

AN
ORATION,

PRONOUNCED AT

TEMPLETON, JULY 5, 1813,

IN COMMEMORATION

OF THE

THIRTY SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY

OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,

BEFORE THE

WASHINGTON BENEVOLENT SOCIETIES

IN THE NORTHERN SECTION

OF THE

COUNTY OF WORCESTER,

AND

OTHER CITIZENS.

—*•*•*—
BY LEWIS BIGELOW.

—*•*•*—
PRINTED AT WORCESTER, BY ISAAC STURTEVANT.

—*•*•*—
1813.

TEMPLETON, July 5th, 1813.

LEWIS BIGELOW, Esq.

SIR,

AGREEABLY to our appointment as committee, we request *you*, to grant a copy of your ingenious and patriotick Oration, this day delivered before the WASHINGTON BENEVOLENT SOCIETIES, assembled at *Templeton*, for publication.

NATHANIEL JONES,
DANIEL HENSHAW,
STEPHEN BATCHELLER, Jr.
SAMUEL CUTTING,
JAMES HUMPHREYS,
ALEXANDER DUSTIN.



TEMPLETON, July 5, 1813.

GENTLEMEN,

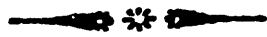
CONSCIOUS that the principles contained in my Oration—proceeded from a heart devoted to the best interests of our country, and believing they will be approved by the real friends of our liberty and independence, I shall venture, without offering any apology for its defects, to comply with your polite request and furnish a copy for publication.

Yours respectfully,

LEWIS BIGELOW.

TO THE COMMITTEE,

ORATION.



THE *misfortune*, which has been the occasion of my undertaking an important part in the ceremonies of this day, can be no less a source of regret and embarrassment to me, than of sorrow and disappointment to this assembly. While we deplore the afflictive and calamitous stroke, which has, in a measure *paralyzed* the powers of our brother,* who had been selected for his conspicuous talents as an orator, to perform the service, so recently transferred to me, we shall forcibly feel, at this gloomy crisis in our national affairs, the want of his powers to excite those proud emotions which once glowed in our breasts, on the return of this anniversary. Yet even *his* eloquence could hardly inspire us with that patriotick enthusiasm, that exalted spirit of liberty and independence, that honourable pride of country, which animated us in the better days of our republick without presenting to our view, at the same time, the mortifying and humiliating contrast of our present situation.

A generation has not entirely passed away, since the commencement of our struggle for those civil rights and privileges that were unjustly withheld from us, by our parent country—a struggle which terminated in placing us on the proud list of sovereign and independent nations. There still exist among us, and perhaps are present in this assembly, some of those heroes, and veterans of our revolution, who dared resist tyranny and oppression, however formidable the in-

* The Rev. James Thompson, of Barre, was chosen to deliver the oration, but in consequence of a severe *paralytick affection*, was rendered incapable of performing the service.

strument by which they were wielded, or however hazardous the enterprize ; and who know the value of our liberties, as they paid the price by which they were purchased. In vain, and worse than in vain, did they endure the toils, the privations and the sufferings of a long and severe war ; in vain and worse than in vain, did the blood of their copatriots in arms flow in the battles of our revolution ; if they shall live to see the day when that **INDEPENDENCE** acquired by their valor, shall be wrested from us by force, or voluntarily surrendered by treacherous, or pusillanimous rulers. The day we are now convened to celebrate, is but a reproachful era in our annals, unless our independence is maintained in the same spirit by which it was acquired. To reflect that we had once enjoyed its sweets when we are deprived of the blessing, would serve only to aggravate the poignancy of our condition. It is a duty then we owe to the memory of our fathers, who fought and bled for our sakes ; we owe it to ourselves, as we value our happiness and preservation ; we owe it to posterity, and to God, to guard with watchful care, the precious heritage transmitted to us, and to defend it with our lives, against every encroachment of foreign or domestick enemies.

In pursuance of this duty we are naturally led to enquire, whether the evils which have been gradually accumulating to the nation for the last twelve years, and which have now become so formidable as to threaten its ruin and destruction, are the consequences of a departure from the policy which governed the councils of our political fathers, or inevitably result from a course of events which *their* virtue, wisdom and prudence could not have controuled. Before a remedy can be applied with any prospect of success, it is necessary that the cause of the disease be ascertained. And, would to God, if our restoration be yet practicable, if there be yet a remedy that can save, we had a **WASHINGTON** for our physician.

In searching for the causes, which have produced the evils under which we are now groaning, let us examine into that spirit which instigated the first attempts to subvert the system of policy, under which we flourished and prospered beyond any example afforded in the history of nations. And here it will be remembered, with emotions of indignation and grief, that while we were yet united and happy, and before we were expelled from our Eden, the fiend of discord and faction viewed us with malignant delight, and by deluding arts, by subtlety and intrigue, attempted to beguile us from our duty. Our guardian genius, who presided over us with watchful and paternal care, beheld the wiles employed for our destruction, and snatched us from the impending danger. But the Dæmon has not yet been appeased, and has only been waiting a more favourable opportunity, to renew and put in execution his hellish designs.

That partiality for France, which was engendered by the assistance she afforded us in our struggle for liberty and independence, has been carefully nurtured, by being represented as a debt of gratitude which good faith compelled us to pay, and strengthened by all the arts of French emisaries and American demagogues, till it has become a ruling principle in our national councils. The revolutionary spasms of France, in their incipient stages, were celebrated by America as the glorious efforts of a great people, to deliver themselves from the bondage of a cruel despotism, and we were flattered with the idea, that the spirit of LIBERTY which seemed to animate them, was lighted up by a spark from the altar of our INDEPENDENCE. Yet although her subsequent atrocities proved, that she was not struggling for rational liberty or the rights of man; and although her country has been deluged with the choicest blood of her own citizens, in all her rapid revolutions, merely for the purpose of cementing still stronger her bonds of slavery; and although she is now govern-

ed by the most cruel and relentless despot, that ever scourged a people ; whose ambitious designs are leveled against every nation he has not already reduced to slavery ; who is bound by no promises, no treaties and no principles of justice or humanity ; but whose will is his law, and who has plundered and insulted us, as though we were incapable of resistance or resentment ; yet we are required to look upon her as our friend, and the friend of liberty, because she was once our ally, and pretended to imitate our example. Those who have harboured this overweening partiality for France, have invariably fostered, for no better reasons, a corresponding jealousy and hatred towards England. From these absurd and unreasonable prejudices, has resulted that hostility to the system of impartial and neutral policy so steadily pursued by our political father in his intercourse between the two nations. We see this hostility first opening and expanding itself in the memorable days of the French minister, *GENET* ; but its appearance was too premature to produce at that time, any important effects. Its growth, however was only checked for a season, and it has since been so carefully cherished and cultivated by our political botanists, that it has already reared its blighting foliage over the loveliest plants of this garden of liberty. The enemies of Washington, during the period his country was blessed with his councils, were too few to hazard any open opposition to his measures. But their hatred was too rancorous, and their ambition too headstrong, to allow them to relinquish their nefarious purposes. While they concealed their designs, and feigned a silent acquiescence in the measures of government, they were secretly projecting their schemes of ambition and concocting their venom. The negociation of a treaty with Great Britain, afforded them another opportunity of bringing into action those passions and prejudices which Washington incessantly strove to subdue, and which only blazed with a

fiercer zeal, by being *smothered* for a while, but not *extinguished*. Every art was employed to inflame the prejudices of the people against the treaty, and to lead them to believe, that by adopting it, they surrendered some of their most precious rights and interests to the nation, as it was said, who harboured a jealousy of their growing prosperity, and still entertained a secret design of reducing them to former their colonial dependence. The commotion excited by these nefarious attempts has hardly subsided, even at this distance of time. This treaty which was approved by Washington, and against which his enemies raised so much riotous clamour and opposition, has expired by its own limitation; and as these enemies, who have since usurped the reins of government, have pertinaciously refused to renew the treaty, or to substitute another, it has been fairly tested, by practical experiment. Then let the people decide, whether they are more prosperous and happy, and whether the nation has been making more rapid advances towards wealth and glory, since the expiration of this treaty, than during its existence. The destruction of our commerce, the annihilation of our revenue, and the distresses of the people, which have been the fruits of a refusal to negotiate with Great Britain, will speak more forcibly than the abstruse arguments of diplomatists upon neutral rights, or upon abstract questions of national law. From the time we ceased to have a treaty with England, we have been rapidly declining from our former elevation, till to retrieve our standing and character, has become almost a hopeless undertaking.

At the head of the faction which has laboured so indefatigably to subvert that excellent policy which governed the administration of our beloved Washington, was the man, who was the first to enjoy the fruits of his too successful labours, in his elevation to the highest office in the gift of the people. Of this faction, he was the parent, the nurse, the patron, the be-

nefactor ; and although he endeavoured to conceal his designs under the broad cloak of hypocrisy, till they should be sufficiently matured for execution, still they did not escape the penetrating eye of Washington, who well might pronounce such men as they have abundantly proved themselves to be, "A CURSE TO THE COUNTRY."

It claims our most solemn consideration, that the man who has insinuated himself into the confidence and affections of the people, by flattery, deceit and hypocrisy, was secretly the enemy of the Father and Benefactor of his country, and opposed to the measures of his administration ; that while he professed an enthusiastick reverence for his character, he was insidiously endeavouring to undermine it, by abetting and rewarding its foulest calumniators ; that he was a naturalized citizen of France, probably initiated in the mysteries of French illuminism, a deist by practice and profession, and an avowed enemy to the constitution of his country. Most of these facts are capable of incontrovertible proof, and all the arguments of his profligate votaries drawn from any circumstances designed to subserve his ambitious views, cannot confute them. Let me ask, then, and I will put it to the conscience of any American to answer, if the correspondent of Mazzei, the servile apologist of French perfidy and outrage and the friend and patron of Callender and Paine, and his partizans, can be the disciples of WASHINGTON ? Your feelings will not endure such gross profanity—they revolt at the insulting suggestion ! Yet these men, "O, shame where is thy blush !" arrogate to themselves the proud character of adhering to the principles of Washington, in their primitive purity, and stigmatize his friends as apostates.

When Jefferson ascended to the presidency, he found the government in the "full tide of successful experiment." Every department was thoroughly or-

ganized, our revenue was rapidly increasing, our credit was high, our character respected; we had "peace with all nations, entangling alliances with none." He entered into a rich patrimony, where he found his mansion in thorough repair, every apartment decorated with the choicest furniture, his servants experienced and faithful, and his whole household perfectly regulated at his hands. Here he had no arduous duties to perform; his funds with prudent management, were abundantly sufficient for the support of his establishment; no family disputes had descended to disturb his tranquillity; he had no cares, no perplexities, no embarrassments. But he commenced his career like a thoughtless, prodigal and profligate youth, who had been impatiently waiting for the death of his patron, that he might come into possession of his estate for the purpose of indulging in luxury and pleasure, administering to his ambition, or of gratifying an idle spirit of innovation. He immediately dismissed his faithful domesticks for others less capable and less worthy; he changed the plans of his establishment which had been arranged by his ancestors and approved by experience; he sought quarrels with those with whom it was his interest to be at peace, and selected for his companions the most worthless and abandoned; he wasted his estate, and prostrated the credit and character of his family.

If Mr. JEFFERSON was sincerely attached to the principles of Washington and his true disciples, we ought to require some proof of it, in the discharge of his official duties. What are the proofs thus furnished? The first exercise of his power was to dismiss from the councils of the nation, those veterans of the revolution, who had been selected and placed there by WASHINGTON, who had devoted the best part of their lives and their fortunes to the service of their country, and were reaping the rewards of their toils, their sufferings and their patriotism, when they were

abruptly turned adrift upon the charity of the world, or to seek, in their old age, new employments for a livelihood, of which an ungrateful country would wish to deprive them. Their places were immediately filled, either with those who were paying a servile homage to some foreign despot, while their predecessors were fighting the battles which gained our Liberty and Independence, renegadoes and fugitives, from justice, or young men whose sole merit consisted in a blind devotion to the politicks of the new school, and *all* of them inexperienced in the duties they were called upon to perform. How well these duties have since been performed, and with what advantage to the country, let the fruits of the new system bear testimony,

Since the commencement of the *Jeffersonian epoch*, in our national history, the old order of things has been, in every essential principle, completely reversed. That unaccountable partiality for France, which Washington dreaded and pointed out as an alarming symptom of future corruption, has been cherished and extended, till a servile devotion to her court, and a shameless subserviency to her wishes, have become conspicuous in all the measures of government. A system of maritime defence, which was considered as the most efficient protection of our extensive sea coast, has been abandoned for idle, speculative, and delusive theories, without any practical result, and the growth of our infant navy has not only been *checked*, but has been *demolished* by the axe and the hammer, suffered to decay in dry docks, or sold to replenish a treasury squandered by folly and corruption. The entire abolition of American commerce, that great fountain of our national wealth, prosperity and greatness, was a favourite object with those to whom were now confided the destinies of the nation, and who sought to gratify the wishes of France, rather than to promote the interests of their own country. This was a part of that system of our rulers, to assist the tyrant of Eu-

rope in his ambitious schemes of conquest and plunder—a system which they never yet dared openly avow, but which a multiplicity of concurrent circumstances has rendered plain and obvious. The interesting and tremendous conflict, in which Great Britain was engaged with the enemy of liberty, she had sustained for a number of years without any diminution of her strength or resources, although her formidable and gasconading adversary had sworn her destruction, and by threats, limited the duration of her existence. The *sage of Monticello* had also predicted her speedy overthrow, and that he aimed to verify a prediction made in perfect conformity with his wishes, the whole tenor of his administration furnished conclusive evidence. On account of the great superiority of the British navy, however, it was impossible for America to render that assistance to France, by the means of our trade, which she so much desired. The trade to France, even in times of *profound peace*, was hardly worth possessing; in time of *war*, was worse than none; and since by the loss of all her colonies, and the retaliatory measures of the British government, she could derive no benefit from any commercial intercourse with the United States, it was decreed that G. Britain should be in no better a situation. An unlimited embargo, for the ostensible purpose of protecting our seamen and shipping, when no such protection was desired by those most interested, was the first step taken by our rulers towards carrying into effect that anti-commercial system dictated by France. This measure has been followed up, by a rapid succession of other commercial restrictions in all the forms in which embargoes, non-intercourse, and non-importation laws could be modified, and as would best subserve the views of the great emperour. That the *pretended* reasons of these self destructive measures, could not have been the *real* ones, is sufficiently obvious. At the time of laying the first embargo, our ships and seamen were exposed to no

increased dangers from British depredations, and, surely, we could have nothing to fear from our good friends the French. But the absurdities and inconsistencies displayed by our rulers in defending their darling measures, powerfully evince their deceitful and dishonest conduct. At the same time we were told that the embargo was adopted for the purpose of *coercing* G. Britain to revoke her orders in council, which were not known to be in existence by our rulers, until some time after it was laid, when Mr. Pinckney was directed to represent it at the court of St. James as a mere "*municipal regulation*," in which she was no way concerned. Such are the contradictions into which our administration have been betrayed, in defending an unwise, a corrupt and ruinous measure. Why was the bill precipitated through congress, upon the naked recommendation of the president, without assigning any reason for its necessity, or even allowing the subject to be discussed? Why was it that the apostate senator declared he would not *deliberate*, he would *act*? How are these things to be explained upon any other hypothesis, than that Napoleon had *commanded*, and our rulers dared not *disobey*? Thus has our commerce been sacrificed, and cheerfully sacrificed, at the shrine of French ambition.

But notwithstanding this prompt application of our restrictive energies, Great Britain was not yet conquered, or even weakened. Her enemy saw that her existence did not depend on the *smiles* of America, and that something more powerful than embargoes and non-intercourses must be adopted, before she would be compelled to yield. It was not enough, that in compliance with the requisitions of France, we had given her fifteen millions of dollars for a territory she never owned, and from which we can derive no possible advantage; with an addition of two millions more, under the pretence of purchasing another territory, of which we have never yet received a title.—It was not

enough that we had renounced our commerce and reduced ourselves to poverty and distress, in obedience to her wishes.—It was not enough that she had confiscated millions of our property, for the purpose of gratifying her avarice, or a lawless spirit of rapine and plunder, and that the injury was rendered more poignant by the insulting pretext accompanying the transaction, that the property was merely “*sequestered*,” and retained as a “*pledge*” for our good behaviour, and would be restored as soon as we discovered a suitable disposition to conform to the “*continental system*.”—It was not enough that she had sunk, burnt and destroyed our ships, plundered our property, and imprisoned our seamen—It was not enough that she had heaped upon us every insult and indignity of which she was capable, and that we had, at all times, patiently endured them, as became her faithful, submissive, and humble slaves—The great emperour had also declared, that there should be “*no neutrals*” until the “*liberty of the seas*” should be restored, or in other words, until England should be *subdued*, at which time we should all be united under one monarch, and members of one family. It was therefore required, that we should actually and zealously engage in the WAR, and waste our BLOOD as well as TREASURE, in the great and glorious work of subjugation. With what promptness and alacrity we complied with this last and most fatal requisition, is, alas! too fresh in your minds, to need any illustration.

Will it now be contended, since we have embarked our fortunes and destinies on the tempestuous ocean of European politics, since we have cut the cable of our anchor, and lashed ourselves to the ship that carries Napoleon and *his* fortunes, that *French influence* does not predominate in our councils? May God deliver the people from the madness and infatuation which so strongly possesses them.

Since we are thus suddenly involved in an offensive

war with the most powerful nation on the globe, as it respects her means of annoying us, it becomes our duty to inquire into the reasons assigned by our government for declaring it, its probable consequences to the nation, and the best means of regaining that neutral position in which Washington left us and advised us to remain. While we examine into the causes of that disastrous measure which has spread gloom and dismay over a nation, it may be useful to inquire whether these causes might have been averted by a wise, prudent and impartial administration, and whether our injuries were such that the pacifick policy of a WASHINGTON would have justified a resort to so dreadful an expedient as that of *war*, for redress.

Although a long and frightful catalogue of our wrongs and grievances has been exhibited to us, portrayed in all the glowing colours which Mr. Madison's strong powers of fancy could invent; yet the *principal*, and perhaps *only*, cause of the declaration of war, as will appear by an attentive examination of the diplomatick correspondence between the two countries, was the orders in council. These orders were issued by the British government as a measure of retaliation to the novel and unprecedented mode of warfare adopted by the French emperour, whose object it was to prohibit all intercourse, carried on by neutrals with Great Britain and her dependencies, and to destroy all commerce from which he did not derive the exclusive benefit. Hence, every neutral ship that had touched at a *British port*, had been searched by a *British vessel*, or had any *British property* on board, was declared to be *denationalized*, and liable to capture and condemnation under the French Decrees. And shall it be said, that upon the monstrous principles advanced in these decrees, and which involved her very existence, she had no right to retaliate, because it might chance to interfere with the interest of neutrals? Is it to be admitted by us, that the proud and arrogant despot of Europe may

disregard every principle of justice and humanity, and violate, with impunity, every neutral right, for the purpose of annoying Great Britain, who is contending for existence, but that *she* may not adopt any measures of defence? Shall we submit to these outrages on our rights, through which a destructive blow is aimed at Great Britain, and at the same time tell her that she has no right to complain of our humility, and that we will not suffer her to retaliate the injustice of her enemy? Was it reasonably to be expected, that a power who wielded the trident of Neptune, would suffer these plans of destruction to be in vigorous operation against her, without raising a finger to avert the impending danger? It was impossible that any nation, not already sold to the conqueror, could be so indifferent to her situation. As it was expected, Great Britain, after having given us a year's notice of her determination to retaliate, unless we resisted the extravagant pretensions of France, issued her orders in council. These orders, however, hardly amounted to retaliation, either as it respected their hurtful tendency towards France, or their operation upon neutral commerce. Their features were mild and lenient compared with those of the French edicts. But our resentments, which had slept so composedly under the aggressions of France, which were even palliated as "*municipal regulations*," were now raised to the highest pitch against the retaliatory measures of Great-Britain, and every species of artifice and deception was resorted to by our administration in concert with the French Cabinet, to place her in the situation of an aggressor. Accordingly when Congress authorized the president, in case either of the belligerents should repeal or so modify her edicts that they should cease to violate neutral commerce, to revive the non-intercourse law against the party refusing, he accepted of a conditional promise from the French Minister of State, as a full compliance with the

requisitions of the law, and issued his proclamation declaring the decrees repealed. Great-Britain, who had uniformly promised to abandon her orders in council whenever France should remove the ground on which they were founded, but who discovered no evidence of such removal, was accused of a breach of faith. In vain did she contend that by the promise of the French Minister of State, the repeal of the French decrees was made to depend on a contingency which had never happened, that they still continued in rigid execution, and to violate neutral commerce, and that in repeated instances since their alledged repeal, they had been recognized by their author as the "fundamental laws of his Empire." She was superciliously told that it would be *indecorous* not to place implicit confidence in the declaration of France by their authorized agent, or not to consider it as tantamount to a Decree of the Emperor; and to convince her that it was her duty to believe, not only *without*, but *against*, evidence, she was served up with learned discussions upon "*conditions subsequent*" and "*conditions precedent*." In our own country it was deemed as worse than *treason* to doubt the repeal of the French Decrees, after the fact had been declared by proclamation; nor was it permitted even to be inquired of the French Cabinet whether they had ceased to operate, because it was questioning the infallibility of the President. But what exposes in a most unquestionable shape, that intriguing, dishonest and juggling policy, which has so long been pursued by our rules under the direction of the French Cabinet, is an Imperial Document, dated nearly six months after the issuing of the President's Proclamation and not promulgated in the country till since the declaration of war, declaring the Berlin and Milan Decrees repealed. The very foundation of this repealing Decree is declared, by its author, to be an act of congress passed subsequent to the president's proclamation, by which

we have “*caused our rights to be respected*” and complied with the *conditions* upon which a repeal was promised. Here then is evidence, which ought forever to seal the mouths of the apologists, of French perfidy, that the Berlin and Milan Decrees were *not* repealed, if they have *yet* been repealed, until nearly six months after they were declared to be by Mr. Madison. From the mysterious circumstances attending the whole transaction, it is too obvious that the price paid by Mr. Madison for this singular proof that he was justified in issuing his Proclamation, is the declaration of war against England. It may not be exactly that kind of proof which he expected, but as the Emperour exacts the pay for his favours before he confers them, he must now put that construction upon it which will best answer his purpose. We have been required, heretofore, to reconcile contradictions and believe in impossibilities, rather than doubt the infallibility of our President, and we shall probably be again called upon for the same exercise of faith. As the French Edicts have *once* been *repealed* and kept in *existence*, by the very terms of the repeal, to a *subsequent period*, why may they not also *continue in force* long after they have *ceased to operate*, and then be repealed by an act to have a retrospective operation? The repealing Decree, which had been so much sought after, and which came to light under such singular circumstances declares the Berlin and Milan Decrees repealed from the first of November preceding, and those who believe that the Emperour can recal time and render what has transpired in a lapse of six months, as though it had never happened, will find no difficulty in believing that the Decrees were repealed and absolutely dead when the President issued his Proclamation.

If we were not previously pledged to France to declare war against England, I would ask, why the only proper evidence of the repeal of the French Edicts, which would have removed the sole cause of war, was

not furnished in season to have prevented the dreadful event? Why was this evidence concealed for more than a year after it purports to have been in existence, and brought forth immediately after the declaration of war? Why has the constitution been outrageously violated by stifling the voice of debate upon this important question? Why was the motion to postpone the declaration of war until we could prepare ourselves to meet the exigencies of such a terrible crisis, and until our ships and seamen should have an opportunity to return, so obstinately rejected; especially when to *protect* our ships and seamen from the rapacity of British cruisers, has been the pretended great object of government? I might ask why our grievances have been so studiously multiplied in the President's Manifesto, and set forth in such false, but glowing colours, unless they were designed as pretexts for continuing the war after the principal cause should be removed? That they are *merely* pretexts, and most miserable ones, no one can seriously doubt who will bestow upon them a moment's consideration. After the orders in council, the impressment of our seamen occupies the most conspicuous place on the canvass. This subject could long since have been put at rest by our government if they had been as anxious for a settlement as they have endeavoured to appear. The British government have repeatedly disavowed their right to impress American seamen, on the high seas. They have offered to make it penal for British commanders to impress American citizens, if our government would make it penal for the officers of the United States to grant certificates of citizenship to British subjects. This proposed reciprocity was certainly fair and honourable on the part of Great-Britain, and while it would secure to her the services of her own seamen, it would prevent those abuses on our part which have been the sole cause of the grievance of which we complain. But an arrangement did actually take place,

which Mr. Monroe declared was both honourable and advantageous to the United States, and which our American Solomon contumeliously returned to the Court of St. James, without even condescending to share the responsibility of the act with his constitutional advisers. Besides, their last Minister, Mr. FOSTER, repeatedly called the attention of our government to the subject and promised to procure the restoration of all impressed American seamen, on being furnished with a list of their names. Why our government would not negotiate with Mr. Foster on this subject, nor even condescend to resort to so easy a method, as that of furnishing the proposed list, to obtain a release of our seamen, so much the object of their tender compassion and affectionate concern, can be accounted for only on the ground that they were determined on war. Another alledged cause of war is the Blockade of the French coast, which was never viewed by our government in any other than a favourable light, until more than four years after its notification, when it was accidentally conjured up by the French Cabinet as a justification of her monstrous Decrees. Till then it had slept quietly, and it had never entered our thoughts to disturb our repose. Yet the moment Napoleon put us upon the track, we eagerly followed the scent, till the Blockade was hunted down as a good *cause* of war! The other causes are exciting the Indians to hostilities on our frontiers—a charge unsupported by any evidence, excepting that illiberal jealousy, which is always ready to attribute every injury to British agency—and the mission of John Henry, a subject which had become so ridiculous in consequence of its dear-bought discovery and the gross absurdities contained in the evidence by which it was supported, that nothing but a desperate resolution to brave his own shame, could have impelled Mr. Madison to bring it again into view.

Such are the causes for which we are required to

wage an offensive war upon a nation who is our only protection against that power which is striving for universal dominion, and which has already inundated the liberties of the fairest portion of Europe. Whether this state of things might have been avoided can hardly admit of a serious question, when we consider the many fair and honourable overtures made by the British government for an adjustment of all differences between the two nations, as if she were disposed to "exhaust to the last drop the cup of reconciliation," and the obstinate refusal on our part, to accept of any proposition which might tend to meliorate the spirit of enmity. An efficient naval defence has been despised and rejected, the people have been impoverished, and their spirit of enterprize depressed, by futile commercial restrictions, the remnant of their property wantonly abandoned to the mercy of their enemies, and then, without revenue or preparation, they are called upon to fight for that which has ever been attainable by negociation, merely for the purpose, as it would seem, of ascertaining how great burdens they will endure, when placed upon them by their rulers. We have thrown away our shield and our armour, cut the sinews of our strength, and hurled the gauntlet at a giant ! If we now escape the most exemplary vengeance, our safety and preservation will be more owing to the mercy and forbearance of a magnanimous enemy, than to our own strength. She has already evinced that she will not be easily provoked to retaliation, and that the severities of war will be inflicted with reluctance, because she considers our madness entitled to *commiseration*, rather than *chastisement*. But we spurn her generossity and strive to frustrate her humane endeavours. Thus while the governours of her provinces, were directing her people to abstain from committing any depredations upon our defenceless frontiers, such conduct served only to enrage the abettors of war, who denounced it as an "*incitation to treason*." Instead, therefore, of imitating her

example, we are striving, by exciting her people to revolt, invading her territories, and by piratical depredations on her unarmed ships, to provoke that vengeance which her power enables her to execute, since no important object can be answered by the war, unless havock, devastation and carnage follow in its train.

It is not pretended, by the most enthusiastick advocates of the war, that we are capable of making any serious impression upon Great Britain, except in her American provinces. On this subject, however, they entertain the most extravagant ideas. The defeats and disgraces which have already attended the arms of the United States in this most vulnerable part of our enemy, have demonstrated how ill-founded were the expectations of those who had calculated on an easy conquest of Canada; and proved that any attempts to *force* Great Britain into a compliance with our demands, must be attended with an expense of blood and treasure for which the *acquisition* of that country would afford but a miserable compensation. Our generous offers to the inhabitants of Canada, of emancipation from their own government, and participation in the blessings of ours, are not sufficiently alluring to induce them to join our standard. Something besides extravagant promises, boastful threats and pompous proclamations, will be necessary before the spirit of Old England will consent to surrender her liberties to the protection of Mr. Madison. Yet, under all our defeats and losses in our projects of conquest, we are to be consoled with the consideration that these were the immediate consequences, either of *treachery*, of *cowardice*, or of *ignorance*. If our troops fight *bravely*, but are destroyed by *superiour skill*, we are soothingly told, that “the issue leaves nothing to regret, but a single act of inconsiderate valour.” If they are overpowered by *superiour force*, it is then we have our passions inflamed by pathetic declamations upon the base and dishonourable means of *defence* employed by

our enemy in accepting the assistance of our "Red Brethren." And such are the prejudices against Great Britain, it is among not the least of our grievances, that she has so long resisted and frustrated our attempts to conquer her provinces. On the other hand, Great Britain, in consequence of her great naval superiority, is abundantly able, by the capture of our property on the ocean, and the destruction of our towns and cities, to indemnify and avenge herself of any injury we can inflict upon her. Although our gallant little navy has given sufficient practical evidence of the erroneous policy of our rulers in renouncing a maritime defence; and although our seamen have discovered proofs of unexampled skill and bravery on the ocean; yet an *infant* cannot contend with **MANHOOD**, nor the *Dolphin* with the **LEVIATHAN**. Her wealth and power will *increase* in the same proportion that ours *decrease*, and if she has ever had reason to fear us, as a commercial rival, her fears are now quieted, and her ambition gratified, by a voluntary surrender into her hands of the commerce of the world. She is now the only nation on the globe, that can send her ships to a foreign clime, or maintain a commercial intercourse beyond the limits of her own territory. To her are the nations indebted for every article not the produce of their own soil, or the work of their own hands. The immense advantage derived to her from this state of things will more than atone for every injury she can possibly sustain in the loss of our friendship. If then the war is productive of such fatal consequences to us, and so little injurious to our enemy, it is rather a war on *ourselves*, than on *Great Britain*. Indeed, that with the motives already suggested, which led to this measure, is combined an inveterate hostility to the commercial interests of the United States, is abundantly evident. Although the only plausible ground of the war has been removed in the repeal of the orders in council, still, *these interests* have not sufficiently suffered under

the pressure of our own measures, to justify at present a cessation of hostilities. The folly of our merchants in sending abroad their property for the purpose of escaping the protection of the embargo, has not yet been sufficiently chastised; and lest these "*unprincipled speculators,*" this "*most worthless portion of the community;*" should yet hope to escape *total ruin*, the president will not only be justified in continuing the war, but in denying them that protection to which they are entitled by the laws and the constitution. He has calculated, that it will cost the country but the moderate sum of *one hundred and fifty millions of dollars*, to support the war for the term of *six years*, and surely no patriot can regret this trifling sum, or the hardships we shall endure, when he considers that, at the expiration of that term, we shall have nothing left to tempt the cupidity of foreign nations, or that will be worth the vindication and protection of our own government.

Whatever evils and calamities there may yet be in store for us, and however effectual a continuation of the war may prove in subverting our valuable institutions, and in prostrating our tottering liberties, yet there is no evil of such frightful aspect, no event so dreadful and so immediately destructive in its consequences, as an *Alliance with France*. It is the fatal Charybdis, in which every nation that has been decoyed into its current, has been swallowed up. It is an insidious poison, destroying the functions of life while it enchants the sense. The most fertile countries have been laid waste, and human blood has been made to flow in rivers, by the fell hand of war; famine and pestilence, earthquakes and volcanoes, have spread death and desolation over provinces, states and empires, and they have again risen into life and flourished; but the moment they are entangled in the toils of a French alliance, their restoration becomes hopeless and their liberties are gone from them forever. They are bound in chains, or perhaps devoured by the monster, towards whose den may

be seen innumerable prints of *approaching* footsteps, but none *returning*, None *returning*, did I say? Yes, thanks to a merciful Providence, though no gleam of hope penetrated the horrid dungeons of the victims of this modern *Cacus*, whose sullen, implacable and inexorable disposition would produce nothing but gloom and despair, yet a **HERCULES** has arisen, where least expected, to rescue the deluded victims from their confinement and perhaps finally destroy the monster. We have already beheld some few of these victims, whose strength and spirits were not too much weakened and exhausted in their confinement, emerging from their dungeons to the length of their chains, and waiting with trembling anxiety for their deliverer to burst asunder their fetters. With such warning examples before us, shall we still persist in following the footsteps of these ill-fated nations to slavery and destruction, and be the last to precipitate ourselves into the snare where our folly could not deserve even the poor tribute of commiseration? Shall we now receive the "mark of the beast in our foreheads," when we have seen its fatal effects on others? Yet, are there not strong indications that we are preparing ourselves for destruction? It is not merely in the subserviency of our rulers to the wishes of France, and their implicit obedience to every mandate of her emperour, that we are to look for the greatest evidence of our danger; it is not that we are governed by laws dictated by him, and that our President dare not even grant a license for the importation of the property of our own citizens, after he is informed the measure would displease Napoleon, that we should mostly deplore. These are merely the *symptoms* of our disease. But it is that the people are corrupted by *French politicks and French philosophy*, and are contaminated by those principles which guided the people of France thro' all the enormities of her revolutions. It is in assimilating our principles and practices to those of France that we render ourselves wor-

thy her destructive favours and prepare ourselves for her poisonous caresses. Already have the most bloody scenes of her revolution been acted over in one of our principal cities, and the hopeful pupils of Robespierre and Murat, in this country, have even surpassed, in cruelty and savage ferocity, the examples of Paris. Our most valuable rights have been assailed by a lawless banditti, engendered in an enlightened city, and pursuing their murderous machinations under the eye of the civil authority. While these blood-thirsty cannibals were seeking their victims and prowling for prey, the guardians of the laws were viewing the scene with silent composure, and perhaps contemplating with secret satisfaction the slaughter and havock that ensued.

That we are thus corrupt in our infancy, and discover such symptoms of rapid decay before we have arrived at maturity, must be a mournful and melancholy consideration with every friend of liberty. But real patriots will never despair of their country. To you, my brethren, who are the professed disciples of Washington, and have associated under his banner, it especially belongs to raise your voice and exert your strength to save a falling nation. You have duties to perform which are rendered important and imperious, as his virtues and principles are disregarded, as the people become blind to their true interests, and our dangers and calamities increase. Be not dismayed because you are beset on all sides, with foes who are insidiously watching your movements, who misrepresent the objects of your association, and stigmatize you as enemies to your country. While you indignantly disclaim the unmerited calumny, let such considerations serve only to stimulate your exertions in the cause of truth and benevolence, to inspire you with resolution, in vindicating and supporting the principles of Washington, to awake your vigilance and strengthen your firmness. Your tutelar saint, in his parting advice, has justly reprobated "all combinations for the pur-

pose of overawing the constituted authorities." But your submission to the laws and obedience to your rulers, in all their rightful requirements, shall prove that you have not hypocritically associated under his name, as your enemies have asserted, for so base a purpose. While you profess to be guided, in your political conduct, by his precepts, be careful that your *actions* rigidly correspond with your *professions*. The ignorance, envy or malice of your enemies may influence them to revile you and load you with calumny ; but you will have the inward satisfaction, that none shall have reason to dislike your purposes, excepting such as dread a recurrence to the principles of Washington, the diffusion of correct and useful information, and the practice of benevolence. Persevere then in your patriotick labours, and if that virtue and spirit which achieved our independence, is not entirely extinct, the nation may yet be rescued from impending destruction. The clouds of error, passion and prejudice in which aspiring demagogues have enveloped the minds of the people, must be dispelled. The people must be aroused to a just sense of their danger, and instructed in their true interests ; they must be taught to know that those who are now piloting the ship of state, are conducting it on rocks and quicksands, and that their only chance of preservation lies in placing at the helm such men as are free from the delusion and infatuation that have brought us to our present perilous situation. Assiduously inculcate those principles which Washington has left to guide us in our political career ; cease not from your exertions, while breath animates your frame, to restore your country to that PEACE, PROSPERITY and HAPPINESS, which it once enjoyed, and the virtuous consolation at least will remain, if our liberties must perish, " THAT YOU ARE INNOCENT."

There is no distress, however extreme, no condition, however forlorn, in which a virtuous mind will not find some source of consolation.

Amid the gloom and horrors of the tempest which is now howling around us, which is beating on our devoted land and threatens to overwhelm us and the other nations of the world in one common ruin, we are cheered by the same promises which furnish the ground of our hope beyond this mortal existence. The commotions and convulsions which agitate the political and moral world are rapidly fulfilling the word of prophecy, and mark the present crisis as the harbinger of the glorious days of universal peace and philanthropy. The flames of Moscow, like the divine SHEKINAH, have ascended to Heaven and illumined the dark and comfortless prospects of oppressed humanity. The conflagration has ceased, but it has kindled a spirit of resistance to tyranny and oppression which cannot be extinguished. A voice has issued from the fiery element, saying to the oppressor of nations, "THUS FAR SHALT THOU COME AND HERE SHALL THY PROUD WAVES BE STAYED!" The Tyrant who has heretofore done "*according to his own will*;" who has "*magnified and exalted himself above every God*," and before whom till late, "*none has been able to stand*," has already experienced the commencement of that "indignation" which is yet to be "*accomplished*." "The wine-press of the wrath of God," in which have been cast "the clusters of the vine of the earth," has already been *trodden* by the avenging Angel, "and blood has flown even to the horses' bridles." Yet perhaps the late defeat and disasters of the tyrant who has brought so much misery upon the world, will urge him to make another bold and desperate effort for vengeance; he will continue a little longer to afflict the people with the calamities of war, and will probably succeed in "planting the curtains of his pavilions between the seas in the glorious holy mountain;" and "many countries may yet be overthrown;" but "*he will surely come to his end and none shall help him*." Then will the millenium com-

mence, and the nations, weary of destroying each other, will. "BEAT THEIR SWORDS INTO PLOUGH-SHARES AND THEIR SPEARS INTO PRUNING HOOKS AND LEARN WAR NO MORE." "THE TABERNACLE OF GOD WILL BE WITH MEN, HE WILL DWELL WITH THEM AND THEY SHALL BE HIS PEOPLE."
