

AN

ORATION

PRONOUNCED BEFORE THE

WHIGS OF PORTSMOUTH,

ON THE

FOURTH OF JULY,

A. D. 1834.

BY CHARLES W. CUTTER.

PORTSMOUTH, N. H.

JAMES F. SHORES, 1, MARKET STREET.

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PORTSMOUTH, JULY 5, 1834.

TO COL. CHARLES W. CUTTER : —

DEAR SIR — The undersigned have been requested by the Committee of Arrangements for the Whig Celebration of the fourth instant, in this town, to present their thanks for the able and patriotic address delivered by you on that occasion, and to request of you a copy for the press.

We are your obedient servants,

W. H. Y. HACKETT, }
JOHN W. ABBOTT, } *For the Committee*
WM. GOODRICH, } *of Arrangements.*

PORTSMOUTH, JULY 5, 1834.

GENTLEMEN — I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the fifth instant, in which you state that you have been requested by the Committee of Arrangements for the Whig Celebration of the fourth instant, to present their thanks for the address delivered by me on that occasion, and to request a copy for the press.

I beg you to make my acknowledgements to the Committee for the manner in which they are pleased to speak of my endeavor to perform the duty assigned to me, and, in obedience to their wishes, I transmit herewith a copy of the address referred to.

I am, gentlemen, very respectfully, your ob't servant,
CHARLES W. CUTTER.

TO MESSRS WM. H. Y. HACKETT,
JOHN W. ABBOTT,
WM. GOODRICH.

O R A T I O N .

FROM the remotest time, in all regions, it has been the studious design of lawgivers to set apart special periods of time for holy or for festive observances ; to arrest the current of events, to withdraw man from his customary avocations, and to attract his contemplations towards matters of higher concernment than those which ordinarily engage his attention.

Some of these periodical observances are of a purely religious nature ; when man is taught to devote himself to the study of his high obligations to his God, to his neighbor, and to himself ; to the contemplation of his duty here, and his destiny hereafter. Others are made to have a chiefly festive character, and are designed to associate with the memory of some great benefactor of his race, or the happening of some stupendous and fortunate event, all the emotions of joy, and gratitude, and exultation, of which our nature is capable.

In the Theocracy of the Jews, their inspired lawgiver was deeply impressed with the value of these

observances ; for he set apart for them days of lamentation and days of rejoicing ; he confirmed the Sabbath, so that it shall remain to guide and to bless mankind, so long as reason remains, or revelation is believed ; and he ordained feasts, and festivals, and jubilees, each with its peculiar duties and ceremonies. The Mythology of the ancients was full of these sacred occasions ; each of the superior deities had its own festal days, during which divers sorts of pomp, and ceremony, and festivity were exhibited, and the great study of their priests was to become versed in the rites, and mysteries, and ceremonial observances of those occasions. And in all that larger part of Christendom, where the Greek and Romish forms obtain, to this day the same respect continues to be paid, to what I cannot but think is a salutary requirement of our nature ; and in all those extensive and populous regions, church and state have *united* to establish festivals, during which it is the *duty* of the *whole population to rejoice together*. And when our Puritan fathers struck at the abuses of Christianity, and attempted to divest it of what seemed to them its superfluous appendages, it cannot, I think, be denied, that blinded by a just indignation, and carried away by their stern but holy zeal, they went one step too far, and in their total abolition of rites and festivals, they divested our forms not only of what was superfluous, but of much that was attractive and beautiful,—nay, more,—of much which a refined philanthropy and an enlarged philosophy adjudge to be beneficial and useful. For there is benevolence

as well as wisdom in these institutions. They help for a moment to smooth the rigid and wrinkled brow of *care*, and to relax the iron muscles of *labor*, and to bring men forth from the recesses of their daily toil into the sunlight of innocent recreation, and to call into action all the social, and kindly, and genial influences of our nature, and to throw over the whole surface of society an aspect of hilarity and cheerfulness. They have also a higher and a nobler purpose ; for they awaken all our feelings of gratitude for the illustrious dead, and they stimulate to good actions, all those who aspire to just fame, and a memory that shall live beyond the grave, by showing how long and how worthily the great and good of other days live in the memory of a grateful posterity. They transport us also back to the scenes of by-gone times ; they compel us to compare the men, and the manners, and the institutions of this age, with those of former days ; and if there be any deficiency, or any wandering, or back-sliding, we are forced by these periodical observances, to know our faults and to become sensible of our errors.

And this day, my friends and fellow-citizens, the natal day of our vast and flourishing Republic, of all the festivals ever celebrated by man, is one of the proudest and most momentous.

No ordinance, it is true, human or divine, has noted it upon time's calendar ; but it is hallowed by the fervent and spontaneous gratitude of *millions of freemen*, whose voices, rising up from city and from forest, from the savannahs of the South, and the

prairies of the West, and the mountains of the North, utter forth the grand choral symphony of a nation's joy — a nation's triumph — a nation's gratitude!

And each gallant son of the ocean, too, be he within the tropics, or skirting the icy barrier of either pole, or chasing the huge monsters of the deep from Chili to Japan, or penetrating the forbidden seas of the Celestial Empire, or urging his persevering way through the mazy throngs of the Thames or the Seine, is now, at this glad hour, either with upturned eyes gazing at the glorious stars and stripes which are floating proudly over him, or turning towards his father-land, with a swelling bosom and an outstretched arm, blessing God that amidst the debasing slavery which may surround him, he is an American freeman!

The day we celebrate is, in truth, our political Sabbath; and we shall be false to our principles, forgetful of our high destiny, unworthy of our fathers, and ungrateful to our God, when we *cease* to celebrate it.

And when it comes, and passes away like other days—when it comes, and no longer its glad morning is saluted by the thunder of artillery, and no more the merry peal is heard from the church-going bell in every sequestered village, and in every thronged city,—when no longer, on the return of this day, the eye of merry boyhood kindles with eager delight, and the cheek of mature manhood flushes with conscious joy and pride, and the whole people cease to assemble to narrate “the lofty deeds and daring

high" of those who made this day so memorable; then will this fair land have become a desert, or worse than that, it will have become the abode of the sycophant and the slave!

But, although the outward manifestations of joy, in all its forms, be the natural outpouring of the heart on this occasion, yet let us remember, that a just and dignified celebration of the great event we are called to commemorate begins but does not *end* with these. For on this day at least we are bound to remember, that the *sacred fire of freedom* is committed to us for safe keeping; other worshippers the bright eyed Goddess has had, but they have proved negligent, faithless, or treacherous. In other lands, fanes without number have been erected to her honor; but they are all destroyed or desecrated.

She turns her weeping eyes from Greece, as a parent does from her first born, who has become the prey of the spoiler. She looks in vain for consolation to the shores of Italy, where were once the flourishing republics of Florence and Pisa, of Genoa and Venice; but the heavy hand of Austrian oppression bars out her entrance from that, her once favorite domain. A bright but momentary flame once shot up from the midst of France, — fair France, the land of romance and chivalry, — and the whole world was illuminated with its lustre; but, alas! the mailed heel of military despotism soon crushed it into darkness, and the ashes about the overthrown altar are red and reeking with the blood of her votaries; and to the remote mountains of the Western world are her eyes turned now as to her

last, last hope ! Yes, hitherward are her eyes now turning, and those of her scattered followers throughout the globe have caught the direction, with joy and with hope, but with hope not unmingled with fear ; for even now her watchful ken has detected the presence of murky clouds, which lie low and dark about the horizon, betokening the coming tempest ; and she cries aloud to her faithful followers to arise, to gird up their loins, to be alert and vigilant, and to guard with tenfold caution the precious vestal flame, thus committed to their care, from *all* danger ; from the perfidy of professed *friends*, not less than from the assaults of avowed *enemies* !

Will ye hear the call ? Will ye obey the summons ?

My friends ! I have used the excited and impassioned language, in which the heart chooses to body forth its feelings on occasions like the present. But I mean to express only what I believe to be the naked truths of history, and the obvious lessons of experience ; and perhaps the plainest and simplest language, in which these truths can be uttered, will be the most impressive ; since then they will reach the understanding *first* and the *heart* afterwards ; and since what is said of beauty, may with equal force and aptness be applied to truth ; that she is, “ when unadorned, adorned the most.”

What I mean to say is, that our country is the only extensive one on the globe, in which the people have a perfect equality, and enjoy an entire freedom of thought, of speech, and of action, upon all subjects,

religious and political; that this freedom is enjoyed by means of an extremely complicated and nicely balanced form of government; that perpetual vigilance and a recurrence to first principles are necessary, in order to keep the checks and balances of this complicated machinery in proper condition; and that this watchfulness is at this moment more than ever necessary, since a disturbing force is now felt near the moving power, which must be rectified; or the whole machine will be disordered, and inextricable confusion, discord and ruin must follow.

And herein consists the chief value of this anniversary celebration, that, on a day set apart for the purpose, we may throw open the entire machinery of our complex form of government; examine its delicate frame-work from the king-post to every tie, mortise, and tenon; see whether by accident or decay, any part of it has become defective or deranged; and especially satisfy ourselves, whether those *operatives* of ours, whom we have placed in charge, are intelligent and skilful, honest, and devoted to our interests, or whether some of them are not careless, ignorant, or treacherous, who seek their own advantage rather than their masters'.

And let it be borne in mind, now and in all future time, that amidst the festivities of this joyous anniversary, some portion of its bright hours are pledged to the study of our political rights, duties, and obligations; to a consideration of those peculiarities in our origin, history, and condition, which make us "a peculiar people," favored of heaven, and envied on earth; and lastly, to a fair and can-

did, but faithful and searching, examination of the principles, conduct, and character of our public servants.

To aid you in the performance of this duty is, I conceive, in part to execute the honorable task this day assigned to me, and for the due completion of which I can promise no more than hearty endeavor and well meant exertion. I may fail to satisfy your expectations; but I think I shall not fail to convince you, that my own efforts to that end have not been wanting.

The origin of some of the celebrated nations of antiquity was so obscure, that their attempts to trace it were ineffectual, and at last it got to be a matter of pride and boasting, that they were either self-created or had sprung out of the earth.

We rejoice, on the contrary, that precisely the reverse of this state of things is true of *our* Republic, and are glad that we can trace our descent from the Anglo-Saxon stock, that clear and noble fountain, whence has flowed the purest blood of the civilized world; that race, whose boast it is, that it never could *exist* in a state of willing servitude; and that, penetrate ever so far into its history, and examine its manners and institutions as they are described by the Roman historians nearly eighteen hundred years ago, before they had issued from the forests of Germany, it will be found that our ancestors were then, as they have since continued to be, distinguished above *other* races, not less for their lion-hearted courage, than for their haughty independence, and undying and unquenchable love

of liberty. And although subsequently to their settlement in England, the Norman conqueror, after his decisive victory at Hastings, had seized the whole realm into his hands, and parcelled it out into military fiefs among his followers, and thus laid deep and strong the massive foundations of the feudal system, which frowned over the land, like one of those vast and sullen castles which it gave birth to ; and which, with its moats and drawbridge, its towers and dungeons, its arches and battlements, serving at once for palace, and fortress, and prison, did for a while overawe the souls of the oppressed people, and quelled for a time the spirit of liberty : yet that bold spirit was no willing captive, nor could blandishments seduce, nor chains and fetters subdue its stern determination to be again emancipated ; and the struggles of ages, and the outpouring of the best blood of England on the field, in the dungeon, and on the scaffold, attest the violence of the incessant contest, and the indomitable courage of the genius of public liberty.

At last the whole of that mighty institution gave way, under the reiterated attacks to which it was subjected. The moat that floated lazily round the dark walls is filled up, the useless drawbridge has fallen down, the inmost dungeon is exposed to the mid-day sun, the crumbled arch and buttress, and the fallen towers and battlements lie along the deserted court, and the feudal system is a vast and magnificent ruin, showing the depth of its foundations and the durability of its materials, and showing also the untiring valor and vigor of its assailants.

It surely is not among the least memorable sources of just pride to the nation, that it has sprung from the loins of such a stock ; that, in our genealogical tree, from the topmost branch to the trunk,—aye, to the very root,—no part of it is found infected with the rottenness of slavery ;—that, on the escutcheon of our national family, the bar-sinister, denoting any left-handed alliances with the enemies of liberty, is no where to be found amongst its quarterings.

And although we congratulate ourselves that the language in which Bacon thought, and Milton wrote, and Chatham bodied forth his spirit-stirring conceptions, is our own mother tongue ; although we have a right to boast, that we are tenants in common with all *Englishmen* of the military glory of Old England, from the time of William the conqueror to the death of the young hero who fell at the heights of Abraham ; yet do I consider it a matter more to be exulted in, that the men who signed the Declaration of American Independence are of the race and lineage of those noble barons, who extorted Magna Charta from King John at Runnymede ; that the men who settled the rocky shores of New England were the countrymen and comrades of Pym and Hampden, of Algernon Sidney and of William Lord Russell ; that the men who fought at Bunker's Hill and Saratoga, were the descendants of those stern Puritans, who won the battles of Marston Moor and of Naseby ; and finally that those dauntless Whigs who, in 1688, sent the second James a fugitive and a beggar to France, are of the same blood,

lineage, language and feelings, with those resolute Whigs of another hemisphere, who, in 1836, mean to send another usurper in disgrace to his “Hermitage.”

My friends, we have taken upon ourselves the name of that great political party, which has been celebrated for nearly two hundred years, for the earnestness, the perseverance,—nay, the obstinacy,—with which it has fought the battles of constitutional liberty in both hemispheres. It has never been seduced by the blandishments, nor intimidated by the menaces of executive power ; but it has manfully stood at the breach, battling, inch by inch, until it has driven its opponents from the entire field of action.

As a *party* name, it is full of meaning ; for to profess the principles of Whiggism, means to express a determination to prevent the aberrations, to resist the usurpations, and to guard against and to punish any and all abuses of Executive power ; for these, wherever the English language is spoken, are the fundamental and well known doctrines of that party.

And to suppose that executive power needs not to be watched with as much jealousy and as much vigilance in this Republic, as under any other form of government, is not only greatly to misapprehend the nature of our institutions, but also to manifest great ignorance of human nature, and a pitiable blindness to the teachings of experience in all ages and in all countries. For the records of history in all times evince, that the possession of power corrupts the heart

of man, and perverts his best intentions; and that, guard against it by whatever legislative enactments you will, throw up around it all the entrenchments of constitutional forms, which the most jealous ingenuity can suggest; yet if those entrenchments be not fortified, and if the sentinels of liberty be not sleepless at their posts, mad ambition will overleap or overturn all its barriers. And the history of passing events shows, that private rights and public liberty are more secure under a form of government with *no written* constitution, but where the people are jealous and vigilant in watching and guarding against the encroachments of executive power; than under one which has the best written constitution in the world, with all the checks and balances which political sagacity can devise, but where the people become indifferent, trust too much to their written forms, and too little to themselves, and sleep on in an overweening confidence in the virtue of their rulers.

Would the Whigs of Great Britain, for example, tamely look on and see their chief executive magistrate, by whatever name he is called, "with one fell swoop" displace every officer in the government, from the highest to the lowest, be his services or his qualifications, or his condition in life what they may, for no other crime than the independent exercise of his right of suffrage?

And yet your American President has done this, and done it under circumstances of all possible aggravation and injustice; for you have seen with your own eyes, and heard with your own ears, that no merit,

no official services civil or military, not honest poverty, not a constitution worn out in the exposure and fatigues of a frontier campaign, not even blood poured out like water in the sacred war for independence, could save the *victim*, if he refused to bow to Andrew Jackson,—nay, more,—if he refused to bow to the menials of his kitchen!

Would the people of England passively see *their* monarch “refuse his assent” to wholesome and necessary laws, enacted by their representatives for the undisputed benefit of the people, and not rise in their wrath, and send him to the Tower, or compel him to seek safety among the slaves of the continent?

And yet the American people have seen their President arm himself with the tremendous power of the Veto, and once, and again, and again, and yet again, reject the most wholesome, beneficial, and salutary laws, enacted by their National Legislature, and in the absence, and for the want of which their whole country is now bleeding at every pore, like an ox at the shambles, because the passage of those laws would have reflected honor upon, or would have gratified, or benefited his political opponents. And yet there are some, and those not a few, who fawn about the knees of the oppressor; and others there are, who can give no other reason for their blind security, for their stupid indifference, than that Andrew Jackson won the battle of New Orleans!

The very first cause of complaint set forth in that memorable instrument, which has just been read to you, against the King of England, the then chief

executive magistrate of the land, was “that he had refused his assent to laws the most wholesome and necessary for the public good,” in other words, that he had exercised his right to *veto* laws enacted by the legislative branches. Now if the Whigs of North America, in 1775, found that cause to be a sufficient one to justify an open resistance to the authority of the crown, to justify in fact a revolution and a dismemberment of the Empire, do not their descendants,—the Whigs of this day,—find in the precisely similar conduct of the present Executive, a sufficient reason to justify that peaceable, quiet, and constitutional revolution, which is effected by a resort to the ballot boxes?

The King of England enjoys the power of the veto, in an ampler and more unrestrained manner than the President of the United States; but the King of England has not dared to exercise that power for more than a century. His Ministers know that the passage from Westminster Hall to the Tower is but a short one, and that he or they would soon be obliged to measure it, if they should advise, or he should attempt, the arbitrary exercise of that power; and yet your monarch has, in the most arbitrary manner, exercised that power four times upon the most important occasions; and instead of rebuking him for his presumption, there are those who shoot off their salutes of a hundred guns to do him honor!

Would the people of England stand by, and quietly see their *Post Office Department* turned into a vast political machine, whereby to reward favor-

ites, to punish opponents, to corrupt the press, and to poison, pervert or stifle public opinion?

And yet what else is your Post Office Department proved to be, by facts and figures, by records and documents, which cannot lie, but one entire mass of fraud, bribery, corruption, and infamy?

And yet the *party press* is as silent as a muzzled bull-dog; unless when it is ordered to attack the able men who have exposed the iniquity, and then it is as clamorous as those hideous monsters, who of old guarded the gates of "Chaos and Ancient night" against all intrusion into their murky domain. Yes! the Post Master General of the United States has not only placed himself, as a most supple and pliant tool, in the hands of a base and mercenary faction, to reward and to punish according to their dictation; he has not only reduced this once flourishing department from a condition in which, according to the estimate of his accurate and indefatigable predecessor, it would soon have had a yearly surplus in its own treasury of half a million of dollars, to the verge of bankruptcy,—do I say to the *verge of bankruptcy*,—I mean into the very gulf of a *hopeless and helpless* insolvency; he has not only suffered his coffers to be entirely pillaged by political sharpers, who have fastened upon him with the voracity of the daughters of the horseleech, crying "Give, Give" until there is neither blood nor marrow *left* to give; but he has dared to take upon himself to exercise the highest act of sovereign power, to borrow money upon the credit of the national resources, to hire it *when* he pleased, of *whom* he

pleased, and at *what rate of interest* he pleased, without the least pretence of legal authority, and without *daring* or *deigning* to inform either branch of Congress of his unprecedented and unheard of proceedings.

And yet there are not wanting newspapers, which are filled with the most gross adulation of the Post Master General; there are not wanting honorable Senators of his own party, who privately admit his delinquency, but publicly endeavor to defend or to extenuate it; and finally, there is not wanting a party majority in your House of Representatives, the Grand Inquest of the Nation, which has held a session of unparalleled length in the very presence, in the actual sight and hearing of this evil, but which, from *fear* of the Executive *frown*, or from *hope* of the Executive *favor*, has not dared to look at this mass of wickedness, until it was dragged to light and exposed to their reluctant view by the co-ordinate branch of the Legislature.

Now I ask whether, in the better days of the republic, such things could have existed, without a universal burst of indignation? Whether under *either* of the preceding administrations of this government, such a Post Master General would not have been, for such misconduct, instantly impeached and instantly punished?

If so, I ask again if this do not prove the dangerously increasing power of the Executive branch? And if it do not prove, also, the *downward tendency* of both government and people; not only that the men who *administer* this government are *corrupt*,

but that the *people* who *sustain* them are *degenerate*?

It appears to me that we are losing sight of those old fashioned republican maxims of other days, once as familiar to us as household words, — that it is unsafe to repose great power in the hands of a single individual; and, therefore, that the Executive branch of the government is the one to be watched with the utmost vigilance and jealousy; and that we have quite forgotten that cardinal principle, that, in all governments pretending to be free, it is the *boast* as well as the *duty*, of the *legislative* branches, as the immediate representatives of the people, narrowly to watch, and promptly to proclaim, and boldly to rebuke, each incipient encroachment of executive power.

And if you will turn to the proceedings of our legislative assemblies in the early days of the Revolution, you will find that in those favorite Halls of Liberty, the tocsin of liberty was sounded first and loudest; that in the admirable state-papers issued from them to an astonished world, the attempted inroads of power were first detected and denounced, with Roman dignity, and Grecian eloquence, but with a spirit and sagacity all their own; and that it was from their masterly reasonings, and their impassioned and spirit stirring declamations, that the heat and blaze of freedom were first enkindled, and thence flashed fast and far over the land, lighting up every glen and valley, every hillside and mountain. But in modern times the very opposite doctrine is advanced, and is imperceptibly receiving

a most extensive and alarming countenance. The new expounders of our Constitution would upset the well proportioned pyramid of constitutional liberty, and replace it with its base upward, resting on the apex; for now-a-days we are taught that the Executive is to be indulged and trusted to any extent he may desire, without let or hindrance or molestation; the Executive now regards himself, and speaks of himself "as the immediate representative of the people," although by the theory of the Constitution he is chosen by colleges of electors, and the people immediately have nothing to do with his election; and the Executive now dares to corrupt the presiding officer of one branch of your National Legislature, and to chide and rebuke the other, as the oldest monarch of the Stewart dynasty did the British House of Commons in his day, or as Oliver Cromwell did, when, with sanctimonious gravity, he dissolved the Long Parliament, or at a still later day, as Napoleon Bonaparte did, when his grenadiers drove out the Council of Ancients at the point of the bayonet. Yes! because the Senate of the United States saw the Executive, without authority of law, grasping the treasure of the nation, and scattering it over the land, into the custody and for the benefit of private petty corporations; when in order to do this, he had to act in opposition to the advice of half the members of his cabinet, and that half the most able and experienced portion of it; and when he had further to prostrate that officer of the government, into whose care, *independent of the Executive*, the custody of the public money was given with jealous caution; when in

view of this enormous usurpation and abuse of power, the Senate, by an unusual majority, passed a solemn resolution, that the President had exercised unlawful power, in derogation of the Constitution and laws of the land; what then was the course of the Executive and of his partisans? Why, the President instantly sends to the Senate a most extraordinary and insulting message, in which he denies to that branch of the National Legislature the right, or the power, to pass any such resolutions; he insolently rebukes the Senators for their interference, as a pedagogue would scold his refractory pupils; and, not content with thus bullying the Senate, and denying their just authority, he goes on and asserts new and unheard of powers; he claims the exclusive possession and control of the public moneys, and arrogates to himself the right of *original* executive power, entirely independent of the Constitution, as *left by it* and not *derived from it*, but coming from some new and mysterious source, either *in* the clouds or *beyond* the clouds, and which resembles the exploded doctrines of legitimacy and the divine right of kings, more than anything else to which I can compare it. Such was the course of your democratic republican President; asserting doctrines which, in the most palmy days of Federalism, I hesitate not to say, would have filled with astonishment and disgust the most high toned federalist that ever lived, and in the instant and unqualified condemnation of which, Fisher Ames, Timothy Pickering, and Alexander Hamilton would not have been one whit behind John Randolph, Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson.

Has not the time arrived, then, when it is indispensable that you, the intelligent freemen of this land, if you would preserve that liberty, to obtain which your ancestors exchanged the comforts of civilized life, for a life of toil, and hardship, and danger in these remote and then rugged regions, and to sustain which your fathers perilled their lives and fortunes, should arouse yourselves, and calmly and steadfastly examine the condition in which you are placed? That you should ascertain the nature of your grievances, and ascertain, also, the best remedy which the nature of the case admits for those grievances; and then that you should apply that remedy, even if it should go to the plucking out a right eye, or the cutting off a right hand? The evil is, that the executive branch is encroaching, with giant strides, upon the rightful powers of all the other departments of the government; with the appalling prospect, that, if not arrested in its career, it will engross to itself the powers which of right belong to all the other departments, and thus will entirely mar the beautiful harmony of our system; impairing private rights, destroying public liberty, and converting this Republic, from a government of law, under which our rights, both public and private, are clearly defined, and our remedies for the infraction of those rights are known and respected, to a government, under which both rights and remedies are dependent upon the caprices of an individual.

My friends! the picture here delivered is no "fancy's sketch." The grievances which we have felt, and the evils which we fear, are no phantoms

of the imagination, which will vanish like the hideous images of a troubled dream. No! the past exhibits them as sad but fearful realities, and the darkening sky and the lowering horizon and the muttering thunder, warn us as to the gloomy probabilities of the future!

Let us for a moment, as becomes men of sense, cast a hasty glance athwart the political sky; let us review the past, that we may the better judge as to the future; let us face the danger, and coolly contemplate the nature of our troubles, that we may better know how to escape or to surmount them.

In some legislative assembly, just after the adoption of the Constitution, when the great and untried powers of the President of the United States were under discussion, some person adverted to the undefined power of *removal from office*, and remarked that, by possibility, the President might exercise that power injuriously and remove honest men from office because they were politically hostile to him.

JAMES MADISON, to whom, Hamilton alone excepted, we are indebted more than to any other individual for the formation and adoption of the Constitution, and who, in construing and defining its powers and in the administration of the government created by it, has had more to do than any other individual whatever, the amiable, the virtuous, and irreproachable James Madison was then present, and what reply did he make to the suggestion? Why, that for any such acts of political proscription, for any such arbitrary exercise of power, *that President would deserve to be impeached!*—

So sacred did *he* consider the freedom of opinion in a free government, and so impossible did he consider it, that any person entrusted by the people with the high powers of a chief magistrate, would abuse those powers, for the sake of coercing that sacred right. And yet what a spectacle did this country for the first time for forty years witness, within sixty days after the inauguration of Andrew Jackson? Was not every office vacated, from the door-keepers of your custom-houses to the highest cabinet ministers, where there was a favorite to be rewarded, or an honest political opponent punished!

The transactions of that brief period, if they are ever faithfully chronicled, will form the blackest page in the history of free governments; for it will be a tissue of the most malignant and tyrannical acts ever perpetrated under color of law and tolerated by a free people!

Contemplate for an instant the conduct of the Executive towards *the Bank of the United States*, an institution established by Congress, and confessedly of great national importance. Not content with the immense patronage conferred by the army, the navy, the custom-house, and the post-office, the creatures of the Executive attempted to control that of the Bank. They were answered by its high minded officers, that the Bank was not a political institution and should not be used for any political purposes; and instantly a war of extermination was declared, which for violence and vindictiveness surpasses all experience. I will not occupy your time by a detail of the particular events in this

modern crusade ; it is sufficient to say that the officers of the Bank have been assailed in their public and private characters, in every possible manner ; their acts have been misstated, and their motives misrepresented ; innocent things have been stigmatized, and acts of plain duty to their constituents have been tortured into criminal offences. An Act, passed by great majorities in both branches of the National Legislature, to renew the institution, was instantly negatived, and finally the public money deposited in its vaults for safe keeping, and for the use of which it had paid a large sum, has been, for purely vindictive purposes, and in a most arbitrary and unconstitutional manner, wrested from its possession and lent to private corporations ! Thus carrying into effect, no matter at what expense of the public faith, no matter at what violation of private rights, no matter at what sacrifice of credit and property, and no matter how entirely the whole currency and business of the country are deranged and destroyed, the great and only principle hitherto adhered to by this administration, and the most dangerous one ever introduced into a free government, that, to reward political favorites and to punish political opponents, is the first duty of the Executive. My friends ! the pretence for all this was, that the Bank had used its power for political purposes ; but what school boy does not know, that the Bank was “punished” because it would not pervert its extensive patronage, and its high and delicate powers for the advancement of the political designs of this administration ! There is not a shadow of doubt in the mind

of any intelligent and well informed man, that this Bank would long ago have been re-chartered, if it had lent itself, in any degree, to the uses of the demagogues who now control the government.

Time would fail me, if I were to point out all the executive acts equally deserving of your censure. Amongst those which stand in bold relief, is the inconsistent and contradictory tenor of the opinions as to the powers of the national government, advanced by the President, first to Georgia, and afterwards to South Carolina ; giving birth to the monster nullification, by the *first* set of opinions, and then, frightened at the hideous features of his own offspring, slaying it by the *second*.

The rejection of the bill to provide for the equitable and beneficial distribution of the public lands, for pretended constitutional objections ; as if the author of the Protest to the Senate could have *any* constitutional scruples, and when his obvious motives were to deprive a political rival of the fame and credit of that great measure ; his repeated evasions and infractions of the constitutional powers of the Senate ; his pretence of original executive power above and beyond the Constitution ; his claim to the unlimited possession and control of the public money ; and finally, his sweeping, overwhelming declaration that he will construe the Constitution as he *pretends* to understand it, and not as it has been declared by the constituted authorities of the nation, evince the same disposition.

My friends, are these things so? That they are I appeal to the understanding and the conscience of

every person present. If they are, is it not manifest that, by the usurpations of the present Executive, your Constitution has been invaded and that your rights and your liberties are in danger? And if they are, I trust I need appeal to no other considerations to induce you to solemn thought, to instant, to vigilant, and to continued action, until you have in a constitutional manner applied the proper remedy.

If other considerations were wanting, I would appeal to all the associations connected with this glorious day; to the memory of the martyrs of the Revolution; of those noble minded, self-devoting statesmen and heroes, who toiled and bled to achieve that constitutional liberty of which you are *unworthy*, if you *undervalue* it; to the manes of the sainted Washington, of whom alone it can be said that he “was first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen,” and to whose memory it is *profanation* to say, that there has been “a *second* Washington.” To the memory of the gallant, the generous, the chivalrous Lafayette, the oldest and the favorite child of Washington, who, in the first blush of early manhood, left home and the delights of youthful love, and the enjoyments of his liberal estates and patrician family, and gave himself up and his fortune and his prospects, to the support of your cause — the cause of man, of liberty, and of equal rights — when that cause was most forlorn and desperate, when the sky was darkest, and Heaven itself seemed to frown upon us angrily; and putting aside the offerings of ambition — and to no man were they ever so splendid or so tempting —

devoted his well spent life to the advancement of the same great cause in another hemisphere, and who has now gone, as we humbly trust, to enjoy in the presence and company of Washington, the bliss which follows the just made perfect.

But I am well satisfied that this appeal is not called for ; that you need no other excitement to generous unremitting exertion, than to know that the power which you have entrusted to your rulers has been *misapplied*, that your Constitution has been infringed, and that your liberties are in jeopardy. You desire to know only the surest remedy for these grievances, and I am confident you will faithfully apply it, at whatever sacrifice.

Now the seeds of the disorder which are eating into the vitals of our social system are to be found in the corruptions of the press, and the arts of unprincipled demagogues, which together have poisoned and perverted *public opinion*.

If PUBLIC OPINION be set right, there must soon be an end to all corruption, to all usurpation, to all errors in the administration of the government ; for it is under the overshadowing wing of a false and fleeting popularity, that all these deeds of darkness, of violence, and of corruption, have been committed, which now make our wide land a scene of disorder, of suffering, and of lamentation.

To correct, to inform, and to enlighten public opinion, is the duty of every citizen of this country, who believes that Andrew Jackson has usurped unconstitutional power, has invaded private rights, and is pursuing a course of measures, calculated to bring

ruin upon individuals, and discredit upon the community.

In order to bring about this healthy action in public opinion, no means must be left untried, no appeals unattempted, to the reason, to the passions, to the national pride, to the patriotism, and to the self-interest, even, of all with whom we have to do; for all these principles may be called into action, and by a remarkable coincidence, will each and all of them, co-operate in effecting the same result; an entire change in the men by whom, and in the principles, or rather the want of principles, on which your government is now administered.

Upon you then, my fellow citizens, and upon each one of you, rests a solemn responsibility, a duty which you owe to yourselves and to your posterity, to your country, and to your God! A duty which you cannot *innocently* neglect, and which you cannot negligently perform. As to the manner in which it is to be performed, everything depends upon the particular circumstances of each individual. Every man has something to do, and every man must do *something*. It is a war in which neutrality is treason. There is no man so elevated in our community, as to be beyond the hearing of this call; there is no man so humble as to be below the reach of this invocation.

All I can say is, that *action* is wanted; not musing upon your wrongs, not meditating merely upon grievances, private or national — but action,

constant, daily, united, unremitted action, directed to this point—to correct, to inform, to enlighten public sentiment. Without it defeat is inevitable, and the “gloom” which now overshadows the land will become thick darkness. With it success is certain, and that “gloom” will be converted into “light and glory.”