

AN

ORATION

DELIVERED AT THE

WHIG CELEBRATION,

NEW HAVEN, JULY 4, 1834.

BY A. N. SKINNER.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE WHIG COMMITTEE.

NEW HAVEN:
JAMES F. BARCOCK, PRINTER
1834.

NEW HAVEN, July 12th, 1834.

Sir--

At a meeting of the "WHIG COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS," for the celebration of the recent Anniversary of our National Independence, held on the evening of the 10th inst., a resolution was unanimously adopted requesting a copy of the Oration, delivered by you on that occasion, for publication.

The undersigned, being appointed a Committee to invite your compliance with that resolution, beg leave individually to unite with the general Committee in requesting your assent.

With high respect,

We are Sir,

Your obedient Servants,

JAS. F. BABCOCK,
NATH'L R. CLARK, } Committee.
JOHN B. ROBERTSON. }

TO AARON N. SKINNER, ESQ.

NEW HAVEN, July 12th, 1834.

Gentlemen--

Your favor of this date, was this evening received, requesting, in behalf of the "Whig Committee," a copy of the Oration, delivered on the Fourth, for publication. From the hasty manner in which it was written, I have some doubts of the expediency of publishing it; but as it was prepared at the request of the Whigs, I submit it to their disposal.

Please accept for yourselves and the Committee, assurances of my grateful consideration.

With high respect,

I am your obedient Servant,

A. N. SKINNER.

JAMES F. BABCOCK,
NATHANIEL R. CLARK, } Esquires.
JOHN B. ROBERTSON. }

O R A T I O N .

FELLOW CITIZENS :

We are assembled to commemorate a great event. In looking down the long ages of past history we search in vain for a parallel to the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America. Whether we look at the magnitude of the interests at stake, the character of the actors, or the momentous consequences that hung on the issue ; this stands out from all other great events, distinct and alone. It was the first grand experiment towards the establishment of rational and permanent Freedom, united with wise and salutary government ; a system which should govern by *law* and not by *force* ; which should express the *mature and enlightened will* of the people, and not be subject to the caprice and violence of popular excitement ; in short, a system by which *man should govern himself*, unshackled on the one hand by a despotic power which he could not control, and wisely guarded on the other against the sudden tumults of his own frail and erring passions.

The 4th of July 1776 will be memorable in all coming time ; all men in all ages to come will hold it in honor, and all who love liberty, will hail it as the bright morning star which is to usher in the day of universal freedom. To *all* nations it is a great day, as foreboding great events ; but to *us* it is a *birth day*—a day of rejoicing—a day of triumph—a day of glory !

It is fitting that on this day every patriot should turn his thoughts from himself to his country, and from his country to his country's God. It is fitting that citizen should meet citizen for mutual gratulation ; to exchange thoughts and feelings, to lay aside the rancor of party strife, and sacrifice little jealousies on the broad altar of his country's good. It is fitting that the father should gather his little ones around him, and teach them the rudiments of liberty, and kindle in their young hearts the love of home, and kin, and country, and

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inspire them with veneration for the illustrious dead. It is fitting that the day should be set apart for the discussion of our rights ; to sound the note of alarm at the approach of danger ; and to animate and cheer us on in the ways of virtuous freedom. Let it be marked by festivities, and public rejoicing, and religious solemnities. Let the young hail it with joyful greeting. Let the good man bless it. Let the dim eye of age grow brighter at its coming. Let the rising generation know—let the world know—that we value our liberty, and honor the memories of those who achieved it.

In the origin of all other nations, we see much of weakness and ignorance, violence and blood shed.

A band of robbers took refuge among the woods and hills of the Tiber, and by rapine and violence planted the germ of the Imperial City. But it required centuries to complete even the stern and dreary fabric of Roman power, which, after all, had in itself the elements of ruin, and ended in a relentless military despotism. How many centuries were necessary to lay even the foundations of the British Empire? Not to mention bloody conquest after conquest, by Roman, Saxon, Dane and Norman,—what a dark and fearful succession of revolutions, civil wars and convulsions, were necessary to purge the British Constitution even to a limited degree of perfection. The history of all former nations presents the same dark and dreary picture. They all had a slow and disastrous growth, and even the nations of Christendom were groping and stumbling in the gloom of twelve hundred years of darkness, on such absurdities as the infallibilities of the Popes and the divine rights of Kings.

But our nation was born and grew up to manhood in a day. Like the fabled Minerva who had no infancy, but sprang forth from the brain of Jove, a full grown Goddess, armed in the full panoply of the Gods, and radiant in celestial beauty ; so, the moment the Declaration was proclaimed by its immortal authors, and hailed by the applauding shouts of millions of Freemen—there stood forth a mighty nation, in the freshness and vigor of youth, crowned with the wisdom and experience of all ages of the world.

A spectacle, which the mighty imagination of Milton only could conceive or describe. Did not the prophetic bard have some glimmering foresight of this august day, when (rapt with the con-

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templation of the British nation's becoming young again) his exulting spirit exclaimed: "It betokens us not degenerated, nor drooping to a fatal decay; but casting off the old and wrinkled skin of corruption, to outlive these pangs and wax young again; entering upon the glorious ways of truth and prosperous virtue; destined to become great and honorable in these latter ages.—Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation, raising herself like a strong man after sleep and shaking her invincible locks;—methinks I see her as an eagle muing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full mid-day beam, purging and unscaling her long abused sight at the fountain itself of Heavenly radiance."

One is almost compelled to believe that the lamentation of the divine Poet for the loss of sight, had ascended on high, and that a merciful God, (in compassion for the darkness that "veiled his rayless orbs",) had granted his Heavenly prayer, and graciously permitted that "celestial light to shine inward" and irradiate his noble mind, that he might "see and tell of things invisible to mortal sight." The Poet did indeed foresee his country renewing her youth, not in herself, but in this her eldest daughter, the American Republic. Was not this "the noble and puissant nation" which he saw "shaking her invincible locks"—"destined to become great and honorable in these latter ages"—and "entering upon the glorious ways of truth and prosperous virtue?" Was it not the AMERICAN EAGLE which he beheld muing his mighty youth, and "kindling his undazzled eyes at the fountain itself of Heavenly radiance?"

Could the film of mortality have indeed been removed from his mental eye, and the glories of futurity have been unfolded to his view;—would not the gorgeous vision, which would have burst upon his sight from this western world, have fully realized the conceptions of his gigantic spirit? He would have beheld far away over the cheerless and stormy waters of the Atlantic—a wilderness dark—gloomy—vast,—upon whose endless solitudes, no ray of civilization, or learning, or religion, had ever dawned. Suddenly, a light, small but bright, breaks forth from the rock on which the Pilgrim Fathers landed. As it increases in magnitude and brightness, others light up in rapid succession along the whole illimitable horizon. The dark cloud which curtained the prospect rolls away—new forms of life

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start into view ;—dwellings, edifices, temples, spires and domes, rise up from the desert one after another like the scenes of a drama ; village spreads beyond village, town beyond town, and city beyond city. The hum of industry begins to murmur along the coasts, and to roll her reechoing din far away over the distant mountains ;—the silent and solitary waters become animate with myriads of ships moving on their snowy wings like “things of life ;”—the forests fall, and the ancient groves, where the woodman’s axe was never heard, begin to ring with the ceaseless sound of mechanism, which converts the very elements into laborers, who work with a million hands.

As rose the earth itself out of the “dark and formless void” at the command of God : So scarcely less suddenly and miraculously, or less moved by the finger of Omnipotence, emerges a great empire ; rolling its millions over the boundless wastes like the waves of the great deep ;—bearing on its tide the germs of other states and other nations ;—lighting up the dark solitudes of the desert with the beams of learning, the arts, and the Gospel of Peace ;—rearing itself like a pillar of fire to the nations that lay in darkness, and sending her hundred charities to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Search the world over, where will you find another country like this ?

Europe rears her ancient dynasties,—“adorned indeed with the imposing robes of science and the arts ;”—powerful in arms and renowned for triumphs, too often alas, over the rights of man. But in all this there is more of magnificence than happiness. Her wealth, her honor, her pomp and power, with rare exceptions, are the hereditary property of the *few* ; while necessity with her iron foot treads the *many* in the dust. There is here and there a proud baronial castle, which lifts its dark battlements over a thousand humbler dwellings to tell of the grandeur of its lordly possessor : but what boots this to the poor peasant who is bound to the soil, and toils to maintain a splendor which he can never share ? It is true that in latter times, commerce, and the progress of free institutions, have done much to improve the condition of the lower classes in Europe ; and that there are a few spots like Switzerland, Scotland, and old England which remind us of our own happy land. But

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even there, entailments, hereditary monopolies, artificial distinctions, and the burden of taxes, increased to support the insubstantial splendors of military greatness, palsy the hand of Industry :—the laborer toils for a pittance, and plods his weary way in hopeless penury. It is true there are some illustrious examples of men who by the irrepressible force of genius have burst asunder these chains that bind the mind, and have arisen from obscurity to the proudest honors :—Still the mass of the people sink under their deadening weight, and do not breathe that vital air of liberty, which “rarifieth and exalteth” the spirit of man “like the influence of Heaven.”

Poland—Italy—Greece—where are they! The gallant spirit of the one is broken—the blood of her heroes shed in vain—her name blotted out—and her noble heart crushed under the heel of the oppressor; but “the day of vengeance cometh!”

Italy, the home of empire,—the prey of lazzaroni and pampered sloth!—the cradle and the grave of human greatness!

Greece! with a doubtful existence, unrecovered from ages of slavery.

“Cline of the forgotten brave!
“Whose land from plain to mountain cave,
“Was freedom’s home or glory’s grave!
“Shrine of the mighty! can it be,
“That this is all remains of thee?”

And Asia—what is she but the mouldering monument of things past? Write sloth and pride, voluptuousness and passion, slave and despot—and her story is told. The wild Arab feeds his camels under the broken arches and interminable columns of Palmyra ;—“the wild beasts of the desert, the satyr and the owl,” dwell where were the palaces of Babylon ;—“the pomp” of Tyre is “brought down to the grave,” and the “crowning city,” whose “merchants were princes,” rejoices no more ;—the City of David belongs no longer to Judah, but is “trodden under foot of the Gentiles.”—The Tomb of the Prophet still remains, and the shade of his despotism still hovers over the land ; but the sceptre of the Moslem is broken, and the crescent is waning, (may we not hope) to give place to the “sun of righteousness.”

And Africa—the pall of the grave rests over her! For her there remains no hope, unless in the arm of Omnipotence. Has not the

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same strong arm, which brought the children of Israel from bondage to the land of their fathers—the same arm which caused a little colony on the rock of Plymouth to become a great nation—given signal tokens of great designs in the unparalleled success of another little colony on the western coast of Africa? Who shall say what another century may bring forth? Who shall say but this little colony may accomplish for Africa what the Puritans did for America? that through its prosperity, under the blessing of Heaven, our great national evil may be removed, and the darkest spot on our country's fame be wiped away, by restoring to Africa her children, and with them the blessings of learning, liberty, and religion?

In this view of other countries we see nothing to weaken the love and honor which we bear to our own. There is no where on earth a people, among whom property, intelligence, honor, and all the sources of human happiness, are so equally and profusely dispensed; where justice, law and order, so completely prevail; where peace, virtue and religion, have such universal empire. In the history of the past, in the enjoyments of the present, and in the prospects of the future, we are fortunate and blessed above all the nations of the earth. But amidst all this happiness, let us not forget that “the Lord God omnipotent reigneth;” that our destinies are in his hands; that prosperity too often hardens and corrupts; and that, in all our exultation, we may be in danger of a fall.

It may not be unsuitable to this occasion, at this peculiar juncture, to cast our eyes around us, and consider the dangers to which we are exposed.

The greatest obstacle to the perpetuity of good institutions, is doubtless in human nature itself; which, by proof of holy writ, as well as the whole experience of the world, is “prone to evil and that continually.” The history of all former republics is briefly told.—They have risen to greatness by the practice of the stern and severe virtues, and their unvaried progress has been from prosperity to vice, and from vice to ruin. When the mass of the people become corrupt, cease to venerate the laws—become idle, poor and profligate—begin to hate the rich and covet their possessions—to desire change—to hope for those advantages in civil commotions which they are unwilling to gain by virtuous industry—when the love of country is lost in the

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love of faction and a shameless scramble for power,—then, there has always been ready some designing man, who has availed himself of popular arts, or of that blind adulation which the multitude always pay to military glory, to ingratiate himself into popular favor, to head the deluded multitude in redressing real or imaginary grievances, and to ride over their necks to a throne.

The degeneracy which leads to this catastrophe is gradual, and to the many almost imperceptible. A people whose moral sense would at first startle at glaring outrages, by being gradually familiarized to slight innovations, will finally come to regard the greatest atrocities, first with indifference, and then with approbation. No usurper ever yet began a career of tyranny by striking a direct blow at old and venerated institutions. He first attacks real grievances—then the *spirit* of the laws, while he carefully observes their *forms*; and finally, under the specious names of reform, or the public good, undermines the foundations of the fabric of freedom.

Human nature is the same now that it was two thousand years ago; and there are causes enough in operation in our country to produce the same general corruption of morals which destroyed all the free governments of other times.

One of the most alarming indications of a decline of morals is the influence of demagogues; a class of men who can have very little consideration on account of their own merits, and who expect to rise from obscurity by agitating the people, shrewdly supposing that in the boiling of the political caldron the scum will always rise to the top. These men are always loud in their professions of *love to the people!*—they are “*the people’s friends,*” and are very anxious about the “*people’s money*”—they have such profound respect for the *people’s opinions*, that although the people become unstable and change every day, they will change too—for they always “*bow to the majesty of the people!*” Although subject to sudden and frequent changes, in *one thing* they are consistent—*one principle* they most faithfully aim to preserve—and that is, *always if possible to keep on the strongest side!*

One of the most remarkable of these “*friends of the people*” was Robespierre, who used to go about the streets of Paris, spreading his hands, and softening his voice, to gull the “*dear people.*” In the

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language of the historian, "Robespierre had to impose upon the minds of the vulgar, and he knew how to beguile them by accommodating his flattery to their passions and scale of understanding; and by acts of cunning and hypocrisy, which weigh more with the multitude than the words of eloquence or the arguments of wisdom. The people listened as to their Cicero, when he twanged out his apostrophes, "*poor people, virtuous people*"!* and hastened to execute whatever came recommended by such honied phrases, though devised by the worst of men, for the most inhuman of purposes." Yes, Robespierre, the cold, cowardly, creeping miscreant, "who signed death warrants with a hand that shook"—the most hypocritical villain, the most ferocious tyrant, that the world ever saw—was *a friend to the people!*

The *true* voice of the people should always be respected, and their mature and enlightened will should always govern. But he is a miserable friend to the people, who will never dare to tell them the truth, or to oppose them, when hurrying under popular excitement into a course, which must lead to their own ruin. The true friend of the people does not seek so much to discover what the majority thinks to-day, or will think to-morrow, as *what is right*, and what will in the end tend most to promote their lasting happiness and honor.

Another mark of a demagogue is a *great horror of aristocracy!*—He grieves that the poor are oppressed by the rich; that any one man should be better clothed, or fed, or instructed, than another; and most of all, grieves that any man is more rich or aristocratic than himself!

Of all miserable delusions, there is none more dangerous and despicable than an attempt to excite the poor against the rich. It is a deep and desperate throw in the game of political infamy, which few should venture upon;—it is a wheel which, when once put in motion, no man can stop, and will roll on in its terrific momentum, until it has crushed friend and foe, rich and poor, in irretrievable ruin.

There are a great many better things than money; but money in *good* hands is the means of obtaining better things, and on this account its pursuit is honorable. What is it that excites every young

* * *Pauvre Peuple, Peuple vertueux!*

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man, or poor man, to honorable exertion, more than the hope of acquiring property, and intelligence, and character among his fellow men? If there be any one right which ought to be regarded precious in the eye of freemen, next to the security of the person, is the security of property. Let the poor man, as well as the rich man, regard it as our safety and our glory, that every man's earnings are his own; that no power on earth can touch a farthing of it without his consent; and that, if by virtuous industry and skill he can accumulate property, it shall not be cast upon him as a reproach, but redound to his own character and enjoyment while he lives, and descend to his children when he dies.

I would be the last man to pamper the pride of wealth and family, when unaccompanied by other endowments: of all kinds of greatness it is the most contemptible, and in our country the most harmless and perishable. We have no entailments of rank or property to bolster up its decay. It soon falls; and its substance, in two or three generations, descends to the more worthy. But on the other hand, if a man has risen from obscurity by his own merit, let him enjoy the reward of his virtue and talents. This is true nobility. While I would scorn to offer one breath of incense to flatter that empty pride which is founded on the merits of others, I would yield a cheerful and affectionate homage to that exalted worth, whose splendor is not borrowed, but shines in the brightness of its own glory. If there be any one motive which is truly the nurse of great and good qualities, it is the desire of deserving the affection and veneration of our fellow men. Let not this ennobling motive be impeded by the malignant wailings of envy, or by miserable, selfish and despicable appeals to the meanest passions of our nature.

Another mark of a demagogue is an attempt to *excite a jealousy against literary institutions, as being hostile to liberty and the natural equality of man!*

The most famous of this class of reformers was one Jack Cade, an Irishman who fled from his country to escape the punishment due to his crimes. In a time of civil commotion he mustered an army, furnished with clubs, axes and scythes, and marched to London to redress grievances—that is, to plunder the city! Among other

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things, he undertook to work a reform in literary matters, and, in his own phrase, to "sweep the court clean of such filth as Lords and those who spoke Latin;" one of whom he arraigned before his presence on the following charge: "Thou has most traitorously corrupted the youth of this realm by erecting a Grammar School;—and whereas, before, our forefathers had no other books but the score and the tally, thou hast caused printing to be used;—and contrary to the King, his crown and dignity, thou hast built a paper-mill. It will be proved to thy face that thou hast men about thee that usually talk of a noun and a verb, and such abominable words as no christian can endure to hear. Away with him! away with him! He speaks Latin!" The historian closes the account somewhat abruptly, by informing us that "Cade was hung*." "There let him remain in his glory." We envy him not—we envy not the feelings or motives of those of his successors upon whom his mantle has fallen, who can find their account in exciting popular prejudice against institutions of Learning.

The Grecians and Romans, and even the *Arabs* and *Saracens*, knew better than this. They honored and cherished learning; and they have their reward. The imperishable glory that beams over their history derives its brightest radiance from the light of letters. But for their poets, their orators, their historians and philosophers, their fame would have been a shadow—and their story, so rich in wisdom and virtue, would have been like the dark and unmeaning fables of tradition.

Who have been the champions of Freedom in all ages of the world? Who were the most able assertors of the rights of man in the great struggles for English and American Freedom? Who framed our own glorious Constitution, and who have been its great

* In justice to Cade, it ought to be mentioned, that although the *prima facie* evidence is that he came to the gallows; still the authorities do not agree as to the manner of his death. Shakespeare says that he was killed fighting valorously sword in hand, by a gentleman into whose garden he had broken to get something to eat, or in his own words something "wherewith to cool his stomach" after five days of starvation. The historian also gives him the credit of saving London from pillage several days; so that it is probable that Cade had more honesty and valor than some of his modern disciples.

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defenders, if not those men whose minds are imbued with solid learning? There were some indeed among them, who were not bred in the halls of learning, but they all showed by the power of their eloquence that they had drawn inspiration from those great works of genius which never could have existed but for institutions of learning. These institutions are the great lights of knowledge which fill the schools with able teachers—the press with able writers—the learned professions with able physicians, divines and jurists; and in ten thousand ways apply the principles of science to promote the arts and enjoyments of life. They are the fountains from which go forth those streams which diffuse sound and wholesome knowledge among the people. That knowledge which is the living breath of Freedom, without which, she pines and dies. That knowledge which never can live with despotism, and before which the shades of slavery disappear as the mists of night before the rising sun. It has been well said—Liberty and Learning have always flourished and expired together.

Another favorite topic with the demagogue is the “*danger of a union of Church and State.*”

What have we in this country that has a shadow of resemblance to a union of Church and State? We have no Church establishment—no House of Bishops, or body of Lords Spiritual or Lords Temporal—no ecclesiastical jurisdiction—no immense Church patronage with its rich livings, its benefices, advowsons, and temporalities, which makes its influence felt in every corner of the land—no tithes—no taxes to support one church, or any church, unless by our own consent.

It is believed that the influence of the clergy is not *very* great in affairs of State—and not *very dangerous* even at the capital;—where there are some other dangers from a somewhat different sort of influence. Among other astounding disclosures, it does not appear that the most alarming is that the clergy stand in dangerous proximity to the fountain of power;—or have exerted undue influence in the disposal of government patronage. It is doubtful whether, for the purposes of Church and State union, their whole united influence is sufficient to appoint even a tide-waiter. It is not known that any

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clergyman excels in producing "healthy majorities" at elections; or can even exercise his own indisputable right and duty to vote at the polls, without being exposed to vulgar abuse.

What then are the alarming dangers of a union of Church and State? What then is it which these clamorous patriots so much dread? When we hear so much clamor for *such causes* and from *such sources*, is it not to be believed that much of this *great fear*, is not, lest the Church should be united to the State—but lest there should be any Church at all in the State? They fear not any danger to the country, but danger to themselves; lest there should exist such a state of morals as would be produced by the general prevalence of religion; a state of things which would greatly abridge their liberties of doing wrong; and above all, which would forever destroy all their influence, and sink them into the insignificance which they deserve. This would indeed be a dreadful state of things!

If any man wishes to serve his country in a way the most effectual of all others, let him by his precept and example, by all his influence from learning, or wealth, or talents, or from whatever source derived, do all in his power to impress deeply upon the whole people a profound respect for religion, and to make universal that living, spiritual christianity which purifies the heart. This is the only effectual antidote to the tendency of human nature to evil. This is the only living stream which can wash away the impurities of the land, and preserve our institutions, and save us from that degeneracy and ruin which have overwhelmed all the free governments of former ages. Let every insidious attack upon its ordinances, its oracles, its ministers, or its solemnities, from whatever source, or under whatever specious form, be met by the decided, and solemn disapprobation of every good man.

On this subject, the father of his country in his Farewell address to the American people, has the following words:

"Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness—these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally

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with the pious man, ought to respect and cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connexions with private and public felicity. Let it be simply asked where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation *desert* the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in the exclusion of religious principle. 'Tis substantially true that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. The rule extends with more or less force to every species of free government. Who that is a sincere friend to it can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of this fabric?"

We have considered some of the arts of these dangerous popular leaders; but it would be endless to trace them in all their wanderings and turnings. They have not the bold and desperate character of those turbulent spirits who scattered firebrands and death in more bloody times—but what they want in audacity and courage, they make up in cunning and intrigue. Their system is described by a popular writer as “a mixture of fawning sycophancy—a traffic for office—a selfish speculation on political chances—a town dividing, county splitting policy—a stock jobbing experiment—a system of rewards and punishments—a little, tricky, maneuvering, skirmishing, selfish, noncommittal spirit—unknown to men of patriotism, spirit, purity, and tried talents. It is working with small agents,—controlling weaker minds—basking in the sunshine of other men’s influence—watching the turns of the market—ploughing to-day with the workingmen—to-morrow with the alien and adopted citizen—pulling every string and moving every wire that makes up the political capital of these ambitious and mischievous little men.”* By these petty intrigues, a sort of “electioneering machinery” has been invented “by which the people become spell bound and taught to play the part of automatons at their own elections.” Where this

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machinery has been put into the most successful operation, the people are no longer in any proper sense of the term "free agents," but act as acted upon; and the "great question, in calculating the probability of the election of an individual is not, "is he honest, is he capable," but "is he a good engineer with powerful machinery?"* Such are the scenes which are witnessed in many parts of our country—equally disgraceful to the actors, and dangerous to our institutions.

Another evil equally dangerous, which I mention with reluctance on this occasion, is the demoralizing influence of Intemperance. You know the number and character of those wretched men, who swarm around the dram shop—the gambling house—the haunts of wickedness and pollution, like a flight of foul and ominous birds, to darken the face of this fair land. You know their influence on the right of suffrage, and the purity of elections;—Fit tools as they are in the hands of the vile demagogue, who cares more for *party* than country, and more for *self* than both:—fit ingredients to work up popular tumults and commotions:—fit fuel to light up the flame of civil discord, when another Cataline shall arise, and another Cæsar who shall set at nought the wholesome administration of law and justice, and subvert the liberties of the land.

We would not unnecessarily mar the festivity and harmony of this occasion by saying any thing, which may savor of the spirit of party, or disturb the feelings of any honest lover of his country. The preceding remarks are intended not exclusively for this party, or that party, this State, or that State, but for all parties, and the whole country. But in the present aspect of our affairs, we feel compelled to go one step further, than we should justify in ordinary times, on a day like this. If we say any thing contrary to the feelings or opinions of any one present, we request that it be not set down in malice, but to a deep and solemn conviction of its truth, and a desire to promote the true interests of *the whole people*.

In considering the dangers which surround us, another still more grave and formidable evil stares us in the face, of which we would speak rather in sorrow than in anger.

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The Government itself has been converted into a great political engine to subserve the purposes of party.

We have seen a man elevated to the highest office in the nation, not remarkable for his wisdom, his experience, his self-control, his respect for the laws or the counsel of wise men, when opposed to his own will; owing his elevation not so much to any of these qualities as to popular favor,—a recommendation at all times suspicious, but delusive and dangerous when founded on the admiration of military glory.

We have seen him possessing some natural good qualities, and abilities for other pursuits; but surrounded by designing men, who have availed themselves of his inexperience in civil affairs, and the excitability of his passions, to engage the Government in a course of measures, and a *mode of execution*, equally unknown to our former history, disastrous to our present prosperity, and dangerous to our future liberties. We have seen the Executive descending from his high station, to become the President, not of the country, but of a party; to distribute the immense patronage of the Government, not by “a conscientious preference of virtue and talent, independent of party or local considerations,” as practised by Washington, advocated by Jefferson, and promised by himself; not with a single eye to the welfare of the whole country, but as a reward for partisan services rendered; a retaining fee for work to be done; as “the spoils of victory,” to be shared among personal adherents and to be appropriated as the grand safety fund to build up and strengthen the party.

We have seen the increase of the executive over the other powers of the Government: the legitimate barriers which separate the executive, judiciary and legislative powers, impaired; the Executive claiming to expound the Constitution and execute it as he understands it! the acts of Congress set aside by expedients, and for purposes never contemplated by the framers of the Constitution; one House acting under the influence of party discipline, with military precision, in subservience to the Executive will; and the other, while asserting its rights and defending the Constitution, attacked in its privileges and honor, and denounced to popular indignation by inflammatory appeals to the people;—we have seen treaties and chartered

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rights violated; the public money disposed of without law and beyond the control of law; loans without the authority of Congress; a corrupt bankruptcy in at least one of the departments; a general derangement of the currency; and a spirit of distrust, agitation and alarm, throughout the nation. In short, we have seen more in the last few years, to break down the great bulwarks of freedom; to fritter away with insidious progress the spirit and sacredness of the Constitution; to destroy the independence of the press and the purity of elections; to break down the proud, independent, patriotic spirit of the people, and convert the love of country and honor into the love of office, and a base, cringing and fawning spirit of slavishness to the will of political leaders, than in all our former history.

Fellow-Citizens: In taking this view of the dangers which surround us, we cannot but look with deep and solemn concern at the prospects of our country. It becomes us to look around for the safeguards of the Republic. Our nicely modelled Constitution will not bear the shocks of every ruthless hand; its sacred provisions must be watched and preserved with a jealous care, or its charm is lost and its power is gone. The purity of elections—the freedom and independence of the press—the vigorous growth of sound and healthful knowledge—and above all, the *morals* of the people, purified by the spirit of the Christian religion, are the pillars on which rests the temple of freedom. These are safeguards which no other nation has ever fully enjoyed. If they are cherished and preserved in their strength, we may hope that our country will be as enduring as it is blessed.

We do not now call on you to battle with weapons of blood.—There is a small weapon, called a ballot, insignificant in appearance, peaceful in its operations, but mighty in its effects. Let this little weapon be faithfully, constantly, and perseveringly used by every good citizen, whatever be his name, sect or profession, and the first step to the preservation of our national safeguards is taken. The others will follow—the dangers which threaten our institutions will be arrested—and the legacy which was purchased by the toils, the sufferings, and the blood of our Fathers, will descend to their children's children forever.

Our ancestors have left us an inheritance which no people ever enjoyed before. They were men of no common foresight, no tem-

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porary patriotism, no narrow philanthropy. They looked not for themselves only, not for the countless generations of their own children only, but for the unborn and untold multitudes of the human race in the whole circuit of the earth, and in all ages to come. They looked upon themselves as the instruments of Omnipotence, to work out a fabric of social and civil order, upon the success of which should depend the destinies of the human race. Never were men so well qualified for executing so vast and so beneficent a design. Their minds had been nurtured in the school of great events, and partook of the greatness with which they were surrounded. They knew all that was worth knowing in the history and policy of former nations, and had before them the examples and experience of all ages of the world. They were deeply versed in all the great questions of human liberty, which had been discussed by the master spirits of the British nation. They brought to the work their own experience in self-government, their knowledge of mankind, derived not from books, but from constant and thorough intercourse in human affairs; and what is more than all, they were deeply versed in the oracles of God, and knew that no building could stand the storms of time which was not founded on the Rock of Ages.

With such examples before us, and such blessings to preserve, shall we despair of the Republic? Shall we suffer this magnificent fabric of Liberty to crumble and fall, burying in its ruins whatever we love, and honor, and hope for, on earth? Shall we suffer this sun of Liberty to be extinguished; thereby casting the shade of oblivion over the glories of our own history, and blotting out forever the hopes of all the unborn millions in ages to come? Shall the American Republic perish!—or shall she rise, “rousing herself like a strong man after sleep”—“shaking her invincible locks”—“casting off the wrinkled skin of corruption”—and going forth to declare unto the nations, in the words of her most gifted son, that the spirit of human liberty which she has nurtured, “is a spirit of *health* as well as a spirit of *power* ;” “that its *benignity* is great, as is its *strength* ; that its efficiency to secure individual rights, social relations, and moral order, is equal to the irresistible force with which it prostrates principalities and powers.” *

* Webster.

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Freemen ! are you ready to answer ? I almost seem to see the shades of your Fathers starting forth from their graves, and calling upon you, as they bend their awful forms, in tones of unearthly solemnity : “Freemen are you ready to answer !”

The answer is given. I see it in the beaming eye ; in the breathless lip ; in the unblenched cheek ; in the speaking look of holy invincible patriotism. The deep murmuring of the people heard from afar, forebodes that the storm which is to purify the political atmosphere is at hand ! The signs of the times denote, that the spirit which dwelt in the bosoms of our Fathers still lives, and will continue to live and flourish in its original strength, in the bosoms of their children. That spirit which has ever defied unlawful power, with determined and undaunted resistance ; and has ever been ready to peril all earthly good in the cause of civil and religious freedom. Whether among the WHIG conventiclers who prayed and fought among the hills and glens of Scotland ; or the WHIGS of old England, who have been ever ready to meet the slavish “tory doctrines” of “non-resistance and passive obedience,” either in the chamber of debate or the field of battle ; whether in the Puritans who bade adieu to home and country for “freedom to worship God ;”—or in the WHIGS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, who “pledged their lives, fortune, and sacred honor” to secure to themselves and their children the glorious heritage of Freemen. That spirit has always been the same ; though defeated not disheartened ; though overwhelmed not conquered ; though bruised not broken ; though overcome still invincible : and at last triumphant ! That spirit still lives and will be triumphant again !

The venerated patriots of the Revolution, where are they ? Like the grey hairs that thinly shadow their aged temples, we see but few lingering here and there among us. Some of whom we now behold to cheer us, and honor us by their presence in these solemnities. Venerable men ! we bid you welcome to the festivities of this auspicious day—to you made mournful by the recollections of the past, but brightning in the beams of present and future happiness. We hail you as the survivors of that band of heroes and sages whose memories shall never die ; we cherish you as the last of the soldiers and the WHIGS of the Revolution. When the eye seeth, it shall

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bless you ; when the ear heareth, it shall honor you. May you yet live many years, in peace, happiness, and honor, to enjoy the fruits of your former toils, and to reap the reward of your virtues, in the delightful contemplation of a free, happy, and united people.

Your companions in arms and in councils have almost all gone before you to their long home. The signers of that immortal scroll, the Declaration, are all gone. The Apostles of Liberty, Adams and Hancock, Otis and Henry, Franklin and Jefferson, Sherman and Livingston, and their illustrious compatriots, are no more. Washington, too, and most of his comrades in arms, the brave and gallant spirits, who bore their country in triumph through difficulties, dangers, and sufferings, with a fortitude scarcely known in the history of man ;—they too rest under the silent clods of the valley. But their memory still lives, and the example of their wisdom and virtue will live forever.

And HE too, the friend of Washington, of liberty, and of man ; HE, the child of rank, nobility and fortune ; the noble youth who bade adieu to the splendors of a court, the fascinations of pleasure, and even the endearments of home thrice happy in the attractions of youth, beauty, and virtue ; and devoted himself with enthusiastic affection to the exalted and sacred cause of Freedom even in a foreign land ;—HE who has passed through the most terrible ordeal of bloody revolutions with spotless purity, and the most lofty and disinterested patriotism ;—HE, our nation's guest and benefactor, who ten years since enjoyed the glories of a triumph, far transcending all Roman triumphs, in the spontaneous burst of affectionate admiration from the whole American people :—The hero, the patriot, the philanthropist—LA FAYETTE, is no more. His body has descended to the tomb, but his spirit lives—his example shines over the habitable earth—and his name shall be coupled with that of Washington in the everlasting gratitude and admiration of the human race.

Fellow Citizens : I cannot in any way so well do justice to my own feelings, and the feelings of every patriot who hears me, as to close these remarks in the words of a great statesman and orator, pronounced in honor of the centennial anniversary of Washington—words worthy such an orator, such an occasion, and such a man—

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words which cannot be too often repeated, nor too deeply pondered upon by every lover of his country and the human race.

“Other misfortunes may be borne, or their effects overcome. If disastrous war should sweep our commerce from the ocean, another generation may renew it; if it exhaust our treasury, future industry may replenish it; if it desolate and lay waste our fields, still, under a new cultivation, they will grow green again, and ripen to future harvests. It were but a trifle, even if the walls of yonder Capitol were to crumble, if its lofty pillars should fall, and its gorgeous decorations be all covered by the dust of the valley. All these might be rebuilt. But who shall reconstruct the fabric of demolished government? Who shall rear again the well-proportioned columns of constitutional liberty? Who shall frame together the skilful architecture which unites national sovereignty with state rights, individual security, and public prosperity? No, gentlemen, if these columns fall, they will be raised not again. Like the Coliseum and the Parthenon, they will be destined to a mournful, a melancholy immortality. Bitterer tears, however, will flow over them, than were ever shed over the monuments of Roman or Grecian art; for they will be the remnants of a more glorious edifice than Greece or Rome ever saw—the edifice of constitutional American liberty.

“But, gentlemen, let us hope for better things. Let us trust in that gracious Being who has hitherto held our country as in the hollow of his hand. Let us trust to the virtue and intelligence of the people, and to the efficacy of religious obligation. Let us trust to the influence of Washington’s example. Let us hope that that fear of heaven, which expels all other fear, and that regard to duty, which transcends all other regard, may influence public men and private citizens, and lead our country still onward in her happy career. Full of these gratifying anticipations and hopes, let us look forward to the end of that century which is now commenced. A hundred years hence, other disciples of Washington will celebrate his birth, with no less of sincere admiration than we now commemorate it. When they shall meet, as we now meet, to do themselves and him that honor, so surely as they shall see the blue summits of his native mountains rise in the horizon, so surely as they shall behold the river on

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whose banks he lived, and on whose banks he rests, still flowing to the sea—so surely may they see, as we now see, the flag of the Union floating on the top of the Capitol; and then, as now, may the sun in his course visit no land more free, more happy, more lovely, than this our own country.”*