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AN
ORATION,
PRONOUNCED AT WORCESTER,
ON THE
FOURTH OF JULY, 1798;
THE
ANNIVERSARY
OF THE
INDEPENDENCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

BY SAMUEL AUSTIN, A. M.

PRINTED AT WORCESTER,
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1798.

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Jones Coll.

WORCESTER, July 4, 1798.

At a Meeting of a large number of Gentlemen, of this and the neighboring Towns, to celebrate the Anniversary of AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE :—

VOTED, That JOSEPH ALLEN, Esq. SAMUEL FLAGG, Esq. Col. DANIEL CLAP, EDWARD BANGS, Esq. and WILLIAM STEDMAN, Esq. be a Committee to wait on the Rev. Mr. AUSTIN, to thank him for the animated and patriotic ORATION, delivered by him, this day, and to request a copy thereof for the Press.

The Committee waited on him accordingly, and received the following ANSWER :

WORCESTER, July 6th, 1798.

GENTLEMEN,

I HAVE the honor of acknowledging the letter of attention, received from you, dated July the 4th. The candor and politeness of my fellow citizens have made a deep impression on my mind, which will not be easily obliterated. If I have contributed to their satisfaction; to the perpetuity of that patriotism, which is already extensively diffused; or to the convalescence of any individual, who is fortunately emerging from a political paroxysm, the satisfaction will certainly be mutual.

Accept, Gentlemen, of my compliments, and permit me to assure you, that I am, with respectful consideration,

Your obliged, and very humble servant,

S. AUSTIN.

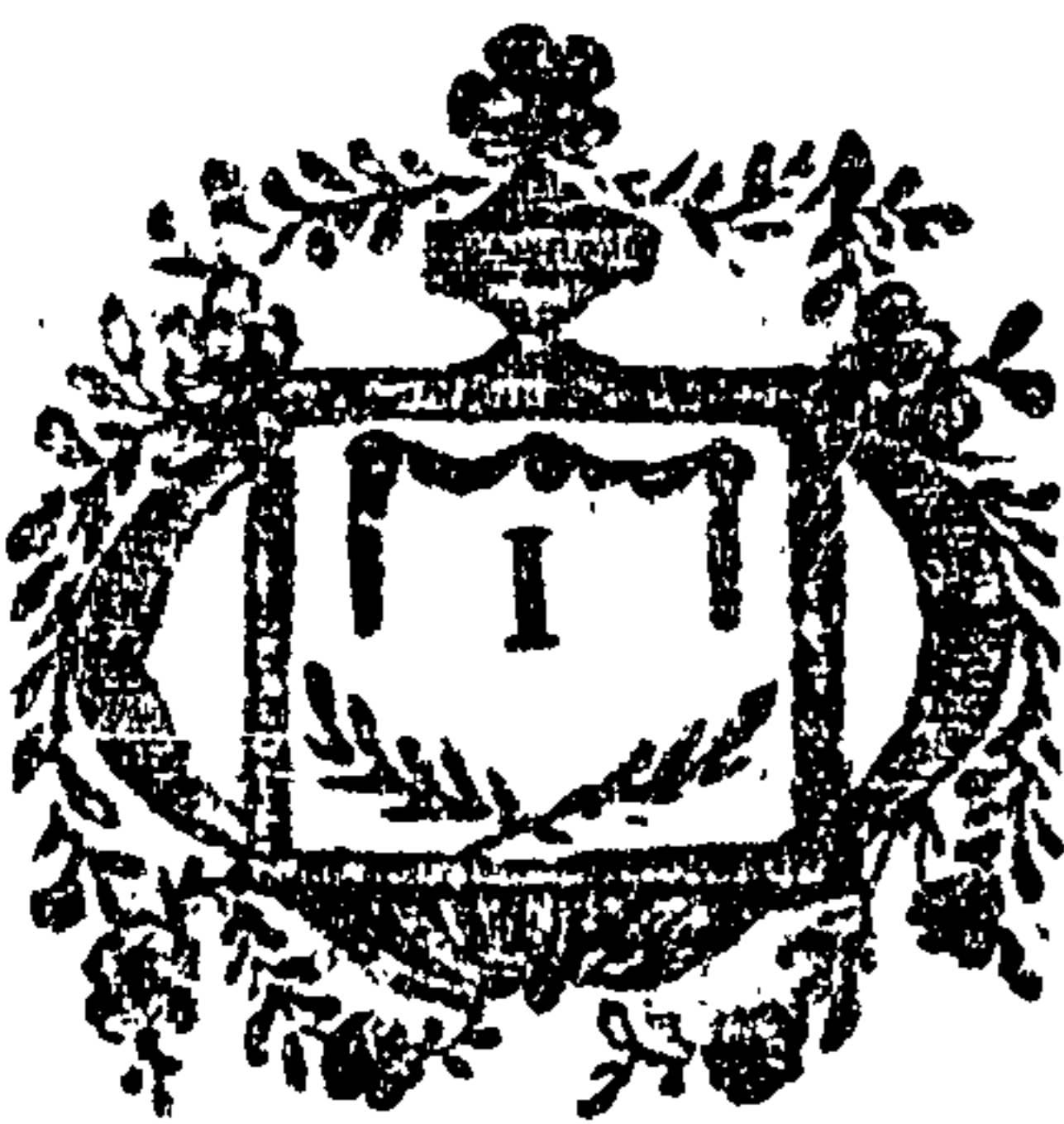


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O R A T I O N,

PRONOUNCED AT *WORCESTER,*

JULY 4th, 1798.



CANNOT but mingle my regret with yours, Fellow Citizens, that the expectations you have indulged, of entertainment, from the ingenuity of a Gentleman* of distinguished abilities, and high official respectability, to whom an early application was made to address you publicly on this occasion, are disappointed. The disappointment cannot be removed : It must be patiently borne. It is some consolation to me, that, while I appear as a substitute, your expectations

* Hon. DWIGHT FOSTER, detained at Congress.

tions will be formed on a lower scale, and that I shall have an equitable claim, upon an uncommon portion of your candor. The little dexterity, which will appear, in the management of subjects, to which it would be unpardonable not to direct your attention, will be venial in one, who is trammelled by professional pursuits, public indeed ; but foreign, and confined.

We are assembled, on this anniversary festival, my Countrymen, to commemorate the memorable epoch of the Birth of our Nation. The fourth of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy six, was the day of the Political Nativity of the United States of America. It was then, that we emerged from the minuteness, and dependence, of a colonial existence, to the majesty of a consolidated, and formidable Nation. It was then, that we took our rank, as one, among the independent sovereignties of the world. For our will to be FREE ; our public and solemn declaration that we would be so, a declaration, founded in principle, the effect of necessity, and utterly irrevocable, was, under God, the guarantee of our freedom. We
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entered not upon a work, which we meant pusillanimously to abandon. Our energy we determined should be effectual, or that, like the Greeks at Thermopylæ, we would leave no triumph in the hands of our oppressors. In this resolution, we have not been frustrated, and the present day completes two and twenty years of our national existence.

As this is the most solemn, and the most general political festival of our country, as it is the great day of the United States of America, a day of peculiar gladness, which we celebrate with the ardor of extensive hilarity, it seems requisite to be sure of its propriety, and to possess a confidence, if such a confidence may be rationally indulged, that there are no considerations whatever, which the adversaries, or the semipatriotic friends of our Independence, and of our National Government, can justifiably allege, to obscure its splendor, or damp its joys. No wise man will abandon himself to an indecent hilarity, founded on an immoral, and indefensible basis. He will yield himself to the government of reason; and proceed no farther, than he feels himself supported by her indubitable decisions.

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Have we, then, reason to glory in the events, which this day celebrates, or have we not? Do the rise, the progress, the local effects, and extensive political consequences of our independent national existence, justify the public celebrity we give to this Anniversary? Are we acting like children, pleased with their toys, and playful with the instrument which is to correct them; or like men of solid sense, pleased with a solid advantage, and capable of submitting, unblushingly, their conduct to the narrowest scrutiny?

Revolutions, it must be confessed, are not always justifiable, or prudent. They are often incumbered with complicated sufferings, and not unfrequently terminate in accumulated wretchedness. And the spirit of revolutionism seems to be now the political, and moral mania of the day. We must take care of our creed, then, in this respect. Much reverence is unquestionably due to prescription. And in taking down a vast building, we have reason to proceed cautiously, lest we be overwhelmed in its fall. Yet, neither prescription on the one hand, nor the hazard of revolution on the other, will justify ignominious

ious forbearance, under notorious, and insupportable abuses.

There were those, who, when the language of Independence was assumed; when the doctrine of subjection was about to be publicly and authoritatively abjured; when the HANCOCKS, the ADAMSES, the SHERMANS, the FRANKLINS, and the RUTLEDGES of our country, stepped forward, with the intrepidity of veterans, and hazarded their heads, by signing the instrument of our eternal separation from the English government, shrunk back from the imaginary gulf, into which they supposed us to be plunging. Holden by prepossessions in favor of the then mother country, or trembling at the most distant sound of a drum, they preferred inglorious ease, in the bed of unresisting submission, to the honor of counteracting the machinations of Despots, and giving birth to an independent, and flourishing Republic. There are those, at the present day, who think, that our situation would have been more eligible, had we remained mere colonies. And there are, perhaps, a few, who are yet of the opinion, that our revolution was the infringement of compacts,

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pacts, which ought never to have been broken. If moral principle have been prostrated, we admit, that we ought to proceed hesitatingly, in exalting this day into the supreme festivity of our nation. But, what compact existed; where is it to be found; in what page of what book is it printed, or written; by what law of Nature, of Nations, or of God, is it supported, which bound us unresistingly to endure to be judged, in questions of property and life; to have modes of government imposed; officers and troops quartered upon us; to have our commerce shackled in every direction; and to be taxed, to any amount, without our consent; in connection with a government, too, partly elective, and wholly so in a department, which extends a control over the national finances? By what compact were we bound unresistingly to see our principal maritime places blockaded; ships of war hovering on our coasts, to hold us in terror; our flourishing towns, and defenceless villages, reduced to ashes; our citizens unhoused and slaughtered; the savages excited to sound the war whoop around our frontiers; in short, to be tied down, hands and
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and feet, and pressed to a political death, under the weight of a government, with respect to us at least, absolutely arbitrary, and flagrantly cruel? Had the original appointments of Nature, and the radical principles of Liberty, the most familiar of which is, the doctrine, that power originates with the people, and is subject to their modification, ever been so completely reversed, as that a territory so remotely situated, so extensive, so evidently destined to a future uncontrollable greatness, the nursery of an independent yeomanry, wholly unacquainted with the monopolies of the feudal vassalage, should be holden, by any moral bond, to yield to such unbounded aggressions? Do not the waves of the Atlantic, the varieties of our climate, the productions of our soil, the strata of our mountains, and our unmeasurable forests, presenting the amplest materials of an immense future opulence, and a perfect national security, proclaim, even in the ears of infancy itself, a different language? If resistance here, then, were unlawful, it must always be unlawful; and to indulge a thought of opposition to the most perfect despotism, must ever be a crime. On this

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principle,

principle, the long repudiated doctrine of passive obedience and nonresistance, the darling doctrine of high churchmen, and political bigots, is incontrovertibly established : Nay, is established beyond its original pretensions.

But we were children. Be it so. Is it a violation of filial duty to escape the clutches of despotic, and cruel fathers ?

With respect to those who doubt the policy, or public utility of our Independence in fact, it might be sufficient to ask, whether it be better to be a child or a man ; an apprentice, or a master ; a pupil, or an adept in all knowledge ; a slave, who has his task set, and his pint of rice given him, or the irresponsible manager of an extensive property ? To what a strange political incredulity are these men subject ? By what kind of political arithmetic do they calculate ? To appreciate the utility of our National Independence duly, we must not look through the jaundiced eye of prejudice, or of foreign attachments ; but, with the clear vision of unbiassed, and extensive observation, we must justly estimate the progress of arbitrary power, when unresist-
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ingly admitted ; its effects on the body politic, in cramping every effort of genius, discouraging enterprise, and exhausting the springs of public prosperity ; we must look at facts, as they exist in regions of absolute colonial dependence ; we must review all the past pages of our own political history, during the period which has elapsed since the declaration of our Independence ; consider the unparalleled increase of our population, our commerce, and our improvements in arts, and learning, the incomparably excellent nature of our political institutions, and the spirit of enterprise, which is diffused even to the extremities of our country ; and with the eye of all the prophecy we possess, which may be somewhat conjectural, but considerably certain, at least probable, plunge into far distant periods, and see a growing prosperity, correspondent to what we have already experienced.

With respect to what is past we have more than conjecture. We have indubitable fact. On a general estimate of the progress of our national affairs, during the two and twenty years which have elapsed, it will appear, that

our

public prosperity has been in fact advancing, with an accelerated speed, exceeding the most sanguine predictions of our warmest political calculators. We have exhibited a phenomenon, which the world never saw, a nation deliberately constructing, adopting, and executing, under singular auspices, without blood, almost without the quarrel of words, a form of government, fraught with wisdom, and administered with firmness. We have moved forward, with our swords in one direction, and under the guidance of one Captain. We have followed HIM with blessings, into the retirements of a tranquil old age, and have attached ourselves, save a few restless partizans, with equal zeal, and confidence, to his venerable successor. This is the past.

And what is the future? Here, I am sensible, political enthusiasm has sometimes soared, till it became dizzy. But, unless our divisions, our cowardice, or our libertinism obscure it, what hinders, but that the eye of political faith terminate in a prospect of unbounded, and irradiated glory, as the triumphant sequel of our national struggles? What else can intercept the foresight of future cities

ies rising, with unequalled grandeur, to view, superb monuments of human art and industry erected, distant forests converted into fruitful fields, rivers meeting rivers by navigable canals, and our innumerable ships, waving their striped pendants over all oceans, and in every district of the globe? What else can prevent our seeing, beforehand, future universities founded, and amply endowed; future WASHINGTONS rising to defend; future ADAMSES to illuminate their country; and a genuine and rational Christianity, rising superior to malignity, and sophism, to moralize, and felicitate the whole?

Let none talk, then, of its having been better for us to have remained mere colonies. Let us spurn such narrow, and inglorious conceptions. Feeling that we ARE, let us resolve that we WILL BE a Nation, and never lose sight of the moment which gave us birth, nor of the illustrious characters, who led the way, in the adventurous flight, from the wing of delusive protection, to soaring on our own pinions, as we pleased.

But see, say the lukewarm advocates, or mere spectators of our Independence; see
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whither you are now posting. See how the more prudent calculations of the wiser sort are about to be realized. See how you have been tortured by one nation, and are now the mere sport and plaything of another. Observe your commerce broken, your national dignity precipitated down to the deepest degradation, and your country like to be assailed by the irresistible phalanxes of an all-conquering Republic. Observe to what your revolution has given birth, in the massacres of revolution upon revolution in Europe, and the collision of parties, the increase of corruption, and the blast of calumniating faction, in the United States themselves.

We should be unwilling to admit, from these suggestions, a conclusion dishonorable to our Independence, or extensively so to our country; nor shall we, without the most substantial evidence. We deny, that we gave example, or furnished patronage, to that endless ringing of changes, which is heard on the other side of the Atlantic; or to that restless spirit of faction, which pollutes the streams of our own public prosperity. It was not pride, impatient of a rational obedience; it

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was not delight in blood ; it was not infidel averfions, or unbounded libertinifm, which impelled us to take our ftand, and retain it. It was the principle of felf prefervation. It was the genuine love of our country, taking fuch a fttep with reluctance, and counteracting a thoufand oppofite attachments. It was cruel neceffity. And are the factious among ourfelves, the demagogues of a party, or the retailers of their infidelity, and calumny ; are thefe the legitimate children of our country, as an independent, and consolidated Republic ? No. They are a fpurious offspring. Like mushrooms, they have a recent, and unfolid exiftence. The proper courfe of our national energy will make them fade, and wither, like the leaves in autumn.

And are not the public arrangements of our government, under its recent adminiftrations, capable of a fair and honorable vindication ? The United States have been fo far from furnifhing an example of difturbing the order of the world, that ours has been uniformly the fuffering, and the pacific lot. We have been merely the objects of aggreffion ; aggreffion, indeed, which would have provok-
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ed any other sovereignty on earth to a violent retaliation. We have been spoiled of our property, when pursuing a fair, and neutral commerce. The very power from which we revolted, in a moment of temporary success, groundlessly indignant at our partialities for the French nation, then struggling for liberty ; partialities which we confess as general, and fervent, but righteous ; broke in upon our honest trade, and ingloriously stripped us of the earnings of our toil, and enterprise. But, extensive as these violations of our property were, though resolutely tenacious of the rights and dignity of an independent government, we did not immediately gird on the sword of vengeance, as the Madisons, the Gileses, and Livingstons of the country, would have had us done. We did not, without the more moderate means of negociation, rush at once, and precipitately, into the ocean of carnage. With greater wisdom, and more dispassionate policy, we first talked with our oppressor. We demanded indemnity, and obtained it. Our differences we settled, by a bloodless accommodation, and an amicable adjustment. Some, instead of imputing to us
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an excessive sensibility, insist that, in this instance, we dishonored ourselves, by servile concessions. To them we answer, that, if to act the part of firmness, mingled with moderation, be to be dishonored, we were dishonored. Let the lovers of an English war take that side of the question, if they choose it. Facts, which no reasoning can overthrow, amply vindicate, at once, our morality, and our policy.

Short, alas, much too short, was the interval of our repose. No sooner had we repelled the attacks, which were made on us on the one hand; than we were assailed, with more intolerable, and ungrateful annoyance, on the other. The French Republic, to whom we had been so warmly, and so generously partial, even in days when her struggle was most convulsive; when her political fate hung in the poize of excessive danger, rather than of uncertainty; when she had not even put herself into the posture of an orderly existence; a Republic, which has heretofore taken us by the hand, with expressions of peculiar fraternity; which has ordered our colors to hang suspended in the very chamber of

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her Legislative Assembly ; and which has frequently given us the vows of eternal alliance ; forgetting her vows, and her friendship, proud with recent victory, and vaunting in the preeminence of her martial glory, has made inroads upon us, of the most pernicious, and flagrant nature. She has not only committed the most predatory ravages on our commerce, but maltreated the persons of our countrymen, and contemplated the entire excision of our government. Relinquishing, totally, her first ostensible ; and, as I imagine, real object, LIBERTY ; and, in her internal agitations, having jostled out, or exterminated, her men of moderation, and virtue ; her Fayettees, and her Barthelemys ; exalted, almost to madness, by libertine sentiments, and accumulated power, she has become, not only to others, but to us, the haughty aggressor. Sporting with the first principles of justice ; insatiable, beyond all decency ; not ashamed to rank herself with the most ferocious barbarians on earth ; and, while she talks of fraternity and liberty, really respecting nothing but the *ultima ratio regum* ; she pushes aside all, who stand in the way of her omnipotent will.

will. Holding half Europe, which she has revolutionized, but miserably exhausted, under the terrors of her vindictive arm, she is now exerting her utmost efforts, directly or indirectly, to overwhelm her most formidable rival. The island of Great Britain, she would, if possible, precipitate to the lowest abyss of the ocean. And, exasperated that we are even on terms of peace, and commerce, with this her hated foe, she is ready to exterminate us also.

I am not an adept in political tactics ; and it would not comport with the nature of the present business, were I able, to descend to a discussion of the points in dispute, between France, and the United States. Several complaints, as the ground of displeasure, have been brought forward, by the French Ministers. But, were they well founded ; could they be substantiated by incontestible proofs, would they all be equal to the single, fordid, contemptible, revolutionizing act of Adet, in his appeal to the people of the United States ; spreading among them combustible materials, and in a moment of popular wavering, on purpose to burn down the fair edifice

edifice of our country's liberty ; aiming, while generously fostered in the bosom of the country, utterly to subvert its most invaluable interests ? But these complaints, it appears to me, and I think the opinion will be supported by the suffrages of all men of candor, have been shewn, by Mr. Pickering, Mr. Harper, and our Envoys to the French Republic, to have no foundation. Our escape from war, by the treaty of London, which has made such noise on each side of the Atlantic, has been drawn into view, as peculiarly offensive, and as the principal, and justifying reason of French depredations. Go, says the haughty Directory, a body of despots, now the concentration of all authority in France, and as ambitious, and imperious, as Louis the XIVth, at least ; go, and undo the contracts, into which you have entered, without advising with us, with the cabinet of St. James's, and then we will talk with you. But not a word before. What, then ! are we amenable, in the management of our public interests, to the Directory of France ? Have we no right to negotiate terms of security, and commerce, without the consent of this domineering

domineering Republic? Must *our* diplomatic transactions be subjected to *her* scrutiny, before they can go into effect? May *we* not be at peace with a formidable nation, without *her* permission? Then let us bow down our necks under the yoke patiently. Let us submit to be rocked in the cradle, or turned out of it, just as *her* Ladyship pleases. But let us no longer talk of being an independent nation.

Whatever opinion may be formed of this treaty with the Court of London; whether, on the whole, it have been a judicious, or an injudicious political measure, one thing is certain, that it cannot be the least justification of French aggressions. Because there is a specific clause, in that treaty, which utterly excludes its operation, in cases interfering with preexisting treaties. But, that this is not the cause of the injuries heaped on us, even in the feelings of France herself, is evident, from innumerable posterior events. It is evident, from her correspondent treatment of other neutral nations. It is evident, from all her revolutionizing measures. It is evident, from her policy, and her avowed principles. It is evident, from her making out
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to us the price of her friendship, and from her own wanton disrespect to the most solemn existing compacts. No : There is another cause of her depredations. And it is her rancor against England, and her determination to crush the English power, united with the most insatiable thirst for self aggrandizement. It is this diabolic, (for I can call it by no softer a name) it is this diabolic disposition, which is interdicting all the commerce of Europe, and draining the strength of surrounding countries. It is this, which directs her clandestine intrigues, and her public operations. And it is this, which will reduce thee, O my country ! to the most ignominious subjection : It is this, which will bring thee to tell a tale of woe, to Venice, Geneva, Holland, and Switzerland, as thy sorrowing sisters, unless thou hast a will to be independent, and unless Providence preserve thee.

How mild, how tolerant, how amicable, how condescending, on the other hand, has been our own government ? Disliking war, reluctant to retalliate, fond of peace, and wishing, above all things, for the privilege of existing,
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and of reducing to the most extensive advantage, the legitimate powers of our country, in a fair neutrality, we have again sought indemnity, and peace, by negociation, on a basis perfectly accommodating. Not satisfied with ample discussions ; with examining closely every point of pretended grievance ; with waiting on the government of France in the person of one Minister ; nor resenting the repulsive manner, in which he has been treated ; we have sent a triumvirate of Ministers, clothed with adequate powers, and instructed to descend to every point of pacification, of which our national dignity can possibly admit ; while, with unparalleled forbearance, we are sustaining injuries, without measure, and without redress. But, lo ! what obstacles are raised to frustrate our measures, and to throw us into utter despondency, with respect, both to national redress, and repose ! Our Ministers, forsooth, are called upon, to deposit a *douceur* of fifty thousand pounds sterling ; and to abandon to the uncertain, and probably fallacious, responsibility of Holland rescriptions, thirty millions of florins more, before the government of France will even deign

deign to hear our complaints.* The quondam Bishop of Autun, the infamous Talleyrand, blushes not, openly to vindicate the aggressions of his government; and, while he dissembles a fair exterior, scruples not, by base instruments of disorganization in our own country, to practise upon the people, to attempt to separate them from their government, and to throw them into convulsions, and at the very moment that our negotiations are going forward; meditating, like Judas Iscariot, to betray, and destroy us, by the luscious embrace of the most insatiable rapacity. Here, indignity becomes insupportable; and French policy, too infamous to be
courted.

* To the subjects of liquidations, commutations, and loans, as suggested by the agents of the French government, and detailed by our Ministers, the Orator has not descended; because they were not of easy comprehension to him, and are, in his view, of no great moment. The question is, Whether we shall add to the immense spoliations, and insults, we have already sustained, a voluntary payment, to a large amount, for the unspeakable mercy of escaping being rent to pieces, under the Harpy fangs of this aspiring government? It is not material, in what mode this payment is made. Though this is a hard condition, it is no more than what we ought to be compelled to perform, if we will listen to it half an instant.

courted. I will proceed no farther, in a detail so wounding to the true lover of liberty.

This view of things seems to me to issue in the conclusion, that we ought to refer the origin of our calamities, to the perverseness of our adversaries, and not to any departure from prudence, or duty, in our own political arrangements ; and that we may, and ought, notwithstanding, to celebrate the birth of our Nation, and rally round the standards of our national government, this day, without blushing. Our Independence, in its origin, in its operations, and in its effects, stands completely exonerated, may I not say ? from every imputation. That our government, or its administrations, are without an error, we do not contend. But, its adversaries, from without, and from within, may be challenged to produce a notorious evil in either.

Let us, then, Fellow Citizens, cherish our national Independence ; and resolve, with joined hands, and solemn appeals to almighty protection, that we will not part with it. Have we not reason to value it as highly, as when we fought on the plains of Saratoga ?

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toga? And are we not summoned to be as solicitous to wrest it out of the hands of French, as of English Despots?

We have now arrived, my Countrymen, to an awful, a most interesting, a most serious crisis. Defeated in our attempts to negotiate an accommodation with the French government, we seem to be left, or, at least, to be rapidly approximating, to the only alternative of war. It appears, that all our patriotism, our wisdom, and our valor, are to be summoned to a most serious trial. It appears, that we are to be reduced to the necessity, either of resigning our Independence, or of consenting to defend it. Which shall we choose? With such a precious object in view, on the security of which the felicity of unborn millions so intimately depends; the dear purchase of years of public suffering; for which WARREN, MONTGOMERY, MERCER, and thousands of our intrepid countrymen, have bled; and for which the bosom of female tenderness has so often heaved with maternal, and conjugal sighs; what is our duty? Is there one person in this house, is there one person in all New England, or throughout

out the whole extent of the United States, who will hesitate what decision to make ? Is there one individual to be found, who will ignominiously withhold his property, or his life, when so vast, and so solemn an interest is depending ?

Permit me here to recite to you a passage, from an eminent Civilian.* “ The law of God no less enjoins a whole nation, to take care of their preservation, than it does private men. It is, therefore, just, that they should employ force against those, who, declaring themselves their enemies, violate the law of sociability towards them, refuse them their due, seek to deprive them of their advantages, and even to destroy them. It is, therefore, for the good of society, that people should be able to repress the malice, and efforts of those, who subvert the foundations of it ; otherways the human species would become the victims of robbery, and licentiousness ; for the right of making war, is, properly speaking, the most powerful means of maintaining peace. Hence, it is certain, that

* BURLINQUET, on the Principles of Natural, and Politic Law.

that the sovereign, in whose hands the interest of the whole society is lodged, has a right to make war ; but, if it be so, we must, of course, allow him the right of employing the several means for that end. In a word, we must grant him the power of levying troops, and obliging them to perform the most dangerous duties, even at the peril of their lives. And the obligation under which subjects are, in this respect, is so rigorous, and strong, that, strictly speaking, no man can be exempted from taking up arms, when his country calls upon him for his assistance ; and his refusal would be a just reason not to tolerate such a person any longer in the society.”

Having taken this review of the past ; having vindicated the attachments you ought still, and with as great zeal as ever, to entertain for your Independence, and for your Country ; and pointed you to that station of valorous, and determined resistance, which you are bound to take ; permit me, now, though I can claim no preeminence in wisdom, to solicit your attention to a few interesting, practical, and prudential principles, which are intimately connected with our duty,

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ty, and our safety, as individuals, and as a community.

A resolute defence of our national rights, against the unbounded violences of France, by resorting to arms, when regularly summoned by the voice of our government, by no means comprehends all that we have to do, as good citizens. There are, in connection with this, other points of duty, which the pressure of circumstances renders equally indispensable, and obligatory.

And, first : Does it not behove us, and especially at this crisis, when the spirit of intrigue is so insinuating, when faction is so daring, and convulsions are so frequent, to extend the eye of the most unremitting vigilance, over our established, and fortunate Constitution of Government ? The absolute necessity of a judicious, and permanent form of government, usually denominated a Constitution, as the grand bulwark of Liberty, is among the radical principles of a rational jurisprudence. A constitution of government, is the primitive consent of the people, in the mode of their political existence ; and is, therefore, the cream of freedom. Being
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the concentration of *their* authority, which, in a free government, is paramount to all other, nay, the comprehension of all authority ; it determines the limits of all public transactions, is the basis of all law, and a constant check against every act of usurpation. It is the anchor of the political vessel, without which, she is liable to be driven, convulsed, and overwhelmed in the billows of faction. A government, without a constitution, must be a despotism. It must be a government of the existing supreme power ; whether in the hands of one, or of many, is of no moment ; and not a government of law. It must exclude all system, and confidence ; and is, therefore, destructive of the very object it professes to pursue, the happiness of the people. A constitution, on the other hand, to which all posterior laws are reducible ; and which holds all departments, and officers, and even the legislative assembly itself, under a wholesome control ; which, therefore, is the supreme voice of the people, ever pronouncing, “ Hitherto shall ye come, and no farther,” as it is the guarantee of the public freedom, is the spring of public confidence.

fidence. It consolidates the society, instead of rending it asunder ; and gives that peculiar energy to public measures, which experience of happiness, and an unwavering confidence, only, can inspire.

The smallest acquaintance with the English history will obtrude on the mind, from a thousand incontestible facts, the evidence of this political theory. In the English government, through its whole progress, prerogative has been restrained, and the rights of the Commons, which constitute what public liberty exists, have been secured, almost only, by establishing, or resorting to, confessed, and permanent principles, of the nature of a constitution. Hither, I imagine, we are to trace the peculiar wisdom of our own country, which has determined, that the very first step towards government, is the deliberate, and voluntary establishment of a *form* of government. The excellency of that particular constitution, which has become the bond of our civil connections, experience hath demonstrated, beyond cavilling. This is our chief national glory, and the predictive oracle of our future greatness. We may depend upon
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it, therefore, that the enemies of our happiness, foreign and domestic, will level all their machinations to destroy it. And need I observe, that symptoms of designs, of this nature, have actually existed? Have we not been witnesses to the most flagitious attempts, to break through the outworks, and gradually to undermine the foundations, of this bulwark of our security? So long as this is preserved inviolate, my Fellow Citizens, we are safe; but, the moment this is wrested from us, we are undone. Let us, then, fasten the eye of peculiar jealousy on the man, who insidiously directs his cunning, or his eloquence, against this palladium of our public liberties. Let us consider, what freedom a foreign nation has used with exterior governments. Let us consider the crafty nature of her policy; how artfully, but destructively, its poison is transfused; and stand abreast, by prudence, as well as by valor, of her enormous ambition.

Again: Doth it not behove us to rid ourselves, entirely, of all corruptive foreign influence; of all groundless predilection for, or antipathy against, this nation, or the other?

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It is unimaginable, what extensive, and pernicious effects, these principles have wrought, in this country. Their consequences have been extremely mischievous. Antipathy, on one occasion, came near to precipitating the United States, needlessly, and irretrievably, into a destructive implication in the struggles of Europe. And a groundless partiality is now disposed to resign, without the least defence, the public liberties. Foreign influence has detached multitudes from a proper adherence to the rights of their country ; and some it has seduced to a traitorous imitation of an Arnold. Nor is this influence confined to public measures, and direct corruption ; but it diffuses itself, with a malignant contagion, into all the ramifications of society. It issues in a servile adoption of foreign principles, and manners. It lays us open to intrigue, and to a dissociating power. It pollutes our religion, and our honor ; and subjects us to an inundation of imported follies. It bows us down, from the erect posture of honest, and independent Americans, to the cringing meanness of slaves. We should be benevolent, Fellow Citizens, to

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all the world ; but be the tools, and dupes of no part of it.

Farther : Is it not a matter of infinite importance, that, relinquishing all personal resentments, and ungenerous criminations, we sink down into one formidable whole ; that we make union the order of the day ; and concentrate all the energies of the country, to the one great point, — the security of all ? If there be those, indeed, who, against every dictate of duty ; against every sentiment of fraternity ; against every challenge of conscience ; against the demands, which are thundered in the ears of sensibility, from the public sufferings, will persist in their determined adherence, to the schemes of a foreign government, to the utter sacrifice of the most invaluable interests of our own, I confess, I see not how we can embrace them. They are not the less our enemies, because they walk in our streets. But, it is to be hoped, that there are few of this character. Men of the least moderation will, in this hour of danger, and distress, listen to argument, and to fact. And it is a pleasing consideration, that this is an obvious effect of recent events.

vents. Notwithstanding the skill of French diplomacy, it is an unquestionable truth, that, in this country, it is defeating its own purposes ; and that the union of our citizens is growing, with an accelerated speed, proportionate to the efforts, which are made, to destroy it. As Republics are, in their nature, essentially democratic, union, to them, is of supreme importance. Divisions, indeed, contravene, in all cases, the very nature of society. They disarm it of the possibility of defence, exhaust its energy, inspire its enemies with confidence, and invite their aggressions. "*Divide et impera,*" **DIVIDE AND GOVERN**, was the darling maxim, of the most artful usurper, the finest scholar, and the greatest military character, that the world ever saw.* A maxim, which a modern usurpation has evidently placed at the head of its political creed. Let us, then, feel the importance of **UNION** ; and sink down into one vast column, moving whither the call of our government directs us, and impelled by one resolution, **THAT WE WILL LIVE INDEPENDENT, OR DIE.**

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* **JULIUS CÆSAR.** See his Commentaries, and the testimony of Tacitus.

Permit me to add: Is it not important, that, as friends to a deliberate, immovable patriotism, we repel, with all our influence, and with avowed detestation, that spirit of calumny, which, like Pandora's box, is scattering mischief in every direction; which loves to traduce virtue, which it cannot resemble; and which can find consolation, only in the prostration of all principle, and order? That our illuminated country can be extensively corrupted, by disorganizing efforts, however insidious; or, that the people of the United States, can ever be guilty of the enormous folly of supposing, that they, and their government, have a divided interest; until some total revolution be effected, I have, indeed, no idea. Equally confident I am, that,

“As the pure limpid stream, when foul with stains,

“Of rushing torrents, and descending rains,

“Works itself clear, and, as it runs, refines,

“Till, by degrees, the floating mirror shines,

“Reflects each flower, that on the border grows,

“And a new heaven, in its fair bosom, shows :”*

So, as the administration of the former, did,
that of the present, Supreme Executive, will,
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in its progress, completely cleanse itself from all the stains of a slanderous imputation; and appear, eventually, with unborrowed, and unpolluted purity. Yet, the calumny, which is poured forth, and most unrestrainedly, from some of the presses, in this country, is an *injury*, a *mischief*, and a *pestilence*, which the lovers of our country, and of virtue, cannot but repel.

Finally: Let us feel the importance of a deep respect for the infinite moral Governor of the world; cultivate an unalterable reverence for the institutions of his worship; and adopt, in our practice, that virtue, which the laws of the universe prescribe; giving full credence to the maxim of wisdom, that "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but, that sin is the reproach of any people." Under his auspices, we may gird on the armor of a resolved self defence, and rest confident, that nothing can destroy us, but our crimes, or that divided cowardice, which is prepared to resign the most enviable enjoyments, liberty, property, conscience, yea, the last drainings of the cup of comfort, to the mandate of a merciless tyrant. A cowardice, which, thanks to Providence,

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dence, is scarce in America; and, where it exists, is an exotic weed, not the indigenous production of our generous soil. May an opposite patriotism swell every breast! May the name of WASHINGTON make us ashamed to retreat from the ramparts of our country's security! And, though danger may be before us, let us meet it with firmness; always remembering, that "*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*;"* that IT IS A GLORY FOR A FREEMAN, AND A CHRISTIAN, TO DIE FOR HIS COUNTRY!

* HORACE.

