

AN
ADDRESS,

*From his
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DELIVERED BEFORE THE
REPUBLICAN CITIZENS
OF
BERKSHIRE,
ASSEMBLED AT PITTSFIELD,
TO CELEBRATE
THE THIRTY-FOURTH ANNIVERSARY
OF
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,
JULY 4th, 1810.

—●—
BY EZEKIEL BACON.
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“Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen who survey,
“The rich man’s joys increase, the poor’s decay,
“’Tis your’s to judge how wide the limits stand
“Between a splendid and a happy land.”

PITTSFIELD :

PRINTED BY PHINEAS ALLEN.

1810.

ORATION.



FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS,

IT is with real reluctance that I have once more accepted the polite solicitation of my fellow-townsmen to address you on this national festival. A disposition to oblige them, together with the unexpected refusal of others to take their due share in the exercises of this day, will be received as my apology for again appearing in a place which might, with more propriety, perhaps to themselves, and certainly with more profit to you, have been filled by others.

AMONGST the memorable events which mark the history of the world, it is recorded, that about the close of the fifteenth century there existed in the then unknown and untroubled regions of the Western Hemisphere, a race of men, the antiquity of whose descent has hitherto baffled the investigations of speculative Philosophers, whose numbers the statistical calculators of the age have as yet reduced to no satisfactory estimate, and whose languages the most learned Etymologists have been unable to trace to any certain analogies with the vocabularies of ancient or modern times. This extraordinary people, Lords in sovereign and indefeasible right of a soil extending through every intermediate clime from the arctic circle to the 60th degree of Southern Latitude, distributed into numerous empires, distinguished by various degrees of social improvement, but generally roaming in the uncorrupt simplicity of nature through the unrestrained range of a thousand forests, were in a luckless and fatal hour saluted for the first time by the cruel footsteps of European civilization, and visited by the desolating and corrupting genius of modern mercantile cupidity. The sad sequel of their story is now to be read only in the depopulation of their

scattered and degraded tribes, the extinction of their empires, and the evanishment of their very name and rank from the list of independent nations.

It is also recorded, that about the commencement of the seventeenth century, such had become the condition of civilized man in the most enlightened portion of the Eastern Hemisphere, that his fellow-man, "invested with a little brief authority," claimed the sacrilegious prerogative of judging between him and his maker as to the sufficiency of his religious faith, the acceptableness of his divine worship, and the sincerity of his inward devotion; and assumed under the penalty of temporal disabilities, and the pains of bodily punishment, to force to his own frail and fallible standard those opinions, and that homage, which the common Father of all had reserved as the subjects of his own exclusive cognizance, and who had expressly declared that he alone would repay the vengeance due in virtue of their omission or abuse. That forced by the dark and unrelenting spirit of religious bigotry, a small band of seceders from the pale of British hierarchy, committed their conscience to their God, their persons to the stormy waves of the Western ocean, their fortunes to the adventures of an inhospitable shore, and planted their standard in the bosom of a pathless wilderness. That after passing through various "scenes of untried being," they had in the progress of somewhat more than a century, rendered themselves sufficiently important in numbers and in wealth, to attract the step-dame attention of their unnatural mother. That in return for having "by her persecution or neglect" planted and reared them to the size and stature of manhood, she claimed a right to appropriate to the support of her extravagance and her decrepitude, such a portion of their earnings and their acquisitions, as she in her great tenderness should see fit to require of them. It was the spirit of opposition to these pretensions, which dictated to the sages of that day, that memorable declaration of the nation's rights which closed with its claims to independence and self-government; and which nerved the arms of our patriots and our heroes, with unshaken fortitude and resolution in its defence. Through the blessing of a beneficent providence the appeal which they entered to the God of armies was answered in peace, and the efforts of their valor crowned with the laurels of successful victory.

To us, my friends, has it been graciously left to reap the rich harvest of their honorable toils, and to preserve unsullied for our descendants, the free institutions, won by the swords of illustrious sires.

WHAT are the general principles on which these institutions rest, and what the dangers to which they are at all times exposed, it has fallen to the lot of the speaker on more than one similar anniversary occasion to endeavor feebly to impress upon his fellow-citizens, those considerations will not now be repeated. The peculiar circumstances by which the aspect of our political affairs are *at this time* marked, will render a short exposition of their present state at once more interesting and more profitable than the customary rehearsal of those revolutionary scenes, which to many of you are familiar from experience, to all from the history of the times. Enough for the contemplation of the present day is the progress of our national affairs since that revolution was so gloriously accomplished, and sufficient for the indignation of the patriot's breast, is the present measure of the nation's wrongs.

AGITATED too as our country has been for the last twelve years, by the struggles of contending parties, and essential as is an enlightened and correct understanding of the practical systems of those parties to enable you to judge between them, such a view of them both, in some of their distinguishing features, as shall at once comport with truth and with candor, may not, perhaps, be unacceptably received, or be deemed inappropriate with the proper objects of the day.

THE merit or demerit of the measures which characterized the general course of our federal government under the first presidency of General Washington, can with propriety be claimed exclusively by neither of the parties which have since divided our country. With the exception of a very few measures, which even at that period served to mark the germs of our subsequent political divisions, the great outlines of the system were adopted with the concurrence, and aided by the counsels of those statesmen who have since acted distinguished parts in all the administrations, which have at different periods presided over our public counsels. And to no one, perhaps, is the establish-

ment of our constitution, or the general outlines of our revenue and commercial systems more indebted, than to the enlightened character who now exercises the first executive office of the union.

THE provision to be made both in relation to the funding and redemption of our national revolutionary debt, was one, however, respecting which a marked division of parties, disclosing different views and advocating different features of policy, the most early made its appearance, and has continued through all periods of our present government to distinguish them.

THE progress and result of this difference, both in sentiment and in practice, it will be my endeavor at this time, with some minuteness, to trace.

THE sum total of the foreign and domestic debt of the United States, on the 1st day of January, 1791, after the government had gotten into full operation and their revenue system established, amounted, as appears on the records of the treasury department, to a little short of *seventy-five and a half million of dollars.* With respect to the merits of the consideration for which this debt was contracted, or the propriety of its being provided for and redeemed with promptitude and good faith, there existed no difference of opinion amongst the statesmen of those times, excepting on two points connected therewith. The first was that which arose on a proposition brought forward by the present President of the United States, then a leading member of the house of representatives, to discriminate between the original holders of the evidences of the domestic debt, and those who had acquired them by purchase and speculation, generally at a sum equal to about one eighth of their nominal amount; paying to the former the full amount of the sum appearing on the face of their certificates, and to the latter the market value at the several periods of purchase, and paying the difference between the nominal and the market value to the original holders. This proposition, however, was rejected, and provision was made for redeeming the great mass of the public debt at par. The other point of difference arose on the propriety of a proposition, which in addition to the debt proper of the United States, and which amounted to somewhat more than *fifty-*

four and a half million of dollars, went to assume upon the union the whole of the debts of the individual states, which was early proposed by Col. Hamilton. In the result, however, about *twenty-one millions* of the debts of the several states, were assumed by, and added to the proper debt of the union, making the whole amount at which the government undertook its management about *seventy-five and a half million*, as before stated. The objections to this arrangement, both as to its principle and the mode of its execution, were various and strong, but they were ineffectual. And twelve years experience proved, that so far from its affording a ready and expeditious mode of effecting the actual payment of the whole debt, that debt, which at the commencement of the operations of the government amounted to but *seventy-five and a half millions*, had, on the first day of January, 1801, risen to the sum of more than *eighty-three millions*, making an increase in that period of more than *seven and a half millions*. During this period the whole amount of sums borrowed by the government amounted to nearly *twenty-two millions*, five millions of which was loaned at the rate of eight per cent. These are facts appearing on record, verified by official documents repeatedly laid before the public, and which no man, who has a reputation either for truth or intelligence to lose, would, it was to have been presumed, wish openly to deny. It was reserved for the chief magistrate of a state, claiming the attributes of peculiar light and information, on all subjects of literature and policy, as well as for distinguished preeminence in morals and virtue, it was left to the chief magistrate of such a state, in the face of those documents, and in contempt of the most notorious evidence, to hazard in a public official address the sturdy assertion, that under those administrations of our federal government preceding that which came into power on the fourth of March, 1801, "our public treasury was overflowing, and our debt, the price of our Independence, was uniformly and rapidly decreasing."* Public decorum forbids our speaking of such an attempt to misinform the public mind, and to mislead the public judgment, in those terms of reprobation which it merits.

SUCH was the state of our public debt when on the accession of Mr. JEFFERSON to the presidency, the man-

* Gov. Treadwell's Speech to the Legislature of Connecticut, in May, 1810.

agement of it, together with our other great national interests was committed to the administration acting under his auspices. In the course of that and the succeeding year, a system was adopted, which by the aid of various retrenchments in the civil, naval and military expenditures, enabled the government to appropriate eight millions of dollars annually to the payment of the interest and the redemption of a portion of the principal of the existing debt. The effects of a rigorous adherence to this system were such as were to be expected. And on the first of January, 1810, the principal of the old debt had been reduced to the amount of less than *forty-two millions of dollars*, being but about half of its amount at the commencement of the preceding ten years. It is to be noticed too, that the amount of this, increased as it had been for the previous years to more than eighty-three millions, came into the hands of the administration of 1801, burdened with an additional charge of more than 700,000 *dollars* annually, being the interest then first falling due on about thirteen and a half millions of its principal, on which by the original terms on which it was funded no interest was to be paid until the year 1801. And which for the nine years during which it has been paid will amount to about *seven and a half millions of dollars*. To which may with propriety be added, more than *two and a half millions* paid within that period for claims arising under an additional article to the British treaty of 1794, as settled by the former administration, by which the United States became obligated to make good certain demands due from our own citizens to British subjects anterior to the peace of 1783. As also *3 3-4 millions* paid to our citizens on account of French spoliations, in part consideration of the extensive and important territory of Louisiana, and the annual interest on the residue of the new stock created by that purchase; amounting for six years to nearly *four millions*. These items added to the principal of old debt redeemed, will swell the amount paid by the government since the year 1801, for objects of a permanent nature, on account of which nothing had been paid by the preceding administrations, and not applying either to the current civil list expenditure, or the military and naval services, to a sum of nearly *fifty-nine million dollars*.— And the result of the system pursued previous to that year being an addition to the debt of more than *seven and a half millions*, furnishes a difference in favor of the treasury ope-

rations subsequent to that time of more than *sixty-six millions*. During the latter period no money has been borrowed; by an act of the last session of Congress, the President is authorised in the event of any deficiency of revenue within the year to fulfil the public engagements, to borrow a sum not exceeding the amount of the principal of the public debt which shall be paid during the year. The annual appropriation of eight millions must still continue to be applied towards the redemption of the old debt, and no new one can in any event be contracted beyond the amount of that which shall be extinguished. Whether the state of the treasury will be such as to make it necessary to exercise this power or any part of it is yet uncertain.*

BUT it has been said, and may be said again, that the aggregate amount of revenue received by the government during this period, exceeding so much that which accrued during the former one, has alone enabled the late administration to apply a large surplus to the reduction of the public debt and other objects of a permanent nature.

* Debt proper of U. States on the 1st of Jan. 1791,	\$ 54,587,667 96
Debts of individual states assumed,	18,271,814 74
Funded in favor of creditor states,	3,517,584 00
	<u>21,789,398 74</u>
Deduct interest accrued in 1791,	913,589 37
Amount of assumed debt on 1st of Jan. 1791,	<u>20,875,809 37</u>
	20,875,809 37
Whole amount of proper & assumed, on 1st of Jan. 1791,	75,463,477 33
Whole amount of debt on 1st of Jan. 1801,	<u>83,038,050 80</u>
Increase of debt in those ten years,	<u>7,574,574 47</u>
Whole amount of old debt remaining due, on 1st of January 1810,	<u>41,922,302 32</u>
Amount of principal redeemed in those nine years,	41,115,748 48
Nine years interest on 13,682,944,00 six per cent deferred stock, which first drew interest in 1801,	7,388,789 76
Paid under additional article of British treaty,	2,666,666 66
Paid to American citizens under Louisiana convention,	3,750,000 00
Paid six years interest on 11,250,000 00 stock, created in consideration of purchase of Louisiana,	<u>3,990,000 00</u>
Whole amount paid for principal of public debt, and other objects not applying to civil list, or naval or military services, and for which nothing was paid before 1801.	58,911,204 90
Increase of debt before 1801, as above stated,	7,574,573 47
Difference in favor of the government since 1801,	<u>66,485,778 37</u>

THAT the annual amount of receipts into the treasury during the latter period, have upon an average much exceeded those of the former one, is readily granted.— And it ought as readily to be admitted, that this fact so far from detracting from the merit, furnishes an additional evidence of the wise and skillful management of the government, under whose fostering care this increase has accrued. It must in some measure at least have been due, to the provident and honest vigilance exercised in the collection and securing of that revenue, and in the liberal and invigorating policy extended in favor of our external commerce; from which principally it has been drawn. And it could have grown only out of that neutral and pacific character, in which it has been the cardinal policy of your government to maintain this nation, in despite of unexampled embarrassments from abroad, aided by disappointed ambition, and querulous discontent at home.

It has already been shewn how the additional surplus thereby accruing has been improved. That instead of encouraging the government in proportionate expenditures on transient and fleeting objects, those expenditures have been proportionally diminished, and your revenue applied to redeem your revolutionary debt, and to diminish other previously accumulating burthens.

BUT it may justly be considered in reference to those who administer the affairs of a nation, as it always is in regard to an individual in private life; that it is not so much *the abstract sum* which is applied to the objects of current expenditure, as it is the amount of those expenditures, *compared with the clear annual income*, which go to mark either the prudence and good management, or the folly and extravagance of either. With an individual, an habitual excess of the former, which is supplied only by anticipations of the latter, must if persisted in, end in eventual distress and bankruptcy. With a nation, they can only lead through increasing and multiplied burthens, to the same ruinous result.

LET us test the two rival periods in our government by this criterion. During the first twelve years it will be found, that the average current expenditures, exceeded the average current revenue, by a sum of more than 600,

000 *dollars* annually, for the whole period. The consequence of which necessarily was, a resort to borrowing to supply the growing deficiencies, and an increase of debt at its close of more than *seven and a half millions* of dollars.— If we take even the most favorable portion of that period, so far at least as respects the popularity of the government, (owing principally to the great, and generally just confidence reposed in him who administered it) it will appear, that for the last four years of Gen. Washington's administration, the average annual expenditure was more than *eight and a half millions*; exceeding the clear annual revenue by nearly *half a million*, and leaving an increase of debt of more than *one and a half million*.

IT was however during the last four years of the first twelve, that the system of that day may be considered as having gotten the most fully into operation, and that its policy may most fairly be tested. And during these four years, although the average annual revenue had risen to an amount of *ten millions*, the average annual expenditures had also risen to *ten and a half millions*, exceeding the revenue by *half a million* annually and leaving still an increase of debt of *one million*.

DURING the last nine years, from 1801 to 1810, the current expenditures have been for the first time kept below the current revenue, by a sum of more than *five and a quarter millions of dollars* annually, and the accruing surplusses applied to the redemption of the public debt, and other permanent objects as before stated.

I HAVE ventured to detain you with so much tedious particularity on this dry and unamusing comparative view of the operation of the two financial systems which, at different periods have been pursued by the two rival administrations, because the effects of those systems will be permanent and operative, long after most of the other fleeting topics of party rivalry and contention shall be buried and forgotten. And because it is one which from its comparative difficulty and inaccessibility has from high authority been made the subject of much ignorant mistake or wanton misrepresentation. It being no part of the object of this day to excite unnecessary feelings of resentment against that class of our fellow-citizens, under

whose auspices our public affairs have heretofore been conducted, I forbear to renew the discussion of various other measures, which with their patrons, have now passed away with little prospect of a speedy return.

YOUR own reflection fellow-citizens, must long ere this have enabled you to make up your own conclusions between the comparative convenience of a system, which required for its execution a land tax, an excise and their appendages, and one which has as yet been able to dispense with both. Between a system which claimed the immunity of being spoken of only under the chilling restraints of judicial cognizance, and one which has lived down calumny in every form, and falsehood herself in her most imposing shapes.

BUT from the minor topics of party division amongst ourselves, and from the little bickerings of personal rivalry and resentment which pervade and inflame every nook of our country, let me call your attention to your country's great cause, outraged as it has long been by the ruthless hand of foreign violence, and trampled upon as it is by the blood stained foot of unbridled power. And let me ask your countenance and your co-operation with a government, so far as they shall be found fairly to deserve it, upon whom it has fallen with a population of seven millions of freemen only, and with resources which are but the growth of yesterday, to vindicate against a world in arms, the last remnant of the world's violated neutrality, and to defend the temple of freedom in this her last and best retreat.

THE moving cause of that atrocious system of wanton injustice and unprovoked aggression, by which the unquestionable rights of this nation have been assailed, and the first attributes of her independence attempted to be wrested from her hands, is to be sought for in that mad rage of unrestrained power, and in those fell workings of insatiable ambition, which God for wise but mysterious purposes has suffered to seize upon the two great rival scourges of modern Europe.

THAT in their inexorable perseverance in this system they have found encouragement from those unhappy domestic feuds, and that misguided party animosity, by

which our national energies have been wasted, and our arm of defence palsied and unnerved, can now admit of as little doubt.

WHETHER by any course of political prudence it shall be permitted to our country to escape from the storm which is now wasting the fairest portion of the civilized world, and to avoid the convulsion which is shaking nations to their centre, is, it is to be feared, a question of dark and doubtful solution. As to those political empirics under whatever party they may range themselves, who affect to discover that our difficulties lie but skin deep, and are at once to be remedied either by the rash experiments of undefined and indiscriminate "energy and decision" on the one hand, or by "unfurling the republican banner against the imperial standard," and throwing ourselves upon the magnanimity and forbearance of Great Britain on the other, their counsels can only be dangerous to listen to, and ruinous to adopt. In the one case they must too often be the result of hasty reflections or ill advised zeal; in the other it is to be feared of callous indifference to their country's honor, or a treacherous abandonment of her essential rights. How many honest citizens had for a season been beguiled by the imposing assurance of the pert state physicians to whom Massachusetts in an hour of misguided phrenzy had entrusted the care of her body politic, "that in the embargo laws was to be found the sole cause of the public distress, and that their repeal alone would afford equal and permanent relief to our citizens." The embargo laws together with every feature of that precautionary policy which has been the subject of so much loud anathema and invective, have indeed long since been removed, and how are the promises of political quackery and designing demagogues been fulfilled? Let the infamous orders of his Britannic Majesty's privy Council, the records of his prize Courts, and the confiscations and robberies of his imperial and royal brother, king of France and Italy answer!

FROM the same authority you were assured, that the proclamation of the President of the United States, interdicting the entrance of our harbors and waters to British armed vessels, after repeated, acknowledged, and unatoned for aggressions committed by them upon the lives and property of our citizens within our own jurisdiction,

and finally upon the honor of our national flag. You were told that this proclamation was the sole impediment to a prompt and honorable reparation for the most heinous of those aggressions. This interdiction has long since been removed, the aggression remains wholly unatoned for, the injury unredressed, and the insult even aggravated! You were told that the unequal footing on which your government had placed our relations with the two belligerents was the main cause of Great-Britain's persisting in her hostile edicts against your commerce and your peace. Our relations with both were then placed on a footing of the most perfect equality, altho' some of the injuries, which we had sustained from Great-Britain, were exclusive and peculiar to her alone. In utter falsification of these hollow assurances, the spirit of her edicts are pertinaciously adhered to, and their principles still enforced against you. Again you were told, that nothing but a disposition in your government to meet the reasonable overtures of Great-Britain, was wanting to ensure a speedy and an honorable adjustment of the differences between the two nations. In his anxiety to close with such overtures, your Executive stepped probably beyond the strict limits of the authority with which he had been invested by the Legislature, and concluded an arrangement on terms mutually honorable and fair to both nations. That arrangement, after being fully and promptly executed on our part, is suddenly and contemptuously rejected by Great-Britain! the reputable minister by whom it was concluded recalled, with an affectation at least of his majesty's displeasure at his conduct; and his place supplied by a character, whose diplomatic jobs in Europe had better fitted him to perform the ungracious part, which he has since acted on the American theatre. And strange as it may read in the future story of these times, in all these acts of unequivocal hostility to American rights, in all these circumventions, in all these evasions of the fair and pacific policy of your government, you are still told by *American mouths*, speaking, it is to be feared, from *the fulness of British hearts*, that Great-Britain has, in all this, "sinned not" against us, nor treated the American character injuriously! Still your own government must be made the scape-goat upon whom is to be laid the burden of all your sufferings, and the weight of all your embarrassments. After every reasonable project of amicable compromise has been trodden under foot, and ev-

ery proposition for accommodation rejected by the British government, your President is required to listen with complacency to the base insinuations of a British emissary, and to press new propositions for his reception, discussion and rejection. Nay further, as if to try the utmost limits of the public patience and to outbrave its scorn, that emissary is crowded into the unwilling presence of the respectable Chief Magistrate of your State, seated by his side at the board of public festivity, toasted in connection with your revered patriots and sages, and brought forward on the stage of Harlequin exhibition as the first figure in the political pantomime of the day !

AT the very moment when all the measures of your government are denounced as a system of subserviency to, and connivance with the unfeeling tyrant of continental Europe, he, in professed retaliation of those very measures, and in a tone of indignation at the hostile aspect in which he views them, is seizing “at one fell swoop” all American property, which falls within his grasp, from the Adriatic to the Baltic, and in his turn denouncing us as but the subservient tools of British policy and British views. While at the same time your government, through its able and spirited minister at the court of the haughty Napoleon, is remonstrating against his atrocities in a tone of cutting reproach and high minded indignation, which he has not been accustomed to listen to or to tolerate from any crowned head in Europe.

LET those who affect to think that the path, which leads out of all our embarrassments, is plain, easy and obvious, and that any thing short of a state of unqualified war with one of the world’s great oppressors, would satisfy the proud ambition and the rapacious designs of the other, consider for a moment the hollow pretents under which each in turn has claimed a right to plunder the neutral world at her pleasure, and the steps by which they have advanced in this work of depredation and outrage.

IT is a fact, as singular as it is disgraceful to their system of national morality, that at least in the commencement of their career of injustice towards us, neither has even affected to justify herself by any direct injury previously received from us, but merely because, having sus-

tained previous injuries from the other, we had not chosen to seek that redress, which her antagonist deemed proper and befitting us. Their principle that they would establish is no less than this, that the refusal or neglect of a neutral nation to repel by actual war any infringement upon its rights by one belligerent power, gives to the other belligerent the perfect right of inflicting similar or even greater injuries upon the unoffending neutral. A pretension, which strikes at once at the root of the vital principle of neutrality, and upon the eruption of every war between two rival combatants, involves at once the whole civilized world in its fortunes.

It is indeed true that your government did not deem it consistent either with policy, wisdom or humanity to put afloat the peace of this nation for the purpose of vindicating its maritime rights against the early and persevering invasions made upon them by Great Britain. During every period of every War in which she has been engaged since our existence as a nation, has the crying sin of impressments of our seamen risen up in judgment against her. So early as the year 1805, was adopted by her Courts of Admiralty, under the conniving influence of her Cabinet, the project of confining American commerce to such limits as should not permit it to interfere with her views of monopoly upon the trade and commerce of the world. In aid of this system came her various orders in Council of that and the subsequent year, prohibiting neutral voyages from one port of her enemies to another, and blockading by a sweep of the pen whole Coasts, Kingdoms and Countries. To these succeeded violations of our neutrality and of our jurisdiction by her armed vessels on our coasts, and in the very mouths of our harbors. For none of these injuries has any redress, until this moment, been obtained. And they furnished to us unquestionably the most unequivocal causes of public war, if we had chosen thus to improve them. We preferred, however, under the existing state of the world and the nation, to avoid the last resort, and to qualify our mode of resistance to these pretensions and injuries, according to the means, which we deemed best adapted to our object and our situation, and of which we alone had an indisputable right to judge. We did so resist them, with great moderation and forbearance it is true. And however well founded may be the position, (and

founded it is in historical fact) that we are to look upon Great-Britain as the first aggressor upon our maritime rights, still is the flagrant pretension of France, as set up in her predatory decrees, no less outrageous and iniquitous, nor are her arbitrary seizures and confiscations on that account the less profligate and unprincipled. They assume as a fact, what is false and unfounded, that the United States had quietly acquiesced in British aggressions upon their rights, and they proceed upon a principle not for a moment to be admitted, that she has a right to judge what our duty to ourselves, under such circumstances, required of us to have done. Still more gross and impudent, if possible, are the pretexts under which Great-Britain affects to rest her great system of neutral spoliation.

BUT it would, I trust, be deemed idle to occupy any considerable portion of your time in attempting to weigh with nice and scrupulous precision the comparative atrocity of these rival systems of robbery and plunder. And posterity may, with difficulty, give credit to the fact, that moving on American ground and even elevated to some of her exalted offices, are found those, who could palliate these enormities, and defend these indignities upon their country !

IT was for the protection of your mercantile capital, and the rescue of your seafaring brethren from the storm, which in a dark and a threatening hour impended over them, that your government interposed the only shield, which in the then state of the world, and with the means which we possessed, could, with any reason, be calculated upon as adequate to those objects. This was the general embargo on your vessels and property. On the general policy of this much controverted and much abused measure, it is not my object, at this time, to enlarge.— One thing is certain ; that since that has passed away, no political party have ventured openly to commit themselves upon any other in its stead, on which as a means of permanent defence they would risque their responsibility in recommending it to the nation to rely. Whether even that, bold and decisive as it was, had it been suffered to perform its most perfect work, unembarrassed by the workings of faction, and unnerved by the temporary delusions of short sighted avarice and cupidity, would eventu-

ally have redeemed our commerce from the fangs of the freebooters of the ocean, is a question, which can never now be tested by its actual results. Whatever may have been the delusions palmed upon a portion of this nation, in a moment of political impatience and passion, it is an obvious and demonstrable fact, that the embargo was a noble and severe sacrifice on the part of its agricultural interest, for the vindication and support of its commercial rights. That this sacrifice has been too generally repaid with the most arrant ingratitude and folly, is a lamentable truth, to which the records of the public Counsels of Massachusetts for the two past infatuated years will long testify. Perhaps your national government could not have well discharged its conscience, or performed its duty to the clamors of commerce, by attempting less than it has attempted in its behalf for the three years past. And is any one sure that the settled voice of the country would have borne them out in attempting more. Were it even true that in this great struggle they had utterly failed of their purposes, the result even then under all the unlooked for and novel circumstances of the times, would have been less inglorious than to have set tamely down without an effort to maintain them.

BUT amidst all the bafflings of internal faction, and the united pressure of foreign violence and fraud, we have, under the operation of this measure, succeeded in divesting the abominable system, which the British ministry had proclaimed by their orders in Council, of one of its most dangerous, daring, and ruinous features to the commerce and industry of the world. She has reluctantly but explicitly been driven to abandon her monstrous attempt to seize upon the trade and revenue of all nations, by a tax upon their commerce wherever bound, and by a duty upon the exports of your soil, which even your own representatives are, by your constitution, prohibited from exacting. She has, to many substantial purposes, been compelled to repeal those orders, and to substitute others materially different in their bearing and essentially more limited in their extent and application. Thus much at least has been effected under the pressure of that restrictive policy of your government, which has been so much the theme of declamation with the demagogues, and of derision with the little wits of the day.

AND it may now be pressed upon our cool consideration to judge whether there is any other system, which has been recommended by the wisdom of political quackery, through the efficacy of which you could entertain a reasonable expectation of having accomplished more? Or does any man so far task his credulity as to believe, that you would have accomplished any thing by a tame acquiescence in British pretensions to their full extent?—Yes, there was indeed a shameful alternative, which under various pretexts has too often been recommended to this nation, by those who would fain be thought the peculiar guardians of its honor and its interests, to submit to adopt. The baseness of which cannot be more impressively delineated than in the nervous language of our intelligent and dignified minister at the imperial court.

“It is indeed true (says he) that were the people of the United States destitute of policy, of honor and of energy, (as has been insinuated) they might have adopted a system of discrimination between the two great belligerents; they might have drawn imaginary lines between the first and second aggressor; they might have resented in the one a conduct, to which they tamely submitted in the other, and in this way have patched up a compromise between honor and interest equally weak and disgraceful.—But such was not the course they pursued; and it is perhaps a necessary consequence of the justice of their measures, that they are at this day an independent nation.”

Now indeed the whole of the restrictive system has, for considerations which I need not detail, been suffered to expire, and your merchants are at last left to that free and unfettered trade, from which their political prophets had taught them to expect so much. They have hoisted the expanding sail in quest of that golden fleece, which they were told was withheld from their grasp only by the unfriendly hand of their own government! And is the nation now to be called upon to redeem them from the hand of ruffian violence, which has already fallen upon them, in every port of continental Europe, which is under the sway of the modern conqueror of the world? Or from the judicial grasp of every petty vice-admiralty jurisdiction, which Great-Britain has spread over the highway of nations?—We hesitate not to declare, that this is a duty

which the nation does not owe them ; which neither the means placed by providence in our hands authorise us to attempt, nor upon which either our interest or our honor require us to commit our fortunes and our happiness.

THAT the enjoyment of a free and unrestrained commerce with the world is, in the nature of things, our indefeasible right, of which no temporary interruption can divest us ; that it is, to a certain extent, highly necessary to be enjoyed, and essential to be exercised without molestation or obstruction, is unquestionably true. The time, the manner, and the degree in which the national arm shall be exerted, and the national resources expended upon its protection and defence, are questions of public policy, to be determined by existing circumstances ; and of which the great body of the nation have a right to judge.

MAY it not reasonably be doubted, whether the wings of our external commerce have not, for some years past, under the operation of peculiar circumstances, growing out of the existing state of the world, expanded themselves to an unnatural and disproportionate extent ?—And have not its late obstructions, unjustifiable and prejudicial as they are to our just rights, already been evidently counterbalanced by some other effects, obviously salutary to our other equally important national interests ; by turning inward for the nourishment and invigoration of great domestic objects, that capital, and that enterprize, which had previously been almost exclusively employed in foreign ones ?

MIGHT it not now comport with the dictates of a sound and lasting policy, or can we make a more suitable improvement of the circumstances into which we are thrown, than by directing our energies to pursuits conformable to our natural situation, and to the accomplishment of which our means are in our own hands, and abundantly adequate ?

WITHIN the twenty years past, the gross amount of national expenditures on our naval and military establishments has exceeded fifty-four and a half millions of dollars. It is probably allowing sufficient to say, that not

more than two thirds of this sum has been expended on objects really necessary and essential for the public interest, and the necessary defence of the country ; and that if no more than that sum had been appropriated to those purposes, we should have been equally well protected in all our substantial enjoyments, and equally respectable in the eyes of the world. Suppose then, that the remaining third of this sum had been applied to the great objects of internal improvements, and the encouragement of those domestic enterprizes and manufactures for which our widely extended country affords so ample a field ? It would have opened an extended chain of practicable inland navigation from the Northern to the Southern extremity of the Union, and from the Atlantic to the great Western Waters ; thereby bringing into cultivation and improvement, and vastly increasing in value, those great national domains, which must hereafter constitute a fund of permanent wealth and revenue ; forming an additional bond of general union and defence, and diffusing the blessings of general intercourse and public happiness through every section of our country. By a system of peace and frugality, an additional fund, adequate to the aid and protection of your infant manufacturing establishments, which already, under the enterprizing and active genius of our citizens, are springing up with unexampled vigor and success, may easily be provided.

It is with feelings of the most cordial satisfaction, that I can at this day congratulate my fellow-citizens on the assurance, that these great objects have not escaped the serious attention of your general government, and are rapidly engaging the active energies of our countrymen in their prosecution and support. Much, I trust, has already been done, towards laying a foundation for a system of national improvement commensurate with our resources, and promotive of our best interests, by the collection, arrangement, and display of such information as is equally necessary to enlighten and prepare the public mind for its proper reception, and to guide the judgment of your government in carrying it into practical effect. In the shifting and embarrassing posture of our foreign concerns, in the perplexing hostility of party animosity, and in the narrow views of local policy, is to be found the apology, that much more has not already been effected.

BUT it ought constantly to be kept in view, that for the successful accomplishment of these great purposes, a fixed and habitual system of peace, tranquility and public economy is indispensable. That it consists not with those projects of martial aggrandizement, or naval and military greatness, which have too generally engrossed the ambition, and absorbed the resources of nations. It has been well said by that great statesman and financier, who presides over our treasury department, in his luminous report on internal improvements, "that the whole probable surplus of our revenue would be inadequate to the support of any considerable increase of the land or naval forces of the country. That should such a system be adopted, the objects of that report must probably be abandoned. For (adds he) it has not heretofore been found an easy task for any government to indulge in that species of expence, which leaving no trace behind it, adds nothing to the real strength of the country, and at the same time to provide for either its permanent defence or improvement."

BUT to conclude what the time permits me to suggest on this, as it is believed, most interesting and important topic to our future prosperity and real greatness, suffer me to repeat a sentiment, which I had the honor three years since of pressing in this place upon the attention and consideration of this respectable audience; and which the small experience of those years has but served to strengthen and confirm. To us, my fellow-citizens, there are but two alternatives, whether we shall hereafter continue as we have done, a free, an independent, and a contented people at home, cultivating those unfailing sources of competence and enjoyment with which we are favored by a beneficent providence, improving the opportunities of foreign intercourse and commercial enterprize as they fall in our way, and enforcing their exercise by such means as are placed within our reach; or whether, quitting the natural station so happily assigned us, we will, like the other nations of the world, build our greatness on adventitious acquirements, and precarious adventures; and like them sink at last into a state of splendid beggary at home, and foreign dependance abroad, under the ruinous load of splendid establishments, and burdensome expenditures, displaying in

sad contrast to the departed days of frugal independence, and individual equality—

—————“how wide the limits stand,
Between a splendid and a happy land !”

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS,

Too long already have I trespassed upon that patient attention, which claimed from the speaker a much more acceptable return than it has been in his power to make to you. It has been my first endeavor, with plainness, candor, and sincerity, to disclose to you so far as was within the compass of very scanty means, and limited time, the real and undisguised situation of our common country, both as to its domestic policy, and its relations with a lawless and a hostile world ; to point you to the true sources of our embarrassments, and our sufferings, and to turn your patriotic indignation against the authors of those wrongs, which without provocation, and without apology, have so long been heaped upon this unoffending people, by the insolence and rapacity of foreign power.

Would to heaven, that the cure of our political maladies was as obvious as their causes ; and the complete redress of the national wrongs, as practicable for your government, as their perpetration has been unmerited and unprovoked ! It is left to those who find in every new outrage committed on their country's rights new topics of calumny, and in every indignity offered to its honor, fresh causes of reproach against its public functionaries ; it is left to those intuitive statesmen, who can discern nothing but plain sailing and serene skies over the political ocean of the times, to inform you, by what unknown means it shall be given to a peaceful nation of seven millions, whose sinews are but just hardened into manhood, whose civil institutions are more happily adapted to diffuse the blessings of peace than to wield the scourge of distant war ; it is left to these political soothsayers to reveal, by what untried experiments you shall be enabled to stay the proud waves which are now dashing to pieces the nations of the earth, and to re-establish those great principles of public law, by which the moral and social order of the world was once regulated, but which are now unblushingly trodden

under foot, and set at nought by the common consent of Europe.

YET all this and more is required of your government; and that too, without even the sacrifice of your peace, or the interruption of a single national or individual enjoyment

STILL, fellow-citizens, if we are but true to ourselves, have we within our own control an inheritance of competence and of freedom, which the unprincipled edicts of modern Rome and Carthage cannot reach, nor their piratical practices wrest from our possession. While the grim tempest of war is sweeping over the face of the Eastern Hemisphere, and the gloomy night of despotism closing with its thickest shades upon the best faculties and enjoyments of the human mind, the genius of American emancipation, which on the 4th of July, 1776, burst the fetters of British thralldom on these Northern shores of the American Continent, is now, we trust, beginning to dawn upon the fair regions of the South; driving before her the sluggish mists of Spanish subjection, and the benumbing chills of European domination. May that being who conducted our country from the land of colonial servitude, and established her amongst the nations, complete the work, which has been so gloriously and so auspiciously begun; and may these new empires of the West, inspired with the same spirit of Independence, and the same love of freedom and of peace, be endued with wisdom and with virtue to escape from that general inundation, which is now burying in its ruins the fairest monuments of human happiness, and the best objects of its hopes!