic fires, with less than half our wealth and population, hardly anticipating, and wholly unprepared for war, with Britain’s sovereignty acknowledged, firmly resisted her attempts to tax them, though thereby compelled to struggle with that potent nation, many years, in arms ; and, Citizens, that we can calmly witness thousands of our countrymen, to whom the

Government are pledged for their protection, torn from their country and their kindred, and thrown into a floating Lion's Den! Our merchants plundered of their property upon the ocean, unless protected, and disgraced, by paying tribute; our dearest rights infringed and trampled on!

Let those, who covet but a moiety of Freedom; let those, who are content to be mere gleaners in the great commercial field, who ne'er aspir'd to proud equality, but take, like duteous children, what their mistress leaves or licenses; let those, who, "in the times that tried men's souls," preferred royal protection, favor, and reward, to honorable peril; and such as now deem fordid wealth of more intrinsic value than our liberties, and spiritless submission more congenial to their souls, than vigorous resistance; who too can rest composed, while all our rights successively shall suffer amputation, till the body politic, bleeding at every vein, at length shall yield, from sheer debility;—let those, who, in this portrait, view a fair delineation of their characters, (and Heaven grant their number may be small,) let such, and such *alone*, refuse their aid in Freedom's glorious cause.

But those, who hold the liberty of every citizen dear as their own, who are determined to enjoy at least a right in common on the seas, who rather spill their blood than pay a tribute, who in deposit hold the rights of their posterity, and feel a deep responsibility to future ages for their conduct,—let such arise, obey their country's call, and in the majesty of arms, again proclaim, again assert, the sov'

reignty of our States. Let some of the hallowed arms of the Revolution be turned against those, whom they are accustomed to conquer. Let experienced valor take the Field, and teach our modern Soldiery, the important skill of victory. The martial spirit of our country is much aroused. Say, Soldier, would you not prefer to die in freedom's cause, the thanks and honors of your country for your shroud, than be dismantled of your war habiliments, and see her rights abused, her sons imprisoned, and her character disgraced ?

Say, Citizens, are any of you ready to acknowledge the patriotic spirit of your fathers flown to Heaven, and not a remnant of their mantle dropp'd on you ! Say, rather, have you not invoked " a double portion " of that vivid patriotism, which erst did constitute the " flaming chariot," wherein many of the fainted heroes were translated to the realms of endless glory. A solemn appeal again is made—to arms—to Heaven ! By the supreme authority of our nation, war is declared ; and every true American will rally round the standard of his country, anxious again to teach our enemy, that a joint effort of freemen can achieve, whatever a sense of justice constrains them to demand. Be exhorted, Fellow-Citizens, to dismiss every ignoble sentiment resulting from party prejudice ; then will your unanimity constitute an impregnable fortress, and your combined energies render our Union the inviolable sanctuary of Liberty.