

Decade 78: 3:

AN
ORATION,

DELIVERED IN

ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH,

BEFORE THE INHABITANTS OF

CHARLESTON, SOUTH-CAROLINA,

ON THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1796,

IN COMMEMORATION OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

By Appointment of the

AMERICAN REVOLUTION SOCIETY,

AND PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THAT SOCIETY,

AND ALSO OF THE

SOUTH-CAROLINA STATE SOCIETY

OF

CINCINNATI.

By *WILLIAM SMITH,*

A MEMBER OF THE REVOLUTION SOCIETY,

AND REPRESENTATIVE IN THE CONGRESS OF THE
UNITED STATES.

PRINTED BY W. P. YOUNG, N^o 43, BROAD-STREET,
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O R A T I O N.

Friends and Fellow-Citizens,

IN accepting the appointment to the duty of this day, it must be evident, that I have been more influenced by a respectful deference for the society which enjoined it, than by a due regard to my own reputation. Had I, at the time, as much estimated the arduousness of the task, as I have since done, I should have solicited a release from a rash undertaking, of which, on subsequent reflection, I have more than once repented.

What indeed can be more awful and imposing than the service assigned to me? To address one of the most respectable audiences ever assembled, on the most splendid Era which history hath recorded, to commemorate which, in language suitable to its dignity, would require the pen of the most classical writer, the tongue of the most eloquent orator.

On a subject so awful, before an audience so imposing, the speaker of slender abilities must shrink with just apprehensions, and lose that manly confidence, so essential to the correct performance of his duty.

If, on this occasion, the trembling hand, or faltering voice, should indicate the unfeigned emotions of alarm, let not this exordium be censured as a superfluous apology; but let me rather hope that it will engage your candid indulgence to overlook the imperfections of this discourse, and to ascribe my acceptance of this service, to no other motive, than a disposition to evince my respect for the society which required it, and my reverence for the day to which it is consecrated.

Animated then by your presence, and upborne on the pinions of this flattering hope, my mind will strive to soar above the level of its native diffidence, and to swell to the magnitude of the lofty theme.

An advanced period of the eighteenth century exhibited a political phenomenon, of which less enlightened eras had furnished no parallel.

A numerous and industrious people, inhabiting an immense territory, of various climes and multiplied productions, possessing all the stores of science and wealth, displaying all the refinements of art and elegance, skilled in the knowledge of government, and capable of enjoying, without abuse, the blessings of civil liberty, were bound by a servile dependence

pendance to a distant empire, from which they were separated by the boundless ocean.

To establish a chain of subjugation, their rulers placed over them vice-roys, who generally owed their appointments more to court favor, than to personal merit, and who, like faithful shepherds, watched the flocks intrusted to their care, and either fostered or sheared them, as best accorded with their master's gratification: Unworthy individuals were clothed with the solemn garb of justice, who oft knew no other law than their sovereign's will, who ignorant of the sacred duties of their station, or unmindful of its dignity, sullied the pure ermine of justice, by the immorality of their conduct, or the unrighteousness of their decrees.

Legislatures were constituted, which, tho' generally selected from the people by fair election, and composed of respectable citizens, yet cramped in their operations, and fettered by the slavish policy of distant rulers, ignorant of our true interests, were, in fact, but the mere mimicry of legislation. To give full efficacy to the sordid views of our owners, a swarm of subordinate myrmidons overspread the country, many of whom followed no rule but their own interest, and were so far impartial, that they plundered their master, while they pillaged his subjects.

To rivet the chain, and render the yoke still more galling, the hard earnings of their honest industry were wrung from the colonists,

by impositions and taxes, established on principles incompatible with the fundamental and indispensable rights of freemen.

Notwithstanding the humiliation of this subjection, the colonists, enjoying a fertile soil, possessing industrious habits, and making progressive advances to wealth, were unwilling to sever the ties which united them to the parent country, as long as any well-founded hope existed of obtaining a reform of their intolerable grievances: but the disposition which was manifested by their rulers, not only not to mitigate the existing severities, but even to aggravate them by extortions and claims, to which none but slaves could submit, roused their indignant spirits to a noble opposition. As this however would have been unavailing, without the bold assertion of independence, on the glorious day, which we are convened to commemorate, they burst asunder the ignominious shackles by which they had been enthralled, and by their magnanimous perseverance, and the timely aid of a powerful ally, accomplished a revolution, which established their rights and liberties, and placed the American republic among the respectable nations of the earth.

In the necessary pursuit of this great work, the states in general suffered all the miseries which war, exasperated by the raging of the fiercest passions, could inflict on man. But the citizens of this state partook of more than their portion of the common distress; they
indeed

indeed drank to the very dregs of the bitter cup of calamity.

All the horrors that could be perpetrated by the destructive sword of the enemy, the desolating torch of the incendiary, or the infernal tomahawk of the savage, were heaped on the wretched inhabitants of this devoted state.

And this was not all!—What must have been the agonizing pangs of our patriot statesmen and warriors, at various periods of the conflict, when unjust fortune scowled on their noble efforts, and held up to their appalled imaginations, chains heavier still than those they had just cast off?

Let those among you answer, who, with honest indignation, saw the swelling canvass of proud Albion's fleet, advancing with exultation to our port, and her victorious standard triumphantly waving on our walls; who saw the black and angry cloud, which gathered in the eastern horizon, gradually spread its sable mantle to the western confines of the state, and menacing, when it burst, to deluge it with desolation.

At that awful period, when every patriotic bosom throbbed with alternate hopes and fears, when many an American heart was nearly sunk down with despair, suddenly a light, dawning in the west, broke in upon the gloomy scene, the auspicious harbinger of brighter days, and, genial as the sun, though inverting its course, advancing to the east with rapidity and increasing splendor, it soon illuminated

mined the whole state, dissipating the clouds of affliction and despondence, and purifying the atmosphere of those baneful mists of despotism, which had overspread and infected it.

On the return of the blessings of peace, the citizens of America, secure in the possession of their independence, exhibited those traits of genuine republicanism, which have disappointed the malevolent predictions of their enemies, and immortalized the cause of liberty.

The gallant heroes, who had encountered unparalleled hardships, who had sacrificed their fortunes and impaired their constitutions in their country's defence, had no sooner sheathed their swords, than they returned, with cheerfulness, to their civil and private avocations, content to relinquish military honors, the gaudy decorations of the camp, and the pride of distinction, for the simple insignia, and the humbler scenes of professional and mechanic life.

An army of enlightened citizens (unlike the mercenary hordes of Europe, whose depredations oft render the first years of peace more afflictive than the last of war) as soon as their country ceased to call for their assistance, modestly resumed their former walks of useful industry, and gave conspicuous proofs that those are the most useful to the state, who can serve it in any station.

But before they parted, they paid one bright tribute to the principles which had governed, and to the friendship which had united

ted them. This patriotic band of brethren, entwined their laurels in a sympathetic wreath, the symbol of their fraternal love, the emblem of their past, the pledge of their future services. Candor shall ever shield it from the attacks of injustice; gratitude shall water it with her tears, and cherish it in her bosom from the chills of malevolence; long may it flourish! and when those who formed it shall be no more, may it be the noble stimulus, and the proud reward of their successors.

The exemplary conduct of the American fair, during this arduous struggle, has been the grateful theme of many an encomiast.

Shall *I* not do injustice to their merits, should *I* attempt what has been already recorded by the faithful historian, and portrayed by the animated bard, with the energy of truth, and the warmth and beauty of colouring? Apprehensive that *I* may injure the impression of others, in vainly endeavoring to improve it, yet anxious, that on a day, sacred to scenes, in which their patriotic virtues were so pre-eminent, even my feeble tribute should render homage to so much excellence, *I* must recal to your recollection, the courageous and dignified part *they* bore, in those gloomy moments, which tried the souls of *men*.

Ever faithful to their country's cause, they withstood the shocks of the raging tempest, with an heroism, which astonished, while it dismayed their foes; like rallying points,
they

they recalled their depressed countrymen to desperate acts of valour, when sinking under accumulated calamities; with an elasticity of soul, always superior to the pressure of events; they were borne down by no disaster—they were disheartened by no defeat.

Encountering with alacrity the severities of every season, deprived of comforts to which from their cradle they had been accustomed, wearing the smiles of contentment on their countenances, while the pangs of grief were deeply planted in their hearts, they cheered the drooping spirits of their countrymen, and animated them, by their magnanimous example, to pursue, without murmurs, the thorny paths of war. And, still more to their honor, they thus essentially advanced, and accelerated the revolutionary movement, without in the least departing from the appropriate delicacy of their sex.

Their hands were never polluted by the torch of the incendiary, or the dagger of the assassin; *their* arms were never stained by the blood of their enemies.

Nature, indeed, constructed not the female hand, to wield the warrior's sword—but to smooth the pillow of the wounded hero—to pour the balm of comfort into the soul of the prisoner, and to convert his chains into flowery wreaths. *Their* eyes were not formed to roll with the savage fury of the fanatic; but to melt with sorrow at the poor captive's tale, and shed the benign rays of commiseration on

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his gloomy cell. *Their* voice was not designed to howl imprecations and blasphemies—but to sooth the afflicted with the gentle note of sympathy, or animate the disheartened with the dignified sentiments of virtuous courage.

These, ye lovely daughters of Columbia, are amongst *your* patriotic duties! And tho' you are excluded from a participation in our political institutions, yet nature has also assigned to you valuable and salutary rights, which are beyond even their control.

To delight, to civilize, and to ameliorate mankind—to exercise unlimited sway over our obedient hearts, *these are the precious rights of woman!* That Almighty power, who made you necessary to our happiness, endowed you with them, and grateful man, who acknowledges their auspicious influence, will never deny them.

On the departure of the enemy, it was expected that peace would have brought in her train all those blessings which we had fondly anticipated from her return: The complete possession of our country, was alone deemed sufficient to insure to us internal order, external respect, and national union. But the painful experience of several years evinced, that something yet remained to be done, before we could enjoy that public happiness, to secure which so many lives, and so much treasure had been lavished. It was discovered, that valour alone could not preserve those

rights which it had acquired, that without the protection of efficient government, and the strong barriers of constitutional restraints, the blessings of liberty, which had been obtained by one revolution, would soon be swept away by another, that liberty, without the strong curb of rational government, was only a license to the strong to trample on the weak, an authority to the profligate to plunder the honest.

The evils which flowed from a relaxed state of society, and an unbraced government, the symptoms of a rapid decay, which were every where visible, announced a speedy dissolution of the little union, which still held the states together, and of the little government which still glimmered in each. Navigation and commerce were declining, private faith was prostituted without shame—public credit was a mere chimera—the connection of the states hung by a thread—America, as a nation, had scarce a name abroad, and scarce deserved one at home.

Those who had cherished the fondest hopes of prosperity from success in war, saw in peace, with inexpressible anguish, that the fair fruits of our glorious revolution were about to be blighted in the bud, and zealously employed their talents and influence in rearing up a constitution which might preserve and perpetuate them.

Among the wonders which no human research can fathom, even in those days, with
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all the miseries of anarchy before our eyes, there were still to be found political speculators, who deriving their ideas of government from abstract theorems, and estimating man more by what he ought to be, than what he is, wished to erect an Utopian constitution on a sandy basis, in which the wild passions of demagogues, and groupes of restless and noisy zealots, unchecked and uncontrolled, were to be substituted to the enlightened and responsible judgment of the constituted authorities; in which the *legislature*, unprotected, and exposed to the storms of factious assemblages, were to be swayed by the fluctuating caprices of a giddy throng; the *executive*, crouching and subservient, to have less power than the ambitious and intriguing chief of a self-created junto; and the *judiciary*, totally dependant on the passions of a popular branch, to be the servile tools of a few leading rulers; where the whole nation, in short, would have been minced up into ten thousand little clubs, usurping all the powers of government, and generating so many jarring elements of perpetual faction, discord, and oppression.

Had one half of the monstrous dreams of these Utopians been realized, this rising empire, instead of displaying that splendid scene of order and prosperity, which has made it the asylum of some nations, and the admiration of all, would long ago have been a prey to foreign dominion, or intestine commotions, resembling those tremendous volcanos, which,

containing within their bowels the seeds of destruction, are first shook to the centre with internal convulsions, and then send forth a fiery torrent, which prostrates every obstacle to its fury, and marks its course with desolation and horror.

Sacred manes of our departed heroes! Was it for this ye shed your precious blood? Was it to lay the foundation of eternal misery for your country, that ye endured unparalleled distresses, and overcame innumerable difficulties? When you annihilated a monarchy, which was the tyranny of one, was it to substitute an anarchy, the worst tyranny of thousands? No—you nobly exposed your valuable lives, to leave to your fellow-citizens, the fair inheritance of freedom, attuned by well modulated government, of republicanism, modified by those luminous principles, and poised by those indispensable ballances, which allow ungovernable license to none, but secure a salutary protection to all.

In overturning the hideous throne of despotism, it was your ardent wish to establish on its ruins the beautiful temple of liberty—But it was not that mistaken liberty, which, erected on the tottering basis of a theoretic instability, is unable to protect itself from the assaults of faction, but that, which, raised on the everlasting principles of order, and consolidated by the maturing hand of experience, will endure for ages; it was not that liberty, which runs wild in the enthusiastic pursuit of
visionary

visionary speculations, but that, which obeys the sober and enlightened dictates of calm reflection; not that, which quickly degenerates into a licentiousness, subversive of morality, religion, and justice, but that, which, by cherishing them all, establishes, under their auspices, the public happiness.

That all-wise and overruling providence, which so conspicuously stretched forth its helping hand in the days of our affliction, would not suffer so much patriotic blood to flow in vain, so many great achievements to go unrewarded.

It was recorded in heaven, that from the noble foundation, which had been laid in so much glory, and cemented with the pure blood of so many patriot citizens, should arise a splendid edifice, the sacred depository and preserver of our rights.

After a severe experience of the evils of disorganization, the American people, with an accord, little short of unanimity, resolved to establish an efficient constitution, containing principles powerful enough to guarantee the duration of republican existence, and to shelter itself from the capricious or designing innovations of faction or ambition.

Here again my enlightened countrymen exhibited one of those wonderful scenes, which none but republics can display, none but republicans, like them, can imitate;—a whole nation assembled, as it were, on their grand political stage, discussing with temper, and
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deciding without tumult, on the mighty limits which were to confine their actions, and on the portions of liberty, which individuals and states were willing to surrender for the general good, and settling, for posterity, the long contending claims of liberty and law. They sanctioned the great charter of union, which had been happily accommodated to the conflicting interests of a diversified and extensive empire; they reared the noble structure, the fair Temple of Liberty.

From a broad and substantial basis arise sixteen columns, connected and adjusted with such fitness and symmetry, as to please the judgment, and afford to each other reciprocal solidity. On these columns is placed a magnificent dome, combining them in a beautiful unity, strengthening, yet supported by them, but deriving its main strength from that substantial base, on which the columns themselves repose. On each column is a medallion, on which are inscribed, in everlasting characters, the gallant deeds of Columbia's worthies; these are decorated with laurel garlands, which expanding from one column to the other, encircle the whole, forming at once their ornament and strength.

High on the pinnacle of the dome, stands Columbia's favorite son, the effulgent emanation of the people, elevated on the summit of the temple, as a faithful mirror, to represent to every part the reflected will of the whole, as the public organ, to promulgate
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the concentered voice of the nation, as the vigilant centinel, placed in the highest watch tower, to sound the alarm when danger menaces.

This stately edifice, the pride of America, the envy and admiration of the world, is the valuable depository of our independence and happiness. Unlike the mouldering temples of antiquity, by a sublime discovery of human policy and modern ingenuity, it contains, within itself, the regenerating seeds of eternity, casting off, from time to time, the impurities of degeneracy, and the decrepitude of age, and renovating itself with all the vigorous sanity of its original excellence.

From time and age alone, it fears not dissolution. But what can resist the fierce assaults of man? Alas! the strongest monuments of stone and brass have oft been levelled in the dust by his unbridled fury.

Suffer not then, my fellow-citizens, the wanton attacks of a capricious unsteadiness, or the inveterate rage of misguided anarchy, to shake one pillar of this precious fabric! guard it with enthusiastic affection, defend it with a holy zeal.

Shall ignorant Mahometans make a rampart of their bodies around the silly standard of an impostor, and drain the last drop of their blood to preserve it from hostile hands? And shall enlightened Americans permit the sacred standard of their constitution to be wrested from them by the unhallowed hands of faction?

on? Shall they suffer the sanctuary of their rights to be invaded, and the palladium of their independence to be prostrated by the lawless sons of anarchy?

No—those eyes which glisten with lively sensibility—those animated countenances, which glow with noble ardour, the faithful interpreters of your hearts, are the surest pledges of your steady zeal.

Nor is this sentiment of limited extent; like the blessings which have flowed from the constitution, it is universally spreading over this extensive country.

Already have we beheld, with pride and exultation, the virtuous and successful efforts of patriotism, against the audacious designs of profligacy and ignorance. In a sister state, deeds have been performed, which claim the warmest tribute of applause; deeds, which have more effectually destroyed the calumnies of prejudice against republicanism, than volumes of fine spun theories. At the call of the supreme magistrate, we have seen thousands of our countrymen, crowding around the standard of the laws, to undergo the distresses of a severe march, at an inclement season. Opulent citizens, refused to fatigue, spurned the comforts of habitual ease, to endure the toils of war, in a rugged and mountainous country; they instantly forgot the sweets of social and domestic enjoyment, and the profits of professional life; they remembered nothing but the outrage to the laws,
and

and the necessity of vindicating them; they rushed to the field, they rescued the federal edifice from the meditated attack. The little storm, which had assailed it, only served to settle it more firmly on its strong foundation, and to fix its roots still deeper in the hearts of the people. Shall such virtuous sacrifices expire in silent oblivion? Gratitude forbids it: these patriotic exploits, which have consolidated our rights, shall be engraved in prominent characters, on one of the largest columns of the temple, and shall shine conspicuously beside those heroic achievements, which first secured them, without disparagement from their superior lustre.

The federal dome is then unperishable; but though that is happily composed of ever-durable materials, the illustrious character, now placed on its summit, is, alas, doomed to undergo the common fate of mortal man. But let me pause!—Ought I to interrupt the bright scenes of this festive jubilee with the gloomy anticipations of, perhaps, a far remote event? In spite of every effort to dismiss them, they will intrude. In reviewing the great events of the war, and the revolution they produced; in casting our eyes over the brilliant prospects of peace, could we escape the mental sight of Washington at every glance? to trace his agency in both might perhaps subject a contemporary to the charge of adulation; but his deeds will hereafter form the favorite theme of every revolutionary festival. In

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reflecting

reflecting on his useful services, and his valuable life, can we exclude the melancholy forebodings which his subjection to the inevitable law of nature must excite? Can we, even on this joyous occasion, avert our minds from the prospect of that fatal day, when all America, covered with the mantle of grief, shall droop over the grave of their departed friend; when the funeral pall of Columbia's pride, like a dark and ominous cloud, shall overspread this now happy land?

Generous and grateful Americans can never forget his services; and though, from the difficulty of pursuing, in this vast and diversified empire, a system, accommodated to all opinions, some murmurs have from time to time appeared, they have quickly vanished before the voice of reason.

The pinnacle of the dome must, from its height, sometimes collect the transient clouds of discontent around it; but the pure breath of justice soon dispels them, and leaves its lustre more refulgent: thus, even the sun's bright beams are at times eclipsed; but they soon burst forth again with undiminished radiance.*

To justly appreciate the many blessings derived from the revolution, it only requires that you should recollect your former abject condition; to estimate fairly the benefits resulting from the federal constitution, it is only necessary to recur back to the chaotic period between the close of the war, and the commencement

* There was a partial eclipse of the sun, on the 4th of July, which was visible just before sun-set.

commencement of its operation ; to love and cherish your country, and to be grateful for all the advantages you enjoy, you have only to cast your eyes for a moment on the nations of the other hemisphere, and turning them hastily back, to fix them at home. A just comparison of these relative situations, did time permit, would be pleasing to the speaker, interesting to the audience, and appropriate to the day : but it displays such a spacious field of admiration, that it is impossible to enter on it at present. I shall therefore content myself with a concise review of their several characteristics. I have already detailed the condition in which you were before the revolution, in which all your rights were dependant on the caprice of others, your commerce enthralled, and the earnings of your industry at the disposal of your enemies : You now enjoy complete political and religious freedom—your flag is displayed in every quarter of the globe—your commerce is courted by the most powerful nations, and not a farthing can be taken from your pockets but by your own consent.

In the interval between the peace and the operation of the present constitution, the laws were relaxed, government was nearly dissolved, and you suffered all the various evils already enumerated. Government is now efficient, the laws are respected, public and private faith are restored, our resources

are flourishing, and our credit and character, as a nation, stand higher than ever.

The contrast between most of the other nations of the world and our own, is more prominent and flattering still; for, on the one side, we see nothing but despotism, anarchy, wars, ruin, taxation, perfidy, massacres, and every national scourge; on the other, liberty, peace, order, industry, and every possible ingredient of public prosperity and private happiness: As a state, we possess, in a luxuriant climate, a prolific soil, renewing annually its treasures, which no time can exhaust; a sea port, which, during that inclement season, when the northern shores are bound in icy fetters, commands nearly an exclusive navigation; an enterprising spirit, which, among other improvements, is opening those channels of wealth, too long obstructed, which will form a precious bond of union with our western brethren. As a member of the great confederated republic, among our numerous and exclusive advantages, is the vast variety of climate, soil, and productions; yet all under the same mild and equal government, securing to every part, freedom and happiness. In the old world, if the inhabitant of the north be compelled, by a decayed frame, to seek in southern climes, under a more genial sun, a shelter from the rude wintry blasts, or the debilitated native of the south require the bracing of the northern

them air, each must relinquish the government, laws, religion and habits, to which he has been accustomed from his youth, and expose himself to all the embarrassments of an alien society, and an unknown dialect: but here, the citizens, bordering on the St. Mary's, or the St. Croix, on the Atlantic, or the Ohio, may mutually interchange their homes, and seek the benefits of a more friendly clime; and each shall find in every region, equal liberty and just laws, a fostering government, the same people, the same language, the same religion.

To commemorate all these blessings, the day,* which gave birth to our independence, and marked the grand Era of our political emancipation, has been set apart, as a day
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* The Fourth of July has always been celebrated as the anniversary of our independence; but the *vote of congress declaring the colonies independant, passed on the second of July.* It appears from the journals of congress, that, on *that* day, "Congress resumed the
" consideration of the resolution, reported from the
" committee of the whole, which was agreed to as fol-
" lows,—“Resolved, that these United Colonies are,
" and of right ought to be, free and independent states,
" that they are absolved from all allegiance to the Bri-
" tish crown, and that all political connexion between
" them and the state of Great-Britain is, and ought to
" be, totally dissolved.” The instrument, called the
Declaration of Independence, was then referred to a com-
mittee of the whole, and after having been considered
on that day, and on the 3d and 4th, was, on the 4th,
reported from the committee of the whole, agreed to
by congress, and signed by the members.

of general festivity, throughout the United States.

On this most auspicious day all labor is suspended, and every heart yields to the delicious effusions of joy and gratitude.

What unutterable sentiments must throng in every bosom, at the varied reflections which it so powerfully inspires?

As to myself, when I behold the united societies of statesmen, whose counsels planned, and of veterans, whose valor achieved, our happy deliverance, the approved magistrates of the people, the reverend ministers of the gospel, the sage oracles of the law, and a chosen band of citizen soldiers, exhibiting an interesting picture, enriched and studded with the sparkling gems of beauty; when I see them here associated, in sweet communion, thus entwining the olive branch of science, with the laurels of victory and the roses of beauty, thus offering a patriotic chaplet, to be consecrated on the altar of liberty, in the temple of God, my emotions almost overpower me; and when we reflect, that from one extremity of this vast empire to the other, thousands and tens of thousands, nearly at this very moment, are offering up in choral gratulations and in joyful hosannas to the throne of their benefactor, their heartfelt tribute and pious incense of adoration and gratitude for the blessings of freedom; the contemplation must fill every mind with undefinable ecstasy!

How

How different, how disgusting, in the sight of that righteous being, are the impious solemnities of the crowned despots and destroyers of the human race, the solemn mockeries of those monsters, who, after the savage butchery of thousands of their fellow-men, uplifting to heaven their atrocious hands, still reeking with the blood of slaughtered hecatombs, profane the holy rights of religion, by invoking, on the altars of God, a blessing for the sacrifices, immolated on the altars of Moloch!

Founders of the revolution! Members of a society, instituted to preserve, in their native purity, the valuable principles it created, to you is entrusted a sacred deposit: reverence and cherish it; suffer not these fair fruits of your patriotic wisdom, to be either choaked by the rank weeds of licentiousness, or blighted by the mildews of despotism: ever keep in remembrance, that in a just equilibrium of the rights of the people, and the energy of the laws, consists the essence of true republicanism; in protecting the *rights* of your fellow-citizens, never forget to inculcate their *duties*.

Affiliated veterans! whose swords, after delivering us from an odious vassalage, now sleep in silence, in their peaceful scabbards, where the bright polish of a well-earned glory preserves them from the rust of time, to you we look as the protectors of that deposit, as the guardians of our national honor. Should the injustice of other nations drag us reluctant

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ant from the paths of peace, we confidently anticipate a renewal of those exploits, which crowned *us* with success, and *you* with glory.

To avenge your country's wrongs, your swords will leap from their scabbards, and you will fly to its defence, with the impetuosity of the noble bird, whose towering and undaunted spirit forms the characteristic prototype of your order.

And you, valuable citizens, enrolled in arms, under the banners of liberty and law, should your country's danger call forth your valorous exertions, the recorded deeds of those among you, whose age permitted them to share in the glorious struggles of the field, and the smiles of approving beauty, will constitute your incentive and your reward. Your fellow-citizens gratefully acknowledge the exalted merits of your association in war, and your praise-worthy conduct in peace, in assisting the maintenance of public order. The disinterested and active services of such well-organized and select corps, distinguished for their courage and patriotism, always ready to protect the liberties and properties of their countrymen, demand the encomiums of a better panegyrist.

Can we, on this day, which so imperiously calls forth all the finer sensibilities of benevolence, forget the interesting revolution of our republican ally? No! She claims a place in our festivals, as she possesses one in our sympathies. Through the whole of her severe
 trials,

trials, those sympathies have caused that ebbing and flowing of alternate grief and joy, which resulted from the various and dubious events of the conflict. While in pursuit of a rational freedom, we have *all* triumphed in the success of her magnanimous exertions; while pursuing an imaginary phantom, thro' seas of kindred blood, we have deplored their aberrations from the paths of political truth. Through the wondrous meandrings of her stupendous revolution, how have we rejoiced to see her combating and crushing the hydra of her antient despotism? How have we mourned to see the brilliant prospect oft o'erclouded, and the hydra of popular tyranny springing up in its place, to see political fanaticism and intolerance succeeding to religious bigotry, and political heretics massacred with more zeal and fury, than had ever disgraced the inquisition and the rack; to see, in the nervous language of Vergniaud, virtue aristocratized to trample on it without shame, and vice democratized to commit it with impunity; to see hecatombs of innocent victims sacrificed on the shrines of ambition, or slaughtered to satiate the fell passions of revenge; to see the very principles of mechanism ingeniously improved, and barbarously prostituted, to expedite the destruction of the human race.

In tracing the rise and progress of this astonishing revolution, the humane American must wish to draw a veil over the mournful scenes, which have tarnished so bright an epoch of

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modern history. But have not even they their use? Will they not impress on our minds, more forcibly than all the precepts of moralists, the dire effects of the prostration of religion, government, and law? Will they not shew us, that even in countries considered as the freest, the most atrocious acts are too often perpetrated, under the mask of patriotism, and by the pretended apostles of liberty?

Hear then what we are told by a cotemporary witness of unquestionable authority——

————— but my faltering voice refuses its aid to so painful a task, and my feelings compel me to reject the dismal narrative!!—

At the recital of such atrocities, human nature stands confounded. Should they be hereafter recorded by the faithful historian, Liberty, appalled, will turn from them with horror, and outraged Humanity, in tears, will snatch the crimsoned page from the polluted volume.

Fortunately for the cause of liberty, this murderous desolation was too violent to be of long continuance; the generous spirit of a great and insulted people was soon roused to vindicate the nation from its grievous oppression; the popular tyrants were overthrown, the dire sanguinocracy was destroyed, the reign of moderation and justice was restored; those ferocious and execrable monsters, who had, without law or pretence, filled France with blood and ruins, were arraigned before the bar of national justice; the hopes of true
republicanism

republicanism were revived, law and government resumed their empire, and the united standards of liberty and humanity were planted on smoking ruins and mangled limbs, amidst the smiles and acclamations of a happy people, and the loud plaudits of approving nations.

On this proud day, while we exult in our own fair prospects, shall we not drop a tear over the sorrows of unfortunate Poland? In boasting of the virtues of a *Washington*, shall we forget those of a *Kosciusko*? No—It would dishonor a day, consecrated to the bold struggles of freemen, and to the bright virtues of their chiefs.

At a time, when the domineering spirit of haughty courts planned the infamous conquest of Poland, to divide its spoil among rapacious princes, when the internal impotency of feudal vassalage seemed to facilitate the approach of the barbarous hordes, and to surrender her to their insatiable fangs; at that unpropitious moment, amidst the darkness of this prospect, Kosciusko arose with the energy of a hero and an insulted freeman, strong in the principles he had imbibed in our regions. He felt his country's wrongs, he rallied his fellow-citizens around the standard of national rights, he shook off the galling yoke of imperial slavery. How glorious the enterprize! With what joy did we hear the sound of "Poland in arms"? Kosciusko, the disciple of Washington, was hailed as the deliverer of his country, and enrolled with the worthies of antiquity. With

what anxious expectation did we await the decision of this great event? At one moment the clouds of tyranny were dispersed, and the sun of approaching victory darted a few scattered rays over the Polish hemisphere. Alas! how short the delusion! The sky was soon again o'ercast, the bright Aurora of hope was darkened, the clouds thickened, and the threatened tempest burst with redoubled fury on that devoted country: The irresistible veterans of the north rushed in like a flood, the Polish ranks were swept away, and Kosciusko vanquished, a prisoner, and in chains! The tyrants triumph, and rising freedom bends beneath the blast of power!!

Unhappy, but magnanimous Kosciusko! freemen will never cease to sigh for your deliverance from an ignominious bondage; and when the mortal shaft shall cut the thread of life, the tears of Americans shall embalm your memory, and the sun of glory shine upon your tomb.

Brave, but unfortunate Poles! on this day, so auspicious to our liberty, united America raises her fervent prayers to heaven, to confound the designs of your oppressors, and restore you emancipated to your native rights.

But, in thus sympathizing with that ill-fated country, can we forbear exclaiming, "Happy is thy lot, Columbia, who, with some sacrifices, hast escaped the calamities, which other nations are suffering from ferocious, bloody, and desolating contests, and

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now enjoyest, in peace and prosperity, a republican government of the people's choice." Happy Americans! let not intemperate passions, or misguided zeal tear from you the blessings you possess. Pursue, with a firm step, and steady mind, the path of national dignity and happiness; suffer not yourselves to be seduced from it by artful and ensnaring appeals to your honor and sensibility. By the wisdom of your policy, let the world know, that when America wages war, it is not through a false pride, a blind passion, or the mad ambition of conquest; but because the outraged dignity of the nation calls aloud for vengeance; not through a wanton insolence, but to preserve those essential rights, without which, death itself would be a blessing. Let the world know, that if America is solicitous for peace, it is not because she is weak or timid, but because she is animated by moderation, justice and humanity. Her valour and success in her late struggle, have fixed her character on a solid and permanent base; while her brows are girt with the laurels of victory, her hands cannot be tarnished by the olive branch of peace.—Reflect that the spirit of liberty is composed of wisdom, as well as of boldness; that it is exposed equally to danger, when it dares too much, as when it dares too little. This principle, which will bear the test of scrutiny, has directed the American councils to check and restrain those passions,

fions, the free operation of which has oft produced the wreck of empires.

Should you, therefore, my fellow-citizens, in those moments of exalted passion, which make a mockery of prudence, be urged to abandon the pleasant and prosperous paths of peace, let me implore you to ponder well and seriously, before you revive those afflictive scenes, which are still recent in your memory, before you tear open those wounds, but just scar'd over, and renew those acts of desolation, of which the dreary ruins, still scattered over the country, are durable and awful testimonies. Call on the advocates of war to point out the advantages which are to indemnify you, for a state of society, which lets loose all the savage and brutal passions of man, and then drives him forth to butcher those he does not even know; which stains the fair fields of plenty with human gore, and changes scenes of luxuriance into a barren wilderness; which either prostrates, or converts the calm retreats of science and the sacred temples of the Almighty, into the polluted haunts of howling beasts. Examine well, if genuine patriotism alone again invites, to darken this smiling land with the funereal cypress, and to enlarge the sad sphere of widowed and fatherless distress, to convert the peaceful vehicles of commerce, which whiten the ocean, into the bloody caverns of death; to substitute, in short, poverty for
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wealth, famine for abundance, anarchy for order, perfidy for faith, and to exchange the tranquil enjoyments of social harmony, for the miseries of sieges, the sustenance of putrid carcases, and the sight of mutilated limbs. Remember well, that war, the dire scourge of other nations, is a calamity peculiarly grievous to America. A nation, chiefly of industrious yeomanry, war is not our trade. While many of the sovereigns of Europe can, at a nod, call forth myriads of useless vassals, trained up for slaughter, the very bloodhounds of war, we must tear from the plough the valuable citizen; when we bring into the field of death, our useful farmers to oppose their lives to transatlantic hirelings, do we wage war on equal terms? Can there be any comparison between the insulated mercenary on the one side, and the father of a family on the other, whose numerous offspring require his fostering hand? The loss of the one is scarcely felt, and easily replaced; that of the other leaves a wide-spreading affliction to his family, his friends, his country.

Before we engage in war, which once embarked in, will be carried on with all the ferocity, which the bitterest passions can excite, let us reflect on the torrents of blood which will be shed, the blood of our most useful citizens, the blood of our dearest relatives and friends; let me appeal to the sensibility of those, whose miserable destiny it has ever been
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to experience the pangs, which wrung their hearts, at the hard and cold grasp of an expiring friend, whose bosoms have been chilled by the last sigh, the farewell look, the convulsive groan of departing life, and they must pause before they involve their country in scenes of human carnage; they will reflect, that of the thousands of their fellow-citizens, who would fall in the blood stained fields, there is not one, who would not leave behind a parent, a child, a wife, or a friend, to bewail his untimely fate; they will, if their hearts be not seared and deadened to every principle of philanthropy, confess that peace ought to be cherished with the most anxious care, and war, that scourge of humanity, never resorted to, but in the necessary defence of essential rights.

But are we then to submit without end to repeated and flagrant insults, in order to avoid these deplorable consequences of war? I trust these observations will not be misinterpreted into a design to benumb that national sensibility, the palladium of our honor and our invaluable rights, or to slacken that sacred fire of patriotism, which ought ever to burn bright on the altars of our country: they are only calculated to put you on your guard against an evil genius always stirring abroad, and to check that too lively irritation, which mistaking ill-founded prejudices for national dignity, and dangerous preferences for patriotism, does not make due allowances for the peculiar

peculiar situation of Europe, and its inevitable effects.

When the great and powerful nations of the world are grappling with each other, in a furious and dreadful conflict, when all their most sanguinary and vindictive passions are engaged in mutual desolation, it is perhaps expecting more than historical experience will justify, that our nation, though in a state of declared and acknowledged neutrality, should maintain the delightful calms of peace undisturbed, and enjoy all our neutral privileges unimpaired.

When the ocean has been convulsed by the raging warfare of the elements, the effects of the tempest are felt at a distance by the heaving undulations, which agitate the peaceful bark, gliding through unruffled waters in a serene horizon.

Which of us would expect to escape uninjured, were we to interpose in a combat, waged by the parties with unbridled fury? Who among us would be surprized, if at the moment when ungovernable rage had expelled from the mind every vestige of reason, one of the combatants, soured by disappointment and defeat, suspecting an intrusive interference, should address us in the harsh language of reproach, or charge us with hostile views? Would any one, in such circumstances, be justified, in the eye of sober reason, in becoming a party in the conflict? The same passions, which agitate the minds of individuals,

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too generally direct the councils of nations. Ought we then to be surprized, if the dreadful war, which rages between nations, with whom we have such extensive relations, should be productive of a temporary inconvenience and a partial injury?

Let it moreover be remembered, that at these critical periods, there is a contagious quality in the vindictive passions of others, which sheds a baneful and poisonous influence over our happy soil; that passions and prejudices hence spring up among ourselves, and soon grow to maturity, fostered by individual prepossessions or antipathies; these, by exciting sensibilities, which would otherwise be dormant, naturally engender feverish irritations, presenting to our heated imaginations, a thousand phantoms, which, under other circumstances, would never have alarmed us.

I will not, as some have done, attribute that restlessness, which displays itself on these occasions, to sordid ambition, a thirst for gain, or to a natural delight in anarchy, war, and plunder; but I am willing to trace it, either to a constitutional peevishness and petulance of temper in some, or in others to a nice and exquisite sense of honor, and peculiar tenderness for our national character. Whatever be the motive, I cannot, consistently with my sense of duty, too warmly press the foregoing considerations on your minds, convinced that a due regard to them, on your part, will have a considerable influence

ence on the community in general. They have been suggested, I can confidently assert, by an honest zeal for my country's good, and I dare anticipate their reception by you, with a correspondent patriotism and a candid indulgence.

Undoubtedly there will be times, when, yielding, though reluctantly, to the pressure of events, the American arm must be uplifted in a righteous defence; when, to vindicate her insulted dignity, Columbia's sword will be wielded with an energy, proportioned to the justice of her cause; when the thunder of her wrath will be heard, as formidable in war, as her forbearance has been dignified in peace. If hostile attempts should then be aimed at her territory, the rash invader shall soon find her sea-coast, bristling with defensive strength, and receive, from her gallant and united sons, the just reward of a vain temerity.

It is a melancholy consideration, arising from the unhappy destiny of those nations, who have fought for liberty, that this invaluable blessing has only been obtainable at the expence of great individual sufferings: thro' a sad fatality, which confounds all human reasoning, war has been always necessary for the establishment of freedom; but it is only peace, which consolidates it by the true display of its energy; it is peace which enobles it by the practice of the mild and gentle vir-

tues; it is peace, which embellishes it by the culture of the arts, and the charms of science.

This country, amidst the political convulsions produced by the French revolution, has hitherto steadily pursued the course prescribed by the rights of nations, and its own true interests. This useful system seemed at first easy to be maintained; by its nature and our position, the American government appeared destined to take no part in transatlantic quarrels. But the injurious outrages on our commerce, and the incessant activity of some enthusiasts, always lying in wait to seize on the generous feelings of an insulted people, and direct them unwarily to the insidious purposes of their own ambition, oft deranged all our political calculations. The government, however, soon perceived that the situation, into which we were nearly brought, was not our natural one, and convinced that a state of war could, in no point of view, promote our interests, while our neutrality presented real and permanent advantages, thenceforth directed all its energy to the maintenance of peace.

To reconcile a prudent temporizing with the rapidity of ever shifting events, and with the considerations justly due to our foreign relations, to resist the shocks continually produced by the exaggerated insinuations of intrigue and malevolence, or of an inconsiderate patriotism, to calm resentments, explain and remove difficulties, and draw a reflecting
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and judicious people around a single rallying point, the scrupulous observance of a fair neutrality ; this was the arduous and sublime conduct which our federal executive has displayed ; the maintenance of peace has been the grand pivot on which all his actions have turned, and on which he was content to hazard that, which, after his love for his country, holds the first place in his breast, its affection. Illustrious citizen ! will posterity believe, that while you were thus struggling with difficulties before unknown, in a situation before untried, and straining all the vigorous faculties of your energetic mind, to shield the happiness of your country from impending danger, some of your very countrymen, with base ingratitude, and shameless indecency, not only reviled your judgment, but dared to impeach your purity.

You once astonished the world by your military fame ; you have since astonished it by your civil virtues ; what will the astonished world exclaim at ingratitude like this ?

What should we say, if history fitting in judgment on this great character, should artfully separate some trivial fault, some slight political error, from that mass of good, which he has performed for his country ; if casting aside so many brilliant and useful services, and throwing the veil of ingratitude over his revolutionary labors, she were to search for some ill-considered measure to cloud his fair fame ? Should we not pronounce it unmerited and unjust ?

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But whatever shafts ingratitude or injustice may now aim at his splendid reputation, history will record to an impartial posterity, the virtues and services of this tried patriot, who, mingling the frankness of integrity, and the modesty of true merit, with the firmness of the constituted authority, jealous of the dignity of his station, and the honor and interests of his country, has concentrated an assemblage of varied excellence of which the world has hitherto furnished no example.

Happy for us, is it, to be habitual witnesses of virtues so dear to all hearts, of qualities so exalted and beneficial; posterity will envy us the pride and delight of being the cotemporaries of such a man, and will lament the shortness of *his* life, and the postponement of *their* birth.

In spite of all the perils with which we have been for some time encompassed, and the late unpropitious appearance of events, we may now congratulate ourselves, that the steady adherence of the American people to their true interests, amidst the storms of faction, and the persevering efforts of insidious disorganizers, has again saved America, and established her character, and her prosperity, on a basis which cannot be shaken. The machinations of anarchists, the attempts of incendiaries, have every where been baffled: the firebrands which they have hurled, and which, like those of their kindred furies, on the mimic scene, produced a momentary blaze and
alarm

alarm, like them have ceased to terrify, as soon as they ceased to be agitated; like them, their fire has evaporated in filthy smoke, or fallen to the ground in harmless sparks.

At this delicate juncture, our duty, as good citizens, is to unite ourselves, and to support each other, in resisting those who would undermine the foundation of the laws, and plunge us into anarchy or slavery.

Let there be then among us, my friends, but one party, that of justice; but one opinion, support of the laws; but one sentiment, the love of our country.—Are we not one great family, having but one common tie, the same interests, the same dangers? However we may differ in the choice of means, let us all concenter our wishes and our exertions, to preserve order, to maintain justice, to promote the prosperity, and defend the liberties of our common country; let us all combine our labours to perpetuate that excellent constitution, in which the necessary restraints of law, and the liberties of the citizen, are blended together in a harmonious system, ensuring to us blessings, which America may proudly boast are possessed by her alone.

Notwithstanding the gratifying sensations which have arisen in our hearts from our general prosperity, yet the late awful calamity, which presents to our afflicted view a dreary devastation, and sheds a transient gloom over *this* anniversary, powerfully calls forth the sympathetic sigh for our distressed fellow-citizens,

zens, and excites the most painful reflections at this disastrous check to the rising importance of our favorite city.

The noble munificence, which has been so liberally displayed on this, as on former occasions, so characteristic of, and so honorable to my countrymen, while it casts a bright ray of comfort over these mournful scenes, renders it almost needless to observe, that this divine virtue can never shine with greater lustre, than when directed to the timely aid of those unfortunates, whom the destructive element has stripped of enjoyments, which Americans are so little accustomed to want.

After expressing my sensibility at having been selected for the interesting duty of this auspicious day, and my ardent wish that, in the performance of it, I may have increased your attachment to the great cause of liberty, and the public good, I will now conclude, by uniting with you, my friends, in effusions of gratitude to heaven, for all the inestimable blessings we possess, and in fervent supplications, that they may long be continued to us, and transmitted, in purity and energy, to our latest posterity.

ENTERED ACCORDING TO LAW.

ERRATA.—Page 12, line 4, for *evey* read *every*—p. 18, l. 8, for *their* read *its*—p. 24, l. 21, for *assisting* the read *assisting in the*, &c.