

ORATION,

PRONOUNCED

JULY THE FOURTH, MDCCCIII,

AT THE REQUEST OF THE
BARNWELL REVOLUTION SOCIETY,

AT BARNWELL COURT-HOUSE,

IN COMMEMORATION

OF THE

ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

By ISAAC BOURDEAUX,

STUDENT AT LAW.

——— Et nomen pacis dulce est et ipsa res salutaris, sed inter pacem, et servitutem plurimum interest. *Pax est tranquilla libertas*: Servitus, malorum omnium postremum, non modò bello, sed morte etiam repellendum.

——— Modò hoc opto:—ut moriens populum Romanum liberum relinquam: hoc mihi majus a diis immortalibus dare nihil potest.

CICERO IN M. ANTON. PHIL. 11.

CHARLESTON:

PRINTED BY FRENEAU & WILLIAMS, No. 44, BAY.

1803.

12



AN ORATION.

WHEN I behold myself encircled by so respectable an assemblage of my Fellow-Citizens, I cannot avoid feeling that diffidence which youth and inexperience inspire. It is, therefore, with the most humiliating conviction of my great incompetence to the task, that I now appear before you; yet, emboldened by the flattering hope of your candor and indulgence, I am induced to proceed to the execution of the arduous duty this day assigned me.

It would be presumptuous indeed were I to entertain an idea that you could now expect your attention to be repaid by the learning of a Jefferson; that the eloquence of a Jackson should arrest your mute amaze, or that the fascinating strains which would charm your ears were a Giles, a Randolph, or a Nicholson to speak, should flow from me. Sensible am I that in selecting me to be the orator of the day, it is much less to the abilities, than the patriotism of a young citizen; to the zeal of a panegyrist of freedom, and disclaimer against despotism, that you have confided this honorable function. In yielding to your sollicitations under these impressions, I rest satisfied that my deficiency in its execution will be viewed through the telescopic eye of ardor in me to perform, to the best of

my power, the duty my country enjoins ; and that the purity of the simple effusions of my heart will make amends for the deficiency of talents. But though I acknowledge my inferiority in point of mental faculties to many other citizens present, who could more ably be the organ of your feelings on this occasion ; still, permit me to say, that with sincerity great as theirs, I dropped a tear of sorrow at the past misfortunes of my country ; that I rejoice at her present prosperity, and am as affectionately anxious for her future welfare.

We are assembled to commemorate the twenty-seventh anniversary of that eventful day which gave birth to liberty in this western world, the epoch of the declaration of our independence ; when, with the magnanimity characteristic of freemen, you broke the fetters your tyrants had forged, and ranked yourselves among the sovereign nations of the earth.

In this assembly perhaps I behold the venerable countenances of some of our earliest patriots, who have convened to join in the solemnization of our annual "*Elutheria*."

Though I cannot boast of having participated in the glorious struggle, yet I feel proud in possessing the principles that actuated our immortal countrymen, Franklin ! Warren ! Hancock ! Which inspired such patriotic ardor in you as rendered you insensible to dangers, and enabled you to encounter, with unexampled fortitude, all the toils of war, whilst combating with an implacable, unrelenting, and incensed enemy.

The occasion, at the same time that we are awed by its solemnity, fills us with joy and exultation. It is solemn ! as our minds naturally revert to those scenes of our revolution that were threatening the destruction of our country's freedom : It is joyous, as it revives in

the imagination those happy events preparatory to our present exalted condition. Your breasts, which trembled with solicitude, and were tossed by the undulation of uncertainty at the commencement of our national convulsions—which triumphed at the ultimate establishment of our contested liberties, although long since ceased to beat, will, on this auspicious day, renew their verberation: Your enthusiasts, patriots, will not be repressed.

The painful sensations of those gloomy moments cannot but arise anew when we contemplate the time that America was floating on the stormy billows of adversity: we see with terror the huge rock, threatening with its ponderous substance, to crush her into atoms; but suddenly we turn and find the dread talisman broken; with pleasure extatic we view the scene changed; the dreary vision fled, and enrapturing prospects, as if beautified by magic art, intercept our sight: we see the tempest calmed, and the beauteous vessel majestically gliding through the tranquil waves.

Fellow-Citizens! It is a well known fact that Britain, from a trivial circumstance, claimed America as her rightful domain, at the time that our ancestors, from various parts of Europe, compelled by the contention of civil elements and ecclesiastical persecution, fled to this remote region as a retreat from oppression, to enjoy here that liberty, both civil and religious, before denied them. The British laws and government were most congenial to the sentiments of the illustrious refugees. They were happy therefore to adopt her code, and to resign themselves to her protection. But whilst in the early period of their settlement, they were sinking beneath the burthen of impediments which opposed their new establishments; spilling their blood in daily

contests with the savage tribes, and encountering incredible hardships, difficulties and fatigues ; she, with the utmost indifference, remained a silent spectator of the scene ; no maternal aid did she afford these meritorious emigrants whilst cultivating deserts, and converting solitary tracts into fertile fields. Yet, when the avaricious Britannia was roused from her lethargic couch ; when she espied the hidden treasures glittering in the secret coffers ; then did her potent *Ahab*, already unwieldy with wealth and greatness, demand our vineyard ; nay more, that invaluable gift of our illustrious progenitors—our liberty ! But Americans, in a voice of manly eloquence replied, “ we will not resign the inheritance we received from God, and our forefathers.” Glorious determination ! Happy resolution !

Suffer, Fellow-Citizens, the magnificence of this scene to arrest attention, and awaken in your minds reflections suitable to an occasion so solemnly interesting. Had you yielded a tame obedience to tyrannic and imperious mandates, or resigned, without a struggle, that right to freedom you had in infancy been taught to cherish ; had you, without a murmur, become “ hewers of wood and drawers of water” for a modern *Nero*, and not magnanimously resisted his brutal grasp, the archives of your country would have been devoid of a glorious record—the *event* we now commemorate ! She, at this time, happy, great and free, would then have served merely to increase the tyrant’s aggrandisement, and that too without being permitted to taste the fruits of her own labors—Her intrepid sons, who now are freemen, then would have been only a numerous, a mournful addition to the servile train of a monarch’s vassals.

I shall not enter into a minute exposition of the se-

ries of events which gave rise to the colonial revolt from the mother country, as Britain was then improperly denominated; but commence from the time that unjust pecuniary tributes, under the colour of law, were to be exacted from the colonists. This system meditated by the British ministry for the taxation of the American people, was the precursor of that brilliant event of the 4th of July, '76. It was a project, whose effects were foreseen by those who dispassionately contemplated the object, and the consequences of an attempt to accomplish it; a project the most impolitic and visionary, and which surely must have been conceived in the frantic brain of ideots or madmen, as the issue of the attempt eventually proved. A few there were in England, in justice let it be said, who less allured by the temptation, who had not drank so freely of the intoxicating draught of speedy aggrandisement at the expence of our peace, like the prophetic Phineas, disclosed the secrets of futurity, who predicted, that from the adoption of oppressive measures, a revolution would inevitably commence, which would terminate in the disgrace of the British arms and in the establishment of American independence on an immoveable basis.

The unjust, haughty, and imperious conduct of Britain, whose maternal behaviour indicated such a degree of affection as should have been reciprocated with execrations, created the scintillation of public as well as private indignation and discontent—the patience of Americans became exhausted. They dreaded the approaching scene whose dismal aspect was increasing to a blacker hue; they beheld and trembled! They exerted every conciliatory, every pacific mean to dispel the threatening storm, the accumulating gloom; and to their immortal glory be it told, they exceeded not the limits

circumscribed by the compass of their national honor.

In vain did Americans, in the voice of Stentor, proclaim against the proceedings of Britain ; uselessly did they remonstrate ; in vain did those patriots, Camden, Wilkes, Fox and Chatham, pour out the eloquence of Demosthenes to avert the evils they, in their wisdom, and from their penetration, foresaw. Statutes designed for the subversion of our freedom were nevertheless imposed : ministerial artifices practiced, and every delusive scheme invented to awe us into submission to the odious acts. Yet Americans, disdainful of the gigantic strides which were menacing their liberties, with one accord, intrepidly refused an acquiescence to their measures. Let us, said they, be free. “ Annul your oppressive laws or we shall continue to make new ones in spite of you. If you endeavor to subjugate us we shall triumph. Your armies—they are not sufficiently numerous. Your navy—all the navies on earth are not capable of making us submit to your will. Make your election between our love and our hate. We have already made our choice between the liberty that is to combine us, and those chains with which we are to be manacled.”

The designs of our oppressors now became too glaring for concealment. The mask was here thrown off : hence, in the daring mockery of omnipotence, a new doctrine was promulgated—hence, a law declaratory of parliamentary right to bind the colonies, “ In all cases whatever,” was enacted. But the doom of Britain was already inscribed on the tablet of fate. America, not having the least shadow of representation in the British legislature, felt indignant at so alarming a declaration. A declaration of an assumption of power by an *island*,

a mere *atom* of *creation*, to bind by its laws the people inhabiting a continent at the distance of three thousand miles ! Submission to this act would have been a criminal passiveness, disgraceful to, and incongruous with the American character. The Almighty Creator of the Universe designed it not ; to fancy he did, would be a detraction of his divine intentions.

Notwithstanding these repeated acts of tyranny and presumption, the colonies were anxious to remain attached to Britain on the ancient system, and by the bonds of concord, because they were sensible of the propriety of the axiom that “ Nations should not be precipitate in overturning ancient and established dominion ;” particularly when the manners, language, habits and government of such, are congenial to their own. Yet, on the other hand, it is not to be understood that a nation, or a people, should tamely bear the abuses which tyrants may suggest, or despotism invent. America wished to continue united to Britain on condition that the grievances of which she complained, were redressed. When that was denied, she then had courage to assert her rights, and she was sanctioned by the laws of God and of nature in her proceedings.

The language of America at that time to Britain was—“ Admit all the men who belong to your government in the different parts of the globe to a free competition for, and an equal representation in your legislature ; let the king alone sway the executive sceptre, and never be permitted to stretch it forth but in the name of those laws made by the representatives, and consented to by the colonies and provinces ; you will then possess the supreme social unity, and the grand monarchy of liberty. The universe will all assimilate to

your empire, or at least all the earth will be eager to imitate such a beautiful model ; you will thus have the glory of commencing the happiness of the world, and ensuring the fraternity of the human race." But these words of wisdom were disregarded. Englishmen were too high in the estimation of themselves. They would neither repeal their oppressive laws nor grant us an equal representation in their legislature. They prescribed : it was enough—we should listen, tremble, and obey.

The Roman emperors usurped the titles of the Gods : Numa was said to have communicated with a divine being. The Lama of Thibet arrogates to be the immortal God himself. The Incas of Peru, and the Saxon kings of old, pretended to descend from the deities of their country ; and surely the king of Britain may boast his ancestry from Belzebub, for he exercises his attributes, and triumphs in scenes of cruelty and carnage. He wielded his sceptre with a mighty hand over a devoted people—overleaped the bounds prescribed by the Almighty for the extension of his power ; introduced fire, sword, pestilence and famine into the land for the enforcement of an unnatural obedience to his will. Not even our harmless unoffending *Oriental* brethren have escaped his avaricious grasp—it was their misfortune that they possessed wealth ; were they a poor and indigent people, their repose and happiness, no more than our's under the like circumstances, would have been interrupted by this rapacious tyrant.

A retrospective view of our political atmosphere, citizens, must provoke in your bosoms a glow of indignation against those who strove by unprecedented deeds to reduce us to a state so abject, so humiliating, as that contemplated by the British ministry. Unconditional

submission! A submission Britain herself scarcely knew under Danish despotism or the feudal tenures of the Saxons.

The tyrannical scheme towards the colonies was the offspring of ministerial demons in the plenitude of their arrogance. The noble opposition on the part of America to unjust demands, kindled up their vengeance; they, regardless of the inherent rights of man; regardless of the sacred precepts of nature and of nations; disdainful to resort to conciliatory means for regaining our affections, announced their pleasure, and answered all our humble petitions for redress by immense naval and military preparations—exhibited to our view, engines of destruction—threatened us with halters, chains, and daggers—poured in among us the warriors of their three kingdoms, with all the dread apparatus of war, in visionary expectation of awing us to obedience, and of reducing us to servitude by coercive and sanguinary means.

These were the dictates of their disappointments! This the scourge intended to castigate us for our glorious disobedience to unjust laws! The pride of Englishmen had elevated itself to the summit of infatuation. Those who would ignominiously surrender up themselves, nay worse, their country, were to be rewarded with benign protection, which meant nothing more than a protection from the insults of their soldiery; but they who honorably continued and nobly dared to treat their offers with disdain, were marked out as victims of their vengeance.

In implicit confidence of their success they clung to the chimera of their prowess in arms. They presumptuously pronounced the invincibility of their armies because combating with undisciplined Americans. They vainly dwelt on their own superiority, and scoffed at

our rebel impotence : But the genius of America convinced them her sons were valorous soldiers, and would live or die freemen !

Such were the terrific scenes when Americans disunited themselves from Britain—when they broke those ties by which they had been attached to a despotic government : such the awful spectacle, when they intrepidly declared their independence, undismayed by the dreadful din of arms, the hideous glare of formidable Demons, the tremendous roaring of cannon, which seemed to mimic the thundering of Sinai, or the gloomy prospects of momentary dissolution.

What a solemn, what a melancholy period was this ! How eventful the crisis ! when you saw our country on a precipice's brink, her national existence exposed to a devouring monster, her destiny suspended by the web of uncertainty ! Yet you were resolved ; your determination was fixed ; “ liberty or death,” was the prevailing motto.

Neither the imperative voice of justice, nor the tender suggestions of humanity could prevent it. The unprovoked violence of our enemies drove you to the decision of arms. You appealed to him, who “ Rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm ;” you addressed yourselves to that allwise and almighty being, the creator and governor of worlds ; to him, who can command the fury of irritated seas when throwing up their foaming billows exalted as the sky, to calm : who can stop the fiery mouths of great volcanos when vomiting flames and liquid matter from the bowels of the earth ; who can check in their career the splendid luminaries of the night, and annihilate the fair creation he has formed—to that august, that awful tribunal of unerring God !

The consideration of those unparalleled horrors which mark the progress of Britain's unnatural contest demands severer terms of opprobrium than any language in my feeble power is competent to express. The unbounded and brutal violence of *legal ruffians*, of *authorised assassins*, are facts which require not that you, fellow-citizens, should glance at the historic page for information.

Fain would I pass over a detail of the black catalogue of crimes committed, nor revive in your imaginations the wounds you received from her avenging wrath : yet, repugnant as it is to my feelings, the voice of duty imperatively bids me draw the curtain of concealment, and bestow on them a momentary contemplation.

Words are inadequate to convey a just idea of this æra of iniquity ; an æra engraven in deep cut letters on your minds ; an æra, that each annual return of this memorable day, would render ten thousand draughts from the stream of forgetfulness ineffectual : a time, when this now happy country, pointed out by the finger of providence as an asylum for those whom the arm of power had persecuted, was converted into the nursery of hordes of German mercenaries, who, in obedience to Britain's arbitrary will, were aiding the tragic drama, and crimsoning Columbia's plains with the blood of her sons.

The measure of calamity was filled. Tribes of savage maniacs were stimulated, by their not less barbarous friends, to accelerate the desolating scheme. From the shores of the Atlantic to the western limits of our forests, destruction spread its demoniacal wings. Our unprotected villages were fired ; our cities and mansions robbed, our relatives detained in dire captivity,

whose misery was augmented by cruelty refined. But the horror ends not here—the dogs of war were howling—their souls were parched with vengeance—they thirsted after blood! The tenderest ties of nature were disregarded, and humanity insulted; the brains of helpless infants nourished a soil made sterile by frequent devastations. Our virgins were snatched by the fell arm of murderous myrmidons, perhaps whilst taking an affectionate, a last, a long farewell, of the inanimate corpses of their dead parents: even the solemn repositories of the dead were searched for supposed hidden treasures; yea, the doors of the temples of Jehovah were forced, for the same sacrilegious purpose, and sanctified shrines profaned by outrageous hands! Ye whose blood watered our fields and rushed in torrents to deface the briny billows of the ocean; ye murdered parents; ye slaughtered friends; ye babes whose little prattle soothed many an hour of your mother's woe, whose innocence should at least have been your shield, and ameliorated the obdurate hearts of your destroyers; you I invoke from your abode of bliss, to witness the facts I now recite—and oh! ye sepulchres, and holy churches! whose sanctity should have arrested their impious steps could you have mouths to speak, you would confirm the tale, and re-echo in your vaulted roofs the cry of vengeance.

Enough! Over scenes of misrule, tyranny and oppression; of rapine and desolation, which would require the pencil of a West to delineate, will I draw the sable mantle of oblivion, nor dwell on a theme at which “all nature cries aloud.”

Gladly will we turn our minds from scenes of horror and devastation, to that period when Britain became compelled to prostrate her little, hard gained,

transitory glory at the feet of injured freemen; when the few laurels she had gathered withered and reclined on the bosom of disgrace; when, notwithstanding the numerous advantages she possessed, American virtue, like ancient Rome's, whilst struggling with Carthaginian superiority, prevailed; when her adversaries, driven by the blind impetuosity, artifices and delusive pretences of base enthusiasts, found too late that she had stumbled into the abyss of error, and lost that inestimable jewel which added the greatest lustre to the crown of England—found that she had fallen! fallen! and from her ruin has emanated a rising republic.

It was not Fabius who checked the fierce career of Hannibal, or Scipio who conquered him, so much as the Roman virtue which overcame Carthaginian corruption. It was not Washington and his associates in arms who subdued Cornwallis, who were the arbiters of a long undecided victory, so much as the virtue, the patriotism and unanimity of Americans that conducted them triumphantly through an arduous and bloody conflict.

No more do clarions sound alarm; no more do trumpets' notes proclaim hostility; nor brazen cymbals shake the trembling air! Freedom's labouring spirit, ethereal flame, like electric matter bursted forth; its shock dismayed the tools of despotism, their boasted courage receded to its source, their presumption perished! America has emerged from political chaos. The sun of liberty, with all its creative powers, in orient splendour arose and beamed those genial rays which now illumine the realms her favourites enjoy. "It is thou, thrice sweet and gracious Goddess, whom all in public or in private worship; whose taste is grateful, and ever will be so till nature herself shall change; no

tint of words can spot thy snowy mantle, or chymic power turn thy sceptre into iron—with thee to smile upon him as he eats his crust, the Swain is happier than his monarch.” Nay, that morsel in frigid Zembla, or among Arabia’s torrid wilds would be more grateful if she crowned the meal, than worlds of wealth, or all the fancied dishes of luxurious palates in a despot’s court.

From the issue of Britain’s attempts to enslave us, let kings and princes learn hereafter to respect their subjects; let this lesson teach them that the “physical strength resides in the governed,” which needs only to be excited to level the most ancient and confirmed dominion.

As the result, fellow-citizens, of your labours, may we behold improvement’s rays concentrating on social life. In every quarter of the union Minerva rears her majestic temples of literature: our country may be compared to one great cultured field, cherished by the showers of enviable wealth. The veterans who were in scenes of civil commotion have forgot in calm retirement the noise of battles and clangor of arms.

In the place of muskets, swords and bayonets, they have substituted the implements of husbandry; there they remain uninterrupted by Mars, shielded by the goddesses of peace, directing them to industry and plenty. Our commerce extends itself; agriculture flourishes, and our citizens emulate those of other countries in their manufactures, whose industry and toil is rewarded with success and prosperity. In short, human happiness accumulates. Oh! favoured people! may these halcyon days remain ’till time shall be no more. To the four divisions of the globe have you given a practical example. In France, you inspired those sen-

timents which introduced a freer system of government and liberated that portion of mankind from the thralldom of those who style themselves nobles; sentiments which raised on the ruins of Gallic monarchy a great and splendid republic. The rest of mankind will copy from the glorious example; strictly will they observe the lesson you have taught them. Their ears are ringing with the seraphic sound of liberty! The day is not far distant when this sublunary orb will be one single empire of confederated freemen. Tyrants! well may you gnash your iron teeth; now may you quiver with alarm; already have your fairest prospects darkened; already do your sceptres splinter—your tridents tremble; your evil genius sets musing o'er your doom; the book of destinies lies open, there read your fate, anticipate you universal downfall!

It is a solemn duty imposed on us, fellow-citizens, that whilst we are celebrating this glorious day, we should, at the same time, render the homage due to the founders of American liberty. I shall not attempt a recital of the prodigies of patriotism and valor which mark the American revolution. Like Greece, we had our Marathon and Salamis; like Rome, our Cincinnatus; like Sparta, our Leonidas. Gates reaped the laurels of Saratoga. The Eutaw of Carolina has wreathed for the forehead of illustrious Greene a crown of glory; and has it not granted immortality to the lamented Campbell. He, who on the day of victory fell with a mortal wound, and cried, "who gives way?" On being informed the British were fleeing, with his last breath he breathed, "I then die contented." The firm and patriotic Regulus could not have deserved more, when bearing for his country all the pangs of

torture that malice and cruelty refined could inflict. At York-Town, the proud Cornwallis, general of the *invincible* armies of Britain, was compelled to yield his sword, steeped in humiliation, to him whom he had so often contemptuously styled the *rebel Washington*.

The grateful people of antiquity have transmitted for posterity to admire, they have perpetuated the names of all those heroes whom they justly called fathers of Rome, of Greece, preservers of their country. And will not every American with reverential accents pronounce the names of our immortal friends, Warren ! Mercer ! Laurens ! Will they not also hand them to posterity ? They will, their memories are apportioned to eternity.

But first in the heavenly group behold that cis-atlantic prodigy of wisdom, that august old man, the sage, the venerable Franklin ! “ He who could mark the course of unknown worlds, and reduce excentric orbs to the obedience of his system ;” he who caught the swift flying lightning from its dark abode, “ who could arrange the sun’s bright rays beneath their various tinted banners, and give harmony and method to the glare of day—he who could develop the perpetual laws of nature, and seemed enabled to unfold heaven’s most hidden secrets.”

Many other constellations glitter with transcendent splendor in our political firmament. But, alas ! they who led our armies to the fields of victory ; whose wisdom presided in our councils ; who first conceived and operated the attainment of our liberty ; become hoary in the service of their country, have yielded to death’s resistless call, and are now slumbering in the peaceful tenancy of their tombs : yet, their laurels will never fade, nor their glory be extenuated by time or

malice: their memories will be sacred to Americans until the "wreck of matter and the crush of worlds."

The people of America, who justly appreciate their worth, are overwhelmed with grief, when these meditations recur to their minds. They say the chief deliverers of our country; they who, like the Pylian sage of old, counselled us with wisdom, who marshalled the armies of independence, and taught us to wield the sword in defence of freedom, are no more. "Nations have hitherto only mourned for kings; we will mourn for men." Let our tears mingle together, let those liquid emblems of our sorrow drop to the memories of the fathers of our liberty! Ye departed heroes of America! Ye guardian spirits of her freedom! You who despised the vanity of false greatness—who withstood the torrent which flowed against her rights, and forsook your tranquility for her salvation; you shall receive your just portion of renown. Your country pays you her solemn tribute of gratitude at the altar of independence—The temples of liberty are hung in sable: fair freedom mourns your loss. An everlasting monument is erected to your memories—its materials, glory—its cement, the affections of your country. Future ages will chaunt to your manes their grateful songs of praise; they will be immortal!

If in the course of my narration, the recital of events which occurred in the progress of our revolutionary war may have revived the bitterness of grief which perhaps you had since ceased to feel for a long lost friend, a parent, or an offspring; or if, from those who have not been bereft of an endeared companion, or an affectionate relative, the recollection of sanguinary deeds may have drawn a tear of sympathy, may our sorrows be solaced, let our sadness be dissipated by the soothing

remembrance that their hallowed shades now walk in the regions of eternal bliss! Fellow-citizens! it is now time that we should contemplate scenes of a more recent date.

We have seen the fabric of arbitrary dominion subverted, and on its crumbled atoms our present federal superstructure erected. Its beauty, symmetry, and perfection have been justly the admiration of surrounding nations. To attempt, therefore, an elaborate eulogium on it, would be but a feeble echo of that superior panegyric, which has been repeatedly uttered by sublimer tongues. I can, however, with pride declare, that our constitution, that fortress and depository of our liberties, now holds itself unrivalled among the many whose walls policy has strengthened, whose battlements are fortified by wisdom, and received the sanctity of time.

To bestow commendation undeservedly becomes a sycophant, and would be equally as unjustifiable as to conceal, with the mask of hypocrisy, sentiments of disapprobation where they are due. Far is it from my intention to attempt to cast unmerited obloquy on the actions of even the former administrators of our government; but being the interpreter of your feelings I am sanctioned on this day, on this occasion, and at this time, to observe, that there was a period during that administration, and not so distant as to have erased it from the leaves of your recollection, when measures were adopted in utter dereliction of our freedom, and our republican system of government; so much so, as to make it incumbent on every friend of the future welfare of America to exprobrate those with whom they originated.

It is, fellow-citizens, one of the grand pillars that supports the weighty fabric of our liberty, and proud

are we to inhabit a country where the toleration of opinion is admitted, where the liberty of discussion is unfettered. Impressed with the belief that it is the peculiar privilege of freemen, what were your emotions when your lips were closed with the seal of silence? When masked with the pretence of suppressing sedition, utterance was forbidden by the imposition of a special act of prohibition? When, if the just indignation of republicans would sparkle to illumine their country, which was fast progressing into gloom, it should be checked by the terrors of loathsome prisons? The objects of the sedition law, passed during the late administration, were to silence our tongues, to prostrate our pens, and every press, those instruments of public information, which dared to tell the truth. What could have been the motives of its framers? Conscious of not continuing the pure and uncorrupt servants of the people, such were the means resorted to for effectually evading a thorough scrutiny of the conduct of the public functionaries.

Your feelings, fellow-citizens, must be at this time materially different from what they were at the period to which I have just referred; when you were witnesses to daily innovations; when many of our citizens, sorry am I to say it, were for precipitating their country's entrance into misery's horrid figure to accomplish some dark insidious project. Their voices, Sempronius like, thundered out for war against a friendly nation and an ancient ally. Let me ask if their affection towards their country could have been demonstrated in no other way than to seek occasion to plunge her into an abyss of ruin. In the frantic zeal by which they were then propelled, did they lose a remembrance of our eight years war with Britain? Their mistaken ardor surely

made them forgetful of the welfare of their country, or war and despotic deeds they would have shunned as destructive to her prosperity.

Such was the disposition of the late administration—such the delusion of a number of our citizens, and such the hasty progress it made to reduce us from a state of happiness to that of misery, when, “First in the east the glorious lamp was seen, regent of the day!” When you made vacant, by constitutional authority, the chair of magistracy, and hailed Jefferson, that bright luminary of America, to direct the helm! whose own effulgence adds redoubled lustre to the exalted dignity.

Oh happy change! our freedom will remain inviolate; the poison which threatened our safety has been precipitated; measures the most wise and salutary have been pursued; accumulated expence decreased; standing armies, the instruments of arbitrary power, disbanded; unnecessary internal taxes, with other odious acts, through his means and our present patriotic members in Congress, have been repealed; our commerce has received protection from the ravages of insolent, yet impotent barbarians. These are the measures which stamp additional brilliancy on his illustrious administration, and which enhance his worth.

I must, fellow-citizens, glance once more at a subject which is abhorrent to my feelings, but I trust not foreign to this solemn occasion. I must here remark that great have been the exertions made by a disappointed faction, since the above mentioned period, to involve us in scenes of bloodshed with a nation whose territory adjoins us on the Mississippi; to sacrifice the peace of our country to the calamities of war, previous to any attempt at negotiation. The restless spirit of faction has been striving again to renew the flame of

martial fire: but they who opposed the former system of hostility—who said to our ruler here stop the career of your ambition, have remained unshaken in their attachment to the happiness of their country. As the result, peace and tranquility we yet enjoy!

Whilst the world is doing justice to Jefferson's exalted merit, permit me, fellow-citizens, to throw with you, my tributary mite into the scale of applause. Permit me, on this auspicious day, however inexpressively the portrait may be executed, to depict the character of this inestimable patriot, whose virtues, talents and principles, render him fit to be the chief magistrate of a great and free republic. In him you will find one whose conduct, uninfluenced by any local motives during our revolutionary war, will immortalize him, the wise and venerable pensman of that solemn instrument, the declaration of our independence; a man of universal knowledge, a second philosophic Franklin, a profound legislator—a *virtuous* statesman.

Against the heretofore unblemished character of this great and good man have the most infamous aspersions been lately cast. The continued detraction contained in many of the vehicles of intelligence under the influence of party, and the emissaries of Britain, are calculated to create phantoms in your minds by a tissue of misrepresentations, and to destroy, by false and deceptive means, our confidence in, and attachment for him: but be not the dupes of such insidious policy, however sanctioned by some influential aristocratic characters among us. The day will arrive when in spite of every endeavor to envelope the truth in clouds of obscurity, fame, like "Jove in thunder," will sound his triumph! Could his virtues be but half proclaimed; could we pronounce his just deserts, or speak that worth which

so far exceeds his fame, even his enemies, those foes to his renown, would call him patriot! friend! Fellow-citizens, I must here in trembling accents acknowledge that I have attempted a task too great for me to perform: to do justice to the subject of my eulogium would demand the oratorical powers of a Cicero. Yet let this imperfect sketch of a perfect man, efface whatever impressions may have been made on your susceptible minds from the perusal of false and scandalous publications, circulated with avidity throughout the United States. Once more I conjure you not to suffer yourselves to be imposed upon by the base insinuations of adherents to the cause of kings and arbitrary government; men who are unwearied in their attempts to create partizans to the interests of royalty and aristocracy even in the bosom of our country.

Friends and countrymen! of courage you stood no more in need during your arduous contest with Britain, than you do prudence now, to guard against the wiles of your internal foes: your former vigilance should not be suffered to repose even in the lap of profound security. Your ancient enemy is not better disposed towards your freedom and independence at this time, than she was in '76. As the subtle Sirens, who were feigned from the shores of Sicily to attract, by the melody of their voices, *merely to destroy*; so she, with *the same design*, from the womb of Albion, sends forth her emissaries to sprinkle poison and to disseminate discord in the American states.

British influence pervades our territory; skilled in the arts of dissimulation, and fraught with malignance, she meditates on mischief, and at this moment studies our destruction. The Hydra of Britain it is true, fellow-citizens, you have conquered, but you have not

like Hercules, totally destroyed it; the monster still exists; you cannot be too cautious of her machinations: she waits with malignant expectation the moment that will be most favorable to grasp you in her destructive talons. It is not Jay's cringing and shameful treaty; it is not our late passive submission to the insults to our flag by the impressments of our seamen, and the depredations on our commerce since the execution of that treaty, nor the indignities that we have offered to the French republic in obsequiousness to her, which has, or ever will appease her ire, or snatch us from the manacles she prepared at the moment of the declaration of our independence. Can you imagine that the language of that declaration—“*That a prince whose conduct is marked by every act which can define a tyrant,*” is already obliterated from his remembrance? It surely is not, nor will it be. The truths it spoke have been rankling in his bosom, and like Milton's devil, he has only viewed the sun of this hemisphere “to curse its beams.” But may you, as you have already done, defeat his artifices; may the government of America ever disconcert his schemes, may it evince to the world the fallacy of his projects, and that the sons of Columbia are too attentive to the felicity of their country to suffer exotic craft to contaminate her councils.

Rome, under the auspices of liberty and virtue, rose to the highest summit of national grandeur; yet why did she not continue in that glorious course, happy, virtuous and free? Why was not the posterity of their intrepid progenitors of liberty, blessed with the Rome of their ancestors? Alas! grown degenerate, they became inattentive; luxury and venality crept among

them and sapped their freedom, when that ill-fated empire became overwhelmed by the weight of its own corruption.

It is not more requisite for you to prevent external injuries than to guard against those which wrought the Roman catastrophe. Remember, that though our government is at present administered by the aggregate wisdom and virtue of the nation, it may at a future time be composed of an assemblage of their opposites; by men less disposed to a representative system than those who have conducted our national ark from the dangers of Scylla, nor approached the gaping entrance of Charybdis.

Let us not, on this day of congratulation, fellow-citizens, lose sight of the remembrance of that gratitude which we owe to the people of France. It is but a small equivalent to that nation who lent its aid, and fought gallantly by your sides; whose blood was profusely shed and flowed in the same stream with your's, to acquire for us the blessings we now enjoy. A nation, without whose naval and military services the capture of Cornwallis, (*the violater of the sacred capitulation of Charleston*, in the west, and the late chief of the band of plunderers of *Seringapatam*, in the east) with the flower of the British army, could not have been effected. A capture highly momentous and important, in as much as it put a final period to our revolutionary war. You will not, fellow-citizens, so far close your native magnanimity from a base dereliction of principle, as to say that you feel no higher interest in the prosperity and happiness of the French republic, than in the prosperity of the different monarchical nations of Europe including even the nation from whom you were emancipated by French assistance! Can it now be said

that the French nation holds not a more elevated place in your estimation than they do? No, citizens, this is not your language: although you have been absolved from your former political tie, (by the act of a legislature under the late administration) by which gratitude had, and should have continued to unite you; I repeat it again, this is not your language, notwithstanding you have frequently and daily been told it should be: you must feel a pang at the idea, and revolt indignant at the thought! You do not forget the bonds by which you should be connected in amity with the Gallic nation, in preference to any other nation on the earth. It would indeed be unnatural were you to favour, even in sentiment, your avowed enemy equally with those who have been, and now are, I believe in the sincerity of my heart, our friends. Would this accord with natural justice? Can it be consonant to those sentiments of honour the sons of Columbia have imbibed from their ancestors? No, never; they are too generous to deny that they entertain gratitude for Frenchmen. Their minds are too elevated to receive contrary impressions, or to cherish opinions so repugnant to rectitude.

Let me ask, fellow-citizens, what sentiments did you entertain for this nation, which some persons now affect to hold in so much contempt, when her army, navy and treasures came to your assistance. When Georgia and the Carolinas were subdued provinces; when the British force occupied the city of New-York, staring Washington's in the face: and when a formidable British army had made considerable progress towards the conquest of Virginia? The halter which was then suspended over your heads; the bayonets which were pointed at your breasts; your dreadful forlorn situ-

ation, and the timely assistance of a generous ally, excited in your minds emotions which language could not express. The most extravagant protestations of eternal gratitude and friendship resounded through the union! And now that you are reposing in the lap of ease, security and wealth; that the storm has lost its terrors, and the halter its dread, are your recollections to lose their active powers, and memory its reasoning faculties? Surely not! Then let us now offer the just tribute that is due them for their assistance towards the establishment of the independence we are this day celebrating.

Americans! our country has arisen to be the first free nation on the globe. She is now in the very altitude of greatness. Like Atlas she rears her head to the firmament on high: her name is held synonymous to liberty. France participated her glory; she venerates her ancient ally.

Britain, in all her gloomy meditations, which humiliated pride can suggest, beholds the beautiful fabric—gazes with a jealous sight—but tacitly admires. America! arbitress of freedom! is repeated at the extremities of Europe, of Asia, and of Africa!

This country, fellow-citizens, nurtured our tender years, supports our manhood, and cherishes us in old age: the regards we entertain for her are as natural as the implanted affection between parents and children. To love her then with an holy enthusiastic zeal, and to sacrifice all inferior regards, to keep vigils for the protection of her liberties, are duties which unerring nature has imposed. Let, therefore, the world's acknowledgements remain eternal; let no divisions nor civil contentions damp your zeal for the general good; let the passion we have imbibed for her welfare be

undiminished. May our freedom ever be inviolate, and ourselves unanimous in its protection, until the "cloud capt towers" of our grandeur; "the gorgeous palaces" of our wealth; "yea, the great globe itself, with all which it inherit, shall dissolve, and like the baseless fabric of a vision, leave not a wreck behind!"

