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O R A T I O N,

BY

CITIZEN BRACKENRIDGE,

*On the Celebration of the Anniversary of Independence.* [Pittsburgh, July 4, 1793.]

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THE celebration of the day, introduces the idea of the principle that gave it birth : Was it the wisdom of the king of Great-Britain, who saw the growing greatness of the province, that they were now of age to act for themselves, and bade them be independent ? No—The wisdom of the parliament of Great-Britain, that seeing the inconvenience or impossibility of our being represented in the legislature, and sensible of the unreasonableness of being bound by laws without being represented, saw the expediency of a separation from them, and said to us, Be independent and become an allied power ? No—Nothing of all this. The king and parliament of Great-Britain, were of opinion, that without representation, we were bound by their laws, and though descendants of their isle, had no right to freedom in a great forest.

WHENCE then our independence ? It was the offspring of the understanding and the virtue of the people of America themselves. The eloquent advised ; the brave fought, and we succeeded. The day on which we assumed our rights, became a festival ; and every future year shall remember it with ardent exertion.

THE celebration of the day, introduces the idea of the effect of it beyond the sphere of these states. The light kindled here has been reflected to France, and a new order of things has arisen. Shall we blame the intemperance of the exertions? Was there ever enthusiasm without intemperance? and was there ever a great effect without enthusiasm? Thy principles, O! Liberty, are not violent or cruel: but in the desperation of thy efforts against tyranny, is it not always possible to keep within the limit of the vengeance, necessary to defence? Do we accuse the air, or the basile of the mountain, when the rock is burst, and the town engulfed? The air of itself is mild, and scarcely wafts a feather from its place: But restrained and imprisoned, the yielding and placid element becomes indignant, and tears the globe before it. Do we accuse the hurricane, when the mariner is tossed with the tempest, and is an incidental sufferer in the storm? The naturalist does not. He tells you that the equilibrium of the atmosphere has been disturbed, and if man has suffered more than the demerit of his transgressions it is in a struggle of nature to restore herself.

Is it the duty of these states to assist France? That we are bound by treaty, and how far, I will not say; because it is not necessary. We are bound by a higher principle, if our assistance could avail; the great law of humanity.

WE might, it is true, alledge the stipulations of a treaty, and the *guarantee of her possessions to France*. But all the world would know, and we ought to avow it, that it is the cause of republi-

canism which would induce our efforts. The tyrant of Great-Britain alledged the stipulations of a treaty relative to the opening of the Schaldt and waiting for no requisition on the part of Holland to observe the guarentee. But all the world knew, and he might have avowed it, that it was not the opening of the Scheldt, but the attack upon monarchy, that prompted his interposition. Shall kings combine, and shall republics not unite? We have united. The heart of America feels the cause of France; she takes a part in all her councils; approves her wisdom; blames her excesses; she is moved, impelled, elevated and depressed; with all the changes of her good and bad fortune; she feels the same fury in her veins; she is tossed and shaken with all the variety of hopes and fears, attending her situation: Why not? Can we be indifferent? Is not our fate interlaced with hers? For, O France! if thy republic perish, where is the honor due to ours? From whom respect to our flag upon the seas? Not from France restored to a monarch, and indignant at these very feelings which are now our glory: Not from the despots that are against her: These will easily recollect that the cause of their evils took their rise here.

CAN we assist France by arming in her favor? I will not say that we can. But could we, and should France say, United States, your neutrality is not sufficient; we expect the junction of your arms with mine; your heroes on the soil, and your privateers on the ocean, to distress the foes; who is there would not say, It shall be so;

you shall have them ; our citizens shall arm ; they shall attack ; our oaks shall descend from the mountains ; our vessels be launched upon the stream, and the voice of our war, however weak, shall be heard with yours !

If we our ourselves should judge that our arms could assist France, even though the generous republic required it not, yet who would hesitate to interfere, not only at the risk of property, but life itself ? Is it illusion ; or do I hear France say ? My daughter America ! I know the dutifulness of thy heart towards me ; and that thou art disposed to shew it, by taking part in this war. But I wish thee not to provoke hostilities for my sake. If I perish, I perish ; but let not a mother draw in a hapless child, to suffer with herself. Is it illusion ; or do I hear America réply ? I do, and it is in the language of the Moabites Ruth, to her mother-in-law, the Jewish Naomi, “ Intreat me not to leave thee, or return from following thee ; for whither thou goest, I will go ; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge ; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God ; where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried. God do so to me, and more also, if aught but death shall part thee and me.”

BUT whether we assist or not, thy cause, O ! France, will be triumphant. Did the enthusiasm of a small Roman people, repel their invaders, until Rome became the protectress of nations ? Did the enthusiasm of a few Greeks, repel the millions of Asia, and afterwards overrun her kingdoms ? Did the enthusiasm of the Saracens,

in a few years spread to Spain on the one hand, and the Indus on the other? Did the enthusiasm of a few mad Crusaders, burst upon the Saracen, and establish the kingdom of Jerusalem in the centre of his empire? And shall the enthusiasm of a brave people, more numerous than the early Roman republic, the Greeks under Alexander; the Saracens of Arabia, or the Crusaders of Europe, be subdued by all that are against them? The weight will but condense resistance, and as the materials of explosion in the ordonance acquire a spring by confinement, so in proportion to the attack of this people, will their voice be terrible, their blow irresistible.

FRANCE will be independent also, and celebrate her anniversaries; and in doing so will recollect that our independence had preceded hers and made the example.—The anniversary of the independence of America will be a great epocha of Liberty throughout the world. Proceed we then to celebrate the day; advance to the festive board; pour out liberations to sentiments of liberty, and let the loud mouthed artillery be heard on the hill!

T H E E N D.