

AN
ORATION,

DELIVERED AT PLYMPTON,

ON THE

FOURTH OF JULY, 1809.



By JOHN WINSLOW, Esquire.



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1809.

ORATION.

ON this joyous day, we are assembled together, not with a view to satisfy a vain and idle curiosity, to attract the notice of the spectator by our gay and costly attire, to gratify our sensual propensities, or to indulge in unmeaning mirth and hilarity ; but with a view of reciprocating in those patriotic sensibilities, which none but the real friends of their country ever feel.

It may appear to a superficial observer of national events, that the subjects most appropriate on this anniversary of our National Independence, are the causes which separated United Columbia from her unnatural parent, and the means by which she attained her sovereignty and freedom ; but these subjects have so oft been the theme of the orator and the historian, and are so firmly fixt in the memory of every American, whose bosom has throbed with anxiety for the welfare and glory of his country, that to this audience, they need not be reiterated. Those of you, my hearers, who have fought the battles of your country, and grown grey in her service, are better qualified to instruct the rising generation in the history of those events, than your youthful orator. Those of you who were “puling in your nurses’ arms,” while your seniors and parents were achieving the independence of your country, (if you be still ignorant of the causes and the means by which America has gained a rank among the nations of the earth,) seek information, not of the young, but of the aged and the experienced ; not of those who unmasked obtrude their opinions and sentiments, but of those who prefer retirement from the noise and bustle of political strife to the notice and applause of the giddy populace.

How we have acquired Freedom and Liberty ; how we have established a form of government, the purest and most perfect ever devised or carried into effect by the human race, are subjects worthy the consideration of every patriot. But it is of much greater importance to inquire how we may lose those invaluable privileges, than how we have attained them ; to ask how the liberties of our country can be preserved, rather than how they were generated by our revolutionary

Heroes, and nursed, educated, and perfected in the school of the immortal WASHINGTON.

Knowledge and Virtue are the great desiderata in all free governments. If the people be wise, they will discern ; if they be virtuous, they will pursue the true interests of their country. Knowledge without virtue, serves to promote the interests, not of our country, but of ourselves and our friends. —Thence arise deadly feuds and animosities ; thence springs up that bane of Republicanism—party-spirit. The predominating party rules the nation, while the mass of the people are mere tools in the hands of designing demagogues, who use them to work out their artful designs ; who flatter and cajole them until they are completely broken to the yoke, and then govern and chastise them with a rod of iron.

As Knowledge without Virtue leads to favoritism, and from thence to Aristocracy or Monarchy, so Virtue without Knowledge, leads to Anarchy and Confusion, and from thence to Tyranny and Despotism. The councils of the nation will be weak and fluctuating ; former precedents will be despised and rejected ; the laws and usages of nations will be disregarded or unknown, and even experience herself will teach lessons neither useful nor salutary. As vanity is usually the concomitant of ignorance, those in office will be puffed up with the notice of the multitude ; they will conceive themselves to be self-taught ; they will look down on those who presume to offer them advice with hauteur and contempt ; they will despise and reject the admonitions of the wise and the truly great, and in their progress through political life, will chalk out for themselves new and unexplored paths, when their abilities are scarcely adequate to conduct them in the most plain and beaten tracts. Such blind guides must soon involve the most happy and prosperous people in all the horrors of misery and distress. Their followers, when too late, will be aroused from their torpor ; they will find themselves bewildered and lost ; they will now no longer trust in those who had mislead them ; but, choosing some skilful and daring pilot to lead them back to the abodes of peace and quiet, wearied with their fruitless peregrination, they will exert themselves no further ; and finally, having placed all trust and power into the hands of their new leader, they will reserve to themselves no other privilege, than that of being permitted to sink down into the most abject state of servitude and dependence.

If in the councils of a nation, there be a conjunction of good and bad qualities ; if some rulers possess *knowledge*, but lack in *goodness*, while others are *virtuous*, but deficient in

wisdom, the arm of government will be rigidly braced, or dangerously relaxed, as vice or folly may predominate ; but in either case, the people will be wretched, and in the end, must be enslaved.

Thus, my fellow citizens, if we wish to preserve our excellent institutions pure and unadulterated ; if we wish to perpetuate the only free and republican form of government on the face of the globe, we must be “ as wise as serpents, and as harmless as doves.”

Unfortunately, communities as well as individuals, are prone to do evil ; and still more unfortunately, there is no tribunal before which they can be arraigned to answer for their misdeeds. Republicanism, which in its purity, is the only rational form of government, has in every clime, where it has been established, been overthrown by the follies of its *real*, and the vices of its *pretended* admirers. As in the human frame, so in all societies, the seeds of decay and dissolution appear to be implanted at the birth. When a free government is first established ; when party spirit with its baggard form has not yet spread discord and jealousy through the land ; when the breast of the citizen is inspired with no other ruling passion than the love of country, the people will select for their rulers and their law-givers their wisest and their best men ; and thus the infancy of Republics is usually celebrated for the great, noble, and meritorious deeds of Heroes and Statesmen, and for an enthusiastic love of liberty and an ardent patriotism in every class of people. But alas ! ere long, these sublime prospects are overclouded and shut out from the view—the heavens lower—dark clouds o’erspread the hemisphere, and horrid tempests scatter desolation and destruction through the land.—The timid shrink back, terrified and appaled, and none outbrave the storm, save those who delight in tumult and commotion.

When the people have selected those best qualified to serve their country, and bestowed on them every important office of honor and trust, that very selection immediately gives birth to a faction. Many undeserving men, who had sought but could not obtain the suffrages of their fellow countrymen, are disappointed and chagrined.—They dare not openly censure the people ; but towards their successful competitors they are implacable.—Every act of their public lives they misrepresent ; their faults they exaggerate, and their most praise-worthy deeds condemn ; and they hold them up to public view, as enemies to the liberty of their country. Those who are most conversant in the laws and usages of their own and other countries, are by them repre-

resented as dangerous men, and utterly unfit for legislators, or for any office, in which a knowledge of jurisprudence is indispensable. Those whose lives are spent in acquiring wisdom, and in inculcating and practising morality and the christian graces, are condemned and abused, if they presume to advance a political sentiment ; to form a judgment of public men and public measures, or to express an anxiety for the welfare and happiness of their fellow citizens ; the vilest arts are resorted to, and the most gross falsehoods circulated, to deceive and mislead the more ignorant part of the community. The vices of the populace are overlooked, their vanity is excited, and they are persuaded to believe, that the truly great and good, who will not condescend to court their favour or flatter their vanity ; who will not demean themselves by indulging their foibles, or palliating their vices, are Aristocrats in sentiment, and would establish distinctions in society incompatible with the equal rights of their free-born fellow citizens. These disappointed aspirers after office, profess themselves to be *lovers of the people*, and the guardians of their constitutional rights and privileges, and call themselves *genuine Republicans*, and the only real sons of Liberty ; and thus they strive to build up a fame, not by meritorious deeds and patriotic exertions, but by barren professions, and unwearied endeavors to depreciate the worth of their superiors by nature and education, and the worth of those whom an enlightened and unimpassioned people delight to honor.

The arts and intrigues of such ambitious demagogues but too often succeed, because they assume ground on which their political opponents disdain to meet them.—They cause the multitude, like the Athenians of old, to grow weary of hearing the praises of those who have deserved well of their country ; integrity and patriotism give place to cunning and selfishness, and no talent, except a talent of deception and hypocrisy, will serve as a passport to any important office of profit or trust.

Thus it is that vice and folly prevail, while virtue and wisdom are neglected and despised ; thus it is, that the destinies of Republics are so frequently placed in the hands of men, not only unqualified for the government of others, but unfit even for the government of themselves ; thus it is, that free governments have degenerated—and, permit me to add, thus it is, that these United States of America, have been reduced to their late unprosperous and humiliating situation.

Have we not, my fellow citizens, already reached that stage of political degeneracy, where patriotism is superceded

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 by party zeal, where the wise and good are driven from office by the arts and intrigues of puny politicians, whose greatest attainments in literature are an imperfect and indigested knowledge of newspaper topics; whose noblest exploits are grog-shop harangues; whose *most praise worthy* deeds consist in circulating groundless reports, raising false alarms, and vilifying their political opponets? In fine, have we not arrived at that stage of political degeneracy, where the wise and the good are supplanted by the illiterate and the designing? Let facts answer these questions.

During that contest which procured independence and sovereignty for our country, all were united, except a *small number*, who from timidity, from an attachment to the mother country, from sentiments of gratitude towards those who supplied them with their bread, from a belief in the *servile* doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance, or perhaps, in a few instances, from a total lack of patriotic feelings, were opposed to a revolution. These adherents to the cause of Britain in this eastern section of the Union were so few in number, their exertions so insignificant, and their influence of so little avail, that it must be a matter of surprise to posterity, why they should ever be considered as an important and dangerous faction; why they should have been held up as the leaders of the ruling party in New-England, with almost every revolutionary worthy in their train, when many of them reside in foreign climes, when most of them are already numbered with the dead, and the remnant stand tottering on the brink of their graves; when some have recanted their political errors, and others are warm admirers of a pure Democratic Government, when administered according to the *sovereign will and pleasure of an individual!* Why should these men still be counted as a firm phalanx, united in a plan, absurd and diabolical?—Why should they be regarded as inveterate in their hostility towards their native country, which contains all that can render life supportable during their short tarry in this world, and as warm admirers of a foreign nation, to which they can now be united by no ties of interest and affection?—Why should they be taxed with ardently wishing to re-colonize these states?—Why should they be represented as influencing and directing the conduct and movements of those, who fought and bled for their country under the banners of WASHINGTON, and of those, who from their exertions in procuring for us our federal form of government, are designated by the honorable name of FEDERALISTS?

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No, my fellow citizens ! posterity will properly appreciate the merits of New-Englandmen ; they will feel indignant that the people, by whose exertions our independence was achieved, should be stigmatized as "*old Tories*," and will be astonished that the arts of demagogues could lead men so far astray from the line of truth, as to induce them to believe, what the free exercise of their own senses would inform them to be the most barefaced deceptions, and the grossest calumnies.

After the Independence of these states was recognized, and we again enjoyed the blessings of peace, it was soon evident that many who were well qualified to excite commotion and promote revolutions, were bad citizens of a peaceful community ; hence a spirit of disorganization and disunion was manifested in various parts of the Union.—The *Southern* and *middle States* declined contributing their proportion of the general expenses. In the regulation of commerce and the establishment of a revenue in the various parts of the Union, a selfish spirit was universally exhibited, and the general Government, although it professed the power of involving us in debt, had not the means of raising money to pay the debt, or defray the expenses of the nation.

To remedy these and other evils, our excellent federal constitution was ratified and carried into operation amidst the violent and unremitted opposition of its enemies : WASHINGTON, by the unanimous voice of his grateful countrymen, was called upon to preside over our councils.—The legislature, the executive, and the judicial departments, were filled with men, who would have conferred honor on any country ; men, who from chaos and confusion, produced systems most beautiful in theory, and most excellent in practice.

But unfortunately, our federal government was scarcely organized, when selfishness appeared to be a prevailing motive with the great mass of the *Southern* and *Western* representation.

Among the first measures of the new Government, it was necessary that a system of finance should be established.—In doing this, it would seem equitable to an impartial observer, that every part of the Union should contribute in proportion to its abilities. But a party in Congress, which with propriety may be called an *anti-commercial* party, insisted that Commerce should be taxed for the payment of the whole revenue of the country, at a time, when it was impossible from that source alone, to raise sufficient sums for defraying the ordinary national expenses and paying the

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interest of the national debt; and this party, by unwearied exertions, by deception, by insurrection, and by other means well worthy the end, have ultimately relieved the interior from paying its proportion of the public expenses; and, what is to them of still greater consequence, they have acquired such a popularity with the unthinking multitude, that their late perseverance in a policy most destructive to the interests of their country, has averted the confidence of but a small proportion of their deluded admirers.

When a system was to be devised for the payment of that debt, which was the price of our independence, a plan was proposed by that able financier ALEXANDER HAMILTON, by which the war-worn soldier and the speculator, who had trusted to the honor and confided in the promises of his country, were remunerated. As the exertions of some states greatly exceeded those of others, and as no means of raising a revenue were left to the states individually, unless by excise or direct taxation, a certain proportion of their debts was also assumed; now, because the national securities, whether in the hands of the original holders, or in the hands of purchasers, were principally possessed in the *Northern* parts of the Union—because large balances were due to the *Eastern* States, where exertions in the cause of liberty had been mostly made, interest created a *Southern party*. Thus the Southern representation were generally opposed to the *funding system*; and, although they themselves could propose no feasible substitute, excepting that of the sponge, they represented the whole as a trick to increase the aristocratic influence, and enrich a few favourite Nabobs.

The anti-federal, the anti-commercial, and the Southern parties being united, and *amalgamated* into one body, formed an alarming opposition to Government; (and though consisting originally of heterogeneous parts) acted in concert, and like parrots soon learnt to repeat the same political creed. Every proposition beneficial to the *Northern* parts of the Union was opposed by them, and every plan for the protection, security, and prosperity of *commerce*, was exhibited to the people in the most odious colours.

In this agitated state of the public mind, when party-spirit, stimulated by the cheering voice of demagogues and office-seekers, was progressing with rapid strides through our happy land, the *French Revolution* shed its baleful influence over these United States. One general sentiment of friendship and gratitude at that time prevailed towards that devoted country; we rejoiced at her successes; we wept at her reverses, and if we chanced to hear of her excesses we thought

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them to be fabrications of aristocracy, or believed them to be the mere ebullitions of Liberty, which would shortly subside, and leave its *pure spirit clear and unadulterated*.

Many among us wished to assist our *sister Republic*, and join in a contest, where like the Giant in the fable, our ally would receive all the glory and profit, while we, like the dwarf, should experience naught, save wounds, misery, and disgrace. But WASHINGTON and the other worthies, then at the helm of Government, judged more correctly ; they dreaded lest the pestiferous breath of revolutionary France should blast the fair buddings of liberty in their beloved country ; they wished to keep aloof from the bloody scenes, which had desolated the most beautiful regions of Europe, and they resolved to preserve a strict and impartial neutrality.

No fairer opportunity than this could have offered itself to the opposition to impeach the motives of our Supreme Executive, and of his advisers and councillors : they represented our cabinet, not as wishing to preserve and continue to their country the blessings of peace ; but as the *enemies of Republicanism, and the favourers of Aristocracy and Monarchy*. Like true pupils of the French school, they inculcated the philosophical doctrine of universal benevolence, and insisted that the welfare and happiness of individuals, nay even the welfare and happiness of whole communities should be disregarded and sacrificed, when placed in competition with the good of the whole ; and those, who felt not the common affections of nature for their relatives, who exhibited not the common sentiments of humanity towards an insulated fellow creature, pretended to be inspired with a most enthusiastic love for all mankind collectively.

Perhaps no country ever presented a more suitable field for the exertions of an intriguing foreigner than did America at this momentous period. *French influence* had crept into our councils, even before our national sovereignty had been acknowledged by Britain ; and had not it been for the patriotic exertions of those who are now stigmatized as *the enemies of their country*, many important privileges, and, among others, our invaluable right to the fisheries would have been sacrificed to French jealousy and French avarice. The gratitude of the French partizans had now been transferred from our benefactors and pretended friends to their persecutors and their executioners ; their attachment to France, whatever might be her form of government, whoever might be her rulers or oppressors, continued immutable ; while towards Britain, time was so far from cooling their overboiling indignation, that it continually added fresh fuel to the flame.

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Genet was the man selected by France to secure the friendship and alliance of America. This minister, confiding in the good will and prepossessions of our countrymen, thought it unnecessary to assume the thinnest veil of dissimulation; he organized *French Courts of Admiralty* in our ports; he issued commissions to the commanders of American vessels to capture and bring in for adjudication, property belonging to the enemies of France: he was proceeding to raise armies on our Southern and Western frontier, to be used against the colonies of Spain, when WASHINGTON interposed his veto, and (though he had the unparalleled assurance to threaten an appeal to the people) procured his recal. Other ministers have succeeded, who have conducted with greater prudence than their predecessor, and instead of force and violence, have directed their efforts to procure the election of those into our national councils, who might be more subservient to the views of *France*, than was the inflexible WASHINGTON.

Though the Embassy of *Genet* was short; yet it was extremely prolific of events derogatory to our national character.—The American Secretary of State* held with this minister (as he himself informs us) “a language official and a language confidential.”—This foreigner established among us those associations to embarrass and impede the operations of Government, which from the name of their *mother club* in Paris, were called *jacobinic*:—He, as it were, organized the opposition, concentrated their efforts, increased their numbers by an addition of enthusiasts in the cause of *French liberty*, and instilled into the whole mass that attachment to the interests of a foreign country, which is ever incompatible with a spirit of genuine patriotism.

When the opposition became leavened with French principles, and biassed by French influence, from that moment its whole strength was exerted to involve their country in an unnecessary war with Britain, and unite it in a fatal alliance with France.

When Britain aggrieved us by her wanton depredations on our commerce, this party cried aloud for vengeance—when France, under the mask of friendship, and contrary to the stipulations of a solemn treaty, committed robbery on our citizens, this foreign faction exclaimed, that we ought to crawl to her on our bended knees, and humbly sue for pardon—when our federal administration, preferring the real interests of their country to popular applause, decided on negotiations with both of those powers, they were condemned, in the former instance, for not electing war in preference to manly

*Mr. Jefferson

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remonstrance ; in the latter, for not preferring unqualified submission to a modest request of our undoubted rights. When with the former a treaty was concluded, by which our Western posts were restored, our citizens generously compensated, and many important commercial privileges secured to our country, the instrument was pronounced to be “pregnant with evils ;” a violent ferment was excited throughout the Union, and all, who had an agency in the negotiation or ratification, were held up to public view, as men bitterly opposed to the one power, and blindly attached to the other.—When, (after two humble embassies) the latter would not condescend even to listen to our complaints, unless on the degrading condition of paying tribute, the odium was thrown on our own Government, which was stigmatized with the charge of endeavouring to injure and offend our DEAREST AND BEST FRIEND.

The foreign faction had now reached the acme of *oppugnation* : no worth of character, no patriotic deeds could shield the devoted victims from their envenomed shafts.—Even the immaculate WASHINGTON himself was defamed and calumniated by those very men, who have since *with crocodile tears* bewailed his departure to the world of spirits, and with hypocritical cant, deplored the loss America has sustained by the death of him, whom now they do not hesitate in confessing to have been the political saviour of his country.

WASHINGTON, whose opportunities for observation were great, whose knowledge of the human heart perhaps was never exceeded, duly appreciated the character of this faction. The insurrection in Pennsylvania (one of the leaders in which now holds the purse-strings of the nation) he attributed to the *French party*. This party he calls “the curse of their country, and the source of the expenses we had to encounter.”—He tells us, that “truth and information was not their object ; that to blind and irritate the people against the Government (to effect a change in it) was their sole aim ;” and he informs us of the melancholy fact, which dear bought experience has fully confirmed, that “it is not easier to change the principles of the leaders of such measures, than it would be to wash a black-a-moor white.”

At length, when we were driven to the alternative of taking up arms against *France*, or submitting to her as vassals, our Government preferred the former. Amidst the most violent opposition, preparations for the protection of our commerce, and the safeguard of our country were made ; a small but respectable navy was built and equipped, and an army was raised, few in numbers, but officered by *revolutionary Heroes*, and commanded by WASHINGTON himself.

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As soon as humbled *France* extended to us the Olive branch, it was eagerly, and some few believed, too eagerly grasped. They thought that our national dignity imperiously demanded that *France*, after indignantly rejecting our humble embassies, should herself make the next overtures ; but our national Administration, at that time, would not insist on points of mere punctilio, when the peace and welfare of their country were the objects to be attained. The advice of those, whose sense of honor was so exquisitely acute, was rejected with some marks of indignation and resentment, and a treaty was negociated, which contained no stipulations whereby our plundered citizens might hope for compensation, and which *France* has violated in a still more barefaced manner than she had done her former treaties.

This pacification with *France* ; this division of sentiment among those who had deserved well of their country, all of whom no doubt had the interest and honor of their country at heart, added to certain acts of our Government, passed during the administration of ADAMS, which were extremely obnoxious, and, in some instances, perhaps quite unnecessary, added new strength and courage to the opposition—their arts were redoubled ; their intrigues were incessant, and they rested not, until they had obtained a majority in both the houses of our national legislature ; had placed their leader and idol, *Thomas Jefferson*, in the presidential chair, and had procured for their much loved fellow citizen, *Aaron Burr*, the second office in the gift of the people of these United States.

From this time to the passage of the *Embargo acts*, the democratic party continued to increase in number, until it became an overwhelming majority, and every part of the Union (the correct and republican state of *Connecticut* excepted) had been pervaded by the contagion. Many aspirers after office who had professed themselves to be FEDERALISTS, but whom the discerners of real merit thought unworthy of their suffrages, have departed from the line of political rectitude, and for the sake of popular applause and filthy lucre, have changed their party, and abandoned their principles. And verily, they have had their reward ! for notice and promotion have invariably been the recompense for political tergiversation. In consequence of there being more labourers in the vineyard, labourers whom interest has induced to submit to the vilest drudgery, truly the ingathering has been abundant ; but it consists not of those fruits, which are delightful to the eye or grateful to the palate of the observer and the connoisseur.

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And here, before we proceed in the history of our foreign relations, I will assume the liberty of noticing those *great and noble* deeds, for the performance of which earthly honors have been deemed an incompetent reward.

After deducting various acts of dilapidation, committed on the systems transmitted from the FEDERALISTS to their successors, (which it surely required neither *virtue* nor *talents* to perform) these *celebrated* deeds will be reduced to three: *the building of gun-boats, the purchasing of Louisiana, and the extinguishment of a part of the national debt.*

I will not insult the understanding of this audience by considering *the first*.—Respecting the second, I am willing to admit, that the purchase money of Louisiana was a cheap *tribute* for the continuance of peace. I am ready to acknowledge, that a boon has been acquired for our *Western* brethren, with money drained from those parts of the Union which border on the Atlantic; and, as to the national *benefits* which may hereafter accrue, it must be conceded, that the purchase will operate in the same manner as would a *mill-stone*, were it tied around the neck of a drowning man.

Much merit has been assumed by the *late Administration*, because pursuant to the system devised and adopted by the FEDERALISTS, they have paid that part of the national debt, which has *become due*; but before we conclude whether applause be deserved for discharging this duty, we should calculate the vast and progressive increase of revenue since the establishment of the Federal Constitution; an increase wholly occasioned by the fostering care of those *friends of commerce*, who have been represented as *enemies* to the liberty and welfare of their country; we should compare the resources of the several Administrations, and draw up an account current between them. And having done this, how will the balance stand? Admitting that the extraordinary expenses of our Government have been as great during the administration of *Jefferson*, as they were in the administration of his predecessors; giving the late Administration full credit for monies paid towards the redemption of the national debt; on the Louisiana convention, and for the payment of the honest debts of our indigent republican brethren in the *Southern States*; giving them full credit for all these items, and for all the monies now within the walls of our *overflowing* Treasury; still there will be found against them a balance of about *fifteen millions of dollars*.—But this would not be a just statement; because, in the former Administrations, we had every branch of government to organize; we had a system of revenue to devise; we had the expenses of

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a long and bloody *Indian war* to defray ; we had two insurrections in *Pennsylvania* to suppress ; we had a short, but spirited contest with *France* to conduct ; we had light-houses to build, docks to dig, navy yards to purchase, naval and military stores to procure, forts to erect and repair, and a navy to create ; we had to ransom our citizens from *Algiers*, and teach the *Barbarians* to respect us ; and we had to incur the expenses of gloriously terminating all our differences with the powers of the world, and settling with them treaties highly beneficial : While the late Administration found every thing prepared to their hands, and have been under the necessity of incurring no expenses incident to a state of warfare, excepting those of a trifling contest with *Tripoli*, the means of bringing which to an happy issue were left them by their provident predecessors in office.

On calculation, it will be found, that instead of *fifteen*, the Administration of *Jefferson* might be justly chargeable for nearly THIRTY MILLIONS of dollars, which would have been saved to our country, had the same economy been practised by them, as was practised by those worthies, who conducted our national affairs during the *golden age* of America.

And how have such sums been expended ? Look at the extravagant appropriations of Congress—look at the enormous expenses incurred in carrying on to little purpose, a diplomatic intercourse with the powers of Europe—look at the exorbitant accounts of our public agents and military officers—look at the immense charges of our *gun-boat establishment* ; in fine, look at all the financial concerns and arrangements of the late administration, and you will be satisfied.

Yet, though thousands, nay millions have been lavished on *sycophants* and *worthless favorites*, still, in every thing which relates to the *defence of our country*, or the *protection of its commerce*, an extreme degree of parsimony has been manifested, and numbers have been induced to believe, that it would be far better to furnish *those birds of passage*, which produce for us our *golden eggs*, than incur the trouble and expense of providing for their support and sustenance.

That *partiality to France*, and *enmity to Britain*, which characterized those who were opposed to WASHINGTON and ADAMS, were continued throughout the administration of *Jefferson*, after whose accession, an unavailing *obstinacy towards the one power*, and a servile *submission to indignities from the other*, were peculiar traits in the American character. Our Cabinet, though too petulant to submit patiently to the acknowledged laws and usages of nations, have been

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too cowardly to resist manfully, the most outrageous insults and aggressions ; and, though they have *threatened vengeance against a world in arms*, separated from us by an immense ocean, could not, in case of war, have protected even the coasting trade, from the depredations of privateers and picaroons. When *Spain*, at that time a satellite of *France*, deprived our citizens of rights recognized by treaty, a payment of money to *France*, for a country to which she had *no equitable right*, was found to be the only medium “between unqualified submission and offensive resistance.”—When French subjects mal-treated, abused, and plundered American citizens ; when our humble complaints and petitions were passed over in silent contempt, or rejected with supercilious hauteur ; when the Ambassador of *America* was treated rather as an humble dependant, than as the Minister of a free and sovereign nation, the conduct of *France* was concealed, palliated, and justified by those in office, and by every *ministerial Parasite in the Union*. When *France* passed a decree, unheard of for insolence and injustice in the annals of the world—a decree repugnant to her solemn treaty with us—a decree highly injurious to the commerce of this country, instead of pursuing that energetic course which on a similar occasion was pursued by the FEDERAL PARTY, our Cabinet amused the people with the vague opinions of an unauthorized individual, until after the property of our citizens had, in numerous instances, been seized and condemned by virtue of this decree. And how did we retaliate, when the designs of *France* could no longer be concealed ?—How did we conduct, when, in addition to her former decree, she had passed a second, still more unjust and inhuman than the first ? Why, truly, by treating her as the *most favored nation*. We hung up no *non-importation laws* over her head, in *terrorem*—we admitted her ships of war into our harbours, while those of Britain were excluded. We enacted *embargo laws*, ruinous to ourselves, but so far from being deemed injurious to *France* by her Emperor, that they have been considered by him as a mark of *our friendship*—laws similar to those passed by the powers of Europe, under the control of *Napoleon Bonaparte*—laws which were calculated to aid the views of the *Tyrant of France* in cutting off all communication between the British domains and every other section of the globe.

On the other hand, our demands on Britain have been heightened in the extreme, and our conduct towards her irritating and unneutral.

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More than once we have refused to treat with that power on terms highly advantageous to America, because she would not unqualifiedly give up the privilege of *taking her seamen from our merchant vessels*; a privilege, which she has ever exercised; a privilege, which we are in no situation to contend against; a privilege, on the continuance of which her national existence perhaps depends.

As it respects the important question of accustomed trade, by some called the rule of the war of *fifty-six*, we have been unreasonably clamorous against Britain, while the conduct of France has been overlooked, although she first set the example, and has ever, when national policy would permit, acted on the same, nay on more rigid and unjustifiable principles than Britain; and we have been unwilling to recede in our demands, when even *Russia* herself, the pretended champion of neutral rights, has by solemn treaty conceded the point, so far as it respects the colonial trade of the enemies of Great-Britain.

Another source of disagreement between us and Britain is the question—whether *free ships shall make free goods*; but here we find the law of nations so clearly expressed by various writers, that it cannot be misunderstood.—Here we find, an armed neutrality, which with the combined enemies of Britain, embraced almost the whole civilized globe, have completely failed in their attempts to compel her government to accede to a new system, by which the property of her foes might be screened. Here we find the whole world combined against us; for even France herself, although she very readily offers us the pretended boon in her treaties, takes especial heed that we do not freely enjoy it; and it has been of little other use, than as a bone of contention between us and Britain, which many of our *snarling politicians* delight to gnaw, and a lure by which France may entice the property of her enemy within the reach of her toils.

We suffered JAY's treaty to expire, when we might despair of obtaining a better. When an excellent treaty was negotiated by our Ministers duly authorized, it was *never exhibited before the Senate*, one of the treaty-making branches of our Government; but after being inspected by the President, was sent back, accompanied by such material alterations, that it could no longer be recognized as the same instrument transmitted to our Government; an instrument, by which (unless the Ministers of America had been guilty of malconduct) we ought to have considered ourselves as sacredly bound.

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When the unfortunate *affair of the Chesapeake* occurred, and before it was known whether the aggression was the act of an *unauthorized individual*, or of the *British Government*, and at the very time when an idea of negotiation was held up, Mr. *Jefferson* issued a *proclamation*, excluding British armed vessels from our waters, and denying to their crews the common offices of humanity. This proclamation (tho' constitutionally a mere nullity) has in its tendency and effects operated as a permanent law of the land, has divested us in a degree of our neutral character, and has delayed that honorable reparation, which the British Government has ever appeared, not only ready, but anxious to make: and we have twice refused receiving compensation for this atrocity;—the first time, because Britain would not together with reparation, give up the right of searching our merchant vessels for British subjects; the other time (though a minister extraordinary was specially delegated to appease our Government) because we would not again assume a neutral position, when the point contended for was a point of the most trifling punctilio.

When Britain wished to reserve to herself the privilege of retaliating on her enemy, and repelling the most deadly blow ever aimed at her naval, commercial, and manufacturing interests, provided that America did not resist the greatest indignity to her national honor, the greatest impediment to her national prosperity, and the greatest breach of national faith that had ever been offered, since she had acquired a rank among the nations of the earth, our Cabinet took such offence, that it was to them a reason, and not an unimportant reason, why they refused to ratify the treaty, which had just been concluded between the ministers of the two governments.

When Britain, finding that the decree of *Berlin* was put in execution, and perceiving that our Administration revolted at the very idea of resistance to its execution, at length retaliated on her enemy, all our indignation and vengeance were directed against her, and amidst the loud clamours and bitter invectives against that power, *scarcely one word* of complaint was murmured against the conduct of France.

In fine, such has been the unconciliatory spirit of our Government; such have been their high-handed demands on Britain, that even *Fox* himself, the constant friend of America, could not offer terms which would be accepted by the Cabinet of *Jefferson*.

And could we obtain all those points for which we have so long struggled, France indeed might be benefited, but

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America would surely be a loser ; for, in such case, our country would be infested with *English, Scotch, and Irish vagabonds* ; seamen's wages would be reduced, and American seamen would be driven from the ocean ; and, instead of almost monopolising the carrying trade of the world, we should dwindle down to be the mere factors, agents, and servants of *Foreigners*.

Almost ever since the establishment of our present national form of government, the democratic party have wished us to measure commercial strength with Britain, and have spoken, wrote, and conducted, as though we might with ease compel her to accede to our terms, by restraining commerce, and diverting it from its natural channels. Their first attempt was to establish discriminating duties in favour of those nations with whom we had formed commercial treaties ; but more intelligent statesmen well knew that such a procedure would enrich France at the expense of America, without producing any material effect on that power, which it was the ostensible object to coerce.

After the leaders of this party had grasped the reins of Government, they passed a *Non-Importation Law*, by which the importation of many articles of British manufacture was prohibited ; but this, and the occlusion of British armed vessels from our harbours having produced no desirable effect, an *embargo* was next resorted to, under a full persuasion on many weak minds, that it would compel the mistress of the ocean to *throw herself at our feet and humbly sue for mercy*.

Of such an unprofitable and idle commercial contest we have now experienced the effects, and no friend of his country can hope ever to see it again renewed.'

That the coercion of Britain was among the motives of some of those who advised an *Embargo* cannot be doubted ; that the views of its advocates were multifarious, and even contradictory is evident, from the reasons, which they themselves have assigned, from the lack of uniformity in their opinions, and from their unsteady, wavering, and almost irreconcilable conduct ; for some advocated it as a coercive measure, to be continued in force until England should be *completely humbled* ;—some thought it a *war measure*, others called it a *peace measure* ; some considered it as a temporary expedient, designed solely for the protection and safeguard of commerce, and many applauded it as an effectual mean to prevent commercial speculations, and compel our seamen and our merchants to resort to the loom and the plough for a livelihood.—But the ruling motive of those in the secrets

of the cabinet was a dread of that pest of society, that scourge of the globe; *Napoleon Bonaparte*, whom, to their everlasting shame, they both loved and dreaded. They have told us, and told us truly, that but for an *Embargo*, or some such alternative, war was inevitable. Truly it was so, for France would not permit us to remain neutral, on any other condition than on that of joining her and her allies in their endeavours to destroy the naval superiority of her enemy.

The *embargo system*, cowardly in the extreme, towards those who had injured us, but energetic indeed towards our own citizens, produced no change in the conduct of foreign powers; the Government of Britain would not relax; and that of France still continued to heap on us injuries and indignities, until even her most enthusiastic admirers were compelled with reluctance to admit that we had some cause of complaint.

Among ourselves, the complete execution of these detested laws was soon found to be impracticable, without depriving the citizen of his dearest constitutional rights and privileges: the whole system must fall to the ground, or the dear bought liberties of our countrymen must be sacrificed. Those who arrogate to themselves exclusively the title of *Republicans*, in the only free government on the face of the globe, preferred the latter, and we were for a season reduced to that state of despotism, which ever ensues, when a community is no longer governed by known and fixed laws, but by the will of weak fallible man.

But the sons of New-England, ever jealous of their rights, can recognize that frightful monster *Tyranny*, whatever form she may assume; by whatever garb she may be decked.— They saw her approaches, they discovered that with the smile of an angel depicted on her visage, she had the malice of a demon in her heart. The mask of *republicanism*, with which she concealed her real features, they tore from her face, and they exhibited to the world her hideous countenance in its true colours and proportions.

At the firm and dignified conduct of the inhabitants of these *Eastern States*, the purposes of our Cabinet were shaken: their popularity was at stake, and they trembled, lest they should be hurled headlong from those eminent stations, they had so unworthily filled. The embargo system they thought it most prudent to relinquish; but completely to retrace their steps, would not only be offensive to the Emperor of France, but would discover an inconsistency of conduct, inexplicable even to their greatest admirers: a substitute was therefore necessary—a substitute was found, and that

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substitute was a *non-intercourse with both France and England.*

War with the latter power would have been preferred by some ; some indeed were so rash and imprudent as openly to avow it ; but the eyes of the people had been opened to the real interests of their country.—They knew it would be folly and madness in the extreme to wage war against a power that wished for peace and friendship with us, when our national prosperity, perhaps our national existence, paradoxical as it may seem, must depend on the success of our enemy. They knew the consequences of an alliance with a despot, with whom *friendship* and *slavery* are terms synonymous ; and, were we driven into a war, they were sensible that correct principles and sound policy would require of us to declare against that power, which admits not of neutrality, but drives the nations of the earth like bullocks to the slaughter, against that power, which can enslave but not protect us, rather than against that power which can protect but not enslave us. As popularity had ever been a leading principle with the Cabinet of *Jefferson*, an open declaration of war was avoided ; but it was hoped and confidently expected that a *non-intercourse* would lead to that event ; for this reason *Giles* and many others advocated it ; for this reason many friends of their country, knowing the inveterate enmity of its supporters against England, and not being able to ascertain by what secret motives they might be actuated, dreaded and opposed it.

On a retrospective view of the history of these United States, during the administration of *Jefferson*, it must be obvious to the most superficial observer, that, at its commencement, we were on terms of friendship with all powers ; were happy at home and respected abroad ; that, at its termination our situation was diametrically the reverse ; but the late privations and calamities of our country are so fresh in the minds of all, that it is needless to depict them. Let us rather rejoice that a brighter prospect is now opening upon us, and that men of all parties, who are not wilfully blinded, can now clearly discern that horrid whirlpool, around which we have been sporting, in the out-skirts of which we have been evidently revolving, and into whose dreadful vortex our *ship of state* might ere this have been swallowed up, had not a propitious breeze arisen and wafted it to the regions of safety.

Our foreign relations appear now to have assumed a new aspect ; for when Britain found we had placed her enemy in the same situation in which we had placed her ; when she found we had put ourselves in an attitude of resistance against

the decrees of France ; when she found that we had voluntarily adopted the same line of conduct she had required of us previously to her retaliating on her enemy, she condescended not to ask what might be the motives which had influenced our short sighted politicians, nor stooped to inquire, whether our rulers were actuated by a spirit of friendship or a spirit of enmity ; but hastened to again tender us satisfaction for the attack on the Chesapeake, and to offer us a repeal of those obnoxious orders, which would never have been passed, had our Government seasonably assumed the same attitude towards France, which now by the voice of the people, they are compelled to assume.

We are told by some of the democratic party, that the embargo has humbled England, and compelled her to submit to our terms ; but so far has it been from producing such an effect, that the Court of St. James never made complaint of it, never considered it as a grievance to their country, or an embarrassment to any people but ourselves ; and we might have continued it, until Britain had acquired thousands of our seamen and artificers, and monopolized the trade of the world, without producing any sensations in the minds of her citizens or her lawgivers, other than those of pity and contempt. But when the policy of our Government appeared to be changed ; when we seemed no longer implicitly to submit to the decrees of France ; when British ships of war were not excluded from the privileges their enemies enjoyed ; when vessels were suffered to escape from our harbors to places, from whence an access to the ports of England was by no means difficult—then, and not till then, amicable propositions were made us by the British Minister. In fact, as it respects the question between America and Britain, it is evident that we have virtually conceded the point in dispute.

The point of honor between England and France, is an affair quite uninteresting to a patriotic American. Britain, it seems, has, from the passing of the decree of Berlin, rather regarded the conduct of neutrals, than the conduct of her enemy, and would never have passed her orders of Council, had they manifested a proper spirit of indignation and resistance ; and now, when they manifest such a spirit, they find their commerce relieved from her retaliating restrictions. But, admitting that England has yielded the point to her enemy ; yet, unless we still consider the cause of France and the cause of America as the same, we need not pride ourselves on such a concession.

At length we are placed in the very situation which Britain has required—the very situation which has been so abhorrent

from the feelings of the late Administration, at a time when we have less prospect of gaining important concessions from her Government, than when we rejected the terms that *Fox* and his successors would offer us.

But though our condition is ameliorated ; yet our dangers are still alarming : a treaty with Britain is yet to be settled, and, unless the Cabinet of *MADISON* be more anxious for a permanent reconciliation than was that of *Jefferson* ; unless they abate in some of those impolitic demands, which have heretofore been a bar to negociation ; unless they lay aside that spirit of animosity and revenge so predominant in the conduct of their predecessors, a treaty, I fear, will not be ratified ; and if the federal republicans be remiss in their duty ; if they sleep at their posts, *French intrigue* may yet blast the glorious fruit of their exertions, and their country may yet be involved in a destructive—perhaps a fatal war.

Let us therefore be vigilant ; let us drive from our councils those men, who would prefer war with England to the most honorable compromise.—Let us drive from our councils those men, who rejoice in the victories of the most oppressive *Tyrant* with which the earth was ever cursed ; who represent him as *ameliorating the condition of mankind* ; who enjoy a diabolical satisfaction in tracing the progress of his blood-hounds over the desolated country of the unfortunate, but patriotic Spaniards.

If those, who now hold the reins of government, are cajoling the people by a temporising conduct, soon will they be detected, and held up to public scorn and execration.—But, if they have seen the errors of their ways—have sincerely repented of their past misconduct, and have resolved to amend, let us rejoice at the prospect ;—though at the expense of the soundness of their heads, let us give due credit to the goodness of their hearts ; and after regretting the unnecessary loss of property, and the useless embarrassments to commerce, misfortunes which it will require years to retrieve, let us exult at the prospect of better days, and cherish a hope, that those who have hitherto so totally mistaken the true interests of their country, like wary pilots, will henceforth avoid those rocks, among which we have so long been entangled, and on which we should ere this time have been wrecked, but for the monitions of those able men, who have so vigilantly watched and so anxiously pointed out the imminent dangers of our perilous situation.

But, my fellow citizens, though we may in that event extend our charity to the President elect and his immediate Counsellors ; yet we must still cherish the same opinion of

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the great mass of democratic leaders we have ever done. As WASHINGTON justly observes, we may as well attempt to wash a black-a-moor white, as to produce a radical change in such men.—“Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his spots?” Neither can an aspiring demagogue extend his patriotic exertions beyond the low, groveling arts, necessary to captivate the ignorant, promote the views of a party, and gain for himself, his friends, and his parasites, some snug offices, in which they may acquire the pleasure of looking down on their superiors in virtue and knowledge, and enjoy the satisfaction of appropriating to their own use a portion of that money, which has been so lavishly poured out from our *overflowing* treasury.

These men, who have misspent the public money; these men, who (but for the exertions of the federal republicans) would long ere this have involved us in a ruinous war with Britian, and entangled us in a fatal alliance with France; these men, who have unnecessarily involved the most happy and prosperous people on the face of the globe in misery and distress; these men, who have trampled on the dearest constitutional rights and privileges of their fellow citizens, arrogate to themselves the glorious name of *Republicans*: but their professions and their practices have ever been at variance. From the first, their political conduct has been a tissue of absurdities: those, who were opposed to the Federal Constitution, are now among its eulogists; those who were advocates of a tax system of government, who have encouraged and promoted, and still encourage and promote *Insurrections against the general government*, have wished to confer unconstitutional powers on the executive department;—those, who were unreasonably jealous lest a consolidation of the states would ensue, have since inculcated the dangerous, illiberal, and anti-republican doctrine, that all officers of the Government from the highest to the lowest grade must perfectly harmonize with the Supreme Executive of the Union in sentiment, and would have debarred the individual states even from the privileges of enquiring, whether their sovereignty had been infringed;—those, who have stunned us with their clamours, because they could not publish the most gross falsehoods with impunity, have been desirous of debarring us from our constitutional and unalienable rights of delivering, voting, and publishing our sentiments on the most speculative, absurd and pernicious conceits of those, who contrary to our wishes have sustained the highest and most responsible offices in the gift of the people;—those, who have incessantly inculcated the doctrine,

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 that all power emanates from the people, and that to them our rulers and lawgivers are accountable for every act of their public lives, have considered the populace as mere puppets, who without volition must be moved as best suits the juggler, who hides himself behind the scene, and carefully conceals the machinery by which the whole is put in motion; those who were admirers of the French Revolution in all its horrors, are the panegyrists of that Tyrant—*Napoleon Bonaparte*; those, who in one breath vent exclamations in praise of *republicanism*, in the next applaud the *destroyer of every republic* on the face of the earth, ours only excepted.—In fine, those very men, who themselves would not bear the weight of a feather, are indignant that others do not stand patiently, when oppressed by the weight of a weaver's beam; those very men, who profess themselves to be the *dearests friends of the people*, whenever a little brief authority has placed power in their hands, have almost invariably proved to be the greatest tyrants.

Their motives are obvious: they were *anti-federalists*; they are now republicans, not from *principle*, but from *interest*.—Knowing the stations in society allotted to them by nature, and despairing of promotion in a large confederated republic, they were opposed to an efficient general government. But since art has triumphed over nature; since those endowed with wisdom and virtue have been placed in the back ground of society, and the most important national offices bestowed on the *unprincipled* and the *illiterate*, they profess respect for that Constitution, which heretofore they had reprobated: they have called themselves *republicans*, because under that mask they could better deceive the people, gain popularity, aid the cause of France, more openly oppose the government of their own country, and more effectually conceal their ambitious designs. But since they have gained their ends; since they have acquired power and dignity, they have become *oppressive tyrants*; and it is with much pain they are still compelled to clothe themselves with that cloak of *republicanism*, which has “covered” such “a multitude of sins.”

Such men are not *republicans*, but rather, like their dearly beloved brethren in France, wrong-headed *jacobins*, who in matters of government, are satisfied with no medium between *anarchy* and *despotism*.

For the sake of my country, for the sake of human nature, I am happy in the consideration, that these harsh observations can justly be applied to but a small part of those, who

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have been attached to the late Administration ; many of that party are virtuous men, and excellent members of society, whom the goodness of their hearts has induced to confide in empty professions, which the soundness of their understandings should have instructed them to distrust and reject.

“ The proper study of mankind is man ;” and to you, my hearers, who are versed in this study, I leave the application.

That republics contain within themselves the seeds of dissolution, and can be continued on rational principles but for a short period of time, has become an axiom among the politicians of the old Continent. May AMERICA have the glory of proving, that this is alike futile with their other axioms.

Let us therefore earnestly pray, that our republican institutions may be preserved in their original simplicity, pure and uncontaminated. Let us beseech the Sovereign Disposer of all events, that the same divine goodness, which has conducted us to Freedom and Independence—preserved us from British vassalage, French servitude, and Virginian tyranny, and permitted us the enjoyment of privileges superior to those bestowed on the other nations of the earth, would *continue to shower down blessings on us and our posterity, to the latest generations.*

FINIS.