

John May Jr (2)

AN

**ORATION,**

**PRONOUNCED JULY 4, 1812,**

**BEFORE THE**

**CITIZENS OF THE COUNTY OF PLYMOUTH,**

**ON THE**

**ANNIVERSARY**

**OF**

**AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.**

---

**BY JOSEPH RICHARDSON, A. M.**

*Minister of the first Parish in Hingham.*

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**BOSTON :**

**TRUE & ROWE, PRINTERS.**

THE Committee appointed by the Citizens of the County of Plymouth, now convened, return thanks in behalf of this meeting to the Rev. Mr. RICHARDSON for the elegant and appropriate Oration delivered by him this day, and request a copy of the same for the press.

SETH SPRAGUE,  
ALBERT SMITH,  
BENJAMIN ELLIS, } *Committee.*

*Hanover, July 4, 1812.*

GENTLEMEN,

THE copy which you have done me the honour to request for the press is respectfully, though with diffidence, submitted for that purpose.

Yours with sentiments of high consideration,

J. RICHARDSON.

HON. SETH SPRAGUE,  
HON. ALBERT SMITH,  
BENJAMIN ELLIS, Esq. } *Com.*

## ORATION.

*Respected Fathers and Fellow-Citizens,*

THE worthy Committee of the Plymouth County Convention, appointed to make arrangements, to celebrate the American Independence, have assigned me the honor of addressing this assembly on this very interesting occasion. As I have not been accustomed to speak in the capacity of a Statesman, but have been almost exclusively devoted to the calling of a humble messenger of the Gospel, I trust I shall not be denied the favor of your liberal candor.

The present is a crisis which seems to demand with an imperious voice the united efforts of all men to preserve the liberties and rights of their beloved country. The advocate of the holy cause of Religion, feels arrested by the solemn posture of our public affairs. He feels that the sacrifice of his rights must interrupt the enjoyment of his sacred hopes. Who is he that would sustain the character of a good man, and would not stand up for the cause of his bleeding country ?

All that the citizen or the christian holds dear is at stake. At this period tyranny like an awful tempest, is extending devastation over earth and sea, and seems to wave his bloodstained banners toward these peaceful shores. This is a period marked with events which arouse the spirit of the grey headed patriot, and with looks of deep concern he calls upon his sons to prepare to meet the approaching storm.

The events of the American Revolution are still fresh in the recollection of many present. They were

actors in those trying scenes. They cannot cease to feel at the recollection of them until the cold hand of death has palsied their trembling forms. Let the sons recollect that the auspicious event we are now assembled to celebrate was achieved by their valour. Our eyes are turned with affection and veneration on the old war worn soldier, who pledged his life at the sacred altar of freedom, for the redemption of his oppressed country. And this day shall he share the plaudits of grateful millions.

This day commences the thirty seventh year of the Independence of the United States of America. This we celebrate as the birth day of a nation of freemen. This day brings to the recollection of the American Patriot, those direful causes which deluged this country with the blood of his unoffending fellow citizens.

The history of the revolution has been often repeated on these occasions, and cannot be too deeply imprinted in the minds of the present and all succeeding generations. The limits of this address will allow me to give only a sketch of the most prominent causes and transactions of the American war.

The first settlement of this country exhibits a series of the most arduous efforts and uncommon sufferings for the attainment of religious and civil liberty, perhaps ever known in the annals of the world.

The terrors of persecution, prisons and death, threatened by the government of Great Britain, forced the first settlers of our nation to leave their native country. These were a people who chose to meet the greatest dangers and sufferings rather than become instigators of discord and rebellion, even under the most cruel and tyrannical laws. No part of the civilized world offered them the desired asylum where they could have the prospect of enjoying the religion and civil government which they felt to have been

originally designed for man, by the providence of God. Not knowing whether to fly to escape the rage of persecution, in their low adversity, bordering on despair, they lifted up their eyes to compassionate heaven and sought direction. Divine mercy listened to their prayer ; but could point them to no better prospect than this howling wilderness afforded. They were guided across the broad Atlantic to these shores, by some mysterious token ominous of blessings for their posterity rather than for themselves. Here they suffered beyond the power of language to describe. They redeemed this country from the savages by the sacrifice of many lives of whom their native land was not worthy. They were among the best men in the age in which they lived. Such attachment to religious and civil liberty as they exhibited we apprehend the world seldom or never beheld. In this vicinity is the consecrated spot on American ground where first those oppressed friends of the rights of man, on bended knees, with tears and prayers supplicated protection, and interested propitious heaven for us.

From the time of their arrival their history is marked with scenes of trial too overwhelming for human beings to sustain without uncommon supports of the Almighty hand. But no sooner had the infant settlement begun to gain strength and to entertain hopes that the desired object would be accomplished after unparalleled struggles for existence, than the British nation reached forth her oppressive power with iron grasp to lead young America into her vile paths.— Her first tokens of strange affection were depriving the people, these persecuted afflicted people, whose wounds in the most distressing and desolating Indian wars were still bleeding, of the darling privilege of chusing their own rulers, taking the power of making laws into her reeking hands, taxing these poor people

without their consent, and thundering her anathemas against such clergymen in this country as declined to conform to the rules of the church of England.

Haughty overbearing monarchists were vested by the king with legislative and executive authority and sent here to sponge the people of their hard earnings. The charters which the colonists had obtained were wrested from them, and all the hateful projects of tyranny were employed, many years before the revolutionary war, to break down the spirit of this young Republic. Every artifice was tried to rivet the chains of slavery upon the colonists. But their vigorous, persevering resistance proves that the love of liberty was interwoven with every fibre of their hearts and early bade defiance to the most gigantic power on earth.

The British Parliament attempted to tax the Americans by exacting duties on different articles. Neither the method nor the amount of the duties formed the ground of objection, in the minds of the Americans. They resisted the tax—because they conceived that the British government had *no right* to this prerogative, as the colonies were not represented in that government. The Americans contended against the *principle* as a species of extortion. Then the colonies took decided and firm ground. All British manufactures were prohibited, till the stamp act should be repealed. Feeble as they were, in comparison with the power who menaced them, they determined to meet the horrors of war, rather than submit to British injustice. That odious act was repealed. Other duties were threatened to be enforced by the point of the sword. But those veteran Americans who achieved our independence disdained to submit to these infractions upon their rights. They however solicited, by their deputies, in the most respectful language, redress of their

accumulated wrongs. Supplications were vain. The haughty, tyrannical, infuriated spirit of the British government thirsted for innocent blood. The first object was to deprive the colonies of their means of defence by destroying their military stores. The British troops, on their way to Concord for this purpose, opened the tragic scene of war at Lexington. Their experience taught them in that expedition, that they had a desperate foe to encounter. The admonition was repeated to them with tenfold vengeance on the memorable height in Charlestown. The mention of that scene brings to remembrance a name dear to America and honorable to the cause of liberty. There immortal WARREN bled and died for his country !...Gratitude and admiration shall embalm his name forever, in the hearts of the friends of liberty.

In that scene, war assumed its most tremendous horrors. An unoffending people, unprepared for war and under almost every possible disadvantage, were now compelled to the last resort. What must have been the emotions of those who beheld the enemy's powerful army in the most terrible array, occupying the height strongly with the bodies and encrimsoned with the blood of their fellow citizens ! Did the love of liberty in that tremendous conflict abandon their breasts ? No, it elevated that spirit which abhors oppression, and invested them with a majesty which shrink from no terrors. The God of our fathers frowned that day on the cause of tyranny, though the genius of liberty bled from the heart. The continental congress were inspired by this proof of the valor and intrepidity of their countrymen. With remarkable unanimity they gave the command of our armies to the beloved WASHINGTON whom Providence appears in a signal manner, to have raised up, to acquire glory for his country, and unfading laurels to decorate his own illustrious name.

The British armies, contrary to the laws of humanity among all civilized nations, extended devastation by fire and sword in the most wanton and outrageous manner. Soon they were made to tremble for their own safety. Crowds of freemen rushed to arms in every part of the country. Every opening day presented new and still more formidable danger to the enemy until the Independence of these States was declared.—This is a sketch of the occurrences which led to the glorious event we are now celebrating, at the remembrance of which the devout heart of every true friend to the rights of his country pours forth the tribute of grateful praise to heaven. To support the declaration of this event, the patriots of the revolution formed the most solemn determination in the name of the Almighty Ruler of the Universe.

Though Independence was declared, it remained to be supported by a long and arduous conflict. Our statesmen, divines, and orators of every description engaged all their energies to inspire the people with the projects which would succeed this bold, this grand enterprize. The spirit of the Americans remained unconquerable ; though sometimes the deplorable state of their small, half armed, half fed, and almost naked troops, was such as to fill common minds with dismay. Who can think of his father's marching in winter with his feet bare—torn by the snow and ice—leaving traces of blood at each step, to fight for the rights of his children, and his heart not thrill with horror. Numerous were the pitched battles, when the American troops suffered inconceivably by their unavoidable disadvantages, though they were generally victorious. Nor were they the only sufferers. The large powerful armies of the enemy with savage ferocity spread distress among the different classes of people, by acts of violence, the recital of which would



cause humanity to shudder. They plundered the country in almost every part. They laid waste a number of the most flourishing and beautiful villages and towns by fire. When a garrison had surrendered, they had the cold blooded cruelty to put the unresisting prisoners to the sword. They doomed many hundreds of American captives to perish by hunger and disease, crowded together into the holes of their prison ships.

You remember also with pain and indignation how the distresses of the country were multiplied and rendered more deeply wounding by false-hearted neighbours and brethren, who beguiled many unstable souls, and most vilely betrayed the dearest interests of all. Against such perfidy, citizens, be upon your guard. After the long series of alternate successes and misfortunes, through a most calamitous and bloody war, the British government abandoned the hope of conquering and enslaving this infant country, and from that period the cruel, haughty, disappointed oppressor has been tortured with madness and shame.

The result of the war reflects the highest honor on those VETERAN SOLDIERS who faced death with the demand that their country should be free; on those ILLUSTRIOUS OFFICERS who led them to many brilliant victories; on those PROFOUND STATESMEN whom no European policy or domestic artifice could beguile or baffle.

RICHARD HENRY LEE\* was the first who dared to move in Congress the Declaration of Independence. JOHN ADAMS rose and with inspired eloquence advocated the expediency of dissolving all political connection with Great Britain. With prophetic wisdom he portrayed the prospects of glory, awaiting the Americans on their attainment of freedom and inde-

\* See Mrs. Warren's History.

pendence. After a long discussion, which displayed pre-eminent talents, the proposed measure was adopted by a large majority of Congress. JEFFERSON 'poured the soul of the country' into the Declaration of Independence. JOHN HANCOCK, as president, sanctioned the illustrious deed with his memorable name. We also proudly recognize in the same bright roll of venerable worthies the name of ELBRIDGE GERRY. We have seen that the principles and conditions of that memorable instrument were executed by the consummate valor and greatness of WASHINGTON commanding our brave troops. The blood of our countrymen mingled with the blood of our enemies encrimsoned every part of the land. This soil is endeared to all true hearted Americans by every consideration. It is the cemetery of those martyred patriots who preferred to meet death, in his most dread array, rather than their children should be slaves.

The brilliant success of infant America in the accomplishment of this event echoed her fame to every land and filled the civilized world with wonder.

The achievement was not more wonderful and brilliant than productive of felicity to this country.

The separation of this country from Great Britain was one of the happiest events with which any people were ever blest.

This proposition is proved and illustrated in the happiest manner by the experience of the people.

Let the day be ever blest which emancipated this country from the arbitrary, cruel, falling government of Great Britain; from a nation whose religion has 'breathed out so much threatening and slaughter,' and still holds a people groaning under her intolerance.

The advancement of the United States, in information, wealth, happiness, population and national im-

portance, has not a parallel in the history of the world.

But had we continued as colonies, what would probably have been the present state of our country? Would there not have been many more thousands of Americans than there are at present on board the British navy and in their armies, fighting their battles against the Portuguese, Spaniards, the French legions, and occasionally against all the European powers?— Can there be even a *tory* now living, who regrets the separation of these States from Great Britain, or who would listen to the hissings of a secret emissary to draw us into her embrace? From the mention of facts in point to answer this inquiry, I refrain.

Are there any in our country who crave the blessing of being subject to bear the British national debt under which that country is already sinking?

There is mystery in the nature of man. The most fruitful and delightful country, the fullest enjoyment of his rights and liberties, and the best government in the world, yes all possible advantages united, often serve to make him ungrateful, restless, and even rebellious, not only against earth but heaven. This truth is to be seen among Americans, and it calls the nation into mourning.

Notwithstanding Great Britain acknowledged our Independence, her conduct has often betrayed a secret hope of recolonizing this country. After the war, her policy, and that of her cordial friends in this country, was conspicuous in caressing Washington and other eminent statesmen; either directly or indirectly participating in banking and literary institutions; lavishing the honors of her universities on our divines; and in various other artifices which have had a powerful influence to assimilate the character of a large portion of the community to that of Englishmen. I apprehend that she has conquered more peo-

ple in this country since the war by such policy, than by the sword in all the revolution.

That power is emboldened by her success in this policy, and her wrongs for a few years have, in many respects, far exceeded those before the revolution.— She might as well send over her governors to rule us, as to raise men among us to seats of magistracy by her influence. Our general government can meet no greater inveteracy than that from men promoted by such influence. Might she not, with as good justice, exact of us *pence*, under the name of *duties* when we were colonies, as *ships* and *cargoes* under *blockades* and *orders*, since she has acknowledged us as an Independent Nation? Is it less an act of injustice to impress the citizens of an independent nation than if they belonged to her own colonies? Has she not for many years persisted in multiplying the most aggravated causes of war?

Her only plea or apology is, that the United States have been injured by France on precisely the same ground that we assert she has injured us. Each of those powers pleads that their violation of our neutral rights is a necessary retaliation against the enemy. The language of our government is, “that retaliation, to be just, should fall on the party setting the guilty example, not on an innocent party which was not even chargeable with an acquiescence in it.”\*

The declaration of Independence in 1776 complained that the king of Great Britain “plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, and destroyed the lives of our people.”

That “He constrained our fellow citizens, taken captive on the high seas, to bear arms against their country, to become the executioners of their friends

\* See President Madison's Message, June 18, 1812.

and brethren, or to fall themselves by their hands." That " He excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions." In what respects, fellow citizens, does the conduct of Great Britain towards us differ in *eighteen hundred and twelve* ?

The President of the United States observes, in his late very able and dignified Message to Congress, that, " our attention is necessarily drawn to the warfare just renewed by the savages on one of our extensive frontiers ; a warfare which is known to spare neither age nor sex, and to be distinguished by features peculiarly shocking to humanity. It is difficult to account for the activity and combinations which have for some time been developing themselves among the tribes in constant intercourse with British traders and garrisons, without connecting their hostility with that influence ; and without recollecting the authenticated examples of such interpositions heretofore furnished by the officers and agents of that government."

" We behold our seafaring citizens still the daily victims of lawless violence committed on the great common and high way of nations, even within sight of the country which owes them protection. We behold our vessels, freighted with the products of our soil and industry, or returning with the honest proceeds of them, wrested from their lawful destinations, confiscated by prize courts no longer the organs of public law, but the instruments of arbitrary edicts; and their unfortunate crews dispersed and lost, or forced or inveigled in British ports into British fleets : whilst arguments are employed, in support of these aggressions, which have no foundation but in a principle equally supporting a claim to regulate our external commerce in all cases whatsoever."

“ We behold, in fine, on the side of Great Britain, a state of war against the United States, and on the side of the United States a state of peace towards G. Britain.”

Some time since ‘ France revoked her decrees as they violated the neutral rights of the United States. Recently her government has authorized illegal captures, by its privateers and public ships, and other outrages have been practised on our vessels and on our citizens.’

The President adds, “ I abstain at this time from recommending to the consideration of Congress definitive measures with respect to that nation, in the expectation, that the result of undisclosed discussions between our Minister Plenipotentiary at Paris and the French government will speedily enable Congress to decide, with greater advantage, on the course due to the rights, the interest, and the honor of our country.” Such is the state of our foreign relations. The vital interests of our commerce are destroyed, our maritime rights have been long trampled upon, and our national character has been insulted with unparalleled audacity.

The great body of the people of this country being rich in their own resources have not been immediately and very sensibly affected by the depreciated state of our commerce. Our government have pursued a course of moderation and forbearance to the last extremity, until the spirit of the people becomes generally awakened to a sense of the wounds inflicted on the honor of our country.

We ask not whether our commercial rights are essential to our national existence. But we feel that submitting them to be wrested from us by any earthly power is courting insult and injury of every description, and highly incompatible with the dignity of an independent and powerful nation.

War is ever to be viewed as one of the greatest evils to mankind. But in some instances, not only justice but humanity requires this alternative. Justice demands that our citizens should be defended at the expense of the country, in their lawful pursuits, or all are not equally protected in the enjoyment of their rights. Humanity demands war rather than thousands of our citizens should be held in the most galling servitude wasting their lives in the wars of a foreign country, or lingering out a wretched existence, leaving their families and friends to mourn their fate with inconsolable grief. Or shall we submit to foreign aggressions and insults without resistance? All measures which have been heretofore taken by our government for the protection of our commerce have been disapproved by a party.

Would they advocate submission to our accumulated wrongs? Have we any reason to expect this would ever obtain respect for our rights? The supposition is preposterous. No, justify all the aggressions and insults of Great Britain and charge France with all the perfidy and injustice in the world and let the minority rule, and then your politics will be pronounced correct.

As republicans we allow of no partiality towards any foreign nation but for the sake of her justice towards us, and her respect for our rights. We disclaim all prejudice against any nation; but we rise with indignation against the power that deceives, wrongs, and insults us. We cherish an inviolable attachment to the principles and forms of our own government. If these be not duly administered we find a complete remedy in our elections. We deprecate a spirit of rebellion against a government founded on this fair and excellent basis.

The government of the United States, constituted

thus by the free voice of the people, after a long and condescending course of the most pacific policy which has been met by injuries and insults continually more aggravated, have caused to be proclaimed "that war exists between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and the dependencies thereof, and the United States of America and their territories."

At the moment we are celebrating the triumph of the fathers in the acquisition of independence, their sons are challenged to vindicate their title to this fairly purchased inheritance. The voice of our country calls us to resist the aggressions of the same inveterate enemy that once strove to conquer this people. Can an American whose heart is animated by one drop of that pure blood which flowed in the veins of his patriotic ancestors, pause for a moment to decide whether to support or oppose the government of his own country at this solemn crisis? What can be the motives of the man who persists in justifying the unprovoked aggressions of a foreign power and in vilifying the constituted authorities of the country that holds out to him the most perfect enjoyment of his rights? Is he filled with implacable envy and hatred against those characters who share the honors of the people in preference to himself? If this be his spirit he has no claim to the name of a patriot. Does he hope that the foreign power whose cause he advocates will reward his services with emoluments or future honors, what is he but a "perjured traitor?" Or does any man conceive that a different policy from that pursued would be most conducive to the preservation of the essential rights and liberties of this Republic, independently of all partiality to any foreign nation, he may be an honest man and a genuine patriot. Correspondent with this manly ground his conduct, his whole deportment will be respectful towards the con-



stituted authorities of his country, although he avails himself of his elective right to effect a change of administration. This will be the course of an honest heart although the understanding be misguided. A character of this description will resent indignities against his country, though committed by the boasted "Defender of the Faith." To apologize for the outrages of one nation because another has violated our rights, is using a mode of sophistry of which children at school are generally ashamed.

Our government have determined to make that foreign foe who has been the most audacious and injurious aggressor, a monitor to the rest of the world, that we have power and energy of character to execute vengeance against our enemies. The period has arrived when the basis of our independence and the stability of a republican government are to be proved by adversity. The eyes of all nations will be turned to this country, to observe the manner in which a nation of freemen will meet the present contest. Ours is the only Republic on earth. Should we desert our government and forget the dignity of our national character, our disgrace would be echoed throughout every region of the globe, and the execrations of posterity would deservedly fall on our devoted name. The young men now upon the stage are descendants of a race of progenitors as brave as any who ever lived.

" From sires so brave descends one dastard son,  
 " Would basely yield the prize his father won ?  
 " Yet will those heroes venerable rise,  
 " A spark unquench'd still flashing from their eyes,  
 " In freedom's cause their bosoms beating high,  
 " Prepar'd to conquer or resolv'd to die.\*

*\*Humphrey's love of Country.*

Has not Great Britain been induced to practice her impositions, which have caused this war, by representations that our country is in an impoverished state, that the people are generally alienated from their government, and that our present rulers have not sufficient energy to avenge the wrongs of the nation?—Our administration has followed the policy of paying our national debt rather than of creating an overflowing treasury. The resources as well as the power of this nation abound throughout every part of the country. We are told of our inability to prosecute a war, and from the same source we are admonished to tremble at the omnipotence of Great Britain whose national debt is enormous, and is annually increasing under a very depreciated credit.\*

Ask the heroes of the revolution what was the state of their resources when they encountered the same enemy with less than half the amount of our present population and almost entirely destitute of preparations for war?

We tremble not for fear of invasion. We have no apprehension that British armies will again ransack our country. It is the determination of the Americans to chastise the nation who tramples on our rights with insufferable insolence. This we have, under a sovereign Providence, power to do.

The population of the District of Maine, of Vermont, or New-Hampshire exceeds, or is undoubtedly at least equal to, that of all the British Provinces

*The population of the United States in 1812	7,239,903
Do. of the British Empire	10,462,514

The debt of the British Empire is stated to be	3,555,555,555 Dlls.
Do. of the United States in 1812 is	45,154,189 Dlls.

The United States contains about	1,000,000 square miles.
The British Empire	100,428 square miles.

in America.\* It is not our inability, but a prevailing conviction of the impolicy of the measure, which alone, has prevented our boasting of a proud navy. Our enemies may feel inconvenience in having our few ships of war turned against them. I have confidence in my country that the present war will be prosecuted until our impressed and enslaved seamen are emancipated, our confiscated property shall be restored, our commerce shall be free according to the laws of nations, and our independence shall be more completely maintained :

These remarks on the state of our public concerns are suggested by the present posture of our country. It is just to add that as a people we have loved and cherished peace to the endurance of the most mortifying sacrifices. When 'smitten on one cheek we have turned the other also.' Our fellow citizens pursuing a lawful commerce have had 'their coat and their cloak also taken away.' They have been compelled to go not only 'a mile and twain,' but to the most distant regions where they could have scarcely the least hope of again setting their eyes on their beloved country. We have consented that our citizens should endure far beyond the requirements of the law of christian forbearance.. Shall we longer hear unmoved the cries of the despairing prisoner, who has so long in vain implored his country to redeem him from his merciless bondage ?

If, fellow citizens, I have advocated the prosecution of the present war, it is to terminate a train of the most extensive and destroying evils which has no prospect of coming to an end without resorting to the sword. I advocate a war in defence of the rights of my country, and against the piracy and perfidy which

\* *The population of all the British Provinces in America, is only about 200,000.*

involve a numerous class of people in ruin. I advocate war to rescue supplicating humanity, pining in slavery and bleeding under the lash of tyrants. We lament the prospect that our citizens must fall by the sword to redeem their country's rights. Will it not be better that some of the members perish, than that others should linger in wretchedness, and the whole body of the nation should be doomed to destruction?

If these premises be correct, I infer that not only patriotism, not only allegiance to our government, but principles of humanity call upon us to support and defend our rights. We would still cherish the hope that our enemies will return to a sense of justice, and spare the calamities of war. If Great Britain still demands submission, we assure her in the language of Burke on American taxation, that "such is the state of America, that, after wading up to her eyes in blood, she could only end just where she began."

Should we be successful in our second contest for independence, the rights of our citizens will be respected, our captive brethren will leap from their chains, an honorable peace will shed unnumbered blessings on our country, and if disembodied spirits visit the abode of mortals, the blest shades of our ancestors will behold their descendants with delight.

But, fellow citizens, we must guard with unceasing vigilance against the wiles of those who will be doubly alert at this time to sow the seeds of discord, to create jealousy and distrust against the general government. We are bound to be good citizens of the state, but the constituted authorities of the Union have the highest claims to our obedience and the cordial support. Let the warning voice of the beloved Father of his country be heard at this day. Let these words be remembered by every one who professes to be his disciple. "The very idea of the power and right of

the people to establish government, presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established government. All obstructions to the execution of the laws, all combinations and associations, under whatever plausible character, with the real design to direct, controul, counteract, or awe the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities, are destructive of this fundamental principle, and of fatal tendency.— Every portion of our country finds the most commanding motives for carefully guarding and preserving the Union of the whole.”\*

We are even threatened with a resistance of government by force. Who can think of the direful plot but with abhorrence of the conspirators? A plan is loudly proclaimed to array one half of the citizens of several of these states against the other half, to overawe and reduce to subjection the general government and an immense majority of the nation. A plan is concerted to excite neighbours, brothers, fathers, and sons to mutual slaughter, as an alternative preferable, to a defensive war against Great Britain! A plot of this hideous character must have been gendered by bribery, fostered by foreign influence, and emboldened by the countenance of a political monster.

We know the character and interest of our fellow citizens too well to be dismayed by the threats of such a conspiracy. There are but few so abandoned that they could be excited to resist by force the constituted authorities of their country, though a foreign power may possibly be deceived and drawn into a calculation of receiving great aid in their cause from our division.

Shall a nation, rich in resources, and, if united, of unconquerable power, suffer the magnificent temple

\* *Washington's Farewell Address.*

of American Independence to be levelled by violence, or to be reduced by a gradual decay, for want of the renovating influence of a vigilant and energetic patriotism? Shall we continue to be torn by divisions until the soul of the nation becomes enervated? Shall the world so soon point the finger of scorn at the degeneracy of the American Republic? Shall our fathers bear the grief in their old age of seeing their country bartered by corruption, or disgraced by servile submission to any foreign nation? Shall the soil that entombs the sleeping dust of our heroes and venerated ancestors be so soon profaned! Forbid it, O thou Almighty Power, on whose sovereign will the destiny of nations depends. "Our fathers trusted in Thee: They trusted, and thou didst deliver them; They trusted in Thee, and were not confounded."\*

Thus, respected fathers and fellow citizens, I have endeavored to employ your animated attention in a manner I hope not wholly unworthy of the day.

We glanced an eye at the interesting situation of the first settlers of this country. The causes which produced the revolutionary war we have noticed with feeling, for they are written in characters of blood in every part of our country. Faithful History† portrays the numerous affecting scenes of the war, which exhibited many illustrious characters who will never cease to be the admiration of the patriotic and the brave. The limits of an oration would scarcely permit us to touch these copious subjects. The declaration and maintenance of American Independence we celebrate with the most felicitous congratulations. For the unnumbered blessings of religious and civil liberty, with profoundest adoration, we of-

\* *Psalms xxii. 5, 6.*

† See *Mrs. Warren's, Ramsay's and other Histories.*

fer this day the tribute of our united praise to the Almighty Sovereign of earth and heaven.

Again our bleeding country calls us to avenge her deep wounds, and to teach our enemies a lesson of respect for our national character. Citizens of Plymouth County, let us this day pledge our sacred vows on the altar of freedom that the glory of our Republic, and of the American name, shall never be stained by a degeneracy from the principles and spirit which triumphed in the revolution, and brought salvation to our beloved country.

Relying on the protection and aid of divine Providence, with confidence in the wisdom of our government and in the patriotism of our citizens, our hopes are inspired with the prospects that the present period is as the darkness which precedes the dawn of brighter glory rising on America.