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# ORATION,

PRONOUNCED AT MINOT, MAINE, ON THE **TRICAL**

FOURTH DAY OF JULY, 1814:

THE THIRTY-EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY

OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

BY WILLIAM LADD, ESQ.

“The nation, which indulges toward another an habitual hatred, or an habitual fondness, is in some degree, a slave.”... WASHINGTON.

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1814.

MINOT, JULY 4, 1814:

R,

WE, as a Committee in behalf of the WASHINGTON REPUBLICANS, convened at Minot, to commemorate the anniversary of our nation's INDEPENDENCE, are directed to present the thanks of the assembly to you for your elegant and patriotic Oration this day delivered; and request a copy of the same for publication:

GODFREY GROSVENOR,  
JACOB HILL,  
STEPHEN PHELPS.

WM. LADD, Esq.

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MINOT, JULY 11, 1814.

GENTLEMEN,

I HAD determined on not complying with the very flattering request of your note of the 4<sup>th</sup> inst. as I could not persuade myself, that it could answer any valuable purpose, to publish a crude and undigested essay on our public affairs, prepared at less than a week's notice. But I have been informed by many of my friends, that gross misrepresentations of my sentiments have been circulated. I therefore, reluctantly, yield to a necessity of laying them before the public.

In this performance I lay no claim to originality: most of the sentiments, and many of the expressions, have been a thousand and a thousand times repeated. I lament, very much, that a multiplicity of various concerns prevents me from adding all the documents, I should wish, and putting a finishing hand to this discourse. But if you will condescend to accept it, "with all its imperfections on its head," it is at your service.

With respect,

Your obd't. servant,

WM. LADD.

GODFREY GROSVENOR, }  
JACOB HILL, } *Esquires.*  
STEPHEN PHELPS, }

## AN ORATION.

*Friends and Fellow-Citizens,*

NO one has a greater antipathy to apology, than the person who has the honor to address you. Yet there are times when apology is both proper and necessary. Invited on a *very* late day to prepare an address, I have not had sufficient time to produce any thing answerable to my own wishes, or the solemnity of the occasion. Great geniuses only can wing their rapid flight through the regions of fancy, taste and literature. Unfortunately, your orator is not of that class, and can only hope to arrive at the same end, by industriously creeping over the surface. 'Tis true, the field, to which I invite your company, is extensive, beautiful and variegated; but so many have trodden it before us, that no beauties remain, worth observing, which have not been already pointed out; no flower, worth gathering, which has not already been plucked. On a subject so hackneyed, what can be expected, but trite observations and common-place sentiment? Under these circumstances, I hope your candour will excuse the homeliness of your entertainment, and will not attribute this necessary apology to an affectation of diffidence.

But can one be otherwise than eloquent, on the anniversary of that event, which raised so splendid an æra in our political history, and gave us a rank and standing among the nations of the world? And while we celebrate the day, which gave liberty to our country, can we forget the virtues of the hero, who accomplished our independence? No. Independence receives additional lustre from the fame of Washington; and the fame of Washington shines brighter by the splendour of independence. Let these subjects then, in some measure, be the theme of our discourse.

The causes of our independence originated in the war between England and France, which ended in 1762, in

which, Great-Britain, under the auspices of the immortal Pitt, overwhelmed her enemies with ruin and confusion, and dictated her own terms of Peace. Frequently the most successful wars are more ruinous to the victors than the vanquished ; and this war, glorious as it was to the arms of Britain, oppressed her with a load of debt. Thus situated, she turned her eyes to this country for relief. And relief, proportioned to our abilities, she undoubtedly would have obtained, had her conduct been marked by justice and prudence. But, guided by a corrupt and headstrong ministry, who forgot that we had privileges as well as they, despising the force, as well as the rights of her opponents, led by passion rather than by reason, she wantonly plunged into an unjust, unnecessary and destructive war. The immortal Chatham raised his voice against the prevailing faction, and thundered forth his eloquence in vain—for Chatham no longer ruled the destinies of his country. The nation freed from danger by his abilities, his virtues were despised, and a vicious, ignorant and sycophantic tribe usurped his place, in the affections of his sovereign, and the confidence of the people. When corrupt men in power govern the majority, by their passions, rather than by their reason, and lead them to infringe on the liberties, and trample on the rights, of the minority, then the subversion of the government, or the separation of the empire, becomes almost inevitable.

Sensible that the “sharpest sharpest conflicts” were approaching, America looked round for support, in those trying times, and Heaven-directed, turned her eyes on Washington.

Her confidence was not misplaced. Surrounded by a thousand difficulties, “he never despaired of the Commonwealth.” Unfortunate and unwise non-importation agreements had left the country destitute of clothing necessary for soldiers. The funds of Congress depended on paper money. And the practice of short enlistments, of year’s-men, and dependence on militia for distant service often threatened the ruin of the cause of Liberty. Yet, under all these disadvantages, with an

inferior force of raw troops, badly armed, almost naked, unpaid and suffering every privation, did Washington keep in check the best appointed veteran armies, commanded by the ablest generals.

We were *then* fighting in a just and necessary war ; and God was pleased to crown our exertions with success. White Plains, Princeton, Monmouth, and Yorktown, witnessed the victories of Washington. But the best concerted plans are not always successful, and at Brandywine and Germantown, though less fortunate, he left the enemy nothing to boast of. At Brookline too he saw his brave, but untrained countrymen, fall, overpowered by hosts of veteran foes. Unable to bring them relief, he felt not for his military fame, but he wept for his bleeding country : and the tear, which trickled from his eye, is more precious, in the sight of angels and good men, than all the tinkling gems, which so lately glittered, on the pageant triumphs of Napoleon, and all the bloodstained laurels which have bound the tyrant's brow.

The spirit, which animated the commander in chief, influenced his countrymen in general. At Lexington, Bunker Hill, Fort Moultrie, Redbank, Bennington, Stillwater, Saratoga, Stony Point, Kings Mountain, the Cowpens, and Eutaws, they were triumphant, and the actions at Quebec, Fort Washington, and Guilford, though unfortunate, were glorious.

The Almighty, who can make the wrath of man to praise him, smiled on our exertions, and brought to our aid, even, the most malignant of the human passions. France, still smarting under the disasters of the last war, had now an opportunity of indulging her natural antipathy to Great-Britain ; and there was presented to the world the novel spectacle of a nation, groaning under civil and religious oppression, fighting under the banners of an enlightened people, struggling for their liberties. Spain too lent us her aid. Little did she think that the nation she was helping to independence, would be the first to invade her American possessions, and would assist the tyrant of Europe to rob her of her own

liberty. Holland soon joined, and the armed neutrality added their threats.

Our struggles were arduous. Our trials were severe. Often did we think Liberty within our grasp, and as often was she snatched from our embrace. But success, at length, crowned our exertions, and gave to the United States of America a high standing, on the political scale of the world.

Independence, however, was purchased at a price, too dear for any thing but liberty, and which the conquest of the world would not remunerate. Warren, Montgomery, Mercer, Wooster, Williams, Laurens, and a host of worthies, officers, subalterns and privates, sacrificed their lives on the altar of Liberty. Peace be to your manes, ye mighty dead. Yet why mourn your fate? Had ye lived to see these degenerate days ye would have been stigmatized with the epithets of tory, traitor, and British emissary, by those, who basely skulked in the hour of danger, or probably, were aiding your oppressors. Venerable, but unfortune, St. Clair: hadst thou fallen on the field of battle, thou would'st not have been compelled, like Belisarius, to weep at the neglect of an ungrateful country, and beg charity of the passing stranger. Better had it been for thee, O Lingan, to have fallen by the bayonets of the enemy, than by the daggers of the pretended friends of Government at Baltimore.

Independence secured, and peace and plenty about to shower their blessings on this happy land, the full cup of felicity was well nigh dashed from our lips, by a designing demagogue, "who wickedly attempted, to open the flood-gates of civil discord, and deluge our rising empire in blood."\* Anonymous letters, artfully addressed to the passions, were circulated, and our victorious armies were in danger of tarnishing all their laurels, by one rash act. But the genius of America interposed. Washington was there, and the ambitious mu-

\* See Washington's address to the army on the subject of anonymous letters, supposed to have been written by Gen. Armstrong, our present Secretary of War.

tineer was awed to silence. Alas how things are changed ! Washington is no more : his virtues are forgotten ; and that self same traitor, it is said, now holds an eminent station in the government of the country. Yes, that same man, who has been so often, and so publicly pointed out, as the author of these traitorous letters, is now in the cabinet, and hopes soon to be your President.

The blessings of peace succeeding the ravages of war ; Washington converts the sword of Fabius into the ploughshare of Cincinnatus. True to the principles of that religion which formed the basis of his education, he buries in oblivion all his animosity against the British, content to hold them “ enenies in war, in peace friends.”\*

No longer bound together by external danger, and agitated by contending passions, the people of America had well nigh become the victims of designing demagogues. But Washington again left his retreat : the cause of virtue prevailed : the antifederal party were humbled : the rebellion was broken, and there was effected a political and bloodless revolution, more wonderful than the sanguinary one, which separated us from Great Britain.

In looking round for a person, to execute the duties of chief magistrate, under the new constitution, to whom could America turn her eyes, but to the man, who had delivered her from bondage, led her through the wilderness of anarchy, and settled her in the land of promise. Faction had not yet acquired that strength, or that impudence, which were necessary, to give it any chance of success, and no opposition was made to the appointment of Washington, to the first place, in the gift of a grateful people.

The adoption of the new Constitution having been violently opposed, by powerful minorities, in many of the states, the anti-federalists formed a considerable portion of the first congress. It could not be expected,

\* Declaration of Independence.

that those men would wish to see happiness flow from those sources, from which they had predicted misery ; or public prosperity effected by measures, which they had declared would be ruinous. Mankind do not so easily brook the confutation of their opinions. They therefore coalesced with the disaffected, and joining to themselves those who envied the glory of the chief magistrate, and others ambitious of power, they formed together a determined opposition to the Washington administration.

The funding system, by which we redeemed our public credit at home, and established an honest character abroad, which was approved by Washington, Hamilton, Adams, and the members of the Eastern States generally, was among the first objects of their attack. The national bank, too, that splendid and useful fabrick of the Washington policy, was attacked and defended, by the same parties, and these circumstances tended to give to those parties geographical boundaries, and to make an unfortunate distinction, between the monied, or mercantile and the landed, or agricultural interests : a distinction, which does not exist in reality ; but which has been a powerful engine in the hands of the party opposed to the federal administration.

The tax on whiskey next fell under their disapprobation. Though laid expressly for the purpose of paying the public debt, this could not defend it from censure. The men, who now so boldly pledge their lives and fortunes for carrying on a war of foreign conquest, then, meanly refused a few cents tax on their favorite beverage, to pay the cost of their liberty and independence ; and not only refused it, but raised and organized an armed opposition to government, and many characters, now conspicuous, were then leaders in that rebellion ; which, being confined to the Western Country, served, still farther, to fix the geographical character of the two parties.\*

At this time began to be felt the effects of political

\* See Note 1st, at the end of the book.



volcano, which had been long effervescing, and which now gave strong symptoms of those convulsions, which were to shake Earth to her centre, overwhelm the surrounding countries with devastation, and cover the remotest regions with its cinders.

The French people, long the slaves of despotism, struggling to be free, passed only from one extremity to another. Anarchy but took the place of despotism. Crowns and mitres, civil and military orders, necessary restrictions and arbitrary regulations, the insignia of superstition and the barriers of religion, together, rolled along the bloody torrent, in one indistinguishable ruin.

America could not be unmoved at the spectacle.— While the wise and virtuous trembled for the cause of rational liberty, sound morality and pure religion, the opposite party seized, with avidity, the opportunity to advance their purposes. They dropped the odious name of antifederal, and arrogated to themselves the honorable appellation of republican. They instituted jacobin clubs throughout the country “for the purpose of usurping the right, to controul the constituted authorities, and dictate to public opinion.”\* They enlisted on their side the passions: every antipathy against England was roused: every partiality for France was flattered, and while the streets of Paris ran in torrents of blood, and when France had put off the monkey and put on the tiger, and had, basely suffered herself to be guided by Robespierre and his bloody associates, then, she was held up as an object, worthy the imitation of Americans. These arts were but too successful, and had well nigh, drawn us into that destructive vortex, which was swallowing up all Europe. But Washington still lived, and he conducted us, for this time, in safety, past the whirlpool. A treaty was made with Britain on just and honorable terms, and Washington, again, saved his country from impending ruin.

The effects of the French revolution on the passions could not be entirely suppressed. So great was French

\* Washington's Letters.

influence, in this country, that the prostitution of the sacred diplomatic character was scarcely censured. A French minister dared to interfere with our sacred right of suffrage, and actually organized armed bodies, to invade the territories of our peaceful neighbors, to resist the laws, separate the union and overturn the government.\* How wonderfully different are men, in power, and out of power, viewing the conduct of their own party, and that of their political opponents. The very men, who openly advocated the expedition against the Spanish provinces, the Kentucky remonstrance, and the whisky insurrection, are now highly offended at the decent and manly expressions of an oppressed people, disapproving the ruinous measures of a headstrong administration.

The opposition to the administration of Washington was now so thoroughly organized, that no single act of his escaped censure. Being then at war with Algiers, a naval force was absolutely necessary, to defend *free trade and sailor's rights*. A bill was passed for building six frigates, and thus was laid the foundation of that navy, which has covered its commanders with laurels, and our country with glory. In this particular, the party may claim a small degree of consistency, for they persisted in their deadly hatred to a navy, till the triumphs of our naval heroes have obliged them, *to seem*, to abate it. The gun-boat system was the hobby of the Jefferson party, and on that species of force, truly characteristic of the administration that planned it, they have wasted the money and timber, provided by the federalists for the construction of men-of-war. Even the late act for increasing the navy, by building seventy-fours, could not have been passed, had not the federal party given it their almost unanimous support, a majority of the democratic members, voting against it. Notwithstanding all this, some of that party are bold enough, to arrogate to themselves all the honor, which the federal frigates have reflected on the country, and more impudent than

\* See Note 2d, at the end.

the harlot before the tribunal of Solomon, claim for their own, that child they would have strangled in its cradle, and would father on the federalists, their litter of abortions.

But the wisdom of Washington triumphed over all opposition, and like a skilful pilot, he brought us through all the dangers, which surrounded us, and having seen us fairly launched forth, on the broad ocean of prosperity, oppressed with age and honors, and longing for that repose "which was as welcome as it was necessary," he resigned the command to a man whom he had always consulted, and who, he expected, would always follow his policy.\*

Scarcely had the commander left the deck, when black clouds, portending an approaching storm, darken the horizon. France thinks she sees, in the growing power of faction, the means of bringing us into servitude, and with unblushing front, imperiously exclaims, that she "wants money and must have it."† Washington again hears the voice of his country, flies to her relief, and places himself between her and danger.— Struck with the majesty of his countenance, France shrinks back aghast, and relinquishes her purpose; faction hides her head: but, alas, our hero dies at his station! Heaven recalls him to the skies: and our immortal Washington, without a sigh, retires from Earth. But his virtues shall live forever, in the bosoms of his disciples and followers. A future Plutrach and a future Tacitus shall write his history: future Homers and Virgils shall sing his praise; and his grateful country shall raise statues and monuments to his memory. And when these too shall have fallen victims, to the tooth of time, and the ravages of war, and when our widely extended empire shall be to posterity, what the empires of Persia, Greece and Rome are to us, then shall his fame eclipse that of Cyrus, Alexander, and the Cæsars, and his name shall shed a grateful odour, long after the

\* See Note 3d, at the end.

† The language of the French Directory to our Commissioners, when they demanded 50,000 pounds sterling for an audience.

names of his contemporaries, who have denied him a monument, shall have rotted in oblivion.

Thus, fellow-citizens, I have attempted, though with a feeble pencil, to sketch the origin, the progress and the consequences of our independence. I have naturally, and even unavoidably, mingled a few traits of the character of the hero, who, under God, assisted us to gain that independence; for the life of Washington is written on the brightest pages of American history.

I have, as naturally, introduced the rise and progress of that political party, which originated in disaffection to Washington, and his administration, has been kept alive by the stimulation of the most baneful passions, has corrupted our body politic, and if not speedily remedied, will end in its entire and everlasting destruction.

On occasions like the present, what can be more edifying, than to point out to the rising generation, the origin of those causes, of which they so lamentably feel, and are to feel, the sad effects. In the sequel of my plan, we are compelled, reluctantly, to turn our eyes from the pleasing picture of the Washington, or federal administration, to contemplate the succeeding events, which have disgraced and oppressed the country, under the administration of the Jeffersonian faction, commonly denominated the democratic party. Let us be brief; for the tale is for our enemies.

The opposition party now assuming the name of democratic, as more flattering to the vulgar and ignorant, no longer restrained by the influence or awed by the virtues of Washington, left no scheme untried to subdue the country to their dominion. Every malignant passion of the human breast, every prejudice of ignorance, every hope of ambition were enlisted on their side. By persevering industry, undermining policy, fraud and stratagem, they at length succeeded in getting possession of the citadel of American rights and liberties. Nor did they slack their exertions to strengthen themselves when there. Almost every patriot of the revolution, or friend to virtue, religion, or Washington, who held a post of honor or profit, was ejected and their places filled with

the tools, sycophants and minions of the new dynasty. Foreign influence and foreign corruptions were let in on our country like a flood, and to secure to themselves the scum and offscouring, which the tempests of Europe had driven on our shores, the birthright of American citizenship was bartered for a mess of pottage.

When Mr. Jefferson took the helm of state, the political ship, having been steered by the steady hand of Washington and Adams, was gliding along with gentle breezes, on "the full tide of successful experiment." But soon the prospect changed: altering his course for every trivial occasion, more commanded by his crew than commanding, more assiduous to preserve his popularity than to deserve it, his compass attracted by foreign influence and disdaining the guidance of the heavenly bodies, he ran the ship among dangers, from which it was not in his power to extricate her. Under these circumstances he retired: leaving it to the next watch, to bring the ship out of the difficulties, he had ran her into. Unfortunately, his successor was no wiser than himself, and steering the same crooked courses, has only got farther into danger.

Should you ask, why, on this joyful occasion, you see these visages of sorrow: why the deathlike stillness of your seaports; why does commerce languish; and our ark covered ships but furnish habitations for the timid swallow and the twittering martin? Why has the blood of our countrymen manured a foreign soil, and why has pestilence and famine thinned their ranks on our own side of the lakes? Why has our inland and our maritime frontier smoked with the conflagration of our peaceful cottages and dismantled ships? Do you ask these questions? You have the right, and undoubtedly every free people have the right, to express their opinions, on the conduct of their political servants. God forbid, that we should ever see the day, when we can no longer call them to account; for then they would become our masters, and we their willing slaves.

What then have been the causes, of the decline of public prosperity, from the happy times of the federal

administration, to the wretchedness of the present day? And, particularly, let us inquire, what has been the necessity of the ruinous and disgraceful war, in which we are at present involved.

Let the government first give their answer, and this they have artfully done in the President's war-message and manifesto. Many of the charges there made against the British government, as the causes of the war, only serve to shew, that the war party had determined on a war with Britain, and were at a loss for reasons, to alledge for it. Among these, we notice the attack on the Chesapeake, which had been already settled to our entire satisfaction: also the charge of instigating the Indians, to go to war with us, which rested on no foundation whatever, and was a bare assertion, without the slightest evidence, and contrary to common sense: for every one in this assembly knows, that the Indians had much greater cause for their enmity to us, than we have for our war with England. and one need not resort to the stale topic of British gold, to account for the war in which we were engaged with them, before our own declaration against Great-Britain.

But the orders in council and the impressment of seamen, were the grand subjects of complaint on which administration founded their notions of the justice of the war.

Little need be said on the first article, the orders in council having long since ceased to operate. I will barely remark,

I. That France was the first aggressor. The rigor of the Berlin, Milan and Bayonne decrees, exceeded, by ten fold that of the British orders in council, condemning a vessel for barely having been boarded by a British cruiser, or having British merchandize to any amount, on board, so that, in one instance, a neutral ship was condemned, for only a single groce of buttons, suspected to be British manufacture, and probably, conveyed on board by the captors.\* Without scarce a

\* In another instance a vessel was condemned, for having been *in sight* of the British fleet, lying under the island of Anholt.

frigate on the ocean, France undertook, to interdict our commerce with the whole civilized world, except herself, and her privateers had orders to burn or capture all American vessels they fell in with, not bound to or from France, as I know by experience, and have felt to my cost.\* These orders they executed, to the extent of their power, not even excepting vessels bound to the ports of their allies, and even after the pretended repeal of the abovementioned decrees, and that no more were burnt or captured, we may thank the British navy, which kept the French cruisers blockaded in France. Now had "free trade and sailors' rights" been the object of our government, would they have passed over all this in silence? Yet you all know, that these aggressions were passed over in silence, and that the democratic party and papers, did all they could, to keep out of sight the piratical excesses of France, while every nerve was strained, to multiply and magnify the causes of complaint against Great Britain. War then and not free trade was their object.

II. The orders in council did not exclude us from one port in the world, to which the French decrees and French practice admitted us, some few ports in France excepted. No not even to Holland, though an integral part of the French empire, did Buonaparte permit our trade, and this limited trade he still further limited, by confining it to three ports in the United States, viz. Newyork, Baltimore, and Charleston: ports in which democracy and French influence were triumphant: and still further these favoured ports, could only send their vessels laded with colonial produce to the restricted ports in France, with a French licence, signed by Napoleon himself, and granted to a French subject, making the vessel and cargo entirely French property, if we apply to them Judge Story's interpretation of a licence, and our own act of Congress on that subject. Is it possible for any man in his senses to believe, that our government were the friends of "free trade and sailors'

\* See Note 4.b, at the end.

rights" when they gave up the trade of the whole world, for the privilege of importing a few French fripperies, on French account. No, my fellow-citizens, the orders in council were the pretext for, but not the cause of, the war.

III. But why need I enlarge on this subject? In the same week of our declaration of war, Great-Britain totally repealed those obnoxious decrees, sent us notice of it, and gave instructions to Admiral Warren, to conclude an armistice, at the same time releasing our ships, which were then in her ports, and suffering them to return with rich cargoes. But Madison spurned their armistice, and rejected, with disdain, their peaceful overtures. This plainly shewed, that the orders in council were not the cause of the war: for had they been the cause, the war would have ceased, when its cause was no more. No: our government had resolved on a war with Great-Britain, while Great-Britain was desirous to be at peace with us. We demanded that Great-Britain should give up rights, which we would not have given up to any nation under heaven, France excepted. This must suffice for this topic. Should any still doubt, I could produce a hundred conclusive arguments, to prove that the orders in council are not the cause of the war; but demonstration is enough.

The other and only remaining cause, which government alledge for the continuance of the war, is the *impressment of seamen*. Excuse me if, being myself a seaman, I pretend to know more of this subject than most of this assembly. It is now more than sixteen years since I first went to sea; I have been often boarded, by British cruisers, both in the broad and narrow seas, in Europe and in the West-Indies, and never witnessed but two impressments. In one case, the man was by his own confession Irish, of the country of the other I am uncertain, but both were without protections, both within the British dominions, and both were almost immediately liberated; could I complain of this? and these two are the only instances which ever came under my own observation. Nay more, for the five years pre-



ceeding the war, (though in that time, I made four long voyages to Europe, and three to the W. Indies,) I have not had a muster roll called, or a seaman asked for a protection, although my crew have generally been half British, and in four voyages I lay in British ports. But what do I say? I know many older ship-masters, who during their whole lives, never lost an American seaman by impressment. Now had impressments been so frequent as is pretended, and the abuses so great as have been represented, is it possible that we could have avoided seeing it? No my countrymen; your credulity has been abused, and that for the worst purposes; your indignation has been roused, and that for the vilest sinister ends.

What then, (you say,) are no natives impressed? I grant you there are some; and whose fault is it? According to their own confession; by their own published documents, you may see, that government could easily have protected the *native* Americans; but they have so identified, mixed and amalgamated us, with the scrapings and offscourings of Europe, that it is not to be wondered at if Britain, in claiming her own seamen, should sometimes take one of ours.

But some one asks, if government could thus amply have protected the American seamen, why did they not do it? Why having disgraced and torn the American flag, till they have reduced it almost to nothing, have they attempted to cover all that are willing to sail under it, and thereby left the native seamen exposed? Why indeed, except to keep the affair of impressment as a reserve corps to let loose on your feelings, on convenient occasions, and thus by goading and irritating you, almost to madness, finally to lead you on to a destructive war; which annihilates both commerce and seamen, and would have bound us fast in an alliance with Napoleon, the destroyer of republics, had the monster been permitted to continue his career? But, thanks be to God, he has fallen; and our government have passed an act for the exclusion of foreign seamen, which if passed before the war, would have entirely prevented impressments.

O that I could have the candid attention of my fellow-citizens, for three hours, that I might undeceive them by my personal experience, and professional knowledge of this subject. But time will not permit, though I am fully persuaded that the destruction and not the protection of seamen has been one of the objects of the war.\*

But you naturally enquire, if neither the minor circumstances, nor the orders in council, nor the impressment of seamen, are the causes of the war; what *are* the reasons for it, and how came the country into its present alarming condition? I answer; a concatenation of various circumstances, have contributed to this sad effect; and as various have been the opinions of the wise and considerate, in tracing the causes, which have brought us into our present distressing situation.

Those, most favourable to the administration, have attributed our calamities to their overheated zeal for the public honor, which, while it made them very sore to injuries received from Great-Britain, has blinded them to the real causes of complaint, which that nation has against us. "The many, as well as the few, are blinded to the rights of others, when conflicting with their own interests and can madly pursue injustice, without perceiving that they are in the wrong. They too, not unfrequently, close their eyes against the plainest evidence and most conclusive reasoning."† Had we pursued the Washington policy of placing our enemy clearly in the wrong, we might have appealed to Heaven, with a better conscience.

Others have attributed our calamities to an overweening attachment, which the majority entertained for France, and hostility to Britain, and say, that our rulers have taken every measure, to foster and keep up these foreign affections and antipathies, to which they in a great measure owe their elevation: that the executive has condescended to the meanness of branding, with terms of contempt and opprobium, every advance of Great-Britain towards a pacification, while the crimes of

\* See Note 5th, at the end.

† Marshall's Life of Washington.

France, her degrading insults, the false repeal of her decrees, and the lie-direct, are slightly mentioned as courtly insincerities.\*

Some have imagined, that the cause of war originated in the desire of the leading party, to stop the aggressions of France, by an humble acquiescence in her will. For they well know that Buonaparte had determined to have *no neutrals*, and that the eyes of Americans must at length be opened, and their feelings excited, by the continual insults, burnings and plunderings of the French, and that a war with that nation must follow, which would be fatal to a party, whose chief support is French influence and British antipathies.

Others again have supposed, that our distresses are occasioned by the anti-commercial spirit of a part of the Union which would wish to drive us from the ocean to "plant the standard of liberty beyond the western mountains," to transfer thither the wealth and population of the East, and thereby increase the value of the western lands and the influence of the Western States. Undoubtedly, the desire of conquering Canada and extinguishing the Indian title, by extirpating the natives, has had its effect, and has moved the tender compassion of the back-woods-men, who never saw a larger vessel than the Indian canoe he had plundered, who knows not the stem from the stern of a ship, a man-of-war from a gun-boat, or which is largest the Erie or the Atlantic, it is this has moved the tender compassion, of men of this character, and made them; all at once, so solicitous for us seamen and merchants, whom they always before despised and oppressed.

There have even been some, who have had the temerity to suspect, that the imperial villain, who so lately tyrannized over Europe, who bought the possession of the royal family of Spain, bribed a minister of Sweden, and purchased a whole party in the cabinet of Russia, and who, converted to a shower of gold, had found his way into almost every cabinet and fortress in the old

\* See Note 6th, at the end.

world, had likewise extended his golden influences to the new, and having bribed some men, in high places, to commit small crimes, satan-like, threatened them with exposure, unless they would commit still greater; that this was the meaning of their "being bound to France and could not go back," and their speaking so feelingly of Buonaparte's "having a rope round their necks." Does any one ask for evidence of the fact? This is the evidence: We find that the officers of the French government have declared, that our administration were seriously disposed and eager to adopt the favourite system of the Emperor of France. We find that the measures pursued by our administration have exactly coincided with that system, and have directly aided Napoleon in his mad schemes of aggrandizement, while they have greatly injured the best interests of our own country, destroyed our commerce and banished our seamen. And above all, we find that some of our most important measures have been foretold in France, when they were wholly unforeseen and unexpected on this side the ocean; for instance the first Embargo, the rejection of Jackson, and the War. Are we not then almost as certain as if a voice from Heaven should assert it, that there was a fatal influence operating on our councils which has laid our prosperity in the dust, and which, without the timely efforts of the people to counteract it, by a change of rulers, will soon lay our liberties prostrate under the feet of designing demagogues.

If we look at the *progress* of the war we shall find it conducted with the same weakness, imbecility and wickedness with which it was commenced. Do but regard our military officers and contrast them with those, who accomplished that independence, whose anniversary we have assembled to celebrate. Instead of a Washington, a Green, a Gates, a Montgomery, a Sullivan, a Morgan, a Stark, &c. we behold Wilkinson, Hull, Smyth, Dearborn, Winchester, Winder, Chandler, Hampton, who have passed before us, in procession, like the phantoms of the magic lanthorn, one accusing the other of treason, cowardice and peculation. Or contrast

these Canada heroes with our naval commanders, those federal men, who in federal ships, have hurled our thunder on the ocean, the place, where it has been asserted, sailors' rights have been infringed. When we view either contrast we sicken at the sight. And are these thy support, O America: these thy Samsons and Gideons who are to deliver thee? an army of officers without soldiers, and those officers, should we believe their own accounts of each other, too often dishonest and incompetent, and as we have too often witnessed without character, without responsibility, and without respect, whose only recommendation to executive favour is a blind submission to the will of the party, more dangerous to the liberties of their own country, than to the territories of the enemy.\*

But some have trusted in France, and have rested their hopes on Buonaparte. He too has fallen before the spirit of independence, like Dagon before the ark. The Iron Colossus that bestrode the world is no more: he has fallen to the ground; his power has crumbled into dust. We saw him lead forth his armies, like the locusts of Egypt; his myriads covered the face of the earth, like the blasting caterpillar. The remotest capital of Europe fell before him. Moscow was wrapped in flames, but it was the funeral pyre of his power. Hitherto it was permitted to go, and no farther; and here were its proud banners stopped. The Sacred Kremlin mounted to Heaven only to call down Heaven's vengeance on its sacrilegious destroyers, and the cold of the Lord consumed them. The mighty magician spake, and lo! another army as numerous and as well appointed as the first: but doomed by Heaven to equal destruction. In vain the impious wretch boasted, that he had "yoked victory to his car and overruled destiny:" the "God of battles" was against him. He had suffered him to punish the nations for their sins, he had used him as a rod, and the proud monster thought himself the agent and not the instrument. But the moment

\* See Note 7th, at the end.

we took him for our defence ; the moment we declared war on his side, the Almighty broke the rod he had used and dashed it to the ground. In vain does the battle of Lutzen revive his hopes ; in vain does the defence of Dresden for a moment relieve him : the fiat had gone forth ; the charm was broken. More than forty millions of men, whom he had subjected by his intrigues, burst asunder their chains, drove him back to his capital, trampled him in the dust, and gave liberty to France, under her legitimate monarch. Where is now thy power thou impious monster ? Where is the cup of enchantments, of which thou hast made all the nations of Europe to drink, and from the effects of which we have not entirely escaped ? Lucifer has fallen. The World is emancipated. All the nations that dwell on the face of it rejoice, we, only excepted. O Heaven ! and is it thus ? Was our cause linked with that of the tyrant ? Must we only be sad, while all the world rejoices ? Yes, thus it is. O disgrace to the cause of liberty ! O disgrace to republican government ! O shame, everlasting shame to my country. Tell it not in Europe. Publish it not to the world. Write it not on the page of history ; that the only republic in the whole world, was the only nation, fighting on the side of the tyrant, when he fell.

But is there no glimmer of light in this dreary scene ? no ray to enliven this cheerless gloom ? Hark ! I hear the sound of cannon. View there our little navy, almost the only relics of federal policy ; which, like the ruins of Palmira in the trackless desert, only serves to shew the wisdom of its founders, or like a flash of lightning in a tempestuous night, as brilliant, but alas, as transient too ! Yet even here are heart-rending scenes. See the gallant Lawrence stretched a clay cold corpse on his quarter deck ; covered with the colours he had so well defended, honored by his enemies even in death. See Burrows, Allen, and many a brave fellow more, suffering the same fate ; view them, and with bitter tears, lament, that such blood should be shed in support of the doubtful right of protecting foreign renegadoes. See

then our frigates dismantled and our sailors marched to defend our western frontiers, leaving our seacoasts defenceless to the mercy of the enemy ; and alas, you see our only hope expire !

It is not my intention to point out all the subjects, on which we have a right to complain ; much less to criminate the whole democratic party, or cast unqualified censure on any class of my fellow-citizens ; and far be it from me to apply to the whole body of that party, indiscriminately, the just accusations which should be brought against many of their leaders. For there are men among our opponents, who if they followed the *unprejudiced* dictates of their own consciences would be ornaments to society ; men who have a high sense of honor and patriotism, and a hearty zeal for their country's cause, though perhaps, not according to knowledge. Many misled by the prejudices of education, family connections or other circumstances, give all their energy to support a cause, which they think to be the cause of their country. But could that cause be seen by them, in the same light in which we view it, they would immediately abandon it. Their intention is good, though their judgment be wrong. To these citizens America turns her eyes, and implores them to consider the party and the politics they are supporting, ere our liberties are swallowed up by anarchy, or overwhelmed by despotism.

“ Unhappily, (says Washington,) it is one of the evils of democratic governments that the people not always seeing and frequently misled must often feel before they can act right.” Great is the obstinacy of the human heart, and difficult to be subdued. How mortifying to the pride of human nature to confess error, and how few have the magnanimity to allow that they have been misled. It becomes us therefore to receive, with open arms those who embrace the cause of truth, and to yield to them, who have the candour to allow that their confidence has been misplaced, the preference over those, who have never been tried. It is our duty cordially to embrace honest men of all parties, and as far as possible put bounds to party spirit.

But above all things, my fellow-citizens, let me conjure you to obey the laws, when constitutionally enacted and executed, and pay your share of the increased public burthens, when legally demanded. Shew to the world the falsehood of those slanderers, who charge the federal party with opposition to government. What is opposition to government? Is decent and manly remonstrance; is complaint, that last right of the oppressed; is detection of error or exposure of crime; are these opposition to government? No: error (says Washington) is the portion of humanity, and to censure it, whether committed by this, or that public character, is *the prerogative of freemen.*" If such censure be crime, I have Washington's sanction, and shall always be criminal.

Remember my countrymen these maxims of Washington: "If we desire to avoid insult we should always be prepared to repel it. If we desire to pursue peace it must be known that we are at all times ready for war." Smile on every endeavor of effectual defence; and should the enemy invade our country, shew that the disciples of Washington are the first to follow his example. But at the same time suppress not your disapprobation of an administration that have cruelly plunged us into a war, which, just or unjust, necessary or unnecessary, we were totally unprepared for.

Always bear in mind that *virtue* and *knowledge* are the pillars of a republic, and elect no man to office who has not both these qualifications. In selecting a candidate, consider not so much, the influence he may have over others, as his own intrinsic excellence. Rather vote for a good man of an opposite party, than a bad man of your own. Would you trust the public purse with a man you would not trust with your own? Would you choose for the guardian of the *liberties* of your children, the man whom you would not trust with their *patrimony*?

"Always regard UNION as the Palladium of your liberties and distrust the patriotism of those who *in any*



*quarter* may endeavour to weaken its bands.”\* The South is already borne down, with the accumulation of new territory. Should the North too receive an additional weight, by the conquest of the Canadas, as was anticipated by the friends of the war, nothing but a greater degree of wisdom and virtue, than commonly falls to the lot of man, can keep us together. The wisest legislators of the ancients restricted their republics to a small extent of territory. Under such wise regulations, Lacedemon, Corinth, Athens, Thebes, and the other republics of Greece flourished in liberty, security and happiness, many centuries. But the desire of enlarging their dominions inflamed their minds, and they fell a prey to designing demagogues, who became remorseless tyrants. Thirsting for the conquest of Sicily, and deceived by the artful Alcibiades, Athens determines on the fatal expedition. In vain Socrates the wise, and Nicias the prudent oppose the unjust and unnecessary war. A host of hungry office-seekers turn the popular clamour against them, and Alcibiades the demagogue prevails. The flower of the Athenian youth fall under the walls of Syracuse; their shipping became a prey to the enemy; Alcibiades turns traitor to his country; and Athens is ruined. Canada has proved to us a Sicily. If Quebec has not proved a Syracuse, is it not because our armies have only got there as prisoners? And if Wilkinson has not proved an Alcibiades, is it not owing to his want of *talents* to complete the character?

But it is not alone from addition of territory that the danger of division arises. Internal feuds, geographical distinctions and party spirit may be no less fatal. Do not forget, while you charitably forgive, the conduct of the present ruling party, while they were in the minority; their opposition to the Constitution, their threatening remonstrances, their rebellion against necessary taxation, and their openly avowed plans of separation. Remember these things not for the sake of exciting party animosity, but that you may shun a line of conduct.

\* Washington's Valectictory:

which all good federalists have always blamed, and I trust will always continue to abhor. For no evil can be so great to us as separation, except the loss of LIBERTY itself; and until a period should arrive, similar to that which severed us from Great-Britain, let us look on separation with distrust. Rather than separate, let us patiently endure to see our commerce destroyed, and our wealth and population transported to the West, under the pretence of carrying on a war for its support. Rather than separate, let us see our constitution violated, our bill of rights infringed upon, the vilest men exalted to the highest offices, and foreigners permitted to rule the nation. Rather than separate, let us see, without a murmur, our nation oppressed with debt, while it has a dollar of credit, and with taxes, while it has a cent to pay, and patiently bear more than our proportion of that taxation, while we have less than our proportion of representation. Let us too, sooner quietly see our remonstrances treated with contempt and our complaints construed into treason. And if any one, in this assembly, wishes any thing further, let him add it to this catalogue of grievances, and then, rather than separate, let us patiently bear all these hardships, and even more, *while there is any hope of redress*. And, further, when all hope of obtaining justice has vanished, and no alternative remains but slavery, or separation, even then, let us pause, before we adopt the dreadful choice, of parting, "peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must."

But why this sombre picture? Why this dreadful anticipation of evils which may yet be prevented. Let us rather on this auspicious birthday of our country, hail its future happy destiny; for happy it shall be. The truth shall prevail. Yes, the principles of Washington shall again prevail, never more to be disregarded. Our bewildered countrymen shall return to the right path, wiser for their former errors, never more to be led astray. Religion, virtue and knowledge shall rule and reign, and the empire of PEACE shall be established. Union shall be secured. "The North in an unrestrained intercourse with the South. The South, in the same

intercourse, benefiting by the energy of the North. The last, in a like intercourse with the West, and the West deriving from the East supplies requisite for its growth and comfort."\* Our happy country "dispensing equal and exact justice to all nations, and forming entangling alliances with none," shall float peaceably down the stream of time, with the full tide of prosperity, and her felicity be only bounded by the Earth's duration.— And to God shall be the glory.

\* Washington's Valedictory.

## NOTES.

## I.

*Extracted from Bache's paper of Sept. 1, 1792.*

“ At a meeting of sundry inhabitants of the western counties of Pennsylvania at Pittsburg, on the 21st of Aug. 1792, Col John Cannon was placed in the chair and *Albert Gallatin*, appointed clerk.

The excise law of Congress being taken into consideration, a committee was appointed, to prepare a draught of resolutions, expressing the sense of the meeting, on the subject of said laws.— Adjourned till 10 o'clock to-morrow.”

*The following is one of several resolutions unanimously adopted.*

“ And whereas some men *be* found amongst us, so far lost to every sense of virtue and feeling for the distresses of this country as to accept offices for the collection of this duty,

Resolved therefore that in future we will consider such persons unworthy our friendship, have no intercourse or dealings with them, withdraw from them every assistance and withhold the comforts of life, which depend on those duties that as men and fellow-citizens we owe each other, and upon all occasions treat them with the contempt they deserve, and that it be and is hereby most earnestly recommended to the people at large to follow the same kind of conduct towards them.

(Signed,)

JOHN CANNON, *Chairman.*

ALBERT GALLATIN, *Clerk.*”

The end of these things was an insurrection of the democrats against government, which cost near a million to subdue.

## II.

Genet not only had a hand in the invasion of East-Florida and the Whisky insurrection. but the following extract from a Virginia paper of these times, will shew, what was the opinion of democrats, in general, of Union and Washington's administration.

“ RICHMOND, JULY 31.

*Notice is hereby given,*

“ That in case the treaty entered into by that damned arch traitor John Jay with the British tyrant, should be ratified, a petition will be presented to the next General Assembly of Virginia, at their next session, praying that the said state may recede from the Union and be left under the government and protection of one hundred thousand free and independent Virginians ”

Yet these same democrats, have now the *impudence* to call themselves the friends of Union and of Washington, as well as of commerce and a navy.

## III.

The following extract from Gen. Washington's letter to John Adams, on his accepting the command of the American army, in the war with France, will show what was his opinion of Mr. Adams' administration.

After stating his reluctance, "at so late a period of life, to enter on the boundless field of public action," he continues ;

"Believe me, sir, no one can more cordially approve the *wise and prudent* measures of your administration. *They ought to inspire universal confidence*, and will, no doubt, combined with the state of things, call from Congress such laws and means, as will enable you to meet the full force and extent of the crisis.

"Satisfied, that you have sincerely wished, and endeavoured, to avert war, and exhausted to the last drop the cup of reconciliation, we can, with pure hearts, appeal to heaven, for the justice of our cause."

What effrontery then is necessary for the democrats, to claim Washington, while they vilify his conduct, and the administration of Adams, which he approved, and at the same time idolize Jefferson, his greatest enemy, and the friend of Paine, Duane and Callender ?

Tom Paine, in his newspaper letter to Washington, writes thus : "I declare myself opposed to almost the whole of your administration, for I know it to have been *deceitful* if not even *perfidious*. And as to you sir, *treacherous in private friendship, and a hypocrite in public life*, the world will be puzzled to decide whether you are an *apostate* or an *impostor* ; whether you have abandoned good principles or whether you ever had any." This fellow was invited to return to the United States, in a national vessel, by Mr. Jefferson, "to continue his useful labours, (i. e. vilifying the christian religion and the federal administration,) and reap the reward, in the thankfulness of nations."

When Washington retired from office, Duane, in his Aurora, exults that Washington, "the man who is the source of the misfortunes of our country, is this day reduced to a level with his fellow-citizens, and no longer possessed of power, to multiply evils on the United States. If ever there was a period of rejoicing this is the moment. Every heart ought to beat high with exultation, that the name of Washington from this day ceases to give currency to political iniquity, and to legalize corruption "

This vagabond foreigner, who has the impudence, to call America his country, was the intimate friend of Jefferson, and received from him the office of stationer to Congress, and has been made a colonel in the army. I believe, that Duane resigned on being ordered, by Eustis, to the frontiers, having 'listed to *print* not to *fight*, and that this order cost Eustis his office of Secretary of War, and that Duane has been reappointed,

From Callender's Prospect before Us, I make no extract. The whole was an abuse of the person and administration of Washington; for which, he confesses, that Mr Jefferson gave him fifty dollars in cash, and unconstitutionally remitted him a fine of 200 dollars more.

If it was necessary, I could adduce many more documents to show, who were the friends of Washington, and who were his enemies; but, if a man is not convinced by the above quoted paragraphs, neither would he "believe though one rose from the dead."

#### IV.

On the 7th of Nov. 1809, on my passage from London to Charleston, in ballast, I was boarded by a French privateer, of 16 guns and 105 men, six days out of Bourdeaux, commanded by Joseph Predie, who informed me that he should burn my ship, as he dare not do otherwise, shewing me an order of Bonaparte, issued on the 19th of Sept and to go into effect on the 10th of Oct. to *burn all* such neutral (i. e. American) vessels not worth carrying in, which they should fall in with, bound to or from, a port not in amity with France; and to let none escape, on pain of capital punishment. I expostulated with Capt. Predie, on the injustice of these decrees, saying, "we are not at war with France." He laconically replied, "ma foi Monsieur, but France is with you."

I however forcibly appealed to the *gallantry* of the Frenchman, in behalf of Mrs. L. who was on board, and manifested a determination of perishing with her, in the flames, rather than to expose her to the complicated sufferings, she must endure, on board a privateer. This was successful. By giving him a receipt for the ship, and also a certificate which he dictated, purporting that I was from Gibraltar, and had the plague on board, he dismissed me, (as he informed me at the risk of his life,) but not till his officers had plundered me of my provisions, small stores, live stock, watch, compasses, spy glasses, quadrants, and in short every thing they could lay their hands on, together with my own and Mrs. L's. clothing. In return they gave me a piece of fresh beef, some sour claret and some apples, wishing me a bon voyage, and assuring me, that they "loved the Americans very much."

By what I could understand by capt. Predie, and others since, this schooner formerly belonged to a great democrat of Baltimore, whence she sailed to St Domingo, notwithstanding our servile act, prohibiting that trade, by the demand of Napoleon. She arrived in the Chesapeake, after the embargo, put into a small creek, where she changed her crew, and (with what papers I cannot pretend to say) sailed again for Bourdeaux, where she was condemned vessel and cargo by Bona, (whether to enforce *his* embargo act or *his* St. Domingo act, I cannot say,) and the proceeds placed in the "chest of death," to wait the political conduct of the former

owner. This is the second French cruiser I ever fell in with, and fortunately, both times, in ballast, for with these lovers of Americans, "bon cargo is bon prize."

My treatment from the British has been exactly the reverse, of what I have received from the French. I never suffered the least hindrance, by unnecessary detention, nor have I the least cause of complaint against them whatever. On the contrary, I have received from them, aid, comfort, and protection, without the least compensation, though I never but once, could prevail on any one of them, to receive any thing from me, without paying its value.

I had extracted from my journals some instances of their generous treatment to me, but I found them too voluminous for insertion in these notes. But of this I am fully convinced, that this nation, against whom we have declared war, have given more protection to our commerce, than our own government have done, and in the seven years preceding the war, beside the captures they have prevented, have retaken from the French and their allies, and restored to us, more property than our government can *pretend* or by *any documents* show, that the British cruisers have taken from us.

## V.

On this subject, I refer the candid inquirer after truth to Mr. Taggart's address to his constituents, which I believe to be the fairest statement of the subject, ever exhibited; and it perfectly accords with my own personal observation. With him, I am perfectly persuaded, that Great-Britain has given up to our claims a greater number of her own subjects, than ever she retained of real Americans, and that any have been detained, is the fault of our own government, in not even *attempting* to make any distinction in granting protections.

I owe it to the cause of truth, here to remark, that I have had, in my mind, some indistinct ideas of another case of impressment, but having carefully inspected my journals, I could find nothing of it, and I am morally certain, that so interesting an affair, could not have escaped my observation; yet, I thought it my duty, to mention it. Also, I think, I should mention, that on the 9th of June, 1811, off the Naze of Norway, I was boarded by the Plover, British sloop of war, the commander of which informed me, that he had that day, taken out of an American ship, a man, who had deserted from him, about a year before, in Winga Sound; that the man had altered his name, and had a fair American protection, and that he had discovered him by accident. He also mentioned having impressed another man from an American ship. It was fortunate he did not examine my crew, for I verily believe, that except myself, and the cook, there were not two Americans on board.

## VI.

Mr. Madison's proclamation states, that the Berlin and Milan decrees ceased to operate on the first day of Nov. 1810, and that in consequence thereof, "our restrictive energies" should cease to operate, with respect to France. Now it is certain, that the French decrees, in question, still continued to be the "fundamental laws of the French empire" long after that date; and that the act, repealing them, was not published, until May, 1812, when it is presumed, that it was known in France, that our country was to be at war with England, and this repealing decree was dated in April, 1811, and said to be in consequence of the repeal of our restrictive laws, thus giving the *lie* direct to our chief magistrate.

## VII.

God forbid, that I should indiscriminately blame a whole class of my fellow-citizens, or speak so disrespectfully of *all* the officers of the army, as the democrats do of *too many* of them. But without fear of contradiction, I may assert, that history, though it may show a set of officers of worse moral character, never exhibited so great incompetency. Who would have believed, or dare affirm, three years ago, that the whole United States could not, by this time, have taken the petty province of Canada, that "potatoe patch," which our democrats told us, was to be reduced in six weeks? If our failures are not owing to the incompetency of our officers, to what cause are they owing?

*Errata.*—In the last line in the 8th page, before "political," insert *a*.  
In the last line in the 14th page, for "Without," read *With*.