



“Oursure the plow of fair, delightful Peace,
“Unweary'd by party rage, to live like Brothers.”

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1813.

No. 731

Vol. XIV.

MR. HAY'S ORATION.

A number of excellent Addresses were made to the people on the last celebration of our Independence. Several were sent to us for publication; but owing to a pressure of other matter, we have not before now been able to insert one of them. We now present our readers with an extract from one delivered in the Capitol at Richmond by Geo. HAY, Esq. which produced great effect upon his audience, from the situation which he makes to the present war, and especially to the enormities then just committed at Hampton.

FELLOW CITIZENS!

From the year 1776 to the present time, the people have consecrated the 4th day of July, to joy and gratitude; joy for the assertion of our national independence, and gratitude to those by whose wisdom, patriotism and valor, it was effected. The anniversary of that day, on which the representatives of the people of the then British colonies of North America declared their constituents to be a free and independent nation, and assumed, for them, among the powers of the earth, that station to which nature and nature's God entitled them, has again come round.— And it has come, like the day on which our fathers met, finally to decide on the future destiny of their country, while our ports are shut, our coasts invaded, our towns laid waste, and our frontiers exposed to all the horrors of a war, in which cunning, cruelty and murder in cold blood, have usurped the place of courage. If then we are here met together to pay the annual tribute of our unfeigned respect to the statesmen, whom time has sunk into the grave, and to the warriors, who fell for us in battle, let us make the offering in the way which they, if they could be now consulted, would most approve. Let us emulate their spirit; let us be governed by their precepts and following their high example, UNITE as they did, and encounter difficulty, privation, danger, desolation and death in every form, rather than submit, longer, submit to oppression and degradation. Let us attend to the valedictory admonition of him who has been emphatically called the saviour of his country; let us show that his memory is dear to our hearts, and his precepts are held in our grateful remembrance, by resolving to be, and to continue to be, one people. Let us attend to him, and not to those false prophets, whose coming he foretold; in a man who under the sanction of his venerated name, preach a doctrine which he abhorred. “Union,” he tells us, “is the main pillar in the edifice of our real independence; the support of our tranquillity at home, of our peace a broad; of our safety; of our prosperity; of that very liberty which we so highly prize. It is the point of our political fortress against which the batteries of internal and external enemies, will be most constantly and actively, (though often covertly and insidiously) directed. Frown therefore, indignantly frown,” he continues, “on the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together its various parts.” To this hallowed spirit, speaking from the tomb the prophetic and inspired language of truth and patriotism, I conjure you and all the people of this nation to attend; to attend with reverence. The enemy, by a discrimination both military and commercial between the belligerent and non combatant States, is endeavoring to undermine this great pillar of our independence, while some of our citizens, from the frenzy of party spirit, cooperate with him, by attempting to alienate the people of the East from their brethren of the South and of the West. At this very moment, when the enemy is upon our Atlantic and inland frontier, when all the energies of the government and of the people ought to be directed to the public service, when the men of Kentucky and Ohio, undismayed by

past calamities, go forth to battle to support the cause of their country, and to avenge the death of their murdered friends, a sullen neutrality in the East is observed, and questions deliberately settled by the best and wisest men of this country, with Washington at their head, are revived and strenuously pressed upon the public mind.

Questions which have slept during five & twenty years of peace & prosperity, are now in the hour of difficulty & danger, clamorously forced upon our notice. Why is this done now? Why is this done at all? These are questions which I will not stop to answer; but there is one point in which we must all concur. We must all agree, that the effect, as far as any effect can be produced, is not only to encourage the enemy, but “to alienate one portion of our country from the rest, and to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together its various parts.”

Let us remember, we have not followed the example of those, whose wisdom, virtue and valor, we are here assembled to celebrate. Our fathers did not wait until the oppression, which produced the war, was actually felt. They opposed the unjust pretensions of G. Britain, at the instance they were announced. The British government asserted a right to tax the colonies. Thus usurpation was strenuously opposed. The contemplated one was trivial in itself—and might have been paid, without diminishing a single comfort, which our citizens had been accustomed to enjoy. But the people of America, happily for themselves, for us, & for the world, decided that they would not submit to the slightest imposition. They opposed a principle which they knew would lead to unlimited dominion. The British ministry endeavored to silence this opposition by a new commercial regulation, which, while it asserted the principle, made the tax entirely nominal. They took from the export duty in England, a sum precisely equivalent to the duty exacted here. But this miserable subterfuge did not succeed. The founders of our revolution disdained to make those pecuniary calculations, which have been of late so common. They scorned to weigh gold and silver against principle.

But our remonstrances were treated with scorn; our opposition was declared to be rebellion; Washington himself declared to be a traitor; our trade was annihilated: our cities destroyed and our country ravaged, by the veteran armies of our oppressor, aided by hired murderers from the continent. But the spirit which dictated the Declaration of Independence was not subdued; the flame of patriotism was cherished with more than vestal vigilance; “the chain of union was bright & strong,” and the surrender of the British army in this state, produced a reluctant but final acquiescence in our claim to national independence.— Such was the conduct, such were the sufferings, such was the success of those whom we are now assembled to honor and who are most worthy to be honored.

Have we, animated by the spirit of '76, followed this great example? Have we united, and risen up to oppose insolent and unjust pretensions, as soon as they were announced? Have we had wisdom to foresee the mischief, which acquiescence in foreign usurpation must always produce, and firmness enough to resist it, from its commencement? No! we have not had this wisdom. We have not displayed this firmness.— The hard hand of oppression was laid upon us; and though we murmured we did not resist. We have been insulted and injured at home and abroad, and though we complained we never struck a blow to revenge. The spirit of our fathers slept. We have indeed been patient. Patient! Let me speak the truth; we have been abject under a pretended

devotion to peace, we have concealed our love of gain. We have been corrupted by high prices for produce and for freight, the miserable profits of a despised and despicable neutrality & in our ardent pursuit of wealth, we have stooped and crept and crawled, until we almost had lost the power to become erect, and we have been oppressed and trampled, until not only every feeling of shame, but all sense of pain appeared to be extinct. Our commerce had been for years piratically plundered, our ships taken from us by force, or consumed by fire, upon the ocean; our cities insulted, our citizens murdered, our flag dishonored, our seamen made slaves, and national character become the scorn of nations. All this we have seen, and yet your patience was not exhausted. For seven long years, the very period which our fathers encountered all the miseries of war, in repelling a claim which was never carried into actual operation against them, then willing subjects of the British empire, we, a free people, possessing twice their strength and wealth, have submitted to every species of oppression and insult. But, thanks be to God! the citizens of these United States have been at length roused from the stupor and lethargy, into which they had sunk.

This subject of our wrongs and humiliations deserves our most serious notice. Mr. H. took a view of them; but we will not follow him. They are well known. We must however mention; that in June, 1807, a British ship in the Bay of Chesapeake attacked an American frigate unprepared for battle, killed some of her men, forced her to strike her colours, and impressed several seamen from on board. Yes, Fellow Citizens, the flag of these United States, which never knew disgrace before, and which has seen nothing but glory since, descended, sunk, became prostrate, within the limits of this insulted country, upon a deck wet and stained with the blood of our murdered countrymen. I do not mention this outrage, as cowardly as it was savage, as a cause of war. The British ministry disavowed the act, and we have accepted the reparation, such as it was, which their pride permitted them to make. It is only stated to shew the insolent and hostile spirit of that nation towards us. But, thanks be to God this dishonor has been wiped away; the nation has been avenged: the flag of the United States has waved in triumph over the naval standard of Britain: and honored, forever honored, be the men, who have bestowed this glory and happiness on their country.

There was yet more of misery, and more of humiliation, in store for the people of America. Encouraged by our patience, and still more by our divisions, and stimulated at once by rapacity and by pride, Great Britain, in November, 1807, issued her orders in council, interdicting all neutral trade with France and her dependencies. This gave the finishing stroke to almost all our commerce except with her self. It was the death-blow to neutral rights. It was the open unqualified assertion in the face of the world, of that principle which has been so adroitly developed, that Great Britain is authorized to maintain its naval superiority against her enemy, at the expense not only of that enemy, but of neutrals. A principle more lawless & more oppressive was never asserted by the Arab of the desert, or the Pirate of the Mediterranean.

A single fact, will exhibit these orders in their genuine colors, and shew the source from which they sprung. After Great Britain had issued her imperial decree commanding the nations of the earth to abstain from trading with her enemy, she herself, meanly and sordidly carried on with that enemy, the very trade, in which neutrals were forbidden to engage! It is true that these orders have been repealed. But why were they

repealed? Was it because Great Britain had at length become sensible of the injustice which we had suffered at her hands? No! Did she offer to indemnify us for the millions of which we had been robbed? No! Was it then because France was believed by her to have repealed her Berlin and Milan decrees? No! Such is not the fact. The repeal was produced by the clamors of the British people who felt the interruption of the American trade to be a national calamity.

To complete the degradation of this country, the British claim the right of impressing their seamen from American ships on the high seas. This alleged right they have long continued to exercise, and in the pursuit of it, have taken thousands of native born citizens, and by chains and stripes, forced them to serve on board their navy—to fight their battles—to assist before the war in plundering their own defenceless countrymen, and since, in combatting against a flag in defence of which they would be proud to lay down their lives.

To shake off this yoke, is now the principal object of the present war; an object which must be obtained. The government of America can never lose sight of it. It cannot be so base and abject. To sanction by treaty, a claim which brands this nation with shame and infamy, would be treason against humanity—a cowardly and sacrilegious surrender of that equal station among the powers of the Earth, to which the great men, whose merits have brought us this day together, declared that “Nature and Nature's God entitled us.”

And yet there are persons in America, men in the councils of the nation and of the states, who say, that we ought still to have been patient, and that the war in which we are engaged, is wicked and unjust. If this be true, let us disperse, in sorrow and in silence. Let us speak no more of the statesmen who planned the revolution, or of the heroes who conducted us through it, or fell in its support. The revolution was folly, the war was wickedness. Washington a traitor, our government usurpation, and that independence which we have here met to celebrate, the shame, and not the glory of America. We have felt for years the hand of oppression; our forefathers would not suffer it to touch them even for a moment.

Before the war, the conduct of Great Britain was in direct opposition to all the laws and principles established among nations for their government in relation to neutrals. Since the war, it has been equally irregular and offensive. She has deluded the drunken Savage of the North West into an alliance, which she knows must eventuate in his destruction. She has turned him loose upon our frontier, and even brought him to fight by the side of the British soldier, though taught by experience that he will rush on a defenceless captive, and murder in the fort, the enemy whom in the field he was afraid to face.

But this is not all. The British not content with combating men armed for battle, have commenced a brutal war on those whose sex claims and receives, at all times, and under all circumstances, from every man worthy of the name, sympathy and protection. A licentious soldiery have been let loose, upon matrons and maidens; and purity and innocence have sunk and perished in the infernal struggle. Fellow Citizens, you are all sons, husbands, fathers, or brothers—you have mothers, whom you venerate—wives whom you love—daughters who look up to you for safety—sisters whom you are bound by honor and affection to protect—you have the hearts of men, and you must feel this unexpected blow—you have arms, and you must avenge it. The hour of retribution will come; but it must come when you are in the field. The only retaliation to which a magnanimous people, however insulted or injured by individual excesses, will ever resort, will be shewn by patriot

ism and courage against an enemy in battle. And when this enemy shall abandon his mean and sordid system of desultory, plundering and licentious warfare, when he shall advance upon our soil, where its defenders can meet him in the face, he will find that the terror with which he has inspired one sex, has only inflamed the courage of the other. “Hampton” will be the word, that will pass from rank to rank, along the line of our patriot army, and the pollution which they have sustained, shall be washed away in the blood of the unmanly miscreants, by whom it was committed.

Here let me ask, what is Great Britain to gain by this miserable policy? What is she to gain by this infamous alliance, by shutting our ports, by pillaging our coast, by burning defenceless towns? or by a shameless violation of the laws of decency and humanity? She may expend one hundred millions more, she may add to the weight of that debt, which has already made every seventh man a pauper; she may employ ten years in the work of death and desolation and pollution; and after all, she will find, that our population has increased, that plenty waves upon our fields, that our manufactures are prosperous, that our union is confirmed, and that experience has taught us never again to submit with patience to insult or oppression. Do you not believe that the British ministry must be sensible, that they can gain nothing in this war by conquest? They are sensible of it. They feel it. Why then do they not listen to our complaints, and surrender the claim of impressing, if we surrender, as we have proposed to do, the right of employing British seamen? Why will they not accept terms of accommodation which we are not bound to offer, and which are offered only from a love of peace? I will tell you. Their hope is, that we shall not be united. This war is waged against our Union. This is the point of our national fortress against which the “external enemy now directs his battery.” His hope is to disgrace our republican government—to expose it to the scorn of the world—to our own contempt. If he can make one part of this nation feel exclusively the pressure of his power, and neutralize the other by keeping at a distance the calamities of invasion, he trusts that we may be weak and wicked enough to quarrel with each other, and to pull down the temple, which we have consecrated, to union and to independence. Then, divided, miserable and weak, we shall be exposed to the pelting of that pitiless storm, which he will soon cause to burst in thunder on our devoted heads. If this scheme shall fail, his next hope is, that the people, harassed by the war, may change the administration, and bestow the government on men whom he supposes to be more friendly to his views. In this hope too he will find himself deceived, there is no party in America, would dare to surrender to Great Britain the right to regulate our trade and to impress even British seamen from our ships.

Yes, my countrymen, rest assured that the union will be preserved, and that our rights will be maintained. The people of America are all well aware of the glorious destinies which await their country. They look forward to that time, which some here assembled will live to see, when fifty millions of people, in the full enjoyment of freedom and abundance, will occupy the fruitful plains and mountains and valleys which extend from the Atlantic to the head waters of the Missouri—from the gulf of St. Lawrence to the mouth of the Mississippi; a people bound together no less by interest than affection. Even then we shall be rapidly advancing in wealth and strength. The nations of Europe, exhausted by the calamities which the ambition of Princes never fail to bring upon their subjects, will respect our rights, because they will fear our power. The navy of