

AN
ORATION,
COMMEMORATIVE OF
American Independence,

DELIVERED ON THE

FOURTH OF JULY, 1810,

BY LIEUTENANT STEELE WHITE,

OF THE SAVANNAH VOLUNTEER GUARDS.

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1810.

TO THE
Committee of Arrangement

FOR THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1810,

OF THE

Savannah Volunteer Guards,

This Oration is respectfully submitted by their Fellow Soldier,

STEELE WHITE

ORATION, &c.

ONCE more should we sing the song of gladness: Once more should we shout praises to the Most High, for again permitting us to witness the return of our National Jubilee.

FELLOW CITIZENS AND FELLOW SOLDIERS,

IF, my Countrymen, we could soar aloft, and extend our vision over our vast Republic, we should behold our citizens flocking, on this joyous occasion, to the temples dedicated to the solemn worship of the Deity, and to halls set apart for the sacred distribution of justice, to pay that homage to the day, which its importance demands. Could we, I repeat, have our organs of hearing so refined, we should at this moment have them assailed with the pleasing sounds of martial music, the roar of cannon and the peal of bells; all combining with the tongues of eloquence, to welcome the return of this gladsome era. In every city, in every town, and in every village of our happy country, we should witness our brethren, uniting in festive and rational mirth; seeming for a while to forget their cares, and each emulous to excel in offering tokens of congratulation.

We are then, my fellow-citizens, assembled on no trivial or common occasion, nor are we alone in so doing. Neither is this the first time you have met in this place with the same object. From this sacred desk, from which you are wont to hear the most animating, profound and pathetic strains of eloquence,

You have before been addressed in a manner calculated to make the blush of shame crimson my cheeks, and my tongue to falter, in attempting to perform the duty which has been assigned to me. Looking around, however, on my respectable audience, I behold my brethren in arms, and others, who, I am certain, will not listen with critics ears, to the few observations which little leisure has permitted me to throw together. They will receive with kindness, what I shall offer with freedom; and excuse, with candor, all defects in the style or in the matter.

And, what is it that has brought us forth? We are assembled to celebrate an event, which, in importance, has no equal in the historic annals of our country; an event which gave a seal to our liberties, and secured happiness to millions. The occasion of our assemblage is admirably calculated to smother all political animosities; to drown the discordant voice of party spirit; to smooth the brow of discontent; to make us forget national enmities, and to compel us to join in fervent acknowledgments to the God of our fathers, for the great benefits which have been bestowed on us. It is designed to bring to grateful recollection, the period which was the commencement of our freedom; and, that this freedom, proclaimed in language suited to the subject, was purchased by the blood and treasure of our fellow-citizens. It moreover makes us tacitly acknowledge, that we will watch over the liberty we have so nobly won, and to defend those rights, which, purchased at so high a price, are worth any sacrifice.

In the zeal which our countrymen manifest to commemorate this day, after four and thirty years have rolled away, we have one of the best proofs, that, as they forget not the origin of it, so they will not cease to hold it in the same veneration, for countless years.

Need I detail to you the origin of it? Shall I not wantonly trespass on your time, if I narrate those events, or those circumstances which gradually compelled the present United States to declare themselves independent? Should I not rather refer you, young men, to the tales of your sires, and to the historic pages of our country; and you, my venerable hearers,

to recur to the time when your memories will bring fresh to your remembrance the events themselves.

The emancipation of our country from a vile and debasing state of political slavery, was an event, as wonderful as it was unexpected. Not one circumstance alone, but a combination of circumstances, gradually induced the then colonies of Britain to wean themselves from their attachment to their mother country, and ultimately to proclaim their entire freedom. A maddening policy seemed to have infused itself into the minds of the English cabinet, and to have influenced its parliament. Induced (by the wisdom and eloquence of the illustrious Pitt, the uniform advocate of American rights) to repeal one act, as obnoxious as it was impolitic, unjust and inexpedient, they yet enacted others, not less unconstitutional, or less calculated to fan into a flame, those embers which else would have gradually died away. Strange infatuation! Monstrous absurdity!—The deluded cabinet of Britain no longer heard the voice of William Pitt. With an accumulation of years, and a burden of disease, he had retired from public office, with disgust, and left his colleagues to pursue those measures, which disgraced themselves, and ultimately relieved us from our thralldom. Thus was deduced good from evil.

Ere we, however, approach to that important time which we hail as the birth day of our freedom, let us hastily scan a few more of the events which preceded it, in which the lawless and licentious power of a parliament will be seen to have aimed deadly blows at our best rights. The colonies, under the consideration that they were not represented, never conceded to the right of being taxed; and, therefore, with the same spirit that compelled them to remonstrate against the stamp and mutiny acts, they were induced to oppose the duties imposed on tea, glass, paper, &c.—Certain restrictions on trade, were also laid, calculated still more to excite discontent and murmuring.—These things, engendered in the minds of men who forgot right and felt power, were aimed as wounds to the vital parts of our constitution; and to rivet the chains of servitude. But, the warning voice of freedom called the sons of America to awake from their

slumbers, or else to sleep the political sleep of death: With the respect which was due to the country, which the colonies styled mother, they had petitioned for a redress of wrongs; they had remonstrated against the tyrannical and odious system of taxation: but all was fruitless; and justice to their children compelled them to oppose, by force, what they could not obtain by reason and entreaty. A sullen ear was even turned to the petition to the king, and address to the inhabitants of Great-Britain and Ireland, on the 8th of July, 1775. Could it then be expected, that the American people would remain quiet, under a burden, which, from unfeeling and weak cruelty, had already increased to a weight, that had almost destroyed the small portion of freedom which had been spared to them? While yet bending under the load, they made a vigorous effort, and saved their country from degradation. The people of America, in full congress assembled, had expressed their sentiments in the bold language of men determined to maintain their rights; but, as soon as the last obnoxious act that was passed was announced to the colonies, opposition became general, violent and determined. The public mind was in a high state of ebullition, and the tumult was increased yet more, when a strong military force was marched into the peaceable town of Boston.

The call of congress, immediately subsequent to these measures, evinced the spirit of enthusiasm which animated the people; and the language which this respectable body spoke, was the language of men, who would not quietly wear the chains which were forging for them. All was vain. Britain would not rescind her unwise and unjust measures, and America was determined to oppose them. The congress of '76 claim the great and distinguished honor of having declared the independence of the then colonies, and from the period of their so doing, the contest for power on the one side, and right on the other, became fierce and animated.

I should unwarrantably encroach on your time, my fellow-citizens, if I detained you with a narrative of the events of the revolution which gave us liberty; and I should indirectly tax you with ignorance, if I believed they were not strongly engraven on all your

minds. The pens of historians have done ample justice to the subject ; and they have also, in faithful language, pourtrayed the characters and bold achievements of our countrymen, in the cause of freedom. It would be pleasing, also, to devote a portion of the present time to eulogise the characters of men, who erected a deathless portion of fame in their country's cause ; but this would lead me into an endless subject. Let me merely remark, that the Anglo-American revolution was not of a common or an ordinary nature ; it was not of that nature which erst distracted Rome, and alternately hurled from the seat of power, one individual, to make room for another, as the force of an unthinking multitude was directed by the influence of a lawless demagogue ; it was not of that kind, which still so oft jeopardises the lives of men, who by it are raised to the dangerous elevation of the throne in Turkey, and some of its dependencies : It was not, my fellow-countrymen, like that revolution which closed the race of the Capets ; which, for twenty years, has kept Europe in a state of agitation, and which has overwhelmed some of its oldest governments, changed the whole face of the country, placed kings, as by magic art, where none were before, and ultimately terminated, by an obscure individual usurping and maintaining, by a wonderful combination of circumstances and an assemblage of rare qualifications, a power and authority at which kings and emperors tremble.

Let me repeat : the revolution which placed the United States in the rank of independent governments, was unlike any of those, and the arms which were boldly seized and boldly supported by our forefathers, for their liberties, and the liberties of their children, were quietly laid down, when their object was attained. Like a band of brothers, who had fought for a common prize, it was no sooner secured, than they returned to their homes to pursue their peaceable occupations : the husbandman to his farm ; the artisan to his shop ; and the merchant to his desk. There was no contention for power—no strivings for superiority. But, although independence was acquired, and the enemies of our country made to see the folly of aiming to enslave a people determined

to be free, it was necessary to organize a government, else anarchy and wild misrule would have blasted all the fair hopes of the votaries of freedom. Here, a new era opens to our view. A whole people quietly resigning one form of government to adopt another, more efficient and more calculated to promote their happiness. If Europe gazed at our country, during the unequal contest for liberty with Great Britain, who was powerful in resources and old in arms, and wondered to see her vanquished, she did not behold with less admiration this novel and untried experiment. It formed a new epoch in the annals of our country. The federal constitution was formed; a wise compact, made to insure to each individual his full portion of right and authority in the government for which he fought, and which he aids to maintain.

To that man, great above all other men, who had signalized himself, when a stripling, in saving the remnant of an army from the tomahawks of a savage foe; who had been a highly distinguished citizen in his own state, for many years; who had been summoned, by his country's call, to head the army of the sons of freedom; who had led it to conquest and renown, overcoming all obstacles and surmounting all difficulties, by a matchless portion of intrepidity, prudence and valor—to that man, who, when he had securely arrived at the goal for which he had started, and peaceably retired to his beloved shade, was the reins of government offered. To Washington, my countrymen—let us pause at the sound of his name. Peace to thy manes! Immortal founder of thy country's liberty! May the guardian geniuses of Columbia watch o'er thy grave! May angels protect thy spirit, until the last great day, when this globe and thousands of celestial worlds shall dissolve into their original chaos. To Washington—let us weep for his departure. To Washington—let us send up fervent orisons to the most high and supreme Ruler of the Universe, for having, in his beneficence, given us such a man. To Washington, I say, who seemed destined to perform great actions, and who did perform them, in a way unequalled by any other individual, was presented the first and most dignified

station which a free people had in their power to bestow. And, will the doubts of any, as to his meriting this distinguished preference, render it needful for me to enquire, who was more worthy of it; who was as much so? To Greene, to Gates, to Wayne, to Hamilton, to all the others who partook with Washington the dangers of the battle, who shared with him the glory of a conqueror, without diminishing it, I would ascribe due honor, and give them their just rank in the page of history—I would have their memories fondly cherished, and their services most gratefully acknowledged; but I would not place them in competition with the actions of a man, who had modestly, and void of all motives of interest to himself, accepted an office as pre-eminent in responsibility as it was in dignity, and who had steadily persevered in a course of laborious action, until he had secured freedom to his native land. He who had been thought most valiant among the brave, was also deemed most sage among the wise. To him, then, was assigned the presidential office; and he ushered from retirement to take the helm of government. He now embarked on a dangerous, trackless ocean, hitherto unnavigated, and consequently unknown. All his watchfulness, all his prudence, were called forth into full and constant action, to avoid shoals and quicksands, to repel counter-currents, and to resist the fury of storms and tempests, which, anon, would have wrecked the barque of state. The commencement was auspicious for the close of the voyage. He selected from among the nation, skilful pilots, and officers well versed in the knowledge of things, especially belonging to the departments assigned to them.

Must I call to your recollection what was effected during the administration of Washington? Need I point out to you those leaves which were added to the wreath which had already graced his brow? Ever vigilant for his country's safety, ever watchful for her best interests, having nothing of self in all his actions, he labored for her good with unwearied assiduity, an unshaken firmness, and an unsullied integrity. Firm as a rock, when dangers menaced from abroad, he bade defiance to threatening power, baffled every snare, warded every blow aimed at our

peace and independence, and he nobly asserted and maintained the rights of a free people. "His reputation was now brilliant and spotless as the sun. Envy itself did not dare to sully it, nor did a rivalry of it enter even into the wildest dreams of ambition. He stood now on the very pinnacle of fame, with the brightest rays of human glory playing around him, and exhibiting him in majesty to an admiring world. Nothing more was wanting to complete his greatness. Nothing more to fill up the measure of his earthly wishes. To a future world alone, could he look for a superior standing in glory, for earth had nothing superior to offer."

Thus did our exalted citizen act, and thus he left public employments for the "noiseless tenor" of a rural life. But, quitting the former for the latter, he, like a parent who is parting with a darling child, still yearned for its future welfare; and, to the strong language of his actions, and the pure example of his life, he added a rich legacy to his countrymen. Will I not be pardoned for calling your attention to some of his monitions? Will you think it a sacrifice of time, if you are detained while I offer you some of those precepts which ought always to be remembered; which we should feel a sacred duty to impress on the minds of our children, as being most essential to our country's weal? In his valedictory address to his countrymen, on retiring from the office to which he had been unanimously re-elected, we have a perspicuity and force of language, equalled only by the plainness and force of the truths which it conveys.

Speaking of the basis of our political system; as consisting in the right of the people to make and change their constitutions of government, he yet warns them against all "associations, under whatever plausible character, with the real design to direct, control, counteract or awe the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities, as destructive of this fundamental principle, and of fatal tendency. They serve to organize faction; to give it an artificial and extraordinary force; to put in the place of the delegated will of the nation the will of a party, often a small but artful and enterprising minority of the community; and, according to the alternate triumphs

of different parties, to make the public administration the mirror of the ill-concerted and incongruous projects of faction, rather than the organ of consistent and wholesome plans, digested by common councils, and modified by mutual interests."

When our political saviour declared these truths, his pen seems to have been guided by a prophetic hand; for, since then, my brethren, have we not seen innovations in our constitution almost affecting its vitality; and which, if repeated, would impair, still more, the energy of that system which we consider the bulwark of our liberty, the palladium of our rights? The influence of the "spirit of party," which we have seen stalking with hideous aspect and rapid strides, from one extreme of the continent to the other, he seems to have had apprehensions. How felicitous would it have been for our country, if his salutary hints had been less disregarded. We should not, then, have witnessed those shameful distinctions between men who have equally borne their share of toil in defence of their liberties; and we should not have been eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses of those dissensions which have distracted our councils; of those bickerings which too often have annihilated some of the strongest ties of affection; which have, in too many instances, shaken the confidence of our own citizens in the government of their choice, and lessened that respect for it which it should have with foreign nations! These are a few of the evils consequent to the prevalence of a high state of party, in a republican government. It is a spirit, which, if well regulated, would probably prove slightly beneficial in some cases, even in a government of the people; but, in an aristocracy, no doubt is to be entertained that it has a wholesome tendency.

"This spirit," says the immortal Washington, when he left his country in a high and unequalled state of prosperity, "unfortunately, is inseparable from our nature, having its root in the strongest passions of the human mind. It exists under different shapes in all governments, more or less stifled, controlled or repressed; but, in those of the popular form, it is seen in its greatest rankness, and is truly their worst enemy."

“The alternate domination of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge natural to party dissensions, which, in different ages and countries, has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is itself a frightful despotism. But this leads, at length, to a more formal and permanent despotism. The disorders and miseries which result, gradually incline the minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute power of an individual; and, sooner or later, the chief of some prevailing faction, more able or more fortunate than his competitors, turns this disposition to the purposes of his own elevation on the ruins of public liberty.

“Without looking forward to an extremity of this kind (which, nevertheless, ought not to be entirely out of sight) the common and continual mischiefs of the spirit of party are sufficient to make it the interest and duty of a wise people to discourage and restrain it.

“It serves always to distract the public councils, and enfeeble the public administration. It agitates the community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms; kindles the animosity of one part against another; foment, occasionally, riot and insurrection: It opens the door to foreign influence and corruption, which find a facilitated access to the government itself, through the channels of party passions. Thus the policy and the will of one country are subjected to the policy and will of another.

“There is an opinion, that parties, in free countries, are useful checks upon the administration of the government, and serve to keep alive the spirit of liberty. This, within certain limits, is probably true; and, in governments of a monarchical cast, patriotism may look with indulgence, if not with favor, upon the spirit of party. But, in those of the popular character, in governments purely elective, it is a spirit not to be encouraged. From their natural tendency, it is certain there will be always enough of that spirit for every salutary purpose; and there being constant danger of excess, the effort ought to be, by force of public opinion, to mitigate and assuage it—a fire not to be quenched; it demands a uniform vigilance to prevent its bursting into a flame, lest, instead of warming, it should consume.”

While I apologise for encroaching on your time, by presenting you with extracts, which, probably, all who are present distinctly recollect, I would yet add, that, were it customary on this momentous day (after offering to the throne of Supreme Majesty, fervent acknowledgements for our manifold blessings—our free, peaceful, happy and prosperous state) merely to read the declaration of independence, in which the rights of freemen are so nobly advocated; and, to close with “that brief, but immortal work,” the Farewel Address of Washington—“a work which should form the political creed of every American, and which future ages will venerate as a monument of the purest patriotism, and the soundest wisdom,” in which the mode of preserving those rights is so well defined—we should, perhaps, render more essential service to our country, than by pursuing the hard-trodden path, in which every object has been clearly recognized, and every subject carefully examined.

With this lengthy digression, perhaps, I ought abruptly to close; for that sense of incompetency to the task I have undertaken, which had impressed me from the first, influences me yet more as I proceed.

You have had a concise detail of the causes and events which led to the dismemberment of the United States. You have had a very distant view, in faint colors, of the revolution, which, with an inauspicious commencement, and dubious progression, had a most illustrious termination. You have seen what no other nation ever saw, three millions of people peaceably remaining under forms of government created in times of great peril, and little leisure for maturing them—and you have seen, what is greatly more worthy of admiration, this same people resigning all government, returning to primeval democracy, and then conceding to a new system, more wise, more concordant, more efficient, and more applicable to the state of existing times and circumstances.

These phenomena have been presented to us: and, in addition, we have all seen a yet greater wonder, our country in peace for nearly thirty years, and, during this time, pushing on to greatness with a celerity and success hitherto unequalled.

Attributing, as I do, so much to the administration of Washington, for the prosperous condition of our happy country, must I say nothing on that of Mr. Jefferson, the "man of the people?" Would silence here become me? Admitting that his deeds are the strongest proofs of the faithful manner in which he has discharged the momentous duties assigned to him by his country's voice; that his counsels best bespeak his wisdom; and his voluntary resignation of the power delegated to him, the most unequivocal proofs of his disinterestedness and patriotism; still, to be entirely mute, after what has been said, would be indirect censure. Far removed be this from my mind.

Nothing less could be expected, when he whose illumined mind could pen a "Declaration of Independence," took the chair of state, than much reviling and great censure, from that portion of the people who had before been in the majority. He had immediately succeeded to an administration in which errors, perhaps, rather of the head than of the heart, had been committed, and which consequently required correction. Few individuals are disposed to acknowledge the commission of faults; and if assented to, are still less willing to yield to chastisement. Need we then be astonished, that in the measures adopted by Mr. Jefferson, the federalists perceived an hostility to their views; and need I ask you, my hearers, if this hostility was favorable or unfavorable to the principles of republicanism? Ought the federalists to complain for a kind of proscription which became essential for the security of the most valuable privileges, and which proscription had been pursued by themselves, and the predecessor of Mr. Jefferson? Will a liberal spirit permit them to murmur.

The administration of this highly distinguished and enlightened citizen was during a time which "tried his soul."

In the unbridled spirit of licentious warfare which governed the two great contending powers of Europe, each looked with a jealous eye towards America; each, in the malicious hope of injuring his enemy, aimed wounds at an unoffending and innocent neutral. You need not be informed what England has done; and what France has done. I need not repeat to you

the words of the "Orders in Council or the Berlin and Milan Decrees." You know their odiousness, and you are satisfied of their undisguised hostility to our best commercial privileges. The situation of our affairs, in consequence of these arbitrary impositions, became perplexed. It was to us entirely novel. The measures adopted by our country to guard against their fatal effects were such as could be dictated by the wisdom of the nation; and if they have failed, we should, with as little justice, censure Mr. Jefferson, as we should that physician, who should prescribe, without success, for a disease of unknown character and disguised features. We will admit the embargo to have been an "*anceps remedium*," but it was the best which sound judgment and pre-eminent wisdom could dictate. We will admit, also, that some evils and many inconveniences were the attendants of it. Such were inevitable; and, for the good of the whole body-politic, it was totally unavoidable, if some of the members suffered. This measure of our government was a wise one, and well adapted to repel the injuries offered to our commerce. I will hazard the assertion, that if it had been as rigidly observed, which, as a law of the land, it should have been, the object in view would have been more certainly attained. But what is justice without a faithful administration of it? An unmeaning sound. What are laws, unless duly honored and observed? Useless trash—bagatelles—trifles. I dare repeat, that if there had been no men in our country base enough to barter their faith and good name for sordid lucre, the embargo would not have continued for a period unequalled in the history of any commercial state. But such were to be found, even in our country, free above all others. Yes, such men, in a government of unequalled mildness, where no restrictions are placed upon their conduct or actions, but those which are absolutely requisite for the security of the body-politic, have wantonly and wickedly infringed a law intended for their good. For such men, pity would be undeserved. They have disgraced the name of Americans; they have forfeited all their claims to friendship or protection, from the government under which they once lived, and enjoy'd the

best privileges of freemen. Traitors to their country, they have become exiles to a foreign land. Shame! Shame! Misguided, deluded men!—What have you not done? Forsaken the land of your fathers; the land in which you drew the first breath of life; where you passed so merrily the days of your youth, and the period of manhood. Forsaken all these! and for what? Yes say, miserable men, for what have you yielded all these blessings? For a little wealth, do you reply? But ask your consciences how much you have lost. While rioting with the riches so dishonorably acquired, is this faculty asleep? Is the moral sense deadened? Has your sensibility become abrogated? When rolling in your charriots, reflect for a moment how these have been purchased, and at what a sacrifice. And when you hear it said in derision, “See, see, that man has basely trampled on the laws of his country; was an embargo breaker;” let guilty shame be marked in your countenance. Think not, my quondam countrymen, that you will remain unknown; and think not that your ill-gotten stores will satisfy the cravings of a guilty mind. They will not purchase that peace which is more valuable than gold, nor will they ensure that respect, which, with poverty in a republic like our’s, is preferable to your’s. Policy may induce to love treason, but traitors ever will be hated.

To return—Permit me barely to notice a transaction, which will be particularly distinguished in our diplomatic records. I allude to the arrangement entered into with Mr. Erskine, in good faith and with the most honorable intentions on the part of our government.

The conduct of Mr. Madison, on this occasion, merits high commendation; it evinced a sincerity and willingness to meet propositions, which the injured honor of our country demanded; and it also evinced a full confidence in the diplomatic agent. Who would have expected deception in such a case? Yet, there was gross, abominable deception; such as has reflected disgrace on the British cabinet, and will long be a warning to us, to enter with caution into arrangements, where the rights of a people may be endangered.

The measure unwillingly resorted to by our government, as the result of this novel business, was one of necessity, and just retaliation. I will not disguise, on this occasion, a sentiment which is, notwithstanding, in harmony with this measure. A portion of the community has suffered much from the restrictions on commerce; and the sufferings have not been altogether confined to those immediately concerned in it. As links of the same chain, the hardy and industrious cultivators of the soil have borne a part, and they have borne it without murmuring; or, if the voice of discontent has occasionally been heard, it was immediately stifled by the plaudits of patriotism and the shouts of approbation.

For such a rapid and imperfect view of recent occurrences, perhaps, I ought to apologize. If my stock of information would allow it, my respect for you will not suffer me to dwell longer on them, and I must close with a few reflections, for which I crave your patience.

For what, let me ask you, did we contend with Britain, at a time when opposition was deemed madness, even by some whose sentiments were in unison with the active supporters of it? For what did the valorous sons of New-England rush from their farm-yards and their fields at Lexington, at a time when British myrmidons commenced the work of destruction? For what did the blood of our fathers so freely flow at Breed's Hill; and for what did your Warren there expire? For what, I repeat, did we support a war for eight years, under difficulties and opposed by circumstances which were discouraging and appalling? Were these sacrifices, and all our privations, to gain nothing or a something? Were they to gratify the pride and ambition of an individual, or a set of men? Was it in revenge for some trifling imaginary or real insult or injury; or was it, my brethren, for the sake of conquest? No, no: very different motives prompted the Americans to forsake the loom and the shuttle; to leave their fields and their shops; to convert their plough-shares into swords, and to haste to the battle. Warmed by the pure flame of liberty, which erst had been smothered, they bade farewell to their homes, and to all that was dear to

them by the ties of nature or affection, to free their country from lawless oppression; to secure a rich inheritance to posterity, or else to perish in the conflict. They fought not in vain. They rescued our land from oppression, and we became an independent people. The United States assumed that rank among the nations of the earth, to which they were in justice entitled, and thenceforward new avenues of comfort were opened to them.

Our government, unlike many of the old world, which have their basis in conquest, is founded in reason, and in the unshackled choice of the whole people. Our federal constitution is one of the most perfect social compacts of which the science of legislation can boast. It is intended, and does provide, for the political security and happiness of every individual; and, while providing these blessings for its own citizens, they are freely offered, "without money and without price," to the distressed and oppressed of other countries. It has relieved religion from the shackles of superstition; and rational toleration now permits each and every one to worship his God in his own way, undisturbed and unrestrained. Under a legislation so wise and so lenient, how rapidly have the United States increased in riches, in population, and in comforts. With some slight exceptions, how have they escaped the warring animosities of the contending powers of Europe; and while the latter have been immolating all that was precious to their subjects on the altars of licentious ambition, the former have been pursuing, quietly, "the noiseless tenor of their way;" yet advancing to wealth, to power, and to the attainment of every thing in which truly consists the greatness of a nation. It would be pleasing here to place before you a comparative statement of our present situation, with that which the peace of '83 left us in; or even that in which we were at the adoption of the federal constitution. The progress which has been made in population; in intellectual improvements; in agriculture and in commerce; baffles all description, and challenges a comparison with the history of any ancient or modern nation. And are not these worth praising? Ought we not to bow, in humble adoration to the Great Dispenser of all good,

for having placed us in such a land? But while we recollect that we have been peculiarly favored of Heaven, we should also remember that our lot may be changed, that our hopes may be blasted, and all our fair prospects vanish as chaff before the whirlwind, or as a mist before the meridian sun.

As an unit is to an integral, so each individual is to the government. He forms a part of the whole, and his individual aid is necessary for its safety and support. He is a member of a family which has interests in common, in which there is no distinction of rights, and no claims to peculiar privileges. This consideration is a most important one. If duly weighed, it would repress the factious spirit, which, unfortunately has too much distracted the councils of the nation, and embittered too often the harmony of social intercourse. It should be remembered, that the unity of government is essential to its strength; to its tranquility; to its peace with foreign nations; to its prosperity, and to its liberty. How odious, then, the distinctions of federalists and republicans, of democrats and aristocrats! Let them be banished far away, for they are invidious; and, as fortuitous circumstances may lend their aid, they may sooner or later give force to a party which may bring ruin on our country. This will produce those evils which our political father, the immortal Washington, so much dreaded, and against which he admonished us with such parental regard. The spirit of party is "a fire not to be quenched. It demands a uniform vigilance to prevent its bursting into a flame; lest, instead of warming, it should consume."

While we should equally dread the overbearing predominance of party, we ought to be alike emulous for the support of our government, the common parent of us all. Being one of our own choice, it demands our most affectionate regard and unlimited confidence. The fundamental maxims of true liberty enjoin these duties upon us.

We should also be emulous in the discharge of our moral and religious duties. Religion and morality are the main pillars of human happiness, and the man who would essay to subvert the fabric of our moral science, would forfeit all claims to patriotism or re-

spect. They are inseparably connected with the security and prosperity of every government. Trace, my friends, the faithful pages of ancient and modern history; mark the melancholy consequences which have flowed from a disregard of religious and moral obligations; and then you will say how all-important they are. Morality and religion are twin brothers—the former cannot be maintained without the latter. Any belief, in opposition to this, is fallacious, and contradicted by experience and reason.

'Tis an axiom, that virtue is essential in all governments, and it applies with greater force to a free government, like our's. Blasted, then, be the prospects of him who would aim to destroy the foundation of so fair a structure!

In aid of what has been just advanced, for the support of political prosperity, it is essential that institutions for the promotion of learning should be encouraged. In a republican form of government, where so much depends upon the voice of the people, it is really indispensable that the power they possess should be guided by a correct judgment. The people should be enlightened.

The principles of policy and humanity inculcate our having a liberal intercourse with foreign nations, but they at the same time warn us against all passionate attachments, as leading to a variety of ills.—While, therefore, we harmonize with the powers of Europe, we should not evince a partial fondness, by granting peculiar privileges, which might, in the course of events, endanger our peace and independence. In extending our commercial connections, it is not necessary that we should entangle ourselves by political alliances.

Americans! we live in a land from which tyranny, with all its horrors, has been driven far away, and liberty, sweet liberty, has substituted its milder reign. How dearly should we prize this change! Then, love your country; cherish and support your government; respect its constituted authorities; defend yourselves against foreign influence, which will destroy your social blessings, demoralize your principles, and weaken your attachment for freedom.

You have all the blessings of which a free people

can boast, to attach you to the government of your choice. Then be firm in defence of that fabric, which has been reared at the expense of millions, and cemented by the precious blood of your best citizens. Remember—I say, remember how your liberties were bought, how your independence was secured.

Naturalized citizens! the country which you *now* call your's, has a double claim on your patriotism. You have been received into her bosom without having grown up with those most endearing ties which attach persons to the land of their birth. She offers you freely all her favors, all her benefits, and she affords you the same protection she does her own sons. Then, evince your gratitude; respect her civil institutions; obey her officers, and leave behind you those prejudices and undue partialities, which (without effecting any good) might be at variance with the habits, the customs and the opinions of the country in which you have found an asylum, and which might embitter the harmony of social union.

Volunteer Guards! for what do you wear the dress of soldiers? For what do those plumes wave in your hats? Why those arms in your hands? Are all these for mere pomp or idle show? Do these questions excite a spirit of indignation, as conveying indirect censure for want of patriotism?—Soldiers! I know you better. The solemn pledges you have offered to obey the summons of your country, will not be forgotten; and when its liberties or its peace is menaced by an ambition which no laws can govern, or a desire for power which no sense of justice can satisfy, you will cheerfully yield the sweets of home, the quiet of domestic life, and hasten to the tented field, to defend your beloved and injured country, fearless of death, even in all the horrid forms of the battle.

It was virtue like your's that fired the gallant Leonidas, and his brave Spartan band, to oppose the innumerable hosts of myrmidons at the pass of Thermopylæ; that led the Grecian heroes, under the command of Miltiades, to conquest and renown on the plains of Marathon. 'Twas this sacred spirit of enthusiasm that elevated Rome to the zenith of her glory, and rendered her the terror and admiration of fu-

ture ages. It was this divine ardor that animated the generous bosom of Doria, and stimulated the immortal Tell to free their countries from oppression, and nobly to assert the rights of freedom.

And lastly, my countrymen, my friends and fellow-soldiers, it is virtue and patriotism, like that of your departed Washington's, which will fix your liberties on a basis, firm as the rock of ages, aye, as immovable as the centre of the earth.

F I N I S.

ERRATA.

Ninth page, tenth line of the oration, for "*the page,*" read "*the fairest page;*" and in page eleven, thirteenth line, for "*The influence,*" read "*Of the influence.*"