

from his little son

ORATION,

PRONOUNCED AT LANCASTER,

JULY 4, 1806,

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE ANNIVERSARY

OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

By SAMUEL BRAZER, Junior.

—BE JUST;—AND FEAR NOT!

SHAKESPEARE.

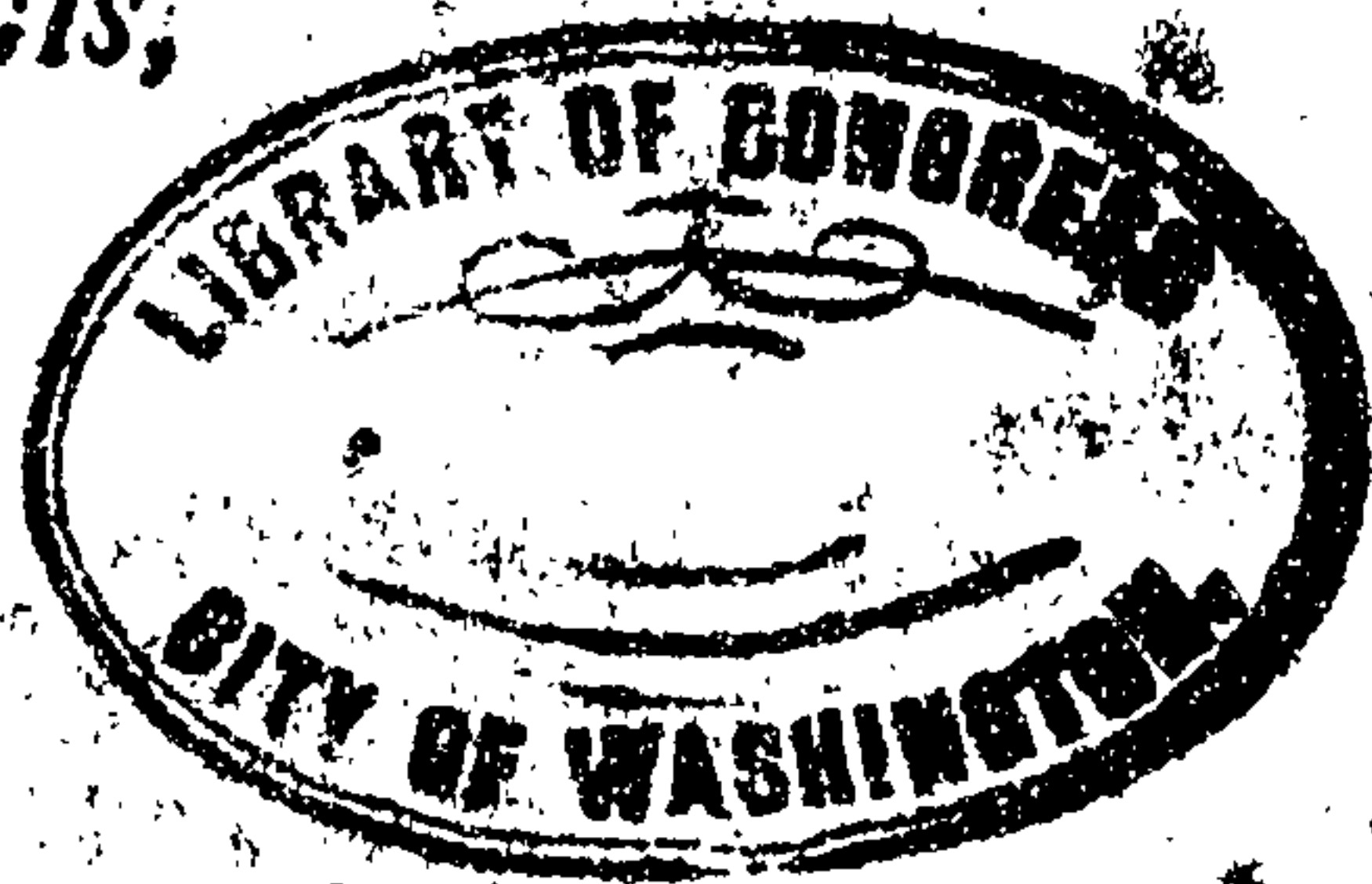
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ORATION.

“WE, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions—Do, in the name, and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, Free and Independent States;—that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connexion between them and the state of Great-Britain, is, and ought to be totally dissolved;—and that as Free and Independent States, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.”

SUCH was the solemn sacrament, by which the illustrious men, who planned the emancipation of their country, bound themselves to prosecute their heaven-prospered purpose. Such was the awful guarantee of their mighty engagement. How faithfully they performed what they so sacredly promised;—

W. B. W. G. 16/02
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how rapidly they accomplished what they so firmly engaged;—history has recorded, and the consecration of this happy anniversary has witnessed. As we croud around the board of patriotic festivity; as we throng the temples of the Most High, gratefully to celebrate the acquirement of his choicest earthly boon—*independence*—The “fainted shades” of the deceased Saviours of their country look down with benignant applause, and, in humble and appropriate imitation of the Saviour of Men, exclaim—“*This do in remembrance of us.*”

On this grand and august occasion, it has become my duty, Friends and Fellow-Citizens, to recal to your minds, the deeds of our Revolutionary heroes, of the motives which prompted their exertions, of the success, which crowned their toils. On such an occasion, an attempt at *novelty* would be indeed preposterous. The frippery of ambitious decoration would but disgrace the grandeur of the theme, and degrade the dignity of the narration. The force and splendour of the picture must depend on the correctness of the delineation. In depicting events, intrinsically great,

“—Those, who paint them truest, praise them most.”

Exiled from their native shores by priestly oppression, our ancestors committed themselves to the bosom of an almost untried ocean, braved the inclement howlings of wintry storms, and having passed the perils of the sea, reached their wished assylum, only to encounter perils more numerous and more dreadful. Yet they patiently endured them. For though their bodies were pinched with cold and famine, their immortal part was unenthralled. They communed with their God, in conformity, not with the mandates of his usurping vicegerents, but with the dictates of their own minds. No haughty prelate prescribed a formule for devotion ;—no bigotted tyrant inflicted torture for non-conformity. Their savage neighbours wielded the tomahawk ;—but they imposed no stole nor surplice. They sounded the war-whoop ;—but they declared no Test-Act ;—they pronounced no anathema. They lighted the funereal bonfire ; but they profaned not the name of the Almighty ;—by ascribing his sanction to the blazing faggot.

The hardships our brave fore-fathers endured, the fortitude they evinced, the resignation

they displayed,—the piety they maintained ;—and the affection for their native land which, in spite of aggression and in spite of neglect, they so ardently cherished, have been the themes of frequent and merited panegyric. Nor was their mistaken attachment, unperceived or unimproved. The unnatural mother, who had driven her children into the wilderness, denied them succour, and exposed them to destruction :—When, without her aid, they had grown to strength and usefulness, had the effrontery to demand from them assistance and support, and to appeal to their filial piety. As the colonies increased in wealth and population, their energies were in constant requisition to assist the British Crown in measures of safety, or schemes of aggrandizement. Directed by a CHATHAM, they paralyzed the colonial power of *France* ;—and that great statesman gave just credit for their important and voluntary services. But, the destinies of Britain were, in evil hour, committed to treacherous and unskilful hands. The wisdom and penetration of CHATHAM retired before the cunning and intrigue of BURE—the integrity of NEWCASTLE was sa-

eriticed to the duplicity of NORTH—and the manly patriotism of BARRE was succeeded by the wily corruption of GRENVILLE. It was then, that, the harmonious connexion between Britain and her colonies was continually interrupted. Wanton oppression on the one side produced distrust and repining on the other. It were an irksome task to recite the list of insulting impositions, projected and proposed, by a weak and abandoned, a mad and a miserable ministry ;—and sanctioned and effected by a venal and pensioned parliament. Tyranny and folly, at length reached the acme of insult and aggression. The Parliament openly claimed the right to “ *bind the American Colonies in all cases whatsoever !* ”—This haughty assumption completed the “ black catalogue of injury, abuse, contempt and crime which exhausted forbearance, and drove us to resistance.” This audacious claim animated the indolent, awakened the lethargic, and decided the doubtful. *Seventy times seven*, had our injured country accorded forgiveness,—and now her hardy sons prepared their arms and steeled their souls for the encounter. Quickened indignation at at-

most forgotten wrongs, caused the blood to course swifter through the veins of every friend to freedom and his country, and every eye flashed disdain defiance. On the other hand, an exasperated ministry prosecuted their flagitious schemes, with determined obstinacy. His most *Gracious* and *humane* Majesty, George the Third, believing his own mercenaries insufficient for the base work of murder and conflagration, looked for aid to his mighty puissant and magnanimous kinsman, the Prince of *Hesse Cassel*. The peaceful plains of America soon swarmed with miserable human packages of legs and arms and heads, taken on commission by the British Brokers in blood, who had stipulated the price to be paid for every part and parcel of these musquet-firing machines, which should not be returned in "good order and well-conditioned." Nor was the measure of iniquity yet full. It was not enough, that the wretched slaves of Germany should assist in the sanguinary enterprize. These dealers in blood were not versed in every branch of the art and mystery of destruction. They were not sufficiently skilled in the massacre of wo-

men and children. The dark business of devastation might not have been completed, had not *savage* ingenuity been taxed. The polished courtiers of *St. James* volunteered on the occasion ; and, for a time, left their riot and debauchery, to incite the western savages to "*deeds of dreadful note.*"

Memory, faithful to the task, indignant at the wrongs, but exulting in triumphs of this eventful period, enables some among my respected auditors, to view through the vista of succeeding years, the interesting scenes which succeeded. To others of us, it is only permitted to view them, "as in a glass darkly," by the lights of history and tradition. Yet, it is the pride and duty of us all, to realize the spirit, which caused them. In fancy, we range to the fields of *Lexington*, where the first act of the dreadful drama was performed—we mount the heights of *Bunker*, where victory blushed, as she cast a glance of regret, at the view of retreating valour—we watch the ascending flames of *Charlestown*, and curse the cowardly miscreants, who achieved the deed—we review the captured myrmydons of *Burgoyne*—we follow,

with agonizing apprehension, our retreating bands through the Jerseys—we rejoice at the brilliant successes of Princeton and Germantown—and we rest, with pride and exultation, on the final triumph of liberty, the final catastrophe of tyranny, completed at Yorktown, by the United forces of *America* and *France*.

This brilliant and decisive event closed the contest. After squandering one hundred and forty millions, with blood incalculable ; the baffled ministry were compelled to relinquish their object, to confess our Independence ;—and with shame and confusion to bow to the prophetic wisdom of CHATHAM, the thunder of whose voice, accompanied by the lightning of whose eye, had long before warned them—“ you cannot *conquer America*.”

But the splendid tale of our country's triumph is not unmarked by afflicting incidents. Melancholy hues intermix with the gaudy colors of joy ;—mellow the tints in the bright picture of American success ; and render it less dazzling ; but not less interesting. The funereal cypress is interwoven with the laurels of victory ; and tears of regret damp the ardour of

exultation. The rich boon of Independence was not gratuitous. It was dearly bought with the lives of illustrious patriots. When we reflect on the fall of WARREN, MERCER, MONTGOMERY, and their brave associates, who winged in company with them, their flight to heaven, the distracted mind, at a loss whether to bewail or to envy, finds relief in the flow of grateful admiration. Exalted spirits ! Like *Moses*, fated never to behold the promised land of Freedom, toward which you had led your countrymen ; like him your dying eyes were soothed with the prophetic view ! Happy at least in this, your fame is effectually secured—exalted above the reach of calumny—unassailable by the arts of envy, or the fury of faction ! Ere your names are shrouded in oblivion, ere your glory is overshadowed or obscured ;—*Liberty*, all her votaries extinct, shall inscribe on some monumental tablet in her temple, “ *Here lies the last true American !*”

Republican magnanimity would fain forget the execrable ingenuity, which invented anomalies in cruelty, in those trying times, when these heroes fought and bled—the predatory ex-

curfions of the traitor ARNOLD, and the miscreant, TRYON—the cowardly barbarities perpetrated on board the prifon fhips—the burning of *Fairfield*—and the lingering miferies, relieved only by welcome death, which have immortalized the names of the *Afia* and the *Jersey*; and damned to infamy the guilty perpetrators.—But, we cannot, we ought not to forget; and we have no right to pardon. The inhuman tranfactions are in the cuftody of hiftory. The wretched victims have delegated to us no power of forgivenefs. Heaven viewed their fufferings. The murderers have not efaped the vengeance of him, who has faid;—“*it is mine.*” The national retribution was indeed obvious and exemplary. Defeat and difafter attended the British arms;—while

“ Victory like the dazzling eagle flood”

perch'd on the ftandards of our brave bands; who, animated with the eloquence of a *Paine*, and conducted by the wifdom of a *Washington*, “ showed themfelves worthy of the holy caufe for which they contended.”

Liberty, fuccesfully wooed, was now to be wedded. Enamoured of her charms, to evince

their attachment, to conciliate her affections, the American people had atchieved deeds of valourous chivalry. A solemn covenant was now to be framed, to secure her possession, to plight the vow of endless constancy. The Constitution of the United States was the sacred contract, by which every *American* pledged his faith “*forever to love, cherish and protect her.*”

Under this auspicious instrument, the first and greatest office was justly and unanimously decreed to our “*first and greatest Revolutionary Character.*” Eulogy has been exhausted ; panegyric has become stale and common, as applied to the illustrious name of WASHINGTON. Let vaunting adulation chaunt her polished periods of praise to the *man* ; and then sacrilegiously spurn his parting *precepts*, and press his name into the service of a party. Let faction industriously excite that spirit of local disunion, against which his dying accents warned us ;—and then boast of his fellowship, and claim him for her own. Be ours a more honest, a more substantial tribute. Let us obey his precepts ; let us imitate his example. “*By this shall men know, that we are his disciples, if we do the things, which he*” enjoined.

Bright were the prospects of our rising nation—splended the fate, which seemed allotted to America. Increasing in lustre, she approached the zenith of prosperity, when “a baleful comet from his horrid hair, shed pestilence and death.” British influence began to undermine the fabric, which British force could never overthrow. I am aware, that we tread on the ashes of hardly-extinguished fires. Yet, it is no less a duty to profit by the dangers we have escaped, than to be grateful for the success, which has attended us. The plain and modest beacon, which warns us of rocks and quick sands, is far more useful, though far less ornamental, than the grand and magnificent column, which commemorates our victories. Shall an ill-judged civility to fallen politicians, shall a misplaced confidence, in purity of motive, shall a false and delusive wish for a chimerical conciliation, induce us to forget the era, when the footsteps of our rulers were turned to the “valley of the shadow of political death”—when a veil of oblivion was drawn over the scenes of the revolution; and “Gorgons, Hydras and chimeras dire” were exhibited in rapid succession, in the magic lantern of state

deception ? Can those disastrous times ever be forgotten, when madness usurped the seat of wisdom, in our national councils ;—when a political Quixotism infected both the administration and its friends ;—when Federal Knights Errant of the *Black-Cockade* sallied forth determined to sacrifice every luckless wight, who refused to acknowledge the peerless excellence of the *Dulcinea* of their affections ; when our foreign concerns were committed to the X's and Y's and Z's of negotiation, and our domestic policy entrusted to the management of office-seeking zealots ; armed with a *Sedition Bill*, and backed by a *provisional army* ;—when to doubt the infallibility of the government was certain proscription and persecution ;—when a CHASE for Judge, and a Stockton for prosecutor, rendered the pretended privilege of permitting truth to justify a cruel and insulting mockery ; when the unhappy emigrant, who had here sought a refuge from oppression, held his protection on the frail tenure of a Federal President's caprice, and became liable to fall a victim to our treacherous hospitality ;—when, in defiance of law and justice, the executive had the

audacity to interfere in the decisions of a Court of Justice, and to order the surrender of a citizen to British vengeance ;—when extravagant loans, at an unprecedented premium, called for heavy and oppressive taxes ;—In a word, when a system of delusion, tyranny, profligacy and “ every evil work,” was strangely substituted for a system of economy, wisdom, liberty and peace.

Deception is but for a season ; and truth is eternal. Heaven, perhaps to win us to our duty, by inflicting the evils consequent on its neglect, sometimes permits individuals and nations to wander from the path, which leads to happiness. Acute and severe distempers sometimes serve to eradicate those latent seeds of disease, which, remaining in the system, would cause a tedious and distressing debility. When recovered, the patient feels new life and vigor and animation. Thus, in the political as in the animal world, there is a crisis, at which the system must be purified or must perish. The struggle, which restored America to her pristine strength and health, was painful and alarming ; but the event was happy and decisive.

The necromantic spell of Pseudo-Federalism

had bound in a fearful delusion the senses of the American citizens. The pupils of BAR-
 RUEL and ROBISON presided at the magic rites ;
 and *Illuminatism and Modern Philosophy*, composed
 the potent incantations, which, for a time, be-
 wildered and deceived. Experience and reflec-
 tion dissipated the deceptive mist. The images
 of terror, which had been conjured up by Fed-
 eral magicians, faded into air. The menacing
 legions of France---the dreadful hydra of Jaco-
 binism,---the blood-streaming Guillotine---Tub-
 plots, Clues, and Conspiracies, all vanished,
 "like the baseless fabric of a vision." The
 precipice, to which the incautious steps of an un-
 suspecting people had been led, was at once per-
 ceived and avoided.

 "The charm dissolv'd space ;—
 "And as the morning steals upon the night,
 "Melting the darkness, so their rising senses
 "Began to chase the ignorant fumes, that mantled
 "Their clearer reason."

The obloquy, "oppugnation and systematic
 revilings," which the men, to whom were con-
 fided the concerns of a rescued nation, experi-
 enced from the discovered and detected conspir-
 ators, as much distanced precedent, as it beggared
 indignation. Organized in opposition to the

will of the people, drawn up in battle array against their constitutional agents, was seen a vindictive army of cashiered officers, disbanded judges, disappointed speculators and party priests. "Religion & Order" were blazoned on their banners; and many of the honest, many of the estimable members of the state, whose interests and those of their leaders were as different as the interests of the traveller in a caravan, and those of the predatory *Arab*, were induced to join this holy Crusade against Infidels and Jacobins. The *Church* became indeed *militant*--- Religion wandered an exile from her holy places; where usurping faction, having seduced her ministers, reigned and revelled. Slander clothed herself in sacerdotal robes; and Seditious bellowed from the pulpit.

Useless were these mighty exertions---vain these convulsive struggles. The honest in the ranks of opposition soon abandoned the hopeless warfare against truth and liberty. Increasing majorities testified increasing attachment to the government. And, at the end of four years, instead of being hurled from office like their predecessors, our Republican rulers received a renew-

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ed and almost unanimous tribute of applause and confidence.

The jaws of the crocodile are closed, and hypocritical tears are now intended to entice. Federalists have now changed their tone. Late, they brandished the arm of defiance ;—now, they extend the hand of friendship. The fierce acclamations of anger are softened down to the gentle lullaby of concord and peace. The wretched foppery of pretended candour is substituted for the imposing hauteur of unaccommodating obstinacy. But—brethren—“ be not deceived. They come to you in sheep’s clothing ;—but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.” When you have carried the citadel by storm, will you extend the honours of war to the haughty foes, who refused to capitulate,—or can they have the impudence to expect, or the meanness to solicit it.”

“ *Conciliation* ” is now a delusive word. It is a trick to cheat the credulous—a mesh to ensnare the unwary. Was *conciliation* the order of the day, when proscription was the punishment for even passive neutrality ;—when the man, who would not mount the black

symbol of monarchy ;—who would not bow the knee to *Baal*,—who would not swell the cry of “ *Great is Diana of the Ephesians* ; ”—who would not join the Chorus of “ *Adams and Liberty* ; ” when, in truth, every man suspected of the crime of Republicanism, was subject to the ban of Federal execration ; was denounced as a traitor and an infidel ;—was cut off from the harmonies of social intercourse ; was anathematized from the pulpit, censured from the bench, and hooted at by the mob ? Where were, then, these meek and christianized teachers of “ peace on earth and good will to men ? ” Where were these advocates of union and harmony, these enemies of party-spirit ?—Where ?—insulting or assaulting some unfortunate Republican, who dared distrust the wisdom and integrity of our then infallible rulers—mobbing and abusing some seditious wretch, who had been guilty of the unpardonable sin of neglecting to protect himself with the mighty talisman of patriotism—the *Black Cockade*—with infatuated folly deriding, even in their dungeons, the hapless victims of Federal wrath !—These were then the conciliatory em-

ployments of our now conciliating opponents. Cowards are ever cruel. The oppression of Federalists was sufficiently experienced in these times of terror. The exposition of their meanness was deferred to the period of their degradation.

Enough of these irritating recollections. We will strive to pity and forgive, but we may be allowed to despise. Happier themes demand our attention. Brighter prospects cheer our view. The orbs in our political system, which have wandered from their regular course, are fast recovering from their erratic movements. The *States*, of late but nominally *United*, will soon become so "indeed and in truth." Faction, even in Massachusetts, already struggles in the agonies of death. The "death-blow" is already "given to pretended Federalism." One blot only remains on our political Calendar. And if our opponents have not doomed shame to perpetual exile; if conscience is not gagged and bound, they must blush instead of boasting, that their Chief Magistrate yet continues in the chair of state;—their bosoms must be wrung with remorse at the execra-

ble means, by which the election of his competitor was defeated. Yes!—Massachusetts is Republican. A new string is added to the national lyre. Union and harmony will soon be restored, not by a mawkish *conciliation*, but by our complete triumph. Of our designing and our duped antagonists, both the deceiving and deceived will soon be ashamed to remember, the one their wickedness, and the other their credulity. The SATANS and the EVES will feel like compunction.

But, let not exultation banish vigilance. Victorious in arms, HANNIBAL was vanquished by his triumphs. If we sleep in indolent security, our foes, ever alert and ever daring, will soon teach us our folly. The blandishments of success must not entice us from the pursuits of duty. “*We have scotch’d the snake, not kill’d it.*” The banquet & the parade become this joyous occasion. Yet the anniversary should also be consecrated to reflection;—and should excite to alacrity and perseverance in the race of patriotism.

Firmly attached to the principles, on which our national Independence was declared and maintained—--the principles of Republicanism;

resting that confidence in our national rulers, which they have so richly merited by a course of patriotic services—carefully watchful against internal enemies and vigilantly jealous against foreign invasion ; let us strive faithfully to discharge the obligations we owe to our country—to our fathers, ourselves, and our posterity. Thus conducting, we have nothing to fear from the despotic powers of the eastern climes, whether contending in bloody rivalry for the empire of the land or the empire of the sea ;—the “ *leviathans* ” and “ *mammoths* ” of the European world. If the adoption of such principles, the adherance to such rules of political conduct, do not refute the croaking prophecies of the advocates of monarchy ; then, indeed, this day thus commemorated by exulting and universal testimonials of hilarity, should be marked by deep and regretful expressions of sorrow—groans of distress should be substituted for shouts of joy—the melancholy knell of dependence should supercede the sprightly chime of gladness—and the slow requiem of death should silence the lively carrol of pleasure ; then,

indeed, is a Republican government a delusive chimera ;---then, indeed,

“ The pillar'd firmament is rottenness ;

“ And earth's base built on stubble !”

ERRATA.—Fourth Page, first line, for “ rapidly,” read “ happily.”—Page 7th, 10th line, between “ mad” and “ miserable” —dele “ a.”—Page 8th, line 4th, between “ disdain” and “ defiance” insert “ and.”—Page 9th, line 9th, between “ in” and “ triumph” insert “ the.”—Page 15th, line 19th, after “ justify,” insert a comma.