

# AN ORATION

DELIVERED

IN ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH,

BEFORE

THE INHABITANTS OF CHARLESTON,

ON

*THE 4th OF JULY, 1809,*

BY THE APPOINTMENT

OF THE

*SOUTH-CAROLINA STATE SOCIETY OF CININNATI,*

AND

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AND

OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION SOCIETY.

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BY THOMAS S. GRIMKÉ,

*Member of the Cincinnati.*

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“ I am sensible of having given offence, because at so early an age,  
“ I have ventured to speak in public; but circumstances sanctioned it:  
“ and to be ingenuous, I coveted the esteem of my fellow-citizens. En-  
“ couraged by this motive, who would not speak before the Public? Why  
“ be affected at the opposition of some? not they, but you, are to be my  
“ judges.” *Lys. Or. for Mantib.*

“ The unity of government which constitutes you one people, is a  
“ main pillar in the edifice of your real independence; the support of your  
“ tranquility at home, your peace abroad; of your safety; of your pros-  
“ perity; of that very liberty which you so highly prize.”  
*Washington's Valedictory Address.*

“ Nam quacunq̄ prius de parti — cesse  
“ Constitues, hæc rebus erit pars janua lethi.” *Lucr.*

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CHARLESTON, (s. c.)

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1809.

# AN ORATION.

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SHALL the creative eye of the poet still find in the works of nature the attractions of novelty? Shall the statesman acknowledge that political science opens a rich and spacious field for investigation, and the philosopher discover new wonders in the natural, and fresh beauties in the moral world? And shall the advocate of patriotism, the eulogist of departed worth, the orator of Independence, complain that his subject is barren and uninteresting? Do the blessings of Heaven descend on a country more favored than ours? Or does the world contain a nation, more strikingly distinguished? Or the annals of history an æra more glorious and eventful than that of American Independence? While, therefore, Freedom shall be the eastern star, that guides this country to prosperity and happiness: while the energy of public virtue shall arm the citizen with fortitude, and the soldier with intrepidity: when the storied urns of our

martyred heroes shall have mingled with the dust they recorded, and our days shall be hallowed with the name of antiquity, the orator of this day shall never find his subject deficient in novelty and instruction. And, when he remembers how many thousands have crimsoned with their blood, the very fields, whose harvest waves only for him; and how long the gates of peace were closed against his wretched country, before she could establish those rights, which he rises to commemorate, what mingled emotions must agitate his bosom! Called forth on such an occasion, before such an audience, in such a place, how must the pale flame of languor and diffidence brighten into the blaze of enthusiasm and manly confidence!

Hitherto you have heard the messenger of peace proclaiming you the favorites of Heaven, and inculcating the sister virtues of the patriot and the Christian. Or you have listened with admiration as the statesman has described the masterly schemes of policy he had aided in planning, or painted to your view the subtile machinery of government. And often, with the smile of exultation and the tear of sympathy, have you followed the laurelled veteran, whilst he grasped with feeble hand, the sword of his youth, and planted again the

standard of his country on the battlements of her foes. But now, the minister of Heaven sleeps with those, over whom his benedictions were so often pronounced. The voice of the statesman of seventy-six is seldom heard, but in the trumpet of fame. And the revolutionary soldier daily meets death, with a smile, since the mould, which receives him, is sacred to freedom and to honor. Henceforth the child shall be taught to revere the spot where they repose; the stranger shall tread lightly on the verdant turf which covers them; and the future historian, and orator, shall visit their hallowed graves, to kindle in his bosom the admiration of virtue and the spirit of eloquence. Henceforth, the rising generation shall be called to perpetuate the blessings, secured by the wisdom and valor of their predecessors. The young man shall minister at the altar of Liberty, which his parent had built, and proclaim to assembled thousands, the glory and usefulness of their fathers.

Happy had it been for America, thrice happy for him, who addresses you this day, had the subject, which is to engage your attention, been the subject of his choice. He might then have dwelt on the influence, which our revolution has had on the world at large, or have traced its more familiar effects in our

native land. He might have explained the importance of great national principles, or have unfolded the fatal consequences, which often result from their decay. But the imprudence of some and the corruption of others have forced a theme on the public ear, at which every friend to his country must start and tremble. They would efface from the tomb of Washington, its brightest inscription, that of the "Common Father of our Common Country." They have proclaimed aloud that these should be no longer United States: that the arm, which severs us, will bring salvation to America: that the constituted authority, which pronounces our national divorce; will speak with the voice of Heaven.

Could you cease to be Americans; could you tear from your hearts the feelings, which nature gave and your country has cherished; could you assume the changeful garment of the courtier, or wear the imposing mask of the hireling; you might listen unmoved to this proposal. But there is no communion between purity and corruption, between harmony and discord, between patriotism and treachery. When, however, the burst of indignation has subsided, strengthen the persuasion of feeling by the convictions of understanding, and build the firm resolve to be united, on the eternal

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basis of truth and reason. But open with the deepest awe, the volume, which contains the principles of union: reverence it, next to the temples and altars of our God: think, when you approach it, that you hear a voice from the tomb of Washington, exclaiming, "the place whereon thou standest is holy ground:" Think that you behold a flaming sword, "turning every way to guard the path to this tree of life."

Had not the impolicy of Britain precipitated the moment of separation, the time was approaching, when this country must have been free. The child, as he matures in age, must assume the dignity and independence, with the vigor of manhood: and the iron links, which bind the colony to the footstool of sovereignty, must be converted into the golden chain, which secures the rights, the interest, and the glory of nations. If our Independence had sprung from the progressive operation of the great principles of society, it might be a question, whether we ought to form but one government, and whether we ever would. But the iron sceptre of power drew around us all one common circle of defiance, and bade us submit to one common law of universal slavery. Hence Americans "established in war," an intercourse of sen-

timent, and an uniformity of conduct; and continued in peace “an united cause, and an united nation.”

From whatever source our arguments are drawn, and whatever be the chain of reasoning we pursue, still shall we find that union is the vital principle of our permanence and happiness. If we argue from theoretical politics, we shall see them confirmed by the testimony of experience, and if unsatisfied by these, we demand higher evidence, we shall discover it from the survey of our own country, in its domestic and foreign relations.

Whilst we confess that speculation, even in the philosophy of mind, its peculiar province, is not always clear and uniform, yet we know that its principles are founded on the nature of man, and have often been advantageously employed by the sagacious statesman. As the science of theoretical politics arose out of the disorders or miseries of the subject, and the errors or usurpations of the ruler, we may always resort to it with success, for the leading principles of national greatness or national degradation. Led by this glimmering light, we may easily arrive at many of the fundamental maxims of sound policy. This will teach us that the wider the interval between united governments and the rest of the world,

the more is union the soul of their existence: that if their disunion be profitable to others, it certainly will be dangerous to themselves; and that it is easier to excite jealousy and dissension between neighboring nations, than between different parts of the same empire. Thus also we may learn that union promotes the great objects of government, that this multiplies, improves, and strengthens the resources of a people: and as the nature of nations and individuals is, in this respect the same, divided states are, when at peace, faithless and suspicious, and when hostile, the most bitter and destructive foes.

Unavailing however would solitary speculation be, were not its precepts corroborated by experience. In vain had the morning star of reason shone on the benighted scenes of human life, had it not been followed by the sun of revelation. Equally in vain would theory presume to guide us, did not its winding paths so frequently terminate in the broad road of experience. But the page of speculation is often found to be a faithful counterpart to the past, and a prophetic anticipation of the future. Here we shall perceive that though danger and necessity were the origin of most confederacies, the advantages of union were the foundation of their conti-



nuance.\* This salutary principle is evidenced from the conduct of monarchies, and even in the measures of savage nations, the same maxim is equally apparent. But though the stern dictates of sudden emergency have sometimes united independent nations in one common cause, let us not forget that it was under circumstances peculiarly favorable. For experience testifies that like the prophetic voice, which warned Rome of impending ruin from the Gauls, the admonitions of threatened destruction are often unavailing. If union of interest would always lead to union of power, why did not Greece, with one voice, assert her resolve to be free, when invaded by Philip? Why were not the Sabine cities allied against the usurpations of Romulus? And the states, which composed the Heptarchy, against the ambitious projects of Egbert? These examples unequivocally declare, that, when once the spirit of jealousy and the pride of sovereignty influence the counsels of independent, and especially of neighboring nations, the appeal to public warfare, the cries of individual misery,

\* The history of the Achaean and Helvetic confederacies, furnishes a striking exemplification of this. The former, which consisted of twelve cities, and lasted 130 years, began B. C. 284, from the union of three. The latter was at first composed of three cantons, but comprized eventually thirteen.

and the claims of posterity are all disregarded.

Nor let us indulge the persuasion, that those whom duty and interest bind together, will always stand firm and united in the hour of a nation's peril. To what then but this, shall we attribute the want of energy and unanimity in Spain? Had all her united powers been vigorously exerted, we might have hoped to see the progress of tyranny successfully opposed. In vain, however, on this very day, of the last year, did the junta of Seville, like our illustrious congress of '76, invoke the God of nature and of nations, to nerve their arms in battle, and enlighten their minds in council. In vain, was the voice of vengeance heard from every province of Spain, amid the wreck of a dissolving government. In vain did thousands of swords glitter in the uplifted hands of an incensed nation, to light them through the storms of war to the regions of freedom and peace. But the forces of her enemy rushed in one mighty flood from the summit of the Pyrenees, and in a moment, the rights, the glory, and the happiness of Spain were swept into the shoreless ocean of tyranny. Then we beheld the proud genius of that devoted country, borne aloft in the fiery chariot of despotism, nor left behind even the

mantle of hope to cover the nakedness of anticipated despair. But let us hope that the time will yet come, perhaps even now is come, when in the midnight of that nation's misery and humiliation, the shackles of the captive will drop from his limbs, and the doors of his prison burst open spontaneously: when the earthquake of revolution will humble the proud towers of despotism in the dust, and the great apostles of patriotism swell the loud anthem of praise and gratitude for their country's deliverance.

But if the fate of Spain speak not a language sufficiently impressive, turn to the republics of Greece, and listen to the faint murmur of admonition, that issues from the shattered tomb of their freedom and glory. If moral and political corruption were the efficient causes of their ruin, the daring hand of discord administered the fatal poison. When united against Persia, they presented as sublime a sight as the world has ever witnessed. Then we beheld a band of heroes rush from the calm vale of retirement, at their country's call, great in the conscious dignity of nature, and the pure energy of republican virtue. Then we beheld cities opposed to nations, and a people to the world.

At that period, Greece furnished the no-

blest materials for a happy and permanent union. In each state, virtue was the predominating principle of the constitution: public good the object of the individual, and national prosperity the sole reward of the ruler. The soldier then was but the citizen in disguise; his only jealousy, for the preservation of domestic harmony; his only fear, lest he should outlive the liberties of his country; his only wish, to hand down to posterity the blessings which he had received from his fathers. Had they then become but one nation, under one general government, they might have proved a match even for the gigantic power of Rome, and have vied with the bright records of glory and happiness, which fame shall transcribe from the annals of America. But when the storm was passed, whose fury had driven them to the same shelter, when the serene sky of peace and independence invited to the enjoyment of its genial influence, the spirit of discord frowned on the brightening prospect. With one consent they levelled the encircling ramparts of union, and rushed, like the prodigal, to revel in the lawless excesses of licentiousness and ambition. They overturned the altar they had consecrated to the genius of their common country, and soon we beheld that genius, mourning amid the ruined monuments of his

greatness, and shedding the tear of unavailing regret, on the hallowed plains of Marathon and Plataea.

But vain would be the testimony of speculation, and equally vain the combined experience of four thousand years, could we not trace their application to ourselves; and discover in our domestic and foreign relations, arguments for our union, which the sophist cannot answer, and the sceptic dare not doubt: If now we examine our internal situation, we shall perceive that the nature of our government, our intimate connection with each other, and the rapid progress of public prosperity since the revolution are links in a chain of reasoning peculiar to ourselves.

In pursuing the train of thoughts suggested by this part of our subject, we must be sensible, that the principle of union is more perfect in our system, than in any other. With us, each state retains such rights and powers, as are essential to its individual interest; while the general government is invested with those, which concern the privileges and happiness of all. Congress acts for all, with regard to foreign countries, as one united nation; and for all, when considered in themselves, as consisting of parts necessarily different, yet closely allied. With us, no single State can constitu-

tionally affect the proceedings of the national legislature, or be exclusively the ally of other powers. If ever a political scheme resembled the Divine government, it is ours, where each exists for the whole, and the whole for each. As in the planetary world so in our system, each has its own peculiar laws; and the harmonious movement of the whole is but a natural emanation from the co-operative influence of the parts.

To the principles of union, we may add the principle of renovation. Our government is the only just medium between despotism, where the rights of nature vanish in the slavery of the subject, and pure democracy, in which the subordination of the citizen is lost in the licentiousness of the man. Ours only is, in a word, the real government of the people, where legislative power is the delegated will of the whole, and civil authority the representative force of all: in which the duties of the individual are not neglected, as at Athens, for the privileges of the citizen; nor, as in the United Provinces, are the immunities of the latter forgotten in the interest of the former. Hence the administration cannot long be inconsistent with the views and wishes of the people. The policy, which is fatal to their welfare and at variance with their principles, is ruinous in

itself, and soon gives way to measures more popular and judicious. If the interests of the community suffer, they are the judges, and their good sense will soon compel their rulers to see and correct the impolicy of their conduct. What though the power of an individual, disorder, for a moment, like the comet descending into our system, the harmony of the whole, the elastic spring of such a government would act with redoubled force, and expel him from the bosom of his country. What though the mighty torrent of faction swell beyond its limits, and threaten an universal deluge, yet shall it soon be lost in the vast ocean of public good, and public virtue.

The principle of improvement is intimately connected with that of renovation. Neither can exist, but in a representative government; and each attains the height of perfection only in a republic like ours. Unshackled by national establishments, like the democracies of antiquity, our foreign and domestic regulations must always vary with the actual state of our country. Whilst agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, shall be the main pillars of American greatness, the spirit of improvement in them will govern the policy of our national legislature. Hence we have no reason to fear that we shall ever justify the

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remark of an eminent political writer, “that the laws, which aggrandize, are not those which preserve a nation.” There was a point beyond which the institutions of Sparta and Rome could not operate; but to the principle of union, the principle of renovation, and the principle of improvement, no prophetic voice shall ever be heard to say, “Thus far shall ye go, and no farther.” The former resemble the human body, which after a season spontaneously languishes and decays; whilst, like the immortal spirit, the latter, did not the decrees of Heaven forbid it, would flourish in never-fading energy and beauty.

These arguments, deduced from the nature of our government, are strongly corroborated by those, which arise from a survey of our mutual connections and dependence.

He, who casts his eye over our happy land, must perceive that we form a little political world in ourselves: that our country seems, as was said of Laconia, to be but the patrimony of a band of brothers: that we appear to be another favored race, sent out by Heaven, from the storms and miseries of Europe, to dwell in this land of promise.

The object of every government ought to be the happiness of mankind, though the measures adopted by each are essentially different.



Fortunately for America, every State in the union, acknowledges, that property is the only true foundation of society; that the rights of the citizen are the vital principles of the Constitution, and the interest of the individual the vital principle of the community. That the welfare of the whole, not the aggrandizement of a part; the felicity of the people and not the glory of the ruler, should ever be the aim of the administration. Whilst then we thus agree in those leading features, in which the parts of a great nation, ought to resemble each other, let not immaterial differences excite the spirit of dissension. Where one state a monarchy, and another an aristocracy;\* were this like Carthage, but a company of merchants, and that, like Sparta, but a band of soldiers, there might be grounds for complaint.

Let not contrariety of character be urged as an argument. Shall we find uniformity in the state, the same city, or even in the same family? Why then require it in an extensive country? In Switzerland, some cantons were catholic and others protestant, some republi-

\* "Aussi voyons nous dans l' Histoire Romaine, que lorsque les Veïens eurent choisi un Roi, toutes les petites republicues de Toscane les abandonnerent. Tout fut perdu en Grèce, lorsque les Rois de Macédoine obtinrent une place, parmi les Amphictions." *Mont. Esp. d. Loix. L. 9. C. 2.*

can and others aristocratical, some refined and elegant as Athens, others rude and unpolished as Sparta. Nor let diversity of interest be resorted to. Were this the same in the north and south would it not imply a similarity of local situation and natural advantages? Where also would be the carrying trade, where the mutual interchange of luxuries for necessaries, of raw materials for manufactures? Disunion would then be less fatal, because each would be independent of the other. But experience teaches us that the clashing of the different, yet connected interests of separate powers, threatens both with destruction.

If the influence of individual States be complained of now, how must the danger increase, the narrower the sphere of its action! And if the politics of some particular states are followed too servilely in others, whilst we are but one people, how soon should we behold the fatal effects flowing from the truth of the remark of an eminent statesman, "that men are often more attached to the country of their principles, than to the country of their birth." Wealth, talents, and population, must always command superiority, and it is no less absurd to imagine that particular states should not take the lead in the American republic, than to be surprised because Athens and Sparta stood

the first in Greece. . So far from militating against an union, this furnishes one of the strongest arguments, arising from our internal situation. Were these powerful states the leaders of separate confederacies, how much greater would their relative influence be, and how much more pernicious to their own united government, and to the neighboring republics. Athens and Sparta, when independent, were two powerful for the liberty and happiness of Greece; and the operation of similar principles, if we divide, may carry down the grey hairs of the present generation with sorrow to the grave.

There are limits to the powers of government, no less than to those of the human mind; but the more extensive our general administration, within reasonable bounds, the more will their schemes of policy be liberal and enlightened. The less also will they be affected by local interest and local power; by individual enmity, selfishness, and ambition. These are some of the causes, which, if less restricted, would prove our ruin; but confined and blended, as they now are, co-operate for the welfare of the whole. Notwithstanding the conflicting politics and interests of different parts of the union, we find that the individuals of the nation are generally harmonious,

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and that local views and local antipathies are lost in the expansive rights of the American citizen. But, when disunited, even these advantages must vanish; for we shall then have no common character, no common constitution, no common country.

As the policy and interest of each State are peculiar, and continually vary, they ought to be regulated, as to internal concerns, by itself. If, however, you narrow the system, of which it is a part, its private welfare must be more frequently sacrificed to the general good of the whole. Hence, also, those inconveniencies, which are now diffused over the nation, would be more severely felt, when confined to a part. All now suffer or rejoice together; but then, the degradation of this would be the aggrandizement of that; and the decline of one would invigorate the spirit of enterprise in another.

Let us conclude this survey of our internal connections, by considering the influence of the social principle in strengthening the bonds of our union. In examining the operation of this universal cause, we may trace it distinctly in its emanations from the parent to his family, from the individual to his neighbors, and thence to the wider circle of his friends and acquaintance. We may perceive

it successively varying and enlarging, as it interweaves the several ranks of Society, unites the diversified classes of the town with the more uniform inhabitants of the country, and combines the influence of individuals and families, of cities and provinces, in forming the complex, but harmonious system of society. When we apply these views to our own country, we shall perceive them strikingly exemplified. We may follow the principle of association from each state to its neighbours, and from them to the union at large. And as the prospect expands, we shall behold the ties of nature and friendship, the calls of duty and interest, the rights of man, and the privileges of the citizen, uniting to form the sacred and mysterious bond of our union.

From the constitution of our government, and our natural alliance with each other, the transition is easy to the rapid progress of our country, since we became a confederate republic. If we begin with our own State, we shall behold our political and civil institutions continually improving; religion & knowledge more widely diffused; civilization extending in the country, and refinement in the city; discordant parts successively assuming the uniformity of the whole, and confusion gradually subsiding into order. Travel through each of our sis-

ter States, and you may observe with pleasure and surprize the operation of similar principles. These will be seen, however, to vary with the nature of the country, the genius of the people, and the spirit of the Constitution. Then conceive yourselves elevated to an eminence, whence the eye may embrace the wide circuit of our happy land. Think what it was when first we became a nation; consider its present state, and mark the gradual advancement of prosperity and power. See the forest retiring, and the village expanding into the populous town: see this in turn swelling into the magnificence and greatness of the city. See the groves descending from our mountains, and rising again in the stately ship, or the spacious edifice. See the white sails of commerce gliding through the woods on the river or canal; and in countless numbers brightening on the azure surface of the ocean, like the stars on the bosom of heaven. Behold the genius of enterprize collecting his bands of adventurers, and leading them to the western wilds. Behold! the mountains open to afford them a passage; the dark wave of the desert rolls back at their approach; the gloomy spirit of solitude retires before them, and the grateful wanderer builds the verdant altar to agriculture and peace. Then behold! the forest bends be-

neath his strokes, the orchard smiles on the hill, the harvest waves in the valley, and the song of the reaper is heard in the silence of the wilderness.

The reasoning thus founded on the nature of our government, our mutual connections, and the rapid progress of our republic, are alone sufficient to convince. But, when we reflect on our relations to the rest of the world, every argument acquires new energy, every principle new importance, and conviction flashes across the mind with a brighter and a purer blaze.

Were the United States the only nation on earth, or could they live entirely within themselves, the question would assume a different aspect. But as the world now is, the policy of our country and the wants of other nations render it impossible. In vain might we forge the fetters of domestic restriction, they would melt from around us in the fierce fires of interest. In vain might we build ramparts of foreign prohibition, like the walls of Jericho, they would fall of their own accord. America then, must be connected with other nations, and must be influenced by them. The policy therefore of our young and flourishing country, is to preserve our interests as distinct as possible from those of other nations. This

we shall be enabled to do more effectually, by union, than by public virtue at home and public faith abroad, if once we divide. From experience we learn that interests different in themselves are yet the same, when contrasted with those of others. Hence, though the local policy of one part of America, be at variance with that of another, they are one and the same, when considered in relation to the tendency of foreign influence. Now from the operation of this cause, the interest of one part of the union, will never govern the national alliances and welfare of the whole; but when disunited, each must be the friend or the foe of the powerful nations of Europe. Were there but one great nation in the world beside ourselves, they would always be decidedly hostile or favorable to us. Whilst, therefore, our confederacy lasts, other governments may perplex but cannot confound us; they may injure our interests, but not our liberties; they may exasperate us mutually as fellow-citizens, but never can arm us against each other as enemies. So long as we continue united, our alliance will be an important object to Europeans; and our interest will be eventually secured by its intimate connections with theirs. But when we cease to be one people, we must treat with them as a favor, perhaps for pro-



tection, even at the expense of our rights. Do we complain then of foreign influence now, and shall we separate and hope to escape the gigantic arm of power, which is stretched across the Atlantic to destroy us?

In every republican government there must be diversity of opinion. If all are ever united in time of peace, it betokens indeed sometimes universal enthusiasm, or universal virtue, but almost always universal corruption. The public calm, which exists in the absence of party, is the gloom of midnight, before the blazing volcano lights up the darkened ocean; it is the awful pause of nature, before she is devastated by the tempest; it is the fearful silence of the world, before "the sun was darkened and the veil of the temple rent." Experience teaches us that in extensive governments, the contentions of party are a war of words and influence, but in small states they become the contest of the sword. In one, it is the citizen, who freely asserts his principles; in the other, it is the individual, who combats with the weapons of personal interest and personal enmity. As soon then as disunion ensues, each state will be torn by its own parties, and foreign influence will inflame them against each other, and each against the whole. Then would the waves of faction dash with

fatal success against the rock of our freedom, and all the proud monuments of glory and liberty be sunk in one boundless deluge of corruption and ruin. Then no Ararat would swell above the flood, no dove remain to bear the olive-branch of peace, and the virtuous republican of future days would exclaim,

“ ————— Thy lofty domes, no more,  
 “ Not e’en the ruins of thy pomp remain,  
 “ Not e’en the dust they sunk in —————.”

Thus have we endeavored faithfully to survey the grounds, on which the friends of union rest their arguments for its continuance. We beheld the faint light of speculation blending with the bright and steady flame of experience. We beheld them, like the eastern star, resting on the temple of our freedom, on whose portals were inscribed the words of our departed Washington, “Your union must ever be considered as a main prop of your liberty.” But if the picture of our domestic and foreign relations, be correct, how shall we observe every color heightened, and every feature more strongly marked, the farther we extend our views! Through every part, we shall trace the bright scenes of glory and peace awakening into life, under the animating touches of union; and the prospect become wild and

mournful under the wintry influence of discord. We shall read a page in the book of futurity, which the hand of union only can tear from the records of fate. Let us then direct our attention next to the fatal effects of disunion on ourselves, and the happy consequences, which reason and experience convince us must flow from union of interest, union of sentiment, and union of power.

The American, who can look forward with calmness to the day of separation, must be either more or less than man. He must be the victim of ambition or corruption; a deluded enthusiast, or a prophet of good, which the most sanguine dare not hope, and the keen-eyed statesman cannot foresee. Henceforward the American eagle shall drop the olive of peace, and grasp only the arrows of war. The hand, which writes the declaration of disunion, shall feel the blood curdle in its veins; and the tongue, which reads it to the world, shall stiffen in the act. The mountains that divide us, shall be "the dark mountains of death," and the streams that flow between, like the waters of Egypt, shall be turned into blood.

But terrific as is the picture which anticipation presents, let us gaze upon it resolutely and calmly. Conceive the eventful crisis ar-

riyed, when the delegates of America meet to sever our confederacy.—Unlike the glorious Congress, which declares us independent; unlike the equally glorious Convention, which framed our Constitution, they would join to destroy the fairest edifice, that human hands have ever raised. Already is their object attained. With one voice they pronounce us free and independent of each other.\* They dash on the earth the tables of our common alliance; they march in triumph to kindle the flame that encircles the temple of union, and hear with a smile the loud crash, as it sinks in the gulf of political oblivion. In vain, when the youthful genius of America is laid on the altar of separation, may a voice from Heaven exclaim, “Hold! hold!” In vain, may the bleeding image of their country arise and point to her wounds, each will exclaim, in the language of the murderous Macbeth, “Thou canst not say I did it.” In vain, may they

\* Were we to divide, several different united governments would probably arise. As our present system is a confederacy of independent states or nations, so we might then conceive an union of those independent leagues. Congress is now the representative of single, but united states: then of distinct, but confederated leagues. Now it legislates for an union of free nations, but then for an union of separate confederacies. This scheme, however, would be as visionary, as the national tribunal of Henry IV. or the independent republic of the protestant leaders in France.—

call up the spirit of Washington to hallow their rites: like the prophet at Endor, he shall look but to blast, and speak but to curse.

I pass over the scenes, immediately succeeding the separation. I shall not survey the anxiety of the public mind, the interruption of private concern, or the stagnation of foreign and domestic intercourse. I shall not pourtray the violence of party, the intrigues of powerful states, the cabals of individuals, and the efforts of foreign nations. Let us suppose the boundaries of the States defined, their constitutions established, and treaties of alliance formed between them and with other governments. These new republics thus arising from the ruins of one, would present the most flattering prospects. The gloomy countenance of despondence has already brightened into hope, and doubt is exchanged for the confidence inspired by certainty.

For a season the affairs of these commonwealths might be conducted with moderation and wisdom. Public virtue might be the rule of action at home, and public faith towards each other and the rest of the world. But this could not long be the state of independent and neighboring nations. While the parent lives, his authority and affection may preserve the harmony of his family circle; but when he

dies, the cessation of personal intercourse produces coldness, and difference of interest creates difference of sentiment, perhaps even enmity. The human nature of nations is like that of individuals; for after any great change, the man and the people are equally circumspect and moderate. But selfishness unfortunately too soon succeeds to duty, and the principle of ambition to the principle of usefulness.

In a short time, we should see the confirmation of the reasoning already advanced. We should see the fatal progress of party spirit, of foreign influence, of local policy, of clashing interests, and of individual intrigue. We should look in vain for the principles of union, renovation, and improvement; in vain for the liberal views and dignified firmness of an united government; in vain for the respect and honorable alliance of foreign powers.

Let us not rest satisfied, however, with this cursory survey, but carefully examine the tendency of interest and ambition. Were we assured that these republics would always understand and pursue their real welfare: that they would discard the influence of selfishness and local prejudice: that they would be ready to acknowledge and change impolitic measures: and to enter into the liberal and more

enlightened schemes of their neighbors. We might promise ourselves that they would be permanent and happy. In a few years, however, we should behold the operation of a principle already mentioned as important: that different yet connected interests, ought to be governed by the same hand. Were they independent, the same effects never could arise; but when associated, they induce each party to imagine, that they have superior claims on the other. From this source would spring misunderstanding, contention, perhaps even a temporary cessation of intercourse; and these unpropitious events would be favorable to the machinations of party, and the intrigues of other nations.

Let it not be said that a sense of interest would guide them. Few nations ever had the discernment, and still fewer the virtue and resolution to consult their real welfare. In vain, did Demosthenes urge a war against Philip; in vain did Burke dissuade from American taxation, and Chatham plead with his own immortal eloquence for conciliatory measures with the colonies. Those casual or trifling events, which often decide the fate of

human affairs, would have a fatal influence.\* Diversity of character would give additional weight to every cause that would militate against reconciliation. The resentment or ambition of individuals, the interested views of particular classes or establishments, and a variety of unforeseen circumstances, would darken the prospect.

To the jealousy of interest, we may add the jealousy of rights; for the pride of sovereignty is as baneful to nations, as the pride of intellect to individuals. The tendency of each is to induce disregard or contempt for the claims, the power, and the remonstrances of others. This spirit is the natural emanation of privileges long enjoyed, of independence universally acknowledged, and of confidence in self-opinion. At a time when this temper would influence legislative deliberation, few individuals would feel and act up to the principle of an eminent statesman, "that timidity with regard to the well-being of our country, is heroic virtue." Few national councils would be so discerning and upright as to show by their actions, that the true glory of a peo-

\* "So paltry a sum as three pence in the eyes of a financier; so insignificant an article as tea in the eyes of a philosopher, have shaken the pillars of a commercial empire that circled the whole globe." *Burke.*



ple is ever inseparable from their real welfare. The consequence of these occurrences might be an appeal to arms. There was a time when the western people were ready to march down on New Orleans; we have seen many of the States agitated by insurrection and rebellion; and but lately, the general government resisted by the legislature of Pennsylvania. Had the affair of the Chesapeake concerned two of these republics, or had the minister of one undertaken to act, as Genet did under Washington's administration, how dark would have been the page of history, that recorded the consequences! If one State were disaffected to the confederacy, of which it formed a part, what pencil can paint the scene of contention, intrigue, and anxiety that must ensue. These causes have been considered in themselves, but when we embrace within our view, the co-operating influence of other states and of foreign nations, may we not exclaim in the expressive language of the poet,

“ On the tomb of hope interred,  
 “ Scowls the spectre of despair.”

Attendant on these calamities, would also be the growing power of individuals, and of military establishments. In times of danger, it

is not on the wisdom and firmness of legislatures only, that reliance is placed; but also on the talents and authority of an individual. At that moment, when too often the rights of all are governed by a single arm, and the voice of one is the collected voice of a nation, who would trust the glory and liberty of his country, but with another Washington? The general then would no longer be the private citizen, called out by the free choice of his countrymen, but the celebrated warrior pointed out by the urgency of the times. The soldier would cease to be the farmer or mechanic, on a temporary pilgrimage from home,

“ But strutting round, in gaudy blue and red,  
 “ Would eat in idleness the poor man’s bread.”

The soothing hand of time, which often closes our wounds and dries up our tears, could never hold out the golden sceptre of peace. The principle of ruin, like the breath of the pestilence, would scatter terror and infection around; and though like the deluge of lava, it sprang from one common source, would widen at every moment the circle of devastation.

Thus should we see the objects of these states not only unanswered, but supplanted by others. They had instituted the civic festival of peace, and beheld it changed for the tri-

umph of war. They had crowned the eminent statesman with the olive of the citizen, and saw it converted into the laurels of the warrior. The old man who had walked exultingly in procession, to taste the waters of freedom from the fountain of a separate government, beheld the placid stream that flowed from it suddenly sink from his sight, and burst forth a dark and turbulent torrent. The young man, whose hand should have delighted in the arts of peace, now grasps the glittering sword of battle, and smiles with delight at the blast of the trumpet. How soon the citizen would be lost in the soldier, and the leader of his countrymen in the hero: how often the gleam of arms would startle the peaceful tenant of the cottage, and the trump awake the slumbers of infancy, time only could show. War, which in its mildest forms, is fraught with ruin and horror, when waged by neighboring states, thirsting for vengeance, animated by interest, or eager for glory, becomes the most cruel scourge in the hand of Heaven. Then it is rapid as the whirlwind, overwhelming as the cataract, and merciless as the angel of death. Memory still paints the terrific scene to many, who witnessed our revolutionary struggle. Friends, who beheld the companions of your youth, hewn down by your

side in the ranks of war, I appeal to you. Parents, who grasped for the last time the hand of your child, and sent him to fall in the battles of his country, I appeal to you. Sons, who bathed with your tears the wounds of an aged father, and caught the last benediction of paternal love, I appeal to you. Widows, whose arms were thrown for the last time, in the agony of separation, round the necks of your husbands, I appeal to you. Spirits of the dead, whose last prayer was for an orphan family, whose dying eyes were raised to Heaven for a desolate widow, whose last words were a blessing on them and your country, I appeal to you.

Amid this scene of horrors, when age would excite no pity, infancy have no privilege, and beauty plead in vain, where would be the order of Cincinnatus? Then would be the favorable moment for the accomplishment of those ambitious schemes, unjustly attributed to you. But in vain against you did the fire of eloquence flash from the indignant lips of a Mirabeau, it was but the lambent flame that played over your heads, and marked you the favorites of heaven. The world and your country now freely bestow their confidence and veneration, and let me promise for those, who have been called in the flower of youth,

to share in your rights and honors, that they shall never be disgraced. To be Americans is our noblest privilege as men, to be members of your body as citizens; and since the sacred duty of our lives shall be to deserve well of our country, we shall look for our models among you, on whose brows the laurel of the soldier is half concealed by the olive wreath of the citizen. To preserve and improve the blessings your valor has won, shall be the height of our virtuous ambition: and often in the calm shades of domestic life, shall we regret that we did not share in your dangers, because you "fought to protect, and conquered but to bless." But though we have not climbed with you the steep ascent of freedom, nor waved the banners of victory on the proud summits of glory, never shall we forget that we also have feelings peculiar to ourselves. Your bosoms have never heaved with gratitude, as you looked on the champions of our liberty, for you are among the number of our deliverers. You have never felt the glow of youthful enthusiasm at the memory of the sages of our country, for you were their fellow-laborers in the great work of our redemption. You have never heard a parent's voice awakening the tender mind to the love of America, and to the admiration of her statesmen

and heroes. Your cradle was rocked by the genius of Britain, her banners were the swathing bands of your infancy, and hope already saw you armed with the thunder of battle, and the lightning of eloquence in the cause of Britain. How then shall we ever forget that you were born British subjects, but we American citizens! You have indeed secured these privileges, and millions yet unborn shall share them with us. But to them also shall we say, with mournful exultation, "We have beheld the faces of our deliverers, and heard the voices of our revolutionary heroes. They were our friends, and often for us has the tear of solicitude or affection bedewed their manly cheeks. They were our fathers; and often have the bright visions of hope been indulged, while they pictured to themselves in us, the the future statesmen and heroes of our country. These arms have been fondly thrown in the caresses of childhood around their necks, and have supported them on the bed of death: these hands have borne them to their graves, and inscribed on their urns the record of gratitude and glory."

If we have seen the jealousy of interest, and the jealousy of power, like resistless torrents, overflowing the fair fields of liberty and happiness, how shall their fatal effects be en-

creased, when we behold the troubled stream of party-spirit rushing to swell the flood, and dashing its aspiring waves against the lofty rock of national prosperity. 'Tis like the evil spirit suggesting terrific dreams to the sleeping Eve; 'tis like the same spirit, in the garden of Paradise, persuading to rebellion against God. Experience has taught us that factions become more dangerous the narrower the sphere within which they operate. Those divisions, therefore, which now alarm us, would then be seen to influence individual interest, and individual happiness; for each would feel a personal concern in the principles of his party. Consider the connections of these parties with others in the different states, and reflect on the influence of foreign nations. Heighten the picture still farther, by embracing within your view the power and enmity of individuals, the secret schemes of interest, unlooked for events at home, and political changes abroad. With these circumstances before you, conceive an alteration in public opinion. But I draw a veil over the scene of insult, animosity, and resentment that ensues; and proceed to consider the progress and influence of ambition.

Every republic has at times generated this principle, and confessed, that if combined with talents, it is the secret mine, which when

sprung, buries the strongest bulwarks of freedom in ruins. Urged on by this incentive, and supported by the energies of a great mind, it is not difficult to deceive or corrupt the unsuspecting people; for unhappily, the propensity to prefer interest to duty, and appearance to reality, is inherent in national, no less than in individual character.

But whatever be the natural tendency of these causes, they are generally concentrated by the skill and good fortune of some aspiring individual. And where could brighter prospects open to such a man, than in these republics? The principle of emulation is implanted at an early age, and as it expands, the chief delight of the youth is to excel, and his keenest pang, that which springs from the superiority of others. Governed by feeling, he soon dwells with enthusiasm on the page that records the virtues, the hardships, and the victories of the hero. Already has he admired the brilliant actions of Alcibiades, Cæsar, and Cromwell, and half wished that he had lived in their days to dispute with them the laurels which they obtained. He reads the noble sentiment of the orator, "*Vita brevis, sed gloriæ cursus sempiternus;*" and would dig his own grave, could he dare to hope that his achievements, like those of Sesostris, would be engraven on



columns of brass, or immortalized in the romantic narrative of a Quintus Curtius. He soon begins to mingle in the world, to practise political hypocrisy, and to court the favor of the ignorant and unsuspecting. Behold him now on the stage of life. His party chosen, he pretends to idolize the populace, and speaks of the imprescriptible rights of man. No arts are too mean, no professions too humiliating, no sacrifice of principle, of duty, of affection, too great to secure popularity. In a few years, he shares the full confidence of the ruling party; for his talents are too splendid not to ensure distinction, and his political creed but too orthodox not to stamp him the advocate of the rights and welfare of his country. Early in life he had resolved to stand first in the legislature of the nation, or be the leader of some powerful faction. Now he aims at sovereignty. No seat will satisfy him but the throne of freedom: no footstool but the neck of his country. By a train of intrigues and propitious events, the moment at last comes, when he shall wield the thunder of the despot, or perish like Cataline, by the arm of freedom. And now the blow is struck. Like Brennus, he casts his sword into the scale, and his fellow-citizens become his slaves.

Thus have we examined the probable con-

sequences of disunion, and seen the fatal tendency of the jealousy of interest, and the jealousy of rights, of party-spirit, and of ambition. We saw the prospect darken at every step; we walked through the valley of the shadow of death, "but there was no rod, no staff to comfort us." We looked and beheld the altar of peace shattered by the lightnings of faction, and her temple swept by the whirlwind into the chasm of separation. We saw the rock of freedom cleft to its base, and sinking mid the billows of disunion: and the indignant genius of Columbia ascending never to return. Then we beheld the flaming temple of ambition arise, rocked on the stormy waves of faction and discord: we heard the demon of war rushing in the tempest to inhabit it, amid the shrieks of the orphan and the widow: we saw his shrine adorned with the gorgeous banner, the beamy helmet, and the glittering spear; whilst on the altar were inscribed in letters of blood, "One Murder makes a Villain, Millions a Hero."

If these be the fatal effects of disunion, people of America, why would you divide? Shall we forsake the peaceful shores of freedom, to seek the unknown land of separation and discord? Shall the fragile bark of national happiness be hurried down the stream of time

into the stormy ocean of political uncertainty, and not be sunk in the whirlpools of faction, or dashed against the rocks of ambition? Shall the traveller advance to meet the massy fragment, which thunders from the mountain's head, and not be crushed? And shall we look down the frightful precipice, that arches over the black gulf of national ruin, and hope to escape?

I might call your attention now, to the happy consequences we may expect to flow from the continuance of union, and contrast them with the gloomy scenes I have just described: but I forbear to rend a veil which the hand of time will remove. You also have already drawn the lovely picture, brightening under the creating pencil of fancy, and softened by the mellow touches of feeling. And, moreover, anticipation could shed but a feeble gleam over a prospect, on which the unfolding glories of our future union, will beam with a splendor, hitherto unrivalled in the history of man.\* But though we decline a survey so

\* The following picture of America from the pen of the great Burke, is too flattering and appropriate to be omitted. "Nothing, in the history of mankind, is like their progress. For my part, I never cast an eye on their flourishing commerce, and their cultivated and commodious life, but they seem to me rather ancient nations grown to perfection, through a long series of fortunate events, and a train of successful indus-

useful and gratifying, may we not dwell on our own advantages, and challenge the world to produce a nation so eminently favored? On what page of history can the eye be fixed, which will not enhance our national pride and the true glory of our country? Shall we fear an equal in the States of Greece, or in the Commonwealth of Rome? In the Lycian Confederacy, or the Achæan League? In the Cantons of Switzerland, or the United Provinces? Theirs was but the twilight of freedom, a feeble transcript of what you possess. Where then, but in our native land, shall we find this original of all that is most honorable and useful to mankind? Where is the freedom of the citizen the basis, and his happiness the object of the constitution? And where are legislators the choice of the people, and the laws enacted solely to promote their welfare? It is in America. Where are the rights of man revered, the privileges of the citizen secured, and the claims of the stranger recognized and enforced? Where does the victim of foreign persecution find an eminence on which the ark of

try, accumulating wealth in many centuries, than the Colonies of yesterday, than a set of miserable outcasts a few years ago, not so much sent as thrown out on the bleak and barren shore of a desolate wilderness, three thousand miles from all civilized intercourse."

his hopes may rest? It is in America. Where can we look for a government so consistent with the liberty, and so adequate to the wants of the people? So comprehensive, and yet so minute? So permanent in its principles, and yet so versatile in their application? Where shall we find a country so various in its productions, and so abundant in its resources: so admirably adapted for commerce with the whole world, and yet so capable of living within itself; daily becoming more powerful and happy at home, more respectable and necessary abroad? And where do we meet with a nation more liberal, generous, and enlightened? more calm and intrepid in war? more dignified and polished in peace? more moderate and grateful in prosperity? more resolute and patient in adversity? Where a nation, whose leading characters have been more distinguished for the bold and energetic virtues of public life, and the mild and engaging qualities which endear us in retirement? Whose heroes, and whose statesmen have reflected brighter honor on their country, by the comprehensive depth of their understanding, the versatility of their genius, and the masterly powers of their eloquence?

*Friends and Fellow-Citizens—*Were we assembled this day merely to commemorate the

glorious æra, of which it is the anniversary, and to indulge our national enthusiasm, by dwelling on the great events of our Revolution, still would our feelings be proud and enviable indeed. But the dark clouds of adversity have passed away, and the sunshine of peace streams in full splendor on our happy land. Henceforth the toils of the soldier, and the struggles of our country, shall only be contrasted with the blessings we enjoy: the patriot and hero of former times shall sleep unnoticed, but not unbeloved: and even the sacred virtues of Washington shall rarely be heard to enforce the reasoning, and heighten the eloquence of the orator. Henceforth let the page of history be the record of their usefulness and renown; whilst you consult the future interests of yourselves, of posterity, and of the world.

Under impressions so awful and interesting, reflect, Americans, on these duties, and how they may best be discharged. Know then, that security or corruption in the people, and ambition in the rulers, are the bane of republican governments. Know that from each of you flows the tributary stream of power and influence, and that public authority and public opinion must be the same as the fountain from which they spring. Know that

the perfection and happiness of a nation depend on the virtues of its citizens, and that each contributes to the purity or corruption, the misery or felicity of his country. Can you trace the effect of every lineament and color, in giving beauty and grace to the landscape? Can you mark the swelling of every wave on the ruffled surface of the ocean; and the splendor of every star, whose mingled light forms the grandeur and magnificence of Heaven? And shall the citizen be free from the reproaches of his country and of future generations, merely because he is not the tyrant, the traitor, or the rebel? Shall he hope to escape the avenging arm of conscience, if his example or his principles have roused the indignation of the virtuous and wise? Guard then, against that fatal security, which originates in private indifference, and that universal corruption, which is but the combined influence of individuals. Guard against that party-spirit, which makes the freeman a slave, and the citizen a hireling; which arms your country against herself, and becomes too often the means of aggrandizement to the turbulent and ambitious. Guard against that spirit of innovation, which looks upon antiquity as the stamp of infamy, and novelty as the test of usefulness and truth: which holds nothing

sacred, no, not even the records of eternal goodness, not the memory of Washington, not the Constitution of our country. Guard against ingratitude to the illustrious characters of our nation; for coldness and neglect to them, will cloud the bright dawn of youthful talents and patriotism. Your hands must weave the wreath of their renown, your hands must build the triumphal arch of their glory, and open to them the gates of immortality. Above all, admire and revere the great father of our country, whose heart was the sanctuary of virtue, and his mind the temple of wisdom. Love and venerate him as the first of men; and know, Americans, that the world envy us that man, more than our freedom and happiness; for all have heard the name of Washington; but who, except Americans, can conceive the blessings which Americans enjoy!

Let not the clamors of faction deafen you to the voice of your country, nor the duties of the citizen yield to the interest of the individual. Let not the dissensions of party cherish the spirit of ambition, by substituting the principles of one for the principles of all: nor lead to political idolatry, and thence to despotism, by converting the representative of the people's power, into the representative of the people themselves. Imitate, therefore,



your ancestors, who taught by their example that death is the only equivalent for freedom, and that the virtue and moderation of each, can alone ensure union in war, and prosperity in peace. But if you neglect the salutary counsels of wisdom and experience, already may you look forward to the ruin that awaits you. Think not that you never can become a corrupt people, the mercenaries of a demagogue, or the slaves of a tyrant. Rome was once powerful, happy, and free. Had the Roman then been told that the charter of her freedom, and the crown of her glory, should be trampled in the dust, by the unhallowed foot of ambition, how would his eye have flashed with indignation, and the sword of vengeance have glistened in the descending arm of the incensed patriot! Whilst, however, you consult your own interests, think of the glory and usefulness of your forefathers; think of the ties which bind you to your descendants, and think of the misery and degradation of mankind. Think what you owe to them, and know that your duties are extensive as the world, commensurate only with the privileges of human nature, and sacred as the records of Heaven. They have claims, which you cannot, you dare not disregard. They entreat you in the pathetic eloquence of per-

suasion: they urge you in the forcible language of remonstrance: they adjure you in the accents of despair, by the vengeance of Heaven, and the curses of posterity, not to betray so sacred a charge. To you are entrusted not merely the liberty and glory of America, but the rights of man, and the welfare of future ages. You alone enjoy genuine happiness, and genuine freedom; and you are the chosen race, whose example shall yet rouse the sleeping genius of nations, to unsheath the sword of reformation, and grasp the giant sceptre of independence. Think not then that we are to be the only great and independent nation in America. Rather behold with the keen eye of anticipation, new revolutions taking place, other nations springing to light, and knowledge and freedom universally diffused. Behold the submissive spirit of the Colony, exchanged for the bold and enterprising character of an independent people. Behold the white sails of commerce swelling in every breeze, and reflected from every wave; the gilded spire, the marble portico, and the splendid edifice, rising in the desert, and brightening amid the gloom of surrounding woods. Behold the vast surface of South-America, now one boundless expanse of hills and forests, diversified with flourishing cities and

cultivated plains. Behold the spirit of improvement gradually advancing from the sea-shore, levelling the woods, clearing the vallies, and scattering the golden harvest, and the purple fruits of autumn, over the sides and summits of the mountains. Hear the confused noise of the busy multitude, deepening along the shore, and echoing on the Amazon and La Plata, among the cliffs and vallies of the Andes. Hear the voice of religion crying in the wilderness, and the cottager joining in the general hymn of praise and gratitude. Hear the midnight song of the mariner resounding on every wave, and the rustic strains of the shepherd floating in the breeze on a thousand hills. Hear poetry describe the greatness and benevolence of God, in the sublimity and beauty of this new world: and eloquence plead for the rights of man, the glory of nations, and the happiness of universal nature.

Under obligations so sacred, with prospects so bright, can you, Americans, be deaf to the voice of posterity, and of mankind? Can you, as individuals, but be virtuous, when all must suffer for the vices and follies of one? Can you, as fellow-citizens, be otherwise than united, whilst you behold the gigantic genius of faction, grasping the pillars of freedom, and

preparing to shake the temple of national happiness into ruins? Can you, as the only free and independent nation on earth, be regardless of the admonitions of experience, the voice of Heaven, the rights of your descendants, and the claims of future ages?—Great, happy, and free, what wish would you form? What prayer could you utter? What wish? but that the world may yet taste the blessings which Americans enjoy: What prayer? but that ours may be the last republic on earth, or the center of universal knowledge, universal happiness, and universal freedom.

*FINIS.*