



Barnwell's Oration.



An ORATION,

delivered before

THE PHILOMATHEAN SOCIETY

and

INHABITANTS

of

BEAUFORT, SOUTH-CAROLINA,

ON MONDAY, JULY 4, 1803,

In Commemoration of American Independence.

**BY APPOINTMENT OF THE PHILOMATHEAN SOCIETY, AND
PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST.**

By ROBERT BARNWELL,
one of its members.

Charleston, 1803

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1803.

BEAUFORT, July 4, 1803.

THE Members of the Beaufort Philomathean Society
having assembled at the usual place of meeting,

Resolved, unanimously, That a Committee be appointed
to wait on Colonel ROBERT BARNWELL, to express their
high sense of the patriotic and eloquent oration delivered
by him this day before the Society, and to request that
he will favor them with a copy for publication.

TO THE PHILOMATHEAN SOCIETY.

GENTLEMEN,

CONSCIOUS that no motive but that ex-
pressed in my enclosed oration could have led me to at-
tempt one; fully sensible of its comparative defects, and
knowing that an idea of its publication did not exist when
it was written, I yet with diffidence yield to your request;
as the same considerations which caused me to deliver,
now forbid me to refuse the required copy for publication.

I have the honor to be,

with grateful acknowledgements,

your humble servant,

ROBERT BARNWELL.



An ORATION,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE PHILOMATHEAN SOCIETY AND
INHABITANTS OF BEAUFORT, JULY 4, 1803.

GENTLEMEN,

HAVING reluctantly determined to comply with the request which you have done me the honor to make me, I shall attempt something like an oration, upon the events of this consecrated day. It is, nevertheless, with truth I declare, that I could only have been prevailed on thus far by the hope that the youthful members of your society, whose professed object is public speaking, may be stimulated to mental exertions by an example like this. I have been therefore unwilling to be the first, and that upon so important a subject, to decline the performance of a duty, because it is an unpleasant one. And whilst I frankly acknowledge, that I have very limited hopes of meeting the expectations of so enlightened an audience as the present, yet I venture to flatter myself, that should the grandeur of my subject shed a transient lustre upon this attempt to commemorate it, that this my offering at the shrine of independency will not be the less graciously received because it is but small.

In reviewing the vast variety of grand and important objects, which naturally present themselves to the mind, reflecting upon the sublime events which gave birth to a day like this, I can easily imagine, that to an orator worthy of the occasion, it were a thing not difficult to excite the tear of sensibility, to stir up the mantling pool of age itself; and when he glowing told how former wars were won, and how our heroes fought and died, to animate the fiery youth to rapture, to make him grasp the airy sword, to stride the ideal field, and dare the foe to battle....or, when he saw the fancied warrior slain, to say, with envious sigh, how sweet, how glorious 'tis to die to save our country. But themes like these become not me; let me then calmly turn, and strive to fulfil the unequal task assigned me.

Would, my fellow-citizens, that I could present to your view our noble forefathers, when expelled their native homes, they fled the intolerant zeal of church and state....when amidst the unknown dangers of unheard-of seas, they sought this distant but secure asylum, where they might raise congenial altars to their liberty, and offer up conscientious adoration to their God. Gallant band! methinks I see them now ploughing the boisterous seas, and whilst they cast a longing lingering tearful eye towards their retiring homes, anticipating with anxious dread the imagined terrors of a savage land; where Fame had told, that silence reigned in death-like pomp, where mother earth lay unpolluted by the iron plough, and where primeval forests stood begrey'd with age. See now they disembark, and scan with fearful eye the gloomy shore....and now they offer up their joyous thanks, because no hostile voice assails their ears. But trust not; oh! trust not the deceitful calm. Hear'it thou that rattling sound? it is the harbinger of death; there lurks the venge-

ful snake....ah! stop; for if he strikes thou diest. But whence, alas! that direful yell? Sure 'tis the shriek of death, for ne'er did mortal sounds like these e'er strike the ear....it palsies the heart, curdles the creeping blood, and makes the hair to stand an end, like to the fretted porcupine. Beware; it is the warrior chief, more savage far than is his savage land. Before his bloody tomahawk kneels in vain the hoary fire, in vain the blooming virgin sooths; shrieks are his joy, his music are the groans of dying men, and the agonizing voice of slaughtered babes are to his ears as halcyon strains; his pride is in the skulls of the slain, and his boast to be the exterminator of nations. At his tremendous name the wives of our forefathers turned pale with fear, and their children clung closer to their mothers' bosoms. They shrunk not back, however, unappalled by even scenes like these; for the sacred book of that God for whom they had left their all, taught them patience and resignation, and the unextinguishable fire of liberty which glowed in their bosoms, cast a ray of glory upon their adopted country.

Then was transplanted into our congenial soil, a scion of that stalk of liberty which had flourished for ages with unknown vigor in the parent country; then was naturalised that intimate knowledge of the true and practical rights of man, which, I fervently pray, may never be alienised our shores; and with the blood which was transfused into their veins, our ancestors imbibed that sturdy spirit of Englishmen, ever quick to discern, and bold to defend their violated rights, when and by whomsoever attempted. Then too began to unfold the germ of the American character....That spirit of industry, which soon converted a barren and howling wilderness into a fertile and smiling garden; that spirit of enterprise, which made the utmost ends of the earth their warehouses,

and which changed the dreary regions of an almost frozen ocean into a neighboring and lucrative fish-pond. Under the auspices of these, where late but thousands of painted and naked savages prowled and starved amidst a world of woods, now soon is heard the busy hum of millions of men; where late the wigwam, built with less than beaver's skill, scarce kept off the pelting of the pitiless storm, now rises the snug and roomy cottage; and where the ragged Indian village scarce caught the traveller's eye, now stand displayed in spacious and gorgeous majesty unnumbered towns.

Time permits not to describe those wars which France, allured by the unheard-of prosperity of our infant country, waged to win the golden prize, as history tells; how aided by the parental arm of Britain, we baffled first, and then expelled that gallant but insidious foe our country.

At this auspicious event, the pulse of America beat with high affection for the English nation.... their old were revered as our fathers, their young welcomed as our brothers....the British constitution was looked up to with idolatry, and was fondly considered as the rock upon which the colonies of America might rest securely for ages. And long perhaps might this confidence have been realised, had not some dæmon, hostile to the interest of the united realms, suggested to an impolitic minister to propose and over-rule an inconsiderate parliament to adopt the determination to tax America....to tax her not only without, but even against her consent.

The spirit of America rose astonished and indignant at the attempt. They asserted, that self-government was not only their acknowledged and inherited right, but was even essential to the very existence of liberty itself....they declared, that

through the medium of their own organised government, they were willing to aid the revenue of Great-Britain; but boldly asserted, that they would hazard their all rather than be governed by laws in which they had no common voice, or submit to pay taxes imposed by men ignorant of their means to pay, having no common interest in their objects.

With one voice they remonstrated, with one voice they addressed themselves to the parent country. They appealed to that spirit of liberty which had always actuated its gallant inhabitants, which had made them consider even war itself as a refuge from tyranny, and which, in times of yore when greatly urged, had roused them in a moment of enthusiasm, not only to shake the base and strip the golden cornish, but even to strike off the Corinthian capital itself of their sublime and boasted constitution, rather than submit to laws in which they had no voice, to taxes imposed without their consent. They appealed to parliament, and were answered by additional grievances; they kneeled at the foot of the throne, and were called rebellious; they made an awful appeal to the British nation, and they turned an adder's ear to their voice. It was then that our forefathers, and not only they, but even some of those now present, retired within themselves, and asked, fearfully asked each other....Men and brethren, what is to be done? Their wrongs pressed sore upon them, and they complained; their towns and dwellings were wrested from them, and they threatened; but when the blood-stained ground of their country cried aloud for vengeance, they made the last, the dire appeal to the God of Battles, and flew to arms.

In order to shew what can result from the genuine spirit of liberty, what did result from its powerful influence in the bosoms of the free-born sons of

America, permit me to attempt a sketch of the comparative strength of the parties now about to engage in civil conflict. On the part of Britain, see a nation, the pride of the world! which appeared to strike its roots deeper and stronger in proportion to the violence with which it was shaken; beneath whose unnumbered navy old ocean seemed to groan, and at the voice of whose destructive thunders the nations of the earth crouched and trembled; whose constitution had stood the test of ages; whose treasury was rich beyond example, and into which a boundless commerce poured exhaustless streams; whose army was gallant and veteran, equipped in all the pride and pomp of war, and whose leaders were experienced and able.

On the part of America, see a nation having no common center of government, no unanimity of council, consisting of colonies prejudiced against each other, dissimilar in property, dissimilar in policy, dissimilar even in manners. A people new to war, without artillery, without arms, without discipline, having no practised veteran to invigorate their military councils, or lead them on to battle; not only possessed of no treasury, so justly called the sinews of war, but even devoid of any practised means of creating one; and, indeed, to give a summary view of the wants of America, she might be said to be without artillery, without arms, without men, without money, without every thing, save that animating spirit of liberty which inspired an unalterable resolution to conquer or to die, and the assistance of the defence of nations, the great God of Justice, before whom the counsels of the wise are but foolishness, the strength of the mighty but stubble.

In this unequal warfare, in this hour of unparalleled danger and difficulty, behold the patriots of

seventy-six, laying aside state policy, state prejudice, and state pride, forming a band of brethren and statesmen to counsel and advise. But, alas! at a crisis so awful as this, counsel alone could not suffice; but where could be found that Cadmean chief, whose creative skill could cause the undisciplined citizen of the eve to spring up the armed soldier of the morn?

Behold that warrior! tall and majestic is his form, serene his looks, and although his face is the face of youth, yet prudence and wisdom regulate his mind. It is the noble youth who, when in former wars the veteran paused and feared, boldly offered to convey across the distant, the untrodden and frozen Monongahelah, dispatches to the Gallic chief; and who, having eluded with matchless address the bloody tomahawk of the vigilant Indian, and passed as it were through the valley of the shadow of death, faithfully executed the important commission entrusted to his charge, and then taking the command of a frontier and exposed station, defended it, long defended it, with a handful of men, unterrified by the disciplined valor of France, unappalled by the threatened scalping-knife of the vengeful Indian, ravening for his prey.

It is the gallant Washington! Eternal glory crown the illustrious chief. Methinks I see him now, as in those wars when the veteran army of Britain stood dismayed, as it were, encircled with a ridge of fire; when the air trembled with the mingled uproar of men and arms, and the earth shook beneath Braddock and his fallen warriors. Methinks I see him then, (if I may use the sacred phrase) interposing like a pillar of fire at night, to shelter them from the foe, and like a pillar of smoke in the day, to lead them from danger and from death.

Him the statesmen of America hail their chief; him they dispatch to take the command of the army which then beleaguered Boston; and it is him of whom hyperbole might say, he found a host of men at the eve, he made them an army of soldiers by the morn.

But time would fail, and I should rather recite a history than deliver an oration, did I attempt even a sketch of the various and important events of our revolutionary war; and indeed who has not heard of Bunker's Hill, where Britons first were taught to respect and dread the steady valor of Columbia's sons? Who has not read the fate of the haughty Burgoyne? who, in the midst of his fancied triumphs, was forced to yield, and with his veteran army to surrender to an undisciplined band of our countrymen. What Carolinian but must have engraven upon the tablets of his memory, the name of Sullivan's Island? from an attack on which an insulting and confident navy were repulsed, and forced to fly with decks streaming with gore, and crippled almost to destruction. And surely every heart must throb with unusual gratitude at thy name, O, Greene! the military saviour of Carolina; who, rising like Antæus, more vigorous from every fall, by a masterly display of military talents, drove a superior force within the gates of Charleston, and gave again to our citizens the long-lost blessing of sitting in peace under their own vines and their own fig-trees. But these can be considered only as the glorious harbinger of that auspicious day, when our Washington, at the head of the allied arms of France and America, by the capture of the gallant but unfortunate Cornwallis, fixed the key to the arch of American independency.

But although I can but slightly mention these few of the numberless displays of the unyielding

fortitude and intrepidity of America, yet surely the orator of the fourth of July may be permitted to pay the passing tribute of remembrance to the fallen heroes of our country. To thee, O, Warren! who, skilled in scientific lore, at the shrill clarion's sound rushed to battle, and by falling at the post of honor, in the desperate defence of Bunker's Hill, sealed your patriotism with your blood. Thee too, brave Montgomery; who, in the gallant attempt to storm the impregnable walls of Quebec, fell on Abraham's Plains, that grave of heroes, there to join the congenial spirits of Montcalm and of Wolfe. Nor Mercer must I pass thee by; who, when thy soldiers recoiled as you led them on to the charge, was slain preferring death to flight.... Thy tomb now rears its head near Princeton's classic ground, and the youth of our country, whilst they tread the paths of science, are taught to reverence the spot where rests the fallen hero. Nor can gratitude forget thy name, D'Kaalb; who, scorning the land of tyranny, gloriously fell for the adopted liberty of our country, and, dying like a soldier, spent your last breath in returning thanks to the vanquished but gallant band you led to battle. Nor shall oblivion hide thy name, O, Screven! who first fell a willing sacrifice to the fiery god of war on these our southern plains. Nor, veteran Roberts, thine; who, like a Spartan of old, whilst thy life poured forth in a stream of blood, calmly delivered thy sword to thy son with these magnanimous words.... "Let it not be drawn but in the cause of liberty and honor; let it not be lost but with life." And what generous spirit can refuse the tribute of a tear to thee, brave Laurens, chivalric name; who, prodigal of life and in the midst of youth, fell in fight of the promised land of liberty.

Ye sacred spirits of those unnamed heroes who

have fallen in the cause of Liberty and America, O! that, bending from thy celestial mansions, you would touch my lips with fire! then would I celebrate thy praises in appropriate themes; then would I deliver a monumental speech as deathless as thy fame.

Having given you this faint and inadequate sketch of the great military actions which achieved this immortal day, upon which the nations of the earth, astonished at the boldness of our success, with joy acknowledged us an independent people, permit me now to turn your attentions to those political arrangements, no less new and astonishing, which were wisely framed and adopted, to unite the will and concentrate the vigor of our hitherto disconnected nation. On this day was promulgated that glorious display of the genius and spirit of Americans, that great charter of our liberties, The Declaration of Independency....a charter framed with all the foresight of policy, adopted with all the decision of wisdom, and drafted with an energy and perspicuity of language worthy of the occasion.

To give this charter energy and effect, then also were adopted the no less new and celebrated articles of confederation; by which the different states consented to yield such of their respective powers as they thought necessary to effect the great objects of their combination, whilst they carefully withheld those others which they deemed themselves either more competent to exercise, or which they considered essential to state sovereignty. In the enthusiasm of liberty, our statesmen considering the Americans beyond the control of the common passions of human nature, and equally disliking and believing the language of coercion unnecessary, made of this a kind of patriarchal government, in which they fondly flattered themselves, that a sense of duty would preclude the

necessity of command, and recommendation have the effect of law. But alas! before the portentous storms of danger these illusory hopes fled off, as evanescent clouds before the whirlwind's rage, and no sooner was this utopian scheme put to the fiery ordeal of war, than it proved defective in all its parts; and although, animated by that flame of liberty which blazed in its bosom, it struggled to the last, yet, like the dying gladiator of old, it expired as it were in the midst of victory. For no sooner had peace withdrawn the terrific form of that danger which had proved the chief cement of the union, than the emasculated and disjointed nature of this government stood prominent to view, and each attempt to invigorate it served only to convince every investigating mind the more, that the fabric itself was rotten at its base, and that every attempt to build upon it would prove laborious folly.

Our country then presented a deplorable picture of debility....Every where agriculture drooped at the plough; every where commerce flapped her scanty sails; and the broken faith of America became a bye-word among nations. In this paralysed state, what could a government without authority, without vigor, do? It saw a rebellion in a principal state, without being able to aid in its suppression.... it saw sister states committing fiscal depredations upon each other, without power to restrain them.... and, with unavailing regret, it beheld the commerce of the union either cramped in its exertions, or monopolised by strangers.

At this awful crisis, that same God of Wisdom who had heretofore over-ruled the councils of America, again interposed; and under his auspicious influence her patriots and statesmen, in order to avert if possible the hastening dissolution of the union,

propose to the people of America to concentrate the talents of the nation in one grand representative council. This advice is complied with, and our nation, which possesses in a pre-eminent degree the internal principle of governmental improvement, convenes her wise men together.

Let us pause at this great event....an event new and unequalled in the annals of the world....for where does history record a fact like this? In what page does she present to our view the single instance of a great and free people, after trying to its last moments an expiring constitution, instead of resorting to anarchy or submitting to tyranny, calmly looking for, and when discovering her wants, deliberately taking counsel how to provide for them? Or where can we find an instance of a people so widely dispersed, and under various governments, uniting with one common voice to accomplish one common end....the happiness of a nation? What bright page does she illumine with a scene like that displayed in the great convention of America? Or where can we find a form of government to compare with the one framed by that august body? whose very essence is liberty, whose arrangements are but the means of diffusing without dissipating its virtues, and whose avowed objects are to form a more perfect union, to establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of peace to ourselves and posterity. No, my fellow-citizens, you will look in vain...in vain may you search for so grand a spectacle as this. The patriotic virtue of Rome cannot shew it; it is not to be discovered in the repulsive austerity of Sparta; neither is it to be found in the specious but wild democracy of Athens. Liberty therein is placed upon a broader pedestal than even in England itself, hitherto the

most wisely free of all nations....our justice was as amply provided for as her's; and when the apex of its pyramid was a Washington, even its authority to control at home, and its power to command respect abroad, was nearly equal to the national wish.

Under the influence of this benign system, our country, as in the days of her infancy, exhibited a change new and miraculous. Washington, the father of his country, is called by the unanimous voice of the electors, springing from the common wish of the nation, to usher in our new-born government to the world. His name gives additional lustre to its intrinsic wisdom, and his character acquires it an instant confidence in the estimation of mankind. The character and conduct of the first congress which met under this new charter, served also to give additional importance to its principles. In that we find the tried integrity and diplomatic skill of an Adams, officiating as vice-president and by his presence giving higher respectability to the assembled senate....connected with it we find a Jefferson, dignifying by his general reputation the office of secretary of state; and Hamilton, the favorite of both Minervas, in his office of secretary of the treasury, raising by his fiscal skill, as it were from the dead, the expiring credit of America. By the wise arrangements of this congress, that debt which, although the price of our independency, had never been paid, was funded and put into activity. This new-born capital infuses unknown vigor into the exertions of our country. Agriculture laughs at the plough, and rejoices in her abundance; the handicraft trades exult in their hitherto unknown prosperity, and commerce whitens with unnumbered sails even hitherto undiscovered seas. But, alas! ere the powers of this constitution are well understood, or its external qualities tried, a storm arises from an

unexpected quarter....not slow and gradual as usual, but dark, tremendous and irresistible....it burst upon the astonished nations of Europe, and threatened destruction to the civilised world.

The French, a nation hitherto attached to their kings almost to idolatry, at once are seized with the frenzy of licentiousness. They who with millions of feet had for ages crouched beneath the fangs of despotism, now with millions of hands seize upon and crush every thing before them. A people who had been accustomed only to move at the command of others, now make the earth tremble at their voice; and a revolution, bursting from the crater of popular fury, consumes in its fiery lava with undistinguishing conflagration the former order of things. Though a king, yet one of the best of their kings, falls a sacrifice to a deluded people, and a nobility once the pride of the nation, are pursued with the keenness of blood-hounds, massacred with the triumph of savages, the leaders who had excited this mighty ebullition had madly supposed, that they could cause it to subside at pleasure. But the evil spirits of the nation now bore sway, and leader after leader, as hideous faction swayed, glutted with their blood the insatiate guillotine. Virtue was denounced as treason, that it might be trampled under foot....wealth as royalty, that the assassin might be justified in plunder....and the fair form and visage of society is totally marred and dismantled. The common ties of human nature are dissolved....parents denounce their children, and, horrid to tell, children produce the dissevered heads of their parents as the applauded evidence of their civism. The guillotine is blunted in its toilsome employment, the bayonet and sabre are too slow in their office, and even drowning itself is not sufficiently ample in its vengeance. And in the rage for slaughter, that dreadful artillery which

had been destined either to level hostile walls with the earth, or lay waste the front of battle, is now made to turn its destructive rage, and pour its unhallowed fire upon the shrieking infant, the palled virgin, the aged matron, and the defenceless sire.

When history shall recite these atrocious scenes, Despotism shall rear his iron front and clank his fetters with triumphant joy; and Liberty, indignant at her prostituted name, shall dash the bloody volume of this revolution from her contaminated history.

Amidst the tremendous shock of this revolution, which overturned some, changed several, and brought into imminent hazard of destruction most of the nations of Europe, let us take a transient view of what was the conduct of our new and untried government. The tail of this dark tempest soon reached our shores, and had the effect of electricity upon our countrymen. They rejoiced that the sun of liberty was now rising, to enlighten a generous and beloved people. They triumphed in their victories, sympathised in the defeats of France, and scowling viewed the powers of Europe uniting to overwhelm her. But, alas! they too soon had to lament that this light, which they fondly hoped would glow with the splendor of liberty, was nothing but the dazzling of a baleful meteor, which having gleamed with disastrous glare, and shed destruction on that nation, had disappeared and left a gloom much darker than before. And America snatched her polluted eyes with horror away, when she beheld Anarchy, drunk with the blood of millions, light up the funeral pile of liberty with the violated rights of human nature.

Early, however, our shores trembled with the conflicting warfare of the combatting nations of Lu-

rope; and that spirit of America which had stood a tip-toe to engage on the part of France, was urged to the very precipice of war, by the unjustifiable aggression of Britain upon our commerce; by the remembrance of the former wrongs which she had done us, which still rankled in the hearts of many of our citizens; by the loud and just clamor of those who had suffered by her spoliations, and unfortunately too by the insidious policy of some, who wished to seize and direct the generous feelings of our nation to objects of their own personal aggrandisement. Our Washington soon however perceived that neutrality was the position which nature had designed America; and his penetration having foreseen its invaluable advantages to her, he firmly and fairly adhered to its principles, unmoved either by the threatened resentments of the belligerent nations of Europe, or by the misguided zeal of our own citizens.

Never perhaps had there been a greater display of the uncommon talents of this great man than at this critical juncture. His skill and prowess in the field, it is true, were well known; but the fearful curiosity of America was turned towards his conduct in this new and untried scene. Nor did his usual character for cool deliberation and unshaken firmness desert him. As if he had been born a politician, he watched the tremendous vibrations of affairs in Europe, and fixed them at those favorable moments when he could best lead them to the ends he aimed at. He developed, and in due season controlled, the insidious machinations of an intriguing foreign minister, contrived to embroil us in the war. He obtained redress from some, explained and accommodated differences with others of the warring nations, when all their angry passions were in arms, and called into action all the varying policy which

either firmness or flexibility required. He employed himself assiduously, by well-timed explanations of his views, to assuage the bitterness of party, and to bring the divided sentiments of our nation to a true discernment of their interests. This most arduous of tasks he in a great measure accomplished; and in order to retain "white-rob'd Peace a guest amongst us," he had the patriotism to risk the loss of the invaluable love of his countrymen.

Unfortunately, however, then was organised; that difference of political sentiment which, in the violence and rapidity of its progress, has not only divided states, but has even sowed the seeds of discord and dissention amongst every class of our citizens, and which, if mutual forbearance does not crush in the bud, threatens destruction to our government. Under its baleful influence, the pure and un sullied character of our Washington was contaminated by the pen of hirelings. He who had been their greatest enemy in the worst of times, was now represented as the partisan of Britain....he who, unsolicited, had been the means of conferring the first office in the gift of our government upon the avowed,* and perhaps the ablest enemy the constitution he presided over ever had, was stigmatised as the head of a party; and the father of his country was blasphemously held up to the nation as a traitor and a murderer. Yes, my fellow-citizens, he whose right arm has been a great mean of enabling us to celebrate this day, was called a traitor; and him who, like the noble Grecian of old, could boast with truth that no fellow-citizen had ever mourned through his means, was branded with the name of murderer. Let us hope, however, that these base

* Mr. Jefferson—See Debates in the Virginia Convention.

and malignant falsehoods did not spring from the poisonous fountain of American hearts ; but rather let us suppose they were suggested by the vindictive malice of hungry and disappointed refugees from Europe, who delighted to satiate their noisome and rancorous appetites upon the character of the greatest man in our nation.

But, alas ! neither the anathemas of party nor the hosannas of praise now reach his ears. Nerveless is that arm which was once the chief defence of our country....silent is that tongue from which wisdom delighted to speak....and that mighty heart, which swelled with every virtue, is now compressed into a clod of the valley. What though as I lately passed Mount Vernon, sad and silent I found its solitary halls....what though the thistle rears its head, and the long grass waving mourns o'er the narrow tomb of the father of his country, yet the illustrious name of Washington shall live for ever....for ever will it be embalmed in the memory of the future patriots of the world. Not because, like Cæsar or Alexander, he was the destroyer of nations ; not because, under the specious pretence of promoting the liberty of his country, he waded, like a Buonaparte, through slaughter to a throne ; but because, in the midst of war, he forgot not that he was a citizen ; and because, when a victorious army clamored for rights withheld, and a bold and daring spirit urged him to demand redress, and force their claims even at the bayonet's point, he firmly resisted the temptation, mildly assuaged their angry passions, obtained them such redress as their disabled country could afford, and having quietly disbanded this discontented army, resigned his high commission with the same dignified humility with which he had received it, and retired a private citizen into the bosom of his country.

Sacred shade ! however calamitous to our country, to thee perhaps your removal was timely ; for already has the pestiferous breath of calumny cast a shade upon the bright characters of your friends and advisers ; and already has a new order of things trampled under foot the favorite objects of your administration. Thy spirit now rests with thy God, thy character with posterity....who, when history shall inform them of thy mild philosophy in peace, thy unyielding firmness in war ; shall relate thy military achievements in the field, thy mature wisdom in council ; shall peruse the splendid events of your administration ; shall read of thy tried integrity, thy disinterested patriotism, and find that your time and talents were consecrated to your country, and your heart to your God ; when they shall peruse the splendid pages of thy illustrious reputation, they will surely say, in the language of the immortal Shakspeare.....“ This was a man who, take him for all in all, we shall never see his like again.”

Could I do justice to the subject, my fellow-citizens, I would now rather command your attention than ask your patience, whilst I turn your mental view to the portentous aspect of affairs in Europe. There the Gallic Cæsar stands conspicuous, and forms as it were a fulcrum, upon which the political balance of that proud quarter of the globe seems to turn. This extraordinary man, after having merited the gratitude of France, by rescuing them from the grasp of almost all the powers of Europe, combined in arms against them, by a stupendous display of intrepidity and military skill ; after having captivated the affections of her inhabitants, by a pretended zeal for the expiring liberty of their country ; after having obtained, by a series of political intrigue not unworthy of a Cæsar or a Cromwell, the first place

in the nation, now sits on the throne of the Bourbons; and towering at the head of the gigantic power of France, Buonaparte seems to await, in fullen majesty, his appointed time to stretch forth his unmatched arm and crush the trembling nations. Already the rich and populous Netherlands are incorporated with his government, and Batavia awaits but the breath of his nostrils to expire.... Already the haughty and indignant Castilian crouches at his feet, and the political state of Italy changes, like theameleon, its hue at his look.... Already the liberty of the gallant Swiss, grown venerable with years, and consecrated by the admiration and respect of ages, has withered at his touch, and Austria and Prussia have their hands in the lion's mouth. Russia stands aloof, either dazzled by his splendor or blinded by his policy; and of all the nations of Europe, Britain alone has the gallantry to dare, whilst she dreads his formidable power.

Already also has his insatiate appetite for power turned his fearful and eager eye upon our distant and hitherto peaceful country; and even now he prepares to possess himself of the great and adjoining country of Louisiana, and has ere this, perhaps, dispatched an army of the veteran conquerors of Europe, to take a station, the most formidable to these states that either policy could have contrived, or ambition desired. Occupying the mouths of the great Mississippi, whose paternal and countless streams wash nearly three-fourths of our country, he holds in his hands the master-keys of the two great principles of human action....those of hope and of fear. With the one he may expect to seduce our western brethren from the union, by advantageous offers in facilitating the exports of the abundant produce of their fertile soil; or, failing in this, he may attempt with the other to terrify them into his views, by threaten-

ing in a moment, and by a single battery, to cut off the only sources of their wealth, more completely than could be done on these Atlantic shores by the proudest navy in Europe. The time is scarcely past when Spain, by violating our acknowledged rights, gave a temporary specimen of the facility with which this can be accomplished, and of the extreme excitability of the American temper upon this subject.

But can we, who know that this immense and fair portion of North-America now belongs to France....can we who know the imbecility of Spain, and that if justly roused, we could in a moment dash this colony of her's to nothing....can we believe that this violation was from her? No, my fellow-citizens; I think I can perceive therein the genius of Buonaparte....it was his master-hand that applied the mighty lock and sprang the bolt, to try how its sound would vibrate on the American ear. Let us return our thanks to that Supreme Being, to whom I trust the dear-bought liberty of America will be ever precious, that it grated harsh thunder to the uttermost ends of the union, and the genius of our country started up alarmed, and seized her half-drawn sword. It is but late that from the infectious mauls of New-Orleans, Danger reared his gorgon front, and however negotiation may shroud his harsher features, still his form of giant mould shall ever awe the genius, and startle the peace of the union, until her flag shall wave in peaceful triumph o'er this western world.

It has hitherto been the peculiar felicity of our nation, to have better hopes of being exempt from wars, both foreign and domestic, than any people on the earth, at home; because, springing from one parent nation, we all possess the same manners, the

same customs, the same laws, the same religion. Learning, in an uncommon degree, is diffused amongst our citizens, and by no nation on earth are so well understood and practised the means of extending its benign influence; and by possessing the invaluable advantage of speaking the same language, from the Lake of the Woods to St. Mary's, from the Mississippi to the Atlantic, the danger of disunion has become a living principle in the bosom of every American. Add to all this that the press, however prostituted amongst us at present, watches over the peace of our country, and is ever ready to denounce, with more rapidity than the telegraphe, any sacrilegious attempt to violate it; our nation, rising from the earth, forms one majestic and common stock, and is only divided into separate branches in order to flourish the more. Thus united, thus guarded, we have but little to fear from war at home. Abroad, it is true, we touch on alien neighbors. On the north we skirt the dominions of Britain, a nation which, however formidable she may be, can never find it her interest to war with us, more especially as it must be evident to all, that the first moment of its declaration must terminate the existence of her continental possessions in America. On the east, the Atlantic rolls three thousand miles of waves between us and Europe's shores; and on every other part we bound upon the widely extending possessions of Spain, which, untrodden and uninhabited whilst in her possession, seems rather to present an impenetrable barrier to our frontier, than a mean of disquieting our peace.

But alas! how soon is this flattering scene to change....for even now, where late the genius of Spain slumbered in inactive ease, soon will stand the bold, the artful, the enterprising French; and amidst those woods, our former bulwarks, Ambition

shall nurse her horrid brood, and wait the favoring time to cry "havoc! and let slip the dogs of war." And should that awful day arrive, as come it surely must, shall America then, like oppressed Batavia, kiss the rod that chastises her? Or shall she, like the poor deluded Swiss, await the last fixture of the galling chain of slavery, before she hears its direful clank? No, never, my fellow-citizens; the ghosts of our aged forefathers shall arise, and, shaking their hoary locks, forbid the parricidal act; the spirits of our fallen heroes shall point to their bleeding wounds, and cry aloud, "forbear;" and the unborn millions of America shall demand, that we shall hand them undiminished down the patrimonial freedom of their ancestors. Never shall this fate befall America. Should that electric spirit still exist, still animate our bosoms, which in our revolutionary war broke forth and burst in thunder on our invaders; should we possess the same unprejudiced spirit to discern our interest, the same boldness to vindicate our rights; should we be equally ready, equally willing as then, with hearts united and with hands combined, to rally round our threatened constitution, and maintain inviolate the freedom and honor of our nation; and above all, should we bravely dare, like the heroes of seventy-six, to draw our swords, and, throwing their scabbards away, resolve to conquer or to die. With this spirit, again would we evince to France, again to the world, that five millions of freemen, accustomed to arms, can never be subjugated by any enemy, however powerful, residing at the distance of three thousand miles.

But instead of this, should the constituted authorities of our country not snuff the danger at a distance, and proudly prepare to meet the rising storm....if instead of their liberty and prosperity our nation shall be taught to consider a comparative

exemption from taxes as the true criterion of their national happiness....if safety is to be weighed in the coiner's balance, and the value of liberty to be calculated by the rules of arithmetic....if the voice of flattery shall delude to the last....if party shall continue to denounce as unpardonable heresy a difference of political opinion, and shall persist to proscribe more than half the talents of the nation....then shall I fear that the sun of our freedom verges to his horizon, then perhaps we shall be compelled to pass to that fatal bourne, from which no free government has ever yet returned. But perish the thought, never shall this fate await our country; for at the mighty voice of Danger, Flattery shall cease her syren song, America shall unfurl her banner'd eagle, shall break the Lilliputian ties of interest, and assembling round the sacred altar of liberty, sacrifice thereon her party spirit, and swearing unanimity, shall denounce a nation's curse upon that sacrilegious breath that shall fan its dying flame.

Let our's be then the pleasing task, my fellow-citizens, anticipating this hallowed day each in his narrow sphere, to alluage this angry passion, and to allay the venom of that party poison which rankles in the bosom of our country. Let us all unite in one great object, to extend the influence of religion and of virtue; let our sentiment be to love our country, our party be that of liberty, and our prayer that it may be immortal.

And you, the fair daughters of America, let it not be supposed that your interest is but small in the events of this sacred day. No, your's are of the highest order of concerns therein; for as it has been the opinion of all political writers, that republicanism cannot long exist devoid of virtue, so is

is a fact, which the history of ages records to the distinguished honor of your sex, that in proportion as virtue has been the characteristic of a nation, so has been your influence and ascendancy over the hearts and minds of men. When nations, lost in the extremes of refinement, substitute manners for virtue, and gallantry for love, there corrupted man learns to consider the invaluable heart of woman, that first of human blessings, as not worthy of possessing; or if he strives to obtain the glorious prize, 'tis but to convert its misguided feelings to her ruin.

In barbarous states, where courage alone is valued, where no law is acknowledged but that of force, and no appeal allowed but that of personal strength; there woman becomes the degraded slave, and oft, too oft, the trembling victim of the brutal savage. If then to be free is to be virtuous, and if virtue is the triumphant state of woman, you surely then, my fair countrywomen, are highly interested in the events of this day; and it behoves you much, whose province chiefly 'tis "to teach the young ideas how to shoot," to make it your peculiar object to implant in the youthful bosoms of your sons the principles of liberty; so that growing with their growth, and ripening with their years, they may ever stand ready to establish your rights by asserting, even to death, the principles of this day.

And to you, gentlemen of the Philomathean Society, at whose request I have tried this novel scene, apology would be in vain; as you already know, that sensible of my insufficiency, I fain would have declined this arduous task. It is my most ardent prayer, that from the bosom of your society may arise a long series of future orators, who, on many returning anniversaries of this glori-

ous day, by their eloquent celebrations of its illustrious deeds, may rivet its principles upon the hearts of the rising generations of our country; and who, by the splendor of their performances, may leave me no other merit than that of having set them an example.



FINIS.

