

AN

ORATION,

COMMEMORATIVE OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,

DELIVERED TO A REPUBLICAN AUDIENCE AT

NEW-BEDFORD, MASS.

July Fourth, 1810.

==
By SELLECK OSBORN.
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NEW-BEDFORD :

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1810.

New-Bedford, July 5th, 1810.

SIR,

WE, as a Committee, have been appointed to wait on you and tender the thanks of our fellow-citizens for the Oration delivered yesterday, and request a copy of the same for the press.

JOHN HAWES,
JOHN DELANO,
ELI HASKELL.

Mr. Selleck Osborn.



July 5th, 1810.

GENTLEMEN,

I leave the performance of which you request a copy, wholly at your disposal.

SELLECK OSBORN.

JOHN HAWES,
JOHN DELANO,
ELI HASKELL.

AN ORATION.



FELLOW-CITIZENS,

YOU have just heard the solemn manifesto, from which we date our existence as a nation—uttered by undaunted freemen, in the face of danger and death—in defiance of a vindictive and powerful tyrant—in the presence of an admiring world, and an approving God !

The sublime effort of patriotism which has justly made this day conspicuous in the annals of human glory, must claim the gratitude and awaken the honest pride of every American heart. May it extend its effects to ages far beyond us, and warm every breast with generous emulation to brave hardship and peril in defence of Liberty.

For a number of years previous to this eventful day, Britain and her American Colonies had been constantly agitated by broad assumptions on one hand, and firm remonstrances on the other. The right claimed by England to tax us for the support of measures which we had no voice in devising, and from which we derived no benefit, was first contested by Virginia, and immediately after by Massachusetts. These two colonies for a long time resisted, almost alone, the torrent of British oppression. In those days, it would have fared ill with the man who should have attempted to sow discord between Massachusetts and Virginia—who should have railed at “ Virginia influence,” and abused our southern brethren. Though the Legislative Assemblies of these states were repeatedly dissolved by their British Governors, they persevered in their united exertions—they successfully recommended to the people of all the Colonies, to abstain from the use of articles taxed, and of British manufacture. Non-importation, that

negative, but powerfully coercive measure, that dreadful eye-sore of ancient as it is of modern friends of England, was then a popular course of policy; though we had then, as we have since, many very *patriotic* people to dissuade us from it; by representing it as weak and futile; pregnant with injury to ourselves alone—totally harmless with regard to England! But, praised be God! such men had then but little influence in our councils, and the republic was saved.

The persevering opposition of those respectable Colonies, and the growing disposition manifested by the others to support them, at length effected a change of ministry, and a repeal of the obnoxious taxes; but the parliament expressly reserved the *right* of taxing us in *all cases whatsoever*. As might have been expected, new taxes were built upon this reservation; which were opposed with unabated firmness.

To induce submission to the *principle*, the ministry once more repealed all the unpopular taxes except that on Tea; erroneously supposing that after so many apparent concessions on the part of Britain, the raw politicians of this infant country would see no objection to the payment of this very trifling tax, for the sake of tranquility. Too late they were convinced, that Americans, born with the spirit and bred in the habits of enterprize and investigation, were no more to be deluded than terrified into a concession of their rights.

The manner in which the oppressions, the menaces, and the intrigues of Britain were met by the Colonies, eminently distinguished this opposition, not only from ordinary revolts, but from all other revolutions. This was of no mushroom growth, to disappear with the night that produced it—this was not grafted on a decayed trunk, like the fatally abortive revolution of France. No—it grew, as it were, spontaneously, from a congenial soil; expanded and ripened by degrees, till a thrifty maturity exhibited its noble fruit for the refreshment of millions. It took root in that native love of liberty—that compound of enterprize and prudence which has ever distinguished the American people; and which forms a foundation that no craft can undermine, no force can funder.

The first opposition to England was expressed in the filial tone of humble petition to an acknowledged mother country. Out of repeated grievances grew the bolder, yet no less respectful, language of remonstrance and expostulation; till the wilful deafness and persevering aggression of England hastened the termination of the climax, so nobly crowned by the illustrious Jefferson, in the immortal Declaration of Independence.

The well known destruction of the Tea in Boston accelerated that awful appeal to arms, to which this contest had been long tending. The king and parliament thought the time now arrived to make a blow for the support of their imaginary dignity. It was determined to make an example of Boston, to intimidate the other colonies; accordingly the charter of Massachusetts was substantially abrogated, and its metropolis blockaded.

But here Britain was met by her evil genius. The side of the magnet which she applied to repel, proved attractive; and the Colonies which were expected to shrink into insignificance, extended their arms to each other by one consentaneous impulse, and exhibited to the astonished eyes of Britannia that immense chain of *union*, then so fatally ominous, still so powerfully obstructive to her ambition—that *Union*, which she and her advocates have never since ceased to assail—and which has never failed to baffle their efforts.

It was in this moment of alarm and distress, when Boston shook with the angry roarings of the British lion, that Virginia established her claim to the hatred of tyrants; It was then that she sinned against England beyond forgiveness, and fully earned that angry invective which the *friends* of England still consistently pour upon her with unabated virulence.

It would be unnecessary, were it possible, for me to describe the alarm, the anxiety, the agony of mingled and complicated distress, which marked the period embraced by this event, and the commencement of hostilities. The attempt would but clog the active memory of my elder auditors, in its flight back to those pregnant times. And do you, my youthful auditors, whose parental firesides

have so often derived interest from the tale of other days ; who have so often hung with fond attention on the knees of your veteran fires—retraced with them their dangers and their sufferings—exulted at their victories—wept at their defeats—do *you* need my feeble aid to realize the complexion of those times ? Even now have you not, in imagination, out stript my words, and already wandered over the consecrated plains of Lexington, ascended the proud heights of Bunker, and hailed the spirits of Warren and his fellow-martyrs ? I know you have, and superfluous words would but retard the animating career.

It was not alone in the warlike field that the American character was glorified in those days of trial. With all possible deference to the virtues of the veteran hero, I would invite him to the contemplation of that patriotic resolution and self-denial, which so powerfully co-operated with his bravery—I would remind him of the more than Spartan heroism and constancy with which our mothers and sisters relinquished their luxuries and comforts, and plied their industry to give effect to the policy of their country. I would speak to him of the intrepidity with which American beauty leapt from foreign splendor to homespun plainness—I would tell him how female patriotism expelled the social beverage, the beloved China drug, from the matronly circle ! I would, to be grave, tell him of the noble generosity with which all classes of people resigned their gains, hazarded their possessions, and bridled their appetites, for the public good ; and he must acknowledge that it was not his arm alone that had atchieved Independence.

The obstinate bravery with which Americans resisted the first efforts of British arms against them, piqued the pride and waked all the wrath of the English ministry. Immense preparations were made, with the sanguine hope of finishing our subjugation at a single blow. That navy which had so long been the terror of the world, hovered round our devoted coasts, prepared to disgorge its vast legions among a widely scattered, undisciplined, and almost unarmed people, whose government had no other strength than a precarious influence over the public mind.

It was under this unpromising aspect of affairs ; when hope seemed to be on the wing, and the success of resistance a matter of fearful doubt—when the friends of England stunned our ears with the dismal croaking which we still occasionally hear—that her power was irresistible ; that she had “ done us no essential injury ”—that we ought to submit to her exactions, and seek her protection, or be treated as rebels and traitors—it was in the midst of peril, on the borders of the scaffold, with the Executioner at their elbows, and an ignominious death staring them in the face, that the American Congress poured forth the collected energies of the country, in the memorable declaration of Independence. This wonderful act of courage and constancy, more powerful than the lens of Archimedes, seemed to collect the scattered rays of our country’s patriotism into a focus too intense to be resisted.—Even the rampant lion of England seemed to crouch for an instant, and pay a momentary homage to the superior energies of mind.

This noble expression of heroic patriotism—and the solemn manner in which they set every thing dear to man at stake, instantly gave a body and a tone to public sentiment, and breathed new life into all. The ancient oracles never gave more point and decision to national force, than did this declaration to the latent strength of America ; those before decided for Independence were now fortified in their decision ; the wavering were settled ;—and those who had still fearful doubts of the result, found they had passed the Rubicon, and it was safer to advance than retreat.

Let the slave of gain, the idolator of self, behold this monument of disinterested love of country, and blush !—Let the timid politician here take a lesson, and learn how much is gained by decision ; while by cowardly time-serving, every thing is lost.

I dwell with more minuteness on this particular measure, not only because it is the very essence of this day’s celebrity ; not only because it is in the abstract a monument highly glorious to the human character ;—but because it is a splendid and useful example of promptitude and decis-

ion, which might ever be followed by our councils, much to their own and their country's advantage. In vain the proud navy of England (unincumbered with other wars, and at full leisure to concentrate all its force against us) displayed its bloody streamers, and yawning ports, menacing destruction—In vain the clamours of the disaffected burst forth, in terms, that in modern times would have entitled them to the proud appellation of “*patriotic proceedings* ;” the Congress of '76 did not shrink from foreign hostility, nor domestic opposition ; but moved firmly and diligently in their elevated course, and maintained their high ground, careless of their own personal fate—solicitous only for their country !

I should usurp the province of history, and trespass on your patience, were I to detail the vicissitudes of the war which followed. Neither your experience, nor your imaginations want a prompter, to recal to mind the hurry of preparation—the tender, perhaps the eternal farewell of the husband, the father or the brother, when the shrill blast of war summoned him to the field—the anxieties of the fireside, or the hardships of the camp ; the consternation of defenceless families, flying in despair from their burning habitations ; or the tumultuous peril of the battle, where myriads of brave spirits were dismissed to their eternal rest, and where rivers of choice blood consecrated our land to freedom ; the distrust and animosity kindled between neighbours, by those who sided with the powerful oppressors against their own persecuted fellow-citizens ; the alternate exultations of victory or the condolence of defeat ; in short, the multiplied disasters of a most vindictive warfare, till the memorable capture of Cornwallis ; when the proud ensigns of mighty Britain bowed before the standard of freedom, and the triumphant eagle clapped his glad wings over the panting Lion. O, ever memorable day of joy ! then it was that the throb of rapture flew with electric celerity from heart to heart, and with one impulse raised the hands of millions with grateful rejoicing ; the engines of war, now divested of their bolts, announced the tidings in harmless thunder ; past sufferings were no more remembered ; the mangled in-

valid leapt on his crutch and forgot his wounds ; a smile of triumph beamed through the tears of the widow ; and the angel of freedom sounded *te deum* through the arch of a propitious heaven !

Such was the justice of our cause, and such the diligence and self-denial of our citizens in its support, that the omniscient eye seemed to look with peculiar complacency upon our struggles ; nor does it require any extravagant national partiality on our part to recognize the protecting aid of heaven in our success. Although no pillar of fire by night, nor cloud by day directed our course ; although no river or sea retired before our retreating armies ; although no manna descended to bless the eyes and quell the hunger of our famishing soldiers ; although no rock unlocked its flinty bosom to yield relief to their parching thirst ; although no brazen serpent repelled the devouring pestilence, and no ark rendered our hosts invulnerable ; yet the mental eye is at no loss to read on our standards *The sword of the Lord, and of Washington !*—and the arm of omnipotence, sustaining us through many trials to a glorious destiny.—What but this could have informed the souls and fortified the hearts of our earliest patriots to resist the encroachments and detect the snares of a crafty ministry ?—What but this could have given such a spirit of harmony, such strength of union and such concert of action to a widely scattered people, of various habits and pursuits ? What but this could have influenced a whole people, who loved riches at least as much as any nation on earth, to forego their gains, and sacrifice their possessions, in defence of their principles, and of their country ? What but this could have caused a people, naturally jealous of control, to obey voluntarily, and almost unanimously and implicitly, the requisitions of a government, which existed but in their breath ? What but this could have preserved the whig's constancy, with danger and almost despair on one side, and tempting promises and allurements on the other ? What but this could have kept alive the flame of patriotism beneath the tattered remnant of clothing, in the fireless and half sheltered prisons of New-York, or in the mephitic and pestilential hold of a prison-

ship? What but this could have harmonized the jarring materials of our army into effective legions, and held them together through every vicissitude, till their career closed with an act of self-command, unparalleled in the records of human greatness.

So very limited were the resources of this country during this war, that the troops were for the most part miserably paid and subsisted. Notwithstanding these sufferings, it had not then become the custom to lay every inconvenience at the door of the rulers; nor to demand of them the performances of impossibilities, for relief. The conclusion of the war found the public greatly indebted to the troops; and under these circumstances it was necessary to disband them. An anonymous attempt was made to instigate the troops to retain their arms, and remain in a body till they could compel congress to pay them. But this attempt, counteracted by the voice of their beloved chief, proved abortive; and this patriotic band, possessing the physical force of the country, quietly relinquished it, and returned to their destitute families, with a bare certificate of the amount due them from the public. But **FREE-DOM** was gained; for this they thought no price too dear. Thus the veteran soldier, after having devoted seven of his best years to his country, sat down quietly to begin the world anew. History abounds with instances of the arrogance of victorious bands; but it was reserved for the American soldiers of Liberty to consummate their victories by the crown of all conquests—the conquest of themselves!

And here naturally arises a reflection of incalculable importance to the American people. We have seen that our independence was gained by much toil and hardship—great sacrifices and privations;—and by such it must be preserved; it is not the lot of man to enjoy without labor and suffering; and that man grossly deceives himself, who looks for the continuance of Liberty, without constant vigilance, and frequent self-denials.

When foreign dangers had ceased, and the cares of peace called the attention of the people, they found a new labor before them. A Constitution, competent to secure

the rights and apply the resources of the nation, was now the grand desideratum. This, at all times the greatest effort of human genius, was in the present case peculiarly difficult. A great variety of interests were to be reconciled, and resolved into one. The conflict of views and opinions to be apprehended, was by no means trifling.— Among other political infirmities, that odious spirit of pecuniary speculation, which has since jeopardized our liberties more than once, had crept into the public habit. The earliest victim of this obstinate poison was the aged veteran, whose locks were bleached by the storms of life, and whose scars were the hieroglyphic history of many battles. He had been obliged to satisfy the wants of his family by selling, for a mere trifle, the evidence of his claim on the public. He was dragging out a life of poverty; while the upstart who had taken advantage of his necessities, and had procured the redemption of the extorted paper at par, was lolling in affluence and ease.—Such causes of disgust promised much less harmony than was happily realized.

After much debate, both in general convention and in the state government, the draft of a Constitution was so modified as to meet the approbation of the people generally. Among those modifications was the provision of the Constitution for its own amendment, in a prescribed form. This regenerative principle perhaps is more preservative of its political health, than any one thing that could be devised. The amendments which finally united all parties, were mostly the work of *Jefferson* and *Madison*. Under this Constitution, the venerable *Washington* was the first President. This great and popular character was of infinite service in harmonizing the public mind, and giving it leisure to settle down in the new government. His influence suppressed for a time, many poisonous weeds which were springing up in ambitious minds. At the close of eight years, he resigned, as *Jefferson* has since done, leaving behind him a treasure of parting advice, which has been the least regarded by those who have been the most prone to screen their views behind his popular name.

When this political fun had retired, the wolves of party crawled from their hiding places, and prowled through the country. These comprised a description of men, who had high notions of energetic government ; of privileged orders ; of splendid establishments ; and of great distinction between men of birth and family, and the common people ; it was a maxim with these, that the common people were not fit judges of their own interest, and consequently ought to have as little weight in the government as possible ; that in order to sink them to their proper level, the hands of government should be strengthened by funding systems ; and great executive patronage ; and those of the PEOPLE weakened by heavy taxation and limited privileges ; that they must be, in relations to the higher orders, like the Helots to the Spartans ; that they must do all the drudgery, while the well born should enjoy all the profits and honors. At the head of this party was Hamilton ; a man of great ambition, who had very mean notions of the mass of the people of any country.

Another description of men, were in favor of giving the body of the people the full weight which had been recognized in the Constitution, and which reason and justice awarded them ; *they* wished at least to give a free scope to experiment, and to let the trial be fairly made, whether mankind, when treated as rational beings, would not be found to have virtue enough for self-government ; those men despised the pageantry of nobility and its idle distinctions ; and wished the weight of government to be derived solely from the merits of its form and administration ;—among the most prominent characters of this class were Jefferson, Madison, and the venerable Samuel Adams.

When the question between the parties was submitted to the people, who had not yet had a fair opportunity to test the merits of each by its actions, a small majority appeared in favor of the former description of men ; whose low opinion of the common people, and whose notions of energetic government, were amply developed in the short career of four years. Few of my auditors are ignorant of the rapid strides made during this period to reach the excellence of the British government, that “ stupendous

fabric of human invention," that hobby of the party, which they indeed rode at an unmerciful rate ; so earnestly did the rulers of that day seem to emulate England in taxation, debt, and prodigality, that we could only account for their falling off from whig principles, by comparing them to uneasy apprentices ; who leave their masters, not that they dislike their treatment or trade, but because they are impatient to set up the same trade for themselves.

These men were very sore, and extremely impatient of opposition ; in those times, it was safer to commit almost any crime, than to speak against the administration. We then heard much of the virtue of rallying round the general government ; and it was their common saying, that the Jacobins (those who opposed their own government) were not only unfit for office, but for decent society !

It was all for the best, that the men of energy, who despised the common people, should have the first watch aboard the national ship ; it was soon discovered that they had set her course directly for an English port, under pretence of avoiding the revolutionary breakers of France ; but they were discharged before they had an opportunity to effect their design ; and had abundant leisure in their retirement to overhaul their reckoning.

Except running the nation in debt, increasing taxes, imprisoning a few printers, and multiplying offices, the mighty bustle of that *energetic* administration resulted in little more than loud swaggering and high words ; exalted on their Babel of debt and taxation, they brandished their cockades, threatened to chastise France, and " Nelsonize the world !" — In the mean time they were wholly ignorant of that silent and bloodless revolution which was undermining their frail fabric, and a tremendous fall was the first notice they had of their danger. A war with France, alliance with England, a great navy, a thriving national debt, and a flourishing growth of taxation, might have been productive of abundant comfort to Hamilton, and the well-born few ; but *the people*, found neither glory nor comfort in them ; so they set aside them and their projectors together.

It was in vain that they had fortified themselves in their elevation ; it was in vain that, by funding system projects, they had attached to themselves the monied influence of the nation ; it was in vain that by excise establishments they had filled the country with their official tools ; it was in vain that they had shackled the press, and provided for the banishment of obnoxious persons ; it was in vain that numerous addresses to the President, and his answers, were multiplied, to persuade the people, against their own conviction, that they liked the prevailing policy ;—all this machinery only served to make their fall the heavier.

When the writer of the declaration of Independence, the illustrious Jefferson, came to the Presidential chair, the leaders of the fallen party who had claimed the exclusive appellation of *federalists*, beheld opposed to them the man, whom, of all others, they had most reason to dread.—His principles were entirely subversive of all their favorite schemes of energy and glory ! and his talents and manners eminently calculated to root those principles deeply in the public mind. They mistook the cause of their own downfall ; and supposing they had been put down by party efforts, they imagined that Jefferson might be written down also ; and this must be done before he had taken too deep root in popular favor. Then was commenced an opposition, the depravity of which was only equalled by its industry ; an opposition which, for vulgar licentiousness has no parallel in history. They accused the President of undue partiality to France ; but they could adduce nothing more against him on this point than against Washington ; they had both wished success to France, as a republic ; and the latter expressed as much in a very flattering letter to the French minister, long after the excesses of Robespierre. They accused him of determined hostility to England ; but if that had been the case, would he have neglected so many plausible opportunities of making war upon her ? They accused Jefferson of hatred to religion ; but the only proof they attempted to bring in support of this, was his writing in favor of religious liberty ! He was charged with cowardice, swindling, adultery, treachery, and almost every crime that can degrade human

nature. But they had the mortification to see this political luminary pursue his steady course, unmoved by their efforts ; while their vulgar calumnies evaporated before his splendid virtues like mist before the meridian sun.

Four years he sustained the flames of the seven-fold heated furnace of their wrath, and came out unscathed.— And so fully satisfied were the people with his pacific and truly republican policy ; and so striking was the contrast between the economy of his administration and the prodigality of the preceding ; that out of 176 Electoral Votes, only 14 were given against him at the next election.

The result of this struggle was as honorable to the American government and people as it was disgraceful to the opposition. It proved how little a government, fortified in the affections of a virtuous community, had to fear from the licentiousness of the press ; it proved that the most abandoned presses might be even useful, in giving vent to those corrupt humours, which if restrained might distemper the vitals of society.

It is the constant lot of man to find evil inseparably mixed with good ; the greatest blessings have concomitant evils, proportionably great. Party spirit is the great alloy of free government ; or rather appears to be such ; for perhaps it is for the safety of the people that active and aspiring spirits should act as a check upon each other.— But the present state of party is such as to produce serious evils to this country, by encouraging the insidious hopes of foreigners to profit by our divisions.

No one who has reflected much on the subject, supposes that England relinquished all hopes of America, when she assented to our Independence ; she only changed her plan ; her object has ever been the same in regard to us, as it was in 1775. Mr. Pitt made no secret of his policy to effect by commercial influence, what arms had contended for in vain. The tories, recalled from exile by a generosity that deserved at least their neutrality, came with hearts untouched by gratitude, but cankered with revenge. These tories were the leaven which at one time threatened to affect fatally the great mass of the people. The efforts of these, backed by swarms of English commercial

agents, who had no tie to this country but a temporary interest—together with the commercial advantages thrown in the reach of our merchants by British intercourse ;—were but too successful in establishing in the heart of our country a powerful British influence, pregnant with much embarrassment and vexation. The unfortunate bias of the Hamilton party cherished this influence. Numerous emissaries from England were scattered over the country, with ready pens, (if not purses) to inculcate federalism, which was known by them to be synonymous with devotion to England. The chief of these, the notorious Cobbett, has since his return to England laid open the views of the ministry, in concert with our Hamiltonians ; and confirmed, what was probable before, the intention of Britain to entangle us in an alliance with her, and hostility to France. It was a necessary part of this system to instigate the American people against France, and persuade them, that the opposers of British views were actuated by *French Influence*. Though the grand object of this combination has failed, it has succeeded too well in part, by embarrassing the measures of our government to meet British aggression ; and has kept alive the hopes of England to divide and subdue us.

If any man is disposed to controvert this description of the party called federal, let him shew me a decided ministerial Englishman in this country who is not also a decided federalist ; let him shew me a federalist who has not been an uniform advocate of England against our government ; then perhaps I may begin to doubt my own correctness.

We have seen this party, composed of such materials and prompted by such interests, openly advocating a war with France, and an offensive and defensive alliance with England ; *openly*, I say ; and I bind myself to prove it if called upon.—We have seen them naturally abusing Jefferson, who stood so much in the way of their views—We have seen them under the name of *Federalists* ; opposing the *federal* government, and seeking to dissolve the *federal* Union ;—We have heard them endeavoring to excite enmity between the northern and southern states, by the most abusive comparisons ; while they claimed to be

disciples of that Washington, who exhorted us to “frown indignantly upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest”—We have seen them, under the appellation of *Americans*, justifying the *plunder*, the IMPRESSMENT, the MURDER of our fellow citizens, by Britain; and the grossest insults to our government by her representatives; while under the same name, we have seen them denouncing and impeding to the extent of their power, *every* measure of our own government for redress.—We have seen them, under the assumed character of friends of order and regular government, denouncing the general administration in Legislative solemnity, and upholding the foreign minister whom that government had disgraced.—Under the name of *patriots* we have seen them, in what they called “*patriotic proceedings*,” on the floor of a state Legislature, instigating the people to rebellion against the laws of Congress; and under the same assumed character we have seen them actually organizing an armed opposition to those laws! We have seen them, under the respectable name of merchants and navigators, descend to the practice of midnight smugglers, disregarding the laws of their own country, and violating those of every other, to the disgrace of the American character.

Towards the close of Jefferson’s administration our commerce became almost annihilated by the singular and unprecedented mode of warfare adopted by the two great belligerents of Europe, which struck at the root of all neutral rights, as recognized time immemorial among civilized nations. Nor had we alone to complain of European injustice; a species of commercial vagrants, born indeed in America, but citizens of every country by turns, and attached to none, had by various fraudulent practices, in concert with Englishmen of congenial character, prostituted our flag; till, from covering every thing it could cover nothing; to the disgrace of the American name, and the injury of honest traders. Under these circumstances, what could be done? To compel England or France, by force of arms, to justice, was out of the question. To take shelter within our own territories till

the storm blew over, seemed the wisest course. The importance of our intercourse to the belligerents was well known. To deprive them of this would injure them ten times more than any other kind of coercion we could use; at the same time that it would bring the national wealth wholly at our command, and leave us at liberty to make war whenever we should have sufficient reason.— Both parties anticipated this measure with impatience rather than apprehension; and the bloody, the disgraceful, the yet unexpiated outrage on the frigate *Cheapeake*, hastened the adoption of the Embargo.

And now, what was the conduct of the very men, who had before agreed in the expediency of an embargo?— Did they assist its operation? No. Did they even suffer it to take its course unmolested? No. Did they point out any thing better? No.—But they laid hold of it as an engine to batter down the administration—they eagerly seized this opportunity to operate upon that love of gain which is so conspicuous a trait in the American character. They falsely represented that the measure was intended by the southern haters of commerce, to annihilate trade and distress the commercial states—they wrought upon every passion that could be brought to bear on the administration—they falsely and impudently asserted that the Embargo was the chief obstacle to prosperous commerce; that our own government was its greatest enemy—they drew the most terrifying pictures of the pretended misery of our country; and even persuaded some to think themselves miserable, whether they were really so or not!— When it was manifest that England began severely to feel the effects of this measure, they encouraged her not to concede an inch; for, said they, you can hold out longer than the American government; the American people will not bear the Embargo; the tide of revolution is strongly in our favor; already is New-England changed; hold out a little longer, and the American administration must yield to you, or go down! At the same time they told us that England did not suffer the value of a straw by the Embargo; and to fulfil, in some measure, their own assertions, they labored to smuggle supplies to English

ports, availing themselves of the encouragement offered by the British king to the violators of our Laws. They inculcated the detestable maxim, that every man had a right to judge for himself whether a law ought to be obeyed; and to act as seemed best in his own eyes! They instigated resistance by force to the execution of the laws; they procured arms, organized companies, and appropriated the public ammunition to this purpose. To such a pitch of depravity did this party arrive, that the federal governor of Connecticut positively refused to obey the law of the United States which directed him to furnish his quota of militia! By the basest arts, they succeeded in alienating many from their own government, and drove the country to the verge of civil war!

Yet these men, who had conducted so unworthily as citizens, had the assurance to solicit you to choose them for rulers. In this commonwealth they set up the motto of "Gore and free trade," and assured you that if they could have the management of this one state, commerce should be restored. Instead of one, they gained five states. And now where is the man that will point out any thing they have done to redeem their promises? Will it be said they terrified Congress to relinquish the Embargo and Non-intercourse? Grant them for a moment, this triumph of insurgency, which Shays and his followers would have gloried in—Where now is the free trade, which they warranted to us in case of the repeal of those laws? Is it to be found in the Baltic, the British Channel, or the ports of France, Holland or Italy? Is it to be found in salt or fresh water, on the land or on the ocean? Is it to be found within the control of France or England? If not, where can it be found?—These men said they would find free trade, if they were permitted to go and seek it. They have been permitted; and now let them tell us where it is? Perhaps they will say it can be had in the shape of a British licence; that is, liberty to take what is our own, only for a few guineas! But if this is free trade, may the Lord give us a speedy riddance of it! And may those who are base enough to accept it, never have any other.

For many anniversaries past, we have felicitated each other on our country's prosperity. I know of no claim that this nation can have to be exempt from the vicissitudes of human affairs. We have no right to look for uninterrupted prosperity. And when adversity comes, and come it will, we must exert such means of defence as the resources of our country afford. All other occupations and interests are liable to interruptions; and why not commerce? And after all, when I view the real situation of our country; when I see the comforts and even luxuries of life springing from our own soil; when I see the increase of manufactures, and the general disposition to seek in our own resources, what the mad policy of Europe denies us; a disposition which tends to *real* Independence, by enabling us to live within our selves, when necessary—when I see our boards crowned with plenty, and the poorest citizens as well supplied with *substantial* enjoyments as ever; above all, when I compare our situation with that of the happiest country in any other part of the globe;—I cannot see that we are drinking so very deep of the cup which now poisons mankind. Cannot the tide of gain cease to flow a moment without making us really miserable? Are we the spoiled children of prosperity, whom the long indulgence of Providence has rendered impatient of contradiction? Are we like clamorous beggars, who raise their demands upon benefactors, in proportion to their previous generosity?—If so, if Columbia indeed “waxeth fat and kicketh,” it is time she was humbled. If in the long sunshine of success we have become rank and luxurious, and outgrown the humble virtues of our forefathers, this storm of adversity is in fact a most seasonable blessing.

I am by no means an enemy to fair and honest commerce; I love to see industry and enterprize rewarded. But for my soul I cannot see why the country may not be tolerably happy for a few years, although the merchant should gain somewhat less; although he may even be reduced to the sad condition of holding his own! although his country mansion does not, this year or the next, rise to mock the humble farm-house! Where commerce, agri-

culture and manufactures go hand in hand, the union is profitable, and they cannot flourish too fast ; but a commercial *monopoly* is of all things most destructive to general happiness, most fatal to republican institutions.

We have it in our power to make the belligerents of Europe feel and respect our weight in the scale of nations. We can do without their luxuries longer than they can without our necessaries of life. We have it in our power to convince them that we can despise gew-gaws, forego our gains, ply our industry, and unite in support of our government, with as much fortitude as our forefathers. They would have been so convinced ere this, had it not been for the false impressions they received from the momentary infatuation wrought in the public mind, by mischievous demagogues. Had the Embargo continued till this time, it would not now have been an object of terror, but of ardent attachment. The people would have nobly sustained the trial, notwithstanding their unfavorable prepossessions. Fully am I convinced of this ; though there was a time when I anticipated the reverse with trembling apprehension. I have no faith in the insurgents, who insultingly described the independent people of America, as the slaves of gain, who would, on no account, forego for a moment the profits of commerce ! Can it be believed that we, while boasting of our Independence, are so entirely dependent on Europe, that we cannot hold together a year—nay, years, without her intercourse ? No, fellow-citizens, I spurn the base suggestion ! Had I thought my countrymen so degenerated, I should have disdained to prostitute my feeble talents this day in assisting the solemn mockery of Independence ! I should have considered every lip of freedom as profane hypocrisy ; and the sound of every cannon as the vain-glory of shame, the ostentation of disgrace !

My fellow-citizens ! as frail children of humanity ; as inheritors of mingled and imperfect happiness—we cannot taste the pleasures of this day without some alloy—the obstruction of the great stream of wealth which has been so long flowing into our country must necessarily occasion much vexation and embarrassment—we cannot, we would

not forget, that thousands of our countrymen, who once raised the song of freedom with us on this anniversary, are at the present moment in slavery on board of British men of war—perhaps at this instant, some hapless sailor is exclaiming “This day my native country resounds with peals of joy—while I waste the tedious hours in hopeless misery. Rejoice, my countrymen—make the most of your freedom; If this morning’s sun brings a ray of comfort to me, it is the reflection that my countrymen are not *all* slaves!” Many of our neighbours are debarred from joining in this festivity, while waiting abroad the decision of their fortunes at the tribunals of civilized pirates.—England, our old enemy, persists in aggression; to plunder and abuse America has become her second nature; ‘can the “Leopard” change his spots?’ The spirits of our countrymen murdered in the Chesapeake, still hover round us unappeased, unavenged; and mar our festivity with their cries for vengeance! The pleasing prospect of a speedy accommodation with France, seems entirely overclouded; justice and policy are divorced, and our foreign relations afloat on the wide ocean of uncertainty. But there is no reason to despair. A kind Providence has brought us safely through many darker days than this.—Not for worlds would we exchange this day and its fortunes for those on which the sun rose thirty four years ago.—Those were indeed gloomy times, when the parent viewed his children with agonizing doubt, whether he was rearing a race of slaves or of freemen. He now beholds them grown to the prime of life in the nurture of liberty, blessing his eyes with another generation to inherit the fruits of his toils and danger. We possess a country, fertile in the choicest products of every climate—the ample stores of knowledge are accessible to all—Every sect, of every religion, is alike free—The face of our country exhibits a happy contrast to the desolated fields of Europe, where war pursues mankind with his heaviest scourge. For the security of our many blessings, we have a government which has stood the test of practice; and which has at its head one of the master spirits of the revolution.

Indeed, fellow-citizens, we have this year more than usual occasion for rejoicing. The hopes of a foreign nation, who has long sought to promote anarchy here, for her own purposes, are forever blasted. She and her partizans may relinquish their efforts; for they have endeavoured, without success, to avail themselves of an opportunity to divide the people from the government, such as they will never have again. The spell of delusion which bound the senses of many of our citizens, is broken; and they are once more restored to the national family. After a dark and stormy night, the sun of republicanism glows with renovated splendor, the green summits of Vermont, the white mountains of New-Hampshire, and the thousand hills of Massachusetts. New-England is restored to her pristine brightness; and every straggling state has returned to the standard of Union. There is indeed a party still existing, composed, generally speaking, of the very high and the very low of society; the one prone to lead in the career of ambition, and the other not daring to abandon their feeders; there is such a party in opposition to government; but their sun is set forever, and a long and dreary night awaits them. Our National Senate is purged of a Pickering, a foreign partizan, a disturber of our country's peace. The substantial body of the people confide in the government—We shall have no more war reports, no more Legislative sanctions to foreign insult—no more “*patriotic*” insurrections. These things have passed away like a frightful dream, and we are awakened to a smiling day.

To retrieve the advantages wrested from us by foreign injustice, and secure those which still abound in our possession, we must recur to the means by which our revolutionary patriots surmounted such formidable difficulties—*a firm and indissoluble UNION*;—*a strong attachment to the government of our choice—and that heroic self-denial, which never places private fortune in competition with the public interest.* A republic, once established, will infallibly stand as long as the people are virtuous enough to deserve its blessings. Let us then be faithful to ourselves; and the

political storms will burst over us, harmless as the fudge upon the massy rock. Let us be just to ourselves ; and this day shall be still a jubilee when the birth days of kings and emperors shall be lost in immensity of time--our liberty, bought with the best blood of the country, shall descend unimpaired, a precious inheritance, to succeeding generations—we shall quit the stage of life with universal applause, and “our children shall rise up and call us blessed.”

