

AN  
ORATION,

DELIVERED AT

LEOMINSTER,

JULY 4, 1815,

BEFORE THE

Washington Benevolent Societies

LANCASTER AND STERLING

AND OF

LEOMINSTER AND FITCHBURG.

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BY TIMOTHY FLINT.

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[1815]

*Leominster, July 4, 1815.*

REVEREND SIR,

WE are directed to request you to accept the grateful acknowledgments of the Society, for the able, patriotick and well-adapted Discourse, delivered before them this day ; and to solicit a copy of the same for the press.

JONAS KENDALL,  
ABRAHAM HASKELL, } *Committee.*  
LEONARD BURBANK, }

Rev. TIMOTHY FLINT.

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GENTLEMEN,

THE Address, delivered at your request, is respectfully submitted to your direction,

T. FLINT.

HON. JONAS KENDALL,  
DR. ABRAHAM HASKELL,  
COL. LEONARD BURBANK.

# ORATION.

YOU have frequently listened, fellow-citizens, on this proud anniversary, to the eventful story of our revolution. It was a revolution unparalleled in the annals of time, and in the highest degree honourable to our national character. It had no taint of French fickleness or ferocity. It grew not out of a distempered and relaxed state of the publick morals; from unsettled and restless habits, and a predisposition to insurrection. But it sprung from the feelings of a sober and calculating people, nursed in the bosom of liberty, indignant even at the thought of tyranny and oppression, discerning them at a distance, and while visible only in principle and contemplation. They prepared themselves to struggle with the proudest and most victorious nation then in the world, with a calm and philosophical courage, and an humble reliance upon the aid of the God of armies. With a mighty and simultaneous effort, they emancipated themselves from the control of the parent country, and exhibited the novel spectacle of a people without laws and without government, from the force of virtuous discipline and good habits, restraining themselves from that ferocity, outrage and lawlessness, which have so generally characterized revolutions. It was conducted with

an energy tempered with mercy, in which no unnecessary blood was shed, and in which the influence of humane feelings and religious restraint stood instead of laws. The toils and sufferings, the victories and defeats, the achievements and events of that revolution, the worth and honours of its sainted leader, fill the most interesting pages of our history, and will continue to thrill the bosoms of our children's children.

The wretched situation of our country, after the acknowledgment of our independence, is familiar to your recollection. A weak and disjointed confederation, coalescing only from a strong sense of mutual interest and mutual danger, elated with success, and many of its members deluded with dreams of an approaching political millennium, in which there should be security, property and protection, without the restraints of law; in which there should be government without taxes, rulers without pride or distinction; and in which the citizens might delegate their power, and resume it at their pleasure. The people had been demoralized by a long and bloody struggle. They were now unshackled from all fear, and given over to the unlimited empire of their passions, sharpened by the penury of the revolution, and the cupidity excited by the inundation of specie, that followed it.

Such were the materials from which the master-builders of the country proposed to rear that superb edifice, the federal government. When we consider the extent of the country, for which they were to legislate, the state of the publick feeling, the differ-

ent people, manners and interests to conciliate, we stand astonished at the completion of this Herculean labour. We hail the great names of the men, who were first and foremost in this wise and beneficent work, and will transmit them down with increasing renown to the generations to come.

Before this, opened the first chapter in the history of our factions, and developed the base arts of harlotry and fawning, that began thus early to be practised upon the people, to prejudice them against their best men, and to stir them up against the salutary restraints of a sound and vigorous form of government. The ties of the new confederation were compared to that iron bondage from which we had emancipated ourselves. Britain had prepared for us a lash of whips, and we, it was insinuated, were about to subject ourselves to the voluntary penance of a whip of scorpions. All the arts of intrigue and calumny were called into action. The Cincinnati, composed of an association of officers, many of them hoary with age, and scarred with the honourable wounds of the revolution, was held up to view as a junto of aristocrats, contemplating in their association an hereditary order of nobility; and the wicked cry of a design in them to "cut the country up into lordships" rung through the land. The passions of a misguided community, thus played upon, soon burst forth in a storm. Insurrection raised her impudent front, seized in one hand a crazy musket, and in the other a pitchfork, and marched forth in this and the other states, to shut up the courts of justice, and take cognizance of the government herself.

The discharges of a few cannon, the prostration of a few insurgents, added to the instinctive quakings of ignorant and guilty minds, soon dispersed the whole. In these troublous times, the combined wisdom and experience of the nation assembled at Philadelphia. The convention was composed of men, not conspicuous for professions of attachment to the people, and fawning appeals to their passions, but for great and actual services, already rendered them, and for having come forward, with their lives and fortunes in their hand, in aid of the revolution, and for the most prudent and adroit pilotship of the helm of state, through a dark and stormy period. The federal constitution was the result of their mutual counsels and labours. Against all the arts and clamours of the demagogues of the day, that constitution was adopted in the course of two or three years by every state in the union.

The operation of that constitution, administered as it was, almost realized to us the incredible tales of the Arabian Nights. The nation arose, and shook itself from the dust. Commerce soon raised the American stars over a thousand vessels. The Arab, the Hindoo, the Chinese, the inhabitants of the isles, of the equator, and the frozen zone, conversed and trafficked with the muscular, enterprizing and calculating sons of New-England, and for the first time learned, that a great empire had sprung up in regions enlightened by the setting sun, and in a country but recently rescued from the wilderness. The range of our enterprize was limited only by the bounds of the world. Instead of pursuing the chase

for amusement, like the inhabitants of the parent country among a few trees, set in rows, and surrounded with a paling which the game could not overleap, our young men found at once amusement and profit, health and exercise, in our vast parks of the North-West Coast, and sold to the Chinese furs taken in the boundless forests that slope to the Pacifick Ocean. Instead of angling, as their forefathers, in the Thames and the Severn, with a hair line and an artificial fly for minnow and trout, they drew the enormous whales of the South Sea from their abysses. No nook of the earth, situate on the sea, was too remote to have seen our stars and stripes.

With a great commerce, and dating its origin from the increasing capital and enterprize of the country, sprung up a new agriculture. Smiling villages whitened the bosom of the wilderness. Beautiful and substantial roads in the straightest directions connected the remotest sections of the country. Colleges and seminaries, of New-England habits and lore, chimed their bells among girdled trees; and spires of new and frequent temples ascended towards the sky, as though to conduct down the blessing of Heaven upon the growing work.

Our exports in 1787, probably short of five millions of dollars, soon exceeded an hundred millions; and an admirable system of revenue collected in the treasury from twelve to sixteen millions of dollars by the year. A navy, the favourite child of Federalism, grew up with a progress proportioned to our increasing commerce. An impartial and honest

neutrality secured for us the regard of all nations, and the American name was respected in every country. An uniform system of jurisprudence dispensed the same justice in every section of the union. We were the envy of the world; and this "asylum of suffering humanity" enticed to its bosom full many a vagabond foreigner, with whose citizenship we might well have dispensed. At the head of the whole work, sat the great WASHINGTON, his thoughtful and sober countenance relaxing into a benevolent smile, and reverently pronouncing all the work to be good. True, to the disgrace of human nature, even this man was calumniated as a British partizan, and his administration was vilified. But he triumphed over envy with the steady and mild lustre of his glory. Like the sun in the firmament, he held on the equal tenour of his way, dispelled the storms of faction, and descended to retirement in unclouded radiance.

During the administration of his successor, while the same policy was continued, the same results followed. Had our commerce and revenue increased from 1801 to this day, in the same proportion in which they advanced from 1787 to that period, our exports this year would have exceeded two hundred millions of dollars, and our revenue twenty-five millions. Our national debt would not only have been extinct, but we should have had surplus millions in the treasury, in reserve for any great national purposes. A navy of forty sail of the line, with a due proportion of frigates and smaller vessels, manned with our hearts of oak, and com-



manded by our Perrys and Macdonoughs, would have set at equal defiance the British Leopard, and the sinking and burning squadron of Napoleon. An amount of internal improvement, beyond calculation, would have kept an exact pace with our external prosperity. More schools and churches, more moral and religious institutions, the fruit of increasing means and liberality of feeling, would have sprung from this state of things. Nor, calculating from the enterprize and improvement of the first years of our prosperity, is it extravagant to suppose, that steam-boats would have been now ascending navigable canals from the Atlantick shores to the remotest lakes of the west.

But the successor of WASHINGTON in the chair of state was beset on every side by the Baches, the Callenders, the Genets, the Duanes, and the whole spawn of French atheism, disgorged on our shores by the French revolution. They clamoured and croaked, like the countless frogs of Egypt. In aid of their calumnies, an army was imprudently raised, and other measures adopted against the feelings of the people. The favourite beverage, the life-blood of the western people, whiskey, was enhanced in price by an excise. Another insurrection, headed by a man whom we should blush to name, was the consequence. The president, instead of pursuing an uniform policy with unbending independence, now stooped to the clamours of the people, and was then unreasonably stubborn and unyielding. The effect of this vacillating and yet plunging policy was, that in 1801 the people saw fit, like the blind giant of

sacred story, to pull down their political edifice on their heads, and erect a very different structure on its ruins. These ruins are still contemplated with veneration and awe by a great and respectable portion of the people. Over these ruins, the classical politician still exclaims, with a sigh—

“————— Fuit Ilium, et ingens  
Gloria Teucrorum.”

*Virg. Æn. lib. 2. ver. 325-6.*

We are aware, that it would not comport with the feelings and associations of this proud day, to follow the succeeding administrations through their theories, projects and deeds. We leave it to the future historian, when time shall have bleached away the colouring of party views, to record the success of their policy, and its effects upon our commerce, our revenue, our foreign and domestick relations, our national debt, and our internal prosperity. We leave it to him to assign the probable causes of the late war, and to award the due meed of glory for its success. As Americans, and as loving our country with all its faults, we occasionally exulted, during the disastrous period of the war, in the lessons, which, under every disadvantage, we taught our foe. By the roar of Niagara, at Erie, at Champlain, at Plattsburg, on the distant shores of the Mississippi, and almost wherever a ship of ours met theirs upon the “mountain-wave,” we taught them what we might be, and would be, in a war purely American, and urged by the feelings of all the people. Unpopular as the war was, almost wherever they looked with the stupid project of invading the

sacred soil, there was but one feeling. The bones of the invaders are left, as mementos to them, never to resume those projects.

Blessed be God, the din of war is now hushed. The roar of battle has faded from our ears. The contrast of this day is delightful, compared with the period, when almost every week brought us news of battles, or rumours of battles; perhaps our acquaintances and friends, at least our countrymen, slain on the high places of the field, and their bones left to whiten on the hills of battle. We heard of towns in flames, and swept with the "besom of destruction." Far off from the sea, mingling with the roar of its billows, was heard the explosion and crush of contending ships, each labouring to sink and destroy the other, to dismember the human beings within it with shot, or lacerate them with splinters, or plunge them together with their frail habitation below the surge, and give their bodies to the sea-monsters, and their souls to their Judge. Our young men exchanged their ploughs and pruning-hooks for sabres and swords, and their green sward and their peaceful homes for the vice and profligacy of the "tented field."

On our vastly extended line of the sea, the inhabitants of the towns were continually stretching their eyes along the deep, pale with apprehensions, which converted our own peaceful and passing sail, or the white and indistinct cloud on the verge of the horizon into an enemy's fleet. And the mother sunk into perturbed slumbers, expecting to be awakened by the ringing of bells, the glare of bombs

and conflagration, and all the horrors of a midnight assault. On our wide frontier, apprehensions equally distressing were continually alive. The roar of the winds in the forest, the nocturnal howling of the wolves was converted by fancy to the yells of savages, ready to emerge from the wilderness, to deal all the tortures and deaths dictated by their indiscriminate and infernal cruelty. This was the external face of the war.

Humane minds beheld a scene equally melancholy at all points in the interior; and from the opened mail followed bearers of letters sealed with black to widows and orphans, and heard them weep over the relation by a stranger, that their husbands and fathers had fallen in some remote wilderness by the sword, or by sweeping sickness, without any of the last offices of friendship and affection, without being cheered and consoled by the voice of prayer in the last extremity of nature, and with no hand of relative or friend to close their eyes, and see their bodies decently deposited below the soil.

Revenge indeed might comfort herself, that our enemy was subjected to the same sufferings. Religion taught us, and humanity remembered, that "God hath made of one blood all nations that dwell upon the earth;" and that the nerves of a Briton are as susceptible, and his life yielded with as severe a pang as ours. We remembered, that thousands of souls were hurried, and perhaps blaspheming at the moment of their death, before their Judge. We remembered the natural tendency of this, in

truth and eternity—Have you been good and true men? Have you acted with a single eye to the good of your country and your kind, and to the glory of God? If you are now determined to be then able to answer these grand questions in the affirmative, whether your cotemporaries honour or calumniate you, as you pass towards that great ordeal, you shall have a source of refreshment “with which the stranger intermeddleth not.” You shall be satisfied from yourselves.

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common with all wars, to demoralize the people, to sear their consciences, benumb their sensibilities, and harden their hearts; by hearing, as things of course, of property rifled, towns burnt, and thousands slain, merely in the exercise of the right of the strongest. We remembered the enormous expense of the war, and the accumulating millions of our national debt, and the burdens it must impose upon our posterity. We saw our finances verging fast to ruin, and the asperities of the people every day ripening for extremities.

Looking back upon this scene, we shall feel that we have every reason this day, with emotions of the deepest gratitude, on our bended knees, to bless the God of our fathers, that we have happily escaped from these evils, and that he hath spoken peace to us. In our exultation, and in view of the new era that has opened upon us, we are not disposed to scrutinize the treaty with jealous eyes, to find whether we have any indemnification for the loss of forty or fifty thousand lives, and probably more than two hundred millions of dollars; nor whether it stipulates favourable provisions for free trade and sailors' rights, providing for the return of the "six thousand two hundred and fifty-seven sailors, immured in the British floating prisons." In the universal joy inspired by the return of peace, precisely at that emergency when it seemed most indispensable, we would willingly forget all the past. We would lose every other feeling in gratitude, in joy and in hope, that the people have learned a lesson, against which no head could be proof, no heart

could be steeled ; in the hope, that the administration, taught by the past, will for the future pursue with persevering constancy the maxims of the Washington administration, not in the spirit of party, but with honest regard to the whole American people. If they will adopt this course, they shall find, that it is indifferent to us what men administer the government, provided only that they administer it in the spirit of the constitution.

Meanwhile let us, as New-Englandmen, test the past, and determine to shape our course for the future by the peculiar bearing of our late policy upon New-England. The favourers of that system, from which we have just escaped, have frequently asked with a sneer, why New-England, which has so little of her own growth to export, should suffer more from an anti-commercial administration, than the more fertile countries of the South and the West ? We answer—precisely because we raise so little for export, and must of course draw our resources from our enterprize abroad. The oak and the pine have been emblems of more enterprize, more crowded cities, more wealthy and powerful nations, than the olive and the cane. The towers of Tyre, the emporium of the ancient world, were founded upon a sand-bank. Athens grew up in a sterile and inhospitable region. Venice was founded upon islets of mud. Holland, once the garden, the counting-house, the ware-house, the laboratory and the work-shop of Europe, was, but a few centuries past, a bog. England, a continued wheat-field, orchard, pasture, and pleasure-ground, so unrivalled

in arts, in commerce and wealth, is described to have been originally among the most sterile and inhospitable countries in Europe. Commerce and enterprize produced all these transformations. New-England was once rapidly advancing in the same steps. Even still, the owner of so great a proportion of the shipping and sailors, of the commerce, wealth and enterprize of the nation, by various incidents that have transpired during the war, she has incontestibly proved to the South and the West, that wealth rather springs from moral habits, from compact population, from calculation, enterprize and economy, than from a genial clime and a fertile soil.

It is customary of late for the people of the South and the West, and, more shame still, for many of her own matricide sons, to speak contemptuously of New-England. Her virtues and her good things are overlooked or denied, and they pounce upon her faults, real or imagined, with the instinctive greediness with which the carrion vulture scents from far his congenial food. Her hardy, florid and unbending sons are ridiculed in comparison with the tawny, limber and *republican* slave-drivers of the South. Her steady habits, her love for the bible, the school-house and the church, excite a sneer. Her cold, arid and rocky hills, the supposed abodes of hunger and penury, are vauntingly contrasted with the fertile plains of the South and the West.

New-England, land of my forefathers, whose habits are so congenial, whose associations are so



dear to my heart, “when I forget thee,” or cease to speak of thee with filial veneration, “may my right hand forget her cunning.” New-England—I delight to see her small but frequent farms, owned by enlightened, independent and virtuous landholders. I delight more in the verdure and the harvests, won by laborious cultivation from native roughness and sterility, than in the indolent exuberance of nature. I love her frequent hills and dales, and the transparent beauty and the pleasant murmur of her rapid hill-streams; and would not exchange them for the creeping and marshy creeks, that wind lazily through an uninteresting and boundless plain. I admire the firm enclosures of her farms, of materials as durable and everlasting as I wish her prosperity to be. I admire her frequent and neat school-houses, and the courteous bow of her clean and healthy children flocking to them. And most of all, I admire her temples, the crowning ornaments of her villages; and, from the multitudes directing their steps to them on the Sabbath, I discern, that here publick sentiment still sanctifies the Sabbath of our God. And near that glorious emblem of law, justice and order, of industry and temperance, during this life, and of a happy immortality beyond it, the village church, I survey with solemn pleasure the church-yard, seen at the same view, and associating its repose with the immortal hopes of the temple, where the virtuous “forefathers of our hamlets sleep.”

During the war, our accustomed commerce at an end, and all the elements of our usual modes of

subsistence broken up, the lumberer of Maine laid down his axe, and sold his farm; the citizen of Nantucket, thinking only of bread for his family, threw his harpoon in despair into the sea; and the inhabitant of Cape Cod renounced his skiff and his fishing-geer, and, their wives and little ones loaded into waggons, the funeral procession of New-England advanced, "with measured steps and slow," towards the Alleghany hills. Thousands of families, poor, but industrious, the very nerve and gristle of the country, have thus been lost to New-England forever.

Should the same policy be renewed and continued, a century hence our posterity will have been gradually emptied into the western wilderness. Our dwellings, our school-houses and churches will have mouldered to ruins; our grave-yards will be overrun with shrub-oaks; and but here and there a wretched kermi, true to his paternal soil, to tell the tale of other times: that, in the days of Washington policy, here rose neat villages; here dwelt a compact population; here tilled the soil the most healthy, independent and cheerful yeomanry on the globe.

He will continue to tell, that the people were shut out from the sea, their habits of trade and enterprize crossed and broken; that they became embarrassed, discouraged, and weary of home; that their imaginations were kindled at the same time with designed and delusive paintings of palaces, and paradises, and spontaneous wealth, in the west; that they emigrated first by families, and, the mania of emigra-

tion increasing, finally in bodies, “over the hills and far away.” He will continue to relate, that he occasionally hears in his solitude, that the emigrants, when removed at a distance beyond the power of return, awoke from their dreams. Their air-castles vanished, and they began to think of the churches and schools, of the civilization, of the mild manners, the steady habits, and the pleasant intercourse, they had left. They now feel, that they live in a state of estrangedness and exile from all that is dear to them, and dream incessantly of their natal hills and vallies. They have long since realized to their cost, that no fruitfulness of soil, no pleasantness of clime, no advantages simply natural, can compensate the want of moral advantages, of the society and intimacy of people of the same views, feelings and habits.

But we know, that however we may differ in our views in other respects, we all agree in being the genuine sons of New-England—agree, that although we do not emblazon in our coat of arms the wheaten sheaf, the olive and fig, the cane, cotton and rice, nor the bread-tree, nor the laurel-magnolia, we love her none the less for her native roughness, coldness and sterility. We contemplate with pride, as the ground of our escutcheon, the oak, the pine, and vast masses of granite rock. For with the labour and the sweat of freemen we cut down the trees; we remove the rocks; and instead of beautiful horses, luxuries and slaves, we rear men, respectable husbands and wives, fathers and mothers. We rear our children in schools and in churches, and there we expect they will gain habits of order,

discipline, and the love of virtue. We learn them to know their rights, to be jealous of them, and to respect themselves. And if the pride and self-respect, incident to these habits, peculiarly expose them to the fawning and the arts of demagogues, we learn them more just modes of thinking, of judging profession by conduct, and measures by results, which will eventually bring upon their deceivers the just retribution of falsehood and deception.

We have seen the effect of Washington policy upon New-England. We have abundantly tested a policy, its rival and its opposite. "No man, having drunk old wine, straightway preferreth the new; for he saith, the old is better." You, gentlemen of the W. B. Societies, here assembled, stand pledged by your solemn professions, to use all the influence of your exertion and example in favour of the former. Perhaps there was never greater need of exertion. Many seem to imagine, that with the war all our danger is past, and that we may yield ourselves up to the indolent confidence of full security. The signs of the times admonish us otherwise.

✕ We see a cloud of threatening and portentous aspect gathering again in the east. While the philanthropist was exulting in the prospect of a long period of repose for the nations; while the Christian was hoping every thing to the peaceful kingdom of his Master, from a state of universal peace, from the facility of intercourse in such a state with distant and heathen lands, from the concurrence of sovereigns professing to wish well to the great cause, and from the increased means of that unexampled

*This cloud had been swept away by the Battle of Waterloo on the 18. June previous.*

ardour for that cause and kingdom, which has been recently displayed, the inscrutable wisdom of Providence has permitted these bright prospects to be again overcast.

The restless disturber of nations is again at the head of the most fickle, turbulent, ambitious and powerful nation in the world. Now, while his throne totters to its base, while he is comparatively weak and insecure, and while the smart of his recent scourging is yet fresh in his remembrance, he may talk of penitence, and conversion, and peace, and subdued ambition, and shed the tears of a sick crocodile. We heed them not. We remember him well—the virtual murderer of five millions of human beings—the Mahometan in Egypt—the Roman Catholick in Italy—the protestant in Holland—and the atheist every where. We have seen him wading to his object amidst dead bodies, through blood and tears, during his long career consistent but in one thing, and that thing perpetual inconsistency. We have “eaten too much bread of adversity, and drunk too much water of affliction,” by him dealt out to us already, not to be jealous of him for the future. Should he once more regain his terrible pre-eminence, we have every thing to dread from the renewal of his exertions to entangle us in his toils again.

Should that event, so deprecated by all the good, take place, we shall expect to see you looking neither for the path of popularity or interest, but steadfastly walking in that of honour and duty. We shall expect to find you using all honourable and

consistent exertions to influence the people against countenancing embargoes, non-intercourses and wars, French measures, which have proved so ruinous to New-England; and to inculcate upon them the importance of that maxim—"peace, commerce and honest friendship with all nations; entangling alliances with none."

In walking in the path of honour and duty, you may be often assailed by calumny and faction. You will often see side-paths, that will promise to lead you in more pleasant and shorter directions to power and distinction. Aspire to the dignity of consistency. Seek popularity no further than you may without the smallest sacrifice of principle. Be not tempted by the bad pre-eminence which is often awarded, as the boon of apostacy and of bending to the current of popular feeling.

As a motive to perseverance in this path, permit me to observe in conclusion, that even in this naughty world, where honours and applauses seem so generally lavished upon the undeserving, all eventually understand, honour and respect the man, who pursues a straight course, and consults his duty, rather than his interest and his popularity.

And should it even be otherwise, forget not amidst the hilarity of this day, that a time is approaching, when it will be of no interest or importance to you, who is in honour, or who in humiliation; when the passing politicks and interests of the day will vanish from your mind, like a dream. The grand question will then return in the light of