

AN

**ORATION,**

DELIVERED IN

**NEWBURYPORT,**

ON THE FIFTY-FOURTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE DECLARATION OF

**AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.**

“Sperat infestis, metuit secundis  
Alteram sortem bene preparatum  
Pectus,”—*Horace.*

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BY WILLIAM S. ALLEN.

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**NEWBURYPORT :**

PRINTED AT THE HERALD OFFICE.

1830.

*AT a meeting of Subscribers to Mr. Allen's Oration ; Doct. J.  
ATKINSON, Chairman.*

**VOTED ;** that *Stephen W. Marston, Esq. Hon. Ebenezer Mosely* and *Doct. John Atkinson* be a committee to wait on *William S. Allen, Esq.* and request a copy of his Oration delivered, on the 5th inst., for the press.

**July, 1830.**

**J. STONE, Jr. Secretary.**

## ORATION.

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FELLOW-CITIZENS :

WE come, on this day, to commemorate one of those great epochs, in the history of our race, which is distinguished by events, that, not simply fixed the fortunes of a nation but, gave an impulse to society itself. And, while those fortunes were no less glorious than that impulse was beneficial, to us and to future generations has been committed the solemn trust of cherishing the spirit, that shall quicken that impulse and preserve those fortunes. Hence, in the commemoration of such a period, may equally join the friend of man and lover of his country. Hence again, to its commemoration, however suited the expression of that sensibility, which quickens into newer vigor, at those grateful notes, pealed forth from the stirring anthem, the joyous bell or deep voiced cannon, no less suited is a disposition to those reflections, that disdain not a calm and faithful examination of our actual condition and prospects.

On an occasion, of such moment, were it even novel, called, as I am, to aid in its solemnities, I should despair of presenting an unappropriated offering, worthy of its grandeur and importance. Standing then, as I do, at an altar, sweet with the repeated sacrifices of piety and patriotism; on a day, that has called forth, among you, the loftiest energies of those accomplished minds, which have shed an enduring lustre on this, the home of their nativity or adoption, you will surely pardon, in me, a failure to challenge your admiration by any unwonted boldness of discussion—any new embellishment of manner.

The language of passion indeed, so simple, when true, has, on these occasions, been too far exhausted to admit of new varieties of expression; the themes most appropriate;—the history and glory of our country, its trials and successes;—are tales thrice told, which, having fatigued the ingenuity of thousands, leave to him, who now takes up the story, the subordinate merit, to be derived from placing, in new positions, subjects of former enquiry and contemplation. I shall therefore anticipate your kindest indulgence, on this occasion.

The day, while it directly and forcibly reminds of that act, which resulted in our country's sovereignty and independence, not unnaturally leads the mind further back to the trials, toils and triumphs of the fathers of that country, whose spirit and principles share in the glory, conferred upon that act; nor feebly suggests whatever bears relation to that country's freedom and security now and hereafter.

As good is educed from evil, to religious intolerance the people of this country and the world owe not a little :—the blessings or example of equal rights, free constitutions and popular governments. When the fires of Smithfield were extinguished, had persecution thrown down her brand and put off her armor ; had she been content with assailing non-conformity by weapons, less sharp than bonds and confiscation, where now is extended one united republic, might have been witnessed clusters of petty sovereignties, existing only for mutual annoyance, or governments cramped by colonial subjection. But Providence had designs that, in the constitution of things, could be effected only by instruments of violence and injustice. The work went bravely on. Civil disabilities and penal exactions degraded and oppressed thousands among the purest and firmest of those, who were resolved to worship God, according to the dictates of their consciences, unawed by the terrors and unseduced by the blandishments of civil or spiritual power. Patriotism may say: “Where Liberty is, there is my country;” Piety would say: “Where God is, there is my home”! and so thought and acted the fathers of New England. Freedom to worship their Maker in the mode approved to their consciences, from the teachings of Inspiration, untrammelled by any form, untaxed by any ceremonial, not of their own choice, was the ardent and uncontrollable aspiration of their bosoms. That they were extreme in their views of the government and discipline, proper or expedient to the Christian Church ; that many of their scruples were fastidious and apprehensions idle, may indeed be true ; but errors not vital, as such must by the enlightened conscience, be held to be, deserved not death, bonds or confiscation. These, however, were doctrines not in harmony with the views of an age, which had not shaken off the load of intolerance ; and the world has witnessed the result in the banishment of the persecuted and conscientious, in the face of opposition and amid threats of punishment, from the homes of their childhood, and the graves of their kindred.

Here, though, in their first public act, in that original and immortal compact ;—in which may be discerned the germ of our happy constitutions ;—they fully acknowledged the authority of the King ; yet their very situation, the acts to which they were constantly impelled, the freedom in which they held their faith and exercised their worship ; all conspired to give them a sense of liberty and independence, which naturally tended to weaken the force of prior obligations, to a sovereignty, removed by distance and averse to their cause. In truth, from their first arrival, loyalty with them was a word of new signification. Here they found a soil fit for the expansion of those principles, which were cramped at home ; and the theory of English liberty was maintained in its fullest vigor both in practice and speculation.—With them, taxation and representation were strictly corresponding rights and duties ; and the privileges, secured to the charter governments, vested immunities beyond the control of arbitrary power. In the avowal and maintenance of such principles, is it surprizing that the entire history of the colonies, from the time they emerged into consequence, as political socie-

ties, to the termination of the war, which secured our independence, presents one long, hard struggle between the crown and its subjects?

Not fifteen years after the settlement of Plymouth, tidings arriving that a change was meditated in the mode of their government, the colony unanimously resolved that they would “*defend* their lawful possessions.”

At no later date, the same colony, followed afterwards by all the others, in a spirit equally independent, declared, in their general assembly, which was strictly democratic, that no act should be imposed upon them, in their own strong language, “at present or to come, but such as has or shall be enacted by consent of the body of freemen or their representatives legally assembled; which is according to the free liberties of the free-born people of England.”

Soon after the restoration, commissioners having been appointed, by the parent government, with full judicial powers, throughout New England, on the first exercise of their commission, a declaration was drawn up by the general assembly of Massachusetts, and published to the people, at the sound of the trumpet, in which they denied their authority, and condemned their procedures. And afterwards, when process was issued against the charter of Massachusetts, as being deemed most refractory, the King having offered milder terms, on condition that the colony should submit her charter to his revisal, her representatives declared that “if die they must, they would not die by their own hands.”

Is it wonderful that, when writhing under the tyranny of Andrus, the indignation of such men should have burst forth at once, on the mere rumor that the Prince of Orange was in England; that, in the streets of Boston, they should have gathered in arms and seized on the tyrant and his myrmidons as “public robbers!”

How resolved were the colonies to enjoy their liberties, if not to shake off their dependence will appear from numerous contemporary declarations.

Lord Clarendon, referring to New England, in his own time, said “they were already hardened into republics.” And this truth was felt by Charles the II. who resolved, as he said, to “reduce them to a more palpable dependence.” No less is it verified by another,\* with every facility of observation, who, adverting to the general belief, in the mother country, that New England meant to abjure her allegiance, says “this objection one meets with from persons of all conditions and qualities.”

The jealousy here disclosed, united to the more powerful avarice of trade, led to those restrictive measures, which, contrary to many recent theories, long before the acts, that ushered in the Revolution, not merely occasioned, to the colonies, some embarrassment, but induced direct and absolute oppression.

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\* M. J. Dummer, agent for Massachusetts, early in the reign of George I.

In proof of this might be cited the various acts, regulating the trade, navigation and manufactures of the colonies, all intended to remind them of their subjection, and confer a monopoly on the merchants, tradesmen, and manufacturers of the mother country; whose clamors against the colonies were always followed by additional bonds on their victims.

That the colonies resisted these acts, as invasions of their liberties; that they chafed in their fetters, or trampled them in the dust, is only further evidence of that determined spirit of liberty by which they were always animated.

Well of such men, as of their successors, might the great Chatham have confessed; "For myself I must avow and declare that, in all my reading and observation, for solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity and wisdom of conclusion, no nation or body of men can stand in preference" to them. Worthy indeed to be the sires of the Adams's, Otis's and Quincy's, who quickened the flame of liberty through half the continent; and some of whom, mournfully to their country, but gloriously for themselves, expired in its blaze!

A study of their early history forcibly illustrates this freedom of sentiment and action; it shows that encroachments were resisted as well in our weakness as our strength; and may serve to inspire their descendants with reverence and admiration of those noble spirits, from whom they derive a birth more illustrious than ever gleamed from the scutcheons of titled wealth or power.

Nor, on this day even, should the appeal be disallowed, at a time when a temper of hostility, not confined to foreign sections of our country, is manifested toward New England; when her history is distorted; her manners derided, her principles belied. It is the duty of every son, true to the interests of that home, where he believes the noblest institutions of his country are supported in the purest spirit of liberty and humanity, to see to it that her character and history are not left without defence; that to us does not attach the reproach of despising good, or clinging to ill, examples; that the same spirit, which inflamed our fathers to resist aggression from abroad, animates us also to repel those encroachments, that would bring us into bondage at home.

Of the harsh and oppressive measures that hurried on the Revolution, and of that mighty event, who, that has not treasured every memorial! Who, that has not scanned every line of the shifting picture; now gleaming with sunshine, now clouded with storms and agitated by tempests; now radiating hope, now sullen with despair!

It was a bold declaration, that which announced to mankind that these American States were, and of right ought to be, free and independent! and bold men were they who fixed their names to this defiance of power! The merits of this Declaration need not here be dwelt upon. As a forcible enumeration of the grievances to which the colonies were subjected; and as a solemn appeal to the judgment of nations and the will of heaven, it is a composition wonderfully touching and powerful. The happy

use of the materials, on all sides abundant, is no less admirable; and has produced an exact expression of the sentiment, temper and language of the times.

The Revolution, that followed, was characterized by all that is serious, lofty and ennobling in character; by the warmest effusions of patriotism, the sincerest aspirations of piety; a self-sacrificing surrender of all that is mean, selfish and aggrandizing in our natures. How deep and broad the contrast with that theatrical display, in a country, thank heaven! far distant from our own, which, hugging the phantom of Reform, resounded with the shouts of a rabble, led on by the mummers of licentiousness, and polluted itself with the doings of fiends, in the shape of men! On that country seemed, for a time, to be poured out the vials of Heaven's hottest wrath. Unbridled vanity, ferocity and lust, held uncontrolled dominion; while the fairest fruits of virtue, piety and religion; of whatever embellishes, whatever sustains society and the human character, were utterly swept away. For a time, almost without a figure, France presented an open hell, into which the nations might look to see the torments of the damned before their time!

*Centauri in foribus stabulant, Scyllæque biformes,  
Et centum geminus Briareus, ac bellua Lernæ  
Horrendum stridens, flammisque armata Chimæra,  
Gorgones, Harpyæque!*

To maintain that a revolution so destructive and so awful; ending, as did that revolution, in the hardest despotism, that ever paralysed the will of a people; to say that it was salutary in any tendency, near or remote, seems almost a perversion of language. But yet how often are we told that such awful and violent convulsions are necessary to the progress of the world?—How often are they likened to the warfare of the elements, when from thunder and from tempest, issues the rainbow of joy; that purification of the air, that refreshment of the earth, so vital to our being! The analogy is imperfect. To sustain it, the lightnings of heaven should not merely flash in the firmament and send a lurid glare over the storm; they should come, as they descended upon the slime of the Cities of the Plain; uproot the foundations of the earth, and whelm, in one common ruin, all the works of Art, of Science and of Time!

This disposition to look forward to revolution, as the only remedy for misrule; to admire the workings of those turbulent and fiery passions, that distract, confound and overwhelm a whole people—to imagine that the improvement to result depends on the extent of the carnage and the ruin—argues a ferocious spirit; more often perhaps a narrow, perverse, or blinded understanding. It is a disposition too commonly cherished among ourselves; and too commonly fostered by those, who assume to engross the formation of the general sentiment. But it is one that deserves to be discouraged by every enlightened and benevolent mind. He, who studies intently the causes that induced the revolution here; and duly appreciates the relation, that existed between the parent country and her colonies, will be the last to nurture or commend a temper, which is disposed, rather, than bear the ills we have, to fly to those we know not of.

Such was not the temper, that influenced the movers of our revolution. They felt, it was no light thing to dissolve the connexion between a sovereignty and its subjects. They would not accept as pretexts or apologies of those superficial, partial or momentary evils; those petulant disgusts or trifling apprehensions; that hurry only into abuse, licentiousness and violence. Sensible, therefore, that, while acting from causes of a deep and aggravated nature, there was, in their course, something to defend;—that, on them, was the burden of proof;—they were prepared to exhibit to the world a series of aggressions, that denied and set at nought the fundamental principles of good government; and the rights, which their fathers always enjoyed and always claimed. They felt bound to show that the question at issue was set forth in terms too plain to be misapprehended; and that the difference was reconcilable only by appeal to arms.

Thus, though, from causes purely natural, held by a tie of feeble texture, which was hourly relaxing, our fathers, to justify the rupture, still felt bound to show, that this tie was studiously weakened, on the part of the mother country, by the most unprovoked and unnatural aggressions. And this it is that shall ever be discerned and admired by the lovers of eternal truth and justice; however much distorted in the declamation of mere demagogues and partizans.

In the recognition of this same firm, yet forbearing temper, should all our civil relations be sustained; nor should our speculations, on this day, be devoid of that calm and reflective, yet independent, spirit, which we hold as a birthright and should ever cherish with respect.

In this spirit then may we venture to ask ourselves, in passing to a view of those indications, which invite our attention in more recent events, if, from some of these, may not be inferred a certain weakness and pliancy of principle, that, wearing the guise of mildness and liberality, permits, encourages and even promotes, that licentiousness of sentiment and manners, so threatening to our national security and happiness; a disposition to make sordid and selfish gratifications the end of our pursuits, that is disturbed only by what distinctly clashes with our self-interest; a dread of sacrificing present enjoyments, in support of cardinal truths and in the cause of humanity and justice; all speciously veiled under that love of excellence in speculation which is perfectly consistent with a blindness to it in practice? Are we not too fond of broaching hollow theories and declamatory professions; nourishing a delusion often that we love, as much, the essence, as, the forms of liberty; yet, by artful sophisms, by moral anodynes, blunting our perceptions to acts of injustice and inhumanity; of gross violations of the spirit of our republican institutions.

Is not this witnessed, in society, by the lowness of our views; in the practical substitution, as the aim of our exertions, of temporal enjoyments; the comforts of wealth and the rewards of ambition, for the pleasures of intellect, the delights of virtue, and the consolations of duty? Is it not witnessed, in legislation, by the absence often of lofty and generous sentiment—of views



of enlarged policy ; in sectional and party prejudice ; in appeals to expediency and present quiet ; in timid and temporary retreats, resorts and evasions. Is it not witnessed somewhat in our coldness to the exertions of benevolence and philanthropy, when pursued with boldness, distinctness and perseverance ; to the feebleness of our response to the voice of justice and truth ; in the complacency, with which we eye the inroads of vice, the prevalence of error, the persecution of virtue ?

This nation has long proudly boasted of its entire freedom and independence ; and the descendants of the pilgrims may boast of a virtue, which they as a body, have never sullied. But can we conscientiously join all in this tribute, when, turning to the South and the West, we look for a moment on that portentous cloud, which threatens to overshadow one half this hemisphere, and, in no long time, to burst, in fire and blood, on the fair face of our country. I mean not now to reiterate those denunciations—so many thousand times repeated till the ears of christian Europe tingled with the alarm—of the horrors and abominations of that traffic, in which human lives and happiness ; and immortal souls, are bartered for gold and silver ; neither do I mean to dwell on the awful and ruinous consequences, to be apprehended from the continuance or extension of slavery in this country. It is a theme, which, on this day, is more directly presented and more fully urged than is consistent with my present purpose. I simply wish to fix your attention one moment on slavery in this country, to recall that solemn act of our assembled representatives, in the capital of the nation, when it was resolved, and that resolve was deliberately carried into law, that slavery, with all its miseries of bondage ; all its horrors of extension, multiplication and perpetuity, should be fastened on the territories beyond the Mississippi. Day after day did the halls of Congress resound with the declamations of those misnamed patriots, who, by every craft of sophistry, labored to extend and eternize the heaviest curse, that ever befel a nation ! Day after day, arose too the voices of those real lovers of their country, who would not temporize away her precious stake in the preservation of principle and the perpetuity of liberty ; who would not throw down her image in mockery to the dust, and barter, for the interests of an hour, the welfare of an age, and our character forever. But the result is known. The great Mississippi is now no barrier to the pestilence that walketh in darkness, as at noon-day ; the plague-spot is spreading from the Atlantic to the Pacific ; and soon the sun, at his rising and his going down, will look sadly on the broadest blot that darkens humanity on the surface of the globe !

And now shall I be told of the stedfast principle of our country ; shall it be proclaimed that the South and the West are eager to rid themselves of this evil ? I heed it not. If they make such professions, those professions are not pure. They feel it not, like men, to be a scourge ; they feel it not, like patriots, to be a shame ; they fear it not, like Christians, to be a sin !

But here, if you see no evidence of a prostration of principle at the feet of interest and passion, let me turn your attention to another and more recent solemn act, where principles are assumed, which I will not trust myself to depict. You have all heard of a nation of aboriginal inhabitants—the native proprietors of their soil—who were living, or, without molestation, might have lived in comfort, prosperity and happiness;—in the cultivation of their lands, the melioration of their society and the improvement of their government. They were growing—incontestably growing, in the best arts of civilized and polished life. They owned the land, on which they trod; its boundaries were defined, and its charter was from God. They never became, by their own assent, subject to any control, save of their own ordaining; and they never ordained that the whites should hold dominion in their soil.

Over this foreign nation—I have cited one only from the number—a bordering State, without color of right or law, extended their jurisdiction, subjecting it to obligations, in imposing which that nation had no voice. Some of those obligations were charged with a most oppressive burden; and breathed the worst spirit of injustice and inhumanity. That nation laid its grievances at the feet of a sovereignty superior to that State; a sovereignty, with which, it had joined hand in hand, in more than fifty treaties; and what was the reply? Will it be believed that it was a resignation and abandonment of this feeble and inoffensive people to the mercy of that State; an abandonment, in defiance of fifty compacts of solemn import and most binding obligation; in contempt of the laws, which hold nations and societies together!

So it *was*—with truth may I say—so it *is*; for the abomination of desolation is now pouring out. A whole people must either be sacrificed in their present homes; or depart—the aged and infirm, the tender and the young—to be dragged, hundreds of leagues, to a wretched soil, yet to be broken up by severe toils and disheartening exertion; to encounter the perils of an untried climate; there to linger out a miserable existence, in poverty and debasement. To conceive of the horrors and extent of this calamity, suppose, for one moment, that one of the horrible alternatives offered to the population of this fair and flourishing county, were removal to new and uncultured abodes beyond the Mississippi. Reflect upon the miseries of leaving behind all that the heart holds dear—the comforts, delights and enjoyments of what they had always called their home;—surrounded by all those fond associations, belonging to the sports of childhood, the pursuits of manly years, the reflections of old age and the graves of kindred! Who does not shudder at the contemplation of a fate so dreadful!

The sophistry, that blinds the conscience, was busy in the justification of this measure. It was said to be expedient that this should be done; that it was strange and unexampled that one nation should exist within another; that it was very inconvenient, very embarrassing. I want words fitly to stigmatize such reasoning! It is that of all wholesale robbers, from the beginning of Time. The partitioning powers felt embarrassed, because Poland was entire. The Revolutionists in France

were embarrassed by the proximity of the Helvetic Union; and embarrassed by the liberties of Belgium and Venice, forthwith disburdened those powers of immunities so trifling!

Have the actors in this transaction so far lost sight of its enormity, as to imagine that, though now the spirit of this country may not denounce or rebuke it, history and after time will be silent? Can they hope for impunity from foreign nations; or suppose the world will acquiesce in this outrage on the liberties of man! We trust all are not lost to these sensibilities; and that some redeeming spirit will atone for a disgrace so ignominious to the reputation of a free people.

The period of this transaction not unnaturally suggests other acts of the same administration, under which this transpired, which may illustrate our position.

Will you bear with me, while I advert to the character of that administration, now displaced by its successor, and ask with me, where is to be found, in our national annals, a more single eyed regard to the dignity and interests of this country; a more considerate, watchful, and statesman like course of action? When there was less occasion for censure or complaint? But against that administration what elements of resistance were not arrayed! resolved, in its own daring language, to "put down that administration, though pure as the angels, that stand at the right hand of God"! Shall we rejoice in the result, that elevated him, who glories in wearing the frontlet of *reform*? REFORM;—it is a word of cheerful meaning; almost invariably of magic influence. Reform and revolution are popular epithets, which, though real patriots may sometimes use, spurious patriots do not always spurn. But do I see reform in a multitude of perversely discriminated removals from office, under the misused principle of rotation? Do I hear it in the exclamation that the sovereign will "reward *his* friends and punish *his* enemies?" Must I call that, reform, which continues and even creates offices for the gratification of a man or a party, and not for the benefit of the people? Must I countenance so great a breach of every liberty, breathed from the great charter of our rights and glory in the act as a measure of good to my country; and shall I, without a murmur, submit to a system, that creates and organizes bands of office seekers, often least fitted for the offices they seek; with whom country means office, patriotism means pay; eager and ready to foment strife at every defeat in their projects? I cannot disguise my sentiments; and will not withhold their expression; the policy is pregnant with injustice; with present mischief and with final ruin.

The indications, I have pointed out, seem to me visible also in that denial, or distrust of fundamental principles, which it should be our pride to venerate and cherish.

The national judiciary is assailed in certain sections, with a directness and vehemence, that denotes the deadliest animosity. That, which has been aptly termed the "sheet anchor of our constitution"; the final, the most rational and practicable, resort, for the settlement of differences between sovereignties, like ours, has been branded with ignominy, as a foul engine of persecution

and oppression. A fresh doctrine—unauthorized by the constitution; unknown to our theory of government; the doctrine of State Conventions is assiduously taught, with a boldness and zeal that must tend to consequences the most fatal and most deplorable.

Again, another doctrine;—more noxious still;—which has been called treason in a colder clime; receives the sanction of distinguished authority in the same section; the doctrine that “it is time to calculate the value of this Union.” Sentiments like these, from far weightier cause, once suspected here, have consigned, almost to infamy, some of the brightest names, on the page of our history; and shall we rest unmoved now? Unmoved! Alas, how much farther can recreancy go! Are there not those, among ourselves, in New England; among those even who loudest proclaim the purity of their patriotism; are there not those, who toil to invent matters of excuse and justification, for those who, in preaching up treason, fail not to load with reprobation, the character and history of New England? And in doing this, to what base instruments, to what foul arts; will they not descend! When, in execution of their purpose, have they not discharged their venom, on those sons of New England, who are the support and glory of their home! And where, in the calumnies of the South, will you find a blacker spirit, than darkens the libels of the North?

Witness the trials, encountered by the noble champion of our Constitution, in his efforts to lay the foul spirit of anarchy and misrule. He, who towers so far above his fellows; in profoundness of intellect, in majesty of eloquence, unmatched; who has explored, to the bottom, the foundations; and traced, with unerring eye, every line of division, in the structure of our government; who has placed his broad shoulders against its walls and buttresses with the strength, but not the purpose, of the mighty man of old; to sustain and not to overthrow; he is indeed “a broad and shining mark”! But faction will in vain essay to penetrate the mail that guards his honor; in vain may she hope to tie him, hair by hair to the ground, where there is none first to lay him prostrate!

Nor is WEBSTER exposed, alone, to buffet this storm of abuse and calumny. Another, shining in his own sphere, with a lustre, rivalling that of his kindred sufferer; distinguished for the breadth of an intellect, fraught with stores of rich and fruitful information; who showed, in boyhood, the maturity of riper years, and, having exhausted the means of liberal learning at home, applied to the resources, offered by foreign lands, and there

—————“drew the inspiring breath of ancient arts  
 —————And trod the sacred walks,  
 Where, at each step, imagination burns!”

returning with the same love of liberty, the same just views of social order, by which he was ever animated and informed; who has, with a pure ambition, devoted his powers to the service of his country; and, having contributed to give her a name in letters, now labors to diffuse her reputation in policy; he, also, has suffered his full measure of reprobation, from that party malevo-

lence, which spares not that genius and those virtues, in **EVERETT**, by which itself was never spared.

In thus referring to circumstances, showing the mischief and malignancy of that party spirit, which disfigures the times, I must not be accused of a desire to foment needless jealousies between brethren; least of all shall I be rebuked for chastising that craven temper, which, to propitiate a foreign section of a country, degrades and vilifies its own. No section of this country is bound to stand with folded arms, and witness the destruction of its interests and mutilation of its character, without a murmur of remonstrance; without expressing at least a sense of the injury. Nor ought we without scorn and indignation, to regard that libeller, who would strike his fangs into the bosom, that has warmed him; and cover with pollution the pillars, that sustain and ornament our character.

Again, in alluding to an event, that has excited a neighboring State of great magnitude and populousness, I am aware, that I venture on a theme of some delicacy, and shall observe becoming circumspection. That event;—the strange and sudden disappearance of a citizen, under the protection of our laws;—it is not wonderful, if any virtue were yet left among us, occasioned a sensation of alarm, and excited a spirit of enquiry. That, on the one hand, these elements of our nature and habits;—a horror at the suspicion of murder, cloaked in mystery; and a shock at the blow inflicted on the freedom of our institutions—have, by designing men, been perverted to party purposes, is most truly and sadly undeniable; nor can it be denied, on the other, that, in many instances, too much coldness has been manifested toward even the slightest enquiry; too much careless heed given to calumnies, designed to blacken the motives of any who might venture to suggest it. For who can doubt there have been many desirous of stigmatizing an act so abhorrent, and tracing out its true causes, from the purest purposes;—the warmest philanthropy and patriotism; the truest regard for the character of our country, the majesty of its laws and the welfare of the people? And who can doubt that the distrust and coldness—the general apathy—by which their movements may have been encountered; united to that supine indifference to misrepresentations that may have maligned their character and wounded their interests, must seriously deter any disinterested efforts to maintain the cause of public morals, and the liberty of the citizen? If we expect, we may expect in vain, the boldness and self-denial of Wickliffe, Knox, or Luther, in every age; nor should we check cautious, moderate and timely interference, till the presence of such men is made necessary: for it proves that the symptoms of distemper have been fatally neglected till the crisis has come. The vast alarm fire, blazing on some rugged height, while it shows that the ordinary beacons are too faint to be of service, warn us, too, that the tempest has deepened in blackness, and the flood risen in its might. §

If, in the last case, the general apathy may be observed as indifferent to movements of beneficial tendency, it may again be observed as leading to others, whose results cannot be too much

deprecatèd. I allude to the doctrines and labors of, in the language of a popular poet, that "unsexed thing," who would demolish pillar and foundation of our political and social fabric. Without stopping to dwell upon the extraordinary benefits, conferred upon the human race, through the Christian dispensation, and the fatal consequences to society, from the general spread of unbelief, truths which have been irrefutably established by arguments drawn from reason, experience and history; all of which, however, she boldly impugns, shutting up at once the chief sources of our faith; it is enough to say that she insidiously assails institutions, coeval with our race; in all times and among all nations, supposed to enter largely into the very cement of society. That she is heard and applauded; thronged by crowds of listeners, and followed by disciples, evinces something more than mere love of excitement, or admiration of genius. With her, Vice, so far from being that "monster of hideous mien," assumes often such angel witchery, as demands the most watchful jealousy to resist her approaches, and repel her dalliance. And it is much to be apprehended that we do not fully realize or heed that habitual surrender of sentiment, that is continually multiplying the victims of error and crime.

In thus verifying indications, not of the liveliest augury, I trust I share only in that solicitude, becoming all, who are sensible to the welfare of our institutions and the prosperity of the nation. It is true, we may and ought, on this day more especially, to rejoice in those blessings of liberty and security, of progress and improvement, yet vouchsafed to us with liberal hand; but we ought surely to be no less mindful of whatever may affect the stability of those enjoyments;—of whatever may impair their only tenure—the purity of public morals. We ought surely to do this, not simply in consideration of its importance to our own welfare, believing the government of this country to be the last—most perfect experiment on political institutions; but we should do it, moreover, to preserve one great and illustrious example, to teach the world that man has the moral power to govern himself. Unhappily, thus far, the real sources of our strength, the conditions of our progress, have been misapprehended by those, who have essayed the great struggle for reform. Supposing that, with new forms and new rulers, a new spirit would come to inhabit those forms and inspire those rulers; it was often forgotten at the scene of the experiment, that the people could know liberty only in licentiousness. That great moral power—derived from the subjection of the passions and illumination of the mind,—seems to have formed no element in the calculations of most revolutionists.—The result is not surprising. France, Spain, Italy, and South America, have passed through the fires of revolt, only to be distracted by anarchy or oppressed by despotism. Let not then the disruption of those ties, that bind us together, add one more—the saddest one of all—to the dark catalogue of nations ruined through presumptuous hopes and careless fears; let not the overthrow of our institutions gladden the hearts and strengthen the hands of those enemies of human freedom, who, having watched with exultation, the prostration of hope, in the old world yearn

for its prostration in the new. Nor would this be all. The friends of liberty ; the reformers of the race ; the advocates of truth and virtue, sinking in despair, would cease to teach a freedom, too pure for the enjoyment or apprehension of the world at large.

And, in all this, we would not be supposed to intimate that prostration of principle is universal ; that the prevalence of low, selfish and narrow views is entire. We may easily discern the partial operation of principles that need only to be diffused ; we have at hand great moral engines, that require only to be multiplied and strengthened, with a clear discernment of the evil to be assailed. We have, too, many minds of lofty reach ;—open to the most generous impulses of philanthropy and patriotism ;—capable of large sacrifices for the general good ;—we have hearts, among us, expanding with the purest benevolence ; burning with a restless desire to promote the happiness of man.

We may trace a melioration of sentiment in those operations of kindness and humanity, that spring from the various institutions of religion, benevolence and economy, which adorn our times. These are the devices and improvements of a recent day. In those ancient republics, often proffered without discrimination, as models, deserving our approval and imitation, we hear no mention of these. Amid forms, sounds and colors, whose beauty bewitched the senses ; where sculpture, music, poetry and painting attained their highest exaltation ;—where eloquence breathed forth strains of unmatched power and sublimity ; the best affections ;—the most softening, the most purifying ;—were suffered to run to waste. Where, but in our day, do we find those associations of charity that look carefully into the wants of the friendless and the destitute ; those combinations of benevolence, that seek the prisoner in his cell and whisper hope to the despairing ; those bands of religion, zealous to illumine the world itself with civilization and christianity !

These mutual associations, dictated by friendship and religion nourish the truest affections and raise man in the estimation of his fellow man. The heart is touched ; and, when that is open to purifying influences, the work of human freedom and human happiness is accomplished. The intellect may be enlightened by all the lore of ancient and of modern days ; it may discourse most wisely upon theories of benevolence, and experiments in virtue ;—it may exhibit the charms of literature or unfold the mysteries of science ; yet be untouched by a single fellow feeling for the rights or interests of a fellow creature. His claims it may reject with all the arrogance of self-satisfied superiority. What is called purely literary society is far from being the most happy, or most enviable. The remark is common, that no society was ever more vexed by tyrannical passions of a petty nature, than the merely literary society of Paris, before the Revolution. And the assertion may be ventured, that most of that society would have played the part of a tyrant on a larger theatre, with all the relish of a Nero or Napoleon.

But so long as there is a difference between Intellect perverted and Intellect improved, so long must knowledge be

deemed a superior safeguard to virtue and happiness. We ought therefore, to rejoice in that zeal, now manifest in the cause of moral improvement by modes of education.

Among the interests, comprehended in this scheme of improvement, is distinguished equally by its position and importance, the cultivation of the female mind. That sex, naturally endowed with those exquisite susceptibilities, that fit her to receive, from the most diversified passages of our being, whatever may minister to our delight or consolation; the companion of man, the sharer of his fortunes, partner of his pleasures, and soother of his cares; if denied, by him, the facilities of wholesome intellectual and moral culture, will, instead of displaying those qualities that fit her to shine in these relations, repay the neglect in that tameness or frivolity, which, when the common character of a whole sex, is apt to stamp itself upon a whole people.

And this it does through the medium of that maternal education, which has begun to be surveyed in all its momentous consequences. When is considered, for a moment, the mighty influence, exerted by a mother on her offspring; creatures of imitation, ever ready to notice her examples; copy her manners, repeat her words, and lisp her sentiments; we need not dwell upon the importance that they, who thus insensibly instruct a whole race, should be themselves informed; informed, too, in what shall best fit them for the solemn trust of educating a free people.

Time, which hurries me from the contemplation of the various means of instruction imparted to indigence, in all its forms, and tender infancy itself, permits only a glance at another mode of education, apparently destined to exert a wide political and moral influence. I refer to those well known associations, of recent origin, and peculiar character, whose object is the general diffusion of knowledge.

That excitement and discipline of the general mind, which these societies propose, and the improvement to which they look, I may be allowed, from the position, in which I stand before you, to consider, at least in one or two detached, but, as I conceive, important points of view. The improvement here noted, consists in a heightened tone of thought and feeling, among those popular classes, which are at the foundation of our substantial strength, prosperity and glory;—in the creation or revival of a taste for mental application; in the communication of a knowledge, which shall teach them a clearer discrimination as to character, rights and duty. In a republic, it is a trite, but indefinite remark, that our greatest security is in the information of the people. In this view its application may be manifest. Who can be insensible of that general and eager anxiety, at the present day, to escape from manual employment into literature, commerce, and the ornamental arts? It is nurtured by the fondness of parents, the flattery of teachers, the indolence of society; by which every impediment of fortune, and the stronger impediments of nature, are entirely disregarded. How many are yearly pouring from mercantile desks and seminaries of



learning, to crowd into employments already overburdened!— And is not the result inevitable? Stung by disappointment, but unused to the toil, they deem a degradation, they spurn the rewards of Industry to grasp at the avails of Chance. And in what lottery are there more bright or tempting lures than the honors and emoluments of office? As chance directs the triumphs of party, so are distributed these shining rewards. They may be the rewards of honor and ability; they are sometimes the lot of that restless activity, which employs itself in low arts and petty intrigues; in forming and directing the combinations of party; in struggling for the triumph of a leader. From a body of men, with personal qualities heightened by education; whose faculties, though trained and invigorated for good, may be sharpened by necessity, for evil; with ample means in time; needy, disappointed, and therefore desperate; what may not be apprehended, as well from their want, as their ambition? They must and will foment faction, generate strife, secure elections, and divide offices. They must and will, unless resisted by those popular classes, who have been, too often, the blinded instruments of men, never actuated by a single impulse of honorable ambition. And this resistance can be effectual only through a more thorough conviction that, “party is the madness of many for the benefit of a few.” It is alone to be found in the moral power of the people. Had this moral power been present in Rome, in the age of Clodius and Catiline, that Capital would have been spared the disgrace of factions and conspiracies. The need of this power grows more and more urgent. When, than now, was ever witnessed a more eager rapacity for office; when a fiercer vehemence, a more reckless determination to reach it through the paths of tumult and faction?

But if the influence here contemplated will not operate in the manner just now supposed, it may work its way no less surely in elevating the character and increasing the esteem of the productive employments. These employments are too apt, even in this country, and at this day, to be associated with ideas of debasement; suggested sometimes by mere prejudice and pride. And they are so, because filled by those, numbers of whom have been cut off from the usual means of improving; of informing, and elevating the intellectual character. Let these means be furnished and that character changed; and the change in sentiment will be corresponding to it.

If Education, in the mode here supposed, or in those common at our higher seminaries of learning, is not moulded to avert or cure this evil, then is the state of things not a little alarming. The evil is one of great political magnitude. It has been a proximate cause of ruin to most nations, heretofore enjoying the name or forms of a republic. May the omen be averted from us!

But we have no reason to despond. The zeal for Education, we believe, is running in right channels. It does not so much foster the objects of mere taste, as those of morals and economy. It does not look merely to seminaries of rich endowment, to

schools of purely academical refinement; it is curious in something besides tints, shapes and fashions; alive, not simply to pictures, verse, stones and statues. When dilating upon the objects of taste or expounding the principles of science, it directly avows their immediate subserviency to human happiness and improvement; here and hereafter. We believe it tends to teach that purity and elevation of purpose, enlightened love of country, moderation of manners, those sober, frugal and industrious habits, which embellish, no less than sustain, a people.

*found the* We believe it will operate strongly to counteract that too common and dangerous perversion of sentiment, which, in the splendor of intellect or attainment, loses sight of a depraved principle or immoral life. What, but this, could have recommended or endured that sentiment, which has ~~been~~ a response, even at festivities, in honor of this anniversary, that "genius of Napoleon atoned for his faults"! What but this, could have reconciled us to sympathise, not merely in the strong or tender passions, breathed from the verse of Byron, but in his personal character even, and his life. What, but this, could have poured out our commiseration, over the fancied sufferings of one, whom nature, reason and education will be slow to pardon for his numerous offences against them all.

Again, we hope it may cure that mischievous corruption of taste and feeling, too often produced in the young, by intimacy with the poisonous productions of older countries, by which our own is deluged. What dissipation of mental habits, frivolity of taste and perversion of feeling, are not hazarded by repeated contact with that popular literature, in all its vile varieties;—sickly, inane, or bloated;—which, after burdening the press abroad, regularly prostitutes our own. Do the young suppose that such are the pursuits and studies, that form the useful citizen or accomplished legislator? Will the old prescribe or approve these? We trust not. Ours must be a purer standard. Let it be proclaimed that we reject weak, false and distorted sentiment, though invested with the charms of incident or language; that we endure no exhibitions of licentious art, though recommended by truth of line and harmony of coloring; by radiance of expression, grace of posture or boldness of development; that fashion unites with reason in condemning those Institutions guilty of subserviency to such an end.

In detaining you, one moment, while I call your attention to further intimations of favorable character, though of lesser moment, I cannot but advert with satisfaction to the policy of a recent administration; a policy, we trust, in harmony with the views of its successor; which fostered the Navy of our country, and an enlightened system of internal Commerce and Communication.

The Navy is a strong, as well as bright, link in the chain of our Union. It is the pride and property; its triumphs are associated with the glory; the very names even of its noble vehicles, it is hardly trifling to observe, remind us that it is the treasure; of one common country. Its members, meeting from every quarter of the confederacy; and associating in easy and enlightened

intercourse ; learn how mutually to unite and harmonize ; and, in separating, carry the spirit into general society.

Again, in a country like ours, abounding in resources, that defy exhaustion, and which, it is the work of ages to explore ; spreading through every opulent variety of sun and soil ; offering facilities, in boundless profusion, for the culture and production of all that can add to wealth and minister to enjoyment ; it is hardly wisdom, that enjoins dependence on the caprices or fluctuations of foreign lands. At home, were enterprise duly cherished, interchange between the various sections of our country would supply every want and furnish almost every luxury. As patriots, we may hope ; either in reference to union or prosperity ; that, through a judicious course of action, which shall not needlessly disturb a single calling in our country, the time may be hastened, when the intervention of a foreign market, slowly attained by a circuitous route of a thousand leagues, shall yield to a direct exchange of commodities at home. The system that tends to this, must expect, in any stage, resistance from old habits, but will be sure to outlive the clamors of prejudice and party ; surviving and flourishing to rivet us, we trust, in the bonds of a perpetual union.

Further may we admire this policy, in its zeal to open access to every portion of our country. Ready means of communication lead to that intimacy, best fitted to harmonize and identify the distant members of our republic. Multiplied facilities of posts invite and accelerate correspondences by those winged messengers of the press and pen, whose language awakens kindred emotions in hearts, divorced by space alone ; and the ample means of travel, so abundantly furnished by the skill and enterprise of the present day, are embraced by thousands, who meet, from the North and the South, the East and the West, to forget prejudice, reconcile antipathies and cherish mutual affection and respect.

With this hasty glance at a portion of the history of our country, and at certain intimations, viewed in connexion with the permanency of our union, and our own improvement and prosperity, I shall abuse your indulgence only to add that I have traced them chiefly in their moral connexions, because I believed it most important to insist upon the identity of public virtue and national prosperity. Every moral being should identify himself with his country ; and the collected body should be animated by the spirit, that we assume to cherish in the individual ; a love of truth, justice, humanity and moderation ; which sacrifices no principle, clogs no virtue, unreins no passion.

Never, on any country, opened visions more glorious than beckon us onward. To us are the means accorded of building up an empire, cemented by all the ennobling principles of our nature. Here may stretch over half a hemisphere a republic, whose march is on the high places of truth and virtue ; of justice, purity and moderation ; of all that elevates and adorns, that proudest name among the nations, a Christian State ! We ardently hope that these opportunities will not be thrown aside ; that we may not tread the blasted path of other republics, fierce,

ullen and malignant ; repudiating all virtue from ourselves and distrusting it in others.

Then, indeed, would the condition of mankind itself be most calamitous. The asylum of the brave and home of the free, turned into a den of cowardice and oppression ; the last stay, hope, and refuge of liberty, cut away ; human happiness surrounded by the clouds and tempests of misery and vice ; like night winds howling over a blasted heath ; whither would the patriot—whither the good man fly ! Would he not, in viewing the menace of such adversity, court the “last sad refuge from the storms of fate,” with the prayer upon his lips, “ere that time come, may I repose in silence, in the dust, for there alone is rest !”

But we will not indulge in melancholy forebodings. We have much to inspire us with hope ; every thing to stimulate us to effort. Every indication of decline in sentiment should rouse us to new exertions ; to labor in the work of re-exciting to generous emotion ; of quickening jealousy to the encroachments of error and vice. We trust we yet bow to the image of Freedom, not merely with blind zeal, and in heartless worship, but with a quick and perfect sense of her true loveliness and beauty. We believe our sentiments yet side with truth. Let us cherish those sentiments. They are those which have before covered us with imperishable glory, and have sustained us hitherto. They are those, which have risen, like a wall, around our institutions of government ; which have protected the people from the undue accumulations of wealth, and ascendancy of families ; which have preserved them from the curse of armed hosts. They have enabled us to baffle foreign intrigue ; to survive the shock of war and the conflicts of party. By these we stand ; in these should we trust. Trusting in these, may we always preserve our freedom, security and happiness ; gathering fresh delight in contemplating the glories of that Divinity, who may be supposed to preside over our destinies, and filled with the exalting belief that

Where'er her track the goddess roves,  
Glory pursue and generous Shame,  
The unconquerable Mind, and Freedom's holy flame!