

AN
ORATION,

PRONOUNCED AT DIGHTON,

JULY 4, 1803.

IN COMMEMORATION

OF

American Independence.



BY

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ORATION.

FELLOW-CITIZENS, AMERICANS,

accents I HASTE to congratulate you on the twenty-eight anniversary of your National Independence. I rise before you deprest with the honour you have conferred upon me, of addressing you upon so important a subject: But still I am elevated with the joy that is inspired on so delightful an occasion. Thus equi-poised by these commanding emotions, my mind is permitted to participate with you the enjoyment of the festival. Already I behold depicted on your countenances, a more lively eulogy than I am prepared to express. But I am forbidden to retire from the subject, when all the affections of so numerous and respectable an assembly, seem enlisted to aid in the panegyric of freedom. Pusillanimous indeed must be that orator, who shall at any time be abashed when his subject is liberty and his audience Americans—Americans, who have been taught from infancy to revere the blessings of Independence, and the inalienable rights of man.

To a heart of affectionate patriotism nothing shall be more welcome and designate more each passing year than the fourth of July. The spring indeed, crowned with primal honours, has returned and passed. It was welcome to the bosom of love and the pen of the pastoral poet. But this day is reserved for the enjoyment of the patriot; to inspire the statesman and animate the enraptured eulogist on the birth right of our nation. Yonder solstitial sun shall abate his wonted fervours while we celebrate the festival.

But lest we approach the fastidiousness of rhetoric, we will enquire, why have we assembled on this day in particular? Because it was recorded by the patriots of '76 as the holiday—the jubilee of America. Nations, in general have their days set apart, sacred to those heroes and leaders who have accomplished some signal deliverance for their country. Thus was the ancient Hebrew, instructed by heaven, to welcome the return of that joyful feast, which reminding him of his deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, renovated the enjoyment of his present felicity. While other nations have their days consecrated to their genii or tutelary saints, ours shall be sacred to independence and the guardian spirit of liberty.

Before we pass, let us view the perspective of that solemn day which is already presented before us. Then while death was im-
 itated against our infant empire, while the embattled ships of an
 all-conquering power, were anchored in our ports; while British
 guards were planted in several quarters of our country, while the
 disciplined armies of a vindictive foe were making their incur-
 sions in every part that was vulnerable, while the corpse of ma-
 ny a freeman lay mangled on our plantations, and our farm-
 houses were reeking with that blood that sent a cry to heaven,
 louder than the blood of Abel, and after we had made some
 experimental encounters at Bunker's hill and else where; while
 surrounded with such circumstances, the good patriots of that day,
 heroes indeed, challenging the birthright of man and appealing to
 the skies for the uprightness of their cause, subscribed that sacred
 instrument just now read, resolving in spite of ambition and ty-
 ranny, to be what God had made them, **INDEPENDENTLY FREE**.
 Ever since that time America has been read upon the chart of
 the world, and acknowledged by the nations of the earth.

While I call your attention to those eventful times, some may
 be ready to remark that addresses of this kind are prone to be uni-
 form and tautologous. How, shall that be tautology that re-
 lates to so pleasing a subject as national freedom! Though the
 circumstances and relations of truth may be uniform, yet they
 are ever new and ever interesting. Is it possible that the revolu-
 tionary scenes, should provoke an American to such critical an-
 imadversion! Shall any sicken at the remembrance of those
 times and refuse to solemnize this day! Shall any be overheard
 to say that these like other animosities ought to be covered with
 oblivion!

The God of Israel, to stimulate his people to perseverance in
 their duty, called their attention to his commandments, by first
 declaring himself "The Lord thy God who have brought thee
 up out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage."
 Many of their institutions were so many memorials of that just
 and solemn cause which the Most High himself had espoused.
 The soul of David looked back to the hill Mizar and it revived at
 the recollection. The evangelic institutions are daily commemora-
 tive of those solemn achievements, upon which the Christian
 faith is founded. If our revolution was just, the same princi-
 ples are just and solemn still. He therefore, who is forgetting
 of those times, departs from his duty and offends against heav-
 en. Federalism, therefore, with all its boasted patriotism, is
 but the disguised apostacy, from the spirit of those times, when a
 nation was upon its knees, beseeching that the blessing of heav-
 en would second their endeavours. The afflictions of those

days were not joyous but grievous. It was not for present felicity, those heroes were animated to resist and suffer the hardships of the camp. That era travelled in pain for the very blessings we now enjoy, and for that national happiness we are this day celebrating. For us the proto-martyr—the brave Warren bled at Bunker hill, that ever memorable battle which placed the first laurel in the wreath of American glory: for us Montgomery fell. For us that immortal band of revolutionary heroes, poured out their lives, as a sacrifice, a ransom and a pledge of our independence. The venerable shades of those martyred worthies call upon us to hold fast our republican principles. If any thing can disturb their blest repose, surely it must be, if not a total forgetfulness of their names, an apostacy from the spirit of that cause in which they died.

But, my friends, we will neither forget their *names* nor their *principles*. By recollecting the price, we will learn the value of our freedom. For this end the faithful muse has recorded them on her living page. If these are to be obliterated, let the name of the historian, the poet and the orator, who shall mention them be blasted. Let not the aged grand-fire, who can but recollect them, presume to relate them to the inquiring youth, nor the American who courts the reputation of a modern patriot, make no search after them but to ridicule democracy.

But we cannot—we will not forget them. Annually we will visit the places where their ashes were laid, and while reading the inscriptions on their monuments, our tearful eyes shall speak the sorrow we have for their deaths, and our hearts shall rebeat with a livelier patriotism. And while we thus sacrifice at the shrine of our country's love, Virtue hard by shall sit smiling, and Piety, in her heavenly robes, approve the oblation. For this is the principle that descended from the skies, ere the bowers of Eden had withered or a tyrant infested the earth. It is coeval with the existence of man—it is the native element of the soul, and stands first among the virtues which survived the apostacy of our race. The world has felt its influence in every age, and where it operates it acts with the omnipotence of truth. It occasioned the chief of those reforms and revolutions, which nobles and despots whose minds are perverted with ambition, have stigmatized with the epithets of madness, anarchy and rebellion. Ancient history has registered many instances where nations have resisted the oppressions of a tyrant and asserted the rights of man. But in modern ages, which are more illuminated, the instances have been more numerous. It has operated long ago even in Great-Britain. In later days in the United Provinces. It operated in all its glory, though unsuccessfully in Poland, and

accumulated in the bosom of Kosciuszko. I believe it has operated in France, however, through the fallacy of mortals, it may have been deceived with its own object. And I am not afraid to declare my belief that it has operated lately in Ireland. I am not afraid to pay my tribute of applause to that principle which tyrants and dependants have in many instances reprobated. I know my own feelings upon the subject and that I entertain an ardent love of freedom. But what the God of nature has prohibited I would ever abandon. This divine sentiment has beyond a doubt, operated gloriously in these United States, and still operates. Without this we must be slaves, and with it liberty shall be the inheritance of America forever,

But to return a moment to our revolution. At that time a brilliant constellation of heroes shone. Their glory was but the reflected honours of the revolution, what was justifiable upon the occasion, and conducted under the guidance of heaven. Those who chose to dissent from the common opinion, were deemed tainted with the pollution of exotic courts and acted a part unworthy an American. But little the patriots of that day realized that ambition, insatiate as the grave and hooded under the disguise of patriotism, was working its traverses and laying its train for the destruction of those very principles which it had openly avowed. This train was to have been fired when the circumstances of the people would insure success to the treason.

While we were related to England as dependant Colonies, aristocracy in this country though having succeeded as far as our charters would permit, must have ever been subordinate to the policy of Britain. A secondary domination was not sufficient for their purposes. But the independence of the nation, manageable at their own will, would give free scope to their machinations, and at length enable them to soar to a rivalry with England. Their zeal was not to liberate the people from tyranny, but to separate them from their parent country and seize the government themselves. Thus while professing to throw off a foreign yoke, they were preparing a domestic despotism in its room. But their designs for the present, were smothered in the tumults of war. In the din of arms the voice of ambition could not be heard. Enough it had to do to accomplish its first undertaking. Immediately, therefore, after the treaty of peace it commenced its operations. Its approximate object was a national government. In forming a federal constitution, it was her intention to have given it all the energy of monarchy, and extend the power of the executive beyond that of the king of England.

In the first convention that was formed to erect a national

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government, the invention of ambition was put upon the rack. She was sensible that a critical and important moment had arrived, in which something must necessarily exist, that would by precept or example, influence for a long time the government of the states. As the prejudices of the revolution were still sanguine, she feared that these might have an imperious influence in the business, and defeat her project. However premature for her purpose she concluded to hazard an attempt.

In that solemn assembly of delegates from all the states, convened for the sacred and important purpose of forming a government for a young and growing empire; a nation just arrived victorious to peace through a sanguinary and expensive war, upon whom a sympathizing world had fixed an interested attention, at whom the invidious foes of republican governments were gazing with envy, waiting the fulfilment of their malevolent predictions, quailing the downfall and aberrations of democratic governments; to prove that our revolutionary hopes were strangely forlorn.—An assembly holy as the solemn conventions at Jerusalem of old.—When Washington and heaven presided.—When the people's best hopes, their most fervent prayers to the Arbiter of the Universe, were, that those liberties for which they fought and conquered might be amply secured, that that government long burlesqued by the Machivellian emperics as a Utopian scheme, a policy visionary and impracticable, might be formed sacred to the happiness and strength of the union. In the midst of those devout deliberations, this infatuated ambition dared to exhibit as a candidate for acceptance, a model of government which in that day especially and under those circumstances, was the height of political blasphemy, and which would have completely transferred and imposed on America all the defects of the feudal establishments and grievances of Europe.

When this model was exhibited, urged and defended with so much spirit and apparent sincerity, the delegates were astonished. They looked upon each other with silent amazement. The President himself was confounded. Then it was that many were compelled to believe, what charity before forbade, that there was existing in this country, a confederacy against the principles of the revolution and a democratic or republican form of government, who in forming the constitution would wish to ape the Briton, and give to executive power an extended jurisdiction, who were for abridging the liberties of the people, and so arranging the remainder that they might form a basis more favourable for their aristocratical structure.

This era gave existence to those celebrated letters addressed to one of the most distinguished and uniform patriots of the re-

solution : letters whose general scope was to hurry into contempt the principles of genuine republicanism, and to enforce against the profane light of reason and experience the necessity and practicability of hereditary honours : letters which brought to view that political phenomenon, a NOBILITY HOLE. A department no more than theoretical and visionary, wherein that body of unnatural power might exist harmless and useful. A body, which though it might operate as a burden to society, yet like a weight in a balance, was necessary to preserve an equilibrium of power in the great body politic : letters, which elucidated for the first time that paradox in government, in science and in sense, a difference between a natural and hereditary nobility :— As if nature designed that glory, genius and merit should descend like wealth to the representatives of the first possessor : As if desert is not and could not be acknowledged and rewarded unless styled noble and wellborn ; and be vested with a privilege of bequeathing their honours to their posterity : letters, which first suggested that the love of liberty might be as deeply interwoven in a wolf as in the soul of man ; and that the principle was no less ferocious and unsocial in the latter, without being cultivated by an “aristocratic” education and political management. Good heaven ! Could these letters ever have been palmed upon any one who had openly declared himself a friend to our revolution ; or could the “Defence of the American Constitutions” ever be attributed to their author. An enigma, the solution of which I leave for the present.

After many indefatigable exertions to exclude from the constitution all sections of a republican character, all articles that might secure too strongly to the people their own native rights, and to crowd into it every organ of power that would tend to give nerve and strength to the new aristocracy in America, an instrument was formed—it was ratified by the states and became the constitution of the American Empire. This party (for I can now call it by no better name) began to profess an attachment to the new formed government, and to assume the exclusive name of “Federalists.” By this title and zeal they believed they could atone for any imprudence they had committed in the discovery of their designs, and under this disguise so far conceal themselves from a republican people, as rapidly to bring forward their favourite project under the forced approbation of the *federal constitution*. They began to read the instrument with other designs than to explain and defend it in its own native spirit and import. Their search was to discover where the grants and limitations of power were defined with the most ambiguity of expression—where they could abridge, where enlarge, where extract other

powers from inherency, where ingraft to make good something that was wanting for the sake of consistency and expedience. In a word how they might effect as great a remote from the original meaning of the compact, as the constitution of England now strangely exhibits from the old *Magna Charta* of the kingdom. The British government was set before them as a pattern for their politics, and recommended to the public in a seasonable and laborious work, with the endearing title of "Defence of the American Constitutions." In this the constitution of England was declared to be the *chef d'œuvre* of political wisdom. Next, in order to eradicate those prejudices unfriendly to their purpose, the English nation was said to be the most experienced and dignified in the world. France who was then struggling for her freedom must be thrown into contempt. A treaty of friendship must be made with the former, while the latter must be provoked to immediate hostilities. With England a breach of peace was painted to your view with all the horrors that a war deserves. With France it was a movement pointed out by the finger of heaven; which would add to the honour of the christian, and crown the American hero with the laurels of glory.

Ambition had now become bold in her measures. Munroe must be recalled and Pinckney be charged with an embassy to France. Acts must be formed that called for a new routine of offices. Their places must be filled with men under allegiance to the opinion that created them, which must supply nerves, tendons, muscles and ligatures to their sthenic and energetic government. For offices were honourable and fascinating even to an uncorrupted yeomanry, and would give greatness and influence to those who filled them: who like editors rewarded and obliged to publish, would feel bound in duty to eulogize and expatiate on every federal act, which, like the blood in the arteries, would be widely circulated and re-echoed down through the remotest branches of government.

As the administration became expensive the revenue must be enlarged. To this end new modes of taxation must be sought. old ones must be new-modelled and arranged. A stamp act, embarrassing not only by the prejudices already existing against it, but by the mode of necessary operation. Americans not duped by the chicanery of government: became suspicious of their transactions, began to feel the oppression and animadvert upon their proceedings. The people as they were then held in check by a powerful faction tenacious of its purposes, had not as yet become formidable in their remonstrances, save exciting in the dominant party, some painful forebodings of a change of public opinion. Federalism began to distrust the validity of its own cause—began to be sensible that it had for-

rested the confidence of the public, and that those who had hitherto remained neglectful of political concerns, began to think and judge for themselves. To compensate for this they endeavoured to increase the number of their adherents by distributing more profusely the emoluments of government. Behold now appeared the black cockade, that fantastic badge of royalty, which was instituted as an external seal of political orthodoxy. Thus they imagined to have satirized and exposed any difference of opinion, and even the neutrality of any disposed to be inattentive to their measures. Thus they attempted to impress upon their side the power of fashion and pride of external dress, to enlist in their service some with whom every other artifice might prove unavailing.

At that time were encouraged by advice and example, those hypocritical addresses, which were tendered to their executive from every part of the union. Then I have thought was the concert like that at the plain of Dara, commanded as a signal for all who heeld, to bow down to the image which was erected by the votaries of monarchy. But as many were so impious and stiff-necked as to resolve against uniting in homage, and who declared, "It is known unto you that we will not serve your gods nor worship the golden image which ye have set up," they were then full of fury and the visage of their administration was changed against the people who would not comply.—The furnace of terror was preparing to rage with sevenfold heat. The sedition bill was passed, and a strong entrenchment thrown up around their venerable characters, to create a habit of reverence for their personal attributes, to beset an implicit confidence in their princely integrity, to enforce the heretical dogma that it is blasphemous to doubt the probity of rulers or inspect their political conduct. This statute however though operating by fines and imprisonment, did not turn from them the eye of scrutiny or that the mouth of just complaint.

Now under the false alarm of impending war, an extended naval armament must be erected and a standing army embodied. Yes my friends, an agricultural nation who had before been accustomed to leave their arms in their cottages, while they cultivated their plantations, must now assume, by surrendering a part of their citizens, the professions of the camp and put on the habiliments of war. Or in other words a despotic body must be formed and placed in the heart of the people, under the flimsy pretext of being the safeguard of their liberties and the bulwark of the nation. A mercenary soldiery composed of the sediment of society, destitute of patriotism, differently interested from the people, educated in the camp, and ever inclined to regard the sources that support and the powers that

honour them. How different this from the sentiment that prevailed in the revolution—read those orations pronounced at various times, in Boston, on the solemnization of the fatal fifth of March. Though strange to relate some of the authors are now numbered with the friends of this measure. Oration that are animated with the very feelings of the times and the inveterate abhorrence that was then entertained against a standing army. An idea that was as abhorrent to our progenitors as the fetters of bondage—that the banners of war should be unfurled beneath the olive of peace.

We could remark also upon the alien bill which was a constituent part of that insatuated policy. This they viewed as a safe barrier against the introduction of republican principles from abroad, and felt prepared to manage them at home. Federalism had now assumed a gigantic size. It lifted its whole front above the interests of Republicans and seemed to defy the clamour of a discontented populace. It had arrayed itself in the vestments of monarchy, and seemed to declare itself to the world the new kingdom of the west. Secure in what it had styled its own energies, it seemed to promise to itself an eternal duration. But even at that period of their felicity and exaltation, the people were mourning for the apostacy of their rulers. Just awake from their lethargy, they felt the weight of their chains and knew not for a certainty that these chains were still unriveted. They saw indeed their error in being so long unguarded, but feared that they saw it at too late an hour. They perceived themselves surrounded on every hand with those oppressive measures which I have briefly described. Thus the Americans, like the beloved people of old, who dared to shake off the bondage of Egypt, who by the interposing judgments of an incensed heaven, had effected their escape from the kingdom and cruelties of a hardened Pharaoh; who believing themselves a liberated and independent people, were flying with rapture towards their promised Canaan, and in the vision of delusive hope already realized the possession of that holy land. When lo! to their astonishment they saw themselves enclosed on every hand. On the right and left lay the impassable mountains: behind them an enraged enemy pursuing, and before them the waters of the red Sea rolled.

This, my friends, was the situation of the American people in the year '99. If I have too strongly drawn the picture your good judgments will soften the colours. But lo, some mighty genius interposed. This Genius was no less than the power of HIM who at the descent of Moses' staff, bade the sea of Buzza divide and give his chosen tribes a passage through. That same power who made us his guardian care, bade the clouds retire, which had obscured with thick darkness the American scene.

phere, and the sun of political truth burst upon us with redoubled brightness.

Behold is presented to view a golden period. A period pleasant and reviving that thence the fair Iris of the departing storm. Glorious era made brilliant with the election of our Jefferson. Jefferson distinguished for talents, patriotism and firmness, upon whom the last lingering hopes of an aggrieved people had reclined, was called to the principality of government. A patriot indeed, who had ever felt with the people, and was too deeply convinced of the mal-conduct of our political pilots. With a modesty which became his conscious dignity, with a prudence which was the effect of his consummate skill, he seized the helm of state, and while the rocks and shoals on every hand threatened us with danger and destruction, he soon conducted us into a safe and tranquil sea. He immediately set himself to repair our shattered bark and make provision for our future prosperity and happiness. He took up the cause of America where the revolution had left it, and proceeded to the arduous task with the same spirit he penned the Declaration of Independence.— With great felicity he united the moderation and economy of WASHINGTON, with his own talents and political knowledge, and brought into view a new order of things: An administration that reflects honour upon the republican name, and everlasting disgrace upon the institutes of kings and the policy of ambition.

He now possesses the full-orbed glory of demonstrating to the world the practicable operation of republican principles. He proved; by happy experiment, that mankind are capable of governing themselves, and that a constitution needs not those spurious energies, which, while they promise stability to governments, will prove an effectual cause of a certain dissolution. He has proved that rational establishments stand, firm as the everlasting hills, upon their own bases, founded deep in the nature of things, despising those checks and balances with which PRIDE and AMBITION affect to intrench themselves. He has removed from the doubting mind, the maxim that reasonable law requires any other executive but its own utility and necessity. He has taught a disappointed faction that virtue and merit need no other protection in a free country save their own imperative dignity; that excellence is unworthy the name, unless it so far transcends as to rise above the malignity of envy and the turpitude of detraction; that the approving voice of conscience is more sweet and consoling than all the mercenary praises of parasitical retinue. He has wiped from the character of man that odium cast by the aspersions of a Burke, an Adams, and a Hamilton, that their passions and propensities are such, that like rebellious spirits or a lawless banditti, they require an iron shower of tyrannical measures to controul and govern them.

Humble under a consciousness of his own desert, and yet exalted under a sense of his integrity, he feels himself at once the President of the United States and a fellow-citizen of the world. Though he possesses all the honour that his country can bestow, yet he attaches not to himself like nobility, (whether natural or hereditary,) any thing of a superiority of being, nor claims a privilege above his fellow man.

He is a Politician. Europe indeed may justly boast of great illumination in the art of government, for she hath produced many enlightened statesmen. Locke, Rousseau, Stewart and Smith have in their turns admonished tyrants and preached to mankind. But in delineating the social compact they have but blended serious truths with ludicrous sophisms. But this sage has solved the problem so important to the world, which Herodotus has thus well expressed, "the only skill and knowledge of any value in politics is that of governing all by all." His politics is the compiled wisdom of all antiquity. Well acquainted with the public body, he knows its various sympathies and affections. He organizes a government, and it so resembles a moral being as to produce a general animation, will, force and reason. No greater encomium can be given to his talents as a statesman than the present happy and flourishing condition of his country. Where is the citizen, truly aggrieved, who wishes to be thought sober in his complaints, that will come forward in his own name and honour, and declare that this country is deteriorated by his administration. Slander may carp; envy may spit its venom, and disappointment may dishevel its own hair, but his most inveterate enemy that is seriously opposed, must at least be silent.

He is a Philosopher: and science must forever frown on that federalism that has presumed to be ludicrous on this eminent qualification of our President. But whence the opprobrious incentive even from the enemies of a Jefferson! Has philosophy in America, lost its charms because ambition has lost its aim. What! deride that emanation of the divinity, by which the human mind has transcended the sphere of the vulgar, and which has given to Newton and Franklin the immortality of fame. Yes, my friends, but with those only who deride the principles of the revolution and the rights of mankind. But every thing that is lovely forbids that his character shall suffer by the imputation of philosophy. It assists him in judging of mankind and exploring the exigencies and properties of society. Being a philosopher, his morality is elevated, his disposition is serene and uniform, his sentiments tender and affectionate, his opinions are the pure deductions from conviction and truth, his mind is above the wildering dreams and thackling prejudices of the bigot; and he beholds with tenderness the frailties of man. He looks with indulgence upon the mistakes of his enemies and

the rage of defeated ambition. He observes that their disappointment is so great that their reason is excusable for not suppressing the ebullitions of resentment. But he seeks an asylum in the applause of his conscience; and seeks only for that heroic revenge, to conquer by doing good. As he entered upon public life when the world was shaken with the collisions of passion and the fulminations of war, it has ever been his study to extinguish their animosities and reconcile their interests. In a word, in his patriotism he is firm as Cato; in his justice, as inflexible as Aristides, in his philanthropy, as universal as Washington.

But I will retreat from the useless attempt to extol his virtues or defend his character. For Cynic madness has voided all its spleen; foul detraction has spent all its bile, and drudging slander exhausted its quiver; all their illiberal aspersions combined have been but a foil to give a lively contrast and beauty to his resplendent character. So when the darkening cloud is transiently brought over your ruler of the day, it effects a momentary eclipse of his glory, but it is suddenly dispelled and the bright luminary returns with an increase of splendour.

But since I have appropriated a few moments, briefly to delineate the character of our Jefferson, I should feel remorse for duty neglected, if I stay not to touch the outlines of that of our great, our beloved Washington. Though pathetic eulogy has failed duly to appreciate his virtues, yet the occasion invites us to call him to remembrance. This day cannot be celebrated without a recollection of his character, because our revolution was not accomplished without his achievements. What bosom at the mention of his name, beats not with the liveliest encomium that we can possibly bestow. What heart is not transported to where his sacred dust was laid, and on his monument drops the tributary tear. His name will ever be dear to an American—dear to a republican. For who that remembers his personal excellence but sees in our Jefferson much of the reflected image of his soul. Moderation, prudence, firmness, economy, love of country and mankind, have held their rival reign in the breast of both. He was blest with the consolation of continuing in life until he embraced the felicitating prospect of his friend's advancement to the first office of government, upon whom, when he ascended to the skies his mantle seemed to rest. Often my countrymen, the administration of Mr. Jefferson brings to my mind the pleasing recollection of some trait in his character. He was a friend to that government, that secured the common interest of mankind. Yes, my friends, Washington was a REPUBLICAN. I challenge the universe to adduce one serious argument to the contrary. Who but an enemy to Washington and his country can suggest that a soul like his was capable of apostasy from the divine principles of the revolution. None. From that corner

which severed us from royalty he received all his glory. A god-like glory which Alexander sought for, but never acquired.— What though some little occurrences of his administration transpired that may seem to afford the anti-republican spirit a delicious moment of exultation, he suddenly removed himself from the reach of corruption, and his resignation was an ample atonement. The most that can be said against him is, that he possessed some of the imperfections of human nature; which teaches that implicit confidence should not be reposed in mortals. But his name will ever be venerated while virtue shall dignify, while patriotism shall animate, and republican sentiments shall exalt the American heart.

Let us now dwell a moment on the present state of the Union. It little concerns us what the qualifications of national policy heretofore have been, compared with an inquiry into the present. It is a fountain of felicity to every true patriot, to contemplate the rapid advancement of his country to greatness and glory. Other nations have arose to wealth and fame, but the intrigues of ambition have soon subverted their personal happiness and national policy. But the wisdom and foresight of the present administration, having observed the rocks upon which they have been wrecked, have unequivocally pursued such a policy as is calculated to secure the prosperity of the country.

Who that has observed the travel of Federalism, but remembers their prediction during the session of Congress in 1802, of the injurious tendency of the measures then adopted. These prophecies have now proved themselves to be only the invectives of an infatuated opposition. Experience, to whose maxims the world must subscribe, has soon demonstrated that those measures were the cool dictates of the soundest policy. Useless, unpopular and oppressive establishments, have been removed without injuring in the least our fiscal arrangements. Congress last year passed a law, that provided for the annual discharge of seven millions three hundred thousand dollars. That so large a sum, when the public debt had been increasing so rapidly heretofore, should be yearly appropriated, arrested more the pleasing hope than the sanguine belief of many good citizens. But joyful to relate, Congress has certainly exceeded its own anticipation.— The commissioners of the sinking fund have redeemed 9,375,000 dollars. Nor was the treasury exhausted. At the close of the year there was a surplus of the unexpended sum of four millions and a half.

How mistaken then must have been the predictions that foresaw the declension of our revenue. This puts the hypothesis beyond a doubt that offices multiplied beyond a due proportion, consume a great part of their own wages. Instead of declining, the finances have arisen far beyond what their own calculations

had promised. Mr. Calatin has officially stated that 22,280,000 dollars have been received during the year ending the 30th of September last, a sum that exceeds by two millions of dollars, the amount for the same duties that entered the treasury, during the preceding or any other year, and which surpasses by 2,200,000 dollars, the aggregate hitherto collected from both the impost and internal duties repealed by the present government.

These are facts that I have never heard contradicted. These demonstrate that a distinguishing characteristic of a republican government is temperance and economy. And can any one affect a disgust at a good government, defined to be thus, that which secures to the people all their rights with the least expence. And will any presume to declare that there have been any concerns of importance, under the present administration, that have not been delicately managed, any rights that have not been preserved sacred and inviolate. And if there be any in this assembly that is not a friend to economy, let him manifest his resentment, for him have I offended. If there be any among you that believes in his heart, that that government is best which creates a host of offices to be supported from the labours of the husbandman, that recommends to public patronage a drossish nobility, who fatten upon the spoils torn from the mouth of a degraded peasantry, who are now suggesting their fears that happy times will not arrive until the common people shall be obliged to work for six pence a day—If there be any such I solicit his pardon, for him have I offended.

But our pencil must have been dipped in other colours to have drawn the picture of the times, had a frantic ambition still held the reins of power: Had the fruits of our labours been wrested by a tyrant, or the energies of the nation been debilitated by war. Our manufactories flourish, our fisheries are encouraged, and above all we enjoy the blessings of peace. Who that possesses but a moderate degree of political knowledge, but must be sensible that peace is highly important to the growth and advancement of a country. We ought therefore to view with painful concern whatever tends in the remotest degree to jeopardize it. The unauthorized violation of the Spanish Intendant, or our right of deposit at New-Orleans, accordingly, arrested the attention of Congress, who treated the subject with the greatest delicacy, wisdom and firmness. Where is the citizen of America, who but remembers the revolution, or feels a glow of that spirit which achieved it, whose heart did not burn with that heroic indignation and ardour which invited him to arms. Or who but feels a greater indignation at the intemperate zeal which so vehemently urged to a declaration of war. The temerity of those zealots resembled more the wild war-whoop of savages, than the

deliberate purposes of a national council. Their insatiable policy is exposed by the most cursory attention to the subject.— It is so manifest that we waive it on the present occasion. But be assured fellow-citizens, that Federalism has on that subject exhibited its most prominent feature, and betrayed its predominant passion. When the waters are troubled, when affairs are fluctuating and tumultuous, she is more successful in concealing her designs and accomplishing her projects. The opponents of government I do not believe, ever entertained an idea that the majority was possessed of that pusillanimity and want of national dignity they pretended. They were intent upon war, and employed every stimulant to provoke government to the measure. It was assuredly the duty of Congress as well as their policy, to attempt to gain that by negotiation which would otherwise require the sacrifice of far more than equivalent blood and treasure. America, to say nothing of other nations, would risk too much wantonly and precipitately to hazard a war.— But confident of her strength, she will vindicate her rights whenever depending circumstances shall justify the measure. With regard to the aggression of the Spanish Intendant, we are happy to learn that the President and the Legislature have acted in concert, notwithstanding the exertions that have been made to divide them. Mr. Munroe has been sent as envoy extraordinary to the courts of Spain and France. A draft of 80,000 militia, which have required the appropriation of one million and a half of Dollars. Arsenals have been ordered to be erected in the western territory, and the additional sum of two millions appropriated, in case emergency should require.

But the opposition having failed in almost every undertaking to save their sinking cause, have had their dernier resort in calumny. A good man when he looks upon this part of their conduct, is filled with pity and astonishment; he is totally at a loss how to reconcile it with that profession of which they so frankly boast. A good cause may not always succeed, but a good cause is always glorious in defeat. Calumny is the retaliation of little, as abuse is the revenge of vulgar minds. I feel it incumbent on me to declare to you that nothing has so completely convinced me of the depravity, the imbecility and the mal-design of the antirepublican spirit, as those torrents of abuse which it has disgorged to obscure and overwhelm that virtue which it was unable to combat. It is in its design the flood of the dragon poured out to blast what his tail could not throw to the earth. It is the petrifying waters that turn to stone—that transform the brightest excellencies of the human character, and which threaten to invert even the moral principles of nature. But unfortunately for their purpose, it is like the Nile in its inundations, which, while it threatens to desolate, leaves the fields more rich and flourishing.

Many minds whom we would have seen thoughtful, and their dignified and noble, have been concerned not a little in the practice.—Our search need not to be extended to a great distance from this town and county to discover men who have occupied conspicuous stations in society, men who have filled the most sacred offices in church and state, men upon whom the people at large have fixed their attention for example and advice—I say to find men who have felt their souls refreshed in calumniating and abusing the republican character, from the President to the lowest member of the community, who have dared to oppose their nefarious machinations, and to show themselves decidedly American freemen.

But, my dear friends, regard it not. It is nothing but wind. It is but the adder's hiss without the power to harm. If Eternal Truth and Experience pronounce in your favour, detraction has turned its edge and satire lost its sting. You seldom or never knew it fail that the slanderer was inferior to the character he attempts to vilify. A character really beneath him is not often of consequence sufficient for investive. Public slander therefore is generally the effect of envy, and envy is the basest of all vices, because it forever proves the meanness of the person who envies, and demonstrates that he lives only in the shadow of his superior, who enjoys the sunshine of that honour, of which he himself is eclipsed. Apply these observations to those who are pleased to abuse and vilify all who dissent from them in opinion, and you will plainly view their cause in distress.

But to descend as many have done to personal abuse, is consummate meanness, and argues the dereliction of every principle of virtue, generosity and humanity. But could every one copy the magnanimity of a Jefferson, and treat such vile assassins with a total neglect and the most sovereign contempt, they would soon relax their exertions, and die, like some filthy animals, by their own stench. A great mind will rise above such wretched abuse, consoled in the consideration that it serves only to complete that portion of evil it has to suffer in the world.

But let not a wish arise for a sedition bill. The devil cannot be repressed by any statute of man: he may range the length of his chain, but cannot exceed it. This evil may prove a loud monitor to virtue, and prompt the republican to be ever on his guard. Better thus than to put on the profession of republican, for it would be harder to discriminate their designs. But should this ever be the case, should they ever succeed, reject at the real conviction of any, and embrace the villain as fellow-members of society. But mark their object; so far as this may be defined, keep them as distinct from the true republican, as the Jewish nation have been from the rest of the world. Their professed love to democracy may be strong, but remember the guile grows higher that betrays the hidden windings of the river. No—the char-

want, their laboured chicanery will be directly unfolded. The features of hypocrisy are distorted and prominent, and it is hard to act a counterfeit long. The designing must recur to many shifts to make good the first. But the path of truth is plain and undeviating.

Our address shall now be directed to the inhabitants of the county of Bristol.

When we attempt to eulogize the blessings of civil liberty, a subject, like the moral virtues, is of so general a nature and so universally interesting, that its spirit or language can hardly become appropriate to any section of mankind. But the present occasion may justify the apostrophe. For this day is celebrated by the assembly of the republican interest of this county. You have conferred upon me the unmerited honour of addressing you on this important occasion. Notwithstanding the humble deference I entertain for superior merit, yet I feel myself elevated on this joyful festival. I come to you this day with diffidence. I come to you as to a people of patriotism and candour; whose ideas of practical politics are clear and established. I come not to dictate or even to instruct you in any political creed. You have grown up in common with Americans, in the knowledge of national freedom. The revolutionary scenes are fresh in the memories of many. Not long since the merciless foe has approached your borders and shook the lash of tyranny over your heads. Hence you know how to appreciate the blessings you enjoy. I am deeply persuaded that your desires, your prayers, your grateful hearts ascend in fervent ejaculation for their continued enjoyment. Such fragrant incense as this has a savour that ascends to heaven."

Let stoical indifference forgive me, should I suggest that it is incumbent on you to stand fast in your liberties, and be not again entangled with the yoke of bondage.

My dear countrymen, be assured of this solemn truth, there has been and still is existing in the states an enemy to your liberty. Far be it from me to attempt to personate him or implicate any individual of the nation; for I wish to hope better things of every American. He is an enemy who like the serpent of old, envies the felicity of this new world. His envy has blinded his judgment and he is found strangely departed from the orthodoxy of truth. His interests are those of ambition, forever partial. For the support of his bigoted creed he recurs to false argument, and perverts the plainest maxims of national policy.—Failing to impose a government of his own, his invention is ever upon the rack to corrupt and controul the government of the people. But the difficulties he has to encounter in this country, in order to elude the vigilance of the people, must be far more arduous and painful than in almost any other of the globe. In progress

ing in his course he is obliged to imparts to his assistance indecorous stratagem, at which he himself is compelled to blush, and which he is forced to disown. For this serpentine spirit must turn and crook in order to advance one span a head. A direct way was never made for the travel of error and duplicity: They seek those paths that are tortuous and winding, and often in their extreme bendings and tergiversations they are defcried by the vigilant and their whole progress and machinations become the sport and ridicule of the public. At one time this enemy is heard founding a false alarm of impending evil; at another, he is crying peace when real danger is at the door. To serve an occasion, the horrors of war are painted before you in their most dismal colours. When he urges to war, he makes the national dignity and aggrandisement cry *to arms*. Yesterday he was heard on the change to vilify the revolution and republican governments. To-day at the coffee-house he approaches with a tender remembrance of those days, and an affectionate attachment to republican principles.—In short, my friends, our time would fail me to pursue him in all his inconsistencies and tortuosity of conduct.

Perhaps some may deem these observations ungenerously pointed. But I am deeply in the belief that there has been a train laid for American liberty. But the stratagem would have never progressed so far, had it not been for the remissness of the people. May you then ever be as centinels to the freedom of the nation, for this is the pælladium of your country—the image which fell from above. While this remains inviolate, your city shall be in safety. But remember the enemy without the walls, who formerly attempted your conquest by open invasion, may soon put on the habiliments of friendship and try their skill in artifice and wiles. Assuming the mask of religion, they may introduce to you their wicked Trojan horse, and pray that you would admit, and sacrifice to the idol. They may bring forward some specious modification of despotism, in the very womb of which lurk mischief and death. This, as they will shun the more wise and discerning, will be presented to the inattentive and uninformed. Pregnant with ruin, it may enter your city, and ere the plot is detected you are gone forever.

There is, my friends, in the breast of man, a fond propensity that is avaricious of advancement and popularity, and is easily courted with adulation and favour. Deceivers may seduce when every other measure is abortive. This is the plain reason why mortals should not be trusted at too great a length. This is the reason why discretionary power in any man or body of men, never fails to operate tyrannically to the people. Remember then that discretionary authority, instead of defending from the common adversary, is too frequently employed in its own defence against the rights of the nation. This authority once imparted, is hard

to be revoked. Individuals in power, can be more dexterous in wielding that power than the multitude can be in regaining their rights. Hence those who rule should be viewed as mere honourable servants and agents to the public body; for rulers like some of the elements of nature, are useful in service but destructive in sovereignty. Let him, therefore, who wishes to act like a sovereign, retire from public office and mingle himself with the people. There he will enjoy a majesty, a real sway, that acts in concert but with the general will. He will there be invested with an independance which cannot be possessed—which ought not to be claimed by any public agent.

Hold sacred, therefore, your elective rights. This is the ark of your safety—the holy sanctuary to which you may resort to repel the weapon directed against your happiness and peace. Refuge in this, you may elude every danger, defeat every adversary, purge the administration of government of every error, change your rulers and amend your constitution. But as politicians, guard against licentiousness in principle and practice. Cherish the doctrine of obedience to law and a veneration for sacred authorities. Lift an indignant arm against the first ravages of the fell hydra of faction.* A factious spirit is only tyranny in a vulgar garb. Be not hasty in assuming any hypothesis. Truth needs not to be impressed into service, but is a voluntary companion to the considerate mind. Be candid, but judicious; be deliberate, but determined. Embalm in a lively remembrance, a sense of your national liberties. History will assure us that what has generally brought on the darkness and degradation of ages, has been the ignorance of the rights of man. The weakness of the people, like many of the strongest of the brute creation, has chiefly consisted in the ignorance of their strength. Hence they have been oppressed because they knew not how to be free.

I must add, my friends, one thing more. Doubtless you have heard it circulated that mankind are to themselves the worst enemy. This doctrine is too absurd to be named among the brutal race, that any animal should be more inimically disposed towards one of the same species than to one of any other. It must have originated with unprincipled ambition, suggested from the conduct of those whom it has made the enemies and scourges of mankind.

This heterogene doctrine has also been taught, that man is incapable of governing himself. How then, for heaven's sake, shall he be trusted to govern others?† Or is he not to govern at all? No, reply those angelic beings called NOBLES, "WE will govern

* The author feels it incumbent on him to suggest, that he has once before published a few of these thoughts in an "oration occasioned by the death of Washington," pronounced in New-York, Feb. 22, 1800.

† Jefferson.

and men shall obey." We know, citizens, that the author of our existence has formed us of equal statures, with the same love for pleasure and aversion to pain. Shall one man then be made without his consent, subordinate to the will of another? No: had this been his pleasure, he would have made for us a Goliath, some tall colossal king, whose arm alone should make us obsequious to his will. Had he intended that a few "*well-born*:" should be invested with the ruling power, he would doubtless have formed them like the race of Anak, with native strength sufficient to command the loyalty of the people. But if their natural impotence is such that they cannot reign without wresting assistance from the common mass of mankind, they have arrogantly perverted the original design of nature, and their power is usurped.

France and Britain, and every other nation who are joined to their idols, we will let alone. Revere their republicanism, abjure their despotism, and pity the weakness of all. Be AMERICANS—Present the hand of fellowship to a friend; withdraw it from an enemy. Look well to much of that declamation called federalism; which though hooded in the guise of duplicity, betrays upon its front an aversion to equal liberty and a homage for the splendors of a crown. Should it assume to itself the surname of republican, a veneration for religion; ask what is its object but to enter the fold in the clothing of sheep, and give success and spirit to a declining opposition. Should it counterfeit the feelings of humanity, and pity the fate of nations, who have failed in attempting to shake off the yoke of bondage, beseeching the rest to be deterred, by their example, from the like undertaking—ponder for a moment whether it exists in the breast of ambition to wish well to mankind; or whether philanthropy belongs unto kings—kings whose sovereign power, as awful as it may be, is only the pirated accumulation of our own. Pause whether those insinuating alarms of the common embarrassments of republics, unavoidable from the passions of men, have not their origin with the prostitutes of royalty, echoed from palaces and manors, and reverberated down through all the ramifications of despotism and official dependencies.

Our gratulations would familiarly salute the company of heroic and other military characters who have politely taken a distinguished part in the celebration of the day. When I look upon you I ever look with respect and gratitude. I look upon you as the safeguard of my country. You, my friends, are more than an adequate substitute for all the standing armies that can be stationed in America. You are citizens, and therefore you must be patriots. You are patriots, and therefore you must be soldiers. You are as ready I presume, when your country calls, to equip yourselves to repel an invading foe, as you are for the

manifestation of your disciplinary days. You feel, no doubt, some of that martial ardour, whenever the parade invites you. With this heroism, the feelings excited on this occasion are not incompatible. Your profession, as a militia, is amply honourable, because you are honoured by the people. Standing troops have no honour save what those few who created them can conveniently bestow. Let a laudable emulation then ever stimulate you to improvement in the military art, and the discipline of your soldiers. All our dependence for external protection is upon you.— Rest assured of this truth, that the militia will never be disorganized until the people have totally lost their elective franchise.— You, as the people, therefore are *originally* your own legislature; and you, as the militia, are *ultimately* the executive of your own laws. We recommend to you to second with spirit the exertions of your worthy President to keep in due regulation the military department. You are not solicited for the protection of your rulers, but for the protection of yourselves. While they are secure in their own impregnable virtue, you shall be called THE LIFE-GUARD OF YOUR COUNTRY.

My address, Ladies, now fondly turns to you.

Fair daughters of America—Among the honours of patriotism we cannot forget the charms of the fair. Though to us are committed the more arduous concerns of the field and the cabinet, yet nature has guaranteed to you in the tenderness and delicacy of your sex, almost a sovereign power, (if we could believe in any such) in the sentimental interests of life. There is implanted in the human breast a passion nearly allied to the passion of angels, conjugal affection. From this proceeds all that variety of tender endearments which will ever be respected and obeyed. As you, therefore, have the principal right of controul in the dominion of love, you will ever retain a commanding influence in the affairs of society. You will pardon me, therefore, if I have considered you for the subject of the day. Notwithstanding that respect to which your virtues and charms entitle you, still the tenderness and weakness of your sex are such, as demand all the protection that well-digested law can bestow. Ambition and despotism, when sporting with the liberties of a country, will also invade those ties and relations which your virtuous minds have ever deemed sacred. For ambition having advanced in its career has ever been inclined to do what seemeth good in its own eyes. Virtuous Lucretia may again be insulted by a libidinous Sextus. Some Leanteous Virginia may fall a victim to the lust of another tyrant Appius.

Should any of your hearts incline you to patriotic deeds, you have examples in history that may forbid the rubric blush to tinge your countenances. Many of your sex have wrested from the hands of ambitious enemies the liberty of their nation. The

Deliverances of Deborah and Judith grace the page of sacred history. In other story the instances are numerous of those brave heroines who like Joan of Arc, have achieved the salvation of their country. But should such exploits be deemed remote from ornament to your sex, suffer me to suggest, that by your persuasions the hearts of men have been compelled to great and benevolent actions. By the intercession of his queen, the golden sceptre of Ahasuerus was extended to the Jews. When Edward the Third had no commiseration or pardon for the brave six at the siege of Calais, he was "won to pity by the queen he loved."

To you, my fair friends, is intrusted the first care and education of our children. You have almost an exclusive authority in the concerns of our families. In domestic economy is laid the foundation of social felicity. From private virtue proceeds all that a nation can boast. The first impressions on our infant minds are the strongest and far the most indelible; and these first impressions we generally receive from you. From the child grows up the man, for "just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined." Why should the love of country be overlooked in your tender instructions, when the patriot is so intimately connected with the good and useful citizen. Mirabeau's advice was, "begin with the infant in his cradle, and let the first word he lisps be the name of Washington." Remember the patriotic women of ancient Greece, who indignantly wept when their sons were wounded in an inglorious retreat; but would rejoice at their death when fallen gloriously fighting for the commonwealth.—Our country is yours. We are willing that you should share in its glory. To this end therefore are various toasts instituted to your honor on public occasions. We do not solicit your bold efforts as an armed race of Amazons, but kindly to employ that tender influence you have, for the good of the public. The hearts of the young patriots shall be fired with an emulative zeal, for in deserving well of their country, they will deserve well of you.—To you then who have oft rejoiced to deck the triumphant bowers of our Washington, to you it is given to enliven the gratitude we owe to our immortal Jefferson, and to add a never-fading wreath in the chaplet of your country. We know the tenderness of your hearts. That benevolence you entertain for the human race, can be equalled only by your conjugal love. You can sympathize in the felicity and wretchedness of your country; and you who have subdued the hearts of kings, must be happy in the persuasion that your tributary aid may subdue the cruel domination of unfeeling Ambition.