

AN
ORATION

DELIVERED

IN THE

BRICK CHURCH IN LANSINGBURGH,

July 4th, 1809.


BY DAVID ALLEN, ESQ.


Amicus Plato; amicus Socrates, sed magis amicus veritas. Adag.

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1809.

Lansingburgh, July 6th, 1809.

SIR,

THE Committee of Arrangement for celebrating the fourth instant, return you their sincere thanks for your Oration, delivered on that day, and request a copy for publication.

Yours respectfully,

TIMOTHY LEONARD,
JONAS MORGAN,
ELIAS PARMELEE,
G. TRACY,
E. W. WALBRIDGE,
J. REID,
J. DENISON. } *Committee.*

To DAVID ALLEN, Esq.

Lansingburgh, July 7th, 1809.

GENTLEMEN,

I RECEIVED with great pleasure your note of last evening, returning me your sincere thanks for the oration which I had the honour of delivering on the 4th instant, and requesting a copy for publication. While I witness with gratitude, the great anxiety of my friends, that this performance should be given to the public, I yield to your solicitation with the greatest reluctance. Nothing could induce me to this, were it not for the misrepresentations which my political enemies are making with a view to wound my reputation. They are assiduously endeavouring to impress a belief on the minds of those who did not hear the oration, not only that I had wilfully stated many falsehoods, but that I had grossly perverted the sacred scriptures. These insinuations are as base as they are unfounded. The public are referred to the oration itself, for an entire refutation of the charges.

I know indeed, that performances of this nature are generally calculated only for the moment; that they do not commonly outlive the effervescence of feeling which they excite: but as the oration in question, forms a sort of compendium of historical facts, it may be useful to those who have not the means of tracing up the chain of our political transactions at a single view. It being written in great haste, and the political events which it recites, crowd so thick upon one another, it is doubtless liable to many imperfections. Besides, it was impossible, in the compass of an oration, to dilate upon all the events, so as to give each its due and proper weight. I however, submit it to the public, in the hope that the cause of truth may be thereby advanced.

Accept my high consideration,

D. ALLEN.

TIMOTHY LEONARD,
JONAS MORGAN,
ELIAS PARMELEE,
GARDINER TRACY,
E. W. WALBRIDGE,
JAMES REID,
JAMES DENISON, } *Committee of Arrangement.*

ORATION, &c.

MY FELLOW-CITIZENS,

THIS is a day sacred to the cause of liberty and independence—It is the glorious anniversary of the birth day of a nation—It is the commencement of the 34th year, since this wide extended continent, emerging from slavery, burst the chains of despotism, and rose in magnificence, to empire and to freedom. It must therefore excite, in the bosoms of Americans, the liveliest emotions of joy and mutual congratulations.

Yes, America now holds a proud rank among the nations of the earth, and is the only spot on the Globe, that can boast of liberty in a republican form of government.

I come not here, however, to detail to you, my fellow-citizens, the causes which led to this independence and freedom of country. I come not here to recount to you, the scenes of blood and carnage which marked our course through an eight years war; nor the sufferings and death of a *Warren*, a *Mercer*, and a *Montgomery*, who gloriously died in fighting for that liberty which we now enjoy—Nay, it would be trespassing upon your time and your patience, to go into these hackneyed subjects, whence nothing new could be gleaned for your instruction or amusement. Every thing worth preserving, relating to our revolution, and the establishment of our republican form of government, is recorded on the page of the faithful historian, and will be read, admired, and had in everlasting remembrance by all true Americans.

Suffice it, therefore, here to remark, that on the 4th of July, 1776, America dissolved the political bands which connected her with Great Britain, and assumed among the nations of the earth, “the separate and equal station, to which the laws of nature, and of nature’s God, entitled her ;” that she established her independence at the point of the sword ; that after the peace of 1783, she retired within her own dominions ; soon adjusted the difficulties and embarrassments growing out of the old Confederation ; and by her wise and admirable system of government, her remarkable industry, and persevering enterprize, she rapidly increased in the science of agriculture, manufactures and commerce, until her great prosperity, her surprising increase of power, population and wealth, began to be suspected, envied and interrupted, as well by her mother country, as by a nation who set at defiance the laws of God and man ; a nation who trampled upon all moral precept, openly and publickly denied the existence of a God, and became barbarous to a degree hitherto unknown among the savages of the wilderness ! But the wise and liberal policy of the immortal WASHINGTON, meeting with correspondent dispositions on the part of Great Britain, soon adjusted our differences with the mother country : and that nation, taking an active part in the cause of virtue, the social compact, and the rights of man, paid due and proper respect to the American flag. Not so with France. No, my fellow-citizens, she had entered into the mad project of enslaving the world, and making it tributary to her lawless ambition. Bear with me, therefore, while I take a hasty view of some of the most prominent features of her revolution, the history of which, forms a tissue of corruption, perfidy and crime, unparalleled in the annals of the world.

When France first emerged from darkness and superstition, and began her political career as the champion of universal liberty, Columbia beheld her with pleasing anticipations. She felt a glowing solicitude for her welfare, and congratulated with enthusiasm the success of her arms; and while she continued to act upon the pure principles of freedom; while she continued to cherish the maxims of universal philanthropy, America could behold her with inexpressible delight; and mingling her joys with hers, could hail her as a *sister republic*. But alas! she has long since bid adieu to every thing appertaining to republican institutions, and overleaping the bounds of freedom and humanity, is assiduously aspiring after universal dominion. She has shamefully forsaken all law, both divine and human; polluting with sacrilegious hands, the temple of God, and wholly setting at naught the institutions and moral precepts of the Gospel of Christ! Do you ask for proof of this? Let me point you to the subversion of the Christian sabbath, by the ridiculous and profane establishment of the *decades*! Go with me to the places of their interment, and there behold, with astonishment, the inscriptions made by public authority, on the tombs of the deceased, affirming death to be an eternal sleep! Behold her insulting the majesty of Heaven, by an open, public profession of atheism* in the Convention, which was received with the loudest acclamations of joy! Note the honorable mention on the journals of that Convention, of a book,† proving the nothingness of all religion! Witness the institution of a festival to offer public worship to a *courtezan*, to whom was given a title, found only in the vocabulary of *modern* infidelity, “*Goddes of reason!*” Nay, if any thing be wanting to complete this black catalogue of moral turpi-

* By Dupont, Danton, and others.

† Written by Anacharsis Clootz.

tude, behold the congratulatory reception of impious children, appearing in the hall of the convention, to lip blasphemy against the King of Kings!

These, says a political writer of discernment, are among the dreadful proofs of a conspiracy, to establish atheism on the ruins of christianity; to deprive mankind of its best consolations, and most animating hopes, and make a gloomy desert of the universe! And although *Napoleon* has attempted to bring back the *exiled* ministers of God, that they may serve at the altars, yet it is the act of a fainted hypocrite, who approaches the sanctuary with *unhallowed* steps! Do you ask again for proof? Look at the versatility of this man's religion, which can accommodate itself to all times and circumstances, as shall best satisfy his thirst for domination: camelion-like, changing from a Roman Catholic to a Mussulman; from a Mussulman to a Hindoo; and from a Hindoo to a Roman Catholic!

The awful fabric of atheism and infidelity having been thus erected, we at once view France, as prepared for every species of vice and immorality. Hence we behold her striking at the very root of all happiness, social, moral and religious; destroying the peace and quiet of families, states and kingdoms. Yes, since the commencement of the French revolution, the fairest portion of Europe has been covered with scaffolds, inundated with blood, rent with intestine commotions, mutilated in its richest systems, and most splendid monuments, whilst desolation and death threaten every person, and every place! Innocence has been immolated, families broken up and dispersed to distant regions, chastity outraged, property given up to pillage, and all talents and virtues have been transformed into crimes! Here permit me to direct the rapid thought to the almost innumerable innocent victims of the merciless guillotine! to those awful

civic baptisms,* the sport of death! to the horrid massacre of the La Vendeeans, executed by a personage who now holds a conspicuous station in the United States! to the tragic scene “in the wood of Vincennes!”† *cum multis aliis*. But when we speak of the corruption and perfidy of France in the success of her arms, the mind recoils at the recital, and the heart sickens at the awful spectacle! Here again we behold her destitute of all those honorable sentiments and feelings, which tend to soften the asperities of human nature; which bind man to man, and teach nations to respect themselves, and the just rights of others: and throwing aside the robes of honor, she seeks the destruction of surrounding nations, and scatters her poison throughout the world! Here our attention is at once arrested by the wretched situation of those unfortunate states and republics, Holland, Genoa, Venice and Switzerland, which have been successively engulfed in the vortex of French perfidy and barbarity, blotted from the list of republics, and made the humble slaves and dependants of the tyrants of France! See also, the peaceful and neutral cities, Hamburg, Bremen and Lubeck, yielding to the exactions of French avarice, and compelled to pay enormous sums of money, as the price of their safety. But I would point you more particularly to the fate of Switzerland, as in her independence and government, she was nearer allied to America, than any other nation on the globe. Yes, my fellow-citizens,

* Finding the guillotine not swift enough in its execution, recourse was had to boats, with scuttled bottoms, which were crowded with innocent victims, of both sexes. They were then conveyed at a proper distance from shore, where the unoffending prisoners, through this singular device, soon found themselves struggling in the arms of death, and yielded their lives to the watery element.

† Reference is here had to the murder of the Duke of Enghein, that outrage upon the laws of nations and humanity, executed by one of the principal generals of the army of the Emperor, who has since been made king of Naples.

Switzerland was once the happy abode of liberty ; she was once in the full enjoyment of her republican institutions, and could boast of a rich profusion of the blessings of heaven. Yet from the commencement of the French revolution, to the invasion of that country, plans were secretly formed to destroy its independence : while in the mean time, the French nation courted her, praised her neutrality, and applauded the firmness with which she resisted every attempt to draw her into the war. But as soon as the French armies had conquered Italy, Belgium, and a considerable portion of Germany, France, with that unblushing perfidy, which has distinguished her revolution, converted her troops into the instruments of enslaving the Swifs ! And whilst a hostile army was in the territory of Bern, the hirelings of France were flattering the weak and timid members of the Swifs cabinet with a happy issue to a pending negotiation ; but at the same time, kept up a constant correspondence with the commander of the French forces, and directed him in every movement, until the meditated blow was struck—when the innocent and almost defenceless Swifs, both male and female, with their swords and implements of husbandry, nobly struggling for the cause of freedom, were compelled, at the mouth of the cannon, to surrender their lives, their liberties, their property, their religion, nay, every thing dear to man, as a sacrifice to the ambitious views of a perfidious government !

Almost innumerable other instances might be adduced, of this ferocious and barbarous disposition of French tyranny, as shewn towards the European powers, during the reign of the French Directory : for we speak not of the *Marats*, the *Robespierres* and the *Dantons*, who, like the coruscations of a meteor, appeared for a moment and then passed away. But coming down to later times, we trace the hasty footsteps of the Corsican Usurper, from the obscurity of

the cottager, to a military chief; to consular dignity; to the blood-stained throne of the once happy Bourbons!

Here, indeed, commences a new era in the French revolution; but the same unbounded thirst for universal dominion; the same bloody treachery and ruin, mark the course of this scourge of nations, which distinguished the reign of the French directory. Having bound France fast in the chains of despotism, the Emperor Napoleon is at once prepared to carry into execution his ambitious views of enslaving the world; and the vassalage of the continent of Europe is written, as with a pen of iron, in the awful battles of Marengo, of Austerlitz, of Jena, and of Elau! Napoleon now attaches Italy to the splendours of his own royalty, while the throne of Holland is presented to a brother! The empire of Germany is rent in pieces; cut up into petty kingdoms and principalities, to provide for a hungry horde of family connections and favourites. See Prussia, once the proud empire of the great Frederick, stung with remorse of conscience, enduring the scourge of the oppressor, and weeping over her fallen greatness! See ignominy lighting upon the majesty of Russia, in the inglorious treaty of Erfurth; while Austria remains the last victim to be immolated at the shrine of the imperial conqueror! But to complete the scene of the perfidy and treachery of this infuriated tyrant, I would point you to Spain! Here the cup of indignation overflows, and language is too feeble to express the abhorrence and detestation which every *honest* man must feel at the horrid scene here disclosed. Spain, through the treachery and corrupt conduct of a venal minister, had been a faithful ally to France; had aided and assisted Napoleon in all his schemes for subjugating the nations of Europe. She had furnished him with her navy, with money, and with soldiers to carry on his conquests. But taking advantage of the imbecility of the

Spanish king, and the confused state of the nation, by a surrender of the throne to Ferdinand VII. and while a Spanish army was actually drawn from the bosom of its country, in the immediate service of this proud conqueror, Napoleon found means to decoy the royal family into his own dominions, and then seized upon them as captives, while he could wrest the Spanish throne from its legitimate sovereign, and confer it upon an ambitious brother! Overflowing with indignation, at this base, infernal design upon the sovereignty of her country, Spain seeks to revenge this unparalleled treachery of her destroyer, and flies to arms: but her resistance serves only to increase the triumphs of her conqueror: writhing under the lash of the oppressor, she sighs over the ruins of her country.

But during the mad career of Napoleon on the continent of Europe, Great Britain has not been an idle spectator. Early instructed in the views of the French government, to trample upon the unalienable rights of nations, and perceiving its designs upon her, by the intrigues and corruptions of her courtiers—by the menace of invasion—by the threatening aspect of combined navies, and finally, by an open declaration, she prepares for the conflict. While she throws in her succours to those nations on the continent, who had been her faithful Allies, to enable them to meet the arms of this great destroyer, her wooden walls of *defence* and *offence*, traverse the seas, to the great discomfort and annoyance of this persecutor of nations, battering down the whole combined maritime force of her most implacable enemy. Passing over the splendid victories of a *Howe*, a *Duncan* and a *St. Vincent*, go with me to *Aboukir*, whither this mad conqueror had gone to scourge the Egyptian land and country, and there witness the mighty battle of the Nile, by the intrepid Nelson, which resulted in the most signal naval victory, since the defeat of the famous Spanish Arma-

da. And whilst the roaring of the cannon, amid the constant flashes of lightning, and anon, the tremendous explosion of one of the French ships, the *L' Orient*, shook the Egyptian coast for many leagues around, and appalled the frightened, trembling inhabitants, the innocent, unoffending Arabs, drawn to the shore, by the awful sight and sound, learning the fate of their invaders, instantly lighted up fires in testimony of their joy and exultation. Behold the kingdom of Naples, liberated from French pirates and robbers, by the splendid achievements of this same gallant Nelson. See him breaking down the northern confederacy (established by Bonaparte for the destruction of British commerce in the Baltic,) by his intrepid attack on Copenhagen, and his destruction of the Danish fleet; and the battle of Trafalgar, while it wreathes laurels of glory around the brow of the immortal hero of the Nile, and completes the destruction of that maritime force by which Great Britain was to be annoyed, it shows to surrounding nations, the immense importance and advantage of a check and restraint upon the mad projects of an infuriated tyrant.

But my fellow-citizens, turning with disgust, from these horrid scenes of desolation and blood, let us take a comparative view of our own country, during the throes and convulsions of the European world.

From what has already been observed, it cannot be doubted, that France, in the early period of her revolution, entered into the wild project of universal dominion; that she resolved to destroy with her arms, combined with her unblushing perfidy and corruption, every opposing power: But, when we contemplate her, as extending her views to the peaceful shores of Columbia, the heart sickens at the recollection, and recoils with indignation, at her base attempts to tamper with the best interests of America. Her views

against every neutral nation being the same, founded in the same dark, mysterious and wicked policy, it is not perhaps surprizing, that the means she employed, to accomplish her object, should have been so precisely similar. In Switzerland, Genoa and America, we find the same affected cant about liberty and equality ; the same pretension of preserving the liberties of the people ; the same solemn pledges and assurances of respecting the rights and independence of neutrals, combined with the same destroying treachery and ruin. She found in these countries, as in all others, parties, differing on questions of internal government, and she immediately united herself with the most ignorant, or the most desperate side ; became their open or secret ally ; appropriated their forces to her own interests, and duped them into a belief, that she was espousing their cause, and struggling for their freedom, while in fact, she was making them subservient to herself and instrumental in their own ruin.

According to her avowed plan, therefore, of treachery and corruption, France commissioned Genet, Fauchet and Adet, successively, as ministers plenipotentiary to the government of the United States, whose ostensible object was, to cultivate peace, harmony and good understanding between the two nations ; but who were secretly sowing the seeds of corruption and disorganization. The first of these ministers, at the moment he made solemn declarations of the friendship of his government, and its entire acquiescence in our neutrality, had in his pocket the instructions of his "masters," to engage our citizens in war and rebellion ! Before he was accredited as the legitimate minister of France, he actually authorized the fitting and arming of vessels ; the enlisting of men, and giving commissions to cruise and commit hostilities on a nation, with whom the United States were at peace : our chief magistrate, the illustrious WASHINGTON.

TON, was treated with indignity and contempt ; the people were persuaded to despise and vilify their rulers—to controul the constituted authorities of the country, and in place of liberty, supported by law and order, to establish in a free republic, in time of peace, a system of disorganization, and to infuse into the bosom of a free and independent nation, a most rancorous foreign influence. But the consummate prudence, the wisdom and firmness of the immortal WASHINGTON, foiled every attempt, and completely frustrated the designs and machinations of this haughty and imperious power.

The enemies of the administration at that period, who are now the self-styled republicans of our country, united with these French agents, and vehemently clamoured against the government for refusing to form an alliance with this nation of pirates ! Taking advantage of the powerful opposition to the measures of government, by the minority in Congress, and stung with mortification and disappointment, at her failure to corrupt the councils of the nation, France determined to become the open enemy of America, and immediately commenced a system of depredation and plunder upon our commerce, as unprovoked, as it was wicked and unjust.

America viewed with astonishment, this conduct of France, projected in darkness, and enveloped in mystery. In vain did she seek repose within herself ; anxious to preserve her neutrality, and to be at peace with the world, she immediately commissioned an envoy extraordinary to the court of France, in order to develop this mysterious conduct, and if possible, to bring about a reconciliation. But to the still greater astonishment of America, he is treated with disdain ; denied even an audience with the insolent directory, and rejected with contempt !

Our country still condescended, for the sake of peace,

to send in addition, two others of her distinguished citizens, still further to attempt a negociation with this *political hydra* ! These ministers carried with them as full and ample powers as ever were entrusted to the ambassadors of any country. They were instructed to place France upon the footing of the most favoured nation, and to take every possible measure, consistent with the dignity, honor and interests of the United States, to bring about an accommodation of differences. The event of this mission, my fellow-citizens, is well known to you. Bearing with them, the temper and disposition of their government and country, these envoys arrive at Paris, and with the olive branch in their hands, present themselves for the reception of the French directory. They are again treated with the most marked indignity and contempt.

After waiting a considerable length of time in the most painful suspense, suffering contumely and undisguised insult, they are at length assailed by the unblushing impudence of X, Y and Z ; persons unofficially commissioned from the French directory, to found the depth of American fidelity, and if possible to contaminate it with the finger of perfidy !

Through the medium of these persons, we are instructed in the base principles of this magnanimous nation. All advances which are not preceded by enormous sums of money, are now rejected : *money*—a *great deal of money*, is demanded as the opening wedge to a negociation ! Here then, my fellow-citizens, is presented to us in its most lively colors, the *sine qua non* of a French negociation ; here we behold the complete developement of French perfidy, contrasted with the united wisdom and firmness of American patriotism : Here the political mask is thrown off, and the base, treacherous and corrupt conduct of the French government, is disclosed to the world in all its deformity ! Nay, these hungry, rapacious French-

men stop not here : they tell us, in the insulting domineering language of tyrants, you *shall* pay us money, and unless you comply with our demands, the fate of Venice is one which may befall the United States ! Gracious Heavens ! what a prostitution of all honor, of all character ! To what a depth of infamy is human nature sunk in that devoted country ! What, to be annihilated as a nation ! to be expunged the earth, and blotted from the list of republics, for refusing to pay tribute to France ! Was this to be the fruit of our revolution ? Was it for this that we had contended with a powerful nation, and hazarded life and property in an eight years war ? Yet, sorry I am to relate, nay, could it have been believed, that there were men to whom this country gave birth, vile and degenerate enough, to palliate, to justify this outrageous conduct of France ; to criminate the American government, and to urge a compliance with this humiliating demand !

But, the patriotic sons of Columbia, who had stood the shock of one revolution, could never consent to purchase of an European power, the privilege of peace and independence. No, my fellow-citizens ; and their commissioners, with a decision and firmness, which marked the American character, spurned with contempt, this dastardly design upon the honor and sovereignty of their country. The government of the United States, taking the alarm, and filled with indignation at the gross insult offered to them, through their ministers, immediately resorted to vigorous measures of defence. The permanent military establishment was immediately increased ; volunteer corps were received and organized ; a navy was soon created, and the most vulnerable parts of our sea coast were put in a state of defence. The flame of patriotism soon fired the bosoms of Americans, and the sons of Columbia flew to the standard of their independence. America,

thus in arms, was soon treated with respect. Pacific overtures were made by the French government, and existing differences were soon terminated by an honourable adjustment.

Thus our country, through the wisdom and virtue of a federal administration, was saved from the chilling embraces of the *fraternal bug*, and rescued from that slavery to which she was doomed, by the abominable corruption and perfidy of the tyrants of the world. Thus, America was again permitted to enjoy the fruits of her neutrality, and the rich harvest which it produced, of peace, happiness, and wealth; until democracy, at length, thrust in its fickle and cut down the tender shoot of liberty, which, by the fostering hand of federalism, had been raised with so much care.

We now arrive to an inquiry into the policy and measures of an administration, which had nearly accomplished the ruin of our common country. This inquiry, though a very interesting one, opening an extensive field, I shall endeavour to make as brief as possible.

When the government of these United States passed into the hands of Mr. Jefferson and his adherents, we were at peace with all the world. Gallic perfidy and intrigue had been completely baffled. Our commercial relations were established upon the broad basis of equal laws, and impartial justice. Our system of finance was ripened and matured, and wealth flowed in from every quarter. Nay, as Mr. Jefferson himself expressed it, we were "in the full tide of successful experiment;" and when he made his first appearance, in his inaugural speech, all hearts beat with joy, and were cheered with the bright prospect of halcyon days. He seemed to have caught a spark from off the altar of '76, and his path was illumined by the wisdom and experience of the immortal Washington:

a path which was enriched with honors, and strewed with the liberal bounties of heaven.

But our philosopher soon mistook his way : forsaking the good old path of his fathers, he wandered into the wide field of experiment. Forming new theories of government, he had vainly hoped, that he should bring the American people to the summit of political greatness, and procure for them permanent happiness. Let us then trace him in his course, and test the wisdom of his acts, by the unerring standard of experience. 'If he be found in error, may Heaven forgive the fault, and his country cover his follies with the mantle of charity.

I shall not, however, pursue our philosopher, in his mad project of the purchase of a boundless tract of country, and the foolish sacrifice of fifteen millions of dollars : nor shall I trace him in his curious speculations upon *salt mountains*, and the extraordinary appearance and properties of certain extraordinary animals. I shall not dwell on his philosophic plan of *dry docks*, nor his miserable, wretched system of an unfortunate *gun-boat navy*. I shall not attempt to sing his song of *economy*, with which he and his followers have been so much enraptured, through the long night of his reign, to the neglect of the best interests of their country : nor shall I go into the field of his long list of dreadful proscriptions, to mark the war-worn soldier and the revolutionary patriot, driven from the posts of honor, to make way for his own sychophantic tools, cruelly deprived of their bread, weeping over the base ingratitude of their country. No, my fellow-citizens, time would fail me, to pursue this administration through all the devious paths of error into which it has wandered, and point out to you the wayward policy by which it has been governed. I shall, therefore, immediately direct your attention to some of the leading features in the politics of this adminis-

tration, by which our country has been overcast with gloom ; the United States shaken to their centre, and threatened with the desolating ravages of an unprovoked war.

Mr. Jefferson, by some strange fatality or other, seems to have contracted a strong and abiding attachment to France, and an unconquerable prejudice against Great Britain : whether from having been a minister to France, at a time when the materials of her tremendous revolution were ripening into explosion, where he seems to have imbibed the principles of French philosophy, or from some more *latent* cause, I shall not now stop to inquire.

He appears also to have formed the chimerical idea, probably founded upon the wretched, narrow policy of the Chinese empire, of ruling a great, enterprising, commercial people, without indulging them in foreign trade, and of defending their country without force. Hence we find him discouraging this trade as early as the publication of his Notes on Virginia,* and throughout the whole course of his administration, we mark his hostility to commerce. But knowing the people of America, especially in the eastern and middle states, to be from nature and habit, the very children of commerce, he could not, by a single stroke, cut off their trade and compel them to resort to other means of support : no, the work must advance by degrees, until the state of things should be such as to make it a matter of necessity. Our commerce was therefore left unprotected, to seek its own safety through the jealousies and collisions of other commercial nations.

* See Jefferson's Notes on Virginia, page 236, (Trenton edition,) where the author observes, "To remove as much as possible the occasions of making war, it might perhaps be better for us to abandon the ocean altogether, that being the element whereon we shall be principally exposed to jostle with other nations : to leave to others to bring what we shall want, and to carry what we can spare."

Does any man doubt? Let me point him to the proofs; "by their fruit ye shall know them."

Mr. Jay's treaty, under which the commerce of the United States had flourished beyond measure, and our country grown rich, to a degree unexampled in any former period of the world, was permitted to expire; and although Mr. Jefferson had the offer of renewing this treaty, under the administration of Mr. Fox, who, on all hands, was admitted to be the peculiar friend of America, yet the offer was at once rejected. Our trade, thus left unregulated with the most powerful commercial nation on the globe, and taking advantage of the European conflicts, soon became the object of jealousy. The temptations to gain, held out by this state of things, soon induced the violation of the neutral flag: Our vessels were accordingly taken and confiscated, under pretence of violating the laws of contraband and the rights of neutrality. This gave Mr. Jefferson and his party a favorable opportunity of commencing their system of "restrictive energies," by more open acts, manifesting their enmity to Great Britain, and partiality for France. Hence the passage of a law called "the non-importation act," passed in 1806, which appeared to be levelled solely against Great Britain; for in point of fact, it had no operation on her adversary. This act exhibited full and satisfactory evidence of the hostility of our government against protecting our commerce, because it was directly calculated to frustrate the ends of negotiation.

A few months after the passage of this law, the Emperor Napoleon, seizing the favorable opportunity of pursuing up his perfidious plan of universal dominion, in the face of an existing treaty between this country and France, issues his famous Berlin decree, prohibiting commerce with Great Britain, that potent obstacle to his mad ambition; the destruction of whose power, would cause the universal spread of his own.

In the mean time, our ministers at the court of St. James, were negotiating a treaty of amity and commerce with Great Britain, which was calculated to free our trade from the embarrassments under which it was laboring with that nation, and to procure for us the blessings of peace. Accordingly, on the thirty-first of December, a little more than one month after the *Berlin decree*, these ministers, actuated by a sincere desire of putting an end to the distresses of our commerce, contrary to the directions of Mr. Jefferson, signed a treaty between Great Britain and this country, and transmitted it to our government for ratification. How is this instrument treated by Mr. Jefferson? Stung with mortification, at this unexpected obstacle, thus thrown in the way of his favorite plan of "restrictive energies," without submitting it to the constituted authority of the people, the senate, that admirable check upon presidential power and influence, Mr. Jefferson takes upon himself the responsibility of rejecting this treaty, and thus again frustrates the hopes of the nation. But it is said, there was a note attached to that treaty, by lords Holland and Auckland, reserving to Great Britain the right of retaliating upon France the Berlin decree, in case the United States should acquiesce in a measure so hostile to herself, as well as every other commercial nation. Be it so; this was a thing growing out of the peculiar circumstances of the case, and justified by every honorable consideration; in as much as the Berlin decree was particularly aimed at Great Britain, and calculated to strike a deadly blow at the very vitals of her existence as a nation. Besides, it must be evident to the capacity of the weakest politician, that in case America acquiesced in this decree, it would not only be countenancing France, in the breach of an express stipulation by treaty, but it would also be aiding and assisting one nation, to the destruction of an-

other. Great Britain, then, by the note in question, asked our government to do nothing more, than was required by its interest and duty.

Think not, however, my fellow-citizens, that I stand here to apologize for Great Britain : God forbid ! I apologize for no nation whatever, any further than it is governed by those eternal and immutable principles of justice, which are inscribed on the hearts of all men. I am, by birth and education, an American, and as such, I am proud of my country and her republican institutions. We want not an alliance with any nation on earth : no, America is abundantly able to maintain her own independence, without foreign aid. As for the friendship of nations, it is an old adage, that “there is no friendship in trade :” we cannot, therefore, expect the friendship of any people, any longer than it is required by their immediate interest. I would, however, adopt the sentiment of “impartial justice to all nations, entangling alliances with none.” I would pay tribute to whom tribute is due, honor to whom honor. But I can never see my country in danger, without searching out the cause, and exposing the fault, wherever it may be found ; whether it exists in the administration of our own government, or in the injustice of others. This is one of the noblest privileges of freemen ; secured to us by our invaluable constitution ; dear to us as life, and without which, we should cease to be a republic.

But returning to our subject, we ask, how did our administration treat the Berlin decree ? I answer, by folding their arms, for more than twelve months, after the issuing of that decree, without taking any effectual measures to resist it. Mr. Jefferson, indeed, received a note from our minister at Paris, Mr. Armstrong, advising him that this decree was not intended to operate against the United States. This circumstance is laid hold of by Mr. Jefferson, and com-

municated to Congress, with a great deal of *sang froid*, as a justification for our acquiescence in this pernicious measure ; although the information was derived from an agent of Napoleon, not authorized to give the explanation : for the very moment application is made to the proper source, we are told, that the decree carries with it its own interpretation, and admits of no exception. Nay, under this decree our vessels are taken, and property confiscated, to the amount of millions ! and many of those vessels plundered and burned upon the high seas, directly in the face of the nation, in violation of an express stipulation by treaty, and the sacred rights of neutrality.

In the mean time, what does Great Britain ? She waits patiently for a whole year, under the operation of this decree, in the vain hope, that America would not submit to this degradation of character, by suffering her flag to be thus indignantly violated and insulted.

But here we stop to notice a transaction, which excited in the bosom of Americans the most painful sensations, and called forth a universal burst of indignation : I mean the outrageous attack on one of our national ships, the Chesapeake, by the British ship of war, the Leopard ! Yes, my fellow-citizens, this was a deep wound, inflicted upon the honor and sovereignty of the United States ; and had it proceeded from an authorized act of that government, could never have been healed. Now the political hemisphere begins to gather blackness ! Democracy unveils herself, and cries aloud, to battle. Every circumstance against Great Britain, is magnified into crime ; while recourse is had to every artifice, to palliate the conduct of France. Every mean is made use of to inflame the public mind, and prepare it for open hostilities.

Mr. Jefferson now supposed his favorite plan was about to be consummated : we had now arrived to

that state of things, in the opinion of our philosopher, when the fatal blow might be struck, and our commerce locked up for ever. Now followed in rapid succession, a train of public acts, which must convince the most prejudiced mind, of the hostility of Mr. Jefferson and his subservient administration, to commerce ; of his enmity to Great Britain, and friendship for France. Taking reparation into his own hands, he immediately issued a proclamation, prohibiting all British armed vessels from entering our waters ; while those of France were permitted to take shelter in our ports and harbors, although Napoleon had, if possible, committed greater outrages against the American flag.

On the arrival of this news in England, the British government frankly and openly acknowledged the insult offered to America, through an unauthorized act of one of her agents, and tendered ample reparation on the spot. But our minister in London, was immediately instructed not to settle this outrage, unless Great Britain would surrender up her right to command the services of her own seamen, who were in the constant habit of going from her employ, and entering on board American merchantmen ; a right which she had ever held sacred, as the only guarantee to her safety as a nation ; especially at a time when she was fighting the battles of the world ; when her navy furnished the only bulwark against the universal dominion of the tyrant Napoleon.

The British government, astonished at this singular stroke of policy in our administration, and anxious to remove every obstacle in the way of a good understanding with the United States, immediately commissioned an envoy extraordinary, to our government, to acknowledge the insult, and to tender such reparation, as should meet the entire satisfaction of the American people. But as Mr. Jefferson had already determined, that this unhappy affair should not

form a distinct subject of negotiation, the offer could not be accepted; and by a kind of *political chicanery*,* he at once avoids this honorable attempt on the part of Great Britain, to adjust a painful difference.

Having thus effectually barred the door to any further negotiation with Great Britain, and receiving satisfactory evidence that Napoleon demanded more *marked* compliances on the part of America, Mr. Jefferson, at the ensuing session of Congress, recommended to that honorable body, the total *inhibition* of our commerce, by a permanent, unlimited *embargo!*—a measure, fraught with the most direful mischiefs to our country.

After the adoption of this fatal measure, intelligence is received of the British order in council, retaliating upon France the Berlin decree, to which we had so shamefully submitted. This excited the embargorons to new vigor. This darling embargo, is immediately followed up, by supplement upon supplement, and finally, by an act called “the enforcing act,” which formed the perfect climax of this system of “restrictive energies.”

* It will be recollected, that the instructions to Mr. Rose, the British minister, authorized him to make reparation for the attack on the Chesapeake, only on condition, that the proclamation interdicting British armed vessels from our waters, should first be withdrawn; in as much as the proclamation was an hostile act, and the attack on the Chesapeake was unauthorized. When Mr. Jefferson, therefore, had *ferreted* out the instructions of Mr. Rose, and found that he could not transcend his powers, he came forward, with much apparent candor and impartiality, and offered to make the withdrawalment of this offensive proclamation, and the act of reparation, *simultaneous* acts, and then boasted of his liberality and pacific disposition. What rare magnanimity is here! Is this that kind of honorable sentiment which ought to pervade the breast of the first magistrate of a great, free and enlightened people? And can he expect to carry with him into his retirement, the grateful acknowledgments of his country, after having thus tampered with its best interests?

Now, indeed, our commerce, which had heretofore unfurled its banners in every port, and whitened every sea, is driven from its native element, and like the *terrapin*, shrinks beneath the touch of its cruel oppressor. The farmer, compelled to yield the hard earned fruits of his labor for half its value, is rendered unable to discharge his honest contracts. The merchant, groaning under the pressure of embarrassment, has the mortification to see the produce, which he had purchased upon the plighted faith of the nation, rotting upon his hands; while his dismantled vessels, lying at his docks, are subject to the devastation of destroying insects, and become food for worms. The honest mechanic, is seen walking the streets in idleness, finding nothing for the employment of his hands. The day labourer, deprived of his hire, with anguish, hears the cries of his children for bread, but is unable to satisfy their wants: while the American eagle, cowering over the distressed mariner, weeps his exile from his native land and country, in search of employment! Nay, a solemn, awful gloom pervades our country, and grief sits pensive on every brow!

We go to the government with our complaints; we ask the cause of our sufferings, and supplicate relief. We are told, the cause exists in the wicked policy of the two great belligerents; and our patience is demanded. We show them the fallacy of the answer, by pointing to the insincerity of their negotiations.* They still demand our confidence. We show

* In addition to what has already been observed on this subject, the reader is referred to that shameful scene of diplomatic juggling, in the negotiation with Great Britain, on the subject of suspending the embargo as to her, in case she would rescind her orders in council. Mr. Jefferson declared to Congress, in his message of Nov. 8, 1808, that it was not deemed inconsistent with the condition of Great Britain, whose power on the

them by experience, that perfect teacher, that the only effect produced on foreign nations, by this wretched anti-commercial system, has been, to excite in them utter contempt for the policy: that our own government has been subjected to the scorn and derision of the world: that the honor and interests of the nation have been basely sacrificed; the American name shamefully tarnished; enterprise crushed; the reverence due to laws diminished; the national treasury drained; and public morals, a main pillar in republican institutions, that support of civil society, has been thereby corrupted. We are still compelled to endure the suffering, and patiently seek relief through the elective franchise. Through this sacred franchise, therefore, our distressed country soon begins to speak in a voice of thunder.† Terrified at this voice of the

ocean is so ascendant, “to state explicitly, that on her rescinding her orders in relation to the United States, their trade would be opened to her, and remain shut to her enemy, in case of his failure to rescind his decrees also,” by which, every body understood, that an explicit proposition had been made to Great Britain, that in case she would rescind her orders in council, as to the United States, the embargo should be suspended as to her. But behold! on examining the mutilated public documents, communicated to Congress in the same message, we find no such proposition had ever been made. The instructions to Mr Pinckney, our minister in London, contain no such authority. The letter from Mr. Secretary Madison, to Mr. Pinckney, containing the instructions alluded to, barely states on that subject—“*Should the British government take this course, (that is, recal her orders,) you may AUTHORIZE an EXPECTATION, that the President will, within a reasonable time, give effect to the authority vested in him on the subject of the embargo laws.*” Yet Mr. Jefferson has dared to state, in the face of the world, that Great Britain rejected his offer. Thus the American people have been duped into a belief, that sincere attempts had been made to adjust our differences with Great Britain, whilst nothing but *hypocrisy* and *double dealing*, are visible throughout the whole negotiation.

† Witness the elections throughout the Union, particularly in the New England States.

sovereignty of the people, and stung with mortification and disappointment, at the total failure of all their measures of "restrictive energies," consternation seizes the Jeffersonian ranks; confusion lights upon their camp, and they divide into parties! They fall into a jargon of confused measures! while the little, virtuous, intrepid, Spartan band, expose the follies and madness of the whole. By a "confusion worse confounded," they at length blunder upon an act unintelligible to all; the extent of which was not understood, or intended by any. But the intelligent, piercing eye of a Canning, though a distant spectator, penetrates the mystery, and separating the chaff from the wheat, foresees in this measure a great good to his country, and the discomfiture of his enemy.

Now Mr. Jefferson, resigning to his successor the task of government, retires from the post of honor, to a private station, "fighting over the ruins of the works of his hands," bearing the declaration of the independence of his country in the one hand, while in the other he holds the tarnished ensigns of his office, labelled with this sacred inscription, "all is vanity and vexation of spirit."

Now opens a scene full of interest, of joy and of gratulation. This non-intercourse act, at first unintelligible, swallowing up all the anterior follies of the Jeffersonian administration, by a mere accident, places the two great belligerents upon the same equal ground of impartial justice.

Mr. Madison, our new president, meeting the pacific overtures of Great Britain, with a "promptitude and frankness" which does honor to the American character, adjusts our differences with that nation, which "two honest men in two hours," might have adjusted more than two years ago, and saved the United States from those awful scenes of distress and ruin, into which they have been unfortunately plunged.

by the wayward policy of a weak and pusillanimous administration. Thus, America is again rescued from the embraces of Napoleon, and the threatening aspect of a destructive war : whilst our commerce returns, with exultation, to its native element, amid the plaudits of millions !

Here springs up again that tender shoot of liberty, which had been nipped by the chilling blasts of democracy. It is instantly surrounded, by a noble throng of patriots, with hearts glowing with the sacred fire of freedom ; who seem to say to the astonished, gaping croud of anti-commercial politicians, " Go ye away ; for ye are unprofitable servants." Thanks to the great Arbiter of nations, our political safety has come ! Then,

- " Hail, Columbia, happy land !
- " Hail, ye patriotic band ;
- " Who, firm and bold in freedom's cause,
- " Dare to maintain your country's laws,
- " And like a bulwark ever stand,
- " To guard Columbia's happy land.
- " Your independence is your boast ;
- " Well you know the price it cost ;
- " Your Sires' own blood procured the prize ;
- " Then rear its altars to the skies.
- " Firm, united let us stand,
- " Guardians of Columbia's land,
- " Resolv'd, till time shall be no more,
- " To guard Columbia's happy shore."