

AN

ORATION,

DELIVERED AT GREENFIELD,

JULY 6, 1812:

IN COMMEMORATION

OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE ;

AT THE REQUEST

OF THE

Washington Benevolent Societies,

OF THE

COUNTY OF FRANKLIN.

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BY SAMUEL C. ALLEN, Esq.

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GREENFIELD,

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1812.

*Greenfield, July 6, 1812.*

The Committee of Arrangement, for celebrating the anniversary of American Independence, at Greenfield, (agreeably to a resolve of the WASHINGTON BENEVOLENT SOCIETY,) present the thanks of said Society to the Hon. SAMUEL C. ALLEN, for his patriotic and eloquent Oration this day delivered, and request him to furnish a Copy for publication.

*In behalf of said Committee,*

**R. E. NEWCOMB.**

# ORATION.

WHEN the exigences of a nation demand great efforts, they naturally inspire the spirit to produce them ; and the characters, which have arisen to vindicate the rights of the people, or to rescue their country from bondage, have, in general, been formed by the circumstances of the times and elicited by the occasion. By converging the energies of the mind to a single point, they produce a force of character, which infinitely transcends the ordinary efforts of the human intellect. But, when the occasions cease, and the characters formed by them have passed away, succeeding generations are left to admire their virtues, without the ambition or the hope of attaining to their excellence.

But, the great man, whose fame is identified with his country's independence and glory, seems to have derived *his* strength of character from an original impress, and not from causes, which, whilst they impart energy to the mind, restrain its liberty. Hence it is, that, the splendor of his virtues, is tempered with a mildness, which rather delights and charms, than overpowers the vision.

As he did not derive his force of mind from the impulse of strong passions, nor the temporary excitement of external causes, so he was distinguished above the great captains of other times, for his cool reflection, for his insight into the characters of men, and for his prophetic vision into futurity. With these qualities, he was competent, as well to conduct the complicated concerns of the civil administration, as to direct the storm and fire of the battle.

He entered into the American cause not from the impulse of passion, but from a deep conviction of

the justice and necessity of resistance. His object was not to establish new and visionary theories in morals or in government, but to vindicate the rights of his country. He never depreciated the lessons of experience, nor intended to demolish the whole fabric of society. As there was nothing wild or extravagant in his views, so there was nothing base or violent in the spirit, with which he pursued them. When he had redressed the wrongs of his country and obtained for her an honorable peace, he had too much greatness of mind to harbour the unmanly sentiments of hatred and revenge.

How far from the spirit and example of WASHINGTON, are those, who desecrate this anniversary to inflame the worst passions, and to instigate the government and the people to measures, not warranted by justice or policy !

As the mind of WASHINGTON was elevated above the low passions, so he disdained the arts and tricks of vulgar politicians. His confidence of truth and right imparted a dignity to his character, which appalled faction at home, and commanded respect abroad.

The beginning of his administration was embarrassed with the difficulties incident to a new government, and to adjusting the complicated claims, which grew out of the war. These were scarcely surmounted, when his wisdom and firmness were summoned to a severer test. A revolution, new in its principles and character, and incomprehensible in its materials and resources, suddenly broke out in France, presenting to the surrounding nations a strange and fearful aspect. The American people, mistaking the guilty violence of an unprincipled faction for the virtuous efforts of a brave nation struggling to recover their natural rights, entered into their cause with a warmth of temper, which set at defiance the calcula-

tions of policy, and repressed the sense of interest and safety. In this dreadful crisis, the mind of WASHINGTON, like the sun in the firmament, dissipated the mist of popular delusion, and saved the country from the pestilence of the French revolution. In the war of unexampled cruelty and slaughter which ensued, he asserted the right of his country to remain neuter ; and having taken the ground, which its safety and independence required, he maintained it with inflexible perseverance and unshaken firmness.

In the domestic administration, he regarded all the great interests of the country. Agriculture, Commerce and the Fisheries flourished under his protection and care.

He patronised the insitutions of literature, religion and charity, and stamped a value upon them by his favour and example.

In his appointments to office, he knew no party distinctions ; but considered talents and integrity as presenting the only claims to public confidence, and affording the only guaranty for the able and faithful discharge of duty. He assumed to exercise no powers of doubtful construction, and sought for his official conduct *no concealment from the people*. Persuaded of the justice and policy of his measures, he reposed for their support on the correctness of the public opinion and the integrity of the public sentiment. It was a principle, which he held in common with the whigs of the revolution, *that the people were never intentionally in the wrong*. Having no interest distinct from the public good, if they deviated from the right course, it was their *error*, and not their *crime*. And it may be affirmed in general, that, whenever the discontents of the people become prevalent, there is some cause of complaint ; and in a controversy between them and their rulers, the presumption at least is in favour of the people. A contrary belief would

destroy at once all confidence in their virtue and patriotism, and lead to a system of proscription and violence, on the part of the rulers, totally inconsistent with the essential principles of republican government.

The great object of his foreign policy was to maintain with the belligerents the relations of peace. He had witnessed the effects of war.—He knew that the spirit of conquest was hostile to the genius of a republic ; and he felt, that he owed it not less to freedom than to humanity, to save the country from the mischiefs and evils of war.

He maintained the true principles of the law of nations against the arrogant pretensions of the French power, and resisted its long continued efforts to draw the government from the neutral ground it had taken. He baffled the intrigues of the French minister and arrested the spirit of faction excited by him.

When the commerce of the country was distressed by the depredations of the British cruisers, instead of waging an offensive war with the unoffending people of her colonies, he claimed indemnity for the injuries she had done us, and he sought, with good faith, the restoration of harmony between the two countries. The treaty, which was the result of a negotiation equally honorable to both governments and productive of great mutual advantage, imposed a law on a succeeding administration, which delayed, for a season, the execution of its mischievous policy, and secured to the country the benefits of a prosperous trade.

Such was the administration of WASHINGTON, so pure in its principles, so elevated in its spirit, so honorable to himself, so glorious to his country.

No sooner were the preserving genius and guardian spirit of WASHINGTON withdrawn from the public counsels, than the intrigues of the French govern-

ment, which had never ceased its efforts to embarrass or undermine his administration, were renewed with increased activity against his successor.—This unfortunate man, remarkable for an inordinate ambition—incapable from temper of pursuing a steady and consistent plan of policy, lost the confidence of his friends, without being able to conciliate his enemies. He left the government with extreme mortification, and his subsequent life, so inauspicious to his own fame, has developed to the extent a weakness and defect of character, which, the eagle eye of HAMILTON early discovered, would ruin the Washington policy, and *transfer* the government into other hands.

The change, which ensued on Mr. Jefferson's accession to the presidency, was not more disastrous to the external prosperity of the country, than pernicious to the *essential principles* of civil liberty.

The system of favoritism, which he introduced into the administration, is repugnant to the genius of the people and at variance with the spirit and structure of the government. Instead of exercising the executive discretion on public principles and for the common good of the whole people, he employed the powers confided to him to encrease the activity and number of his partizans, and to acquire, by an imperceptible influence, the control of the public opinion.

Of all the ways of invading public liberty, this is the most insidious, and least likely to excite jealousy and create alarm among the people. It is a slow poison, which pervades the whole body, and imperceptibly preys on the vital energy.

Not contented with distributing the offices within his appointment to his own partizans exclusively, he extended the plan of favoritism to the popular elections, and the freedom of opinion, so essential to public liberty, was every where assailed by a mysteri-

ous power, unknown to the constitution. By means of this influence, the representatives, whom the people had placed as a guard and control on the Executive power, were converted into the pliant tools of the administration, affording an indiscriminate support to all its measures. In this perversion of the popular branch of the government—in this unnatural state of things in a free constitution, it is not strange, that the freedom of debate should be invaded, and the sovereignty of the people violated in the persons of those independent men who should claim the right to deliberate, who should dare to speak for the people.

The same system also extended itself to the particular governments ; and the state sovereignties, which were intended to be guarded with so much jealousy, passed into the hands of men no less obsequious to the national Executive. Indebted for their elevation to his favor, it was natural, that they should uphold a system, which had lifted them into notice and consequence ; and in *their* turn, employ the patronage attached to their stations in accordance with its general policy. Thus, the tributary streams of the state governments were turned to swell the tide of Presidential influence. In this way, the sovereignties of the individual states, which were intended as a watch on the general government—to control its dangerous powers, have been virtually annihilated ; and an immense fabric of usurpation and tyranny has arisen, unperceived by the people, under the forms of the constitution.\*

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\* At the adoption of the Federal Constitution, the state sovereignties were considered as so many barriers against the encroachments of the general government. “ They will afford, said AMES in the Convention, a shelter against the abuse of power, and will be the natural avengers of our violated rights.” Was it expected that *the consolidation of the states*, so much dreaded at that time, would be effect-



The infusion of this spirit of favoritism into the government has not only poisoned the fountains of the public security, but it has invaded the retreats of private life and embittered its enjoyments. The independent sentiments and virtuous habits of the people of Massachusetts, for a long time, resisted its encroachments and maintained that moderation and liberal policy, which had uniformly distinguished its public administration. But so great was the executive influence, so numerous and powerful were its attractions, that it attached to its interest the profligate and the unprincipled, the ambitious and the needy, and its partizans at length prevailed in the elections, and the administration passed into their hands. We have neither time nor *patience* to enumerate its multiplied acts of injustice and violence. It will long be remembered for its invasion of individual rights—for its gross and palpable violations of the constitution—for the indecency of its appointments—for its attempts to prostrate the judiciary—for its actual derangement of the militia, and for its pitiful contrivance to secure the first branch of the legislature, in contempt of the authority and will of the people.

Measures so flagitious in their character, so de-

ed by *open force*? The people have more to apprehend from their own credulity and the *frauds* of designing men in power.

When Mr. Jefferson came into office, we were told, that the state rulers ought to *harmonize* with the general government. What was intended by this *harmony*? It could not be a prompt compliance with its constitutional requisitions. No, it was the total surrender of *their* discretion and implicit confidence in *his* measures. This doctrine leads directly to tyranny. When the state rulers shall thus become the creatures of the President, the states will degenerate into provinces of his empire; the people will find, that the name of freemen and the right of suffrage, can avail them little, when the Chief Magistrate of the Union is designated by a Cabal in the City of Washington. Let them look to the State sovereignties, as the Citadel of their Liberties.

grading in their operations, could not fail to excite the spirit and kindle the honest indignation of the citizens of Massachusetts. For it is not in the nature of freemen to submit to discriminations, founded in a difference of opinion, and to disqualifications arising from the exercise of a right ; “ And until their spirits are broken, they will make continual efforts to recover what belongs to them.”† They have redeemed the liberty and honor of this state and restored to its councils their most esteemed citizen, the excellent STRONG, the disciple and companion of WASHINGTON. And in the government of the union such a state of things cannot long exist. Either this system will destroy public liberty, or the people who are the natural guardians of their own rights, *the people* will arise in their majesty and restore to the constitution its vital energy and diffuse their vivifying spirit through all the departments of the government.

As this system of favoritism and proscription had, for the first time in this state, been adopted and carried into effect by Mr. Gerry, the national executive looked with great solicitude for the success of this experiment with the people. And in order to divert their attention from the odious features of his administration, and to raise in their minds suspicions and jealousies of their best citizens, a wonderful contrivance of a wonderful Plot was fabricated and got up for the season of the northern elections ; and though the hero of it succeeded perfectly to his mind, his employers were made the miserable dupes of their own artifice, and the one lost his money, and the other his election.

The baseness of this expedient to maintain their abused power is equalled only by the ridiculousness of its issue ; and it is not more a subject of detesta-

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†Gov. STRONG's late incomparable Speech.

tation, than of ridicule. If any thing, however, could *add* to the shame of this most contemptible farce, it is the superlative folly, which should get it up again, and bring it before the world, as a cause for engaging this nation in the devastation and carnage of war.

The system of foreign policy, adopted by Mr. Jefferson and pursued by his successor, has been a subject of continual apprehension to all discerning men, who wished to maintain the neutrality and peace of the country. The treaty, formed by Jay and approved by Washington, expired by its own limitation when Mr. Fox was at the head of the British ministry. To preserve the amicable relations contemplated by that treaty, this ministry, who were thought to entertain the most favorable dispositions towards America, offered to renew its provisions, and in the mean time, to enter upon the discussion of the several points in controversy between the two countries.— Mr. Jefferson declined this offer ; and afterwards rejected a new treaty, formed on the basis of his own instructions, and by his own ministers ; a treaty, which they considered as embracing all the points in dispute, except the subject of impressment, and contemplating such arrangements in that affair, as should remove all cause of complaint. The rejection of this treaty by Mr. Jefferson and the pretext for rejecting it ; the rejection of this treaty without submitting it to the Senate for their advice, is proof of a deliberate intention on his part, to throw the country off the neutral ground, which WASHINGTON had taken, and ultimately to enlist its forces and hazard its fortunes in the war of France against England.

It was the misfortune of the people and government of Europe to misapprehend the genius of the French power, the nature of its resources and the variety and efficiency of its means. And France is not more indebted for her conquests to the vigor of her

military spirit, than to the intrigues and artifices by which she corrupted and deceived the rulers and the people of those devoted countries, which now groan under her despotism. Through all the revolutions in her government she has pursued the same course of policy towards foreign nations. And such is the nature of her power, that it seems to be susceptible of little modification from the will and character of the person, who administers the government. Humanity therefore has little ground of hope that its oppressions will terminate with the life of the present ruler. In the ultimate views of her policy, for extending and perpetuating her dominion over the world, is comprehended, not only the destruction of English commerce, as a mean of undermining the maritime power of Great Britain, but the extinction of the *commercial spirit* in every country, as being hostile to the genius of her government. Her anti-commercial system did not therefore originate exclusively from her enmity to England. It is to be presumed, that the fall of the British power would cause no relaxation of its spirit, no abandonment of its principle. And so long as the present despotism shall exist in France, COMMERCE can have no security, but in the want of her means to distress and annoy it.

We have not time to review the several edicts of the belligerent affecting neutral trade. As early as January 1798, the French Directory issued a Decree declaring, that the condition of ships in every thing, that concerned their character as neutrals or enemies, should be determined by their cargoes ; and every vessel laden in whole or in part with merchandize coming out of England or its possessions, was declared good prize, whoever might be the owner of such merchandize. This decree, so repugnant to the law of nations—and injurious to the interests of neutrals, was expressly founded in an ordinance of Lewis XIVth.

At that time, a sense of national independence and honor had not deserted our public counsels. France was compelled to recede from her unjust system, to suspend her hostility to commerce and to wait the chances of a change of men for the renewal of her favorite plan of policy. She was not deceived in her calculations. She knew the number and quality of her host. At length, a more favorable time arrived for the revival of her ancient principles ; and she commenced anew her systematic warfare upon neutral trade.

There can be no pretence, that England was the aggressor in this war upon commerce ; and the blockade of Mr. Fox would furnish to France no pretext for her Berlin decree, as a measure of retaliation.

But, whatever opinion we might entertain, as to the precedency of the public acts of the two governments, the *injuries* of France in principle and character, in magnitude and extent, intitle her to a preeminence in fraud, in violence and cruelty. Her invasion of Hamburg and seizure of all English merchandizes, no matter to whom they belonged, before the Berlin decree could have been notified, thereby giving a retrospect to it ; her confiscation of our vessels and cargoes, which, without the knowledge of this decree, had resorted to her ports in the pursuit of a lawful trade ; her burning and sinking our ships on the high seas ; *these* are acts of atrocity and outrage, which have no parallel in the conduct of her enemy. Yet, the despot, who invaded a neutral state and seized the goods of neutrals in a neutral territory, for no other reason, than, that they were of British origin, has the effrontery to declare himself the defender of the rights and commerce of neutrals !

But the United States are concerned to maintain only the character and rights of a neutral nation. And whatever pretext the blockade of Mr. Fox might have

afforded to France for her Berlin decree, as a measure of retaliation against England, yet, being no infringement of neutral rights, it was never considered by our government, as a subject of complaint against England, till Bonaparte saw fit to prescribe it as a condition, without which, he would not even *promise* to revoke his decrees. If any thing could encrease the dishonor of this administration, and *add* to the proof of its absolute subserviency to France, it must be, the attempt at this late hour to get up this blockade, as a cause of complaint against England.

There is as much of cruelty as of artifice in the conduct of Bonaparte to the President, in the case of the Proclamation. Having induced him to proclaim the repeal of the French decrees, when in fact they were *not* repealed ; as if he intended to degrade this government, by exposing the character of its chief magistrate, he has now published to the world documents *disproving* the fact, which the President had thus proclaimed, on his high responsibility.

However the administration, whilst it pretended to act in the belief, that the decrees were in fact revoked, might attempt to justify the continuance of the non-intercourse against England alone, yet, the promulgation of the late report of the duke of Bassano, proving the existence of the decrees, would require, at least, the renewal of this act against France, as a measure of impartial neutrality. And a government, which had acted with sincerity, and was intitled to respect itself, in a case so materially affecting its honor, would have demanded an acknowledgment of the injury it had suffered, and required security against its repetition. But the publication of this report produced no change in the American Cabinet. The great Emperor had long ago determined, there should be no neutrals ; and assumed to declare, “ that war in fact existed between England and the United

States"; and the late war act of Congress is but a republication of the same thing, for the sake of form. †

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† In July 1810, Mr. Madison instructed Gen. Armstrong, then minister in France, "That a satisfactory provision for restoring the property lately surprised and seized by order, or at the instance of the French government, must be combined with the repeal of the French edicts, *with a view to a non-intercourse with Great Britain*; such a provision being an *indispensable* evidence of the just purpose of France towards the United States." Such was the *ground*, at that time, *professedly* taken by Mr. Madison. How has he maintained it? The French minister in his letter to Gen. Armstrong, in Sept. following, says, "As to the merchandize *confiscated*, it having been confiscated as a measure of *reprisal*, the principles of reprisal must be the law in that affair." Thus France, not only neglected to make 'provision for restoring this property,' but explicitly asserted her right to it—as being subject to the law of reprisal. What did Mr. Madison do next? He issued his proclamation the first of November thereby exempting France from the operation of the act of non-intercourse, and leaving it in force against Great Britain alone.

Thus he abandoned the ground himself had taken, and compromised the interest and honor of the country. Now after relinquishing his claim for indemnity, for such in effect is the proclamation, and quietly giving up to Bonaparte 30 or 40 millions, of which he had robbed our citizens, under his unjust decrees, what security did Mr. Madison obtain against future seizures, what evidence of the actual revocation of the Decrees? The mode of repeal would be by a formal decree for that purpose; and such decree, if it existed, would be found in the proper office; and the regular evidence to our government would be a formally certified copy of it. In this case such evidence was indispensable, because, without it, they could not claim of Great Britain the repeal of her orders in council.

It is not strange that an administration, which should give up its claim to indemnity for French confiscations *against right*, should proclaim the repeal of the French decrees *against fact*.

As the French Decrees were not repealed, either Mr. Madison was *deceived* by the French, or he was himself a *deceiver*. Why did he not require of the French government the proper evidence of the repeal? If he intended to avail himself of the advantage of it with Great Britain, such evidence was indispensable. Why did he not permit Mr. Smith to make the enquiry of the French minister when he arrived from France, "whether the decrees were in whole or in part, revoked." An American must look through French spectacles, not to discern *something* in this affair.

What shall we say, fellow citizens, of the present state of our country? What are the causes of war against Great Britain? It is not pretended that any *new* cause exists. It is an *offensive* war. Such a war requires strong reasons to justify it. A conscientious man must have great scruples, whether he could justify himself, in attacking the peaceable province of Canada, and shedding the blood of its unoffending inhabitants.

Again, what advantage shall we derive from this war? If we should overrun the open country and leave Quebec in the hands of the British, the whole territory would necessarily fall back into their possession. If we could succeed to capture that fortress, what advantage would the United States derive from the acquisition? Great Britain could command the only outlet of that whole country, and cut off all its communication with the sea. Under the privations and distresses of such a condition, the inhabitants would naturally seek relief in a re-union with England. Who, then, will answer for the blood which shall be spilt in this unprofitable contest? Besides, if we could attach these provinces to the United States, such a measure would encrease the dangers which already threaten the union. Our territory is large enough without them. The very extent of the country is unfavorable to a republican government.— An extensive empire must almost necessarily become a despotism.

Again, a state of war is hostile to the *genius* of a republic. It cannot fail to endanger the liberties of the people; and a war of conquest is, in the spirit of it, repugnant to the principles, which are the support of a free state.

It has been said we should fight for commerce. I would be among the last to relinquish the right to a free trade. But, shall we obtain a security for trade



by a war with England? If Great Britain were subdued, would commerce be free? Would it find in Bonaparte a friend and protector? Hostility to commerce is in the very essence of the French power.

When the Directory issued their decree, the government of this country acted with dignity and decision. Mr. Adams in his speech to Congress, pronounced this decree an unequivocal act of war, which interest, as well as honor called upon the nation firmly to resist. The firm and energetic measures of Congress in that crisis, not only afforded protection to trade, but maintained the rights and honor of the government. And the rulers of France were compelled to suspend for a season, the measures of their injurious policy.

Again, will not the war, by cutting off their supplies, aid the Tyrant of Europe to conquer the patriots of Spain and Portugal? Have we no sympathy with these people, nobly contending against a foreign foe, for the independence of their native country?

What will be the effect of the war upon ourselves? It will exhaust the treasures of the nation, and create an enormous public debt. It will subject American property, of immense value, to sequestration in England and to capture on the high seas. It will annihilate the remnant of our commerce—it will expose our seaboard to depredation and our towns to the fire of the British navy. It will subject the people to **GRIEVOUS TAXES**—it will corrupt their morals. It will compel them to relinquish their peaceful occupations—the comforts of domestic life—to leave their wives and children, their fathers and mothers—to expose themselves to hardships and fatigues, to dangers and sufferings. It will require them to encounter the foe in the field, and to meet death in all its terrific forms. It will multiply widows and orphans in the land, and deprive the aged of the sup-

port and hope of their declining years. . Where is the *necessity* of this war? If it were like the war of the Spaniards and Portuguese—a war of defence to save our country from a foreign yoke—to protect our wives and daughters from a brutal soldiery—to guard our dwellings from conflagration, and our old men from massacre. If it were a war like this, there would be found a spirit in the people, which no danger could appal, no force subdue.

But, as the war we are engaged in could not have been undertaken without guilt, so it will not be terminated without disgrace. France has required of Great Britain the acknowledgment of certain principles, unknown to the law of nations, which she cannot admit but with the surrender of her maritime power; and the American government has enlisted itself on the side of France to coerce Great Britain to make the surrender. Will she *do* this? She may fall by the *power* of the conqueror, but she will not submit to receive *law* from his mouth. She may perish in the conflict, but she will not disgrace herself by an ignominious surrender of her independence and sovereignty. Bonaparte will not recede from his system—England will not submit to it. America, must therefore, retrace her steps and return to neutral ground.

Are the people prepared for an alliance with France? We were told, years ago, in a paper of high authority, that France would furnish us with officers to command our armies, and with engineers in this then contemplated war with Great Britain. She now, doubtless, reckons us in the number of her allies, and considers us as associated with Holland and Switzerland and Italy and the subjugated States of Europe. Will the people submit to be the *slaves* of France? Their only security under Providence, in this awful crisis, is, in their own spirit, union and patriotism.

Again, when can we expect a period to this war?

Will Bonaparte relinquish his plans of conquest, while there is an independent state in Europe? If Great Britain, at the expence of her honor and safety, should accede to his principles, novel and extravagant as they are, would he be satisfied with the concession? Where is the country, which has found security in submission to him? When have his ambition and rapacity been satisfied with conquest and plunder? What then will be the duration of this dreadful conflict? When can the weary nations hope for repose?

Will the people of this country, remote from these scenes of cruelty and disaster, relinquish the advantages of their situation, and entangle themselves in the toils of foreign ambition and intrigue? Will they waste their resources, and hazard their fortunes, and spill their blood in an European war? Are they ready to associate their destinies with those of the mighty conqueror? Do they wish to become his auxiliaries in the subjugation of England?

Such is the character of this war, that, instead of promising *safety* to the country, it is *itself* the cause of her principal *perils*; and she has perhaps more to fear from victory, than from defeat.

But a gracious Providence has heretofore wonderfully interposed for the deliverance and safety of the United States. When the heathens rage, and the people imagine vain things, he will regard his heritage in mercy, and save his people, if they trust in Him.

#### GENTLEMEN OF THE SOCIETY,

We have associated to promote the virtues, which WASHINGTON practiced, and to maintain the political principles which animated his efforts in the war, and guided the measures of his civil administration. We claim no control over the private judgment or conscience of any man. We do not require of others the

surrender of their opinions, but in the things which concern the independence and safety of our common country, we ask of them the fair and deliberate exercise of their judgments. We disclaim all foreign partialities, and cherish the principles of the Federal Union. We profess no political doctrines distinct from the constitution under which we live. We pledge ourselves to the support of no party in the state.

But we receive the precepts of WASHINGTON, as the words of political inspiration, and we look to his great example, in public and private life, as a model for the citizen and the statesman, in all succeeding times. We remember the blessings of his administration ; and we believe, that, the steady pursuit of the same policy, would have preserved the neutrality and the peace of the country. We have no hope of political salvation, but in a return to his principles and measures. We have witnessed, with deep anxiety and alarm, a departure in our public counsels from the conciliatory spirit and pacific policy, which distinguished his domestic and foreign administration. We will not, therefore, cease our endeavors to *revive*, in the minds of the people, *the principles of WASHINGTON*, and to restore the country to the ground on which WASHINGTON reposed its peace and security, and erected its prosperity and glory. But we disclaim all violence and artifice. We invade no man's rights, and we endanger no man's safety. We have no weapons but truth and argument. We have no instruments of assault but good will and charity.

We have no means of corrupting the people. We have no offices to bestow—We have no honors or rewards to confer. We claim only the privilege to meet together, and assist one another to learn the precepts, and to practice the virtues of WASHINGTON, and to join in acts of benevolence and charity, as occasion shall require. Let us then fulfil the objects of

this institution, and do honor to the name of WASHINGTON, by an adherence to the principles, which sustained that great man in the trials of his public life, and by the practice of that piety and virtue, which supported him in his departing moments. And whatever may be the fate of our beloved country, we shall satisfy our minds, and secure the approbation of all the enlightened and real friends of its freedom, independence and peace.\*

A tribute of respect and gratitude is due to the memory of those illustrious men, who sacrificed their lives in the field of battle. WARREN, first in the cause of his country, was the first to consecrate, with his blood, American freedom. We view with pride the names of the heroes and patriots of the revolution; and gladly would we revive the spirit, which animated their generous efforts. LINCOLN, having fought the battles of liberty, disdained in his old age to be made an instrument of tyranny; and when he could not conscientiously execute the orders of the government against its own citizens, he resigned his office, and thus preserved the purity of his own fame.

The Spirit of the Fathers may even now save the Sons.

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\*It is no wonder, that the partizans of France, who hated WASHINGTON, should be alarmed at the *revival of his principles*; nor that *his disciples* should be honored with a portion of the same malicious calumnies, which were so liberally bestowed upon their great Master. Finding that their exclusive pretensions to republicanism are no longer current with the people, they would fain divert the public attention from *themselves*, by setting up a horrible outcry against *others*.— But these Gerrymanders had better be at rest. The people *have found them out*. They may *pipe* to the tune of John Henry, but the people will not *dance*.

AN  
ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE TABLE BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY,  
AND PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

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GENTLEMEN,

HAVING met with our Fellow Citizens, in commemoration of a day, *justly* distinguished in the annals of Liberty, we must be sensibly impressed with the ties which unite us, and the duties we owe to *ourselves*, and to our *Country*.

*Washington* and *Benevolence*, are names by which we have chosen to be designated—names which may *honor us*, or by us be *dishonored*. We have associated to promote the principles of morality, of social affections, of benevolence and love of country; to *imitate* the *exalted* virtues and to *venerate* the character of WASHINGTON. How far we shall succeed in effecting the great objects of our institution, time will hereafter determine. We may descend to posterity as *enthusiastic* dreamers, and *vain* pretenders, or as the benefactors of the human race. For by our fruits we shall be judged. If our morality is but a name, and our benevolence an empty *sound*—if our patriotism is *mere* professions, and our love of country the *noisy pretensions* of *love of the people*, our institution will be a *libel* upon him, whose name we bear, and whose active virtues and preeminent services, so greatly contributed in laying the foundation and building up our Republic.

We have important duties to perform. We meet to receive and communicate information—"to unite the inexperience of youth, with the wisdom of *gray hairs*"—to mitigate the evils of life—to succor the unfortunate and to relieve the distressed. We have united as friends to our country, and are pledged to support its constitution and its rights. We have solemnly *disclaimed all partiality* for foreign nations, and have avowed ourselves the friends and supporters of the *American Union*.

Our government, which the world has eulogised for the wisdom of its construction, *now* remains the only Republic on earth. Others have existed, but the people have been corrupted, and *lawless* ambition or *desolating* wars have brushed them from the catalogue (if not of nations) of freemen, and the *high places* of liberty have become the *pleasure grounds* of despots, or the *ensanguined fields of battle*.

The liberty and independence of this country have been purchased by *immense* treasure, and *sealed with blood*. The form of our government has been devised by the wisdom of our *wise men*—our political rights and privileges have been chartered to us, and it remains for the people to determine, whether our children shall *inherit these rights*.

As members of this Society, it has now become our imperious duty, as it is the duty of every good citizen, to disseminate *correct* information, and *correct* principles, among our fellow men. To act with cool deliberation, but with a resolution firm and inflexible, never to yield the right of self government, but with the blood of our hearts. We must aid in electing to office men distinguished for their abilities, their virtues, their fidelity to the Constitution, and their *love of Peace*. In this way, and in this only, can the hand of the *destroyer* be stayed, and our country saved from the *wide spreading* ruin, which threatens to over-

whelm it ; unless, (which may kind Heaven avert) an appeal be made to the *last* resort of *abused and oppressed man* ; an appeal at which humanity shudders and our nature revolts.

The character of rulers will always resemble that of the people. “ A corrupt fountain cannot send forth *pure* water.” When a people are lost to a sense of moral duty, when their manners and habits are corrupted, they have no relish for the duties of patriotism ; they are inattentive to the character of their *public* agents, and are regardless of their own best interest, until ambition, as corrupt as themselves, shall have *sealed* the ruin of their country.

Our institution is called a benevolent one—Let it be so in *reality*—Let it be a pure fountain of benevolence, that the streams may not only make glad the heart of him that is ready to perish, but that *our country* may experience its benign and invigorating effects, in a change of *public opinion*, a change of men and a change of measures.

Of all the political, and moral and social virtues, which dignify the human character, we have a bright example in the life and death of that *great and good* man, who was the Father of his Country. He was a rock in the Ocean, unmoved by the dashing of the billows or the beating of the tempest. He was Heaven’s greatest, best gift to America. The days of WASHINGTON, were the *golden days* of American glory.

*He was first in War*—for he was brave, honorable and humane. He was prudent, and victorious—Danger did not abash him—Difficulties did not dishearten him—He out-rode the storm of the revolution and conducted his country to glory. But the *glory* of this world passeth away.

*He was first in Peace*—for his wisdom, his impartiality and his firmness, harmonized the conflicting interests of this great people—He held in control the



ferocity of the Savage, opened every sea to commercial enterprise, subdued rebellion, silenced the turbulence of faction, and with his country's good for his object, he steadily pursued an undeviating course; and alike regardless of censure and applause, he preserved our *neutrality* and maintained with *all the world*, that peace for which *he* fought and *our Fathers* bled.

*He was first in the hearts of his countrymen*—for all good men loved him. The *bad* revered him. Europe honors his memory and America has *now double* cause to weep his loss—for alas! on whom has his mantle fallen.

He was first in the walks of private life—for no one has dared to call in question his moral rectitude, doubt his integrity or reproach his domestic character.

As a humane and benevolent man, he was second to no one; his kindness and humanity endeared him to all within the reach of his hospitality. While he lived, he made the slave forget his servitude—at his death he bade him be *free*, and the African, whose head had *whitened* in his service, *wept at his tomb*.

My Countrymen—This resplendent luminary has gone down. A night of gloom has since been gradually succeeding, until it has at length obscured our *brightest* prospects, and covered our land with *distress* and *darkness*. Our prosperity, has turned to adversity—our peace, to war; and the land we till, is about to be made the untimely sepulchre of our fathers, our brothers and our children.

Have we no refuge—are all our hopes entombed with Washington? Must we despair of the Commonwealth? No—As *American* Citizens, as the *disciples* of Washington, our lives and our fortunes are pledged to our country. Not, however, to be thrown away in support of *mad* ambition, or causeless war. Not to unite the destinies of our beloved country with

the ruthless destroyer of nations ; but to be *spent* in every constitutional effort, to preserve our form of Government, the rights of the people, the privileges of our *birth-right*, our *blood purchased* Independence, and to ensure the speedy restoration of an honorable Peace.

If our most excellent constitution of Government, be not suffered to out live the *calamities* of this present war—if this day should be the last anniversary of *American Freedom*, I trust in God it will not be owing to a want of zeal, of patriotism, of fidelity, of energy and firmness, in the disciples of Washington. They will yet *rally* for their country ; awaken the people from their slumbers, cause them to *return* to the principles of Washington, as to the *Ark of their safety*, and thus preserve from tyranny, oppression and slavery, this once highly favored nation.

Then, will the *sainted* spirit of our political Saviour, look down upon his beloved country, and feel an addition “*to the pure blifs high Heaven affords,*” at beholding the object of so much of his earthly *cares*, his *labors*, his *toils* and his *anxieties*, accomplished in the happiness, the peace and prosperity of a people *endeared* to him by a life *spent* in their service and *devoted* to their *best* good.