

A

SERMON

ON THE DEATH OF THE

HON. WILLIAM PATERSON, Esq. L.L.D.

ONE OF THE

ASSOCIATE JUSTICES

OF THE

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES,

**WHO DIED ON THE NINTH OF SEPTEMBER, EIGHTEEN
HUNDRED AND SIX, IN THE SIXTY-FIRST
YEAR OF HIS AGE :**

**PREACHED IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
BRUNSWICK, (NEW JERSEY) ON THE TWENTY
FIRST DAY OF SEPTEMBER.**

**BY THE REVEREND JOSEPH CLARK, A. M.
MINISTER OF SAID CHURCH.**

**" Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright:
" For the end of that man is peace." — Ps. xxxvii. 37.**

NEW BRUNSWICK :

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1806.



RESOLVED, That the thanks of this Board be presented to the Rev. Mr. Clark, for his well adapted discourse, preached on the death of the Honourable Judge Paterson—and that he be requested to furnish a copy thereof for publication.

Extract from the minutes of the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church, in New-Brunswick, Sept. 22, 1806.

JOHN NEILSON, *Clerk.*

A
SERMON.

2. SAMUEL, III. 38.

“*And the king said unto his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?*”

THE loss of men, truly great, has ever been considered, in all countries, a public calamity. When such men fall, a country is called to mourn!

An occasion of this kind drew from the pious king David the words before us.

Abner, the son of Ner, had been commander in chief of the armies of Saul; a man of an enlarged mind, possessing, in a high degree, the talents of a great military commander; strongly attached to the interests of his country, and faithful to his sovereign.

Saul was now dead; his son, a weak prince, early discovered that he possessed not talents equal to the task of governing;

the affairs of the house of Saul were tottering, and the hearts of the men of Israel were drawing towards David.

In this state of things Abner became fully sensible that, to continue any longer the struggle in favour of Saul's house, was vain:—that the good of the country required, that the whole tribes should be united under David, whom he perceived the Lord had chosen to be king over his people Israel. A personal affront from Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, determined him to hasten an event which he saw to be of so much importance to the peace and welfare of his country. He accordingly repaired to king David, communicated to him his views, and pledged himself to do all in his power to bring about a union of the tribes, and to establish the kingdom in David's hands. The interview resulted in a manner most agreeable to his benevolent views. He took his leave of the king, and was just set out to execute with patriotick ardor, the generous enterprise in which he was engaged, when Joab, the chief captain in the armies of David, returned from pursuing an hostile troop.

Joab was informed of the interview;—was told that Abner had been entertained

by the king in the most friendly manner, and was gone away in peace. Burning with jealousy in the view of such a rival, and stung with rage on account of the death of his brother Asahel, who had fallen in battle by the hands of Abner, Joab immediately dispatched messengers, and brought back Abner to the city, where, in the most base and treacherous manner, he thrust him through with the sword that he died!

The whole of this base and inhuman business had been transacted without the king's knowledge. But when it came to the ears of David, he was affected with the deepest grief. He put on the garments of mourning, and commanded all his servants and all the people to mourn for Abner. As a mourner he followed the bier; and at the grave he wept and lamented over him, as did all the people. "And the king said unto his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?"

From the language here used it is manifest that, the king considered the fall of Abner as a loss to the nation; and that, on this account, as well as from the respect he had for the character of the deceased, he wept and lamented over him.

The words before us are not chosen on this occasion, with any view to a comparison of the character of our deceased friend, with his alluded to in the text; but as a declaration of the high importance truly great men are to their country; and the great loss their country sustains, when such men are removed.

Treating the subject in this view, I shall consider,

I. What constitutes the truly great man.

II. The high importance of such men to their country.

I. I shall consider what constitutes the *truly great man*.

Certain it is that, neither wealth, nor rank, nor titles, nor splendid equipage, can confer true greatness. Nor can he ever merit the noble distinction who, through the lust of a boundless ambition, disturbs the peace of the world; deluges countries in blood; robs weaker nations of their independence, and renders them tributary to an insatiable avarice. Well were it for the world, could the memory of such greatness for ever rot! and its footsteps be never more found amongst the dwellings of men!

The truly great are indeed rare characters in every country; which makes *their deaths* the more a cause of lamentation! To be *truly great*, men must possess great natural talents, talents that are solid, and suited to advance the best interests of mankind;----a strong comprehensive understanding----a sound judgment---a firmness of purpose---a mind, elevated by noble dignified views---a prudence in conduct; or a natural facility in accommodating to the occasion, and improving times and circumstances to the best purposes; and a majesty mingled with mildness, that both inspires veneration and creates esteem.

These natural talents must also be improved by literature and science.

On this foundation, laid by nature and improved by science, must be erected the moral and Christian virtues, to direct and adorn the whole----a profound veneration of the majesty of heaven and earth!----a reverence for his authority, institutions and laws----a deep respect for the august tribunal of heaven, where all characters and every deed done in the body shall be finally tried----a rejoicing in the divine government; a dependence on the divine aid; a sincere regard to the divine glory in every

