

Mr. *Adams's*
S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT

L E X I N G T O N,

NINETEENTH OF APRIL

1783.

The evil designs of men made subservient by
God to the public good ; particularly illustra-
ted in the *rise, progress and conclusion* of the
American war.

A
S E R M O N
PREACHED AT
L E X I N G T O N,

ON THE NINETEENTH OF *April, 1783 ;*

Being the Anniversary of the Commencement of the War
between Britain and America, which broke out in that
Town on the 19th of April, 1775.

By *ZABDIEL ADAMS, A. M.*
Pastor of the Church in Lunenburg.

" The Cause was from the Lord."

I. KINGS, xii. 15.

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S E R M O N, &c.

G E N E S I S 50th Chap. 20th Ver.

12 But as for you, ye thought evil against me, but GOD meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive."

THE story with which the text is connected, is one of the most affecting tales to be found on sacred record. Taken in all its circumstances, it is beyond a parallel. It contains such a number of surprising incidents, and all, at last, so overruled by the providence of God, for the good of the eastern world, that it is not only one of the most *entertaining*, but also the most *instructive* pieces of history. It gives an *illustrious* character to Jehovah, as a being of *such* sublime perfections, that the most unpromising events are, by him, made subservient to his own glory, and the good of his people. It teaches the malignancy of the passions of envy and hatred

hatred on the one hand, and the *strength* of *natural affection* on the other ; and when these are set in *contrast*, as in the case of Joseph and his brethren ; when the events are *so* unexpected, *so* interesting, and at last terminate *so well*, the story becomes *too* impassioned to be read with stoical *insensibility*. A man of *sensiment* and of *piety* can never read it with an *unaffected* heart, or with eyes *unsuffused* with tears.—From it we farther learn that guilt is fearful and suspicious.—Thus, the brethren of Joseph, are under fearful apprehensions (since their father was dead, who was the centre of union,) lest Joseph, now in power, should take deserved vengeance upon *them* who had designed, and *really*, for a time, brought him into most unhappy circumstances. From these suspicions they sent messengers to him, informing that it was the dying injunction of their common parent, that they should confess their fault, and ask forgiveness ; hoping from the benignity of his disposition, that he would in consequence thereof, restore them to his favor.—They were not mistaken. The injured brother, always generous, humane and god-like, most heartily forgave them, assigning this particular reason for his conduct, “ you thought evil against me, but God meant it for good,” &c.

The occurrence to which my text alludes, has a near affinity, in its origin and final issue, to the tragical event, which eight years ago took place in *this* town, destined, by divine providence, to be the stage on which a most *memorable* scene was acted. The instances are not, indeed, in all respects, parallel ; and who could expect to find, even in the bible, that copious book, an instance exactly similar to *that* which *then* happened in *this* place ; which ushered in the *American* war, and gave rise to this anniversary, which

has been *so* wondrously conducted and *landably* continued to *this* day. *

Were we to trace the similitude, it would be no difficult matter to point out a striking *one* in *several* particulars, though not in *all*. It must be confessed there are some discrepant circumstances. Thus, a single family was concerned in the banishment of Joseph; whereas, a whole nation meditated the subjugation or ruin of the American States.

In the case of Joseph no murder was committed, though originally intended; but murder has been perpetrated *here*, with every circumstance of cruel barbarity.—In these two instances they differ, but agree in many others.

Joseph's brethren through fear of his future exaltation and aggrandisement, first intended to murder, and afterwards sold him into Egypt. Envy was the moving cause. And what greatly different excited the British king and his parliament to meditate and stir up against us, a severe civil war of near eight years continuance ?

* As hostilities first began in the town of *Lexington*, it was thought proper by the worthy and patriotic minister of that place, with the entire approbation and concurrence of his respected hearers, to institute a solemn annual commemoration of that important event; on which the *militia* has been under arms, military exercises performed, and a sermon preached to crowded auditories. The whole has been conducted with great decorum, and to universal acceptance. The Rev. Mr. *Clark* preached the first sermon, in which is contained a particular narrative of the whole transaction; Mr. *Cooke*, of Cambridge, the next; then Mr. *Cushing*, of Waltham; Mr. *Woodward*, of Weston; Mr. *Morrill*, of Wilmington; Mr. *Gummings*, of Billerica; and Mr. *Payson*, of Chelsea.

nuance ? They were jealous we should one day revolt, become independent states, and rise to liberties superior to their own.

The elder brethren of the family meditated *his* ruin ; and who but *our* elder brethren attempted to despoil us of our liberties, and reduce us to a state of vassalage ? Again, Jacob's sons advanced Joseph to *honor* and *distinction*, by the very means they made use of, to *tumble, depress or destroy* him. So in the present case, the measures made use of by *Britain* to enslave the inhabitants of this country, have accelerated their *independence, sovereignty and honor*. Farther, as the great Jehovah overruled the *malice and envy* of *Joseph's* brethren for the good of the whole family and Jewish nation ; so the *unprecedented massacre of this day*, and the subsequent ravages of the British troops, through the country, though "meant by them for evil, yet the great Jehovah has overruled for good," not only to *this* and the United States of America, but also to *some other kingdoms* of the world ! And may I not add, that since the causes were so similar, and the effects also, *we* in this country ought to resolve as Joseph did, not *so* to remember the injury done and designed, as to ill treat or forbear acts of kindness to the people of Britain ; from whom our ancestors descended, to whom we are consequently related, and with whom we symbolize in *religion, language and laws*.

Before we proceed to point out the happy effects of the war just concluded, to *this* and *other parts* of the world, it may be proper to make some *frictions* on the doctrine that is held forth by the text.

*This and some similar passages of scripture have been much quoted of late by a certain new and upstart sect to prove that God is the efficient cause of sin.—*In support of this novel doctrine, they quote not only my text, but such passages as the following—“*I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things*” . And again; “*Is there evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?*” . These passages, methinks, are greatly wrested. For, they refer not to *moral* but to *natural* and *penal* evil, as has been the confession of the *wise* and *learned* in former ages, a *very few* only excepted. They are now pressed into the service of a particular sect, who would make the wondering world believe, that they are the authors of new discoveries, and have unraveled a difficulty which has nonplused the brightest geniuses in former and latter times ! But, pride apart, who could suppose that the above-mentioned passages countenance any such sentiment ? a sentiment repugnant to the moral character of the Deity, which subverts the order of nature, and makes an holy G O D very like to his grand antagonist, the Devil ! To suppose that G O D cannot effect his designs without bringing sin upon the stage, or influencing moral agents to the perpetration of it, is to imagine *that all powerful and perfect Being* to be weak and impotent, and altogether such an one as ourselves !

It is true, the great *Jebovah* has certain plans of providence which he carries on, and never wants means to effect. But is it not contrary to the true meaning of Scripture, and the *common sense* of mankind, to assert that he is the *efficient* cause of sin, and that he influences men to commit it, in order to effect his designs ? There is no need of this ; for if good ~~must~~ be brought about by the wickedness of men,

there is forever a sufficient number of moral, free agents, who, prompted by the devil, and their own hearts lusts, are ready to do that, which under the superintending providence of God, is overruled and finally terminates, either to the *general good* of the system, or to a *particular* part of it.

The brethren of Joseph, filled with envy and ambition, could not brook his dreams, nor bear his party-colour'd coat; and therefore conceived a design to murder, or some way get rid of him: But the great G O D, *known unto whom are all his works, from the beginning of the world; whose counsel shall stand, and who will do all his pleasure*, made these same passions subservient to his particular purpose. They intended to gratify their malice, but *He* to indulge his boundless philanthropy and benevolence. Now I would ask. Is there not a mighty difference between G O D's *permitting* these brethren the gratification of their hearts desire, and governing it to the public good, and his being the *efficient* cause of their behavior? The *latter* opinion makes men machines; the *former* is consistent with that freedom which is *essential* to rational beings—to moral agents.

I have observed, that G O D has general plans of providence, which he is ever carrying into execution, and which he some times accomplishes through the lusts and passions of men.—I will mention a few instances out of very many.—It was the will of heaven that a seven years drought should come upon the *eastern world*, and that the posterity of *Abraham*, then in *Canaan*, should be preserved from the fatal influence of it. This could not be better effected, in the common course of things, than by having a prudent ~~man~~ of their own number sent before them into *Egypt*.

that garden of the world, who, having a foresight of the impending scarcity and through a variety of adverse fortune, being raised to *distinction* and *power*, should cause the erection of granaries, by stores reasonably accumulated in which, the *posterity* of *Jacob*, as well as others, should be preserved from the sad consequences of a *severe* and *long continued* scarcity. This scheme was executed by the malice and envy of *Jacob's* sons, who sold their brother with no other view than to be rid of his pretended, haughty and imperious temper. Now, through whose efficiency was this barbarous banishment brought about? God's? or Satan's? Let scripture and common sense decide.

Indeed, some persons pretend that God influences to the *opus operatum*, to the outward action, but not to the sinfulness of it. This appears to me, a lame account of the matter. It will not quadrate with the case referred to in the text. How can we, in that instance, separate the action from the obliquity of it? To *kill*, or to *banish* persons, under *some* circumstances, is a virtuous action, a laudable deed, when they have *forfeited* their lives or *merited* exile. But how can the same be done to innocent persons without guilt? And if there was guilt, to whom is it to be imputed? To God, or to *Jacob's* sons? Let God be holy, but every man a sinner.

In after ages, the Jews were to be redeemed from *Egypt* by an out stretched arm. The great *Jehovah*, in that idolatrous country, and *empire* of the world, chose to display his wonderful works, and his evident superiority to the false gods of the Heathen. Nothing gave a greater scope for this, than the obstinacy of *Pharaoh*, the reigning prince, who refused to let the children of *Israel* go out of his dominions, till the most

astonishing judgments were sent, and *miracles* wrought in the land of *Ham* ! But we are not from hence to conclude that God by his efficiency produced this perversity of disposition, in the *Egyptian* king. All that was necessary, was to raise to the throne, and cause to stand *there* a certain man, whose avarice, ambition and tyranny prompted him to detain the posterity of *Israel* in his kingdom, till Jehovah demonstrated himself to be the true God of the universe. There is one objection to this account of the matter : the scripture asserts, in direct and positive terms, that *God hardened Pharaoh's heart*. It also says in other places, that *he hardened his own heart* ; nothing more, therefore, can reasonably be intended thereby, than that God *permitted* him to follow the evil dispositions of his heart, *left* him exposed to the temptations of the world and the devil, *took* from him his holy spirit, and *brought* him into such trials, as meeting with a perverse temper, rendered it more so ; not that he used any positive influence in the production of this event.

Farther, it was the will of heaven, a scheme in providence, that the people of *Israel* should be planted down in the land of *Canaan*. To this end the ancient inhabitants *must* be exterminated. *They* were left therefore, to fill up the measure of their iniquity, that so the Jews might be justified, in the destruction of them. To suppose God made them wicked by his own *efficiency*, is to imagine that he was reduced to the *hard necessity* of justifying one sin by the production of another, than which nothing can be more injurious or absurd.

Again ; The *Jews* after being sometime planted in *Canaan* become extremely vile ; so that, agreeable to the moral nature of the divine government, it was necessary

necessary they should be punished by captivity. There were those who were ready to carry this design into execution. *Senacharib* undertook the service: but it was far from his intention, to fulfill the designs or execute the *plans* of heaven; all that he meant was to gratify his *lust* of domination and conquest. Accordingly we find the Almighty thus declaring, *I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria. He meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy, and to cut off nations not a few.*

Once more: It was the scheme or plan of providence, to redeem the fallen world by the *advent* and *sacrifice* of *Jesus Christ*. In order to accomplish this benevolent plan, the Saviour of the world must be put to a *cruel* and *ignominious* death. *Judas* and the people of the *Jews* stood ready to accomplish the deed, which, though nefarious in itself, was productive of the happiest consequences to the world. The perpetrators were actuated by the worst of principles. *Satan*, through the door of avarice, entered into *Judas*; and *St. Peter* declares, that his murderers in general were moved by an evil spirit, and practised with wicked hands.—*Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.*—From these examples it plainly appears, that though there be *general schemes* of providence which will be executed; yet we are by no means obliged to recur to the *blasphemous assertions* of some late dogmatists, who tell us, that as the plan was from heaven, the evil principles by which it was accomplished were from God.

These instances being previously mentioned, and commented on, we shall apply the whole to the memorable

memorable revolution that has lately taken place in this country.

It was the will of heaven, and agreeable to his general plan, that the principal part of *America* should become *separate* and *independent* of *Britain*.

This separation *must* be brought about, like most other events, by the *agency* of men. *America must* revolt; and some incidents *must* take place, to induce or excite them thus to do. The *avarice* and *tyranny* of *Britain* soon led them to this. Instigated by those restless desires, *they* imposed heavy burthens grievous to be borne; revoked our *charters*, *shut* up our ports; *changed* the mode of criminal prosecution; *quartered* a body of armed men upon us, who insulted the inhabitants; and finally, to complete the system of oppression, *excited* the *dogs* of *war*, the *sons* of *violence*, to *butcher* innocent and *unoffending* men. The first attack was made upon the *militia* of this town, who, only because they appeared in arms, and thereby demonstrated that they would not be *mere spectators* of every *outrage*, *insult* and *abuse*, were, in a most *inhuman* manner, cut down, and eight of them had their souls instantly dislodged from their bodies. As soon as the *news* of this *barbarous deed* had reached the distant colonies, *all America* rose as one man to arms, to avenge the wrong done to their fellow-countrymen! The *British* troops, indeed, marked their progress through *this* and the *neighbouring towns* on that *memorable day*, which we now solemnize, with such characters, of unheard of barbarity, that all to whose ears it came, were ready to say, *that no such deed had been done in America* since its first settlement to that time. † And

† I am sensible, that acts of greater barbarity in themselves considered, have sometimes been committed against the *Americans*

And having their souls filled with an extreme abhorrence of it, were ready to cry out in the language of Jacob, when he reflected on the cruelty of Simeon and Levi ; “ O my soul, come not thou into their secret, unto their assembly, mine honor, be thou not united ; for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self will digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger for it was fierce, and their wrath for it was cruel.” From this wanton and unprovoked massacre, the American war took

mericans by the *aboriginals* of the country. But still, when all circumstances are duly considered, the affair at Lexington may be pronounced cruel beyond a parallel. This will appear, if we for a moment reflect upon the *cause* and the *authors* of this detestable deed. The indians acted no otherways than might reasonably be expected. *Untutored* and destitute of *civilization*, they always made war with every circumstance of ferocity ; it was their nature and agreeable to their modes and habits of life. Besides, they were peculiarly incensed against the *English* inhabitants, because they ousted them from their old possessions, and interrupted their *fishing*, *hunting*, &c. — But nothing of this sort can be plead in extenuation of the crimes of the *Britons*, in firing on the *Militia* of Lexington. They value themselves on their *politeness* and *humanity*, and certainly had no provocation thus to behave ; except it be a provocation for others to hold arms in their sight. The *Americans* were never indebted to *Britain* for the soil they now possess ; they purchased it with their own money, and cultivated it with their own hands. It was extremely cruel, after they had driven our forefathers from *Europe* into the wilds of *America*, to pursue their sons, and slaughter them in heaps, for no other crime than tenaciously adhering to their liberties and inheritance, which were transmitted to them from their ancestors. Upon a review of these several particulars, we may be justified in saying, “ no such deed had been done in this country since it was inhabited by emigrants from *Britain*, to that time.” Heaven, it seems, resented it, together with their other barbarous conduct towards this people ; for when the *appeal* was made to him, and the dispute was to be decided by the sword ; he has given the cause to *America* :

took its rise, and *barbarous rage* effected what no other consideration could have done ; it combined a large nation in arms, though of somewhat different *customs, laws, religion and manners* ; and what is still more wonderful, combined them against a *powerful and war-like kingdom*, nearly related by blood !

The war thus commenced, went forward with *rapid progress*, and with *various fortune*, till, under the conduct of a kind providence, it has at length ended in *independency and peace* ! Now, though the general plan was evidently of God, to emancipate *America* from the bondage of *Britain*, who deprived their forefathers of liberty of conscience, under the intolerant spirit of a persecuting *Land*, and in this way caused them to seek an *asylum* in *this then howling wilderness* ; and who with the same spirit pursued us their sons over the ocean, and had they not been obstructed, would never have desisted from their attempts, till they had made us *beavers of wood and drawers of water, so haughty and imperious taskmasters* : yet the evil spirit which induced them to these measures, can not be imputed to God, but to *Satan* and to their own corrupt hearts—" *As God cannot be tempted of evil, so neither doth he tempt any man ; but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lusts, and enticed : surely the wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain*" It is his prerogative to reduce good from evil ; to reduce the greatest *extricities* to order, to *frustrate* the deepest laid schemes, to *turn the wisest counsels into foolishness*, and to make wicked men, quite beside their own intentions, the executioners of his pleasure ! " *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out !*" This exclamation of the Apostle is remarkably

bly verified in the *rise, progress and conclusion* of the late war. The *king of Britain* meant one thing, but the *KING of HEAVEN* another. The *former* intended to bring us to his feet, and extort a revenue from us, to maintain a band of idle pensioners, the tools of government ; but the *latter* meant to bring about as at this day, to make a *great and numerous* people (corrupt indeed, for which we have been severely chastised) the depositaries of that liberty which is the incontestible *birthright and peculium* of man ; of that liberty which has forsaken the greater part of the world, flown over the *Atlantic* and now *domesticates* itself with us.

I shall in the last place observe, that as God meant these evil things for good ; and great good has already resulted therefrom, and there is much greater in reversion ; the consideration thereof should, as in the case of *Joseph*, reconcile us to our brethren of Britain, divest our breasts of all emotions of resentment, or revenge, and induce us, upon their return to a pacific temper, to maintain a friendly intercourse with them.

C

At

* This part of the Sermon may probably be excepted against, as not being fully understood. To prevent mistakes, therefore, let it be observed, that the preacher had no intention to recommend the reception of the *Refugees*, or to persuade the people of the *Massachusetts* so far to overlook the vile conduct of those persons, who went out from us, not up against us, and did all in their power to ruin and enslave us, as to receive them into their bosoms.—This was far from his design. He does not conceive that the preliminaries of peace oblige them so to do. From erasing those articles, he is persuaded this is finally left to the option of the differing States. This must therefore depend on the sentiments of the people at large, and the resolutions of the several *Legislatures*. It is to be hoped they will be divinely directed. It the preacher may be permitted to express his own sentiments

or

At least, we ought to forgive them, bear them no hatred, and pray to God that none of the evil they have done us, may finally be laid to their charge. This I know is a hard duty, but it is such as we are bound to comply with. As a preacher of the gospel I am obliged to recommend it to whomsoever I have the honor publicly to speak. If we feel the smart of the blows inflicted, the duty of forgiveness is still more difficult. Now this is our case. The sufferings of *America* by the hands of *Britain* are still felt, and they have been cruelly severe. A little recollection will soon convince us *all* of this. You my brethren
of

on a matter so differently thought of, he should certainly say, that *many* of the *Absentees* have conducted *so ill, so offensively* to the people of the United States, that it is, by no means reasonable, that they should ever be permitted to return to their former possessions, even though they should be willing to pay the *bona fide* price which was paid by the present possessors. This, however, must be the subject of free discussion in our several Legislatures. To them I trust, the people at large will be willing to refer it, and acquiesce in their determination.

As to the people of Britain, the proper inhabitants before the war, there can be no kind of difficulty. They certainly ought to be forgiven, and restored to our charity, as they have virtually acknowledged their faults in conceding to reasonable terms of peace. How far an intimate connexion with them in *trade* and *commerce*, will be advantageous to this country, is left to time and wiser heads to determine. Such is the nature of mankind in general, that they soon overlook the greatest injuries, when those who perpetrated them cease their offences; and there is no doubt this will be the case in future times between Britain and America. But supposing it should, this one thing may with truth be affirmed, that the copious consumption of their luxuries can never be profitable to America. Though with *all the world* we may trade, yet let it *all* try prevail, and our exports exceed our imports, till we shall ever be poor and miserable.

of this town, want no monitor to stir up your *minds*, nor lively description to affect your *hearts* at the *de-
ful* tragedy which was *here* perpetrated. Though eight years have since rolled away, yet your souls have a lively *remembrance* of your *affliction* and *miser*y, of the *wormwood* and *gall* that were contained in that *bitter cup*, of which you were compelled to drink large draughts !—Those missive balls which felled eight or ten of your number to the ground, and which were discharged without provocation, ushered in a scene of *havock* and *destruction* through that *dreadful day* which, when brought full to view, still harrows thole bosoms that are softened with compassion, and causes the cry-
stal, briny tears to flow ! Well may you *all* shed a tear over the *mouldering urns* of your murdered friends on this anniversary, especially when you call to mind the tragical circumstances attending their exit, the cause in which they fell, and the glorious events that have resulted from their deaths !—On this occasion, you may be allowed to shed both the tears of *sorrow* and of *joy* ; of *sorrow*, when you consider how dreadful it was to have your relations and friends sent instantane-
ously, and perhaps unexpectedly, to the righteous bar of God ! How lamentable ! how affecting the sight ! to see husbands, sons and fathers lying in their gore, pale and breathless, snatched away, without opportunity of going through the *parting ceremony*, or so much as bidding the *long farewell* ; at once deprived of their company, their support and solace ; and abandon-
ed to all the wretchedness of woe ! If this had hap-
pened in the common course of providence, and after the usual premonitions, it would have been a mighty mitigation. But to have the *atrocious deed* unexpect-
edly perpetrated, and that not by a *common enemy*, but by those who were *relations* and *pretended friends*, with whom heretofore we have had *sweet communi-*

and now had no *sufficient cause* to hurt, much less to kill, how aggravating the circumstance, how pungent the grief ! For these reasons you are excited, *on this occasion*, to shed tears of grief ; and also, that your friends had not lived to share with you the important blessings of *independency* and *peace*, to which they so greatly contributed.—But then, on other accounts, you are called to shed the *tears of joy* : In particular, that your *friends* and *townsmen* died in so good a cause, that they fell the first *victims*, and were made a *sacrifice* for the good of their country. Every generous and disinterested soul, forgetting the ties of blood, is prompted thus to do. Even the mothers of heroic youths, among the *Romans*, though of the tender sex, have been known to rejoice that their sons were slain in battle, and died in the cause and for the honor of their country ! *Quam dulce et decorum est, pro patria mori*, was a principle with them. It is also a maxim of reason and no less so of the gospel, *that it is better that one man, nay that many men should die, than that the whole nation should perish*. Since then, the murder *here* committed by the *British* troops, has been followed with happy consequences, has preserved this country from slavery or destruction ; the consideration thereof should cause *townsmen*, and even *relations* to dry up their tears of sorrow, and excite them to weep tears of joy.

But when I have mentioned the death of your friends, I have told but a part of the bitter tale. Not content with killing your townsmen, they were prompted by Satan, to burn your houses and destroy your property. Those who in the morning of that fated day, arose and blessed themselves that they were possessed of comfortable habitations, the fruit of former toil, were, ere the evening came, deprived of their accommodations

accommodations, had not, like our divine Redeemer, *where to lay their heads*, saw their dwellings consumed to ashes, and the smoke ascending to darken and insult the face of day ! And this which happened to you in the first instance, has been the bitter portion of many others on the continent. Need I tell you of the towns, fair and populous, that have been consumed by fire in the wantonness of British rage ? What numbers of our brave men, the young, the healthy and robust, the boast of their country, the pride of their parents, and the flower of the army, have miserably perished in jails and prison-ships, through *neglect* and *studied* cruelty, for want of wholesome provision and fresh air ? Should I paint in proper colours the dreadful scenes of carnage, the horrid tortures which, with more than diabolical malice, were inflicted on our countrymen, and *women* and *children*, in some of our new-settled plantations, it would renew your grief, excite the tenderest emotions, and wring your breasts with the keenest anguish ! How many women have been ravished and maids debauched in the course of this unhappy war ? What enormous taxes have been laid upon us, and how oppressive the load we have borne in defence of our liberties and lives.*

But

* That there is no exaggeration in the above representation is well known to all who have registered the events of the war in their memories. Five or six large towns have been burned by the enemy, with an immense quantity of valuable effects. Among these were *Charlestown, Norfolk, Falmouth, Danbury, Esopus* and its environs, &c. besides a number of private buildings in many other towns.

The sufferings of our people captivated and imprisoned by the enemy, have been severe beyond example. Witness, particularly, those who were carried into *New York*, and especially those that were captivated at *Fort Washington*, of whom

But notwithstanding all this, it is certainly our duty to forgive, if not to forget. To forget, indeed, I know is not our duty. *Sooner may our right hands forget their cunning, than forget thee and thy unparalleled sufferings, O my country!* Indeed, whilst the vestiges of learning, and the force of the *English language* remain, it is impossible they should be forgotten. For such writings have been composed, and such monuments erected, as will perpetuate the distresses of this country, and the mighty exertions they have made for their liberties, to the last period of time. The annals of *America* will stand distinguished among all the nations of literature, till "*the angel, with one foot on the sea, and another on the earth, shall lift up his hand to Heaven, and swear by him that liveth forever and ever, that time shall be no longer!*" Even our tender offspring, in future times, will stand around the knees of their parents, and with faltering accents ask, what meant the military exercises, and the yearly meetings, on the nineteenth of April, at *Lexington*? Their fathers, under the operation of various passions, will inform them, that *then* began, in *that place*, those hostilities, which, in progress of events, brought on the present happy settlement; the great privileges *they now enjoy*. The children, satisfied with the pleasing

whom eight or ten died every day. The dreadful sufferings of the people on the *Susquehanna*, are still fresh in our memories, and the recollection causes the blood still to run cold in our veins! Of thefts and rapes *New-Jersey* and the *Carolina* had large and sorrowful experience; though none of these things disheartened them! And of taxes, which have been incredibly heavy on all, none have paid a larger proportion than the inhabitants of *Massachusetts*. When the heavy debt contracted by the war will be paid, the wisest politicians cannot tell.

pleasing narration, will bless the memory of their virtuous ancestors, and sacredly hand down the important tale, from generation to generation, till children shall be no more !

But though it be impossible to forget the late transactions on the stage of *America*,—yet certainly the laws of Christianity oblige us to forgive. The duty of forgiveness Heaven does not extend so far as to oblige us to make the offenders our confidants and friends—to trust them for the future, or receive them into our intimate communion : it only requires, that we bear them no ill-will—take no steps for revenge—and recommend them to the mercy of God. We must *bless them that curse us, and pray for them that despitefully use and entreat us*, if we would be the children of our Father in Heaven, who causes his sun to rise on the evil, and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just, and on the unjust. If we are his children, and possessed with a humane and benevolent heart, we shall bitterly lament those wars and fightings, which the lusts of men create. Great allowances are to be made for the weaknesses and follies of mankind. As we are human, and know our own frailties, we ought to be indulgent to the follies and vices of others.—*Homo sum, et nihil humanum a me alienum puto*,—was the modest saying of an ancient sage. On this principle, we ought ever to act.—Reason requires it, and scripture demands it. *Joseph*, educated in the Jewish religion, teaches us, that in consideration of the great good that resulted from his brethren's envy, he should overlook and forgive the most aggravated personal offence.—But a greater than *Joseph* is here. *St. Stephen*, when just expiring under the cruel attacks of his enemies, breathed out this benevolent prayer, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge !* And a greater than *Stephen*, even the Lord Jesus Christ

just before he was put to a cruel death by his persecutors, preferred this petition to God, which contained the only excuse that could possibly be made for them ;—*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do ! Let us go and do likewise.* Shall we, who profess ourselves Christians, and are assured, that unless we forgive men their trespasses, our heavenly father will not forgive our's ; which are greatly aggravated and daily committed, refuse to forgive, or retain our resentment against the people of *Britain* ? God forbid ! May we honor the *manes* of our departed friends who died in the war, and most cordially at the same time forgive the perpetrators of those evil deeds, in consideration of the great good that has arisen therefrom, not only to *this* but to *some other* parts of the world.

Now, would it not be deemed impertinent or superfluous, I could easily point out the great advantage that has accrued to some *other countries* as well as to *this* from the late *American* war. Before the contest with this western world, the spirit and the idea of liberty, was almost lost from *Europe*, as it had been long before from *Asia* and *Africa*. This dispute aroused it in *Ireland*, who before were fettered in chains of severe bondage. Poverty and oppression reigned in that island. Their trade was most invidiously restricted ; *pensioners* were saddled upon them ; their *taxes* were heavy, and their *rents* from *landlords* who lived in *England*, enormous ; by means of all which, the common ranks of people became excessively poor, and from the greatest industry could scarcely procure a mouthful of meat for themselves and family more than once a week. But seeing the spirit raging in *America*, they caught the heavenly fire, and with ~~arms~~ in their hands made a bold demand of their rights ;

rights, & never desisted, till England granted their request, unfettered their trade, and *now* permit them to live upon terms of reciprocity with themselves ! A glorious effect of the American war ! Farther, the king of *France* has given free toleration to his Protestant subjects, and allows them to build their churches, undisturbed in any part of his kingdom ! The king of Spain has put an end to the *Inquisition* ; and from the ratified articles of peace between these two latter kingdoms and *Britain*, it should seem, that it is made upon more liberal principles than commonly has been between *Protestant* and *Papish* kingdoms. But what is the most considerable, the confederated States of *America* have in consequence of our struggles, become *free, sovereign and independent* Independency and freedom are the wish of all men. Freedom, indeed, may be abused to purposes of licentiousness, and what other blessing may not be abused ? But, if it be not our own fault, we may *now* be the happiest people upon the face of the globe ! Instead of being controuled by others, at three thousand miles distance, we *now* have it in our power to rule and govern ourselves, to impose our own taxes, choose all our officers, regulate our internal police, and rise under the influence of our virtues, to eminent distinction and renown !

We have at present a happy constitution of government, framed by wise men and accepted by a majority of the people at large. If we adhere to the spirit of it, and labor to give energy to the laws, and dignity to the governing authority, by electing *wise men and true*, and then submitting cheerfully to their commands, we shall doubtless taste the sweets of that liberty for which we have bled at every vein.

It is not only natural for nations to wish to be independent, as the minor pants for twenty-one ; but

it must be highly eligible and advantageous to be separated from *Britain*. Whilst connected with them our *peace* and *virtue* would ever have been in danger. Their examples would have had a pernicious influence on our morals. Their extensive commerce has given them wealth, and wealth by a natural causality has produced luxury ; and luxury, effeminacy. These vices are extremely contagious ; and if we had been *connected* with and *dependent* on them, should have been very prone to have aped them in their vices as well as in their virtues ; and such vices as those above-mentioned, would have been highly detrimental to an infant country. May God long preserve us from them.

Besides, being in connection with them, we must frequently have been embroiled in their broils ; which we know in time past have been frequent and numerous ; and probably will be so for the future.

Monarchies are often in war, with a view to extend the domains of a single man, whilst Commonwealths are naturally pacific ; because the benefit resulting from conquest, being divided among the ruling body, which is numerous and often shifted, or among the community at large, is not a sufficient *stimulus* to war.— Hence *Holland*, *Switzerland*, and other republican states are never, except through necessity, engaged in national disputes ; though the latter republic, it is well known, furnishes a plenty of the best soldiers, who are often the mercenary troops of crowned heads.

Having therefore assumed republican governments, and being *now* separated from *Britain*, and not obliged to follow her *inclination* or her *fortune*, there is the highest probability, that we shall enjoy a *lasting*, if not a *perpetual* peace ; and that this would be a preci-

ous boon, a glorious advantage, we must needs be convinced from the late long continued horrors of war ; for if war be a judgment (which by sad experience we all know to be fact) doubtless peace is a blessing. If we are in peace we shall be at leisure for the noblest purposes ; for the service of God ; for being *delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we may serve him without fear, in righteousness and holiness all the days of our lives* ;—for the cultivation of the arts and sciences, which never flourish in a time of war ;—for the extension of commerce and a lucrative navigation ;—for the improvement of agriculture ; and the diffusion of the blessings of good government, and liberty to all around us.

When rapt into future times, we contemplate the great things which will be acted on the stage of *America* ; how she will bless her numerous sons ; how produce *legislators, politicians, orators and poets*, equal to the most renowned of antiquity, and how she will rise to opulence, fame and glory ; unless it be her own fault, we must feel ourselves not only willing to forgive the people of *Britain*, who by the infatuation of their councils, have been the undesigned instruments of so much good ; but can also bless God, most heartily, that he has been *so kind to us*, whilst in pleasing gratitude we can adopt the words of the prophet, and with but a little alteration, say, "*Happy art thou, O America ! who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thine excellency !*"

I cannot, with decency, conclude without addressing myself to the gentlemen now in arms :—

RESPECTABLE SIRS,

WHILST we revere your character, as soldiers, we cannot but lament those faults and passions of men

which make your profession necessary, and entitle you to deserved esteem.

In the present state of the world, no body of men is more important than *that* which is acquainted with the dexterous use of the instruments of death, and has studied the arts of killing! A *well regulated militia* is the glory and defence of every country. They are a greater security than *standing armies*, who, though necessary in time of war, are ever dangerous in peace. The liberties of *Athens*, of *Rome*, of *Sweden*, and of many other places, have been destroyed by them. Our rulers, knowing their pernicious influence in other parts of the world, have resolved they shall not be maintained *here* in times of peace. Soon, therefore, may we expect to hear that our *army* is disbanded, and then our dependance will be altogether on the *militia*. And indeed on whom can we rely for safety better than on them? Memorable have been their exploits in former times. It was by the *militia* that *England* anciently penetrated to the gates of *Paris*, took their *fleurs de lis*, and almost conquered that great and potent kingdom. And what noble feats have they not performed during the progress of the war but lately finished? Principally by their exertions *Burgoyne* and his powerful army were captivated, and lost their power to hurt.* Considering, therefore,

* When I thus commend our *militia*, I certainly mean no reflection on our *standing army*. Great is their merit and much have they done, under *Washington* one of the wisest and best of generals towards bringing forward the present happy era. Their toils and labors, their patience and perseverance, under peculiar discouragements, are unexampled in history! To such an height of discipline and skill, of bravery and prowess,

therefore, gentlemen, the importance of your character and the expectations of the people, you will be persuaded to persevere in measures for the acquirement of greater military capacity to do good. Peace will justify no relaxation in this regard. As the country, for ought we know, may soon be attacked, and need your assistance, so we trust you will labor to be qualified and disposed to give it. To your conduct, under GOD, we are much indebted for the present independent station we hold among the nations of the earth; for here the corner stone thereof was laid. As you early stepped forth, lent your aid to your country, and made a sacrifice in her cause, at a time when she needed the assistance of all her sons; so we trust, should there be any future call, you will be prompt in obedience to it. How glorious to be hailed, like *Camillus*, the saviour of your country!

The deaths of those who from your body were slain, as on this day, by *British* cruelty, have been suitably noticed and resented; and that you have not yet forgotten them is evident from your appearing in hostile array in the house of God.

You have acted a laudable part in observing this anniversary to the present day. It has answered a most valuable

prowess, have they arrived, that we should not fear to have them meet in the open field, an equal number of the best veteran troops in the world. A large *British* army was cooped up by them, and with the assistance of the French, *Cornwallis*, with his numerous host, fell an easy prey to their manoeuvres and undaunted courage. Now that they are about to leave the camp, with their brows encircled with the laurels of victory, may they cheerfully return to the peaceful walks of life, and by the several States who employed them, have equal justice done, and a reasonable compensation for all their former sufferings.

valuable political purpose, as well as demonstrated a decent respect to the memory of those who first bled in their country's cause. What may be the line of propriety for the future, I shall not take upon me to say, and for this reason, because I do not particularly know. This, however, I may be permitted to observe in general, that the ends of this institution being chiefly secured, the call for its continuance cannot be great. To you it belongs to determine, and to you it is left. But if you continue the solemnization of the anniversary, yet you will not perpetuate your resentment against the inhabitants of *Britain*. It is unbecoming the character, both of christians and soldiers so to do. As the good soldier is brave in war, he is no less humane and gentle in peace. "*Better is he that quieteth his spirit than he that taketh a city.*" Whilst, therefore, you bless the ashes of your departed friends, you will eradicate from your breasts the spirit of revenge, and all forbidden resentment to the living; and exert yourselves so to pass through life, that when death shall lay its cold hand upon you, and call you hence, you may be ripened for, and through grace in the divine Redeemer, be admitted to that glorious world, where wars and fightings never enter, where harmony and love perpetually reign!

And now turning myself to this numerous assembly, I would, in the fulcra of my heart, congratulate you on the return of peace with its olive branch, after the toils and perplexities, the straits and horrors of more than a seven years war! Hail my happy countrymen, at length emancipated from the slavery that was designed for you! The shackles are knocked off; the chain that was to have bound you in perpetual bondage, was quitted in the forge, the snare is broken and we have

have escaped ! And not only escaped, but are placed on the *stable rock* of independence, and are brought to an honorable and advantageous peace. *

That we may perceive in the most lively manner, the blessedness of our present situation, and *keenly* relish the joy of the day, we need only recollect the horrors of that *dreadful day*, when the war first broke out in *this place*,
and

* The Parliament of Britain seem to be discontented, and murmur at the peace, as being made, in their view, on terms ignominious to the nation. But be this as it will, surely we, of this country, have the utmost reason to acquiesce in it, and with a mixture of joy and astonishment, take notice of the hand of Providence in accelerating this important event, and establishing it on terms *so honorable to America*. Our most sanguine wishes are gratified, and expectations outdone ! Who could have thought, when the object in dispute, was of *such magnitude*, that *Britain* would *so soon* desist from her claims, consent to the dismemberment of the empire, and make *so large* a proportion of it, independent ! That we possess a share in the fishery, both in the gulph of *St. Lawrence* and on the Banks of *Newfoundland* ;—that a moiety of all the great Lakes to the *Westward*, falls within our limits, which gives us the advantage of a lucrative inland navigation, and an interest in the *furr trade* ;—that our boundaries are so extensive—and that the *British troops* are to evacuate every part of confederated *America*, which they possessed during the war, *New York*, *Long Island* and *Penobscot*, is under G O D. to be ascribed to the *valor* and *heroism* of our army, to the *wisdom* and *unwearied exertions* of our *ambassadors*. This event plainly demonstrates, that we can *shine* in the *cabinet*, as well as in the *field* ; that we are *wise* in *council*, as well as *mighty* in war. This country will, I doubt not, retain a *lasting and grateful remembrance* of those worthies, both in civil and military departments, through whose *vigorous and persevering efforts*, we enjoy so glorious a peace, and so pleasing a prospect of future good.

and contrast them with the present *smiling aspect* of divine providence. *That was a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains ; when the people were much pained, and all faces gathered blackness.* Many of you heard the *sound of the trumpet, and the alarm of war ;* and saw the *doleful spectacle of garments roll'd in blood !* you saw your friends pale in death, and heard their dying groans ! *Distressed* at what had already happened, you were no less *anxious* for the future. *Sadness* sat brooding on every face, and sorrow penetrated deep into every heart. But *now* the scene is mightily reversed—the incumbent gloom is dispelled, and the brightest prospects open to view. *That never to be forgotten morn,* was ushered in by the discharge of musketry, loaded with the instruments of death ! But *it's* opened with the *feu de joye*, which diffused agreeable sensations thro' the soul. On *that day*, the *British standard* erected, presented a sickening prospect to the free born sons of Massachusetts : but on *this*, the thirteen stripes of the *American flag*, waving and wantoning in the wind, exhilarate the heart, and cause the pulse of freedom to beat high. On that doleful day, the floor of this sacred house was crimsoned with the blood of our murdered friends, and spread over with their mangled corpses ; but on *this*, it is trod by the feet of devout worshippers, who come hither in crowds to express their gratitude to that God who has beheld us with a propitious eye, appeared for our help, and turned this anniversary *from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day !* *That day* saw some of the best characters of the province proscribed, doomed to destruction, and hunted like partridges on the mountains ; but *this auspicious one* beholds *them* advanced to the *first seats* of the government, and enjoying the *confidence and reward* of

an obliged people. * Thus the stones which the British builders refused, and designed to break to pieces, have, in our political edifice, become the head stones of the corner ! This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes ! This is the operation of that God who appeared for the Jews, when destined to slaughter, promoted Mordecai to the highest post of the kingdom.

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dom.

* When the British troops came from Boston, it is believed that one part of their business was to seize, if possible, his Excellency John Hancock, Esq; our present Governor, and the honorable Samuel Adams, who, by their opposition to British tyranny, had rendered themselves obnoxious ; and were known then to be in Lexington. They happily escaped out of their hands. For having, by private posts, dispatched from Boston, received intelligence of the movement of a detachment of the troops, with the probable object of their view, those gentlemen arose from their beds in the dead of night, decamped, and thus escaped. They were reserved to a better end, even to govern and bless that people with their counsels, to whose deliverance from slavery they so greatly contributed. Truly laudable was the conduct of his Excellency in making his appearance in the house of GOD on this day. His presence increased the general joy, as it gave us an opportunity of sharing it with one, who had largely partook in the distresses of his country, lamented in all their sorrows, and administered to multitudes the balm of consolation. There was also a great propriety in his coming up to the house of GOD with others, to testify his thankfulness to Jehovah, on this occasion, as this was the town where his pious ancestors lived ; as he was upon the spot when hostilities were first commenced ; as he was designed to have been one of the first victims to their rage ; as they came partly in pursuit of him, and he experienced the divine favor in his signal preservation on that day. The example was such as ought ever to be set by those in power, under similar circumstances. May his Excellency long live to taste the sweets of that liberty, for the obtaining of which he has made a great sacrifice ; and this Commonwealth never want a Governor to animate them to the worship of God by his own example.

dom, and inflicted on an haughty *Haman*, the punishment due to his crimes — thus by the kind providence of that God who disposes the fate of nations, and causes kingdoms to rise and fall at his pleasure, we are brought to the summit of our earthly wishes, and have lived to *see what many others desired*, but were not permitted to behold, by reason of death. Since our lives are lengthened out to this glorious epoch ; since we have seen the blood here shed, cleanted by that God, who abominates murder and all acts of cruelty ; let pious gratitude rise from the altar of our hearts to the King of kings, and the most substantial obedience to his laws adorn our external conduct. Let us all, now laying aside every other contention, strive only to do most for that Being who has saved us from slavery, *redeemed our lives from destruction*, and *crowned us with loving kindness and tender mercies*. As the war is brought to a conclusion, let us attend to the arts of peace, for which we have so blessed an opportunity.

Since we can now sit under our *own vines and fig-trees*, having none to disturb us, or make us afraid, let us diligently cultivate the soil which has *been watered* by the blood of our countrymen ; and beg of God that he would cause the *earth to yield her increase, and the trees their fruit* ; that he ~~would~~ give us *fruitful seasons*, and plentiful crops : for then soon will our scarcity be followed with redundancy, and *America* supply the deficiencies of others. May *navigation, trade and commerce* flourish ; and by an attention to every source of wealth, may we have such streams flow in upon us, as shall enable us to discharge all our dues, and give us distinction among the nations of the earth. Above all things, may we seek after true repentance, and peace with God, which, alone, will
stand

stand us in stead, when the *revolutions* of *kingdoms* and *empires* shall cease ; “ when the sun shall grow dim with age, and nature sink in years.” Nothing, on this side of eternity, can give us lasting content, if we have not peace *within* ;—little shall we be bettered by peace with a *foreign enemy*. In the revolution of a few years, we must follow our departed friends, and be unconscious to terrestrial scenes. Let us, therefore, seek peace with God through Jesus Christ, the great peace-maker ; *who has made both Jew and Gentile one, and made peace by the blood of his cross* ;—that so when we are called away from the enjoyments of American citizens, we may be made free of the city of the *New-Jerusalem*, and become the denizens of the Zion that is above.

A M E N.

A P P E N D I X.

LEXINGTON, 22d April, 1783.

NEITHER the public nor the world, at this time, need to be informed, that the late great and affecting contest, between *Britain* and *America*, opened in *Lexington*, by the *unprovoked massacre* of a number of its inhabitants, perpetrated by a body of *British* troops, on the *nineteenth* of *April*, 1775.

This distressing day has been unto us for a memorial. As such it hath been statedly observed in this place, as an important anniversary, through the course of the late war, by a respectable appearance of the militia in arms, and a solemn assembly of the whole congregation in the house of GOD, to drop a tear upon the graves and mourn over the ashes of our slaughtered friends, religiously to notice and acknowledge the hand of GOD, —humbly to express our confidence in him, as the righteous and powerful avenger of injured innocence, and devoutly to implore his presence and aid in the cause of our country, of posterity, and mankind.

It hath pleased him, who is *governor amongst the nations*, to behold the state of an oppressed land, to hear the prayers of an afflicted people, to give them to see their desires upon their enemies, and to rejoice in his salvation, by bringing the war to an happy issue, and granting them the pleasing prospect of the blessings of a peace, in which all their rights and claims, as *free, sovereign states*, and an *independent nation*, are established upon a permanent foundation.

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Our sorrow being thus turned into joy, and our mourning into songs of praise—decently and religiously to express the fulcres of our hearts, upon this great and joyful occasion, the *interesting anniversary on Saturday last*, was observed and celebrated in the following manner, viz.

The dawn of the day was ushered in by the ringing of the bell.—The officers of the *town militia*, with a large number of the inhabitants, being collected together—at five o'clock (the time when the *Britons* made their approach, and, without notice or provocation, *inhumanly* fired upon the people of this town) *eight cannon*, from the *artillery*, commanded by Captain *Oliver Brown*, were discharged, in memory of *eight* of our brethren, who fell the *first victims* to the oppressor's cruelty, and *martyrs* in the cause of liberty, *America*, and mankind.

At the rising of the sun, a large flag of the *United States* appeared displayed over the house of Captain *Brown*, near the meeting-house and place of parade, where our brethren were *slain*, and *thirteen cannon* were discharged in commemoration of that spirit of liberty, patriotism and bravery, which, upon that affecting event, fired the *American's* breast, and catching from soul to soul, diffused itself through this wide extended continent, and inspired the inhabitants of thirteen of the (then) *colonies of America*, as *one man*, to rise and *revenge* their *brethren's blood*; and, in a solemn appeal to heaven, at the point of the sword, to assert, support and defend their own, and their country's rights.

Between twelve and one, on the arrival of the Governor, (who was present and a witness of the tragical

gal scene, which gave rise to this anniversary, and who greatly added to the joy of the day by honoring the solemnity with his presence) a number of cannon were discharged, as a token of respect from the inhabitants of the town and a salute to his EXCELLENCY.

At two o'clock, a large number of the inhabitants (several of whom in years past had borne commissions from this or the United States) turning out as volunteers, in honor to the day, assembled in arms; and being embodied under the conduct of the present officers of the militia, performed several *military manoeuvres* to good acceptance.

Precisely at three o'clock, the company, commanded by Capt. *Manroe*, appeared at the house of the Rev. Mr. *Clark*, and from thence escorted his Excellency the Governor, and a large number of gentlemen in the ministry, and other gentlemen of character, to the meeting house, to attend divine service.

As the company, with the procession, were marching to the house of GOD, *thirteen cannon* were discharged, in memory of the wisdom, firmness and patriotism of the *thirteen colonies*, in declaring themselves *free, sovereign and independent states*, and consolidating their union and strength into one body for glory and defence, as a nation, by articles of a confederation, founded in principles of wisdom and equity, virtue and liberty, supported by the experience of ages, and approving itself to the common sense of mankind.

In the house of divine worship, prayers and thanksgivings were devoutly addressed to that God who hath been with his people in distress, who has carried them thro', and who, alone, is to be exalted in their salvation ;
and

and an excellent and well adapted sermon, preached by the Rev. Mr. *Adams*, of *Lunenburg*. to a very crowded and attentive audience, from Gen. 50. 20 *But as for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it for good, &c.* The exercise was closed with a psalm and an anthem, pertinent to the joyful occasion.

After divine service, the procession was escorted back to the Rev. Mr. *Clark's*, by the company in arms, and three volleys fired, as a salute to his *Excellency* and the other gentlemen of the procession.

The military company then returned to the place of parade, *when thirteen cannon* were discharged, to celebrate the glory of victory and the joy of peace, to the *Thirteen United States of America*, now delivered from the calamities of war, restored to the blessings of peace, and established in their freedom, independence and sovereignty, as States and a Nation.

The rejoicings of the day were closed with a parting salute of three volleys, by the company in arms; and the discharge of a cannon, and the striking of the flag at the setting of the sun.
