

AN
O R A T I O N,

PRONOUNCED AT

AMHERST, NEW-HAMPSHIRE,

July 4, 1804,

THE ANNIVERSARY OF

THE DECLARATION OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

—♦♦♦♦♦—
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ORATION.

FELLOW CITIZENS,

NOTHING, in modern times, has been more interesting to the world, than the civil and political history of our country. In the retrospective view of less than two centuries, we may see the settlement and civilization of America, like the little cloud in scripture, rising and spreading over the dreary forest of the western hemisphere, till the whole exhibits one vast scene of recent improvement, displaying at once the unexampled industry of man, and the most liberal blessings of his Maker.

The pious zeal, steady fortitude, hardy enterprize, unconquerable valor, inviolate patriotism, and mature wisdom, which in private life and on public emergencies have shown conspicuous in our forefathers, and the yet surviving sages of our country, awaken in our breasts a veneration for all those noble qualities in man, which have a just claim to our pride; while the success of their efforts ought to fill our hearts with gratitude to the Ruler of nations, on whom they acknowledged their dependence, and to whom they never looked in vain for aid.

Having passed the Jordan, that rolled between us and our hopes, driven out the heathen from before us, gained possession of the land of promise, and a rank among the nations of the earth; let us pause.—

There is a period, in the economy of Providence, when nations pass their minority, and the immediate and more obvious interference of their common guardian seems to cease. After which they remain stationary, on the basis of habitual virtue; acquire new glory by uncommon achievements; retrograde by the gradual introduction of vice, or rush to ruin by the precipitance of their folly. To which of these courses we are tending at present, and what may be our future destiny, are matters of serious enquiry to every American.

It has been customary on this anniversary to recapitulate the achievements of our countrymen, and paint in glowing colors the prosperity of the nation. Were my talents equal to my wishes, I would render both immortal. In the theme of eulogy, familiar to your ears on this occasion, I feel, and rejoice to see in others, that pleasure, which is animated by our country's happiness, and that pride, which participates in her honor.

But let us not, like the young heir, in possession of an ample patrimony, mistake our good fortune for our merit, and become vain, because our fathers had reason to be proud. In the enjoyment of what they have bequeathed to us, let us not forget that we have something to transmit to posterity.

Our republic, since our remembrance, was a youth, spurning ease; muscular and spare, from the effect of rugged toils; generous to friends; disdain-

ing to yield to a foe, till honor approved the terms ; and full of that exalted spirit of ambition, which looks beyond present enjoyment, to immortal fame. This youth is now presented to our view, corpulent to an excess, that bespeaks a fatal dropfy ; courting sloth from principle, but impelled to activity by passion ; wallowing in private luxury, but niggardly in public expenses ; mistaking apathy for wisdom, and the soul of the miser, for the genius of economy, he calculates on friends and foes through the medium of the treasury ; and, to increase the plagues of a fickle, degenerate mind, seems doomed to see his own household in implacable war with himself and each other.

If the contrast I have represented be not substantially true, mark me as the enemy of America, and worthy the reproach of rational man wherever he is found. For treacherous must be that friendship, which can exaggerate the faults of a friend. If the picture be justly drawn, and eulogy still have charms, let the voice of the charmer cease.

But hark ! The prosperity of our country, the stability of its government, the virtues and wisdom of its rulers and ruled, are now echoed by a thousand tongues from every part of the Union. Were this all, I would not mar the hilarity of the day, though carried to disgust. It is not the flippant tongue of the parasite that gives the greatest pain to the heart, or most confounds the understanding, in the jargon of our political Babel.

The same tongue which forgets its homage to the law, that should be shown in decent respect to the first magistrate of the land, disgraces independence

by obsequious adulation of the man, and filches from those, whom it berates with bitterest invective, the surreptitious laurels, with which it over burdens the head of its favorite. If we give credit to one class, who profess to echo the voice of the public, and to be the more immediate organ of the government, we must ascribe to the present administration all our political, and almost all our social blessings. Nothing to the past, but evil designs and corresponding actions; little to Divine Providence, except the change it has suffered in our rulers; much to ourselves, if instrumental in that change. If otherwise, and we do not echo the praises which disgust, and the abuse which shames the heart; then if we feel not the sting of the asp, it is not that the speaker needs its poison; but because he out does all credulity in praise, and in calumny loses the power of wounding, from the frequency of the attempt.

If we listen to the eulogists of the past administration, do we not hear much that it would be treachery to approve? Their bold, rancorous, and unqualified abuse of our rulers, independent as it may appear, is a shameful comment on their former text of respectful obedience to the magistrates of our choice. It is not merely an attack on men. In the spirit of our elective government, it is hostility against the constitution. By magnifying an error to a crime, representing a wise measure, as absurd, and a doubtful one, as ruinous, it loses all that effect, which candid discussion and manly rebuke will always have on an administration, prone to err. What is still worse, it irritates and provokes that devouring demon of party spirit, whose malign influence has al-

ready poisoned our civil virtues, and blasted the fairest blossoms of our national honor.

If it be said that I have misrepresented these clashing interests, and this common perversion of principle; I appeal to the annual addresses of the fourth of July; the day on which we too often provoke the indignant spirit of independence, by the absurd sacrifices, we make at its altar. Point out to me those addresses which have been seconded by the loudest plaudits, and gained the most celebrity in our country, and I will show, in the authors, men who dared not to be independent. Who were the obsequious mouth of a party, which applauded, because they were the pliant panders of its baser passions.

I will appeal to our myriads of newspapers, which are the best criterion of the feelings and views of our political parties, as well as the morals of our citizens, and the character of our nation. What conclusion can an American or foreigner draw from these? That we are an enlightened people? Does he see the perennial blaze, cherished in the pure principles and enlarged mind of the patriot, and fanned by the genius of liberty? Is not the fume of passion more conspicuous than the light of the understanding; and the heat of collision more obvious than either?—That we are united? Let the advocate for conciliation tune, even the harp of Orpheus; the trees may bow, the rocks listen, and the hills echo the sound; but Sisyphus continues to roll his stone; Ixion, to turn his wheel; Cerberus, to bark; and all the demons of faction double their diligence to drown the voice of harmony. Let aspiring genius, in the language of indignant truth, flash ethereal

fire from the clouds, that cover our hemisphere ; the blaze is lost in darkness, and the bolts forgotten, when they cease to be felt.

To complete the description, and shew the extent of our political malady, let us attend to what transpires within the immediate observation of all classes. Where is the city, town or village, whose municipal concerns and enjoyments have not been haunted, and occasionally to distraction, with this fiend of party contention ? Wherever it be, it forms a happy exception to our general destiny. Neighbors, mutually indulgent to each other's errors, and liberal in diversity of sentiment, have sacrificed the tranquil pleasures of domestic peace, for the frantic zeal of the mock patriot. A contention for men, of whom they had no knowledge, for measures beyond their comprehension, or names in themselves insignificant, has led them to a neglect of plain and positive duties. The feelings of the former friend have been consulted, only to irritate him with more success. Every breach of good manners has swelled the items of political consequence ; and the outlawry of Christian charity, insured the promotion of the misguided zealot. The evil has extended still further, and the parent has taught the parroted infant to hiss its curses on their political opponents. Implacable indeed must be this angry deity ! If not appeased already by the sacrifice of our fathers and our brethren, let not our children pass through the fire to assuage his hellish wrath !

This town has seen and felt a portion of the evils I have described. But yet the times are prosperous, and demand our gratulation. Yes—the produce of

our farms commands a high price; trade is brisk; and what was once luxury, has now become ordinary fare. The contrast between the present and the days of our struggle for Independence are striking indeed. Then our means were small, but our minds were great. The peasant possessed but little; but that little, together with his services and his life, were devoted to his country. Those times made men; the present breed misers. For my own part I shudder at the consequence of that prosperity, which makes us rich in private property, and poor in public spirit. In the latter, which constitutes the strength and glory of a nation, we may safely declare that America was richer, during the revolutionary war, than she is at the present time.

Rome advanced to greatness, by public munificence, and private economy. Her full treasury was not her strength; but it was both the cause and evidence of it—the public spirit of her citizens.

We attempt to reverse the maxim of the once mistress of the world; and till the laws of nature are reversed, shall find the full tide of unsuccessful experiment carrying us the downward course of degradation, from a nation of patriots, to a nation of misers and demagogues. “Where a man’s treasure is, there will his heart be also,” is as true in politics, as in divinity. If in his country’s treasury, it makes even the miser a patriot from interest. If in her welfare and glory, it enlarges his views, and enlists his very pride and vanity under the standard of patriotism.

Ask our countrymen, what interest they have in their country, and wherefore they venerate her?

The latter part of the query is unintelligible to most. She has lost her hold on the better feelings of the heart. Now and then, an old veteran, who has shared in her exploits in arms, will exult, for a moment, in her heroism. But his short lived pleasure soon dies in the recollection, that the juggling of our finances, has left him only the empty honors of a soldier, and given to the more cunning speculator the profits of his toil. The successful speculator can answer the question of interest. He has learnt the secret of our newfangled patriotism. His adroitness has made him rich; his wealth has given him consequence. Habit, if not nature, has given him an ear, that is deaf, and a heart, that is callous to the claims of suppliant justice; and a brow that can assume the place of modest merit, and laugh at the usurpation. The example becomes contagious, while the successful knave rises to consequence. Plain honesty is banished by cunning; and its faithful nurse, a regular course of business, exchanged for the harlequin of speculation. Conscience is deemed a traitor; and prudence prized only as she saves from the pillory or gallows.

In the walks of ambition, *patriot*, *inflexible principle*, and every term expressive of a noble mind, have become half contemptible, by their abuse. Should the infection extend much further, the unprincipled demagogue may spare himself the trouble of acting the hypocrite, and speed his promotion, by the avowal of his infamy.

Hence most men agree to answer, that they have an interest in our country; because luxury pays a light tax, ambition prospers, avarice thrives, and speculation in a profitable trade. It is needless to

add, that, in proportion to the influence of these unbridled passions, will be the want of moral sentiment and correct habits, the only sure basis of a free government.

It is from the decay of these invigorating qualities, and the decline of religion, without which, neither can be permanent, that the laurels of America, won with so much toil, are withering on her brow. It is from the decline of these, that the man marked with infamy, holds his head aloft in society, and pushes his way to promotion, while substantial merit mourns in silence the want of patrons. It is from the decline of these, that every bird of passage is fluttering for the fruit upon the tree of public honor, and gorging, with impunity, till there is scarcely encouragement left to cultivate or protect it. It is the decline of these, which has given to party spirit that illiberal, rancorous tone, and deadly animosity, which leaves our independence, rather propped by its collision, than supported, on the firm basis of a united people.

I might prolong the irksome detail of our country's growing evils. But I have dwelt on this subject, only to trace the disease to its source, the better to apply the remedy.

Whoever expects a cure from any set of political men, or measures, will be disappointed. Not only is the *head sick*, but the *heart faint*. The malady has infested the vitals and pervaded every vein and artery of the nation. In the work of reformation, "the eye cannot say to the hand, nor the head to the foot, I have no need of thee." Each of us have our part to act, a part requiring little effort of the understanding, but much resolution.

From our early habits, and constitutional rights, we have a common interest in the political concerns of our country; and more than the vindictive partizan, ought we to feel this interest. We ought to distrust our thoughts, and guard our words and actions, till we are sure our hopes and our passions are extended beyond the views of a party, to the good of the whole. Where this is the case, no man's thoughts, words, or actions, can give just ground of offence to a rational being. This liberal extension of the mind naturally begets a spirit of candor and conciliation. With this quality, which is in substance all that is comprehended in the legitimate meaning of the word patriotism, the heart will always be right towards its country, and on most occasions the ready prompter of the head. Smitten with anguish, by the effects of the poisonous cup of party spirit, which has intoxicated our country to madness, it will seek with equal solicitude the apology and the cure. So great an evil, by a liberal and discerning mind, will never be laid at the doors of any one set of men, either in, or out of office. Much will be attributed to ambition, disappointed of its intended honors: Something, to the pursuance of high toned measures, under the last administration, which were doubtful in a constitutional point of view; mysterious, as expedients; and evidently such as the genius of the public would not bear: Something to our present rulers, for erring on the other extreme, and flattering, while it courts the support of that private luxury, avarice, and loquacious ambition, which have already smothered the embers of our national spirit: Much to ourselves, for our sad

declension from that enlarged love and pride of country, which our fathers felt, and vainly thought they had left, as a perpetual legacy, to their offspring; and much to our inexcusable aberration from those steady habits, and sober modes of thinking, which were at once the nurse and guardian of the infant glory of our country.

While we arraign the acrimonious, vindictive spirit of party, as the arch foe to our public and private felicity, we ought to be guarded against a listless indifference on political subjects. Though the discussion of important state questions may often draw our representatives, on whom it immediately devolves, into the ranks of party, and the heat of its animosity, yet there is no reason why we, who are remote from the violent concussion, should be agitated by the weaker undulation. Our situation with respect to our feelings, and every argument, drawn from the principles of our government and our natures, dictate the reverse. Nothing will tend more to temperate the proceedings of the legislator, than the idea that his constituents are canvassing them with cool, deliberate judgment. Nothing so much to adulterate them with his passions, as the belief that they are dictated by the prejudices of those who give him their suffrages.

On questions, arising from the constitution of the general government, we have the clear and explicit principles of the constitution itself to guide our judgment. A prudent legislature will never enact laws, nor a wise administration pursue measures, which are unauthorized by its obvious authority, unless dictated by the most urgent necessity. And good

citizens will submit to those laws, and acquiesce in those measures, if not evidently pernicious in their effect. If so, they will remonstrate with the dignity of freemen, till redress is obtained. In the constitution itself, amendments are contemplated. But it should never be forgotten, that its sole support is public opinion. That the same power which can alter one jot or tittle, can abrogate the whole. And that it must stand or fall, together with the whole fabric of our state governments, as this basis is substantial or fluctuating. When it is further considered that the opinions of the mass of any people are formed more by habit than the efforts of the understanding, prudence will double her caution, before she moves her wary finger to alter; and patriotism bear even a certain evil, rather than risque the consequences of any material innovation. Above all, should that change be avoided, which may involve the interest, and excite the jealousy of particular states. In this original compact the several states were parties, each contributing to the common stock of the federal government a certain portion of its rights and immunities, for the purer preservation of the remainder, and the common good of the whole; and each reciprocally conceding to the others whatever wisdom suggested, as necessary to unite jarring interests, and incorporate the whole into one general system. Hence it seems clear that all the rights and powers, which were released by the several states, are under the direction and control of our federal government, at the discretion of its several departments, or according to the will of its majority, as pointed out by the constitution. And equally clear, that where a right is vested in any

particular state or states, by mutual concession, that right can never be divested, but by the consent of the states, to which it was conceded, without a violation of the federal compact. And nothing can be more impolitic; not to say unconstitutional, than an attempt, by any power under the general government, to take away from particular states, what it has already guaranteed, as a right.

This distinction between what was ceded by the states to the general government, and by the latter guaranteed to the former, appears too clear to be easily mistaken. It is made, and the principle resulting from it, respecting the rights of individual states, and the power of the federal government, taken, because it is apprehended we may soon have serious occasion to call them into view. If this reasoning be not supported by the plain import and letter of the constitution, that spirit of union, which was its parent, and inspired its original frame with life and vigor, urges us to the same conclusion, with the strongest admonitions that can be addressed to the heart or to the understanding. Every union, experienced by associated man, which originates in friendship and mutual concession, must be maintained by the same conciliating temper. From this binding cement it derives its strength and support. Whatever its form may be, this is its soul. It sickens at even the glance of the jaundiced eye of jealousy. The very touch of her rude hand seals the warrant of its death!

A resolve has lately been brought before the legislature of a neighboring state, to which these arguments seem to apply; and which requires that state's

representatives to congress to use their influence to effect an alteration in the constitution, which, if the above principle be correct, cannot be done without the free consent of those states, whose strongest interest it is to oppose it. Were the naked question put to any American, who feels interested for the support of rational and permanent freedom, whether he would have slavery legalized directly or indirectly by the federal constitution, or any of the state governments? He would answer unequivocally—no. Ask him—shall this foul stain, sanctioned as it is, by the constitution, with all its pernicious rights to some states, and its indirect injuries to the others, remain, or shall the constitution be destroyed? He will answer—preserve this ark of our safety, with both the clean and unclean, which it protects from the storm. /

If those, who find in the hand of bondage the temporary privilege of a vote, will not consent to relinquish it, shall we be guilty of a breach of faith, and an act of violence, in taking it from them by force? If we lose what they gain, in point of political consequence, is it not a proud consolation that we share not the disgrace? Is it not more than a compensation, that we may be exempt from its destructive effects? The unwilling hand of the slave, that gives his present importance to the master, will sooner or later, in America, as in the West-Indies, become the avenging instrument of heaven, to inflict that punishment which, in spite of envy, jealousy and resentment, will extort our compassion.

The cure of this evil is beyond the powers of man. The tampering of politicians, in the mood of the

present times, and with no other object than the avowed one of state influence in view, will only irritate and increase it. And, should the motion alluded to be pursued, with the unaccommodating spirit of the day, Massachusetts, in her attempt to reduce Virginia to reason, may yet have the credit of introducing the entering wedge, which will dissolve the union, and force us all into a state of complete distraction.

I hope it will prove that I have been urged to this theme by groundless fears, rather than the propriety of the occasion. It shall be relinquished for ordinary occurrences, which demand our attention, as freemen, and as citizens.

That important right of freemen, which as such combines our best privilege with our first duty, demands our most careful attention; I scarce need say, I mean the election of our representatives. In the exercise of this right, we may, so far as human efforts can avail, insure to ourselves the greatest honor and felicity, or bring on ourselves and posterity misfortune and disgrace. By it, we select the man who is to become the guardian of our rights, the organ of our will, and the advocate of our interests. Our rights, if a wise and good man, he will never sacrifice. Our will, he will modify by the exercise of his own best judgment. Our interest, so far as compatible, he will compare and incorporate with the public good.

In this election, we have the most urgent reasons for consulting those well known maxims, which regulate our choice of agents, in our inferior, pru-

dential concerns. Wherever we have any thing to transact by proxy, our first object is strict fidelity and competent knowledge in the agent. If, in his agency, he have a diversity of characters to deal with, and various interests to reconcile, our aim is to find a man, who is master of his subject, quick in his observation, profound in his knowledge of human nature, able to command his own passions, and conciliate those of others, while he pursues his object with inflexible perseverance. Having exercised our soundest discretion in the appointment, we feel quiet in the discharge of our duty, confident that our agent will leave nothing undone, within the compass of his commission, and in no case exceed it, unless for our evident benefit. We are thus freed from that perplexing source of inquietude, which arises from absent concerns, intrusted to doubtful hands. Instead of censuring the conduct, or inventing a vindication of the character, we have only to share in the fruits of the labor, and the well earned praises of him, who has proved himself worthy of our confidence.

These familiar maxims are so well understood, and so commonly practised, in our minor transactions, that one would suppose their application to the choice of our rulers and law-makers, would not be overlooked. But all rules have their exceptions. The stubborn spirit of party defies the maxims of common prudence. Itself the unnatural jumble of cause and effect, it disdains alike fair premises and rational conclusions. With the caprice of a child, the domineering pride of a despot, and the malignity of a fiend, no common toys will satisfy its fantasy, no ordinary sacrifice of reason or independence, soothe its

pride, and no measure of evils to our citizens and country, assuage its malice.

Instead of one people, pursuing a common interest, we are harnessed, by this tyrant, into two parties, engaged in actual contention, under nominal distinctions. Governed by this ill-fated destiny, one forgets the patriot, in the name of federalist; the other disgraces freedom, under that of republican. One seeks its honor in the idle badge of a cockade; the other, its gratification in the finger of reproach, which is pointed at the rampant folly. The former exhibits a specimen of its wisdom; the latter, of its magnanimity. Each must struggle for its proper representative. The creature is too often such as might be expected from the creators.

Thus marshalled into parties, and hackneyed in debate, we exhibit, from our fire sides, up to the national senate, one vast forum of political disputation, where we distort the features of simple truth, vindicate dogmas, in themselves inexplicable, and display all the chicanery and keen retort of the bar, untempered with its urbanity, without the dignity of the bench to control, or its impartiality to decide.

It is this condition of society which makes us quacks in politics, while it sickens our morals; which makes the partisan's memory familiar with his text, and his tongue flippant on the comment, without the labor of the head, and against the admonition of the heart; which gives us so much to root our prejudices, to inflame our passions, and so little to cultivate the nobler faculties of the mind; and which draws our youth from the early maxims of prudence to premature self sufficiency, and from the

invigorating fountain of sober science, to the hot bed of exuberant passion, and puny intellect.

If it be not true that the loathsome evils I have described have spread, and are spreading their rank infection through our land, I have one consolation—I have, for more than ten years past, been dreaming, under the painful impression, that I have seen our country, with her full tide of vaunted prosperity, running fast the downward race, to anarchy, despotism and ruin.

If real, what course are we to pursue to arrest her declension? If we look forward, humiliation stares us in the face; if we remain stationary, we are covered with shame. If we look back, we meet with rebuke. But that rebuke is salutary. The genius of our forefathers rises to chide, and to admonish. It points to us the sure path, beaten with unceasing toil, through which they won their way to fame. It shews them, bowing with humiliation at the altar of devotion, exhibiting a spirit bold and unconquerable to man's encroachment, which distinguished them at once as the favorites of heaven, and the dread of tyrants. With them, industry was amusement; morality, habit; wisdom was honor; and religion, pleasure. Economy regulated their domestic concerns, and bounty presided over the public treasury. In their families and schools, their children were nurtured by wholesome precepts; habituated to respectful obedience to their superiors, and veneration for their God. They considered private virtue as the only sure basis of public prosperity. They viewed vice and disgrace as inseparable. In conferring their honors, they sought for wisdom,

and were too discerning to deem the man fit to control their public concerns, who neglected to regulate his own deportment. If their zeal sometimes urged them to excess, their solidity of judgment soon corrected the evil; and their perseverance in well-doing, rarely allowed them to falter in their duty.

It was from this assiduous care of our forefathers to make good citizens, their habitual and exalted virtues, as such, that our country's prosperity increased by sure and progressive steps, that the sturdy roots of its independence shot deep, and spread wide, before its branches scarcely appeared, and long before its fruit was anticipated by the imagination. This tree, which may yet prove the tree of life to America, or the upas of her dissolution, has been protected by the memorable heroism of the veterans of our revolutionary war. From that struggle, its branches have sprung up to luxuriance, and its exuberant fruit clustered on every bough. We vainly call it the work of our own hands, and are elated at the sight of the gorgeous wonder. Ambitious to ascend and enjoy the fruit, we neglect to prune its branches and cultivate its roots. Heedless of the annoying insect and insidious worm, which devour, we imagine our toils are ended, and the blessing secure. But as this blessing was growing to our hands before we sought it, ere we are aware, it may be taken from us. Common observation shews, that we may soon lose, by neglect, what has been acquired, by the prudence of years; and that precipitate folly may destroy in an hour, what has been accumulated by the wisdom of ages. It is to stimulate, not to discourage our exertion, that all, which most adorns

private life and sheds lasting lustre on a nation, is acquired by assiduous efforts, and maintained by constant care. It is not enough therefore that our ancestors were virtuous and brave; that they were exemplary in private life, and conspicuous for their devotion to the common good of their country. The spirit of gratitude and a laudable pride require that we should commemorate their characters with filial reverence. Our duty to ourselves, our country and our God, demand more than the empty homage of the tongue. They urge us to revive their example; to make their correct habits and wholesome precepts familiar to ourselves and our children; to view wealth as useless lumber, without the former, and knowledge as worse than vain, without the latter. Pursuing their well known track, we cannot essentially err. It has "line upon line, and precept upon precept," for all the vicissitudes of life, from the pure and simple lesson, that falls on the listening infant's ear from the lips of the affectionate mother, to those sublime truths, which awe our reason, and point the way to heaven. With these sure guides, we have it in our power to convince the doubting world, that a republican government is not an idle theory, that its strength, is the union of its citizens, its wealth, their public spirit; its stability, their virtue; its independence, the result of all, and its only mystery, the simplicity of its principles, exhibiting, in obvious social duties, the whole theory of its policy.

Shall I be accused of flattery, in asserting, that the fairer sex are the principal arbiters of such a government? No.——

YE DAUGHTERS OF COLUMBIA,

IT was in the arms and by the side of Rome's matrons, that their sons were inspired with noble sentiments, and formed to habits of virtue. It was the mother's tongue; more than the philosopher's, which taught them to run the undeviating course of honor. It was the mother's feeling accents, more than the commanding eloquence of the senate, which made their youthful blood thrill in their veins, with the theme of their country's glory. And it was the mother's neglect, which degenerated those legions, that awed the world with their valor, to a band of musicians, ambitious only to amuse their conquering masters at an opera.

More is due to the matrons of America. They formed their sons to all the Romans knew, and added the inspiring sentiments of that religion, which makes private virtue and national honor subordinate to the exalted prize of immortal glory.—Whence then the son's degeneracy? Why did your nurturing hands forsake the tender plant? And why did your enlivening precepts cease to rear it to maturity? Charity dictates, and wailing grief responds the answer. The husband, on whom you doated, and the son, in whom you saw his ripening image, flew in the hour of danger from your arms, to avenge your dearer country's wrongs. Your anxious solicitude for their fate made you forget the infant in the cradle. Elevated above ordinary concerns, you neglected its mental food, while your heart was pursuing its then nearer object, through the painful vicissitudes of a long, eventful war.

You, who were then daughters in the bloom of youth, have erred on the side of your most amiable virtues. With sensations of exulting joy, you welcomed your fathers and your brethren from the field of battle, to the congratulations of domestic felicity and national peace. You joined with them in gratitude to heaven for our independence. By them, you were taught to consider France as its means. The gay airs of the Frenchman, too soon supplanted in your hearts the gravity of the priest. The bewitching novel usurped the place of the bible, and the dancing school drew its devotees from the house of God. This gratitude, this lively joy became you. It should have been accompanied with more pride. While you were admiring and striving to imitate the superficial fripperies of Frenchmen, they were smitten with veneration for the simplicity of your manners, the solidity of your virtues, the sincerity of your affections, and the inimitable charms, which native innocence and freedom flashed from your eyes. Inspired with what their boasted arts of civilization had given them no conception of, they were electrified with the spirit of freedom, which communicated from the soldier to the statesman, till all, in imitation of America, resolved to erect a government on its model, and enjoy, like us, the sweets of liberty. Vain attempt. The splendid meteor has disappeared forever, but left a lasting, solemn lesson

to the world. A lesson, which speaks, with admonition and authority, like the voice of heaven. Its weighty injunctions to us are—

“ Beware of hasty innovation. The sudden adoption of even your virtues has sunk us to ruin. Our fickle habits could not sustain their weight. Religion, their only support, fled before our dissolute manners, when the heavy restraint of government was removed. Shun, then—shun, as death, the contagion of our manners!—Adopt them, and you lose your religion;—the anchor which holds you to heaven is gone; the habits, on which you rely, are afloat; and your boasted freedom perishes in the storm!”

Thus speaks the French nation, taught by its awful destiny. Our own experience half confirms the weighty truth. Already totters the once strong foundation, and reel the mighty columns of our independence. Our rulers and our busy politicians shake the fabrick, by their jarring efforts to support it.

It is for you, whose frowns appal vice, and whose smiles inspire the social sentiment, to frown the flitting demons, that haunt our felicity, to the land from whence they came; to renovate us with the electric power of your charms; to lead us to the temple of concord, and woo us to the imitation of what we were. Your triumph will then be complete, and

we unriveted from our disgrace. This anniversary shall then be dedicated to you. Our fainted heroes will look from heaven with complacency, and yield to you the palm.

Without your aid, the phlegmatic reasoning and warm dissensions of our sex, will avail nothing. We may wear out our lives in tedious debate, before the independence of our country expires. But, unless the destiny of nations is governed by new principles, the children, that now lift their queries on the cause of this rejoicing, will witness, in the groans of their country, the knell of its departed freedom!