

AN
ORATION,

DELIVERED AT PAWLET,

FOR THE

FOURTH OF JULY, 1807.

BY CHAUNCY LANGDON.

"Virtue

"Is the only aramanthine flower on earth."

POWPER.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENT.

SALEM: 2. H. ?

PRINTED BY BODD AND RUMSEY.—1807.

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TO THE COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENT OF
PAWLET.

GENTLEMEN,

YOUR request of a copy of my oration for publication, is a respectable testimonial of your approbation. Many of the orations, delivered on similar occasions, have been calculated to tickle the ear, and to flatter and extol the conduct of one party; and by approbrious epithets misapplied, to wound and irritate the feelings of others. These, I have avoided as far as I could without sacrificing the fundamental principles of all free governments, and those which operate for the good of community, and the preservation of rational liberty. If I have erred relative to principle or fact, let the public on a candid and fair examination, correct them; if they are true and just, let every one adopt and practice them, without regard to names, or political distinctions.

The celebration of the day ought ever to be performed with union, and harmony, or be omitted. Your example, and the union, order and regularity, which prevailed, in so large an audience, is worthy of the imitation of all men, and redound to the honor of the town and vicinities.

The appearance and performance of your military, were highly pleasing, and deserve the thanks of the public; and are a laudable example to every town in the state.

Some paragraphs offered for publication, were omitted on delivery to abbreviate the length. Some extracts from Washington's addresses, and relative sentiments, are substantially contained in a former publication of mine; yet from their purity of sentiment, they cannot be too often repeated and impressed on every citizen.

The publication of the performance will expose its imperfections and me to censure, but I hope that candor and charity still exist in the public mind.

I am, Gentlemen, with due respect,
Your humble servant,

CHAUNCY LANGDON.

CASTLETON, July, 1807.

AN.
ORATION.

FRIENDS AND AUDITORS,

THE compliance of your request is an undertaking pleasing in its nature, yet arduous and hazardous in its performance. Pleasing, to bring to our recollection the glorious day of our national birth—when the arm of LIBERTY burst asunder the bands of tyranny—and the still, small voice of FREEDOM shook the throne of despotism to its centre.—Arduous; in that it is not in the power of man to please and satisfy all. Hazardous; since different political opinions, views, names and professions have pervaded the body politic, created strong prejudices against the views and actions of the best of men; engendered a party spirit, which weakens the tender cords of our union: threatens our peace and happiness; and, if blown into a flame, will eventually destroy our political existence. On this auspicious day, let us throw aside prejudice and the spirit of party, and all unite, as brethren of the same family, in love and harmony, to celebrate the important event:—and rejoice together, with one common joy, that we were not stifled at our birth, but as a nation have become great, vigorous and happy. Let us rejoice that the SPARK OF LIBERTY, struck from off the altar of FREEDOM, warmed the patriotic breasts of our fathers to emulate each other in virtue, and in the defence of our common country. “When there was no eye to pity, or created arm to save,” *they dared to be free!*—and relied on the arm of the LORD GOD OF HOSTS to shield and to save them in the day of battle.

GREAT-BRITAIN had long extended her parental arms to protect her rising colonies. They leaned on her breast, as on the breast of their beloved; and she derived great benefits and advantages from them.

HER commerce was carried on in every part of the world. It reached both the Indies; and the wilds of Africa were the objects of her inhuman traffic. The savages of the wil-

dernefs hunted down the beasts of the forest, to carry on with her a bartering intercourse. The fish of the sea had no peace in their native element : and the whales could not sport in safety between the tropics ; and vainly hid themselves beneath the polar circles. She became rich, and her coffers overflowed. Her power was great, and many nations in Europe, Asia and Africa trembled at her feet. Exulting in her strength, she vainly said, *I sit among the seas as queen of nations !—I will extend my power and deck myself with glory !* She vainly thought herself omnipotent ; and that none would dare resist her will !—And she as vainly arrogated to herself unlimited power over these young and flourishing colonies. Through the pride of her heart she forgot her legitimate and tender offspring. She forgot that her true descendents were born with the love of liberty interwoven in the ligaments of their hearts. She assumed the right to tax us, in all cases whatever, without our consent. Our fathers boldly resisted the attempt :—and heroically resolved to risk “their lives, their fortunes, their honour” and all that is dear to man, in the defence of their sacred rights. Like faithful centinels they stood at their posts to cheer, to guide and to save.

GREAT-BRITAIN maddened at the magnanimity of our fathers, looked with contempt on their opposition, and sought to crush them at a blow.

THE Atlantic groans beneath her fleets. Ships of war hover round our coasts. The jetty hulks pour forth upon us armed troops, thirsting for blood and eager to enrich themselves with plunder. “Hordes of Hessian slaves long accustomed to rapine, fire and slaughter” arrive, and begin the work of death !—They spread over our land like a pestilential cloud, ready to stifle all opposition, and blast all hope ! “In the day of battle,” it may be truly said, that “there was neither sword nor spear found in the hands of any of the people.”

BLACK despair gathered thick around us, and accumulating destruction was ready to burst over our heads !—In the dark night of adversity, our fathers and some who yet live, stood, like rocks in the midst of the tempestuous ocean, firm and undaunted, without one cheering ray of light to dispel the gloom, or of hope to support the despairing mind. Tho’

in dismay yet they fainted not. Though few in number, yet they relied on the justness of their cause and declared themselves A FREE AND INDEPENDENT NATION!

PATRIOTIC ardor filled every soul, and inspired every breast with courage to meet the unnatural foe!..... But who can be found so great, and patriotic, as to soar above the most alluring temptations, and scorn the loss of property, life and honor, and lead the uncertain strife?..... Our country trembled at the dilemma!..... Injured innocence called aloud!.... Washington heard her voice!

*“ Unspeakably serene,
“ His conscious soul smil'd o'er the dreadful scene.”*

Indignation glowed in his countenance. His soul rose superior to danger, and “ he deemed it glorious to die for” his “ country.”

OUR fathers and many who hear me this day, whose heads are honored with baldness or grey hairs, flocked to the standard of liberty, and rallied around the man, “ whose head has been a senate, and his arm an host!”—The American eagle hovered over the heroic band; and the God of armies was their shield and protector in the hour of danger. Like the band of Leonides, they fought, they bled, and they conquered.

THE acknowledgment of our independence cut the gordian knot. Peace returned to smile on the desolated fields; and joy beamed in every eye.—The mighty chief beheld the glorious change, and rejoiced with his brethren in arms, giving public thanks to ALMIGHTY GOD, “ for all his mercies.”

THE grey-headed veteran—the war-worn soldier crippled with wounds, or covered with scars, are assembled together for the last time.—They mourn the heroic fall of their brethren in arms.—Sympathetic tears steal down each martial cheek!—and the stout heart, which feared no danger, is melted into the feelings of parting lovers!

THE saviour of his country, like an anxious and tender parent, earnestly recommended to all, “ that with a strong attachment to the union, they should carry with them into civil society, the most conciliatory dispositions: And that they should prove themselves not less virtuous and useful as citizens, than they had been victorious as soldiers. And

be fully persuaded that the private virtues of economy, prudence and industry are not less amiable and meritorious in civil life, than the more splendid qualities of valor perseverance and enterprise are in the field." Wishing them the "best of heaven's blessings here, and hereafter."

THE curtain of a painful separation was then drawn, and closed the glorious drama of those military achievements, which ended in the establishment of our independence, and of erecting a government on the broad basis of virtue and rational freedom.

SEE the same illustrious chief, clothed with honor and glory! unbounded in confidence amid the shouts of his adoring countrymen!—bending under the weight of his merited laurels, appear before that august body of sages in Congress assembled, to resign his commission! How sublime the scene! when he, who commanded the hearts of every American arose, and claimed the indulgence of retiring from the service of his country, to the humble walks of private life!!!

MINDFUL of the finger of God, and having reviewed the momentous contest, he said, "I consider it my indispensable duty to close this last act of my official life, by commending the interest of our dearest country to the protection of Almighty God, and those who have the superintendence of them, to his holy keeping.

"HAVING now finished the work assigned me, I retire from the great theatre of action, and bidding an affectionate farewell to this august body, under whose orders I have so long acted, I here offer my commission, and take my leave of all the employments of public life."

HE had saved his country, and he sought no more. He wished not the splendor of a crown, or the pageantry of a court. He desired no greater reward for his unexampled services, than to enjoy in private life, the sweets of peace with dignity, and "*to light up a smile on the aspect of woe.*"

WHO can but admire the sublimity and purity of his virtues? How worthy the imitation of all men! Though his virtues and patriotism astonished the world;—yet the one half of them were not then known.

How unlike, was he, and his co-patriots, to the victorious Caesar, or the fortunate Bonaparte, who seized imperial crowns, as the vile reward of their services;—and riot-

ed on the spoils and miseries of millions, to gratify their pride and ambition !

THE effect of peace soon discovered that the old confederation was not sufficient to secure the objects of government and answer the views of the people. It was only a compact, "intending to form a perfect union of the states, to establish justice, to ensure the tranquility and to provide for the security of the nation." It was never intended to establish courts of distributive justice among individuals, but national justice among the states. It was an *union in name* without the power of securing it against the jarring interests of the different states, and the intrigues of designing men. It had power to recommend, not to command obedience to the resolutions of Congress.

THE framers of the old confederation were deceived by that love of country, and patriotic enthusiasm which actuated them ; and by that sublime virtue which was universally displayed by the whole body of the people in the hour of danger. Then, advice was law, and every citizen, friendly to the American revolution was emulous to serve and save his country, and to make the most illustrious sacrifices for her good. ILLUSTRIOUS MEN ! I venerate your virtue, and respect your memory. It is dear to every American !— "It is as the dew of Hermon, that descend upon the mountains of Zion : for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore."

THEY forgot, that revolutionary virtue is not always lasting ; and will not always descend to posterity. They therefore framed a system of government, better adopted to patriots and heroes, than to the mass of mankind, who live in the ordinary state of society, in time of peace. They did not contemplate the infinite diversity of interests, and various opinions in so extensive a country ; and they did not truly calculate "on the various springs of human action, moved by ten thousand wheels," so as to give them proper forces and tendencies, to produce and secure the greatest good.

UNDER this system, the states were divided, selfish unequal in their aids of the general government, and dilatory. Some were becoming formidable to others. Tribute was levied for years, by some states, on their sister states, under

the name of impost. In others, iniquity was sanctioned by law, and reduced to a system. Creditors were treated as outlaws. Bankrupts were armed with legal authority, to defraud and enrich themselves out of the ruin of their honest creditors. Discontent, divisions and jealousies naturally arose, and paralyzed the arm of the general and state governments. The want of public and private faith sickened commerce, and infected the vital part of civil society. The supreme council of the nation had only power to recommend to citizens their duty ; and then supplicate their reluctant, jealous, partial, slow and parsimonious aids. This threw the whole burthen of public expence, on some of the states who were least able to bear it.

“ AMERICA resembled a giant paralyzed,” laid on his back, begging subsistence of his selfish, jealous and divided children. We had liberty ; but we dreaded its abuse more than its loss. Experience, the great instructress of men and nations, was “ brandishing in her school a whip of scorpions, with which she often teaches her summary and awful lessons by the wounds and scars of adversity.” Multitudes are to be taught, not by reason, wisdom or fear ; but by suffering.

THREE seperate empires were projected, and began to be circulated by many. Libertinism began to raise its snaky head : national credit failed. The crippled soldier could realize and obtain no other satisfaction for his services, than

“ *To shoulder his crutch,*

“ *And straightway talk of battles he had won !*”

OUR peace and union hung by a thread ; and factions, at home and abroad, were preparing their tools to cut it. Party spirit and anarchy began to stalk around, and threaten to overthrow the tottering government, and rend asunder the TEMPLE OF FREEDOM !

THIS awful crisis demanded the united wisdom, and influence of all good men :—And, blessed be God ! that Washington then lived ; and that good men were sought after, and enough were found, to frame and unite in our present happy constitution, with the exception of some alterations.

IN spite of family aristocracies, which already existed in some of the states ; from which it took away an improper use of power and influence ; and therefore they became its dead-

ly opposers, under the name of anti-federalists :— In spite of the pointed opposition of some of the large and commercial states ; from which it took away an unequal source of revenue, which they unjustly collected from their sister states : In spite of vice, which it restrained ; therefore its implacable enemy ; and in spite of intrigue, party spirit, anarchy, the influence of powerful men, the ambitious projects and sordid speculations of many, to the honor, peace and prosperity of every true American, it was immediately adopted by a majority of the states, and the others soon followed.

THE monarchies of Europe saw, with pleasure, the old confederation sinking into an early tomb ; but now they beheld the new republic rise from the dust, and exhibit to the astonished world, the strength, vigor, beauty, stature and proportion of a young giant awoke from sleep.

By the organization of our government, guided by the plastic hand, and wise councils of the immortal Washington, order sprang out of confusion, and political light out of chaotic darkness. Public and private credit were reanimated ; commerce flourished, and was extended to the ends of the earth. The hand of industry became active, and all enjoyed the fruits of their labors. Roads were made and improved in every direction. Canals were opened and rivers united, to facilitate commerce. The earth doubled her increase under the cheerful toils of the husbandman ; “and the wilderness blossomed as the rose !”

WHILE the despots of Europe and Asia drain their empires by force, to raise one splendid capital, and people it with inactive slaves, to display their power and grandeur ; LIBERTY can build a thousand cities ; enrich them by industry ; people them with heroic freemen ; and surround them with fruitful gardens and cultivated fields.

THE empire of despots resembles Nebuchadnezzar's image, whose golden head is supported by legs of iron, and feet of iron and clay : A well regulated republic resembles the human body, where life, health and strength, beauty, action and majesty appear in just proportion and symmetry in every part.

OUR constitution contains an admirable balance of power to protect rational liberty, and the rights of men ; and give energy to its operations. It rests on the free election

of the people, directly or indirectly in all its departments : and therefore, it must be supported by our union, our virtue* and our attachment, to secure our happiness and protect our rights. Says an eminent statesman, " Each state is calculated to maintain and promote the interest and felicity of its own citizens : The general government protects and defends the whole."

As the heart diffuses the vital principles of life and vigor through every part of the natural body, so the Federal Government, well administered, will impart the vital principles of rational liberty, protection and national happiness, thro' every member of the body politic.

Economy, virtue and incorruptible integrity, in rulers, and in the people, are indispensibly necessary, and are the only preservatives of the vital principles of our government : And it becomes us, as a nation and as individuals, to watch and guard them, as the apple of our eyes.

By the adoption of our constitution, our country has one more invaluable chance, to enjoy union, freedom and happiness. And God grant, that we may long enjoy the rich blessing, and not loose it, by the pursuit of party spirit, and party principles ; by falling a prey to intrigue and corruption ; and becoming the willing dupes of demagogues, and foreign influence.

*" Oh ! that estates, degrees and offices,
 " Were not derived corruptly !—that clear honor
 " Were purchased by the merit of the wearer !
 " How many then be covered, that stand bare,
 " How many be commanded, that command !
 " How much corruption would then be glean'd
 " From the true seed of honor ! How much honor
 " Pick'd from the chaff and ruin of the times,
 " To be new varnished ?"*

MEN and brethren, by this review of principal events, we may learn to justly estimate the blessings we enjoy ; and may we cherish the fair inheritance as a prize of infinite value. Permit me, therefore, as a faithful sentinel, whose youthful days were freely spent in the fatigue and service of

* I have been informed that a man high in office, in his oration on this day, advanced as a principle, " that virtue was not an essential requisite to make a good republican."

his country, until health and constitution failed him, this day, to candidly warn you of some of the dangers and evils which naturally await our government; and concisely point out the means of avoiding them. In this, I would not offend any one; but consult your own good; and cultivate “that spirit which is pure, peaceable, easy to be intreated, void of partiality, and full of good works.”

OUR government was formed in wisdom by the hand of virtue. Through a just and wise administration the people have been generally prosperous and happy. Yet a generation may arise (or has arisen) who know not Joseph, and may forget the wisdom, prudence, virtue and meekness of the American Moses. The blessings, which we enjoy are not guaranteed to us unconditionally, by the God of nature. The stamp of change is placed on man and all his works. Truth and virtue are the same in all ages. The best governments have tumbled into ruin. The most enlightened, wise and powerful republics, sooner or later, have become a prey to corruption, intrigue, demagogues, parties and factions: And the most liberal and free ones have become tyrannies. Every page of ancient and modern history, the great mirror of the world, in which we may correctly see the fate of men and nations, demonstrate the facts.

WHERE are the republican states of Greece, once the seat of freedom, virtue and science? What is become of that love of liberty, which roused the soul of Demosthenes, and other Grecian orators, to burst forth in strains of eloquence, which rolled like a torrent through the land, and became more formidable to the invading foe, than millions of armed slaves defended by walls of brass! Where is the legislative wisdom of Solon and Lycurgus, whose laws, while executed and obeyed, guarded and protected the rights, and promoted the happiness and prosperity of every citizen? Where is that heroic patriotism, which inspired Leonidas, and three hundred Spartans to oppose an army of five millions, at the straits of Thermopylæ, in the defence of their country, until one man only survived the dreadful carnage? Where is that love of virtue, and incorruptible integrity, in the administration of justice, which dignified Aristides, surnamed *the just*; and which made his people prosperous and happy?—These virtues have long since fled the ill-fated re-

publics, and left their governments an easy prey to corruption, demagogues, party-spirit, envy, slander and detraction. The famous Arcopagus, the seat of justice, wisdom and science—the theatre of unrivalled eloquence, patriotism, and of every public and private virtue, that ever adorned man—is now become, “like the empty and bloody skin of an immolated victim!” or a cave of Turkish darkness!—The descendants of heroes, patriots and enlightened statesmen are now “dozing in slavery, without feeling the weight of their chains.” They have suffered scorn until they have merited it. They tread on classic ground, and on the ashes of immortal heroes, philosophers and patriots, without knowing or feeling their worth and fame; and are totally ignorant of the nature or even the name of Liberty!

WHAT better fate has befallen the rich and magnanimous commonwealth of Rome, once the mistress of the world?—Where the Roman Eagle extended her victorious wings and frowned indignant at every species of public vice and corruption:—Where liberty reigned triumphant.—There universal corruption and sordid vices pervade the whole mass of men; and consequently “slavery clanks her thousand chains!” Where the pure virtue and tried patriotism of a Cato made the victorious Cæsar tremble!—Where the incorruptible integrity of the Roman senate made vice and faction disappear!—Where the irresistible and persuasive eloquence of a Cicero made the seditious Cataline shrink away, and demagogues hide their heads!—There the sweets of rational liberty are not known, and the paths of virtue are filled with briars and thorns!—And the gigantic power of France rules with unlimited sway; and her iron yoke galls the servile neck.

ROME was once free, virtuous and powerful: Yet in her days and in the height of her glory, she could by the instigation of party-spirit and restless demagogues, proscribe her best and most virtuous citizens, drive them into banishment or hurl them headlong down the Tarpean Rock. Her citizens could hear unmoved the fervent prayers of the virtuous Marcellus “that Rome might be happy and never need his services,” while driving him from her walls into exile! Demagogues, corruption and party-spirit made the arbiters of the world a field of blood! Cæsar grasped the

empire and the royal diadem ; but *they* conquered Rome, and were too powerful for Cato and his little senate, and finally prepared the way for Cæsar! Her *mons sacer*, was the mount of *division* and *sedition*, and her agrarian law, or an equal division of property was the hobby horse of the ambitious, profligate and discontented ; and the food of restless demagogues.

WHERE are the modern republics of Holland, Geneva, Venice and Genoa ? By discontent, division, party-spirit, corruption and the deceitful arts of demagogues under the mask of patriotism, and reform, they have lost the liberty and freedom they once enjoyed. Their citizens are now the vassals of a foreign family, who have been clamorous in the cause of liberty ; and, like Jehu, cried aloud, " Come see my zeal " for liberty and to restore and establish the rights of man ! until they have made themselves and their favorites, *kings, princes and emperors, to give liberty to citizens, and the most gracious dictates of their sovereign will and pleasure, as laws to Republics!*

SWITZERLAND! oh once happy country, environed by hills and mountains, made rich by industry and economy ; and free by the intrepidity of *William Tell* in 1317, when a republican form of government was established consisting of thirteen Cantons. This government united the restraints of law and rational liberty. Under it, though not the most free, the Swiss enjoyed the sweets of freedom and independence. They were industrious contented, virtuous, learned, generous, brave and happy. For centuries they lived in peace, without the *splendid miseries* of men, which arise from victories and defeats.

BUT alas ! unhappy nation ! The fabric of their government is destroyed and nothing but rubbish remains !

THE revolutionary phrenzy of France entered this happy land. The rich wanted rank, the demagogue power, and many of the people change. The fascinating charms of an ideal *liberty and equality* without any restraints, and of the perfectability of man, stole away the hearts and affections of many from their government : and demagogues and false patriots profited by the delusion—until the Swiss awoke from their visionary dreams of forming one *perfect republic*, " for the great family of man," when it was too late for them to

correct their errors. In vain did the Swiss heroically fight, bleed and die, under the walls of Berne, in the defence of their ancient liberties and independence. Too many of them were already engulfed in the giddy vortex of a *fancied equality* and vain *philosophy*. "From affluence," says the Belgian traveller, "they have become a country of beggars: whose prayers and lamentations do not cease to harass the ear, and whose miserable appearance, to torment the sight of every traveller. Ask them the cause, the uniform answer is, *the Revolution and French fraternity have ruined us.*"

MAY the tear of pity, such tears as Cato shed over dying virtue and Roman liberty, never cease to flow at the sight of their miseries and ill deserved fate.—And may all free republics see the cause of their ruin, and fear not that the restraints of good and wholesome laws will infringe upon rational liberty, but preserve it: And let them who think they stand fast in the liberty which they have been made free, "take heed lest they fall."

THE revolutionary events in France have placed before our eyes the most awful and instructive lesson to shew the abuse of liberty; and the absolute necessity of real virtue, and true patriotism to preserve it. These events are as so many beacons, to point out the shoals and quicksands of all governments.

SOON after the close of our revolutionary war, the vital and purifying spark of liberty was kindled in France, by some of those who had generously aided us in our glorious contest for liberty and independence:—And may the names of *Fayette* and others, and their services never be forgotten.

MANY Frenchmen endeavored to reform the abuses of their government, and partially follow our example: but they mistook the true road. Virtue and information in the mass of the people, just emerged from slavery, and partially restored to their natural rights, were wanting; and ought first to have been inculcated and diffused. Reform, therefore, produced revolution; and one revolution produced others, until they kindled into a devouring flame, which spread misery, death and destruction through a great part of Europe. The republics of France were led to destruction by the *Ignis fatuus* of vain philosophy, and the visionary

dreams of Condorcet, Godwin and others about a perfect equality, the perfectability of man; and that reason ought to be the only restraint upon our passions and actions; and that the means were ever justified by the end! France wanted the restraints of good laws, well executed; the relative connections in civil society, in their original purity. She wanted industry, economy, information and virtue; and above all the moral precepts of our holy religion, to correct and regulate their morals. But alas! they soon found, and we shall ever find by fatal experience, that *perfection* is not in man, or the works of man. Search for it, you search in vain:—You will ever find it the contagious disorder of the mind!—“the baseless fabric of a nightly vision!”

THE government of France was so reformed, as to ameliorate the condition of the people, and partially to restore to them their natural rights. This was received by them with enthusiastic joy. The king and queen became the pride and idols of the nation;—but soon, *very soon*, they were immolated under the guillotine, and were humbled in death before a scoffing multitude! Those who aimed at a reform in government so as to secure to the people the blessings of rational liberty, and virtuously resisted the torrent, mingled their blood on the scaffold, or took refuge in exile. Then the revolutionary sabre gave law to the people; according to the arbitrary will of the prevailing party.

To remove every vestige of former institutions and to destroy the effect of virtue and religion on the mind, the demagogues of the day began to ridicule and attack the clergy, morality and public and private worship. At length to ensure complete success, in their impious undertakings, and to free the mind from all moral restraint, the national legislature struck the fatal blow, destroyed the christian calendar, and blotted out the holy sabbath, from the record of time. They changed the places of public worship, into temples of reason; and instituted feasts, and an idolatrous worship of the goddess of reason, tending to ridicule and blaspheme the worship of the living God!.....And have they not dedicated them with hecatombs of human victims?—Despising the experience and example of ages, they madened with rage against religion, and would eradicate it

from the human breast. Adoring their new-fangled reason, they canonized it in their heated imaginations ;—so that every one carried his own God in his brain !

LET us imagine, for a moment what race of beings such a system would produce ! take away the restraints of law, and the precepts and sanction of religion, and what limits can you prescribe to the passions of men ?—Would not the human race present to our view one dreary waste ?—Render contemptible, that most intimate of all connections ; the most endearing of all unions ; the source of pure and refined happiness of social enjoyment and exalted affection ;—and a brutal intercourse would follow, and a national prostitution ensue ! As soon as the human offspring opened its eyes on the light, it would be cast out, abandoned to chance, or perish and be forgotten ! Youth, impelled by unruly passions, would often be left to steer their course through the storms and alluring temptations of life, without a guide or compass. Middle age would have no insurance of any lasting enjoyment ; no tender and protecting companion to alleviate miseries, or console the gloomy mind. Old age would be comfortless, without one solitary hand, “to rock the cradle of declining years, or to remove the thorn from the pillow of disease,” or to close the dying eyes ; but left alone, without God, or even hope in the world, quivering on the brink of eternity and exploring the dreary passage to the grave. Without religion, the whole fabric of public morals, and social order would tumble to pieces. “Riot, lust and debauchery ; frauds, thefts, robbery and oppression ;” lying, slander and detraction ; “treachery, murder and assassination and every other vice would be the fruits of an universal atheism.”

THE consequences of these principles, industriously propagated among the people were inevitable ; for like causes will produce like effects. Faction succeeded faction. Party-spirit raged with unrelenting fury. Parties trod on the heels of parties ; destroying one another, by themselves destroyed. Demagogue after demagogue arose in thick succession, and seized the helm of government, differently modified ; and as the besom of destruction swept all before them. Millions of every age and sex fell a helpless prey to their rage and tyranny, obliterating every virtuous act, flat-

tering and deceiving the people, until all religion and virtue in a majority of the rulers and people were done away. When these are gone the descent to anarchy and universal corruption is rapid and easy ; and despotism the inevitable consequence. In vain will the patriot strive against the torrent. The virtues of a Cato will then become a solemn mockery ; and the influence and patriotism of a Washington will be a "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal!"

So it was in France ; and before the time predicted, the same Bonaparte, who had been so clamorous and active in proclaiming the cause of liberty, and the equal rights of man, and under pretence of restoring them to nations and republics, drenched Europe with blood and slaughter, easily made himself emperor of *Republican France*, and king of Italy ; and *most graciously* took on *himself* the power of dictating and executing all laws, civil religious and military. He now makes, at his *leisure*, of his own family and favorites, and for himself, kings, princes and priests ; and gives law and destiny to a great part of Europe, Asia and America ! It may be truly said that "his little finger is thicker than the loins" of any former monarch !

I HAVE ever been astonished, that so many can impute all the excesses and cruelties of the French revolutions, as the necessary effects of a virtuous struggle for rational liberty ; when every act of those revolutionary governments has been hostile to all peace and order in society, and a constant warfare against the civilized world, and all free republics. They were more the effects of demagogues and parties grasping at office, power and dominion.

MANY flattered themselves, that the French were copying our examples, and adopting the principles of our government ; but have been greatly deceived in the event. Our situation and theirs, were widely different. Liberty we ever had ; they had none. We were well informed and virtuous ; the mass of the people of France were ignorant, and just emerged from political slavery, and consequently corrupt and easily wrought upon by artful and designing men. We had only to preserve liberty and our natural rights from foreign aggressions ; they had to gain it at home, and when gained to preserve it. The preservation of ours in its purity, depended, and still depends on our early edu-

cation in the principles of morality and religion; on our uniform, economical and industrious habits; on a brave and virtuous yeomanry, or farmers, possessing an equal distribution of property, and correct information; and who have never been dandled in the lap of corruption. And further on carefully avoiding foreign influence and foreign politics, for these engender strife and division; and in preferring our native citizens to foreigners, to fill places of office and trust; on our readiness to obey laws which are enacted for the correction of our morals and the protection of our rights, and in their being impartially administered; on the encouragement and support of schools, academies and colleges: and above all on the preservation of virtue, and the moral precepts of our holy religion.

THE body of the people of France had neither virtue, information or stability sufficient to preserve their rights and liberties, when they had regained them. Liberty with them, was like mercury in the hands of a quack, which, though often abused is of no less value in skilful hands. The French were naturally active and gay, avoiding care and cool deliberation as mortal poison: and collected in large cities, therefore, their passions and prejudices were more easily excited and commanded by artful and ambitious men. Under their former government they had become familiar with flattery, deceit, corruption and vice.

*“Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
 “As to be hated, needs but to be seen;
 “Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face;
 “We first endure; then pity, then embrace.”*

HERE religion and pure morals influence the heart, and public opinion: public opinion corrects and checks our rulers. There corruption and rulers commanded public opinion. Here liberty is a restraint to the unruly passions; there it inflamed, and let them loose upon mankind. Here it is refreshing as the morning dew, and as cheering as the summer's sun enriching the hills and dressing the vallies with living green:—There, it is as the burning rays of the noon day sun, darting on the barren sands.

To preserve our government and enjoy its benign influence, every citizen must act well his part. In it, the private individual as well as the ruler has an important part to

act ; and is equally accountable for a faithful performance to community, his conscience and his God.

“ Honor and shame from no condition rise,

“ Act well your part, there all the honor lies.”

As the source of power, in our government, is in the body of the people, it is of the highest importance that they act with information, integrity, without party views, but with a sacred regard to the general good. Mankind will ever pursue their own happiness, if they know the right way : And the people will ever act right if they are virtuous, and if they are rightly and correctly informed of the real characters and motives of men, who are candidates for office ; and of the true effect and tendency of measures proposed to be adopted. Vicious men will ever choose vicious rulers ; for tho' vice may fear and respect virtue, yet it will never love real virtue.

WELL regulated schools and seminaries of learning are essentially necessary in all free and elective governments.— These correct our taste and judgment in youth, prepare us for usefulness in every stage of life, and qualify us to fill important offices, or perform the equally important part of a private citizen. A good and early education protects and guards us against temptation, and every species of vice. It will, rightly improved, alleviate our misfortunes, sweeten our toils, aid and amuse us in the journey of life.

KNOWLEDGE, when acquired, must be diffused. Every part of community ought to know how to act. To that end, therefore, it is highly important, that the head of a nation should be first in eminence, for his virtue, dignity of character, correct knowledge, integrity, independent sentiment, truth and wisdom. His mind ought to be the great store-house of national concerns. It ought to be capable of surveying the whole field of politics :—and out of the mass, when collected, to propose a general system, which will embrace the various interests of every part of community. He ought to be partial to none but the honest and virtuous. He ought to know with clearness and certainty ; to judge with wisdom and integrity ; to communicate with dignity and sound discretion ; and to execute with promptitude and energy. In fine, he ought to be as an example to the people, in a life and conversation, adorned with every moral and political virtue.

UPON the assembling of a nation by their representatives, what sublimer exhibition can we behold among men, than to see such a chief magistrate appear in person, before the august assembly of a great, wise and virtuous people; and there with dignity unfold to them, for their consideration and adoption, those political principles and extensive information, which his elevated station, and extensive intercourse among nations, has enabled him to collect; and his wisdom patriotism and virtue to digest in his own mind.

WHERE shall we find a likeness?—A full length portrait is drawn in the person and communications of Washington to Congress: and is completely finished in his last address to you. Read! read! and read it! oh my friends! and you will find new instruction in every line. He there has shewn that he has studied and understood mankind, and as a dying father has forewarned you of the dangers and evils which await you: and we begin to see and feel them.—May the “mantle which fell” from the hero and statesman be caught by some successor; “and a double portion of his spirit” and virtues rest upon him.

THE freedom of the press is essential to the diffusion of political knowledge and information. The art of printing has been considered, by many, as the most important discovery ever made. It undoubtedly has made the paths of science, more plain and easy, and placed it within the reach of all. Newspapers, or periodical publications, well conducted, bring political information to our very doors. A weekly newspaper was first published, called the weekly Courant, in London, 1622; and the first newspaper ever published in England was in April 1588. They have been, generally speaking, the handmaid of liberty; and the companion of freedom. But alas! how are their benefits abused, and shamefully perverted!—Are not the greater part of the presses mere hirelings, and devoted to the ambitious views, and promotions of particular men, and the vile spirit of party? And are not, even foreigners assiduously employed, as more skillful, in the ignoble work of slander, and abuse of the best of our revolutionary characters, real Americans, and especially, a virtuous clergy, who are wholly dependent on the people for employment and support? Free and candid discussion is known to very few. Our public papers

have become the ready vehicles of detraction and falsehood ; or of gross and fulsome flattery ! Many of them are like serpents among flowers. They teem with malignity, and all the hacknied and approbrious epithets, which imagination can invent, or ingenuity apply, to sour and prejudice the honest and virtuous mind against the best of men : merely to promote, on the ruin of others and the public good, the exclusive interest, and ambitious views of party men and party measures !

*“ My heart laments that virtue cannot live,
“ Out of the teeth of emulation.”*

PARTY and ambitious men are ever sensible, that spotless reputation is the greatest treasure among mortals !

*“ The purest treasure mortal times afford ;
“ Is spotless reputation. That away,
“ Men are but gilded loom, or painted clay :
“ A jewel in a ten times barr'd up chest,
“ Is a bold spirit in a virtuous breast.
“ Mine honor is my life ; both grow in one ;
“ Take honor from me, and my life is gone.”*

A GOOD reputation must, therefore, be taken away from those, who possess and merit it ; if they are virtuous, independent in sentiment, or oppose the interest of party ; or if they stand in the way of the promotion of ambitious partizans or demagogues. Partizans and demagogues will ever assail it through the medium of hireling presses, or by the malignant tongue of slander :

*“ Whose edge is sharper than a sword ; whose tongue
“ Out-venoms all the worms of Nile : whose breath
“ Rides on the posting winds and doth belie
“ All corners of the world.”*

PARTY-SPIRIT in all free governments, towns or families, is an inexhaustible source of evil and malignity. “ It is,” says Washington, “ in all governments of a popular form, seen in its greatest rankness, and is truly their worst enemy.” — “ It is,” says he, a frightful despotism.” I never knew any party, in religion, politics or any other concern whatever, so just and reasonable, that a man can follow it, to its height, and be virtuous and innocent. It embitters every enjoyment in life ; and like a gangrene preys upon the vitals of all governments. Its pestilential breath destroys all confidence, and blasts all social intercourse and happiness. It discolours every virtuous act, corrodes like canker, and fits

the mind “for treasons, stratagems and death.” It enslaves the understanding, and perverts the judgment, so that many will be governed by it, yet really believe that they act from pure and patriotic motives. It drives every public virtue into exile ; or the shades of retired life.

WHENEVER a party is formed in free and elective governments, and the leaders of it, wish to carry a favorite measure, or promote, or reward a favorite partizan, whose character and abilities will not bear the test of a public examination, even Legislatures will meet in midnight conclave, and shun public discussion, in order to unite and concentrate the minds of their party, and remove the qualms of conscience from the more honest part of them, and have the business *all cut and dried*, before it is discussed before the legislature : And then, candid examination is at an end, and every avenue of the mind barred against all rational conviction, and the public good invariably sacrificed to the interest of party.

IN elections for offices of honor and confidence, the same methods will be taken, and the most zealous partizans, and those who have done most for *the party*, not the public, will be selected, without regarding their private characters, virtue, wisdom or integrity. The enquiry must not be made is he virtuous ? Is he capable and honest ? No ! *union* is order of the day ! and the only enquiry is, does he belong to our party ? And does he deserve well of it ? And ought he to be rewarded ?

WHEN party spirit thus prevails, we shall see “folly and corruption, placed on the seat of judgment.” It will not be singular to see men, who have been guilty of adulteries, frauds, thefts, forgeries and every species of vice, making laws for, and dispensing justice to the very men they have injured. Then, “a post of honor is a private station.”

THE spirit of party, when pursued, will inevitably introduce every species of vice and corruption, and destroy all confidence in government. Experience has told us, that it will end in the destruction of every government, town or family : and the divine author of our religion, has said, that “every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.”

WITHOUT real virtue in rulers and in the people, no free

government can long exist. To that end, the institution of the sabbath, and public worship are highly important. The regular return of a day of rest from our daily labors and worldly amusements, refresh and invigorate both body and mind. To meet in solemn assembly for public worship, "in that place which is none other, than the house of God, and the gate of heaven;" there with devout attention to receive moral, pious and holy instruction opens our hearts to benevolent acts; cultivates friendship and union; helps us to perform the labors of life with cheerfulness and gratitude to the great author of all mercies: will guard us against vice and temptation: will alleviate our miseries and calamities: and will enable the pious soul to look toward that period, when "God shall wipe away all tears from his eyes." Here we may learn, "to do justice, to love mercy, and walk humbly before our God." To respect virtue, integrity and truth: To speak no evil of our neighbors, or our rulers unjustly: To cultivate peace and union in society, and obey the laws "as the ordinances of God."

YE reverend Legates, ye messengers of truth and grace to guilty men, your office well performed,

"Must stand acknowledged while the world shall stand;

"The most important and effectual guard,

"Support and ornament of virtue's cause."

IT is your part to cultivate virtue;

"The only aramanthine flower on earth:"

And to inculcate the importance of TRUTH; as a great and lasting treasure. Thereby you will perform an important part for your country, and shall at last receive a greater reward than the world can give or take away.

IT is your part, ye rulers of the land, not to bear the sword of justice in vain: but by your official and private conduct, "to be a terror to evil doers, and a praise of such as do well." And lasting honors await you here and hereafter. Be not familiar with vice, and favour not vicious men, to obtain their favour; flatter not, to tickle the ear, and thereby obtain popularity, promotion, or retain office. If partiality, corrupt motives, flattery, deceit and the interest of party govern your official acts, and your life and conversation; the brightest laurels will wither on your brow "and you will cause the people to mourn to the last."

FINALLY, brethren, be of one heart and one mind. Let us profit by the fate of nations, and the experience of ages.

Let men of virtue, information, integrity and real merit, not the merit of party, be the objects of your choice ; for in them your safety rests. Look to the actions of men, in public and private life, not to their noisy professions ; for “ by their works ye shall know them.” Men “ do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles.” A Cincinnatus was found at his plow : a Washington cultivating his farm : a Howard visiting the abodes of misery and distress, relieving their wants : a Demosthenes, an Aristides, and a Cicero at the bar of impartial justice : and a Moses on the mount receiving instruction from the oracles of truth. But you will find Korah, Dathan and Abiram, in the camp, creating a party and stirring up the people against Moses and Aaron, who delivered them out of their Egyptian bondage : an Absalom in the gate of the city kissing, flattering and deceiving the people, insinuating things against “ the man after God’s own heart,” so as to be judge himself ; and I, said he, *will do you justice !* And you will find a Cataline in taverns and brothels, familiar with vice, creating sedition, discontent and division, so as to be made First Consul. Human nature is the same now as then.

By the precious blood which has been shed ; by the toils and dangers which have been endured ; by the treasures which have been spent in the defence of our liberty : by the love of our common country, and by all that is dear to us and to posterity, throw away party-spirit, falsehood and intrigue in all your elections and public transactions. Uninfluenced by the spirit of party, or the vague reports of *the day*, be independent in sentiment, and act as virtuous freemen for yourselves and the public good. Unite in the love of one another, and of our common country. Detest envy, slander, deceit, flattery, party-spirit and *professional patriotism*. Cultivate peace and harmony in society. Practice virtue, integrity, industry and economy : these are the life of liberty, and free governments.

THUS we shall perpetuate our freedom and government in their original purity. Thus we shall secure to us, and our posterity the sublime enjoyment of all the rights and privileges, so dearly bought by the toils and precious blood of HEROES AND PATRIOTS, and we shall become victorious over the enemies of FREEDOM ; and generation after generation shall rejoice in the victory.