

ANNIVERSARY

ORATION,

IN COMMEMORATION OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

PRONOUNCED

BEFORE THE REPUBLICAN CITIZENS OF CHARLESTOWN,

JULY 5, 1819.

.....
BY BENJAMIN GLEASON, ESQ.
.....

“Festive honors crown the Day.”

“It is our Country’s natal Day, the Jubilee of Freedom.”

R. T. PAINE.

Published by Request.

CHARLESTOWN :

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY T. GREEN.

1819.

ORATION.

BEAUTY and intelligence—public sentiment and virtue, and ambition, on this auspicious occasion, crowd the altars and temples of our country.

Our country?—Yes.—The spacious region, widening between the *torrid* and *frigid*, and spreading through the great *temperate* zone of the world; and at its vast longitudinal extremes, washed by the mighty waters of the Atlantic and Pacific.

Throughout this immense extent of territory, in magnitude nearly equal to modern Europe, millions, in high and holy devotion, are even now engaged, in this Grand National Jubilee—The anniversary celebration of American Independence.

The day, the theme, the cause, the principles, are all worthy of a free, sovereign and happy people.

Tears of peerless lustre brighten the eyes, and emotions of grateful sensibility animate the hearts of the millions of freemen, and their numerous off-spring, this day assembled, and this day rejoicing, in their glorious emancipation, and exalted destiny.

The cheerful bells peal their joy, with the opening morn; the star-spangled banners are displayed triumphantly; and the cannon's roar echoes along the welkin. Liberty, with the welcome shouts of the day, seems to awaken from the slumbers of Peace, and with complacency and delight, smiles on all her children.

- “ O Liberty! can man resign thee?
- “ Once having felt thy generous flame:
- “ Can dungeons bolts or bars confine thee?
- “ Or whips thy noble spirit tame?
- “ Too long the world has wept bewailing,
- “ While tyrant powers their sceptres wield;
- “ But FREEDOM is our sword and shield,
- “ And all their arts are unavailing.”

With pride, with gratitude,—with enthusiasm we repeat,
 “where liberty dwells, there is our country.” Let the tyrant,
 the usurper, or the oppressor, but dare a violation of her rights
 and felicities, and a whole nation would raise the loud acclaim :

“ To arms, to arms, ye brave,
 “ The avenging sword unsheathe ;
 “ March on, march on ! all hearts resolv’d
 “ On VICTORY OR DEATH.”

Liberty is of this highly interesting character ; as contradistinguished from “ a tempestuous sea, on which floats the great national ship, called the Republic,” without chart or compass, or object, or destination, liable to founder in the mountain waves of commotion, to perish in the political storm, or to shipwreck in the fluctuations of the veering gale. Our nation’s character refutes this libel. No : Liberty is justly and truly represented as a being of ethereal nature, whose delight is with the children of men. Her majestic walk is among verdant alpine scenes of grandeur, while a clear azure, a serene heaven, above and around, cheers and brightens her course, with the radiations of celestial light and glory.

“ Grace in all her steps,
 “ Heaven in her eye, in ev’ry gesture
 “ Dignity and Love.”

She bears the shield and helmet of *Minerva*, for “ wisdom is her defence.” She has the strength of *Hercules*, “ to bind kings in chains, and nobles in fetters of iron.” She is beautiful as the *Venus de Medicis*, to win and captivate her votaries. She presents in one hand, the *Olive Branch* entwined with the *Laurel*, strongly emblematic of the offering of peace to all nations, with the reservation of ample honors for her naval and military heroes. In the other, she holds the golden bowl of nectar ; around which, the bird of *Jove* hovers in majesty, banqueting on the hyblean sweets.

She is portrayed thus with angelic loveliness, and styled “ thrice sweet and gracious goddess,” to command the political homage of every heart. Though her frowns might endanger the safety of nations, her smiles, like the effulgence of the sun, in the azure firmament, cheer the world.

When the famed *Alfred* of English history opposed the enemies of his country, played the harp in their camps, *illusively* to amuse, and the collected munitions of war against them, *effectually* to destroy. What was this, but the inspiration of liberty?

The efforts of a great people, whose children we are, whose language we speak, whose government and policy we emulate, whose arts and sciences we admire, by imitation, and whose virtues and religion, with a degree of veneration, we respect: through their distinguished reigns of Normans, Plantagenets, Tudors, Stuarts and Hanoverians, to the establishment of Magna Charter; to the revolution of 1688; to the era of Emmet—Chatham, and Junius and Fox! Their rallying efforts and struggles for the conservation and perpetuity of their rights, were all the impulsive inspirations of liberty.

Bastiles and Inquisitions have fallen, and will fall, beneath her potent and liberating hand.

Her piercing eyes and avenging arm have oft dethroned tyrants and despots; like as the mighty *Julius*, who,

“ In his mantle, muffling up his face,
“ Even at the base of Pompey’s statue fell.”

Thus have they “burst their mighty hearts,” thus fallen, thus freed the oppressed, and thus become the subjects of their avengers’ triumph.

Under her auspicious influence, sovereign states, as Greece and Rome, and Genoa, and Helvetia, and Belgium, have seen their better days.

What shall we say of the conflicting struggles, and ravages, and desperation in our day, between royalty and patriotism in South-America; wasting the blood and treasures of thousands opposing, and thousands engaged in the sacred cause of freedom, over a vast country, with mines of wealth, the richest soil, luxuriant forests, loftiest mountains, and largest rivers of the globe. The heart pains and sickens with the carnage that paves the way to empire, and often marks the giant course of freedom. But who shall conquer in this contest for human rights? Who, among the mighty, shall prevail, from the Texas to Patagonia—from Per-

nambuco to Lima ; in this convulsive revolution ? The God of battles will give victory to the brave, and will honor the devotions—the Altar, and the Temple of Liberty.

Be it gratefully remembered, that when the little band of heroes first adventured for religious freedom, from their home to the Netherlands, and thence over the mighty deep to this new world, now distinguished as “the asylum of all nations,” they were led, were protected, were preserved, by a gracious Providence, which cherished the inspiring ardor of liberty.

When oppression marked the sovereign acts of Britain, in relation to her colonies, then uniting as states, and rising to eminence and distinction, liberty, at every stage of these “repeated injuries,” manifested a just indignation.

When those select and worthy few held their consultations in the metropolis of New-England, (I speak of that fellowship of patriotic souls, honest, ardent and invincible ; their names and memories venerable, and brightening all our nation’s history ;) when they confederated around the cradle of the revolution, and stood forth champions and advocates in the holy cause of freedom, destroying stamp acts, and port bills, and king’s offices—unrighteous taxes and duties, and tory principles, and whole cargoes of India teas, and resisting massacre and suffering death, for conscience sake ; when they were passing through good report and evil report—as rebels, traitors, mohawks, yankees, whigs, soldiers, prisoners, heroes, victors or veterans, in all the circumstances of their action or being ; their perils and dangers ; their hopes, or their disasters, or despondency ; Liberty was always with them ; could not leave them ; would not forsake them.

Seizing the clarion bugle ; with her inspiring breath, “she blew a blast so loud and dread,” that the “prophetic sounds” all Europe heard.

At her well-known voice, our hardy yeomanry, rising from among their thousand hills, anxiously enquire the cause ? Hurrying from the scenes of rural quietude, in the alarm ! the husbandmen, the youth, the aged, the ambitious promiscuously rush to the field of battle, at once converted to *Militia Soldiers, Columbian Guards, Light Infantry* in blue, a powerful *Phalanx*;

with effective *Artillery*,* they crowd to the ports and marts, and frontier cities to resist the invading enemy—Meet them at Lexington; astonish them at Concord bridge; confound them on Charlestown heights; and drive them from their Capitals.

When the recruited fleets and hostile armies were gathering round our coasts, numerous and destructive as the locusts, pitching their camps at a hazard, but deliberately plotting chastisement and vengeance for the rising states—while the mandates of a king held in servitude and terror and anxiety, the children of the emigrants of the old world. Then liberty, indignant, repelled, in scorn, this gasconade of chivalry.

“When the eye of the immortal Washington, lightened along the embattled ranks” of the American legions, determined to conquer or to die. Liberty was the coat of mail; the shield of protection; the encouragement to action, and their only physical strength.

When Jefferson, Franklin, Hancock, and the other illustrious chieftains of the states, in Congress assembled, deliberated, penned, and confirmed the Declaration of our Independence, pledging by sanctions most solemn and inviolable, “their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor.” Then was liberty “by them as one brought up with them; daily their delight and rejoicing always,” in approbation of all their honourable transactions.

When at last the Temple of Freedom was reared and completed, the altar raised in solemn devotion. Peace within its walls. In every niche the heroes’ fame, in all its alcoves the suspended arms and eagles of our country. Multitudes thronging within to shout the triumphs of her victory, in grand celebration. Nations surrounding and admiring the resplendent and glorious scene. Behold, enthroned in the midst of the happy worshippers, is the bright god-less, sweet liberty. Nor battle-axe, or spear, or shield, or helmet now—these lie secure within the archives of the altar, the key of which is worn upon her bosom. In easy elegant attire, loosely flowing, in the negligence and magnificence of *stripes and stars*; She appears,—smiles—speaks—exults with all the children of her maternal love, while all triumphantly rejoice, praising the ever good and gracious Power, that gives their valued, their inestimable blessings.

* Names of the Companies in Charlestown.

There, under the caption of liberty, on the ~~one~~ *one* hand, are inscribed the articles of Constitution, the national compact and the Union of the States ; on the other—the Rights of Man, the laws of the Republic and our social blessings. Books, port-folios, state-papers, records and memorials fill the *area-perspective*.

Here are recorded, as claiming precedence, the names of Boston, Charlestown, Lexington, Concord, New-York, White Plains, Bennington, Saratoga, Long-Island, Trenton, Princeton, Monmouth, Philadelphia, Brandywine, Camden, Charleston, Savannah, Yorktown, &c. with *manly* naval actions. There (as a recent inscription) Plattsburg, Sackett's Harbor, Niagara and Fort-George; York, Queenstown, Chippewa, Bridgwater, Erie and Champlain, New-London, Stonington, Norfolk, and Baltimore, and New-Orleans, with a long catalogue of naval victories, displaying the honored names of Hull, Bainbridge, Porter, Jones, Decatur, Rodgers, Burrows, Lawrence, Perry, M'Donough, Stewart,—but I pause, for what a host of worthies might be singled and recited, from Montgomery the hero of '75, at the walls of Quebec to the hero of New-Orleans, during the exact period of forty years of our recorded history. Well may you judge the grand Temple of Freedom, thus richly and superbly decorated with innumerable inscriptions, monuments of fame, and laurel wreaths of glory, merits, as it commands, the admiration of the world.

Conspicuous in our national annals, in the great work of legislation, and in the conservation of our liberties, are the venerable names of Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe, successively the presidents over a great, free and happy people, honored with their free suffrages, and in consequence more honorable than kings ; for diadems and thrones and hereditary peerage, bear no comparison to the merit, and worth, and virtue, which elevate to this distinction and supremacy. Junius Brutus would not envy a Tarquin, or a Cæsar ! Aristides would not covet the glory of an Alexander. The virtuous save and bless—Tyrants oppress and destroy their country.

In this brief allegory, curiosity may trace the scenes of revolution, and the great outline of British and American history.

Here would I rest ; but that an aged veteran gave a strong interest and pathos to the subject, by marking more distinctly

each progressive event. With bleached locks, he was sitting at the foot of a decaying oak, emblematic of the man, bowed down with the weight of years. He was resting on his staff with one hand, and in the other, holding a *Pension Certificate*. His children were about him. A smile seated on his fearless brow, indicated much happiness and gratefulness, to be remembered and to be rewarded. "I have from my youth, said he (like Caius Marius) been familiar with toils and dangers. I was faithful to your interests, my countrymen, when I served you for no reward, but that of honor." He was a veteran soldier of the Revolution, and fought in seven distinct battles. With exquisite feeling, he spoke of Bunker's Hill, of Warren, of General Putnam, and the distinguished revolutionary officers, Gates, Greene, Lincoln, Knox, Starks, and the brave Kosciusko,—of him particularly who was "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen." For a moment, the freshness of youth seemed to pass over his frame. His eyes sparkled with pleasure, and an unusual flush glowed on his cheek. It was the effect of sensibility.

He began his narration.

Three (wars said he) within my remembrance have afflicted this young Country. The first in 1756, for the English against the French. It terminated in 1759, with the victory of General Wolfe, over General Montcalm, on the plains of Abraham. The cession of all the Canadas to the British was in 1760, and the definitive treaty of Paris in 1763. Thence various prosperity and adversity attended the Colonies till the year 1775. From that time during eight years, the revolutionary war continued. Our Independence was declared July 4, 1776. In an arduous struggle, it was maintained, and finally achieved, and the war ended glorious to our Country, in the year 1783. On the third day of September of that eventful year, was the ratification of the definitive treaty of peace and amity between Great Britain, France, Spain and the United States of America.

Commerce then revived, spreading its white wings, on every ocean, to every port. Agriculture prospered. Manufactures increased. The Mechanic Arts progressed. Our Country was free, and our citizens were blest and happy. The Constitution, a noble structure, raised pillar after pillar during 1787, was adopted in 1788.

April 6, 1789: George Washington was chosen first Presi-

dent of these United States. An epocha, with circumstances most memorable. It being the organization of a great republic, and the commencement of a nation's history, John Adams was elected president in 1797—Thomas Jefferson 1801—James Maddison in 1809—(exactly 200 years from the first settlement of the United States) and James Munroe in 1817, within three years of completing two centuries, from the landing of our forefathers at Plymouth.

Our Republic has generally prospered during these successive administrations, (casualties excepted,) and within a half century has become an extensive Empire.

Various aggravated offences, against the peace and dignity of our common Country, by Great Britain; the infringement of our national rights; the orders of Council; and especially the illegal and abusive impressment of our hardy seamen, were the causes of the last war of two and a half years' duration, from the eighteenth of June 1812.

The circumstances of this war are familiarly known; of our glorious triumphs, by sea and by land; and of the bravery of our troops and seamen. All—all deservedly honoured by their Country.

—(Here he paused—looked at his *Certificate*, and dropped a tear of gratitude. He seemed in deep reflection—the work of half a century was passing in review before him. He said something of St. Clair—of soldiers' notes—of disbanding the army—of fears and hopes—and finally of national credit and honor. When speaking of the times, the name of Monroe was uttered with benediction. Then brightening from his reverie, he resumed his story, and went on.)

The names of our Naval and Military heroes merit everlasting honor. Pike, Barney, Jackson, Hartison, Brown, Scott, Gaines, M'Coomb, Croghan, Jessup, Ripley, Miller and numerous others shall be gratefully remembered. Enwreathed with glory, shall be their columns, in the temple of liberty, for services so essential and efficient, rendered their Country, in the hour of her adversity. Peace has now returned to cheer and bless the world. Under kind Heaven may we long enjoy its blessings. Under the auspices of the Prince of Peace, may we ever be a united, free, grateful and happy people. Palsied be the hand—or single, or in CONVENTION, that shall attempt to sever the gordian knot of our Union!

The history of our republic is brightened with great achievements. Our rights are now secured almost beyond the reach of violation—our demands granted with ample satisfaction—our flag honoured with proud distinction. Our hopes and prospects are this day most flattering. Be our joys expressed by brilliant spectacles—sound of cannon, beat of drum and grand parade, throughout our happy land.

A venerable personage has said, “This day ought to be commemorated as the day of our deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to Almighty God.” It ought to be solemnized with pomp, shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires and illuminations, from one end of the continent to the other, from this time forward *forever*.” Let us thus rejoice reciprocally together, as the honoured citizens of a greatly honoured Country. May our exertions and loyalty, our profession and principles, our patriotism and our duty, be ever in mutual and just correspondence—then—

“As he tills his rich glebe,
 “The brave vet’ran shall tell,
 “While his bosom, with gratitude, glows,
 “How your Warren expired,
 “How Montgomery fell,
 “And how Washington conquer’d your foes.”

He finished by observing—

In the celebration of our Independence, think not to mark the verriest faults of the times; it is uncandid, unseasonable and inexcusable. Attempt no wit, at the expense of wisdom. Forget not the occasion. Be patriotic. Speak of no man, no measures, no party, no topic, but *The Day*, and the great national concerns and important benefits, which it commemorates.

Revert to the year 1776, and a long time before. Pass on, in the series of years, to 1812, and some time after—and note the different stages of British insolence and aggression; for as one justly said, they never have, they never will forgive us, the imputed SIN of *Independence*.

Call to mind the persecutions, dangers, sufferings, hardships and calamities of those “times that tried men’s souls.” Think of the privations and the perils, the merciless savages and the accursed prison ships; the barbarous insults and the immolated victims, worthy of a better fate; and the treachery, caprice and cruelty of the enemy—and if you can, magnanimously forgive them.

Remember those who planted the standard of freedom, in the midst of all those overwhelming dangers and difficulties. Guardian angels hovered around it and with the tears of commiseration, converted its blood spots, into stars of glory! The hand of the Almighty is visible in our deliverance. Let us then rightly estimate, and duly appreciate the religious privileges, the civil immunities and the political blessings, we now enjoy; and do honor to the Giver, by cherishing piety, and morality, and virtue, and education, as the four cardinal points of all our mortal responsibilities; and more,—when we extend our views to Europe and the wide world around, and observe how toleration, and peace, and improvement, and happiness, are spreading and increasing all their estimable blessings.—This day should be to us, and to our children, a day of praise and joy and thanksgiving, to the Great Disposer of all human events; the Great Ruler of the destinies of the world, who has redeemed, and will save his people. Here ended the recital, and his pathetic admonitions, with the blessings of the good old man, on the present generation, and his Country.

FELLOW CITIZENS,

Having generously enlightened the minds of your children, with useful knowledge. Teach them wisdom, piety and moral principle. Fit them for the employments and honours worthy of your distinguished Country. Instruct them in national sentiment and national sympathies. Bind their hearts' affections to the Public Good by patriotism, and enlarge their minds by a display of the general and varied polity of the world. Learn them to venerate those principles of virtue and education, on which rest the liberties and safety and hopes and happiness of our Republic. Cherish an ambition in their young hearts to emulate the glorious deeds of their fathers. Often repeat to them the history of your nation the nature of your excellent government, constitution, policy, Religion and Laws. Win them by fanciful description, and inform them by plain narration. Describe to them the circumstances of the times long past, even from your boyish days, and awaken an interest in the virtues and glory of the age preceding, and so retrospectively to the earliest settlements of your Country, and even to the memorable 1492, the era of Columbus, and the discovery of this new world. On such a day as this invigorate their hopes, and cheer their emulation. Inspire them with gratitude to Heaven, for all their manifold benefits, and passing the great and interesting events of the Revolution before them; leave them the injunction to teach their children, and they the

next generation, the duties, which they, in consequence, owe to themselves, their country and their God.

SOLDIERS,

You are the defence of our republic: the invulnerable arm of power. The fencibles and invincibles of the body politic; the strong bulwark of our liberties; but you are not supreme, for the military is wisely subject to the civil powers, and "of right ought to be." In your hands, at the instant of command, a wall of polished steel is displayed around the Palladium of Liberty--the constitution, the laws, and our revered religion. For their protection you would raise a *chevaux de frize* of bayonets, and carry destruction, into the last entrenchments of the invading foe. For the security of your rights, your freedom and your honor, dear to every soldier's heart, you would even breast again the storm of war; present your gleaming swords, in a forest of arms; charge home on the enemy; beat up all his quarters; enfilade his march; out-flank his battalions; press on his ranks; break down his columns; and through all his strong works and fortified stations, pursue *Tyranny*, to its very citadel of power: then triumphant, as victorious conquerors, lead the captives forth, in admiration of your valor, bravery, and humanity.

Nay, you know not fear; "You would not turn on your heel to save your life." In the times of danger, no risque is too great, no hazard too bold, no enterprize too daring, no fortune of war too desperate, no sacrifice too much--when your rights are at stake, and your independence in jeopardy. The warm blood of an American heart flows with enthusiasm for liberty--and it shall faint, falter, perish! but when liberty is no more. Unfurl your banners, strike your cymbals, display your colors, and raise your eagles, before an admiring world. Brace on your armor, and be ready! your helmet is crested with glory; your shield is the inspiration of freedom. Collect your ample munitions; calculate your resources, replenish your magazines, and be prepared: Preparation for war is the security of Peace. Another *Comet* is in our hemisphere. Should it be portentous, leading war and pestilence in its train, whither it goes to the north and east, let the children of the west remember their duty, and put their trust in Heaven. Yet 'tis the voice of your Country only--be "enemies in war, in peace be friends." "Have peace, commerce

and honest friendship with all nations ; but entangling alliances with none." Give " millions for defence, but not a cent for tribute." And while the *Navy* proclaim " Free trade and sailors' rights,"—bearing on their flags " We have met the enemy and they are ours," cheering with the loud acclaim " Don't give up the ship," and *all's well*. Let your muster rolls be inspected in the *Army*, and a million of freemen, with the distinction of citizen-soldiers, shall be found, attesting, that

" The sons of Columbia shall never be slaves,
" While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves."

FATHERS,

With deference, I would speak to you ; it is my duty ; we live this day to honor you, in the commemoration of your great achievements and virtues. In the early circumstances of the Revolution, you were without means, destitute of arms, camp-equipage, necessary rations and clothing, or even powder and ball sufficient to annoy the wolves of your forests. Without discipline, or funds or friends, and almost without hope. Your enemy, formidable in numbers, skillful in arms, rich in resources, haughty, fatidious, and imperious, leading the destinies of all Europe. Claiming your obedience and submission, while every act of yours—of disaffection and resistance was considered as high treason against majesty. You were threatened, insulted, outraged, tortured, with insufferable insolence, to humble your proud spirits, and by the magic of royal names and terms to hold you spell-bound and enchained, in perpetual, colonial humiliation. Through all these discouragements you rose, like *Charity* itself, " suffering long, and bearing all things ;" yet bidding defiance to a world in arms, you then laid the grand foundations of Empire. The loans, forces, aids and encouragements supplied from abroad are gratefully remembered. See now in a righteous cause, and trusting in Heaven, what can be done, by a determined few, against the mighty. The mailed giant, despised the ruddy youth of David ; but only with a sling and a pebble-stone, in the name of the Lord of Hosts, he brought to the earth, this great champion of the Philistines.

What a contrast is, this day, presented in your free republican government, in your vast resources and great population, your cleared and cultivated country, magnificent cities and immense shipping.—Your arts, sciences, institutions, increasing revenues of wealth and innumerable advantages, spreading from the Col-

umbia to the Chesapeake—from the Lakes to the Gulf; from St. Croix to the Rio Bravo, and from the Yellow Stone to Pensacola.

I cannot yet forbear. The theme is too interesting. I call on the Youth, the hope and pride of their Country, the children of veteran and illustrious fathers. I call on them, this day, to rejoice with us *manfully*, in a fair estimation of their numerous privileges and blessings - to contrast slavery with liberty, ignorance with education, humiliation with honor, superstition with devotion, tyranny with their constitutional rights, the abasement of three quarters of the world with their preeminence, and the condition of the human race, with the glory of their Republic. Let them be engaged in these reflections, these liberal and fruitful studies, till we shall meet again. Let them read, admire and imitate the purest virtues of the human heart; and like young Norval, "Heaven directed"---

On this day, come ambitiously to hear
 'Th' recorded history of their Country's fame ;
 Their fathers' worth and virtues to revere,
 " And bless the deeds, that gild their humbler name."

Unusual, as it may seem, I cannot close this volume of events, now an interesting and important part of the history of the world, without addressing a few words, to the female part of our audience: the mothers and sisters, whose animating presence, on this occasion, does great honor to this respectable and numerous assembly, and adds much to the celebrity of *The Day*.

LADIES,

You will kindly hear me. You hold a high and responsible station in society. You are the maternal friends of our infant years; the associates of our youthful improvements; the companions of our maturity, in the social connection; and in advanced age, with the decline of life, and through all the vale of years, our best nurses, our best advisers, and our best christian examples of true piety and resignation. We would honor you this day, with this memorial of your distinction, your worth, and your virtues.

Throughout Africa, and Asia, in many parts of Europe, and some parts of America, the character and condition of females is but deplorable abasement; and irredeemably so; except where the powerful missions of christianity operate to the liberation

and restoration of their sex, to their original dignity.

Our religion and laws are mild and beneficent: they allow the amiable female character, a just consideration: their personal and mental accomplishments, great value; and their rank to be equal and respectable.

In some christian countries, but in the United States especially, these are their exalted privileges, honors and blessings. Be then happy in your condition, be wise, be virtuous, and be grateful; and your rewards shall be the smiles of your little innocents, of your husbands, your parents, your friends—and of Heaven!

The merits and powers of the female mind are remarkably tested in affliction, and are honorably remembered in the circumstances of our revolutionary war. The tented field, the battle ground, the hospital, the habitations of industry and of distress, and the sepulchres of the dead, bore witness to these ministering angels of mercy. In their smiles were the alleviations of captivity, and the proudest honors of victory.

“Many daughters have done virtuously,” but they excelled. Few now remain to repeat the affecting story, to their children. On the present generation rests this responsibility.

Honored Matrons, we owe you a lasting public debt of gratitude, and it shall never be cancelled; because this “national debt is our national blessing.”

It is yours, to direct our first accents, to imbue our hearts with a love of truth, to train us up in the pursuits of honor, to give importance to our education, to cherish the principles of innocence and virtue, and to inspire a due reverence, for our religion and our God. We solicit your unceasing attention, to these honorable duties. Your memory is ever blessed with the recollection of times past.—in all the times to come, may your precepts, admonitions and encouragements—excite the youth of your charge to the love of their Country, to moral action, to honor and integrity, to generous ambition, and to sincere devotion. Then, like *Miriam* the sister of *Aaron*, leading the fair daughters of Israel, with timbrels and dances, in the rejoicings of their deliverance—so shall your presence ever gladden, with sweet exhilaration, each returning——

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