

AN

ORATION

PROFONCED AT

HILLSBOROUGH, NEW-HAMPSHIRE;

JULY 4, 1810,

THE ANNIVERSARY OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

.....
BY JOHN BURNHAM, A. B.
.....

*In reason, nature, truth, I dare to trust...
Ye fools be silent, and ye critics just.*



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—
JULY, 1810.

HILLSBOROUGH, JUNE 20, 1810.

SIR,

THE Citizens of Hillsborough, assembled to make arrangements for celebrating the approaching Anniversary of American Independence. request you, by their Committee appointed for that purpose, to pronounce an Oration on the occasion.

We are, dear sir, your obedient servants,

DAVID STARRET,
JOHN TOWNE,
SOLOMON M'NEIL, } Committee.

MR. JOHN BURNHAM.

GENTLEMEN,

Unaccustomed to writing, and much less in the habit of public speaking, I undertake, with diffidence, a task, which would be disrespectful for me to try to evade.

Accept, gentlemen, for yourselves and the citizens of Hillsborough the assurances of the highest respect of your most obedient servant,

JOHN BURNHAM.

DAVID STARRET, Esq.
JOHN TOWNE, Esq.
Capt. SOLOMON M'NEIL.

HILLSBOROUGH, JULY 5, 1810.

SIR,

WE have it in charge from the Citizens of Hillsborough to present you their thanks for your ingenious Oration, and in their name to request a copy for publication.

Accept, sir, &c.

BENJAMIN PIERCE,
DAVID STARRET,
JOHN M'NEIL, } Committee.

MR. JOHN BURNHAM.

GENTLEMEN,

My Oration was not intended for publication; but if you think proper to publish it, trusting to the candor of a generous and liberal public, I will submit to you a copy for the press.

Accept, gentlemen, &c.

JOHN BURNHAM,

BENJAMIN PIERCE, Esq.
DAVID STARRET, Esq.
Lt. JOHN M'NEIL.



Oration.



FATHERS, AND FELLOW-CITIZENS,

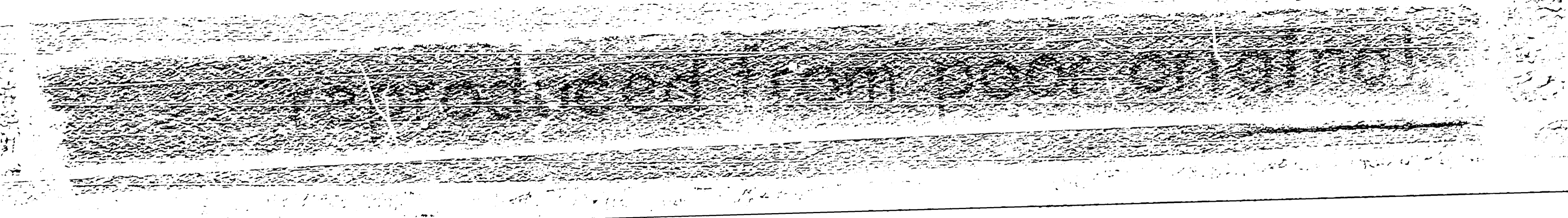
ON this day, consecrated to freedom, we have assembled to present an oblation of gratitude, and to burn incense on our own altar to the **GOD** of liberty and of nature. When the heart is full of its subject and swells with elevated emotions, it forgets all introductory form, and seeks immediate relief by giving immediate vent to its feelings. How shall the speaker perform the task assigned to him? How recount the achievements of our revolutionary fathers, some of whom add dignity to this assembly? How sketch the outlines and shadow the great proportions of a revolution, whose sublimity has astonished mankind, and whose salutary effects are felt in the emancipation of half the world, and in the extension of commerce and wealth over the whole?

If my powers were proportionate to the mighty theme we are about to contemplate, I would speak to you in a strain of eloquence, sublime as the day we celebrate, and as elegant as the brilliancy of my audience. But I have not the faculty of gleaning flowers from the gardens of fancy and of literature. I am unable to collate the sublime beauties of language, to decorate the flowing periods of oratorical description. I have nothing to do with the embroidered tinsel of imagery.

What I have been able to prepare, I exhibit to you in the plain garb of simple narration.

The political world, like the natural, is subject to incessant changes. Both appear in a continual flux and vicissitude. In this, each returning day and night diversifies the prospect, and the revolving seasons vary the aspect of the passing year. In that, revolution rapidly succeeds revolution, like the undulations of an agitated ocean, and each exhibits in its operation a multiform succession of grand, sublime, and dreadful scenes. In the animal and vegetable kingdoms, generations rise and pass away; life and death, at eternal variance, hold animated nature in continual fluctuation, and the same portion of organic matter is seen to assume ten thousand forms, and it occupies, in succession, ten thousand ranks. The political world presents an equal variety of aspects, motions, mutations, and revolutions. Here states, and nations, and empires are seen to fall like the leaves of autumn, and they are succeeded by others, which, like the blossoms of the ensuing spring, repair the waste of time and the ravages of war. Nature, however, in her operations preserves order, beauty, harmony and economy. Controlled by fixed laws, her varieties are uniform, her vicissitudes are permanent, her confusion is regular. Here the analogy ends. For in political revolutions nothing of order, or beauty, or harmony is seen to appear. It more frequently exhibits an appearance like the rout of Milton's devils, "confusion worse confounded."

The American revolution is of a different character. It stands alone in the story of nations. Other revolutions have been produced by a fermentation of the vilest passions of man, have been conducted by the dregs of human creation, and have generally terminated in rivetting more closely the galling fetters of despotism upon the nation they were meant to emancipate. Our revolution was conducted in the noblest feelings which God has implanted in the breast of man; it was conducted by sages whose names will forever glisten on the pages of history like the dazzling constellations of heaven, and its termination was as glorious for humanity as the novelty of its commencement, and the grandeur of action and character it exhibited were great and astonishing. What pencil of genius can delineate its strong features? What powers of description can do justice to the



patriots it produced? What flight of imagination is able to tour to the godlike elevation of their virtues?

Portrayed by the faithful historian, they will rouse the gratitude and excite the emulation of latest posterity. We often hear that man is by nature the subject of liberty and equality. But the terms are not always clearly comprehended. "If rightly understood, they mean enjoyment of personal freedom under the equal protection of the laws." It is not the wild chimerical liberty and equality of revolutionary France, which held out to the populace the idea of an equal distribution of property, and sanctioned robbery, and murder, and treason under the name of public good. Such liberty involves the seeds of its own sudden dissolution. True liberty inculcates an affection for our government, which guards it from encroachment, and for our country, which supports its growth.

When, therefore, you are told that man is by nature free and equal to his fellow-man, you are to understand that every being on whom God has stamped the image of humanity, whether he be clothed in the humble habiliments of ragged poverty, or shine in the robes of wealth and honor, is equally entitled to all the rights and prerogatives of man.

But there is another principle in man at war with the principle of equality. It is the lust of arbitrary power. Between these, arose, in the morning of time, a bloody conflict, which hath continued through every age, drenching the world in blood, and converting the fair garden of nature into a theatre of carnage.

I cannot tarry to notice the various progress of this contest between right and prerogative. It may not, however, be useless to view the different effects of freedom and slavery on human genius and human action. While we see in the contrast the superiority of our government, the more salutary influence of our republican institutions, it will excite us to support them with more zeal and energy. When ancient Greece was free, the finest specimens of human genius shone in the productions of her sons.

Her wisdom and patriotism still gleam with immortal splendor, and her literature and philosophy still blossom

and look verdant in history. But her liberty passed away, and her genius fell asleep. Then were the muses seen to hang their harps upon the willows, eloquence ceased to charm, and poetry no longer breathed her magic influence.

Rome, once the *Lux orbis terrarum*, whose walls contained a Cicero, a Cato, a Brutus, presents the same melancholy picture. The chains of slavery embrace the limbs of her citizens, and the gloomy pall of ignorance and superstition shrouds their minds.

When her government was inspired by the genius of liberty, she stood on an eminence, and glory surrounded her. Awed by the terror of her arms, the world confessed their submission and acknowledged her authority. Like yon refulgent orb in the centre of the material system diffusing light, life and motion, republican Rome, from her dignified elevation, diffused over all nations wealth, literature and civilization. But liberty at length sunk into the tomb; tyranny assumed the sceptre, and the laurels of Roman glory immediately withered. Deserted were her groves of fame and philosophy, and cropt was every flower in the garden of science.

So destructive to the human intellect is the scorching influence of despotic power. So effectually does the annihilation of the rights of man break down his spirit, and incapacitate him for every noble exertion. He becomes at once the forlorn child of degeneracy and despair.

History, we are told, is a lamp to the judicious statesman to direct his path through the mazy windings of politics. It flashes light through the labyrinths of intrigue and ambition. It lays open the *oblique* advances of the crafty demagogue. It discovers the causes of the rise and fall of nations. In history we are taught that corruption of morals has invariably preceded the loss of liberty. This suggests an interesting lesson to the patriotic statesman. It suggests the importance of preserving purity of morals in a free government, as the skilful physician would preserve purity of blood in a natural body. Am I heard by legislators? Permit me to suggest to you that due attention to the dissemination of virtue and morality is the height of patriotism, for surely love of country shines most

conspicuous in those exertions, which tend most directly to perpetuate its respectability and its happiness.

If then you love your country, you will labor incessantly to promote the cause of virtue and morality, with which are closely connected public literature, all modes of decent education, order and good manners, in every rank of society. Public virtue is the very *bark of our tree of liberty*, which conveys nutrition to its branches. Public virtue is the *soul of our free Constitution*. If its cultivation be neglected, the spirit of our free Constitution will creep from its case of parchment *like a snake from his skin*. You may have the shrivelled form left, but the substance clothed in a new garb has gone.

Liberty is forever in the people's nostrils, and they are at all times able, by a single puff, to blow it to *annihilation*. When men become infatuated with freedom, and it verges to *excess*, to *delirium*, to ENTHUSIASM, although like the burning bush it may for a while "*flourish unconsumed by the glory that surrounds it*," it will at length, by the fire of its own nature, ardent and glowing like the fire of *Ætna*, burst its integuments, and carry destruction in its progress. It is then like a mighty river bursting from the mountain's side, which tumbles, and foams, and roars along, *scooping deeper channels in the rocks of adamant*. Such has been the fate of liberty in ancient times, such its progress in modern Europe, and such, in a peculiar manner, has been the boasted march of liberty and equality in France. The nations of the east have proved themselves unworthy of liberty by their crimes, and she has left the eastern world. But she has found a residence in America. She has reared her temple near the western skies. Here her faithful votaries delight to worship. Here the principles of liberty exist in their purity, diffusing as much influence as gives happiness to society and stability to government. Our fathers have planted freedom, religion and literature in the same garden. It is our part to foster their united growth. Let us teach them to cling together like tender plants, whose branches wreath around and mutually support each other; then may our republican government be indefinitely protracted. If we separate them, or neglect the

cultivation of either, the flowers of liberty will wither and die on its stalk.

After these general remarks, it will undoubtedly be expected that my address should run in the ordinary channels of declamation on the Fourth of July; that I should trace the history of my country, and notice the leading events of the late revolution. It is indeed a noble theme for declamation, a fertile subject for the pen of genius. Here eloquence has often exerted her powers, and erudition exhausted her stores. It is a subject on which we shall always delight to dwell. But it is not altogether agreeable. Like every thing in human affairs, the pleasure we derive from it is blended with pain. To use the fine expression of the Irish Bard,* it is "like the recollection of joys that are past, pleasant and mournful to the soul."

I do not know that I ought, but surely I do feel a degree of reluctance, in attempting to sketch the scenes of anguish, and grief, and blood, through which our fathers have purchased the blessings which we enjoy.

Would you contemplate the origin of yourselves as a nation, and of the institutions of your country that bloom so beautifully around you? Go along with me. I will lead you back to the seventeenth century. Dark indeed and gloomy was the morning. Thick shades and black clouds rested upon it. *Jehovah had made darkness his pavilion.* "Bigotry, the accursed progeny of servile hypocrisy....of remorseless lust of power, laboring for the destruction of man under the specious pretences of religion, her banners stolen from the altars of God, and her allies congregated from the abysses of hell," had expelled our pious fathers from their friends, their country and their homes.

When we soar on the quick wing of reflection, and behold them turning their backs upon the world and all its fascinating glare of allurements, we admire their self-denial. When with the eye of imagination we see them forlorn and destitute march to the shore of an unaccustomed ocean, mount its boisterous waves, lose sight of earth, commit themselves to heaven, and pursue their

* OSSIAN.

course undismayed, mid storms and tempests, "while thunders rocked the ocean, and the lightning's broad gleam painted hell on the skies," our souls are wrought up to the highest point of astonishment and veneration. Liberty was their directing star. They saw its effulgence beaming in the western horizon. Their way to its genial influence lay across an almost shoreless ocean. That ocean might abound with rocks, and shoals, and quicksands. The country they sought might be an ungrateful clime, a world of ice and snow, a dreary barren desert, with gloomy vales to pass, with craggy steeps to climb. They might be met on the beach and immolated by the savages, or driven back into the ocean, or carried away captive, and their names and sufferings at once consigned to the land of darkness and oblivion. All these gloomy prospects were lost in the superior blaze which the hope of civil and religious freedom shed upon their minds. In that hope they went on their way rejoicing; and all the privileges to which you and I, my fellow-citizens, this day feel ourselves entitled; the innumerable blessings which a bountiful God has showered upon our country, are in no small degree attributable to their fortitude and perseverance.

But I must hasten along. The scenes that crowd upon our imaginations are too various to be embraced in the scanty limits of an oration. The ocean wafted them over; they landed in the new world. I stop not to portray the frightful forms of death that met them at the brink of the ocean. Hunger oppressed. A bitter winter approached. Pestilence raged. I say nothing of their *super-inhuman sufferings*, their still more torturing apprehensions from the Indians. I have no words to describe the horrors of savage cruelty, the groans of age and the shrieks of infancy, that often pierced through the silence of midnight, thrilling every heart with terror. It is a waste of words to paint such scenes to human imaginations. Surely I need not tell the father, around whose heart nature has entwined a single cord, what horror and distraction would seize him, should he behold his sons, the beginning of his strength and the flower of his future hope, mangled and bleeding around him. I might

paint to you the wild and frantic mother viewing her lovely babe writhing on the point of a barbed spear, or rudely gashed by the Indian scalping knife. In those days of tribulation such scenes were frequent.

But I will not torture your imagination with the recollection. I will not harrow up your souls by reciting such horrors. They have passed away. Let us proceed to the contemplation of happier times. Dressed by the hand of industry, the wilderness soon began to assume the air of a cultivated country. Smiling fruit fields and blooming gardens were seen to emerge from dark forest grounds, through which the sun had never before penetrated. Towns and cities sprung from the desert; and those superb edifices, which add ornament to convenience, arose with surprising rapidity, on the very site of the *wigwam*. Seminaries of learning were instituted. Government was organized. Commercial towns began to adorn our seaboard and navigable streams, and our canals to whiten the ocean. Athletic and muscular from labor and hard fare, the robust frames of our youth were still further hardened by frequent exercise in Indian wars. The pulp of infancy was verging towards the gristle of youth, but had not yet acquired the solid bone of manhood. The vastness of the American continent, and the prospects of its future importance, from the sources of wealth and commerce, which it opened to view, had attracted the attention of the old world, and engaged the leading nations of Europe in competitions for its settlement.

England, France, and Spain were the principal agents for the acquisition of territory beyond the Atlantic waters. Each had planted colonies. In the war, which immediately preceded our revolution, England had been uniformly successful. She had humbled Spain. She had crippled the power of France. Conqueror on land, she was mistress too of the ocean. Her commerce scud before every gale of Heaven, and her flag shadowed every sea.

Both the Indies laid their treasures at her feet. Africa was nearly depopulated of its black inhabitants to cultivate her American islands, and even the whales in the Norwegian seas, and in the ice-fields of Greenland paid tribute to her commerce. Proudly decorated with the

laurels of conquest, and haughty in the sway of empire, she viewed herself on the pinnacle of glory, and looked down with disdain upon the world.

Considering her colonies as vassals created for her sole emolument, she assumed the unlimited right of taxation. But the sons of Columbia, free as the salubrity of New-England air, and firm in soul, as the *marble of the mountains*, that surrounded them, were not of a temper to yield a single right without a violent struggle. America was indeed, at that time, an infant, but it was a gigantic one. It was the infant Hercules, whose brawny grasp could strangle the monsters, which struck terror into ordinary manhood.

Britain was indignant that a people so weak and contemptible as she deemed her colonies should presume to define the doubtful limits of her authority, and set bounds to her lawless rapacity and ambition. At the first remonstrance on the part of her American subjects, her countenance loured and gathered a fiery aspect, like the *ominous gleam on the clouds*, which precedes the birth of the thunder. But when open opposition was made to her edicts, and the odious article of taxation violently destroyed, she was *maddened to desperation*. "The darkness on her brow gave notice that a storm was collecting and the lightning in her eye flashing across the Atlantic announced the thunder that was to follow.

Apprehending that liberty was now about to be forever crushed, the nations of the earth were deeply interested in the event. The eastern world *stood on tiptoe* to behold the mighty conflict in the west.

England had cried "havoc ! and let slip the dogs of war ;" and the green fields of America became the theatre of carnage and bloodshed.

I forbear to touch upon the injustice of Great Britain in commencing, and her more than savage cruelty in carrying on the war. If you anticipate a delineation of this, you have assigned me a task I am unable to perform. Genius has no colors sufficiently glowing to portray its barbarous features. Should I attempt it, my deficient powers would lag far behind the rapidity of your feelings. Compared with the ferocity of British troops in some transactions, which will forever blacken the pages of her

history, the fiercest tyger that paces the howling desert, the fellst monster that cuts the azure deep, are mild and harmless things, and the cruelties of ordinary war whiten, grow mild, and assume the appellation of comparative mercy.

What spectacle more horridly unnatural than that of a parent torturing and wantonly butchering her own children, supplicating for mercy at her feet? But I forbear. These scenes are past in action; yet shall they live forever in the recollection and abhorrence of all civilized nations.

England was soon taught, in the affairs of Lexington and Bunker Hill, what she must expect from men determined *to live free, or die on freedom's soil*. And she learned in the capture of Burgoyne that the laurels of glory, which adorned her, were liable to be filched from her brow by her mischievous children.

The revolutions of time at length rolled on the fourth of July, Anno Domini 1776. We are in the habit, fellow-citizens, of attaching peculiar qualities to that memorable day. We fancy that the day-star, which announced the orient morning, shone with more than ordinary lustre; that the *luminary of Heaven* shed uncommon effulgence upon the day; that the zephyrs fanned the evening with more genial influence; that nature, through all her departments was seen to smile with peculiar delight; and that the balustrades of Heaven were crowded with myriads of celestial spirits leaning to contemplate the sublime transactions of the time. *Then* was drawn the bold declaration of AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE, which like the pole-star in the Heavens directed our revolutionary pilots through the bloody ocean of war. The concentrated wisdom of America sparkled along its periods, and the souls of three million freemen animated the body of the work. Thirty-four annual suns have cherished the growth of our liberties, and as many times have its votaries assembled with undiminished ardor and zeal to celebrate its birth. At the recollection of the day, the blood of the hoary veterans of the revolution, though chilled with the frost of age, grows warm and thrills along the channels of their bodies with an accelerated motion. On this day, we their offspring catch the rapturous glow, and we glory to drop a tear of gratitude over the tombs of

our ancestors who sleep *untenanted of their celestial essence*. Their hearths have been bedewed with tears and hung round with eulogies, and their well earned laurels still bloom in the affection and gratitude of their country.

They need not our feeble panegyrics. The heights of Boston, Saratoga, Monmouth and Yorktown will appear in descriptive story, in parrallel lines, with *Thermopylae, Salamis, Marathon* and *Mantineia* in Grecian history.

Britain at length found that *all nature* was marshalled in war against her. The world could not but pity the hard case of her colonies, and the hearts of her own soldiers, hitherto invincible, inspired with horror at this unnatural conflict, melted within them, and Heaven seemed to frown on all her enterprises. She was at length constrained to acknowledge America an Independent nation, and her blood hounds of war were recalled from the soil of freedom.

Perhaps the world will never again witness a conflict of so sublime a character. Perhaps it will never again be the theatre of so much disinterested patriotism. Liberty triumphant and peace and independence established, America exchanged the rude scenes of war for the soft allurements of peace. *She was, emphatically, left to her simplicity and her passions*. She had astonished the world by the brilliancy of her success, and she now astonished them still more by the regularity with which she proceeded to the organization of government.

The nations of Europe had seen the old confederation sink squalid and pale into its tomb, and they expected that passion and prejudice would effect in America, what the arms of England could not perform. They expected that anarchy would ensue, and embroil the States before they would agree on a form of government. "But their astonishment was swelled beyond the limits of magnitude when they beheld the new Constitution suddenly rise from the ground, throw off its grave-clothes, and come forward into life and action like a young giant refreshed with sleep.

Some opposition was indeed made to its adoption, but like an *attractive and luminous focus* it at length concentrated the scattered rays of patriotism and public spirit;

and it still continues the grand centre, around which revolve the bodies that compose our system of government.

I mean not to pronounce its eulogium. All I could say would only amount to what has been a thousand times stated, and which is unquestionably true, that it embraces the good qualities of other governments, but excludes their defects. The respective powers of its three departments are defined with sufficient exactitude, and the impulses of each calculated with skill and discernment. The various wheels and springs of the grand machine were arranged with such order and put into motion with such regularity, that it may always move in perfect harmony, and its original tone and action be forever preserved, while virtue continues its actuating principle and its management is entrusted to judicious and honest hands.

The sentiments respecting our Constitution entertained by WASHINGTON, whose opinion will be held in higher estimation by his countrymen, than the eccentric flights of an Ames, or the monarchical speculations of a Hamilton, may be read in his last legacy to his country. He has there told us our Constitution is the most perfect form of human government. He has told us it may be preserved. In the words of the patriarch, he has blessed it; yea and it shall be blessed. It points out the modes of preserving it. That legacy should often be read. Scylla and Charybdis are there marked. Like the rainbow in the clouds, it defines the limits of the storm, of party rage and sectional prejudice. It gleams along our political sky, like the milky way in the Heavens, combining innumerable rays of political wisdom and virtue. With what forcible eloquence, what ardent solicitude that fainted patriot enforced the importance of union. Assigning it the same station in our system of government, which the principle of attraction occupies in the system of philosophy, without which all the bodies that compose it would mingle in wild confusion. Not only individual union, but a union between the State governments and the National government. So important is it to the happiness of this nation, that all its parts should be cemented, that whoever would, either directly or indirectly, excite disunion, or foment prejudice in one State against another,

or endeavor to weaken the cords, that embrace the whole, is either in grain a traitor, or is duped. Is he in private life? He either seeks power, or is the slave of one who does. Is he in public office? He is not a firm pillar in the house of government, but *a weather-cock on the top of the edifice.*

Such men, Washington tells us, should be watched with *an eye that never winks.* Look at the map of the United States. You will see at once, whatever designing men may urge to the contrary, that God and nature have made and fitted every part for the most intimate union with all the others. *Then let them cling together* in an indissoluble bond of union, and they may defy the united machinations of the world. America is a sanctuary for oppressed humanity. Here the forlorn fugitive scourged by the lash of tyranny may find refuge from the storm, and if virtuous may rest under the equal protection of our laws. Like Mr. Curran, who speaks in what he calls "the spirit of the British law," but whose language applies with more truth to this country, I also speak in the spirit of the American Constitution, "which makes liberty commensurate with, and inseparable from the American soil; which proclaims even to the stranger and sojourner the moment he sets his foot upon American earth, that the ground on which he treads is holy and consecrated by the genius of universal emancipation. No matter in what language his doom may have been pronounced; no matter what complexion incompatible with freedom, an Indian or an African sun may have burned upon him; no matter in what disastrous battle his liberty may have been cloven down; no matter with what solemnities he may have been devoted on the altars of slavery. The first moment he touches the sacred soil of America, the altar and the god sink together in the dust, his soul walks abroad in her own majesty, his body swells beyond the measure of his chains, that burst from around him, and he stands redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled, by the irresistible genius of universal emancipation." This is the glorious country we have to defend, the fair inheritance bequeathed by our fathers, and enriched by the best of the blessings of Heaven. Shall we suffer it to be contaminated by foreign influence? Or subjugated by

foreign power? Or dishonored by domestic faction? Shall we not rather sacrifice private feeling to public good? Shall we not rather unite in the resolution, that, ere we surrender that liberty, which is our birthright, the soil, on which our fathers fought and bled to obtain it, shall receive from our own veins a new and a deeper tinge?

The strongest testimony has no weight with us, if we deny that a spirit of disunion and in some degree of faction and disorganization has seized and infatuated a portion of our citizens. The right of canvassing public men and public measures, guaranteed to every American by the Constitution of his country, is unquestionably, if exercised within the limits of decency, productive of good effects. But surely it cannot be either noble, or honorable, or *morally right*, for any set of men to wage an implacable warfare against the mildest administration of their own government. It is neither an evidence of talents, nor of patriotism, nor of erudition, to be able to vilify and defame those to whom the nation has committed the guardianship of its rights and liberties. For in the trade of scurrility, folly and vulgarity are more successful than talents and erudition. But, fellow-citizens, on this day devoted to hilarity, mutuality, and harmony of feeling, I will not touch upon a topic, which is painful to me and must be disagreeable to you. I will only enquire, and surely the enquiry becomes us all, what is the duty of a patriotic citizen? Is it to exert the noble powers which God has given him *to relax the sinews of his government, or to strengthen its arm?* To defend, or render it contemptible? To rally around its standard, or to palliate and justify the insults of its enemies? He is unworthy the honorable name of an American, who ever hesitates in his answer.

Within the last twenty years, surprising changes have taken place in the *east*, which, by engrafting new principles into the policy of nations, has deeply affected the interests of America. Europe has experienced repeated convulsions like the tremendous succussions of an earthquake. Their influence has rung through the deep caverns of the globe and threatened, at times, the solid foundations of our government. Not by open hostility, but

by "war in disguise." Not by the bold current of manly warfare, but by "circuitous streams secretly sent forth, winding and working unperceived" and *under ground*. Thus situated, the American politician should watch on the *watch tower* of his country, with unsleeping vigilance. He should be able to grasp, at one view, the whole field of politics in Europe. The destinies of that continent are now wielded by a warrior, whose military talents far surpass all, which the world has hitherto produced. His good fortune exceeds, if possible, the boundless extent of his abilities; his ambition outmeasures both; his disregard of justice is more glaring than either; and his insidious policy, treacherous craft and oblique cunning are infinitely more dangerous to the world than all. By a train of mighty actions, whose accomplishment has uniformly followed their conception "quick as the bolt of Jove pursues the flash," he has prostrated the independence of continental Europe, and, without doubt, pants ardently for universal dominion. Between him and this great object, England like the gulf between heaven and hell forms an impassable barrier. England stands alone, and she wields a power truly formidable. Determined to struggle till her last breath for the ancient glory of her island, she waves high the standard of war and desperately continues the doubtful conflict. Her spirit, and courage and strength are yet unbroken and entire. She has drawn a line of demarcation around the borders of the continent, and, in a voice, which the Emperor of France feels he must obey, has said "hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther." "My floating walls are able to stay the proud waves of your ambition." Finding the thunder of his power thus "checked in mid volley," the mighty soul of the hero is moved within him, and violently agitated like the fiery bowels of a volcano about to disgorge rivers of *lava* to deluge surrounding provinces. Against England as a focal point, all the fire and force, all the lightning and thunder of his genius and power, are concentrated and directed. England is neither insensible of his views, nor dilatory in counteracting them. All their national antipathies, which have been for centuries acquiring bulk, strength, and combustibility, have taken

fire, and while the flame scorches and devours the world, it may also consume themselves.

It is a war of extermination between those two powers, and to the means which each has put in requisition to annoy the other, every thing must yield. Reason and justice, treaties and alliances, the immutable principles of natural right and the laws of nations, hitherto held sacred, are with them lighter than dry chaff before the hurricane. And could either of the champions, by annihilating all the rest of mankind, gain the smallest advantage against his rival, he would not hesitate a moment. So two clouds, fraught with the flaming artillery of Heaven, and impetuously driven by opposing winds, meet and encounter on the top of the Alps, and rend from earth, whole ridges of ancient oaks and lofty groves of pine, unmindful of the lesser trees, which may be crushed by the fall.

Justice and good faith being no longer the shield of nations, America, in her extensive relations, must devise means to *enforce* due respect towards her rights as a sovereign nation. She should prepare for the worst that can happen; prepare to defend herself by the sword; be swayed neither by the politics of England nor France, but *learn to despise them both*. We are not Englishmen. We are not Frenchmen. We are Americans! We have a government, which we have sworn to defend, and around whose standard we should unanimously rally. No such thing as national friendship exists. Self is, and will be, till *nature* changes, the grand centre, around which national, as well individual feeling and action revolve. We have therefore nothing to *hope* for from any nation in the world, and if united we have little to *fear* from the whole world combined.

In the beginning of the great conflict in Europe, ere the infernal emissaries of France and England had arrived in this country to enlist America on the side of their respective masters, she was happy indeed, enjoying as much unanimity as gives life to republicanism, and as much tranquillity in civil affairs as consists with an elective government. The demon of party spirit, which *sets man against his brother*, and, without a single pleasant ingredient, fills with unmingled dregs of gall and wormwood, the cup of social harmony, had not entered the fair gar-

den of American liberty. "Such was the state of Eden when the serpent entered its bowers."

The eagle-eye of Washington penetrated futurity, and kenneled the crooked paths of French and British policy. His prescient mind presented to him the high ground of a neutral nation as the only ground which was tenable, which could preserve the independence of America. It was the salvation of his country. He seized it; and he hung out the flag of neutrality.

But the strictest justice and impartiality in our commercial and other relations have been insufficient to protect our neutral rights. Under our various administrations, the whole system of American commerce has been incessantly *lashed round and round* the degrading circle of insult and spoliation. The English have unjustly captured our ships. The French have wantonly burned them. One detains thousands of our sailors in her service, and tinges our own seas with the blood of our citizens. The other lays up the property of our merchants for sequestration, as a "pledge for the good behavior of our government." The latter passes insolently, without notice and without answer, all the complaints and remonstrances of our minister. The *diplomatic agent* of the former boldly approaches the sanctuary of the American government, and insults its majesty, even in his official capacity; and, "O shame! where is thy blush," he finds his ablest apologists among the people he has so grossly abused.

In the arrangement with Mr. Erskine we discovered the *rain-bow* of peace *on the edge of the clouds*; but in the affair with Mr. Jackson *the vivid colors grew pale*. *It became a baleful meteor portending tempest and war*.

This then appears to be our political situation. Injured and insulted beyond all *human sufferance*, our government has used every possible exertion for redress without effect. The cup of reconciliation has been repeatedly drained to the dregs. The cupidity of England is as insatiable as the ambition of France. The insolence of both is bounded only by the limits of their power. To all the motives, which impel the *lawless lustibood* of France; the British ministry add the ranklings of wounded pride, of ancient hatred. Enemies they are still to our independence, which was wrung from them like wringing the

vital fluid from the heart. No mildness will assuage them; no concessions satisfy; no humiliation short of absolute submission can soften their deep rooted enmity. Against our peaceful commerce they wage an unprovoked, a perpetual, and an unrelenting hostility. All prospects of an accommodation are seen to have vanished. We must therefore exchange the olive branch for the sword. The roses of peace, which have so long bloomed, are to be rudely torn from the palpitating bosom of our country. In addition to the reduction of the price of produce, the temporary suspension of mercantile profit, the decrease of circulating medium, the stagnation of commerce and the death of industry, evils so severely felt in the *embargo*, which arose from foreign injustice, but which, had it been strictly adhered to, might have operated like the gentle showers of Heaven that fall upon and fertilize the very fields from which they had been exhaled, we are to experience the more dire calamities of actual war. The weapons of death may again be seen to glitter in our fields and cities with tenfold refulgence. Our seaports may once more be laid in ashes by the fleets of England. But all these things, though truly dreadful in themselves, dwindle to insignificance compared with the horrors of civil war, which may arise from disunion amongst ourselves. If we repel not the approaches of this *bell-born* spirit, all the tragical scenes of revolutionary France may be acted on the fair theatre of America; and while thus afloat on the *shoreless ocean* of revolution, the wreck of our liberty and our bleeding country will be eagerly seized by our foreign enemies. This is the path of national dilapidation, the path in which conquerors grasp their victims. The *lion* chooses to take his prey however weak, while sleeping, or drinking, or otherwise off its guard. By disunion, we not only weaken our energies, but we lay open the avenues for the approach of subtle or open enemies. Disunion is the grave of republicanism. Here sunk the liberties of Greece. Here fell the glory of Rome. This is the source of ambition. Her emissaries of disorganization sow the seeds of dissention, and she reaps, in tranquillity, the harvest of victory. By the influence of these, she infects the heart, and then she conquers it. "They first despoil the purity of the struggling

or half consenting victim, and then with their ruffian daggers they stifle at once the voice and the memory of the pollution." But we need not yet despair. Among her patriotic sons, America has thousands and tens of thousands who will fight manfully and struggle with their last breath for the principle of her national existence. America may be prepared if she will. She may defend herself if she *chooses* to do so. "Her citizens are alert and vigorous, and opulent and generous, and bold and undimayed." They have only to be called into unanimous and energetic action. And if we all as one rally around the standard of our republic, cultivate individual union, strengthen and draw tighter the *golden* chains, that bind the state governments to the general government, we shall safely ride out all the storms that threaten us and arrive at the haven of peace.

United in sentiment and in action, the confederated states of the Union would present an unbroken front of fire and of adamant, fearing demolition from no power on earth. And even should BONAPARTE with his legions find himself by some *miracle* landed in America, he would dread, and, confident I am, he would hear, in the voice of our national union, the *funeral knell* of his departed glory. Our internal resources are ample. Our country is vast and fertile, producing, in copious abundance, all the ingredients of human happiness. The laudable enterprise of our citizens, checked by the lawless depredations of France and England, may find new channels of action in South America. The Spanish Provinces are hursting the bands of slavery, and enterprise and industry, commerce and civilization will follow. The little cloud of independence, which first appeared in these northern regions, appears to be spreading in the south; and it is no wild flight of imagination to conceive that both the *Americas* may shortly become the *full-drawn* picture of what the United States now are in miniature. How boundless, how glorious in contemplation, is this theme! How infinite the prospects it unfolds to view! What inexhaustible sources for the growth of variegated industry, the extension of commerce, the expansion of various enterprise, the advance of manufactures, the cultivation of art and science, the diffusion of human happi-

ness, and the indefinite progression of diversified improvement. The old world may be abandoned to their slavery and their crimes, to worry and destroy each other, while the new shall become one nation of brothers enjoying in cordial harmony the equal rights and prerogatives of man. Blest, happy, great, and free, it shall extend from the regions of the *boreal* sky, to the shores of the southern ocean. We cannot longer tarry to contemplate the scenes, which rise to the imagination. The poet yet unborn shall sing the scenes, which the *muses* may already behold in the raptures of prophetic vision.

As a people, we have a course to pursue, which to the eagle-eyed statesman is as clear before him, as "the milky way in the heavens glowing with living sapphires of accumulated light." We have to put in requisition the internal resources we *now* possess, and to support the foundations which are already laid, and to lay new ones for their accumulation. We are to organize and discipline our militia, to foster with peculiar care the spirit of improvement in manufactures, which begins laudably to shew itself, and to diffuse literature by legislative patronage. But above all we are to discard that party spirit, in which patriotism is lost, which sometimes raises to office, by intrigue and corruption, men, who are unqualified to discharge its duties; men who appear like insects on a mighty pillar, and diminish in apparent size in proportion to their elevation.

We cannot fight on the ocean, for we have no navy. We may hereafter. But in the present stage of our national existence, to think of meeting England on that element, would be a degree of folly bordering on infatuation. If we have war it must be on our own soil. And here if our energies are properly directed we have little to fear; perhaps nothing. If our enemies expect any advantage from our temporary dissensions, I have no doubt that, by the unanimity of our meeting to repel them, we shall disappoint an expectation so vile in itself and so dishonorable to our country.

Our apprehensions, with regard to foreign relations, *may* not be realized. An accommodation with France and England *may* yet be effected. But the prospect is truly gloomy, and preparation is the best preventive of

war. It may burst *suddenly* upon us. And if it come, the militia of the country must form the only bulwark of political salvation. It cannot, therefore, be improper for me, in my situation and *very limited capacity*, to address that honorable class of citizens; a part of whom, glowing with the fire of courage, which liberty and patriotism inspire, I see before me. Here I consider myself surrounded, not merely by a few companies, but by all the military votaries of freedom, who swell and lengthen the shining battalions, and regiments, and brigades of America. Surely *death is not terrible* to the American soldier. He fears it not. Compared with slavery, it dwindles to nothing in his view.

For if you die freemen and fall in defence of your country, the laurels of honor and unfading renown will bloom on your graves in immortal verdure, and latest posterity will delight to water them with their tears. You inherit a spark of that celestial fire of courage, which glowed in the bosoms of your fathers, whose fainted shades this day hover around you, rejoicing to see their offspring so great and happy.

I know that your hearts, like your swords, are made of tempered steel, for while they bend with sympathizing pity to the touch of woe, they can suddenly resume their springing energy to punish arrogance and resist oppression. Arise then, and learn to wield the sword. Lash up your energies and your courage, which peace has suffered so long to sleep. Your country calls. Her eyes are directed to you. She views you as her last support, the rock of her political salvation, her *corps de reserve*. She leans upon you. In the hour of her trouble, *under God*, she has no where else to go.

While the scar-honored veterans of the revolution, whose venerable heads appear here and there amongst us, are dropping and sinking one after another into the tomb, and invoking the last blessing upon their country, you will step proudly forward, and, by your virtue, and valor, and patriotism, prove yourselves worthy to supply their places. And should either France or England dare to invade us, we will all unite, drop every party distinction, and in the language of Mr. Emmett, "meet them on the beach, with a sword in one hand and a torch in the oth-

er." We will meet them with all the destructive fury of war, and, if possible, immolate them in their ships before they contaminate the soil of our country. If they succeed in landing, and if forced to fly before superior discipline, we will turn our fertile country into a desert before them. It shall afford them no shelter nor sustenance. We will rase every house, burn every blade of grass, dispute every inch of ground, and the last spot where the hope of freedom shall desert us, there will we hold; and the last entrenchment of liberty shall be our grave.* Thus united and thus resolved, we shall leave our beloved country to posterity, as our fathers bequeathed it to us, a free, sovereign, and independent nation. And thus shall it remain the theatre of freedom, the asylum of the oppressed, the sanctuary of the rights of man, till tyranny shall have measured back, step by step, the progress by which it hath advanced over the globe, and liberty sway the mild sceptre of peace and equal law over the universal republic of an emancipated world.

* *Mr. Hancock*