

A N
O R A T I O N ;

DELIVERED IN TRINITY-CHURCH,

I N

N E W P O R T,

ON THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1801.

By WILLIAM HUNTER, Esq.

Corpora magnanimo satis est prostrasse Leoni,
Pugna suum finem, quum jacet hostis, habet. OVID.

—:~:—
The Diffusion of Information, and Arraignment of all Abuses,
at the Bar of the public Reason.

President Jefferson's Speech.

—:~:—
“ I wish sincerely, that your good Example, in endeavouring to bring the People of these United States more acquainted with the Laws and Principles of their Government, was followed.—They only require a proper Understanding of them, to judge rightly on all great National Questions ; but, unfortunately, infinite more Pains is taken to blind them, by one Description of Men, than there is to open their Eyes by the other ; which, in my Opinion, is the Source of most of the Evils we labour under.”

Gen. WASHINGTON'S Letter to Judge ABBISON,
dated 4th March, 1799.

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Mercury—1801.

At a Meeting of the State Society of CINCINNATI,
July 4th, 1861,

R E S O L V E D,

T H A T *the thanks of this Society be presented to WILLIAM HUNTER, Esq. for the O R A T I O N, this Day delivered, on the Anniversary of American Independence; and that Col. Henry Sherburne, Col. Ephraim Bowen, with the Secretary, wait on Mr. Hunter, and request him to furnish the Society with a Copy for Publication.*

Extract from the Minutes :

ROBERT ROGERS, Sec'ry.

TO THE
SOCIETY OF CINCINNATI,
OF THE
STATE OF RHODE-ISLAND.

THIS
ORATION,

PRONOUNCED AND PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS,

WITH SENTIMENTS OF HIGH RESPECT,

INSCRIBED BY THEIR OBEDIENT HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.



A N

ORATION.



FELLOW-CITIZENS,

WHEN, it is considered, under what peculiar circumstances, I have been induced to accept, the share assigned me, in the celebration of this day,—I hope and I believe, affectation will not be imputed to me.—When I declare, I never rose, in any assembly, with more unfeigned diffidence and apprehensive embarrassment.—The request of the Society of the Cincinnati, came to me, so late, as to preclude any idea of formal or elaborate preparation; but it came likewise recommended by such marks of honorable confidence, accompanied by such friendly promises of indulgence for imperfection, and apology for error, and so enforced by the peculiar interest, that society have in the glory of this day—that I felt myself obliged not to disobey so urgent and so respectable an invitation.—I feel too further encouraged, when I recollect, that I have to address you, on a subject on which research is not only unnecessary but useless. When I speak of the acquisition of our Independence, of the charms of freedom, of the invaluable blessings of a Constitution uniting liberty with order, of a wise ad-
ministration

ministration contriving good, and diffusing benefits—I have but to utter, in the prompt and unmediated language of the moment, the instinctive sentiments of my own heart, the invincible opinions of my own understanding. And I shall find those feelings and opinions accorded to by you with corresponding harmony, with anticipated conviction and zealous co-operation.

WE all know, this day is consecrated as the sabbath of freedom, the festival of reason, the jubilee of our independence; that it commemorates, one of the few revolutions, whose object was the universal good, in which the prize obtained was as valuable as the blood that was shed, in which the chiefs were actuated by pure, and disinterested motives, and the people contended on sound and rational principles, for their legitimate rights and inherited liberties. In strictness, perhaps it was no revolution.—It was a natural separation, effected in the fullness of time, of the larger country, from the less.—The child was of age, and chose no longer to labour under the legal disabilities of infancy, much less under harsh parental oppression, but determined to exercise the just and legal prerogatives of manhood.—At the period, when our differences began, the ablest minister the annals of any country can boast, had taught Britain her strength, and made Europe tremble at it. Our mother Country was then proud in glory, flushed with conquest, and elate with the joys of successful power. But her situation was rather splendid, than prosperous, and her victories while they exhausted her resources, had stimulated her avarice. The compact with the Colonies, was never accurately defined, and until this period when it was conceived they might minister to the necessities of the State, their importance was never duly appreciated. The right arrogated by Britain, amounted in substance, to that of taking all our property without our consent. The assertion of this principle, even
before

before it was accompanied with an attempt to enforce it, was sufficient to rouse the attention and resistance of this country.—This resistance emanated from that unconquerable spirit of freedom we had derived from our ancestors.—The nurse of great thoughts and magnanimous intentions, a spirit that stimulated by a virtuous jealousy, had enlarged and elevated our conceptions—and in the language of Milton had, like the influence of Heaven, rarified and enlightened our minds.—We knew, we admired, we loved, the constitution of our mother country, the principles of her common law, the essential and fundamental maxims of her liberties.—The spirit excited here was the same that in the previous century had there opposed loans, benevolences, and ship-money, and as Chatham has expressed it, called all England on its legs, and by the bill of rights vindicated the British constitution. Our revolution did not commence in a struggle to repel an immediate aggression. We were not hurried into resistance by the sting of immediate oppression.—We anticipated the evil, and judged of the pressure of the grievance, by the badness of the principle.—And as it has been well said, we augured mis-government at a distance—and snufft the approach of tyranny in every tainted-gale. We soon perceived, that Great-Britain was estranged from her natural affections, and alienated from her most endeared emotions, that with a bosom friendship soured into unappeasable hatred, she no longer smiled upon us with parental fondness, but under the pretence of protection, oppressed us with afflictive exactions.—We refused her specious bounties when she had infused poison into their fountain. When she treated us with neglect we did not reproach her, when she governed us by affection, we rejoiced in and acknowledged her superintending authority. But when she causelessly and cruelly changed her conduct, withdrew her affections, infringed our charters, and violated the compact of connexion,

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we withdrew our allegiance. It was long, however, before we could expel from our bosoms our old attachments—our honest and hereditary prejudices.—We lingered around the mansion of our fathers, we fled from it with reluctant disobedience.—We were not impelled by mere love of change: we were convinced that nothing but the most imperious necessity could justify resistance.—We fondly, varied, and renewed our attempts at reconciliation.—We appealed to the justice of the parliament, and invoked the mercy of the people.—We quoted their own laws; we claimed the benefit of their own constitution. We pathetically supplicated the kindred spirit of English liberty—the guardian of our mutual happiness, and the impartial defender of our common cause.—But, in British counsels, “madness ruled the hour;” England would have forced us to drink the cup of humiliation to the very dregs—and have compelled us to unconditional submission.—But Americans; taking counsel from their courage, nobly resolved to hazard all—to seek freedom through years of toil, and seas of blood. But, how was this revolution conducted? compared to many which preceded, and one which has followed it;—it presented the calm and quiet of regulated society—it was a singular phenomenon, a civil war waged with mildness, a revolution conducted with order. There have been too many attempts of late, to defend our revolution, upon wrong principles—to attribute to its first movers wrong motives, and to force a strained analogy between our *revolution*, and the French *subversion*.

BUT in proportion as we are proud of the American character, we ought to resist this attempt, and repel this Accusation.—We invented no new principles—“we moved within definite limits for a definite object.”—Our right was grounded on law, as to its existence not denied by the whole nation against whom we contended.

And

And as to its correct application, acknowledged by the most enlightened and respectable portion of that nation.—It was law—in support of which its ablest pens and most eloquent tongues had been exercised, and its greatest spirits had acted and suffered. Our object was to have the benefits of that acknowledged law.—Our war was not one of ambition or aggrandizement, but of justice and necessity.—We were economical of blood, and conducted our unhappy but inevitable contest, as rational and accountable beings. Those wild, delusive, fascinating, but fantastic theories of liberty and equality, the offspring of modern times were never adopted by us, much less furiously propagated.

THESE principles, so rapid in their movements, so terrible in their perversion, so fatally destructive in their consequences, were ill suited to our notions of safe, orderly and practicable freedom.

NOTWITHSTANDING it has been declared by the author of the Declaration of Independence, “that all men are created equal,” yet this to us, was not a dangerous novelty, because though badly expressed, it was rightly understood.

In the eye of municipal law equality is a sacred principle, which only tyranny and injustice will violate, it is the ground-work of mutual safety, and the basis of all judicial decision. According to its precepts, opulence can claim no preference, rank no pre-eminence.

BUT equality, in its new sense, as a political truth discovered by metaphysical subtilty, we never have here acknowledged. However specious or even sublime in theory, we know the impossibility of ascertaining its limits, and its consequent liability to abuse in practice.* IT

* For a copious illustration of this subject, and the source of these reflections, the reader is referred to a work of superior merit, “A prospect of the relations which subsist between the French Republic, and the Helvetic Body,” written in French by a Swiss and a Republican-Colonel Weiss, member of the Council of Berne.

IF it be true, that all mankind are created equal—and if it is a logical deduction from this position, that every one is entitled to the same rights—and if this is adopted, as a universal maxim—Why do the Southern States, exclude from the exercise of every right their Negroes, forming the largest portion of their population?—Why do we, in this State, insist on certain qualifications, to bestow the right of suffrage?—Why do all the States, and all the world, exclude the other sex from all share in government? They are the fairest, the most amiable, and in general not the least intelligent part of mankind.—The truth is (whatever may be pretended to the contrary) utility and expediency are the only vital principles of good government—a slave, and those like slaves, who are extremely dependent, extremely ignorant, extremely indigent, and fiercely barbarous, ought to be excluded from all share in government.—For a very contrary reason, among others, ought the fair-sex to be excluded;—interesting, fascinating, with power to direct us at their will, and exercise a despotic sway over our affections; once admitted, they could command every suffrage, and engross a complete monopoly of power.—The rise, and fall of Empires, the fate of nations, would depend on the grace of person, or the beauty of features, on the lustre of an eye, or the contour of a bosom.

Look at nature, she no where presents the image of equality. Her operations and productions are infinitely diversified. Her stupendous whole is bound together, by a concatenated series of gradations and inequalities, as with that

“ Golden, everlasting chain,

“ Whose strong embrace, holds heaven, and earth, and main.”

DESTROY these gradations and inequalities and you violate the law, invert the plan, and annihilate the system of nature.—And as it has been happily illustrated.—Lower but the summits of the mountains and level the surface of

of the earth, and from that moment there will be no longer vallies or rivers, circulation or vegetation, there can remain no medium either an universal aridity or one general inuudation will prevail. In none of her productions is nature more diversified and unequal than in that of man.—Shall we compare the trifler or if you please the man of ordinary talents who gazes at the dashing of the waves, or amuses himself with the beauty and variety of the shells on the shore, to NEWTON who comprehending the cause of that immensely sublime object the ocean that lay before them, revolves in his mighty mind the theory of tides and the powers of attraction—and is led by the contemplation of “Natures work up to Natures God.”

IN the moral world, let but the scythe of equality, mow down to one level, all the gradations and elevations of society, what a dull and uninteresting flat, would present itself.—With nothing, above him, to what could man aspire? Where would be activity and industry? Where the spirit of emulation? Where the proud distinctions of virtue? The generous remunerations of merit?—I dwell the longer, on this chimerical notion, for though the illustration of its formidable consequences is obvious, and its refutation is easy—yet propagated, by sects and philosphists, with insidious industry, and decorated with the splendid colours of eloquence—it has in reality been the cause of the delusion of thousands, of the murder and miseries of millions. Vaguely defined, erroneously understood, the multitude have deemed it, a certificate of right, permitting them to seize by violence, all that the wisdom of States had hitherto withheld, a passport authorizing plunder and destruction.—It has begotten a state of warfare, of the poor against the rich;—of the citizens, against those whom they have appointed to represent and controul them.—It infallibly weakens subordination, infringes order; violates peace, endangers security, disturbs property, and annihilates all the sources of public prosperity and harmony.

In our revolution, we contended not for an abstract and metaphysical liberty founded on this equality for like other mere abstractions, we knew it was not to be found.—We did not with the ax of a vandal, level in a moment, what taste, industry and refinement had been ages in erecting.—Unlike, the revolutionists in France, the rights of man did not constitute with us, a plea, for the destruction of the rights of citizens.—We did not use the sovereignty of the people, as a pretext for the subversion of civil society, the extinction of morality, and the overthrow of religion.—We interfered not with the concerns of other nations, we did not arrogate to ourselves a right to dictate constitutions, or drive powerless but unoffending nations under the yoke of our domination.—True patriotism animated, real injuries inflamed our spirits; we fought for our country, our altars, our homes — not, impelled by wild ambition for fame, for plunder, or extended power.—We set up no constitution, as the paragon of perfection, and the model of imitation.—As the idol, before which all the nations of the earth, were to fall down and worship—under the penalty of being cast into the burning fiery furnace of our displeasure. No State has marked with terror the progress of our armies, spreading desolation.—No State has had to mourn, in repentance and affliction, the incumbrance of our friendship. We did not imitate the crafty cruelty of the ancient Tyrant, who having allured his victims to embrace, as if in sport, the beautiful but lifeless statue of a Venus, found a dagger spring from her bosom, and pierce them to the heart. In what, then, does this pretended similarity of the French revolution to ours consist?—Is it because they threw down the mild monarchy of Louis, to make way for the despotism of Bonaparte?—Is it because they have erected the immense pyramid of their power, upon the ruin of empires, with the bones of whole nations, and cemented it with the

blood

blood of millions?—Do we find this resemblance in an expiring commerce, in a discouraged agriculture and annihilated manufactures?—Is it, because we borrowed the aid of revolutionary tribunals, sanctioned murder by law, and encouraged assassination by legislative bounties?—Is it in the idiot ridicule of all religion, and boasting professions of mad impiety?—In the adoration of a statue of liberty, bespattered with blood from the contiguous guillotine?—In the before unheard of worship of a harlot, tricked out as the goddess of reason, in a gorgeous drapery, so thin and adhesive as to heighten, by affecting to conceal her meretricious charms, to stimulate, instead of suppressing unauthorised desire. Has any man here, been bold enough, with his eyes looking abroad on nature, seeing the power of God, declared in all his works, from the moss that creeps round the rock, to the sun that blazes in the heavens, in full day, with the reproaching light of that sun, darting on his head, has any man here been bold enough to deny his existence, to spurn his mercy, to deride his power?—The French revolution was a comet, not one of those that Milton, has described, “shaking, from his horrid hair, pestilence and war, and with the fear of change, perplexing Monarchs,” for the imagination of Milton, whom we have hitherto been taught to estimate, “as no plagiary from any thing human, but whose lips we can believe, to have been touched, by seraphim with hallowed fire from the altar of heaven,” his imagination even, was not bold and wild enough to realize any analogy of a French Revolution.—It was, in reality such a comet in the moral world, as the fears of astronomers, have predicted is at some fatal period to annihilate the natural;—whose prodigious bulk, bursting with accelerated velocity, into a wild eccentric orbit, and fed with flaming fires, is to destroy all the laws of attraction, and break down all the balances of nature;—interfering with

our earth, the obedient ocean must overwhelm us, or whirled round in ceaseless agitation, we must be absorbed in its fiery bosom. Our revolution, founded on mild, ancient, and allowed principles, presents to the mind's eye, a brilliant planet, which though it formed from the beginning one of the balances in the great order of nature, though it had rolled for ages in unbounded space, "the bosom of its God," and was kindled into being, when the highest said let there be light, yet, unseen by mortal eye, unknown to mortal calculation, it suddenly glittered in the front of heaven, shedding light, and life, and joy.—But it appeared in pursuance of the regular, steady and eternal laws of nature, in completion of the irrevocable decree of infinite knowledge and omniscient power, like the star in the East, the herald of good, the harbinger of felicity. Away with this pretended analogy! How is it, that delusion has so long and powerfully operated, that thousands have taken pride, in what, if true, would have been disgrace, and derived an imaginary consolation, from a copious source of affliction.

But perhaps, they will idly declare this resemblance, is exhibited in the similar *result* of the two revolutions.—Are we then to degrade our free and happy constitution, with the constitution *perhaps* existing in France. Listen to the uncoloured description of this government, by the ablest statesman of our own country "Behold a consul, for ten years, elected, not by the people, but by a conservatory senate, self-created, and self-continued.—One branch for fourteen, the other for ten years.—One branch with a right to debate the law proposed by the consul, but not to propose.—Another branch, with a right, neither to debate nor propose, but merely to assent or dissent, leaving to the people, nothing more than the phantom of representation, or the useless privilege, of designating one tenth of their whole mass, as candidates indiscriminately for the offices of the state, according to the option
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of a conservatory senate,—Behold ! in this magic lantern of republicanism, the odious form of real despotism, garnished and defended, by the bayonets of more than five hundred thousand men, in disciplined array.”†

Our excellent constitution founded on the true principles of liberty, accommodates itself to the nature of man, and unites with that liberty, restraint. National happiness, with the permanent security of that happiness, is its ultimate and beneficent object; to this end all other objects, must be considered only as means; even freedom itself, is valuable only, as a means indispensably necessary to that end. I will not say our constitution is perfect, but it is the only one which, formed by the deliberations of wisdom, has been voluntarily adopted, without tumult—without a suspicion of improper influence by a great and intelligent nation. But I do say, let it in substance be perpetual. Speculative men may deem it an imperfection, that, in spite of the careful attention to its construction, and the attempt at nicely poizing and adjusting its balances, there still remains a power in perhaps a single large State, ‡ to retard or defeat the operations of
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† *Hamilton.*

‡ *No State has hitherto appeared to be more convinced than ours of the necessity of adhering to the constitution unaltered and unimpaired. No answer from any of the States to the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions, was more manly, decided and federal than ours.*

The same aversion to change was held up in our answer to the resolutions from the State of Vermont. It evinces in most unequivocal language our attachment to federalism, and contains a distinct panegyric on the administrations both of Washington and Adams. Our Legislature appeared to be apprehensive of the engrossing policy of the large states, and of Virginia in particular; and in the the last answer it enlarged on the duties and interests of the small states. These answers passed without opposition.

How is it to be accounted for that the politics of some men, then as well as now high in office, are so materially changed. In their official capacities and under official responsibilities, they sanctioned with their names and votes these answers?—The last answer was adopted unanimously so late as June 1800. Why is it that under the unpropitious auspices

the whole.—Our experience, has taught us to apprehend, that at some unfortunate moment, a large state, by resolutely pulling herself back, or hastily throwing herself forward, may snap the ligaments of the union, or draw the power of the whole, concentrated into herself. Some, too querulously perhaps, have deemed it an imperfection in our constitution, that we are not allowed to enjoy for more than four years, in a retreat from contest, the delicious calm of public tranquility. They may suppose this too great a stimulus, to the warring prejudices and passions of mankind.—And that the consequent existence of parties, with their alternate triumphs and defeats, does not afford, a prospect of progressive improvement, from the permanency of any administration.—They say, our constitution promises, and has hitherto realized of blessings, the rich and luxuriant harvest of tropick climates—yet like those climates, we are perhaps sentenced to endure in periodical returns, the calamity of a hurricane, which may shatter the fair fabric of our felicity, spread around us extensive and mournful desolation, and with its frequently attendant earthquake, throw down the pillars, and shake the foundations of society. It certainly is an imperfection in our
 constitution

ambassadors of the same men we have been suddenly drawn, into the vortex of Virginian party? Was their former conduct artful, dissembling and fraudulent; or have they suddenly unlearned their former opinions, and repented of what they now deem their former errors; or do they adopt and reject by turns, any system of politics, federal or anti-federal, as it suits their purpose?—Are they patriots of steady minds and undeviating principles, or have they adhered to any plan of policy, but that of obtaining office, enlarging patronage, and securing emolument?—Surely those who formerly acted with them in apparent coincidence of opinion have a right to demand an answer to these questions. Candid answers explicitly given might too, in the present state of parties have the best effect. These answers would perhaps constitute an ample apology for their inconsistencies, and convince us that what has the appearance of indefensible treachery and tergiversation is frank, honorable, and patriotic repentance.

constitution arising though from the limited powers of the human mind, that it has not precision of language adequate to the difficult task of defining the diversified powers of our various and interfering authorities, and that justice, crushed to pieces, by the collision of conflicting jurisdictions, will frequently be deplored, as the weeping and bloody victim, of this inevitable deficiency.—But still, I would exclaim with the ancient barons, “*malumus mutari.*” Let us resist innovation, and beware of pretended improvements, however speciously proposed, in this age of rash adventure, and heedless experiment.—The chaste ionic structure of our constitution, admits not the corinthian capital of nobility, and a crown would be a brilliant burden, an incongruous excrescence, which the eye of legitimate taste would disapprove, and the virtuous, and indignant disapprobation of our country destroy. Yet slander, “more cruel than the sword,” has imputed to some of the best characters of our country, the very framers of this constitution, whom one would naturally suppose to be fond of their own work, and who by their actions have shown the most confirmed and partial affection for it—it has attributed to them, the strange and chimerical notion of introducing monarchy and aristocracy. And this calumny was propagated by artful ambition, and caught at by stupid credulity when these characters were in the dutiful administration of their regular authorities, under a constitution they had sworn to support, that guarantees a republican form of government, that excludes stars, titles, ribbands, and all the absurd gew gaws of artificial pre-eminence, and defines with unexampled precision, the form of election, the duration and extent of the powers of its executive.—We have too much reason to believe, that these artful and dangerous calumnies, were meant merely as a cover to dark designs, and unwarrantable intentions,—the mere **st**uff and straw of a party, versed in stratagems, burnt to
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raise a smoke to cover their advance, to the attack of the best depository of our rights, the most sacred citadel of our freedom.—Suspected of sacrilegious plunder they raised the first cry. It is in vain, to pretend otherwise, there are men in our country who hate its constitution, and chiefly because, having broken down the Oligarchies, previously existing in many of the states, it has taken away the means of their dangerous pre-eminence, and raised a mound against which, their enraged ambition beats in vain. They were a formidable band who opposed it in its commencement, who retarded it in its progress, and who have systematically clogged the wheels of its administration.—The evidence on this point is too strong to be resisted. This party, at the period of the formation of the constitution, in an exorbitant style of gloomy prediction, described it, as a monster, which unchained upon the people, would mark its steps in their blood, and devour as its accustomed diet, their rights and privileges. This hatred, if it existed in language or in imagination only, would have been harmless and transient, but their conduct affords proofs that it was originally sincere, and that it remains unaltered. The amendments to the constitution, are too unimportant, and on points too insignificant, to have reconciled them to a system they detested.

If this party had objected only, to particular plans of administration, and sometimes approved others, we might have supposed it upright in its intentions and honest in pursuits.—But it has indiscriminately condemned every thing, impeached every person, as much under the administration of Washington as of Adams.—Its || publications, have been pointed, against the constitution.—
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|| See in particular among other numerous publications, *Priestly's Letters*.—*Callender's works*.—*The Times* a periodical paper of Virginia.—*The Letter to Mazzie*, and an address of one Wortman of New-York, on the accession of Mr. Jefferson to the Presidency, &c. &c.

They have frequently, made aukward, and forced comparisons of it, with the things, which in France have been called constitutions—so many of which have appeared, in the course of the last ten years, only to disappear.—The dangerous theories, the crude philosophy, the raw metaphysics and the false rights of men, so utterly inconsistent, with the rational, steady, and sober principles of our constitution, have been openly, and avowedly approved.—The particular object of their hostility, is the Senate.—They wish to strike out, this bright and best proportioned feature, which reflects a grace, upon the whole of our constitution. They wish to give us, a fabric of government; which, supported only at its two extremities, will fall in at the first pressure of calamity, and pull down society along with it.—They disapprove, likewise of the unity of our executive power.—They have even praised, that five-headed monster an executive directory, and recommended it for imitation. Let us for a moment, recollect the character, of that despotism. Jealous of each other's power, darkly plotting mutual destruction, wearing secret armour in their very cabinets, afraid each one, of the machinations of the other, but more afraid of honest public indignation, they retired from the public view, and secluded in splendid palaces, endeavoured to drown care and conscience, in tumultuous riot and revelry. They took however with cautious dread the mantling bowl, in fear that even-handed justice had dropt her poison there; and shuddered as they received the embraces of illicit love, in fear that some *other* Charlotte Corday, animated with heroic courage and stung to madness, by her own and country's wrongs, would sheath in their bosoms the dagger they deserved.—Like the savage Domitian, as described by Pliny, †† never issuing from the dark den of their retirement, but to lap human gore—to riot in the

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†† See Plin. Panegyric. Trojan sect. 48.

destruction of the worthy and illustrious, and to put in execution the mischiefs they had been brooding over in darkness—never issuing from their solitude, but to spread the solitude of Death.—This is not an exaggerated picture.—Bonaparte, when he felled the Hydra, related its history, and all France re-echoed assent and applause.—How is it possible that there are any so rash, as to be willing to encounter the desperate chance, of realizing these scenes in this happy country?—No, let us hover round the holy ark of our constitution, borne as it is on the shoulders of the people, and may that hand be withered, that is held out even to touch it unlawfully.—May that constitution, still roll in its natural and regular orbit, and remain like the great machine of the world, unworn in its parts, unimpaired in its beauty, unwearied and undisturbed in its motions.

LET us never forget our freedom depends on our ancient principles, our pure manners, our native institutions, our beloved religion. Let us not transplant to our soil, and engraft upon the stock of our liberty, any bastard exotic.—Though it may glow with rich luxuriance, glitter with golden blossoms of promise, and allure with apparently delicious fruit—yet it will enclose particles of rapid poison, and the people that eat thereof will surely die. Let us not be precipitated again, into the abyss of chaos and anarchy.—Let us still reverence and preserve the institutions, which the wisdom of our forefathers has provided. They have erected, as the triumphal trophy of their conquest over barbarism—and of their establishment of civil society, a well-constructed bridge.—It rests on the three grand arches, of property, of marriage and religion.—Over this we may pass to the enjoyment of peace, security and happiness. Godwin the high-priest of jacobinism, with all the train of petty philosophers, who form as it were a band of sappers and miners, for the French camp, have wielded against these primary principles all their
weapons

weapons of dextrous sophistry, and directed against them all their arts of covert attack.**—Property, the basis of civil society, they reprobate as an odious monopoly, which they hope the raging of their “tempestuous sea of liberty,” may overwhelm.—Marriage, and its attendant charities of life, conjugal affection, filial piety, parental fondness, fraternal endearments, they deem, as so many impediments, to what, in their dialect, is termed the perfectability of man.—Religion (I speak of it only as the spring of popular government, and as it is politically beneficial; of its higher attributes I am unworthy and unable to speak) religion,—a principle inborn and instinctive, in the human heart, so effective of good, so productive of felicity;—that principle, which restrains while it consoles the poor, which abases the pride, while it declares the duties of the rich, powerfully impressing as it does, the lesson of christian equality,—That, the father of the universe, looks with an eye, of equal beneficence, on the whole family of mankind.—Religion the balm of wounded minds, the refuge of misfortune, whose gentle hand slopes the path of declining age, and smooths the bed of death

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death

** *Examine Godwin: first London Edition, page 788 book 8 chapter 1, where he exclaims against property as the cause of all the abuses of society, and proposes a ready principle for its equalization. To whom says he does it belong?—He answers, to him who wants it.*

He proposes an equal distribution, page 799, page 833.

Religion, page 797—He says we ought to lay aside, as intended only for children in understanding, and contemplate the nature and principles of things.

Page 849—he says “The institution of marriage is a system of fraud”—page 850 “Marriage is a law, and the worst of all laws. An affair of property and the worst of all properties.—The abolition of marriage will be attended with no evils.”—&c. &c.

And yet this book has passed through several editions in this country—and a new edition is now advertised at Washington, supported it is said by high—very high patronage.—It is even taught as a school book in some of the academies of Virginia. May the theories of a Cæsarotus not lead to the practices of a Robespierre!!!

death—which beams from Heaven the radiations of hope, softened through the medium of mercy, even on the heads of the wretched and the guilty.—This Religion, the philophists, the fabricators of recent revolutions, ridicule, afflict and persecute, and have confederated their exertions to banish it from the earth.

WHILE the Sun of Christianity enlightens and beautifies the Universe, like owls and bats, they fly with envious discontent, from his splendour, and chuse to flutter in the dismal twilight of doubt and ignorance.—Or “hail this Glorious Sun, to tell him only how they hate his beams.”

BUT I turn with pleasure from the pursuit of so dreary a subject, from the path of darkness and blood, where wander the misguided victims of delusion, to brighter scenes and fairer prospects.—I feel my spirit refreshed, and as it were sustained, by the consoling idea, that there *are* characters, deserving of praise.—That jacobinism has not yet exiled from the world, all rationality honor, and virtue.

IN addressing the respectable Society of the CINCINNATI, I distinguish a group of worthies who, animated by the principles, of rational liberty, have fought, bled and suffered. for their country.—And have acquired, for it, the glorious prize, of liberty and independence.—I distinguish a society founded on the principles of honor and beneficence.—Friendship their means and benevolence their object.

GENTLEMEN,

OUR country is indebted to you in an endless debt of gratitude.—Not that oppressive load of obligation, which weighs down the heart—but that delightful gratitude, which “owing, owes not, but still pays, at once indebted and discharged.”—You are those, who engaged in the con-

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test we now commemorate with early ardour and honorable enthusiasm—who did not count the tremulations of the beam, to know on which side the balance of fortune would incline. You stepped forth the champions of your country—you were successful—but, unlike the armies of Cæsar, of Cromwell, and of Bonaparte, you did not abuse the affections of your countrymen; and, in the warmth of their admiration, cheat them of their liberties—You claimed no exclusive glory—no permanent pre-eminence—you preserved an erect integrity, an un sullied honour.—After eight years of toil, varied only by the vicissitudes of danger and distress—With impaired constitutions—With fortunes reduced in your country's service—With just claims, which an exhausted country could not satisfy, your army separated—Many, too many, not to return to their comforts, and their homes—but “forced to beg their bread, through climes their valour won.”—You lingered not in arms, but laid your sword, yet wet with the blood of victory, at the feet of the civil authorities of your country. You staid but to take an affectionate leave of your fellow-soldiers and turning from their tears, hurried into an unambitious retirement.—This forbearance was magnanimous—this scene unparalleled. But you are richly repaid. What is so noble a reward, as the sense of conscious rectitude?—The voice of five millions of people, who acknowledge you their benefactors, must sound in your ears as soft as the music of the Spheres, as sweet as the harpings of the angelic host.

Oh! that every picture I have to present you with, was decorated like this with the golden rays of joy, but I feel my mind filled with those

“Thoughts which musing pity, pays;
“And fond remembrance loves to raise.”

YOUR father has gone to heaven!—WASHINGTON,

a character that stands unrivalled on the lists of true glory—a name, that, inscribed by the hand of gratitude, in characters of light, on the pillar of eternity, shall defy the assaults of envy and of time, and triumph over oblivion!

This loss is indeed irretrievable.—Some part of this day ought to be consecrated to sorrow. I now Gentlemen, contemplate you as a band of brothers, who penetrated with sacred sorrow and sympathy—still cherish, with an endeared remembrance, the virtues of your parent,—It is not in nature to expect, that those strong and primary emotions, that early and instinctive burst of sensibility, which spreading from man to man, from village to village, from city, to city, touched every heart, in their progress, and softened a whole nation into tears, could endure forever.—But there is a woe, deep, as well as copious, that does not soon exhaust itself; a patient and enduring sorrow, that does not hastily solicit relief, that delights to retain the impressions of sadness, and loves to linger with its tears.

“ Tho’ every coarser stem of forest birth,
 “ Throws with the morning beam its dews to earth;
 “ Ne’er does the gentle ROSE, revive so soon,
 “ But bath’d in nature’s tears, it droops till noon.”

I contemplate you as those, who, anxious for your country’s good, and apprehensive of its future destiny, meditate deeply, again and again, upon its most afflictive calamity.—And deriving your only consolation from the precepts of wisdom, know, that you cannot otherwise diminish its effect, but by infusing into your minds his patriotic principles; and by an imitation, in your lives, of the private goodness of him, whose loss you deplore.

FELLOW-CITIZENS,

I have ventured to depart a little from the beaten track of this day’s theme.—Impressed with the magnani-

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mous sentiment of our first Congress—who said, to the English nation, We will hold you, as the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends.—I have not mis-spent your time, and abused your patience, in inflaming national antipathy—in gathering round your hearts the malignities of our nature—and fixing there the chilling froit of callous and inveterate hatred.—We conquered.—In noble natures, success inspires generosity.—Towards a fallen foe, it springs up the first sentiment of magnanimity. Our religion sanctions and strengthens this sentiment; and enjoins, as a duty, *forgiveness of injuries*.—The very savage, when war is ended, buries the hatchet: he invites his former foes to the feast of friendship—They smoke the Calumet of peace together—They renew and brighten the chain of amity.—Though the blood of his kindred has flowed, he awakes not to the remembrance of the past; he expresses himself in untutored eloquence, and, using the images which the scenes around him afford, he hopes their friendship may spread, like the waters of the Lake;—may flourish, like the trees of the forest;—may endure, as long as the Stars of Heaven;—may endure, until they are called, by the Great Spirit, to his imaginary Heaven, behind the Hills,—and there forget, in *his* extatic bounties,—all earthly toils, all human cares.—The encouragement of national antipathy, is a policy fatal indeed for this country. As the world is situated, with nation opposed to nation, and confederacy rising up against confederacy, if we have hatred for one, we must have affection for the other.—The just and reasonable requests of one will be refused, their fair privileges resisted, while every thing the other *commands*, will be blindly or dastardly conceded. The attempt at establishing this policy is an insult upon the good sense of this country. Our merit cannot be augmented, by the degradation of *any other nation*. Let us compare our relative situation,
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and without vanity we may say we are a great nation. We ought not to suffer ourselves to be entangled in the intrigues of any. Let us attend to plans of improvement at home, instead of looking abroad for points of controversy.—We have space enough, for the exercise of our best affections; ample objects, worthy of our tenderest care. Attend to the Legacy of Washington—support those maxims of administration he pursued, and his successor adhered to.—You all recollect the effects of that administration, soon after the adoption of the Constitution—how, as if by the effect of miraculous power, order sprung out of chaos, and light out of darkness. You were without credit abroad, without union at home. Want of confidence had ruined commerce, and public credit had not even an existence or name. As far as our eye could reach, our wintry prospects were obscured by storms, and bounded by impenetrable frosts. Yet on a sudden, like the instantaneous effects of spring in northern climates, fertilizing streams of wealth, issuing from the fountain of public credit, flowed through this country, just before sad and silent with distress, but now resounding with the busy hum of joyful men.—These streams turned round again—the wheel of commerce, and awakened to motion and life, its various and complicated machinery. Inspired agriculture with the force and rapidity of vernal vegetation, every-where diffused the charms of creative cultivation, and the earth smiled with the bountiful exuberance of nature.

WE all must allow, the maxims of administration then pursued, by our civic Father Washington, were the result of wisdom, ability, and virtue. We will do our nation justice; it conceived itself to be, as it really was, the most fortunate nation on earth. And while it proudly challenged the comparison, it gratefully acknowledged the cause. And why has this delightful scene existed for so short a period? Why, when the government

government continued to communicate benefits, did the people cease to reciprocate gratitude? It was because foreign influence, calling to its assistance the most amiable propensities of our nature, and appealing to the generous but mistaken notion of national gratitude, interfered in our Councils; and, under the semblance of kindness, administered potent, foreign drugs, to stimulate all the peccant humours, and petty discontents of our country. Ever since the appearance of Genet, a party has existed, organized and disciplined, extended in a connected line throughout the Continent, that has watched with ceaseless jealousy every movement, and opposed with undistinguishing hostility every measure of the Federal administration.—And yet that administration, beset with innumerable evils and difficulties, has contended successfully with all.—Two insurrections fomented by that party, were suppressed, without bloodshed; a wise and dignified neutrality was adopted, and two foreign wars avoided without dishonour.—Under that administration our prosperity has been uninterruptedly progressive, our agriculture has reached the summit of the Appalachian hills, and our commerce, deposits on our shores, the luxuries of China, the furs of Kamtschatka, the fabrics of Bengal, and the silver of Mexico. Do you need undeniable proofs of the assertion, that this administration has been prosperous and happy; take them not from any one who has born a part in it, or who has regarded it with steady, and undeviating friendship. That man, certainly illustrious, who has overthrown that administration, and who is now seated at the helm of affairs—President Jefferson himself, has pronounced its most splendid panegyric, in a speech valuable, to be sure as a model of literary elegance, but doubly valuable as he has verified this important political fact. He informs us that the government of this country is in “the full tide of successful experiment.”—Who made this experiment?—Who conducted this government. Washington and Adams.

In this early and generous recantation of past error, accompanied by promises of encouragement to commerce, of "sacred preservation of the public faith," "and of the general government in its whole constitutional vigor," you must acknowledge the voluntary adoption of the principles of the federal administration, and you must with pride and pleasure hear this strain of spontaneous admiration burst from its most able and successful adversary; "We are all Federalists."—Let us then with sincerity support this administration, commencing with such splendid promises, and such happy auspices. We have an unquestionable assurance of justice and impartiality, an indemnity from the fatal effects of party triumph.—We have reiterated promises of "equal and exact justice to all men," of "whatever religious or political persuasion."—We have the pledged honor of our first magistrate, that he will "restore to social intercourse, that harmony and affection, without which, Liberty and even Life itself, are but dreary things." Never unmindful of these promises, and of his honor, he will falsify all the predictions of evil, the effusions of our patriotic, but too apprehensive zeal. Merely because his predecessor appointed, he will not remove meritorious and honorable men, whose conduct is blameless, whose characters are irreproachable. Disdaining the gratification of ignoble resentment, he never, in the spirit of miserable quibbling will take advantage of a clerical error, to interfere in a department, placed by the meaning of the Constitution beyond his reach. Aloof from all party predilections, earnestly solicitous to reunite public opinion, he will firmly resist the eager selfishness of his dependants. He will remind them of their boasted purity of principle, their noble disinterestedness of motive. He will declare to them, your zeal for me, was attachment to what you deemed the cause of liberty.—In my person that cause has obtained a triumph, and in that triumph you have your reward.

HE never will forfeit all claim to public esteem, or so insult the native talents of his countrymen, (talents he so ably defended against the sneers of European authors) † as to appoint to the most important office in his gift a *Foreigner*.

To his solicitations he will answer with firmness and dignity. You may sir, forgetful of your own, have reasoned yourself into a cold and philosophic preference for this country.—But this is not sufficient for our security, our interests require the strong ties, ‡ the early sympathies, and even the prejudices of native attachment.—Tis true you are armed with formidable talents, but their whole energy has been exercised in opposition to that government, that has not only hospitably afforded you protection, but has forgiven your crimes,* and extended towards you unexampled clemency. I acknowledge my personal obligations to you. But elevated to this high station, equally by the prudent patriotism of my opponents, as the ardent approbation of my friends, I must take a commanding view of my duty, and with my mind purified from the mists of passion, raised by the heat of party contest, with a judgment unobscured by prepossession, I must consult the safety and the happiness of the whole community. I reluctantly encounter the reproach of personal ingratitude,—I regret the unhappy and compulsive necessity of a refusal, but my duty, my honor, my promises, and above all, the PUBLIC GOOD require it.

Such are the enlarged and liberalized ideas of this eminent man. Such will be his ingenuous and magnani-

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† See notes on the State of Virginia, p. 110, Stockdale's Ed. London, 1788.

‡ See notes on Virginia, p. 141.

* Albert Gallatin, a Citizen of Geneva, thought it prudent to take the benefit of an Amnesty, offered by the clemency of President Washington, to the Insurgents, in the first Insurrection in Pennsylvania in 1794.

mous policy. These are his unsolicited promises, as explained by the unforced construction of his memorable Speech. If this policy be pursued—if these promises be realized, the sentiments of federalists towards this administration will not be those merely of cold allegiance, but of animated affection. The tears of more than one half our nation, excited by what they deemed the disastrous event of Mr. Jefferson's elevation to the Presidency, will fall not the effusion of disappointment, but the tribute of reconciliation and of love.

“ As gracious signs of sweet remorse,

“ And pious awe, that fear'd to have offended.”

BUT yet citizens of the State of Rhode-Island, you must guard against deception.—Still adhere to your ancient policy, beware of cunning, treachery and hypocrisy, they are the friendly coadjutors of jacobinism, they are leagued in unhallowed friendship to uphold it.—They teach a man to bend to the occasion, like the osier to the breeze. In specious language, in deceptive phrase, in smoothness of eloquence, and even in scriptural quotations, they profess whatsoever things are good, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, †† merely with more artifice to delude, merely with the hope of violating with impunity all promises and all professions. On one day, in one situation, they allow a man to speak of atheism, with indecent levity, “ it neither breaks his legs nor picks his pockets,” †† on the next day, upon another occasion, with the air of a Monk of the Inquisition, emerging from his cell, with gravity of deportment, severity of aspect, and solemnity of phrase, he devoutly prays you may be preserved, by ** God in his holy keeping.

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†† See Mr. Jefferson's answer to the committee that announced to him his election.

†† See Notes on Virginia, page 265.

** See the President's answer to the address from the legislature of Rhode-Island.

THE Federalists, must remain true to themselves, they must rally round the standard of their country's good.— They must be unremitting in their efforts, to refute the principles, detect the fallhoods, and expose the misrepresentations, of their unprincipled adversaries. They must pour instruction on the public mind, they must, by the pen, and the tongue, enlighten the people.

WE must attack the enemy on the heights.—If there be a man, as some have ventured to suggest, who has held himself in power beyond the ordinary term of hereditary monarchs, by unworthy compliances, by the subterfuges of cunning, the arts of intrigue, by ambiguous calumnies, whispered in the dark, to destroy the characters of our best men.—Surely as good citizens you must know your duty—Examine cautiously, judge with candor, and a hope of seeing innocence and integrity established, but above all things do examine, and if the result proves these suggestions to be truths, act with a firmness a constancy, a resolution, worthy of Freemen.

CITIZENS OF NEWPORT,

ATTEND to your interests.—By an expression of the public will, which as such we are bound to respect, you have lately changed your councils. But recollect “the will of the majority to be right, must be reasonable.”

WHAT is the consequence of this change?—Without an increase, and with circumstances indicative of a diminution of your former opulence, you have had an increased burden of taxation imposed upon you. The decision of this important question was so feebly (I will not say treacherously) managed, that you had hardly a voice in it. But I forbear.—No detail of local grievances should damp the pleasures of this day.—And I must hasten to a conclusion.

Not however without again soliciting your indulgent candor, towards this address, so unworthy of the occasion,

sion, composed at a hasty notice in the intervals of professional duty, scarcely moulded into shape, much less polished into elegance.—And what above all I regret not condensed into conciseness. Let the honorable invitation, the pressure of the occasion, the glory of the day, an ardent wish, and a humble hope of doing good, plead the extenuation of my errors, and forgiveness of my faults.—Blame me not, if I have ventured the attempt at this interesting crisis of public affairs, to arouse the public mind from the dangerous apathy which oppresses it.—If I have thrown a pebble, which I hope may undulate its surface, into the dull and stagnant lake of public opinion.—If I have spoken truths with some boldness—the times require it.—If any object to me, that I have done this with unwarrantable boldness.—I answer that in a free country, I have spoken the dictates of my feelings, the suggestions of my understanding.—I know who will object, and I am not ambitious to avoid their censure. If I may be allowed to use the language, while I feel, the sentiment of a great statesman, I would further answer,—that “the heat that offended them is the ardor of conviction, and that zeal for the service of my country, which neither hope nor fear shall influence me to suppress.”

F I N I S.