

AN

**ORATION,**

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

INHABITANTS OF THE TOWN OF SOUTH READING  
AND ITS VICINITY,

ON THE

**FOURTH OF JULY, 1832.**

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BY **ROBERT RANTOUL, JR.**

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## ORATION.

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It is a very common remark, and I do not care with whom it originated,—it is none the less true because it is common,—that the world is governed too much. Fifty-six years ago, on the day we are met to celebrate, three millions of people, of the freest, and best governed among the inhabitants of the world, impressed notwithstanding, by their own experience, with the truth of this maxim, met together, by their delegates, whom they had authorized and empowered so to do, solemnly proclaimed to the world, that, for the future, they and their descendants would not be governed too much. Whether under all the circumstances this decision was wise, whether it can and will be carried successfully into effect, is for the present generation and for posterity to determine. The question is of universal interest, the experiment is a grand one; the eyes of all mankind are upon the actors, and anxiously awaiting the issue. If self-government in this full and fair trial of its capacities be found to fail, the hope of liberty is gone forever. If, on the other hand, it should be found able to meet that absolute necessity out of which governments grew, if it should be found competent to fulfil all those high purposes for which governments are maintained, especially if it should be found to answer the ends for which men in society have mutually surrendered some portion of their natural freedom, with less encroachment on their natural rights, at a cheaper rate and in a more satisfactory manner, by a shorter, simpler, surer and more efficient process, it is not presumptuous to foretell, that sooner or later the example will be every where imitated, and that in the progress of time, as surely

as ages roll on, the day will come when the light of liberty shall shine on all who now sit in darkness, when over all her wide spread continents and among all her widely differing races, the world shall no longer be governed too much. If this be so, my friends, if the future destinies of mankind no less than our own welfare do in a great measure hinge upon this question, it is important that we should discuss and understand it: and I do not know of any opportunity more fitting for the discussion than this anniversary, filled as it is with associations which awaken all our noblest sensibilities, and kindle into a lively ardor that affection for our common country which we all profess to feel.

All nations in all ages have set apart seasons of thanksgiving for great national blessings, and more especially days whereon patriotism might delight itself in the recollection of great national deliverances. The ancient people of God had their feast of tabernacles, their passover and their jubilee, and on those solemn occasions, when all the tribes of the land went up to pour forth their common gratitude in the temple of their common Father, grand and imposing indeed must have been the spectacle. An institution so beautiful could not fail to spring up spontaneously and under a great variety of forms, among the people of classic antiquity. The Greeks, our preceptors in matters of taste, the Romans, who, whatever we may lay to their charge in other respects, we may safely pronounce to have been models of patriotism, honored their heroes while living, and their memory when dead, and distinguished also the days and the places marked by their achievements, with triumphs, games, festivals, and other tokens of public regard and interest, which have so often been described that I will not trouble you with the repetition.

The custom is good: it is founded in natural feelings, and worthy to be perpetuated. And certainly, among the blessings which deserve thus to be commemorated, national independence ought to hold the first place, since without it no rational liberty can be enjoyed, and without liberty all other blessings are worthless. The Sabbath, which, with a slight departure from its original institution, all Christendom now holds as holy time,

was ordained to be observed by the Hebrews through all their generations, as a memorial of their deliverance from slavery—“for in that day the Lord brought thee out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage.” The Catholic church, the universal church, as it is proud to call itself, has filled its calendar with days of observation. The birth of its saints, the sufferings of its martyrs—nothing that ought to be remembered, is forgotten. It keeps high festival on every day marked by any extraordinary event in the history of its early progress. We moderns, and protestants, and on this side of the Atlantic, have but few such festivals, whether of religion or of patriotism, remaining; we should therefore be so much the more zealous to nourish and to keep alive the genuine spirit of the few that are yet left to us.

If then it be true, that the days when signal blessings have been bestowed, ought to be consecrated in after years; if it be undeniable, that of all national blessings independence is the greatest; it is manifest that beyond any event, that any nation was ever called upon to celebrate, these United States of America are emphatically called on to celebrate the birth day of their Independence, since it has secured to them a greater amount of civil and political liberty than is enjoyed by any other nation on the face of the globe. The yeomanry of New England, who fought the battles of the first campaign, the people of Massachusetts, among whom the contest originated, may rightfully claim a large share of the glory, and therefore have peculiar reason to keep alive the remembrance of the struggle by which Independence was secured. Least of all should we forget it, we, the men of Middlesex, to whom belongs so liberal a portion of the rich inheritance of our fathers' glory. The County of Middlesex is the classic ground of American history. Lexington, where was shed the blood of the first martyrs in the holy cause; Concord, where the first effectual resistance was offered; Bunker Hill, where the veterans of the mother country were first taught to suspect that skill and discipline and British valor, might buy their victories too dear; Charlestown, offered up as one great burnt sacrifice; Cambridge, the head quarters of Washington while

Boston was in the hands of the enemy ; these, to enlarge no further, these with their thousand cherished traditions, are all our own. Well may we exult as we enumerate them : these were the scenes of the first act in the bloody drama, and it is an hereditary honor of which republicans may be proud, that our fathers were the actors, that here they got them a name and a praise among the nations. Lexington, Concord, Cambridge and Bunker-Hill ! These magic names bring before us at once the whole array of patriots and sages, and recall all their eventful story, with its romantic reality. Imagination pictures the leaders, and marshals the ranks ; we are hurried back to the times that tried men's souls, and our bosoms glow with corresponding emotions. The American Revolution deserves to be commemorated by you, men of Middlesex ! on this republican jubilee. It presents itself in imposing aspects. It opens a field in which there is room to expatiate widely and yet leave the subject unexhausted. Spirit stirring reminiscences, told and written, sketches vividly portrayed and of absorbing interest, rush at once upon my recollection, and almost tempt me to indulge in the enthusiasm which the moment inspires. But while my heart swells with the grandeur of the theme, I cannot but be forcibly struck with the futility of attempting to do it justice. What part of the habitable world has not rung with the story of your father's wrongs and of their manly vindication ? In what part of the world is there strife now raging between the oppressor and the oppressed, that it is not quoted day by day, making the ears of tyrants to tingle ? From hoary age to helpless infancy, who that has ears to hear is not familiar with it ? Whose breast, of all that listen to me, is not throbbing with sensations which language is not adequate to express ; to describe which were to degrade and to abuse what cannot be described ; to analyze which were to anatomize beauty, to exhibit that lifeless whose essence is life and health. No, gentlemen, no ! It is not my part to inform your intelligence, or to heighten your emotions. All of you have heard, and some of you have seen and known and felt in your own persons, (long may these honored representatives of a race of heroes be spared to the circles they

adorn,) the sternness of resolve, the dauntless bravery, the long enduring perseverance through unmitigated suffering, the self-denying patriotism, the unalloyed devotedness, which characterized the men of seventy-six, which bore them through the fiery trial, and stamped them to be nature's noblemen. Why then, let these things speak for themselves—they need no eulogist.

To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,  
To throw a perfume on the violet,  
Were wasteful and ridiculous excess.

Old men, your meditations are eloquent beyond any thing that can be addressed to you. Young men, read the record, and then confess, that it is not any oratorical flourish, any petty artifice of rhetoric, that can add brilliancy to the lustre of your fathers' glory. Their deeds magnify them; their works praise them in the gates, and words must forever fall far short of their praise.

Passing by, therefore, the more obvious topic of discourse on this occasion, a humbler task I will undertake with alacrity—the discussion of the question, whether the American experiment of self government is likely to be a successful one—a question on whose doubtful issues hang the hopes and fears, as has been already intimated, of the friends of liberty in all quarters of the globe and throughout all coming ages. A humble task, since it furnishes little scope for ambitious declamation, and debars from the opportunity for those appeals so easily offered and always favorably received, to your national pride; but perhaps a more important service, could it be adequately performed, inasmuch as information is better than adulation, and truth of more value than flattery. To qualify ourselves, therefore, for the decision of this great question, let us consider some of the causes and some of the consequences of American Independence. The personal observation of each individual supplies him with the dear bought wisdom of experience, but history is the only teacher who can exhibit lessons for nations. In the events which history transmits, the voice of Providence seems to be addressing the rulers of the world. It seems to admonish them, in solemn and impressive tones, to profit by the severe yet voluntary warnings which

past errors, past crimes and past calamities, afford for their edification. "Be wise now, therefore, Oh ye Kings! Be instructed, ye Judges of the earth!" In America the people are the sovereigns, and in order that they may govern well, they must govern understandingly: they must recognize the causes and the consequences of great political events.

The causes of American Independence lie deep in the character of the Continent itself, in the character of the times in which it was discovered and colonized, and in the character of those who colonized it. Subsequent events tended to develop these causes, but they were operating surely though slowly, and sooner or later must have produced their effect, even though those events had never occurred. Let us dwell for a moment on each of these particulars.

The character of the times in which the discovery and settlement of the New World took place, first demands our attention. To an ordinary observer living at that period the times would not have appeared peculiarly propitious to the growth of the spirit of liberty. The fierce democracy of Athens, the unrelenting sternness of that unnatural code by which Sparta strove to eradicate all the finer feelings of humanity, and to condemn her whole male population to serve forever as an armed garrison under martial law in the midst of enemies; supported by the labors of slaves of kindred stock extorted from them at the point of the sword—both these chimerical systems had ages ago proved, equally, total failures. So it was with the lesser republics, all had proved unable to sustain themselves, oblivion had closed upon them, and the torch of Grecian liberty was extinguished forever. The grinding despotism of the privileged orders of Rome, a form of tyranny to which the despots were pleased to give the name of a republic, had never permitted any real liberty, save to the patricians liberty to oppress. It trampled the mass of the people beneath its feet, as vessels formed of a different clay and ordained to dishonor. For them its only provision was hereditary, intolerable, hopeless servitude. It consigned them, without prospect of relief or mitigation, to eternal poverty and misery at home, and for all this they were

consoled by the glory of the Roman name abroad. It made them general robbers, but the booty fell to the share of the leaders of the gang. From a den of famished wolves prowling for prey, it made the seven hills the head quarters whence its victorious bands issued resistless to plunder and to conquest, and finally the storhouse of the accumulated spoils of the whole known world, civilized and barbarian. Throughout the course of this unparalleled career its essential features remained the same. The kings were driven out because Roman ears would no longer endure the name of king: but a double annual monarchy succeeded, and rods and axes, no idle ceremony, were borne before the consuls. It was a great accession to the already vastly predominating weight of the oligarchy in the state, when from year to year they could deposit this enormous executive power in what hands they pleased. They had swept away the only check which could stand in the way of their projects of aggrandizement, an hereditary chief holding office by a tenure independent of their will. They had gained an exorbitant increase of strength, and the people for compensation had got rid of an odious word. Thenceforth the government was more purely aristocratic than ever, and Roman patriotism, still stronger than death, was more truly what party spirit in other countries has been well said to be, "the madness of the many for the benefit of the few." The government was the military government of hereditary captains, over starved, unpaid and despised soldiers; and this government the permanent council of war which directed its operations, the haughty senators, dignified with the name of a Republic; and the moderns, because they had no other name to bestow upon it, ratified the title. When the power passed from the hands of the Patricians, exhausted with intestine dissensions, and centred in the person of a successful commander, liberty lost nothing by the change. The Republic, if so it must be styled, was struck out of the list of Republics by the union of all powers under one absolute head: but the forms of republicanism, which, so far as the rights of the unprivileged people were concerned, had never been any thing but forms, were sacredly preserved—and the people certainly

lost none of the substance of freedom when their slavery was transferred from many masters to one. The iron rule of the emperors, indeed, while it bore more heavily upon the unshackled spirits of the patricians, was on many accounts less galling to the subject people, and brought them, at least for several centuries, some alleviation of their burthens. The magnificent fabric of the Empire was doomed also to have an end. It fell into the hands of bad men, and was administered with indescribable profligacy and atrocity. It gradually lost the affections, ceased to command the respect, and at last relinquished its hold on the fears of the subject nations. Its decay impaired its vital energy, its corruptions hung like a millstone about its neck, it tottered long, and at last a vigorous external impulse precipitated it in ruins. None lamented its fall. It sunk loaded with the curses of millions, and was overwhelmed by the torrent of barbarian invasion. Out of the chaos that ensued was to be generated a prodigy more portentous than the Republic in its most victorious career, or the Empire at the height of its uncontrolled dominion. An element of power had in the mean while been growing up, advancing silently; but irresistibly, opposed to which all other influences were to be stripped of their force, and which was to subdue beneath its sway alike both the conquerors and the vanquished. Religion had never hitherto played any but a subordinate part. It had been a useful servant, but it had never pretended to act independently; much less had it attempted to dictate to the civil authority. Now, however, when the empire is dismembered and the fragments left masterless, when thrones and potentates are prostrate and so great the confusion that government cannot be constructed again out of the ordinary materials, Religion suddenly presents herself under a new aspect, as a political ruling power, not an engine in the hands of the statesman as it had always been, but as itself a power, and ready to meet the crisis; able to reconstruct the social edifice when every other power is confessedly incompetent to the task; profiting by the convulsion which confounds every other interest, peculiarly fitted to ride in the whirlwind and direct the storm. Such Religion rose in her might. Fixing her lever

upon the hopes and fears of another world, she had found the pivot which Archimedes desired—there was nothing in this world which she could not overturn. Much progress had she made before it was suspected that the noiseless, humble, unobtrusive agent, was to become an imperious, haughty, all-controlling master. But when once fairly landed in the arena, no competitor could turn her aside. She pushed forwards with gigantic strides and undeviating purpose till she was seated in majesty on the throne of the Cæsars. The development of her new character was no less appalling than unexpected. Gathering the scattered reins of empire and grasping them with a firm hand, she guided the chariot with skill and with firmness, and its course was ever onward. The Gerontochracy of the Senate of Rome was succeeded by the Gerontochracy of the Pope and his Cardinals, and they inherited from their predecessors all their passion for conquest and consolidation. The Apostle of him who was meek and lowly became the Autocrat of all Christendom. The chief of the subjects of the Prince of Peace became the instigator of the wars of Christendom. The disciple of him who said “Judge not that ye be not judged,” laid claim to infallibility, and reared the palaces and the dungeons of the holy Inquisition. The follower of him who, for an example, washed the feet of his disciples, exulted in manifesting his derision for whatever the world has of reverend, if so be it held not its patent under his seal. “The Servant of the Servants of Christ” set his foot upon the neck of kings. In his colossal greatness, however, he neglected no means of influence however trivial, and disdained not to borrow the worn out machinery of heathen superstition. The Pantheon, the temple of all the Gods, was consecrated anew as the temple of all the Saints. Where the Pontifex Maximus, the high priest of the ancient superstition, went up the steps of the Capitol to burn incense at the altar of Jove, the Pontifex Maximus, the high priest of the new religion, went up the same steps to burn incense at the same altar in honor of Jehovah. The very statue of Father Jupiter, one of the most sublime production of heathen genius, before which the pagan bowed himself in the devotion of ignorance, having

been baptized by the name of St. Peter, now receives the adoration of the ignorant devotee as the image of the chief of the Apostles. To sum up all in a word, heathen rites, festivals and notions were retained with slight disguises : the saints, with whom the heavens were repeopled, occupied the stations of the inferior deities whom they had banished ; an obscure woman of a remote province of the Roman Empire was worshipped as the mother of God, and the world was again overshadowed with practical polytheism. It did indeed seem as if the spirit of old Rome, daughter of Mars, had revisited the earth in the shape of the church militant, to exercise a more terrible domination and to sway a leaden sceptre over men's souls. The decrees of the Senate were not half so dreadful as the bulls fulminated from the conclave. The wars which ancient Rome waged against Carthage, were neither so causeless, so fierce, nor so destructive, as those in which, at the fiat of modern Rome, the best blood of Europe watered the plains of Asia. Rome seemed to have risen like the phenix from her ashes in the undiminished vigor of her pristine youth—or rather, to borrow an illustration from her own faith, more apt, as it figures the increased fear with less respect and still less affection which her second dominion inspired compared with her first, she seemed, after she had circled her brows with a tiara richer than the diadem of the Cæsars, her priestly Empire seemed to be but the ghost of the old Roman Empire sitting crowned and ghastly upon the mouldering sepulchre of her former greatness.\*

But enough and more than enough of this. The fascination of the subject has seduced me to dally with it too long. What Greece and Rome had failed to accomplish, the modern Italian Republics undertook with little better success. At the period of the discovery and settlement of America, the last of the Italian Republics were degraded and degenerate, and they have since died childless. If this representation be in any measure correct, it must be apparent that down to the time of the settlement of this continent, no successful experiment of self government had ever been exhibited, and as the other nations of the old world

\* Hobbes.

are generally considered to have been less free than those we have been discussing, it is equally apparent that all nations had been governed far too much.

I have said and I repeat it, that an ordinary observer, living at the time of which we treat, would not have supposed that time peculiarly propitious to the growth of the spirit of liberty. He would have looked back at those abortive experiments already enumerated and would have despaired of a more favorable opportunity to renew the trial.

He would have seen the Greek Republics, securing to their citizens but little practical liberty, always at war with one another, and at last falling an easy prey to Macedon, to Rome, and to the Turk. He would have seen the Roman Republic, an aristocracy, regardless of the welfare of the people in its best days, merged in the empire. He would have seen Christianity, from whose equalizing tendency and benign spirit some amelioration might have been hoped for, in the hands of a domineering hierarchy monopolizing wealth and learning and talents in the service of the church, enslaving body and soul, and lording it over the consciences of men—exemplifying emphatically the truth of the maxim, “*Corruptio optimi pessima.*” The corruption of that which is most excellent engenders evils the most monstrous. He would have seen the Republics of Italy growing up under peculiar circumstances, passing through corruption, decline and decay, apparently natural consequences of their constitution and mode of existence, and falling, one after another, under the yoke of Doges, Dukes, Grand Dukes and Marquises, if not previously arrested in their course by the interference of foreign control.

In view of all these precedents, he would have looked about him to observe the phenomena of his own times, to see whether they would afford him any grounds to reverse the decision of history. He would then perceive that whereas in all past times more of liberty had been enjoyed in smaller states than in great empires, now the universal tendency was towards aggregation and consolidation. That kingdoms which had existed for centuries were some of them incorporated, others likely soon to be incorporated, with the territories of their stronger neighbors. That

provinces which had been for many generations, substantially, almost independent sovereignties, were one after another annexed to the crown, in more than one nation, and in every instance augmenting the power of the central government. These growing monarchies, under the guidance of crafty and ambitious rulers, whenever their interests brought them into collision, propitiated one another by the sacrifice of weaker principedoms, made peace at the expense of some feeble neighbor, and threatened to parcel out Europe under a few great despotisms.

If he should then reflect that hitherto the only protection for the people from an excessive authority vested in the crown had been the resistance of the barons, naturally jealous of any encroachment on the part of their feudal superior, he would behold with dismay the feudal aristocracy divided, disheartened and broken, their ancient prerogatives discountenanced by the sovereign on the one hand and invaded by the people on the other, deprived of the power of carrying on war at pleasure, no longer exclusive possessors of the wealth of the nation, relinquishing their hold on the soil and on the cultivators of it, and fast dwindling into insignificance. All this he would have witnessed, but could he have been so far gifted with the spirit of prophecy as to enable him to foresee how soon all respect for hereditary nobility was to vanish, how totally their preponderance in the political system was to be reversed—and had he been informed moreover of the wonderful alteration that was to take place in the whole art of war, that hereafter, instead of nobles at the head of their retainers, instead of mercenaries hired for a short service, and ready to serve on the opposite side of the contest, when their term had expired, for higher pay—standing armies were to be instituted, devoted entirely to the will of the sovereign, directed by officers of his appointment, permanent, and having a constant interest in the increase of the power on which they depended; still more, had it been revealed to him that national credit, then almost unknown, was to supply the means of supporting this permanent force, without recurring to aids from the privileged orders or direct taxes upon the people, postponing for posterity the burthens of the present generation

and furnishing resources to an incredible, to an indefinite extent,—could any man I say at that time have known all this, he would have recoiled with terror from any further investigation of the future destinies of his race. He would have pronounced without hesitation that there was no power existing or to exist that could for a moment withstand a government entirely unchecked by that body in the state which had hitherto been its only effectual check, having treasures immeasurable at its command, and wielding with such tremendous energy the sword. He would have confessed in his despair that there was no relief in prospect for him, that Asiatic Despotism with unmitigated sternness was about to be visited on Europe, that all mankind were doomed to eternal slavery, or in other words, that henceforth the whole world was to be governed too much.

Had this disconsolate philanthropist then been told that the order of the Jesuits was to be established for the purpose of protecting arbitrary ecclesiastical power, and of debarring the people from that knowledge which is power, and from that inquiry which leads to knowledge; that this institution was to unite in its service vast talents and learning, a zeal and a skill, unquenchable enthusiasm, and cool, calculating policy, such as were never before combined; and that with an untiring perseverance it should penetrate and influence every where—that the Holy Inquisition should put forth its restrictive energies with tenfold fury—and that, further, a new continent should be discovered; that into that continent the Jesuits and the Inquisition should be transplanted; that the most fertile parts of that continent should be cultivated by negro slaves, purchased for that purpose in Africa; that Charles the Fifth, uniting in his person the full sovereignty of Spain, the Netherlands and the German Empire, should derive from that continent more of revenue in gold and silver than had ever been heard of since the days of Solomon—he would not have detected in any of these facts any warrant to entertain a doubt of the conclusion to which he had arrived.

There were causes however in operation which sooner or later must have produced a mighty revolution in the condition

of Europe, even though Columbus had never been born, and though the Western Continent had never been disclosed to any civilized voyager. Through the influence of the institution of Chivalry sentiments of honor and a sense of personal self-respect and independence had become prevalent ; and these generous feelings were by no means confined to the orders among whom they originated. The crusades, a series of mad enterprises, which had produced a more general transfer of property and a greater change in the relative position of different members of society than had taken place before, since the period of barbarian conquest, though they gave a fatal shock to the feudal aristocracy, yet gave birth also to that commerce which has been the parent of every thing that is valuable in modern civilization, whose blessed fruits are improved manners, comforts, arts, science, intelligence, and liberty—which has erected the stupendous structure of British greatness, and which has crowned with plenty and lined with opulence the whole western coast of the Atlantic. Commerce, springing out of the crusades, had already acquired an instrument with whose aid she was to enlarge her borders, and fearlessly traverse those unknown oceans, upon which, without it, she could not have ventured. Enterprise was already awake. The Venetians carried on a lucrative traffic in oriental products by the way of the Levant: the Portuguese were extending their maritime empire along the coasts of Africa, and discovering and colonizing the islands of the open sea. The passage of the Cape of Good Hope was soon to be accomplished, to open to them the direct path to the riches of the Indias, and to make the Islands of Spices their own. Out of the enlarged intercourse, the industry and economy which are the concomitants of commercial enterprise, a firm conviction of common interest and a liberal zeal for the common welfare formed bands of union for men of the same pursuits, and founded and organized guilds, corporations, towns and cities. These rallying points for the members of the third estate gave the new order strength and vigor and confidence. The monarchs favored them because they furnished a convenient weight to balance the hated power of their turbulent nobility. They were destined to

grow till the sons of toil and of traffic were more powerful than the sons of war, and they whose trade is production and acquisition more numerous than those whose business is destruction. Through the whole process which has been described, you may discern the infallible operation of social intercourse preparing the basis and developing the elements of general freedom. But this was not all. The introduction of the use of gunpowder was changing the entire character of war. Instead of a mere struggle of brute force and animal courage, it was to become the highest exercise of the human faculties. Every thing became the prize of skilful and rapid calculation, and just and instantaneous decision. The interests inherent in the new state of things soon came into collision with each other. The controversy assumed an imposing vastness. In the fury of its progress nation was dashed against nation, and the shock roused from its long torpor the slumbering intellect of the popular mass. Life and death, liberty and slavery, depended on the issue, and the people were alive to the momentous hazard of their situation. The vague and indefinite immensity of the rewards which success presents in prospect to the victor, the total and final annihilation of all his hopes which defeat involves, in short the desperation of the stake, make war beyond comparison the most exciting game which kings can play at. When all that we have or hope for rests on a single cast, the fear of sinking into nothing—the illimitable aspirations of ambition for the dominion and glory almost within its grasp—engross the whole soul, and quicken all its dormant energies. The irresistible attraction of this intense interest, drew to its sphere a large proportion of the talent of Europe. The passions of the leaders were wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement. Genius is nothing but strong passions working their action through the instrumentality of strong intellect. Accordingly, many brilliant constellations of genius shone successively through the troubled gloom of three stormy centuries, till at last, the master spirit, Napoleon, our age's leading star, rose, even as the sun, in dazzling splendor, but with serene majesty, out of that last and fiercest moral tempest, the French revolution.

It is then evident, that war, in its new form, directly produces and must produce genius of superior order, and more abundantly than any other profession. But indirectly also it calls into being genius of every possible variety, and puts in requisition every species of talent. So suddenly does it reverse the relative position of nations, that the statesman must constantly task his invention for the means of recovering what arms have lost, or of making the most of the advantages which arms have won. So often do the interests of belligerents come into conflict with the rights of neutrals, that the profound inquirer must discuss the law of nations, and lay down a code of morals to govern the mutual relations of independent states. So rapidly does it exhaust the most extensive resources, that the financier finds employment for all his ingenuity to supply the drain. Political economy must determine how this drain may be supplied with least detriment to the general welfare. So suddenly does it call up from obscurity to rank and power, so suddenly does it impart vigor to classes of men whose influence in time of peace was unfelt in the state, so suddenly does it destroy old interests and create new ones, and such multitudinous emulations and rivalships does it originate, that the constitutionalist must take care lest the social machine be torn in pieces by the violence of its own action. Should it be rent asunder, or should some modification of its form become indispensably necessary, he must study the nature of society and of government, and when he reconstructs or repairs the system, disregarding ancient prejudices, he must take care to deposit the effective administration in those hands in which power appears now to be permanently lodged. Such apparently inconsistent obligations does war oftentimes seem to impose on those engaged in its service, that the moralist must investigate the nature of human duty, to decide complicated questions of right and wrong, cases of conscience and points of honor. Not only all moral and political science, but the mathematical and physical sciences, and the arts connected with them, are exercised and invigorated. Geography and Topography survey the field of action. Engineering lays out the roads, removes the obstacles, and erects the defences. Trigonometry plans the fortifications, and Geom-

etry measures the path of the projectiles. Medicine and Surgery benevolently strive to snatch some few fragments from the waste of life, while Chemistry furnishes new agents of destruction, and the Mechanic Arts construct new engines for the employment of them. Literature and the Fine Arts also are not without their share of impulse from the all-pervading spirit which war inspires in the whole body of the community. Philosophy must discuss its causes, its consequences, and its merits. History must record its fortunes. Painting and Sculpture must immortalize its heroes, Poetry must celebrate their achievements, and Music must chant anthems for their victories, or in solemn dirges bewail their funeral.

War therefore, directly and indirectly, has been a fruitful occasion of the development of modern genius. And it is too obvious to need remark, how conducive the development of genius in classes having no hereditary share in the government has been to the progress of freedom. But war and commerce, however great their acknowledged influence, were not the only instruments of the mighty revolution going on in the constitution of society and in the condition of Europe. Other causes were co-operating, causes originating farther back, which have often been considered, but to which a few words must now be devoted. The Revival of Letters had come like the dayspring from on high, after the dreary night of the dark ages. The beautiful models of antiquity infuse a masculine energy into the mind of him who devotes himself with earnestness to the study. We can hardly conceive the delight with which they were hailed, when after slumbering neglected for so many ages, they re-appeared in the freshness of their immortal youth. The rapture which welcomed these long lost treasures was no misplaced enthusiasm. Whatever we may judge of the conduct of the Greeks and Romans, their writings, all must admit, are filled with the noblest sentiments. The perusal of these writings brought to new life ideas which had long been forgotten. Perhaps there is even now no literature whose tendency is so democratic as that of the ancient classics, and this circumstance is not to be overlooked in forming an estimate of the state of

public opinion in the ages succeeding the revival of letters. The cloisters of those ages must have contained many an ardent lover of the rights of man, whose situation indeed repressed his noble rage, but who nourished within his breast the sacred flame ready to burst out when the first breath of popular commotion should fan it. The general currency of ideas borrowed from the ancients had restored the tone of the moral system and stimulated the intellect so that it was prepared to enter with alacrity upon new channels of thought. At this crisis the press is brought into action. Now indeed the people have an instrument peculiarly their own. Thought is now no longer to be locked up in the scarce and costly manuscript, jealously guarded in the library of the monastery. No bolts can fasten it. No dungeons can confine it. No arbitrary edicts can restrain it. It escapes: it o'erleaps: it walks abroad: it is free as air: it flies on the wings of the wind. Ideas which had long been brooded over in silence are now communicated. The similarity of their conclusions strengthens their convictions, so that simultaneously certain great principles seem to have originated in opposite quarters and to have circulated among countless multitudes. The means of mutual action being now afforded, mind was brought into contact with mind, and doctrines fraught with portentous consequence were the issue of the union. The seeds of the reformation had been sown, and Martin Luther was soon to cultivate them into an abundant harvest.

In many respects, therefore, the time when the American continent was discovered, and still more especially the period of the settlement of North America, was a season of a general fermentation and heaving in the mass, which there was no reason to apprehend would cease till the people had obtained and secured a share at least in the government of themselves. Such was the character of the times, and if America had never been discovered, convulsions and revolutions must have taken place in Europe and had their course, though not so rapidly as in the actual state of things has happened.

The American continent was situated at a safe and desirable distance from the old world. The time, expense and difficulty

of the voyage were so great, that any considerable population who might settle here might fairly calculate upon governing themselves, and might securely trust that they were out of the reach of any effectual interference on the part of the mother country. It was the ruinous expense of supporting an army thousands of miles from home that made it absolutely necessary for Great Britain to abandon the war and acknowledge our independence, when we were but a small nation comparatively, though our exertions were paralyzed by the miserable inefficiency of the confederation, and though George the Third was obstinately bent, as long as there was a doubt to hang a hope upon, upon reducing us to subjection. For the same reason it is impossible for Spain to recover one of her lost colonies, though the South American republics are mismanaged, have no resources, and no affection for their ephemeral governments.

Again, the country is so vast that when thirty thousand men could have marched through it, three hundred thousand could not have subdued it. While inhabited by civilized men, it might be overrun, but it could not be conquered. An army may pass through Scythia, but it cannot occupy and retain it. The army would enforce obedience in its immediate neighborhood on all who chose to remain there, but before it the inhabitants would remain free and behind it they would rise up free. An army might pass through Tartary, but the Tartars would still acknowledge no master. Even Russia is content with nominal authority over the scattered tribes of her Asiatic territory.

Another favorable circumstance is the face of the country : its colossal ridges of mountains, and the innumerable rivers that flow from their sides. Every mountain is a natural fortification, every river is a line of defence behind which a retreating army may rally. It is by means of its mountains and precipices that Switzerland has maintained its independence so long in the midst of jealous and powerful neighbors. It was by means of its mountains that Scotland was so long independent of England, that Wales was so long unconquered, that the Moors held out so long in Grenada against the efforts of Spain, and that Spain herself was able to withstand the gigantic power of Napoleon.

A determined people in a mountainous country cannot be subdued. These remarks apply to the continent as a whole, and prove without further examination that its inhabitants could never be destined to dependence on the old world. Indeed there is not now to be found any colony dependent on the mother country except those who derive or believe they derive more benefit than they suffer of inconvenience by the connexion. Omitting to inquire the character of particular sections of the continent, we may be excused for dwelling a moment on that of New England. Her inclement seasons and her barren soil, requiring habits of exposure and of indefatigable industry, as well as rigid economy, naturally form her hardy yeomanry. The sterility of her sea coasts provokes her adventurous mariners to tempt the perils of the ocean, and to draw from the depths the treasures of the sea. While, if there be any truth in the influence of climate, so long as her northwest wind blows over her granite mountains, invigorating body and soul, breathing courage into all who have courage to go out and breathe it, her pure air ought to make her the nursing mother of a race of heroes.

And who are the inhabitants of New England? Who were their fathers? Picked men every one of them. Tried by the ordeal of adversity, and selected by their tenderness of conscience, their steadfastness in duty, their daring in adventure, their fortitude under suffering. Had they not possessed all these qualities, the desolate coast of Plymouth, the inhospitable bay of Massachusetts would never have received them. Had they not been actuated by the love of civil and religious liberty, no other motive could have retained them "in this howling wilderness" till they had made it rejoice and blossom as the rose. That such a people, coming at such a time, to such a country, should have there planted the liberty which they came to enjoy, and should have kept it as the apple of their eye, and that in process of time they should have become independent of the mother country, cannot excite surprise. That having no privileged orders or aristocracy of landholders among them, but setting out on the principle of an entire equality of rights, they should have framed and enacted laws calculated to encourage,

promote and preserve that equality, is not to be doubted. Neither is it any thing wonderful that the attempt should be to some extent and for a limited time successful. But the question which the patriot anxiously, the advocate of arbitrary governments sneeringly, asks, is this,—Will your system last? Are there not latent causes of corruption inherent in it which must sooner or later work its overthrow? It may throw some light upon this question, to notice some passages of our history since the close of the war which secured our national independence.

There are, in the history of every nation, where the mind is not held in complete subjection by the tyranny of established habits, which, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, may not be altered, certain points of time when the principles of policy upon which the government has acted, or the means by which it has supported its power and enforced its authority, become unacceptable or inefficient, and a new order of things is imperiously called for. The march of improvement is continually going on—the times change, and the people change with them. The varying circumstances of other nations, their different dispositions towards us, the fluctuations of commerce, the creation of new wants, and the disuse of old customs, perpetually vary the nature of our foreign relations, and require corresponding alterations in our foreign policy. If, while the wishes, feelings and interests of a people have undergone great modifications, the course of the government still remains the same, its operations are impeded, its influence is diminished, and a change in the administration becomes necessary.

In arbitrary or mixed governments, whenever the measures of the government are at variance with the interests of the people, if no powerful body in the state is strongly interested in the continuance of the course objected to, the sovereign gives way, the minister is sacrificed, and the machine of state moves on smoothly again. But should the question be of the privileges or immunities of any numerous and influential class, they will resist innovation, and a revolution must be the consequence.

Except perhaps the hopeless endurance of a grinding despotism, to avoid which men resort to this bitter remedy, a revolu-

tion is the greatest of all evils : it may be likened to whatever is terrible in nature—a fever of the social system—a tornado in the political atmosphere—or rather an earthquake, obliterating, the ancient boundaries of law and morality, overthrowing the venerable institutions of religion, and shaking the very foundations whereon society reposes.

The imprisoned fires whose force suffices to upheave a continent, which if denied a vent work wide destruction, leaving behind them no vestige of life and beauty, issue through the open crater of the volcano comparatively harmless, though with a fearful glare and threatening roar. Popular elections furnish the safety valve for the elements of the moral earthquake.

It is the great excellence of the popular form of government, that it offers facilities for the frequent expression of the will of the people, and the means sooner or later of carrying that will into effect. Causes which elsewhere would lead to revolutions, here produce only a temporary fermentation of the mass; the will of the universal democracy triumphs, and all is quiet again. A stranger would imagine, were he to witness the heat and uproar of one of our contested elections, that the rule of anarchy had begun, and that all other government was at an end among us; but incontinently the object of the stronger party is attained, the weaker party acquiesces, and the conflagration of the passions burns out for want of fuel.

Since the era of our national independence, three times has the country arrived at a crisis which demanded a change—a change which under any other form of government could not have been effected without a revolution, and which must therefore have been delayed till the evils became intolerable. Three times has the change demanded been accomplished, and twice have the consequences been observed and recorded; the third period is now commencing. The effects of our third moral revolution are beginning to be developed, but remain for the most part matter of speculation.

The first crisis was that of the downfall of the confederation. That form of government which the energy of popular excitement had made tolerably efficient during the revolution, soon,

when passion had subsided and when individual interests became distinct from, and preponderated over those of the nation, began to discover its inherent weakness. The several States often refused to furnish their quota; foreign powers subjected our commerce to the most mortifying embarrassments; our credit was poor and precarious: in short, the confederate power was neither obeyed at home, respected abroad, nor trusted any where: neither could it, from its feeble constitution, enforce, avenge, or inspire confidence. Our trade was without protection, and our government without revenue, and the practical evils which resulted, not only showed the statesman, but made the most unthinking feel the necessity of some central power, which should be endued with the concentrated strength of all the members, and act for the common good with a force that should ensure success. The collected wisdom of the country, met at Philadelphia, having adjusted many contested points in a spirit of compromise, formed at last the present admirable Constitution which creates such a power. The people, jealous of their rights, and unwilling to entrust their best friends with authority which may be abused, were hardly persuaded by the sound reasoning and commanding eloquence of such men as Hamilton, Jay, Madison, and the elder Adams, to adopt so *strong* a constitution. Jefferson denounced its form as a close imitation of the British, and seemed to consider the executive as a king in miniature. Patrick Henry declared that the President possessed both the sword and the purse, and by their means might make himself master of whatever powers he pleased. The new Constitution was however adopted,—in several of the States by very small majorities,—and a military chieftain, the immortal Washington, called on to administer its functions. He gathered round him an able cabinet—he consulted the wishes of all sections of the country—the evils which oppressed us were removed, the dangers which threatened us vanished, commerce revived, and prosperity was restored. Party spirit therefore was naturally quiet for a short period—but party feeling did not cease to exist. The materials for a great party division, founded upon the character of the new Constitution, existed among the people. The

jealous fear of usurpation, the offspring and the safeguard of freedom, on the one hand, led many honest and high spirited republicans, under the guidance of the heart rather than the head, to suspect a strong tendency towards *consolidation* in the new institutions. The dread of anarchy, from the horrors of which they had just escaped, led many honest and prudent republicans, on the other hand, to apprehend danger rather from encroachments on the prerogative of the general government, and from the unwillingness of the people to submit to any even the most wholesome restraints. Posterity will probably decide that to a certain extent both parties were right, and to a certain extent both were wrong. The Federalists were undoubtedly right in believing that the common good required great powers to be conferred on the general government—far greater than the party who opposed the acceptance of the Constitution were willing to allow—for both parties have since practically concurred in endowing the government with *more* power than the Federalists at that time contended for. Experience has shown also that the Democratic party were right in believing that it is the tendency of every government continually to accumulate power, and that this tendency requires to be closely watched and incessantly counteracted by all constitutional methods. On the other hand, the Federalists set the first example of those latitudinarian *constructions* of the Constitution which have been subsequently carried so much farther than they who founded the Constitution would ever have approved or indeed ever have dreamed of, which may be summed up in a single sentence, *that the powers granted to the government IMPLY all other powers which the government may find it convenient to assume*, a doctrine not yet advocated in terms, but practically acted on, and which threatens to make the Constitution a mere dead letter, and to leave the government absolute and unlimited save by its own sense of propriety and duty, and its fear of popular resistance whenever its encroachments are too flagrant to admit of any plausible justification. In this precedent, so fruitful in dangerous consequences, the Federalists were, to say the least, unfortunate. The popular party were equally unfortunate at that

time, in contending that the navy, whose brilliant achievements have since shed such a lustre upon our annals as to make it the favorite of all parties without distinction, was a useless burthen upon the national resources, and ought to be dismantled and sold: that the national treasures were lavished in prodigal profusion for the support and improvement of the army; though experience afterwards demonstrated that a just economy would have dictated even a more liberal expenditure upon those objects, and would thereby have saved the nation from much pecuniary loss, to say nothing of loss of time, loss of blood, and the mortification of undertakings thwarted for want of preparation, and of vast means thrown away on projects ending only in discomfiture: that the funding system, being copied from the practice of the English government, was founded on aristocratical principles, would build up an oligarchy of fundholders, and would involve the nation in a debt, like that of England, forever to be augmented without prospect of relief; though that same much reviled funding system has since carried the party that denounced it through a war to which no other resource could have been found equal, and now having performed its office and done its work well, having discharged all our obligations, and redeemed and sustained our shaken credit, it is about to leave us the only civilized nation on the face of the globe having a superabundant revenue wholly unincumbered with debt. These, with some other errors which might be enumerated, then popular, but now admitted to be errors, belonged to the times; they have long since been abandoned on all hands, and we scarcely remember the strong hold they once held on the public mind. Before however we dismiss them forever from our memories, there should be time to tell the truth about them. Let us derive the benefit of whatever lessons they can teach us, and then let them be forgotten.

Such being some of the leading views of the two parties, the Federal claiming a broad construction of the Constitution and an efficient power for the government, the popular party invoking the strict letter of the Constitution, and seeking shelter within its narrowest limits against undue assumptions of power on the part

of the government ; having opposite views also of foreign policy ; as was to have been expected, causes, growing chiefly out of the foreign relations of the country, soon brought them into open hostility with each other. As was to have been expected also, after a long and exasperated conflict the popular party prevailed. They came into power under the guidance of Thomas Jefferson, a man of a somewhat speculative character for a statesman, a philosopher in the common acceptation of that word. This was the *second* moral revolution. In as great a degree as in the first, the event disappointed the expectations of both parties. Neither the fears of the defeated, nor the hopes of the triumphant party were destined to be realized. The Federalists, perhaps it would be more just to say some of the more excited and alarmed among them, feared that the credit of the nation would be prostrated, that commerce would no longer be protected, and the flag of the nation cease to be respected abroad ; that rash experiments would be attempted in every branch of the administration ; that the funding system, the bank, the army, the navy, would fall victims to the rage for innovation ; that the nation would be degraded before the throne of a European despot ; that religion would be discountenanced and scoffed at ; that the government would be stripped of its essential prerogatives, and thereby rendered incapable of fulfilling its functions ; that consequently social order would be interrupted, and nothing but anarchy could ensue.

Such were the gloomy forebodings of honest, enlightened and patriotic statesmen among the disheartened and discomfited Federalists, and even of some of the most distinguished founders of the Constitution, when they beheld the administration of that Constitution delivered into the hands of their enemies. They were mistaken however, and we rejoice that history has recorded how much they were mistaken. They did not repose confidence enough in the character of the American people, they did not repose confidence enough in the excellence of their own work, destined we trust to weather many a storm. It will not be uninteresting to contrast our present prosperous condition with the apprehensions entertained. Our credit has sustained

itself through difficulties and dangers, and now stands unshaken by any of the causes which are at this moment producing such ruinous fluctuations in the credit of the wealthiest nations of the old world. Our commerce has flourished by its own inherent vigor: it has extended its operations to sources of gain at that time unknown, and has gathered the spoils of every clime: it has accumulated the wealth which has built up our great cities, and the surplus of which is now digging our canals, projecting our railways, and laying the foundations of our manufacturing establishments: through discouragements, checks and reverses, it is still living and healthy. Our flag commands respect on every sea: wherever it floats it effectually protects all whom it covers. Experiments were indeed tried, and tried satisfactorily; but after a short period of change and trial, the government settled down into the former course of practice, and affairs went on pretty much in the old way. The funding system turned out to be the main stay of the government, at a time when it had little else than its credit to rely upon, and its capacities have been tasked far beyond what was originally calculated on. The Bank, at the expiration of its charter in 1811, was opposed by the whole strength of the democratic party, and was refused a renewal. The Hon. Henry Clay, then a leading democratic member of the United States Senate, in an able speech against the re-charter, declared the Bank to be altogether unconstitutional, and on that occasion made use of these memorable words. "This doctrine of precedents, applied to the legislature, appears to me to be fraught with the most mischievous consequences. To legislate upon the ground merely that our predecessors thought themselves authorized, under similar circumstances, to legislate, is to sanctify error and perpetuate usurpation. *The great advantage of our system of government, over all others, is, that we have a WRITTEN CONSTITUTION, defining its limits, and prescribing its authorities;* and that, however, for a time, faction may convulse the nation, and passion and party prejudice sway its functionaries, the season of reflection will recur, when calmly retracing their deeds, all aberrations from fundamental principles will be corrected. But

once substitute *practice* for principle ; the expositions of the Constitution, for **THE TEXT** of the Constitution ; and *in vain shall we look for the instrument in the instrument itself*. It will be as diffused and intangible as *the pretended Constitution of England*. I conceive, then, sir, that we are *not empowered by the Constitution*, nor bound by any practice under it, to renew the charter of this bank." Soon, however, the Administration found it convenient to employ a bank, and they accordingly chartered one upon a much larger scale than the institution which they had denounced. And now Henry Clay sits in the same Senate, the champion of the **FEDERAL** doctrine upon this subject, answers the arguments contained in his old speeches, and ranks as the most able advocate for the re-charter of the corporation with powers greater than those which he unequivocally pronounced to be unconstitutional.

The army has been enlarged and restored to favor, and has furnished the readiest passports to popular applause. The navy has humbled the piratical states of Barbary, rich with the spoils of all maritime christendom, and confident in their contempt of the laws of warfare among civilized people. It has visited the nests of those vultures and tamed their ferocious voracity. It has freed us, before any nation of Europe, from the dishonorable tribute paid to those banded outlaws ; others have followed our example, and now Christian commerce sweeps over the Mediterranean secure from their fearful depredations, protected by the terror of the wholesome chastisement which American valor first inflicted on them. In the last conflict in which it was engaged, it has covered itself with a plentiful harvest of glory. British tars, till then invincible, were astonished to meet their equals on their own element. Let us not insult the mother country, or underrate the honor of such an ancestry. Till that hour, her dearest boast was true. Britannia was ruler of the waves : but from that hour when Yankee champions of free trade and sailors' rights first challenged her to equal combat, the charm was broken, the glory had departed from her. Our gallant little navy gave her many defeats to mourn, and but few victories at which to rejoice. It was a new chapter in her naval

annals. From that hour we claim to be sharers in her before exclusive dominion, and to carry our flag with the proudest of those,

Whose march is on the mountain wave,  
Whose home is on the deep.

We had met the enemy and they were ours, on the Ocean as well as on the Lakes. From that hour our Eagle,

Sailing with supreme dominion,  
Through the azure depths of air,  
Glancing with an untired pinion,  
Glory's palm shall highest bear.

The *Guerriere*, the *Java*, the *Peacock*, the *Macedonian*! Would that time would allow me to enumerate all her trophies, and last not least, to bring before your imagination Lawrence, undishonored by disaster, cut down "in the purple blossom of his youth, while the lingering graces of manhood yet clustered round his form," falling in a desperate and sanguinary struggle, the respect of his enemies vying with the anguish of his friends, and two rival nations, in generous emulation, honoring with sympathetic tears his premature grave. The subject has a witchery about it: but your patience has already been tasked too long. The sketch, brief as it has been, must be condensed still more. Suffice it to say, then, that so far from the dignity of the country having been compromised abroad, American diplomacy has ably seconded American valor. While the nation has gone on steadily in its march to greatness, it has commanded a still larger and larger portion of respect and attention in its foreign relations. Religion, confident in her own intrinsic strength, neither asks nor receives aid or support from the civil authority. She is maintained without an establishment, she is obeyed though her ministers do not hold seats in the Senate of the nation. The government has been so far from weakness and inefficiency, that the complaints, and of late they have become loud and startling, have been all of an opposite nature. The government is accused of overstepping its legitimate powers, and if, which may heaven avert, in our day, discord, rebellion and anarchy shall make havoc of this fair land, it will not be because the government

has forborne to use powers granted, but because it has assumed powers not granted by the Constitution. So much, then, for the consequences of our second moral revolution. It has been seen that both parties were somewhat disappointed in its effects; that when outs become ins, they view questions of policy under different bearings, and of course come to different conclusions. These considerations will assist us in determining what amount of change may result from our *third* moral revolution, that brought about by the elevation of Andrew Jackson to the Presidency. Of this I shall say but little, this not being the time or the place to discuss questions upon which parties at present divide. I will, however, venture to remark, that violent partisans on both sides, have been, and will probably continue to be, disappointed in their expectations.

One of the principal weapons used in bringing about the late revolution of parties, as it had been before the election of Jefferson, was the promise of a thorough-going, universal system of *retrenchment* in the national expenses. So soon, however, as the retrenching party came into power, they found serious obstacles impeding the full execution of their promises. The nature of mankind is the same under one administration as under another. There were claims innumerable to be satisfied, expectants more numerous than offices, and wants more abundant than the means of gratifying them. Every pretension advanced, if admitted, keeps open some outlet for expenditure; if rejected, turns a friend and ally into an enemy and opponent. Besides, the new opposition not holding so strict a doctrine on the subject of retrenchment, could not be so effectual a check on the propensity of the new administration to depart from its theory of rigid economy. Savings indeed to some extent were effected; as for instance, in the Navy Department, the expenditure of the first three years of this administration was less than that of the last three years of the preceding by 1,582,000 dollars. Other instances might be selected, but still the expectations of many of the most ardent supporters of General Jackson have not been fully realized, and some have not scrupled to express their disappointment. With regard to rotation in office, the practice has

not been carried to the extent which office seekers hoped and office holders feared. I express no opinion as to the doctrine in general, or as to the propriety of removals from office for political causes, but certainly, since the election of Jefferson, it cannot be pretended that that doctrine is not an essential part of the republican system of faith. Many gentlemen, who advocated this republican doctrine, no doubt from the most disinterested and patriotic motives, with great zeal and effect in 1801, found the practical application of it extremely unpleasant in 1829. This, however, was no excuse for apostatizing from the fundamental principles of democracy, and reprobating so clamorously the faith which they had always professed. But great as has been the outcry raised by these gentlemen, and others, it is but just to add that the administration deserve credit for the moderation with which they have exercised the power of removal from office. From the third of March, 1829, to October, 1830, out of 10,093 public officers, the whole number of removals for all causes whatsoever, was only 919, or about one-eleventh of the whole number. When we consider how many of these were removed for unfitness or dishonesty, and to substitute better men, we shall probably set down the number removed for political reasons merely, at a very small proportion indeed. In the Treasury Department alone, the deficit in the accounts of those who were removed, amounted to at least 300,000 dollars. How groundless is the charge brought against the administration, of an unsparing proscription of all who do not profess to be its friends, will appear from the proportion of the two parties among the office holders in the city of Washington. On the accession of General Jackson to the Presidency, the number of Adams and Clay men in office in Washington was

Clay men in office in Washington was	228
The friends of General Jackson in office there,	71
The number of removals for all causes was	40
The number of Clay men in office in 1831,	173
And of the friends of General Jackson,	140

So that this proscriptive administration still left a majority of 33 of the offices at the seat of government in the hands of its enemies.

At the time of the elevation of the present incumbent to the executive chair, his opponents feared, lest, as he had not been brought up a diplomatist, he might not possess the knowledge and the judgment necessary for the proper direction of our foreign relations. The history of his administration thus far has been very far from justifying any such apprehensions. At no period since our independence have our negotiations been so successful. The trade of the Black Sea opened to us; the trade of the British West Indies restored to us; our claims on Denmark satisfactorily adjusted; indemnity, which our merchants had almost despaired of, secured from France; these are only a few of the advantages which have been obtained within the short space of three years. It is but justice to attribute some portion of this success to the plainness and directness which have characterized the operations of the present administration, and have made its pithy and pertinent state papers so opposite in substance and manner to the endless, involved, verbose and unintelligible declamations, so frequently issued by the members of the cabinet under the late administration.

With regard to our domestic policy, it was feared that the manufactures of the North would be prostrated by the sudden and total abandonment of that system of restriction which the votes of the South, some years since, against the will of New England, fastened upon her. In this particular also, the administration has displayed more of justice and of wisdom than its opponents predicted. It has proposed a system of compromise, which, while it will save from destruction interests that have grown up under existing laws, will tend in a great measure to alleviate the dangerous irritation which the wrongs, whether real or imaginary, of the present system, have produced through an important section of the country—a compromise which we may safely pronounce to be a reasonable one, since Ex-President Adams, high authority for the opponents of the present administration, has adopted it, and, with some slight modifications, made it the basis of his own proposed arrangement: and with his modifications, there is a fair prospect that it may become a law, and prove satisfactory to a large class of the manufacturers themselves.

Thus far I have considered some of the consequences of the three moral revolutions through which our government has passed, in the general manner which the necessary brevity required, but with enough of particularity to answer the purpose of the investigation : and I now pause to sum up the practical inferences to be drawn from them. We cannot help admitting the obvious truths, that our party contests have not that intrinsic importance, with which the lively fancies of the heated partisans often invest them : that they are often in a great degree struggles for office, and that if the party out of power always strives to fight itself in, by the vindication on all occasions of certain leading popular principles, it is by no means certain how far those principles will be exemplified in its practice after it shall have prevailed by zealously professing them. That, however great may be the inconsistencies in the political conduct of individuals, even if beyond parallel in any other country, still the fluctuations of the government are temporary, and of lesser magnitude than they at first appear to be. We may therefore expect the government to go on through reverses and vicissitudes. We may expect the dissatisfied to proclaim peril and to prognosticate destruction : and as insurrections have taken place in Massachusetts and in Pennsylvania, and have been threatened in Georgia and South Carolina, we may expect the execution of the laws to be sometimes resisted by violence. Yet as the party in power will always act on the same general principles, and as the party out of power can always take possession of the administration so soon as it can command a majority of votes, we may trust that our discontents will generally evaporate in menaces, and that the great American experiment of self-government may prosper in its course, till that decay which is the fate of all things earthly shall fasten on our free institutions. If in the long lapse of ages that eventful moment should ever arrive when the government of our country must yield beneath the weight of its abuses, let us hope that the principles of freedom may be so firmly rooted in the breasts of our posterity, that from its downfall a new republic may rise, better guarded against corruption, and that self-government, purified and renovated,

may enter on a new and interminable career. To make free government securely permanent among us, it is not any set of leaders or scheme of policy that we have to depend upon. We must rest our reliance on the character of the people, and to this end we should do all in our power to promote intelligence, morality, temperance, industry and economy. Make these virtues universal, and futurity has nothing for us to fear.

While other nations are trembling as it were on the brink of the precipice, while their boldest have little hope to escape it, and their wisest know not what an hour may bring forth, let us be thankful that union, peace, prosperity, and happiness, are the prospect we see before us. Let us endeavor to merit and preserve these blessings. Let us conciliate and compromise: let us sacrifice, if need be, some partial interests to the general good.

Let us now invoke the favor of Divine Providence that the shield of his almighty protection may be spread over our beautiful, beautiful America. That her land may reward with rich harvests the labors of agriculture; that her manufactures may revive and flourish, and furnish profitable employment for her redundant population; that her commerce may whiten every sea with its canvass, and enrich and gladden all her shores with the returns of its enterprise; and that the free soil which we tread, and the free air which we breathe, may be continued free to our remotest posterity.