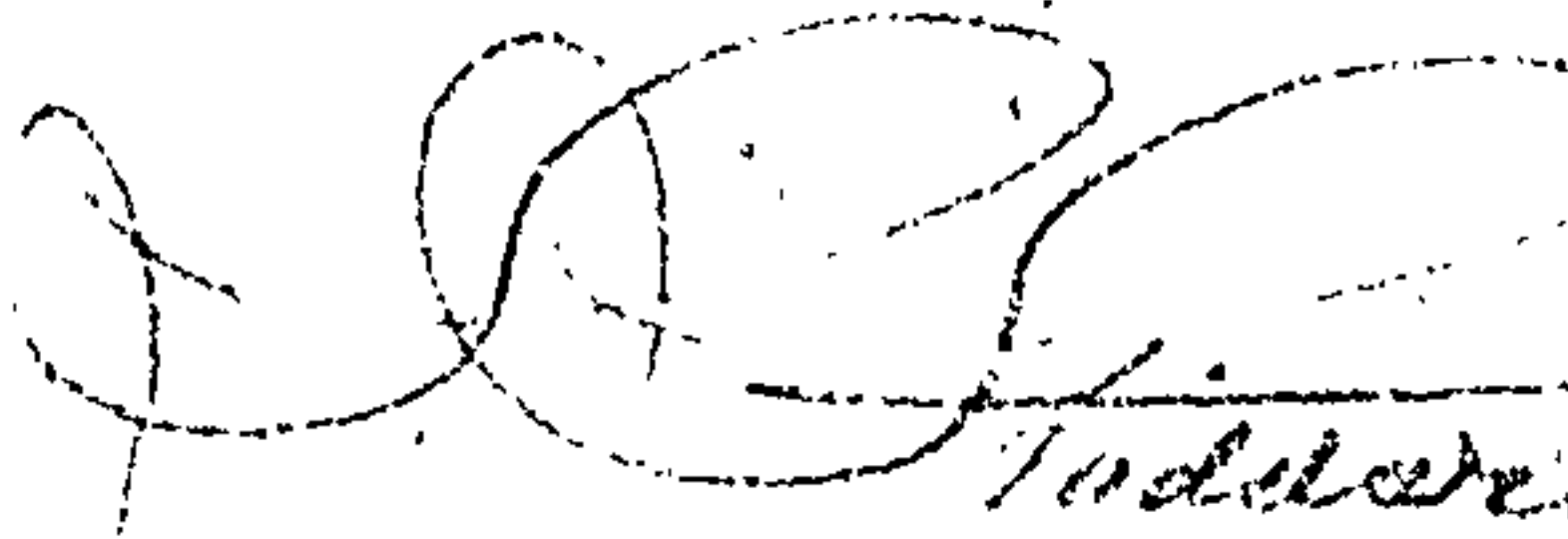


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ORATION,

PRONOUNCED AT NORTHAMPTON,

ON THE

ANNIVERSARY OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,

1811.



By GEORGE GRENNELL, JUN.
OF GREENFIELD.



NORTHAMPTON:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM BUTLER.



1811.

AT a large and respectable meeting of Federal Republicans of the Town of *Northampton*, and various parts of the County of *Hampshire*, assembled at Col. CHAPMAN'S, on the 4th of July, 1811,

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY, That the Committee of Arrangement be a Committee to wait upon Mr. GEORGE GRENNELL, jun. and thank him for his *elegant, national, spirited, and patriotic* Oration, this day delivered, upon the Anniversary of American Independence, and request of him a copy for the press.

Attest—R. E. NEWCOMB,

Chairman of the Committee

GENTLEMEN,

ENCOURAGED by the approbation the "Federal Republicans" have been pleased to express of my Oration, I humbly submit the copy to your disposal.

With greatest respect,

your obedient servant,

GEORGE GRENNELL, JUN

Col. NEWCOMB, and

Committee of Arrangement.

O R A T I O N.

TO commemorate the illustrious events, which occur in the history of our country, may produce the happiest effects. So powerful is the association of sentiments and feelings, that the coolest patriotism must quicken into fervour, on the annual recurrence of that day which saw America rise above dependence and oppression, and take her seat among the nations. Contemplating the high achievements of past generations, we are apt, in the glow of enthusiasm, to indulge the childish regret that our lot had not been cast in the age that produced them. To us it is an age of superior virtue and heroism. We make the passions and the language employed in such periods our own; and becoming in idea the agents, invest ourselves with glory.

National pride may become unjust, intolerant; but when associated with public virtue, is the strong guard of republics. So long as the annals of a nation bear the record of great actions; if the ignoble spirit of rulers, or an habitude of servile submission have not abased the character of the people, this salutary principle will ever be awakened, in its *best power*, at their remembrance.

History cannot furnish a political event, in itself so august, so fraught with important consequences, as that which we are assembled to honor. But if we rest satisfied in the recollection of deeds of virtue and of glory, achieved by brave ancestors, without a solemn concern for the happiness of posterity; without cherishing unwasted the spirit and the principles which secured our country's independence, the blessing may fall prematurely from our hands: another scene may be acted on the broad

field of experiment and blood, *arduous, sanguinary and fatal.*

The history of British usurpations over the American colonies, would lead to a wide range of enquiry. It is familiar to you all. The religious intolerance of the House of Stuart, while it hastened a revolution in Great-Britain, laid the foundation of an Empire in this Western hemisphere. The colonists were from the first republican. Attached to rational liberty in all its modes, and all the rights of man; made valorous by the multiplied obstacles they were doomed to contend against; virtuous from principle, as well as poverty; industrious and intelligent,—such were the people whom the misguided ministry of Britain attempted to reduce to abject vassalage; such were the men who braved the weight of British power.

Without the right of self-government so dear to the soul of man, he sinks from the dignity of his nature to the arbitrary uses of another. For this inborn right Americans contended. They had often felt the abuses of power; often had capricious ministers drawn forth their spirit; then yielded before it; perhaps in tenderness—perhaps in fear. At length the crisis came. The designs of the parent country to stifle the rising greatness of America; to draw from her a revenue, which was to be the price of no solitary privilege, secured by the English constitution, were fully unfolded. An arbitrary principle was not overlooked from the *littleness* of the application. The billows of the ocean, and a ripple on the rivulet will both discover the course of the winds.

The last resort of oppressed man was seized by the Americans to redress their wrongs. Behold them, ye who repose in heedless content, on the inheritance, secured by valor and transmitted by virtue! Behold them, rising with steady fortitude, to reclaim by arms what had been denied to humble petition; staking on the issue, every thing valuable in life. The noble spectacle is

complete. It swells with the best display of human dignity and greatness. It was the perfection of human passion. Let the spirit that ruled on that occasion, my countrymen, never be forgotten. While it is cherished in American bosoms, it will prove the *munition of liberty*; —tyrants will respect you, and *demagogues* be awed.

Unlike most revolutionary struggles that blacken the page of history, the American war of independence presents no traits, that dishonor the grand purpose for which it was undertaken. Adopted with solemn deliberation, prosecuted with persevering fortitude, conducted by men who would have honored the brightest age of any nation, who would themselves have stamped the character of any country that produced them, it left the morals of the people uncontaminated, their principles unchanged.

The toils and dangers encountered by our countrymen in their mighty contest, their patience and heroism, their vicissitudes of fortune to the glorious issue, were a grateful theme to the patriot mind. Full often they have presented a welcome field for brilliant oratory; — the muse of poetry has displayed them in epic elegance, and the muse of history shall make them immortal.

Bear with me a few moments, while I attempt with humble hopes, a brief review of the principles and objects which led to our present system of Government, and the principles and policy by which it was conducted in the early administrations. The transition from this interesting theme would be almost irresistible, to a view of the principles and policy, which have been pursued by their successors.

Constitutions of government, when adopted without violent convulsions, are produced from the sentiments and manners of the people. Differing from this standard, they are exposed to invasions: innovations will weaken their powers, and endanger their existence. To a philosophic observer, it would not be cause of wonder that the American people erected a frame of government, like the one under which we live, without those

civil spasms which usually attend such events. Their opinions, habits and feelings were ever republican; republican, not democratic as the term is rationally received. The government they had thrown off was, in its character, temperate but energetic. Revolution had refined its composition, and defined its parts, till it aptly meted with the temper and character of the people. True it is, corrupt ministers had made it bend to their ambitious schemes;—wicked men have perverted the doctrines of the purest religion, to promote some diabolical purpose; and we have late seen and felt how easily the most perfect of human systems may be violated, to answer the views of unprincipled men. The Americans were not like the frantic revolutionists of France, intoxicated with the liberty they knew not how to use; but passed, with moderate temper, from the government of the most liberal and mild monarchy in the world, to the best regulated republic the world had ever witnessed.

Several independent municipalities spread over a wide extent of territory, with different advantages of trade; in population and strength unequal, required a common bond, to blend, in any degree, the jarring interests of the parts, which would otherwise prove an abundant source of feuds, jealousies, and war. A confederate form of government was therefore adopted, which was designed to protect the members in the enjoyment of their individual rights; unite their energies; and secure the whole from foreign dangers. The pursuits of industry and enterprize were dissimilar, in different portions of this great domain. To afford to each part of the union that encouragement which the habits of the people, or incidental circumstances had rendered important to their prosperity, entered deeply into the views of the framers of this great political charter.

It is manifest from the situation of the country; from the ancient habits of the eastern people; from their reasoning at the time as well as from the internal evi-

dence of the instrument itself, that a desire to establish an extensive foreign commerce, on a secure and liberal basis, was one leading motive to this great national event. Pure morals, which may be said to expand into public virtue, were doubtless the congenial principle of this form of government. But, it was not then discovered that this principle could not consist with commercial relations. That was not a time for speculators, economists and philosophers, by a dash of the pen, to doom to poverty, ignorance and barbarism, the people of a liberal and enterprising nation. It was justly conceived that trade gave vigor to all the domestic arts. If agriculture was the sinews of the republic, its life-blood was commerce.

Altho' the constitution partook, in a due degree, of the democratic principle,—so well distinguished and balanced were the several powers, as to promise, in the opinion of the wisest statesmen, duration and strength, consistent with the purest liberty. The friends of rational freedom approved and admired; and experience, the test of human systems, evinced its perfections. *Factions dared feebly to bay against it, and the pupils of French philosophy, then in its swatches, alone dared denounce it, as containing the substance with the form of the English constitution.*

It is at all times important, and was never more so than at the present, to review those periods of our history, characterized by the wisdom, dignity and firmness of rulers. They spread before us lessons, which none but unprincipled men can read with unconcern. The contemplation raises in the patriot mind, a mingled emotion of manly pride and pensive melancholy. Transient are the pleasures of the man wailing with disease, on the retrospect of his days of glowing health and athletic vigour;—memory saddens at the change—

“ he turns him, in despair
 “ From things that *have been*, to the things that *are*.”

To look back from this sad remove to the times of our immortal Washington and his immediate successor,

might answer the purpose of philosophic enquiry ; might furnish abundant materials for political disquisition ; an ample field of speculation on the future fate of our Empire ; but to us they speak in fearful monition of the hastening ruin of American liberty.

The voice of his country called her deliverer from the retreats of domestic life and calm philosophy, to lead in the administration of a government he so greatly aided to establish—to give his country happiness, as he had already gained her glory. The event transcended her strongest hopes. *So impartial, so dignified, so unswervingly in the spirit of the constitution,* was the course of this great man ; so preeminently wise his maxims of policy, that the *administration* and the *principles* of Washington will ever be the *chart* and the *compass* of all virtuous rulers, if indeed that blessing is yet reserved for this dishonored nation ; and even bad men and demagogues in power will claim to be his pupils and followers, for such is ever the homage that vice pays to virtue.

You do all remember the honor, the dignity, the patriotism of those years. They mark a path in our national history, like the Galaxy in the Heavens, that shall carry its light to future ages. The measures of Washington were experiment in that region of untried being, which exalts them to the first rank of political importance and puts to the severest trial the powers of the directing mind. If we view him with his great compatriots, urging the heavy movements of a new and complicated system against the sinking spirit of the times ; against the excited elements of faction, and all the impediments that foreign and intestine foes could throw in its way, we cannot withhold that free and full admiration, which we reserve alone, for wisdom and magnanimity.

If a particular providence is ascribed to the Deity over the affairs of men, we cannot resist the conviction, that this constellation of patriots was planted in our hemisphere to enlighten, to direct and to save our country.

Among them was Hamilton, of *immortal memory*. O! if our country were grateful to her benefactors;—if all the *angry passions* had not conspired against their glory; how would the name of Hamilton descend the stream of time, more honored than Philopœmen, more revered than Aristides! His spirit has hovered over his country in times of peril, ungrateful to his name, but humble to his mighty genius. His enemies while treading in his footsteps, have denied their director. The system of public credit and national revenue by him devised, has formed the fairest pillar of American greatness and will claim the admiration of men, so long as any thing American is admired.

Most of those associated with Washington, had with him fought the battles of their country. They were republicans; and from their support of the Federal constitution, derived a distinguishing name. Some indeed there were of his appointment whose energies had been bent with vehemence against that instrument, and the leading measures of its friends. It could not escape the discernment of that great master of the human character, that dangerous men have less power of mischief, when associated with the centinels of liberty, than when left to scatter ambiguous tales among the multitude.

It is an undoubted truth, that a republican government owes its best energies to public opinion. The speculative projects of an innovating administration may, for a while, dazzle the popular understanding, may flatter their prejudices; but they are poison to the public mind. Change is remotely dangerous, whether it aim at the opinions, the habits or the spirit of the nation.

Reviewing the administrations of Washington and Adams, we dwell with pleasure on one general result which can never be deemed unimportant to a republic, notwithstanding the abstract nature of the principle. Thro' all the difficulties to be surmounted by a feeble and indigent government, in all the crises of affairs, the *national spirit* was preserved. It was peculiarly the spirit

of Americans ; with it was the government imbued ; and with it will cease to respire American liberty. High honor attended the American flag, wherever enterprize had urged it. Good faith and liberal justice secured the respect of all nations ; and when these ceased to be reciprocated, the spirit of the nation was ready to demand them.

Is there in all this period evidence of unjust partiality towards any government ? None. You have heard Washington declare, with patriot enthusiasm, “ that inveterate antipathies towards particular nations, and passionate attachments for others should be excluded : the nation which indulges towards another an habitual hatred, or an habitual fondness, is in some degree a slave.” Who dare assert that this man ever swerved from the lessons he taught ? His practice was ever their fairest commentary. You have seen his policy in regard to foreign nations full often exemplified. In that dark and perilous time when revolutionary France was waging a desperate war with Britain and the powers of the continent, the sympathies of many in America inclined to render her that aid which the French monarch had afforded us in our struggle for liberty. The wounds of our revolution were cicatrized ; the public fervour rose high ;— the Anti-federal party, who were then passing the chrysalis to Jacobinism, urged the measure with a frenzy and outrage unparalelled. Amid this storm of passions, sufficient to shake the firmness of common minds, he looked beyond it to the lasting weal of the state, and by a proclamation of neutrality, withheld his country from that tremendous vortex, which has swallowed up so many nations.

Needless it were to multiply proofs of the justice and impartiality of the federal administrations towards foreign powers. Years of undisturbed peace and commercial prosperity will speak their eulogium when we are passed away. Commerce was then thought worth the protection of the country : not by the ignoble mode of retiring from the ocean ; but by the active powers of

the nation. Nature was not forced, nor common sense insulted, by a wrong-headed scheme of restraints, abhorrent to the proud feelings of Americans. Embargoes were not perverted from their ancient use to preserve, what cowardice durst not defend.

Would you ask, what may be remarked during this period, that evinces virtue and wisdom of the highest order? You have seen commerce protected; the confusion and bankruptcy of the treasury give place to order, wealth and revenue. You have seen the national honor preserved; the national spirit cherished; and the government administered in the spirit of the great charter of our rights and privileges: in a word, you have seen the American people enjoying peace at home; commanding respect abroad, and cultivating a friendly, not an entangling alliance, with all the civilized and savage world.

So bright the future prospects of America, her state so dignified and fair, Europe confessed what at first was deemed problematical, that she was worthy of the independence she had gained. And scarce will it gain credit with after ages, that innovation should so soon threaten to sweep away the fruits of so much valor, toil and virtue. But it will be read that this is the era of experiment; anomalies and speculation. It will seem that

“The moon had come more near the earth than she was wont,
“And made men mad.”————

France, bloody, treacherous, unprincipled France! What does she not owe to America, to humanity and to justice? While she appeared to be overturning the system of tyranny with which she had been so long oppressed, every friend to liberty ardently wished success to her struggle; every friend to humanity devoutly prayed that ages of freedom might be the reward of the blood she spilt. But her revolutionists were tyrants, and her new systems were the Utopias of infidels and philosophers. America has revolutionized France, and she in

her turn America. Never did a Mussulman claim more merit from a martyrdom to the principles of his prophet, than did the jacobins of America to the abominable doctrines of French philosophy.

Our country has not yet forgot the events of those times; those *principles* we shall never forget. They are in our books, in our statutes, in our government; they are mingled with all our passions. They shook the government while Washington was at the helm, most fearfully. Adams, at length fell before them. Adams! "he had done the state some service." We review his political measures with satisfaction. They were approved of Washington. Poor old man! the sport, alike of fortune and of passion. Could Hamilton speak from the tomb, he would pity and forgive thee:—Wicked men have played upon thy dotage.

I have said that France had revolutionized America. It was not a sanguinary scene, that was acted. It was a radical change, wrought in the moral temper of the people. A new train of reasoning on moral and political subjects, a loosening of principle was effected, which, for a time, threatened the social and political state. The pupils of the French school, (and they were abundant enough for great mischiefs) seemed to suppose that whatever bore the traces of age, must be abuse, must be tyranny; all that appeared English was in their view corruption. The energies of our government imposed on man restraints he was not born to endure; society should be as level as the lake.

It is beyond our object to enter into an examination of French principles, or to trace their progress in America thro' all their modes. It is the peculiar nature of faction to assume various names or language, according to the posture of events; and so versatile is public opinion, when diverted from its wonted channel, that scarce any thing is too absurd for its adoption, if it possess the charm of novelty. The enemies of our consti-

tution drank down these principles like nectar. They were in general, aspiring, restless, factious, discontented, disappointed men : forming together a band, that for desperate hopes and dark views, might have outrivalled the followers of the exiled son of Jesse at the cave Adulam. They told the people, their government was approximating to the odious forms of Britain. The well earned popularity of Washington was made the subject of alarm for the safety of their liberties. Adams was put to the torture of a licentious press, yielded and fell. The avarice of men saw with jaundiced vision, in a system of revenue adequate to the times, waste and oppression. A plan of defence, was to prove an incentive to war or the germ of tyranny.—Men whose services have aggrandized their country, and secured her happiness for late posterity, hold the public favor by a frail tenure, when unprincipled demagogues shall point the popular jealousy to the lofty victims.

When the confidence of the people is detached from one set of men, where shall it fasten ? where but on those, who profess better views, and present more dazzling objects for popular cupidity ? It is a truth, to which history will do justice, that the opinions, and principles derived from France have given a lasting direction to the sentiments and reasoning of the American people, foreign to the *spirit of the constitution*, foreign to the spirit of the American revolution.

Passing the climax of imposition by which a change was effected, it may not be unprofitable to examine the nature of the principles, and the policy pursued by the administrations since the year 1801. It is needless farther to review the auspices under which the party came into power. The revolution that brought them forth, was greater than easy men may be aware. If posterity are not more deeply impressed with its magnitude than we are, happy indeed will be our deception ; the nation may yet be safe ; and you, my countrymen, will go down

to after-time as the fomenters of jealousy and false alarm, or the zealous, but misguided centinels of your country's rights. The labors of Pickering and the eloquence of Ames, will concern the world as much as they do their country.

While we allow the position, that peace is the policy of the United States, we contend in the language of Washington, that to preserve it, we must be prepared for war. Peace has a thousand charms, and is doubtless the condition of nature ; but short-sighted men will not reflect that it may be pursued in a way, directly, tho' perhaps remotely to produce war, and a war of the worst kind. Is there not danger that a reliance on this broad principle, may stifle that spirit of national honor, which is the great bulwark of our rights, and which alone can secure the blessings of peace ?

The maxim is as old as the Athenian Phocion ; and has been followed by the greater Washington with eminent success. Has it not been sacrificed to a *servile, profitless, deceptive* system of economy ?

The early opposition, to the construction of a navy to compel the Barbary powers to respect our flag ; the uproar of faction, when the sacred rights of the nation required the array of arms against the aggressions of France, are not without their weight in developing the origin of this passive policy. It is a truth that the defensive plan of the nation has not only been unadvanced by the party in power ; but as it would seem, in the Vandal spirit of the times, they have laid a rude hand on the system, which was already rising to importance. We have thrown aside our buckler, because we disliked the burden. Our navy has been sold or dismantled, and where was the economy ? In a wretched gun-boat armament, abandoned at length for inefficiency and expense. Was not the spirit of the nation suffered disgracefully to slumber, when our treaty with Spain was violated, in the occlusion of the port of New-Orleans ?

But shall we be answered,—it were better to purchase peace, than shed republican blood to obtain the boon? This were to fit us, by degrees, for the yoke of despotism. Who can doubt, that America might have saved herself the humiliation and ignominy which now cover her character, by a manly and commanding posture of defence? Relinquish a single right you possess, out of fear, and it is a pledge for all you have remaining.

It is not alone the provocations, which this course of policy gives to foreign nations to trample on our rights, that we have to deprecate. It is nearly allied to a passion which, for years, has never ceased to wound our dearest interests. *Hostility to commerce.* It would be fruitless to enter on the abstract enquiry of the influence of trade upon national character or government. It is in the charter of God to the American nation, that we enjoy the fairest advantages for this source of wealth and aggrandizement; and such has been the natural order of industry, enterprise and improvement, that this professed blessing has become an *indefeasible right*. In whatever relation we view it, we are ready to maintain, that to destroy it, is *usurpation and the worst of tyranny*. Can any man doubt, that the security of commerce was a prime motive with the Eastern States, to the Federal compact? The genius of the people had extended trade to all seas. How have we seen these hopes and these interests blasted by *impolicy, weakness and cold-hearted philosophy!*

In other times, a naval armament was thought a fair commutation with the trading states, for the revenue they poured into the treasury: but we have seen its fate. Had government been content to leave commerce without this protection, they might still have been forgiven this departure from the spirit of the Federal compact; but a succession of measures, all tending to its utter overthrow, must, after the madness of the times is past, righteously draw on its authors the *execrations* of an *abused* people.

Rulers have told us, their object was the *security* of our trade. The armies of conquering France, proclaimed

to the free and happy and independent nations of Europe; that they came to break their chains; then trampled them to the dust. Americans have listened to the siren melody of republican professions, till they have forgotten their duties, their cares and their liberties.

Hostility to commerce, in union with a host of passions, for which this country weeps, has ever rankled in the bosom of Thomas Jefferson. Shall I be told, this is the empty declamation of a furious partizan? It is on record—he has written a book, it has been displayed before your eyes; it has invaded your towns and your villages; it yet hangs like a pestilent fog upon your mountains. That man has yet to answer to his country, for her *honors withered, her blessings wrested, her spirit debased, her union drawn to the verge of fate.* We pass his well known opinions full often expressed against foreign trade; we pass his report, while Secretary of State on our commercial relations. The system of commercial restraints, which began in the close of the year 1807, and has continued in various forms to the present moment, will unfold a truth, that sophistry and falsehood can never cover. Fruitless were the attempt to review in detail the circumstances attendant on this thrice execrable system; they would swell to a voluminous journal of errors. When this portentous era opened, our trade was important to the nation. Twelve months had elapsed since the Emperor of France, from the capital of conquered Prussia, thundered forth his decree of blockade of the British isles. Our government had acquiesced, while the privateers of the tyrant enforced its provisions. Spiritless remonstrance, and gentle enquiry, had been answered with evasion and artifice, with flagrant insult and menace. No hope remained of justice. The views of the Emperor could not be misconceived; he had declared war for us against his enemy; “there should be no neutrals.” He had arranged his continental system for “conquering the liberties of the seas;” in other language for the overthrow of Britain and the erection of his own un-

righteous sway. I would not affirm that our government designed to favour this monstrous object. The leading facts of the matter have all been displayed before you; artifice, sophistry and false pretence can never distort them. Our opinions can strike in no middle course. Error in judgment in such a crisis, in the midst of such bold facts, charity can never suppose. The administration, panic-struck and trembling, resorted to a measure, novel in its design and operation, deadly to the trade, the prosperity and happiness of America, as the African Sirocco to the unheeding traveller, and our country was shrouded with an unlimited Embargo. The people look around for the reasons of this measure. What dangers, in the ordinary course of events should drive an enterprising and valiant nation from the ocean? Where slept the American spirit that never shrunk, in elder times? Alas, it had already been taught to do homage to avarice at home, *pitiful and groveling, and usurpation and tyranny* abroad.

We need no oracle to declare that any acts of foreign powers, which can threaten our national sovereignty with violation, should instantly put us in arms.

Injuries had been received from Great Britain, incidentally flowing from the war she was waging. But, what comparison had these borne to the outrages of France? She had studied peace with us, on terms consistent with a fair neutrality. Was not the right of search as well settled as it had been for ages? Was the proclamation of the British monarch, calling home his subjects to defend his throne, fraught with mighty danger? The cause lay deeper; it would not bear the light. *Hatred* of Britain was more popular than *love* of Washington. She rested on commerce as the solid column of her power and greatness; Britain must be destroyed.

Was this scheme of restraints designed for coercion? The perfidious Emperor applauded, haughty Britain despised it. At one time, it was to be the lever of Archimedes, and again the ark of safety, and Americans, like

Chinese, were to retire within their borders, and like them fall down before the pagod of their worship.

I venture the opinion, that when the story of these times shall be dispassionately read, this system of commercial restrictions, viewed in all its forms and all its modifications, will be stamped by the solemn verdict of posterity, as flowing from an inveterate antipathy to England and a servile attachment for her enemy. Attachment for France! What infatuation can seduce an American mind into a love for that polluted nation! She gained for us, our independence. Yes, and before the blessing was well secured, attempted to blast the possession. Time has not yet obliterated the veneration of our jacobins for France, while she was seething with faction and blood; while her tyrants were sweeping to destruction, all who were ever entitled to the gratitude of Americans, all that was amiable, good and noble in the nation. The *like* veneration appears to have distinguished the *same* party while they have had the power to practice upon it in the high places of our government. They who rejoiced at the victories of Bonaparte, the general, over the republics of Europe, have promoted the designs of Bonaparte, the Emperor, against the only hold of liberty and virtue in that portion of the earth and, under Heaven, "the world's last hope, Britain's fast anchored isle."

At length has this system assumed a form which baffles description for injustice, oppression and alarm. Tenfold more ruinous is the present Law of non-impotation than Embargo and all its military tyranny. How does it harmonize, in destructive effects, with the decrees of Napoleon. The legitimate acts of the unsuspecting merchant in pursuit of an honest commerce, are by this unprecedented law made crimes,—himself returning to his native country, who harbors and protects in her bosom the abandoned of all nations, with the fruits of his industry and adventures, to fall a victim to extortion, tyranny and prison; his property doomed to swell the *vulturine spoils of contemptible spies and informers.*

But, be not deceived, this is not the extent of the ruin. You have, you *must* have traced, with deepest attention, the causes which have led to this state of things. A blind, a devoted confidence in the *promise* of a tyrant, who has broken all faith, has thrown this country into a state of most *disgraceful* jeopardy. Were it not madness to conclude his edicts revoked, when he declares they are "the fundamental law of his empire?" Was nothing required of the trembling President but to echo the falsehood of the Emperor? The veriest dolt must be convinced, he has swerved from his powers. The decrees have never ceased to violate the neutral rights of the United States. Not a vessel escapes from his shores but gives the melancholy tidings of repeated captures and condemnations; not a breeze from his coasts, but is laden with the sighs of your incarcerated countrymen; they are shot in his dominions, under the mockery of justice. Their plundered millions swell his coffers. And at the moment we are *slavishly* inhibiting all trade with his enemy, are told that this property was seized by way of reprisal, and the law of reprisal must govern the affair: Reprisal for what? A mere municipal law. The government seem to have inverted the order of things prescribed by the law of May 1810, and imposed the non-importation against England as a precedent condition for the repeal of the Decrees; thus laying a fairer claim to his *law*, by an act of supererogation. Did the tyrant ever utter a clearer truth, than when he pronounced us to be "*without just political views, without honor, and without energy?*" The trade we are allowed with France is unworthy of pursuit, trammelled as it is with his restrictions; but he declares, he will favor it, if we conform to his decrees: and under the sting of these outrages, we are yielding every shade of sovereignty to his nod; we are putting on his harness and adopting his system. I pity the man whose bosom would not glow like a furnace, at the thought of these indignities; but we shudder

for the fate of our country, whose rulers are spiritless enough to bow submission and kiss the hand that inflicts them.

Every friend to his country would avoid an entanglement with Britain ; but can never rejoice in her overthrow while she is fighting the battles of Christendom. Why is friendship kept with the tyrant of France ? Lawless and wild is his ambition, he wages war with humanity. A treaty with him is the frost-work of a night ; it dissolves in the first beam of the morning. Are we less servile than was Spain, less submissive than Prussia, more happy and virtuous than Switzerland ? The land of Tell groans beneath the tyrant's power ; and the land of Washington is verging to the same doom. Ensnared, dishonored and plundered by Napoleon ; on the eve of a war with his enemy, and to human view, in the bands of that dread confederacy, conspiring for her ruin, a happier destiny is hardly within the reach of hope. Ages bore the Roman Empire to greatness and glory, and ages again, conducted her declining to her fall, lingering in review of brilliant exploits and eminent virtue. *This* anticipation is hardly left to cheer the American patriot. He contemplates the materials preparing of horrid combustion, ready to burst and overwhelm his country, her honors, her greatness, her history lost, and mourned as Herculaneum and Pompeii.

Three years of commercial restrictions full of blunders as they are, are full of important lessons for our country. One truth is most clearly demonstrated : foreign nations are not so dependent on our commerce as to be compelled by its restraints. Submission to one aggression is provoking another ; and it may be repeated by the same or a different hand. When a nation suffers her sovereignty to be invaded, she that moment forfeits her right to be neutral. The submission of Denmark to the demands of France cost her, her navy. Submission to the Berlin decree has been the origin of our heaviest evils.

It would require a vast stretch of faith to be convinced the administration, if their views have been the purest, have pursued the solid interests of the nation. The present crisis almost forbids the hope. Indeed the party in power, viewed in their whole career, discover a policy designed rather to catch the popularity of the day, than to advance the lasting welfare of the people. Let this be borne in mind. It may be profitable to lead us to the true reason of many measures, otherwise unaccountable. Their schemes for regulating commerce have not been limited by the spirit of the constitution. They have violated the terms of the *Federal compact*, broken up the habits strengthened by ages, and blasted the means by which thousands lived. And when these measures are viewed, combined with the avowed antipathies of the ascendant party against Britain, against commerce and those who follow it, and in relation to the declarations and decrees of Napoleon against the same objects, our rulers must stand convicted before the nation of sacrificing its rights, its honor and its dearest interests. The judgment of Washington is against them thrice involved:—*they have forborne, in time of peace to prepare for war;—of England they have indulged an habitual hatred, and an habitual fondness for France.*

The merchant and the husbandman, the mariner and the woodman have felt the oppression; the rich man has been despoiled of his wealth, the poor man of his daily bread. Will the men of New-England tamely bear this invasion of their natural and chartered rights? As well might you drive them from their cornfields and their meadows, as from commerce and the ocean. *They will maintain their rights, peaceably if they can, forcibly if they must.*

But while the Eastern States behold with alarm their commerce prostrated, their energies paralyzed; the tale of grievance is scarce half told. The prospect blackens into night when they see their weight in the confederacy sinking to comparative insignificance,—translated to

strangers ! A rash hand has been laid upon the constitution in the admission into the Union of the Territory of New-Orleans, that land of political plagues, that colony of Frenchmen. Yes, men of New-England, the fair inheritance, those rights and privileges for which you and your fathers fought, for which they marched bare-footed and bleeding, over the frozen hills of New-Jersey, for which their blood did flow at Charlestown and Monmouth, is to be divided with these foreigners who know not your language, your interests or character. The expatriates of Europe are to sit in your councils and legislate your liberties away.

When the spirit of the constitution is profaned, what security have we of its most essential provisions ? The danger lies beyond the ordinary reflection of the people. The sacredness of the instrument rests, it is feared, too lightly on their minds. In this general apathy may be seen not the least of the dangers that threaten American liberty.

Turning from these more general concerns to our state interests, are the prospects such as to animate the hopes of freemen ? Is not *there* the hand of the "incomparable Napoleon" pointing our course to the high road of ruin and sealing our destinies ? The state government must echo the acts of the general government, who echo those of the base-born tyrant. The Executive must be supported, and the people must uphold the secret works of darkness, or they are branded as rebels. Our state metropolis, far-famed as the cradle of American liberty, is denounced by the man who violently opposed that constitution which regenerated us as a nation and gave us a name of highest renown.

An orderly and peaceable meeting of citizens, *to consult upon the common good*, to effect a constitutional change of rulers, with the hope of promoting the public weal, is denounced as an *assemblage plotting discord, exciting commotion*, rebellion and civil war ; *because they dared to act freely and vote for a better man than he*

who thus proscribes them. A vengeance *so* unbridled in its range for victims, may also enrol *ourselves* in its proscriptions, who are here assembled for the purest purpose that can warm the patriot heart—to commemorate the principles, which founded our republic ; to honor the virtues of her mighty dead ; to bear testimony against those principles and those men who are urging her to ruin.

We have heard with heart-felt shame and indignation, the principles of a furious party avowed and defended from the chair of state. Massachusetts has boasted Governors of Roman virtues ; but they are discarded for the leader of a party who has applied the torch to the combustibles of faction ; and Heaven alone, knows where the flame will abate. Your Governor descends to tell you that you must harmonize with the general government ; and the annals of tyranny are unrolled for maxims of political faith, which Americans have long since renounced. The doctrines of governmental infallibility, of passive obedience and nonresistance are rescued from the night of oblivion to which they were falling, and “ hung on high to poison half mankind.” Patriots, fathers of liberty ! is this the voice that, scarce one age ago, demanded the sacrifice of your privileges, your opinions, and your inborn rights, before the mace of arbitrary power ? Your State Republic is in danger. It received the first offering of your vows, and when the inordinate ambition of bad men is breaking down your stake in the Union, it is the last palladium of your rights. *There is a political necessity above all the parchment bonds in government : Heaven grant it may not be provoked.*

The condition of this country is alarming beyond example ; well nigh to despair. Ten years of misrule have nearly overthrown that peerless structure, which was cemented by the blood of thousands of brave men. We are decrepid even in our youth. We have passed from error to error ; so rapidly has one innovation followed another, and all without reform, that the public judgment is distracted ; and lost in party passions.

With grief, with horror have we seen the fundamental principles of the *Federal Union* perverted; the constitution repeatedly assailed with a ruthless hand; the policy and examples of the fathers of our government habitually discarded for French partialities, and an ignoble passion for popularity; the Eastern section of the country nearly sunk into Virginian colonies; trade and revenue destroyed; the Union shaken; and at length, the American republic about to be sacrificed in an alliance with the most terrible tyrant that ever scourged the world.

These are no mock terrors. The first men in the nation; the first perhaps of the age have sounded the alarm in the ears of the people. They are regarded with an apathy equal to treason. They begin to despair of arousing them, and view the impending danger as the Roman Pliny viewed the volcanic mountain which was soon to overwhelm him in eternal ruin.

Dare we *hope* the spirit of '75 yet slumbers in our hills? It may awake in the last *hour* of hope; display the *Ægis* of Freedom, and in the uniform of Washington rally the patriot band to save this sinking Empire: Or in another event, if delusion shall still enshroud the public mind, and our rulers advance in their present course against the warnings of reason, experience and Heaven, an half age may not escape, ere we shall groan in unison with Switzerland, Hamburg and Holland, and the American Republic shall crown the funeral pile of liberty.