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Hon. JOSIAH QUINCY'S
ORATION.

JULY 4. 1826



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AN
ORATION,
DELIVERED
ON TUESDAY, THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1826,
IT BEING THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY
OF
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,

BEFORE THE
SUPREME EXECUTIVE OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

AND THE
CITY COUNCIL AND INHABITANTS

OF THE
City of Boston.

BY **JOSIAH QUINCY,**
Mayor of the City.

Delivered at the request, and printed by order
of the City Council.

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1826.

ORATION.

On the fiftieth anniversary of the Independence of our country,—on the great day of our fathers' glory,—we assemble to speak concerning their virtues; and to tell of labours and sacrifices, by which they gave existence to our nation.

More than half the term, allotted, in the ordinary course of Providence, to the longest human life, has elapsed since that event. Those, whose age, or experience, guide the affairs of the present time, were then children, or youths; witnesses, without being partakers of that struggle. How natural and suitable is it, on such an anniversary, for the fathers of the present day, to speak concerning the fathers of former days, to one another, and to their children; who are destined to be the fathers of the age, which is to come!

We are, then, fellow citizens, assembled, not to take part in a light and vain show, but to perform a solemn, and somewhat a religious duty. Parents and children,—we have come to the altar of our common faith, not like the

Carthaginian, to swear enmity to another nation, but, in the spirit of obedience and under a sense of moral and religious obligation, to inquire what it is to fulfil well our duty to ourselves and our posterity. And while we pass before our eyes, in long array, the outspread images of our fathers' virtues, let us strive to excite, in our own bosoms, and enkindle in each others, that intense and sacred zeal, by which their patriotism was animated and refined. Fifty years after the occurrence of the greatest of our national events, we gather, with our children, around the tombs of our fathers, as we trust,—and may heaven so grant!—fifty years hence, those children will gather around ours, in the spirit of gratitude and honour;—to contemplate their glory;—to seek the lessons suggested by their example;—and to examine the principles, on which they laid the foundations of their country's prosperity and greatness.

But if, as Americans, it be natural and suitable to consecrate this day in our affections, how much more as citizens of Boston,—inhabitants of that city, known through the world, as the cradle of American liberty;—standing, as we do, under the canopy of that sacred temple,* which was honoured, in the most trying times of our revolution, by the boldest breathings of our chiefest patriots; which was polluted, in the most disastrous times, by the war-horse, which neighed and stabled, in this sanctuary;—surrounded, as we are, by the direct descendants of those, who were first and most fearless, in the day of severest trial!

Where shall the memory of the great men of our revolu-

* The Old South Church

tion be honoured, if it be not in this city, in this temple, and in this assembly ?

What future age, what distant region, hearing of the American Revolution, shall not also hear of "Faneuil Hall" and of "The Old South ;" where the early spirit of American liberty stood in dignity, fidelity, and fearlessness ; while sentries, with fixed bayonets, were at our State-house doors ;--while Boston was but a garrison ; its islands and harbours, possessed by a vindictive and indignant foe ;--its trade, suspended by British cruisers ; famine threatened by British edicts ;--and the blood of its slaughtered citizens flowed, like water, in its streets !

In what land, where the American name is known, are got,--and shall not forever be,--known, the names of those citizens of Boston, who were the strength and lights of their own time, and the eternal glory of their country ; Adams,--and Hancock ;--and Otis ;--and Warren ;--and others of scarcely less celebrity ?

Especially shall he not be forgotten,--now, or ever--that ancient citizen of Boston, that patriarch of American Independence, of all New England's worthies, on this great day, the sole survivor.* He, indeed, oppressed by years, sinking under the burdens of decaying nature, hears not our public song, or voice of praise,

* John Adams, the patriot here alluded to, expired at about 5 o'clock on the afternoon of this day. Thomas Jefferson, another patriot of the same period, also expired at about one o'clock, of the same afternoon.

Thus two of the most distinguished statesmen of the United States, both members of the committee of Congress, who drafted the Declaration of American Independence, and who both signed that instrument ;--both of

or ascending prayer. But the sounds of a nation's joy, rushing from our cities, ringing from our vallies, echoing from our hills, shall break the silence of his aged ear; the rising blessings of grateful millions shall visit, with a glad light, his fading vision; and flush the last shades of his evening sky, with the reflected splendours of his meridian brightness.

How peculiarly and imperiously incumbent, then, is it on us, on this day, in this place, and in this assembly, to speak together concerning the glory of our ancestors;—to analyze that glory;—and to inquire what it is to deserve, and what it is to disgrace those ancestors!

When we speak of the glory of our fathers, we mean not that vulgar renown, to be attained by physical strength, nor yet that higher fame to be acquired by intellectual power. Both often exist without lofty thought, or pure intent, or generous purpose. The glory which we celebrate was strictly of a moral and religious character; righteous as to its ends; just as to its means. The American Revolution had its origin, neither in ambition, nor avarice, nor envy, nor in any gross passion; but in the nature and relation of things, and in the thence resulting necessity of separation from the parent State. Its progress was limited by that necessity. During the struggle our fathers displayed great

whom had been for many years Ministers of the United States at several European courts; both of whom had held successively the offices of Vice President and President of the United States, finished their mortal career on the fourth of July, 1826; it being the fiftieth anniversary of that most glorious and happy event, for themselves and their country,—the declaration of American Independence

strength and great moderation of purpose. In difficult times they conducted with wisdom. In doubtful times, with firmness. In perilous, with courage. Under oppressive trials, erect. Amidst great temptations, unseduced. In the dark hour of danger, fearless. In the bright hour of prosperity, faithful. It was not the instant feeling and pressure of the arm of despotism that roused them to resist, but the principle, on which that arm was extended.— They could have paid the stamp-tax, and the tea-tax, and the other impositions of the British government, had they been increased a thousand fold. But payment acknowledged the right; and they spurned the consequences of that acknowledgment. In spite of those acts, they could have lived and happily; and bought; and sold; and got gain; and been at ease. But, they would have held those blessings on the tenure of dependence on a foreign and distant power; at the mercy of a king, or his minions; or of councils, in which they had no voice, and where their interests could not be represented, and were little likely to be heard. They saw that their prosperity in such case would be precarious; their possessions uncertain; their ease, inglorious. But above all they realized that those burdens, though light to them, would, to the coming age,—to us, their posterity,—be heavy and probably, insupportable. Reasoning on the inevitable increase of interested imposition, upon those, who are without power and have none to help, they foresaw that, sooner or later, desperate struggles must come. They preferred to meet the trial in their own times, and to make the sacrifices in their own per-

sons. They were willing themselves to endure the toil, and to incur the hazard, that we and our descendants—their posterity, might reap the harvest and enjoy the increase.

Generous men ! exalted patriots ! immortal statesmen ! For this deep moral and social affection, for this elevated self-devotion, this noble purpose, this bold daring, the multiplying myriads of your posterity, as they thicken along the Atlantic coast from the St. Croix to the Mississippi, as they spread backwards to the lakes ; and from the lakes to the mountains, and from the mountains to the western waters, shall, on this day, annually, in all future time, as we, at this hour, come up to the temple of the Most High, with song, and anthem, and thanksgiving and choral symphony, and halleluia ; to repeat your names, to look stedfastly on the brightness of your glory ; to trace its spreading rays to the points from which they emanate ; and to seek, in your character and conduct, a practical illustration of public duty, in every occurring, social exigence.

In the rapid view, I am compelled to take of the genius and character of our revolution, I shall chiefly fix my eye on this state, town and vicinity. Let other states and cities celebrate with due honours the great men, whose lights cluster in their peculiar sky. Massachusetts has a constellation of her own, exceeded by none, in brightness ; yielding to none in power ; surpassed by none in influence, during the first stages of the revolutionary struggle. In this state and in this metropolis were exhibited, among the earliest, those generous virtues and that noble daring, which electrified the continent.

If it be asked in what the peculiar glory of our fathers, in that day, consisted,—this is my answer. It consisted in perfectly performed duty ; according to the measure of that perfection, which is attributable to things human. Now real glory, when strictly analyzed, and reduced to its constituent principle, with all tinsel and dross separated, will be found to consist, and to consist only,—in truth. The glory of contemplation, is truth to nature. The glory of action, is truth to the relations, in which man is placed ;—perfect fulfilment of all the obligations, which result from the condition of things, allotted to him by Providence.

In this point of view the glory of our fathers at the revolution may be stated, in detail, to consist in being true to their ancestors, true to themselves, true to their posterity ; and above all, in being true to virtue and liberty.

Our fathers, at the revolution, were true to their ancestors ;—maintaining their principles ; obeying their precepts ; copying their example.

The revolution of 1776 is called, and justly,—a mighty struggle for independence. But it was neither greater, bolder, nor more arduous, than the emigration of the first settlers to New England ; nor was there incurred in it more hazard, nor displayed, in any of its events, a more determined spirit of independence, than were incurred and displayed by the immediate descendants of those settlers ;—the direct progenitors of the authors of our revolution.

Time would fail me, were I to attempt to maintain this position by historical references. One or two striking evidences of fact and opinion must suffice.

The emigration itself of our ancestors was, in truth, only a mighty struggle for Independence. According to the genius of the age, and the particular bias of our ancestors' minds, their motive took the aspect of a strong desire for a higher religious freedom and a purer form of religious worship. It is impossible however not to perceive that even this desire was only a mode, under which existed an intense and all absorbing spirit of civil freedom. In the nature of things, it could not, possibly, have been otherwise. They fled from the persecutions of the British Hierarchy. Now the strength of the hierarchy was in the nerve of the secular arm. It was that odious centaur,—not fabulous,—church and state, which drove them for refuge into the wilderness. This monster, with a political head and an ecclesiastical body, they hated and feared; representing their emigration and sufferings, under the familiar type, of the woman of the Apocalypse, who fled “into the wilderness, to a place prepared of God, from the face of the beast.”

We are apt to view our ancestors, of the first and second generations, in the light of enthusiasts. Now if by this term is meant, according to its usual import, “men who through a vain confidence, in heaven, neglect the use of human means,” there never existed a class of men, less entitled to that appellation than our fathers. Of all men they were the most practical. Their whole history, the colleges, schools, churches, all the institutions they founded, constitute one unbroken series of examples of the wise, and happy use, of human means. As to their opinions, take instead of a multitude, which might be adduced, a single example. In that

famous work, entitled "Faithful advice to the churches of New England," sent out into the world under the auspices of our fathers, having the signatures of both the Mathers, Davenport, Colman, and others, there is the following remarkable vindication of the use of human learning, in religion, urged with their characteristic acuteness.

"No man ever decried learning without being an enemy to religion ; whether he knew it or no. When our Lord chose fishermen to be ministers ; he would not send them forth until they had been several years, under his tuition,—(a better than the best, in any college, under heaven,) and then, also, he *miraculously* furnished them with more learning than any of us, by seven years hard study, can attain unto."

It would be easy also to adduce abundant evidence of the free opinions entertained by the first settlers relative to the right of resistance to kings and to personal and colonial freedom, by quotations from approved authors of that period. A single extract from the writings of Nathaniel Ward, the first clergyman of the town of Ipswich, in this vicinity, will sufficiently manifest the temper and spirit of our ancestors, in that age, on those points. This writer was so highly esteemed by our ancestors, that he was employed in 1639, by the General Court of Massachusetts, to draft that code, consisting of one hundred laws, called "the body of liberties" of the colony. In an eccentric, but highly popular work, in that day, published by him, in 1647, entitled "The Simple Cobbler of Agawam in America," the contest, then carrying on between the King and Parliament, is represent-

ed under the similitude of a controversy between royal prerogative (*majestas imperii*) and popular liberty (*salus populi*) and is thus stated in the quaint language of that day :

“ We hear that *Majestas Imperii* hath challenged *Salus Populi* into the field ; the one fighting for prerogatives, the other defending liberties. If *Salus Populi* began, surely it was not that *Salus Populi* I left in England. That *Salus Populi* was as mannerly a *Salus Populi* as need be. If I be not much deceived that *Salus Populi* suffered its nose to be held to the grindstone, till it was ground to the gristle ; and yet grew never the sharper, for ought I could discern. I think that since the world began, it was never storied that *Salus Populi* began with *Majestas Imperii*, unless *Majestas Imperii* first unharboured it and hunted it to a stand, and then it must turn head and live, or turn tail and die. Commonwealths cost as much in the making as crowns ; and if they be well made, would yet outsel an ill-fashioned crown, in any market *overt*, if they be well vouched.

“ But *preces* and *lachrymæ* are the people’s weapons ; so are swords and pistols, when God and Parliament bid them arm. Prayers and tears are good weapons for them that have nothing but knees and eyes ; but most men have teeth and nails. If subjects must fight for their Kings, against other kingdoms, when their Kings will ; I know no reason but they may fight against their Kings, for their own kingdoms, when parliament say they may and must. But parliament must not say they must, until God says they may.”

The bold spirit of liberty, which characterized the first settlers of New England, cannot be too highly appreciated

by their posterity. Neither are their wisdom and prudence, in maintaining their liberties, less subjects of admiration and applause. What state paper exists more solemn, or comprehensive, than that memorable order, by which the General Court of Massachusetts, in 1660, caused a committee to be raised, to consider the consequences to their liberties, to be anticipated from the restoration of Charles the Second?

“Forasmuch as the present condition of our affairs, in matters of the highest concernment, calls for diligent and speedy use of the best means, seriously to discuss and rightly to understand our liberty and duty—thereby to beget unity among ourselves in the due observance of obedience to the authority of England, and our own just privileges, for the effecting whereof, it is ordered that Simon Bradstreet &c. be a committee to consider and debate such matter, or thing of public concernment, touching our patent, laws, privileges, and duty to his majesty, as they may judge expedient, that so, (if the will of God be,) we may speak and act the same thing, becoming prudent, honest, conscientious and faithful men.”

Now what their notion of these “just privileges” was, may be gathered from “their refusing to make the oath of allegiance necessary,”—“refusing to cause proceedings at law to be in the name of the King.” “Maintaining that liberty of conscience justified their removal to this quarter of the world,—that with removal their subjection to England ceased, and that the sovereignty of the soil was in them, because purchased by them of the native princes.”*

Hutchinson's Hist. of Mass. I vol. ch. 2

That these were doctrines, holden and avowed by “persons of influence,” among the early emigrants to New England, we know from history. Their patent, or old charter, itself was, in fact, only an incorporation for trade, turned, by the dexterity of the first settlers, into a civil sovereignty. And the real cause of their extreme attachment to it was that under colour of that instrument, they chose their own rulers and judges, made laws, and, in effect, were an independent state.

How this theory of the ancient leaders of Massachusetts was seconded by the spirit of the people, will be apparent from a single transaction of a somewhat later period. During the reign of King James the Second, our fathers had been insulted by the dissolution of their charter, and oppressed by the proceedings of the King’s Commissioners. The leaders of the Colony were indignant. The people were stung to madness.

On the 18th of April, 1689,—The 18th and 19th of April are red letter days in the Calendar of American liberty,—On the 18th of April, 1689, say our historians, there came up from North Boston,——that northern hive has been famous, in all times, for a hardy, industrious, and intrepid race of men,——there came up from North Boston a multitude of men and boys, running. The drums beat. The people ran to their arms. They rushed to Fort Hill; where was then a formidable fortification; “standing so thick that one gun from the fort would have killed a hundred of them; but God prevented!” *They scaled the

* Hutchinson’s Hist. v. i. ch. 3.

sconce ; and seizing the lower battery, they turned the guns “on the red coats in the fort,” who surrendering at discretion,—they took the king’s council prisoners ; and put the king’s governor under guard ; they sent the captain of the king’s frigate to jail ; and turned the batteries on the king’s frigate herself ; and the country people coming in, the elders and fathers took possession of the king’s government ; and thus was effected a glorious revolution, here, in Massachusetts, thirty days before it was known, that King William, of glorious memory, had just effected a similar glorious revolution on the other side of the Atlantic.

It is very obvious that the fate of New England was suspended on the fate of the Prince of Orange. Had he failed, our ancestors, of that day, would have had to expiate the guilt of treason, in exile, or confiscation, or on the scaffold. How truly then may it be said, that the spirit of our ancestors, of the first age, was emulated by the immediate authors of our independence, and that these descendants were true to the example and glory of their predecessors !

If we descend from the era of the English revolution, to the middle of the last century, we find the same daring spirit of liberty promulgated, not by irresponsible scribblers, in anonymous pamphlets, but by the highest colonial lawyers, on the floor of state, and by the most learned colonial clergy, from their pulpits. Take, for example, an extract from a sermon, entitled “*A Discourse concerning Unlimited Submission to the higher powers, with some reflections on the resistance to King Charles the First, and on the anniversary of his death, in which the mysterious doctrine of that*

prince's saintship and martyrdom is unriddled. Preached by Jonathan Mayhew, pastor of the West Church in Boston. Among other doctrines, not less bold and decisive, he lays down the following :

“ A people, really oppressed to a great degree by their sovereign, cannot well be insensible when they are so oppressed. And such a people, if I may allude to an ancient fable, have, like the Hesperian fruit, a Dragon for their Protector and guardian. Nor would they have any reason to mourn, if some Hercules, should appear to dispatch him. For a nation, thus abused, to arise unanimously, and to resist their prince, even to the dethroning him, is not criminal ; but a reasonable way of vindicating their liberties and just rights.”

Now it must be remembered, that this discourse was preached six and twenty years, before the era of our revolution, by the most learned and popular preacher of his day ; that it was published “ at the request of his hearers ;” that the thing was not done in a corner, nor circulated in a whisper, but as the title page has it—Anno, 1750. Boston. New England. “ Printed and sold by D. Fowle, in Queen street, and by D. Gookin, over against the Old South Meeting house.”

There is no need of farther proof that the fathers of our revolution were true to their ancestors, both distant and immediate ; obeying their precepts ; copying their examples. and acting up to their characters.

It remains for us to observe, that the fathers of our revolution were also true to themselves and true to posterity.

ty ; and in this, above all, that they were true to virtue and liberty.

There were three great principles, which, in the opinion of our ancestors, in every age, constituted the essence of colonial liberty ; and with which, in their minds, it was identified.

1. That their rulers and judges should be chosen by and responsible to themselves.

2. That the right of laying taxes on the inhabitants of the colonies should belong exclusively to their own representatives.

3. That their religious rights should depend wholly on their colonial laws and constitutions.

The first of these principles was the object of the struggles of the first settlers of New England and their immediate descendants. They exercised this liberty between fifty and sixty years. They lost it by the dissolution of their old charter. That of William and Mary did not restore it. Among other obnoxious provisions in this last charter, the appointment of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Secretary, with a qualified appellate judicial jurisdiction, was reserved to the crown.

The loss of this branch of liberty was submitted to with reluctance, and endured with great impatience. The deep yearning of our fathers' hearts, after their ancient liberty, is to be seen in every subsequent page of their political history, and was one of the active, though hidden, causes of our revolution.

On the second great principle of colonial liberty, that

taxation and representation are inseparable, the American revolution turned.

Now the just estimate made by our fathers of the importance of that principle,—the self-devotion with which they maintained it,—the boldness, with which they put in jeopardy life, liberty, property, reputation, whatever man holds dear, in hope or in possession, to vindicate it, are the great central points, from which radiates their glory at the revolution.

At a superficial view, we are inclined to wonder at the inflexible firmness of our fathers in opposition to the stamp and tea taxes, and the other British impositions, at that period. The amount small; comparatively little burdensome; for the most part affecting articles of luxury, or of occasional use. We are tempted to exclaim, what grievous oppression in all this? A single year of war would exceed, in expense, the loss, in fifty years, from such taxes. And when we look at the subject, in point of principle, their condition would not have been a whit worse than immense classes of British subjects, who pay taxes, without having any voice in the choice of their rulers. Arguments and facts of this kind were urged on our fathers, in every form of reason and eloquence; enforced by appeals to their hopes, from the smiles of royal favour; by appeals to their fears, from the terrors of royal power. But they stood as the mountain rock, which alike mocks the melting heat of the summer's sun, and the uprooting blasts of the winter's storm. By such considerations the flame of their unkindled zeal was neither quenched, nor allayed. Their

unyielding fixedness of principle, in this respect, does infinite credit to their sagacity and virtue.

For when we consider more carefully this principle, so earnestly asserted by Great Britain, and so resolutely resisted by our fathers, we shall find that, to human view, it contained the whole hope of American Independence; for the then present, and all future, times. The possibility of American Independence, at any time, depended upon the union of the colonies, in some common principle of opposition to the pretensions of Great Britain. Now this right being conceded, it was scarce possible that any such common principle should exist; much less become a bond of union among the colonies. This right admitted, every thing else was but mode and measure; an affair of discretion. What hope that they, who could not unite in resistance to the whole right, could be ever brought to combine in resistance to a particularly oppressive degree in the exercise of it? Besides, how easy would it have been for Great Britain, by settling any obnoxious degree, in mode or measure, differently in different colonies, to take from some, all motive to co-operate in the resistance of others! This principle, therefore, being yielded, there was, to human view, no subsequent hope of independence for the colonies. That principle was worthy, therefore, of all the importance attached to it by our fathers; worthy of all the sacrifices they made in its defence. Their foresight, their energy and inflexible spirit, on this point, are among the brightest beams, in the glory of that day.

Of a similar type is the self-denial, to which they submitted, and the hazards, which they voluntarily incurred, for the sake of that principle. By submission, they would, in their own time, have enjoyed peace, secured plenty, attained external protection under the shield of Great Britain, and in the gradual advance of society, they had reason to expect to arrive, even in the colonial state, at a very elevated and enviable condition of prosperity. On the other hand, what were the hazards of resistance? The untried and not to be estimated perils of civil war;—"a people, in the gristle and not yet hardened into the bone of manhood," to rush on the thick bosses of the buckler of the most powerful state in Europe; the one most capable of annoying them; without arms, or resources, to enter the lists with the best appointed nation on the globe; destitute of a sloop of war, to wage hostilities with a country whose navies commanded every sea and even their own harbours.—In case of success,—the chance of anarchy and the unknown casualties attending a new organization of society. In case of failure,—exile, confiscation, the scaffold, the fate of some; to bear the opprobrious names of rebel and traitor, and to transmit them to a disgraced posterity, the fate of all.

What appeals to selfishness! what to cupidity! what to love of ease, to fear, and to pusillanimity! But our fathers took council of a different spirit;—of the pure ethereal spirit, which glowed and burned in their own bosoms. In spite of the greatness of the temptation and the certainty of the hazard, they resisted; and the front ranks of opposition were filled, not by a needy, promiscuous, unknown and

irresponsible crowd, but by the heart, and mind, and strength, of the colony ;—by the calm and calculating merchant ;—by the cautious capitalist ;—by the sedate and pious divine ;—by the far-looking, deep read lawyer ;—by the laborious and intelligent mechanic. We have no need to repeat ^{the} names. The entire soul, and sense, and sinew, of society were in action.

The spirit of our revolution is not to be sought in this, or that, individual ; nor in this, or that, order of men. It was the mighty energy of the whole mass. It was the momentous heaving of the troubled ocean, roused, indeed, by the coming tempest, but propelled onward by the lashing of its own waters, and by the awful, irresistible impulse of deep seated passion and power.

In this movement, those, who were foremost, were not always those of most influence ; nor were the exciting causes always the most obtrusive to the eye. All were pressed forward by the spirit, inherent in the community,—by force of public opinion and sense of duty, which never fell behind, but was often in advance of those, who were called leaders.

The event has shown that our fathers judged rightly in this movement ; that their conception was just concerning their means and their duties ; that they were equal to the crisis, in which Providence had placed them ; that, daring to be free, their power was equal to their daring.—They vindicated liberty for themselves.—They transmitted it to us, their posterity.—There is no truer glory, no higher fame known, or to be acquired, among men.

How different would have been our lot, at this day, both as men and citizens, had the revolution failed of success, or had the great principle of liberty, on which it turned, been yielded ! Instead of a people, free, enlightened, rejoicing in their strength, possessing a just consciousness of being the authors and arbiters of their own and their country's destinies, we should have been a multitude, without pride of independence, without sense of state, or national sovereignty ; looking across the ocean for our rulers ; watching the Atlantic sky, as the cloud of court locusts, tempted by our greenness, came, warping on the eastern breeze ; waiting on the strand to catch the first glimpse of our descending master ; some transatlantic chieftain ; some royal favourite ; some court sycophant ; sent to govern a country, without knowing its interests ; without sympathy in its prospects ; resting, in another hemisphere, the hopes of his fame and fortune. Our judges coming from afar. Our merchants denied all commerce, except with the parent state. Our clergy sent us, like our clothes, ready made ; and cut in the newest court fashion. None but conformists allowed to vote. None but churchmen eligible. Our civil rights subject to crown officers. Our religious, to a foreign hierarchy, cold, selfish, vindictive, distant, solicitous about glebes and tythes, but reckless, among us, of the spread of the light of learning, or the influence of the gospel.

How different also would have been the fate and aspect of the present age, had the American revolution never commenced, or had it failed ! Under Providence, this revolution has been the chief, if not the sole cause of that impulse to

the human mind, which, during the last half century, has changed the face of Europe and elevated the hope of man. The light of truth and reason, reflected across the Atlantic from the mighty mirror of American liberty, penetrated the cottages of peasants and the cabinets of Kings. The multitude were propelled upon thrones. Kings have consequently been induced to soften the rigours of ancient servitude. In every part of Europe, the chains of subjects are lightened. Sovereigns daily realize, more and more, the necessity of admitting the people to a voice, in their councils, and to a qualified weight, in state affairs. Under the influence of this condition of things, knowledge has been increased and diffused; the rights of man vindicated; a free intercourse of commerce, science and arts, introduced on both sides of the Atlantic, unparalleled in human history; and giving promise of an advancement in freedom, morals, and refinement, exceeding the hope, or conception, of former times. Under these auspices, the patriotic theories and visions of Milton, Harrington, Algernon Sidney, and Locke, are beginning to be realized; the capacity of man to govern himself to be demonstrated; the great truth promulgated and carried home to the bosoms of all sovereigns, even the most arbitrary, that they, who would govern man long, must govern him justly, and treat him as a rational, accountable and moral being; that they must respect his essential rights and even towards servitude itself, recognize the principles of a substantial freedom.

Such was the genius and character, and such the proud results of the American Revolution. Such the glory of our

fathers. Such the glowing points, from which that glory radiates.

It is suitable, and it is our duty, on this occasion, to inquire, what it is to maintain that genius and character; what it is to deserve, and what to disgrace, those ancestors.

In listening to the preceding development, fellow citizens, it is impossible that each of you should not have realized, individually, your interest in the character and conduct of our fathers. It is a law of nature. The virtue and glory of fathers is the most precious inheritance of their posterity. By this law, an indissoluble, moral union, connects times past and future, with times present. Without that law, man would be a creature of the day; grovelling in selfishness; wallowing in the mire of sense; with eye, and taste, and thought, all downward; with no backward regard; with no forward hope; with no upward aim. But this eternal, moral connection, which is established by Providence in his nature, gives him, as it were, existence in the days of old, and existence, in the times, which are to come; and instead of a being, destined, as the term of his natural life seems to indicate, to exist only a few, short years, bestows upon him, even in this world, a glorious immortality.

By this law, it is made the duty of man, in every age, in gratitude for the inheritance he receives, to transmit it faithfully to those, who succeed; not diminished; not corrupted; not soiled; but if possible, enlarged; strengthened; purified; increased both in splendour and usefulness.

The occurring circumstances of every age make, indeed, the duties of each succeeding generation different. But, in

consulting concerning those duties, it will not be difficult for this, or any future age, to determine in what they consist, provided, according to the example, and in the language of our fathers, we endeavour, “so to understand our liberty and duty, as to beget unity among ourselves, and to act and speak, as becomes prudent, honest, conscientious and faithful men.”

It is true, that we, in this age, are not called, as our fathers were, to take our lives in our hands, and bare our breasts to the tempest and shock of war. But such dangers and sacrifices are not essential to the existence of true glory. This, as I have endeavoured to illustrate, consists not in the particular part, we are called to act, but in the manner, in which we perform the part, to which we are called. The essence of true glory is principle. Our fathers endured the hardships, and despised the dangers, of the field of battle, not for the sake of the species of glory there to be acquired, but because battle was the mode, appointed by Providence, for them to vindicate their truth to the relations of things, in which it had placed them. They could, in no other mode, have fulfilled their duty to those relations.

Now this glory is just as applicable to us, as to them. The labours and sacrifices of our fathers have, indeed, left us a noble inheritance. But our tenure of that inheritance is not absolute, but conditional. If we would maintain it, and transmit it, unimpaired, to our posterity, we must, like our fathers, be true to the relation of things, in which we

stand ; and particularly, to those, in which we stand to that very inheritance. Now truth to those relations, as it respects us, consists in our fulfilling the conditions, on which the continuance of that inheritance depends. These conditions are,—that we understand our liberties,—that we value them as we ought,—that we are willing to make the sacrifices of time, labour and attention, necessary for the preserving them ; and are vigilant in defending them, not against external foes, to which, in all probability, we shall never be called, but against a much more insidious foe,—the passion, corruption and weakness of our own hearts.

The great principle, for which our fathers contended, and the maintaining of which constituted their glory, was, in fact, the right of self-government,—the right of choosing their own rulers ; in other words, the right of possessing themselves, and of transmitting to posterity, the elective franchise, in its most pure and perfect state. Now this great privilege, it belongs to us to maintain, by a right and wise use of it ; and to transmit it to posterity the purer by our example,—the safer by our use,—and the more precious from the obvious blessings, resulting from this our fidelity. This is our duty. In this consists our glory.

Let every man, therefore, who inquires, what it is to deserve, and what it is to disgrace, our ancestors, consider his conduct in this respect. Let him ask himself,—whether he truly appreciates the nature and greatness of that privilege,—whether he is faithful to liberty, to morals and religion, in the exercise of it,—whether he is indifferent about

it,—or neglects it,—or sports with it. And so let every man answer for himself ;—his own conscience being his judge. And let all remember that, in the ways of Providence to nations, as well as to individuals, there is retribution as well as favour. No people ever did, or ever can, long enjoy any privilege, and, least of all, the elective franchise, who systematically undervalue it ;—or abuse it ;—or are even indifferent about it.

Again, truth to liberty, to virtue, to our ancestors, and to the relation of things, in which we stand, has respect, also, to the manner, in which we conduct towards those, on whom the elective lot has fallen, and in whose favour it has been declared.

It is the nature of man, under a free constitution, to divide into parties, according to that diversity of views, interest, opinions, passions, and even fancies, which are inseparable from his constitution. This condition of things is not to be deprecated, or condemned. It is to be understood and acted upon.

Now the duty, which each individual, in a free republic, owes to rulers, is just the same, whether they do, or do not, belong to the particular sect, or party, he happens to prefer. Truth to the relations of things, in which we stand, requires that our rulers, should be judged, not by any previous prejudice, or theory, but by their conduct, while in power ; by the measures they recommend and countenance. These measures are to be received in a candid, generous spirit, and with fair and manly construc-

tion. Those, therefore, will be false to the genius and character of our revolution, who, regardless of the measures of rulers, shall wage war upon them, merely because they do not belong to their own particular sect, or party; or, who shall decry wise measures, or misrepresent the motives of just ones, with the sole view of pulling down one individual, or of building up another; or who, making the liberty of debate, or of the press, a cloak for licentiousness, shall pervert, both, or either, to purposes of malevolence, or slander.

Above all, those will be false to the genius and character of our revolution, who shall associate themselves with political leaders, without reference to principles; who shall deny rulers the chance to show their real projects, by the course of their administration, but shall wage war upon them from the very beginning, on the principle of political extermination.

There can be no surer sign that the liberties of a people are hastening to a dissolution, than their countenancing those, who form parties on men, and not upon principles. Whenever the only question is, whether Cæsar, or Pompey, Lepidus, or Mark Anthony shall rule, and the people are corrupt, or debased enough, from mere personal affection or preference, to flock to either standard,—such a people are not far distant from a revolution, which will not leave them even the poor privilege of choosing their own masters.

Thus you perceive, fellow citizens, that the glory of our fathers, which we this day celebrate, was not of a tempora~

ty, or individual character ;—that there is nothing exclusive in its nature ;—that it may be shared and emulated by the truly noble of our race, in every age ;—that it essentially consists in possessing and exhibiting, in all our public relations, a pure, just, elevated and manly spirit.

And now, fellow citizens, consider your privileges. Consider your duties. By the virtues of your fathers you have been preserved from an ignominious bondage. Beware lest you become subjected to a more grievous bondage of base, ignoble passions. As they subdued their enemies in the field, do you subdue those enemies, which have their strong holds in the human heart, and which have laid low in the dust, the proud hopes of all former republics ;—“ambition—avarice—love of riches and the corruptions of prosperity.”* Be as just, as temperate, as moderate in preserving your liberty, as your fathers were bold and daring in repelling the chains of servitude. Be penetrated with “a love of liberty,—of religion,—of justice and virtue, and inflamed with a sacred zeal and affection for your country.”* Thus it may be hoped that through the combined and strenuous endeavours of true and faithful men, in all times, there shall be gradually infused into the mass of mankind, loftier thoughts, higher aims, more generous motives, whereby the human character, being elevated and refined, shall become more worthy, and thus more capable, of perfect freedom. And so this temple of liberty, the foundations of which were

* Milton's *Defensio, pro populo Anglicano, contra Claudii Salmasii Defensionem Regium*

1776

laid on the fourth of July, 1776, in blood and peril, by our fathers, shall, by the labours, councils, and virtues, of all the good and great, of present and future times, be enlarged and extended, in true proportions of moral architecture, till its pillars embrace the universe, and its dome vault upwards, with a more than human skill,—with glorious archings of celestial wisdom,—resplendent with purest faith,—radiant with immortal truth,—crowned with revealed hope.—to the joy and rest of man. on the promise, and in the presence of the Eternal

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