

AN  
**ORATION,**

**DELIVERED**

**BEFORE THE**

**WASHINGTON BENEVOLENT SOCIETY**

**OF THE**

**COUNTY OF GRAND-ISLE,**

**AT SOUTH-HERO,**

**ON THE**

**SIXTH DAY OF JULY,**

**1812.**

.....

**BY ASA LYON.**

.....

**PLATTSBURGH, N. Y.**  
*Printed for the Committee,*  
**BY A. C. FLAGG.**

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**OCTOBER 1812.**

SOUTH-HERO, JULY 6th. 12.

*THE* Committee of Arrangement, for the celebration of American Independence, for themselves & in behalf of the Washington Benevolent Society of the County of Grand-Isle, return their thanks to the Rev. ASA LYON, for his Oration, delivered this day, and request a copy that it may be printed.

ALPHEUS HALL,  
STEPHEN DAVIDSON,  
DANIEL G. SAWYER,  
JABEZ ROCKWELL,  
JAMES BUTLER, } Committee  
of  
Arrangement.

.....

GRAND-ISLE, JULY 20th, 1812.

Gentlemen,

When on the sixth instant, you requested a copy of my Oration for the Press, it was my intention to decline. In my public addresses I had, heretofore, studiously avoided political controversy. I had endeavored to bring into view no ideas, in which all parties could not unite. Your special request induced me, for once, to chuse a subject wholly political. But, though I was happy in gratifying your desire, on that day, I had no wish to appear before the public as a political writer. Your earnest and repeated request, since, has persuaded me to place this copy at your disposal. Of the propriety of sending it to the Press, I much doubt. Submitting it, however, to your discretion, I remain, Gentlemen, sincerely devoted to your and my country's welfare.

ASA LYON.

The Gentlemen, the  
Committee of Arrangement. }

## ORATION, &c.

**RESPECTED AUDIENCE,**

**ONCE** more we meet to celebrate the commencement of our National Independence. When this was declared, thirty six years since, it was a time of darkness and foreboding fears. Our shores were invaded by the hostile foe, a long struggle in the field of war was before us, and our inexperience and want of preparation rendered the issue of the contest doubtful. But our *all* was at stake. What was dearer than life was to be won or lost forever.

Our wise and intrepid Councillors then took their stand, and showed, by their resolution, that they were deserving the accomplishment of their patriotic desires. Heaven was pleased to crown the arduous undertaking with success. After a long and bloody contest, in which defeat and triumph were alternate, we, at length, obtained the object of our wishes. Our independence was recognized by the powers of Europe, and, under a happy constitution, wisely administered, our nation became more flourishing than any the world had ever seen.

It was the policy of our first administration to cultivate peace with all, as far as was consistent with independent and universal justice. Under this wise policy our Constitution was confirmed, our government acquired energy and respect, every species of useful industry was encouraged, and our wealth and prosperity were rapidly increasing. Each revolving year rendered our independence more precious, and, with new and increased gratitude, we blessed the memory of those who fought and bled for its establishment.

But alas ! how different is the prospect which presents, at this anniversary of our independence ! As when it was first declared, "the morning lowers and heavily in clouds brings on the day." The savage war-whoop fills our frontiers with dismay, and murdered parents and their mangled infants call on heaven and their country to avenge their blood. Our commerce, in every direction, is interrupted ; honest enterprize is, every where, discouraged ; our revenue is annihilated and bankruptcy, war, and ruin are staring us in the face with redoubled horror. Among ourselves, the most direful omens appear. Divisions and party contentions have arisen to an alarming height. The struggles to maintain or regain political influence are so fierce in their operations and dangerous in their effects that truth, justice and patriotism are openly contemned, and every thing dear to a free people threatened with immediate destruction. The

springs, not only of national but of domestic happiness, are disturbed, and every indication seems to threaten that ruin which awaits the nation that is divided against itself.

One great cause of irritation and perplexity seems to be the difficulty of obtaining correct information concerning the real state of our foreign relations. So much dust has been raised, by the fury of party contention, that nothing can clearly be discerned.

To endeavour to throw some light on a subject so perplexingly confused, at the request of the committee which has invited me to this place, I shall attempt to give a brief, historical sketch of our relations with the two contending powers of Europe. In doing this I shall confine myself to simple facts, without any comment, or attempting to cast any invidious reflections on either nation, or deciding on the policy of any of the proceedings of our own government. The inferences will be left to be drawn by every individual, with only hinting at a few things concerning which it is important for every one to enquire.

In prosecuting this enquiry I shall look back to the commencement of the year 1802. At that time treaties of amity and commerce were existing between us and both the contending nations. These treaties amply secured our neutral rights. That with Great Britain granted a reciprocal and perfect liberty of commercial navigation between all her dominions in Europe and the United States, and a direct trade with all her ports in the East Indies. But the trade to her colonies in the West Indies and the carrying of colonial produce to an enemy, as the treaty was finally ratified, was left to future negotiation. This treaty was suffered to expire in 1804.\* The treaty with France was made in 1801 and continued in force till 1809. This stipulated that it should be lawful for the citizens of either country to sail, with their ships and merchandize, (contraband goods always excepted,) from any port whatever to any port of the enemy of the other, and to sail and trade with their ships and merchandize, with perfect security and liberty, from the countries, ports and places of those who are enemies of both or of either party, without any opposition or disturbance whatsoever; and to pass, not

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\* By the last clause of the 28th art. it was agreed that if arrangements for commerce between the British colonies, in the West Indies and the United States, were not made before the expiration of two years, from and after the conclusion of the war in which Great Britain was then engaged, then all the articles of the treaty, except the first ten, should expire together. That war ceased in 1802, and, as the arrangement appears not to have been made, the treaty expired in 1804.

only directly from the places and ports of the enemy, to neutral ports and places, but also from one place belonging to an enemy to another, whether they be under the jurisdiction of the same power or under several.

After the British treaty had expired, Mr. Fox offered to renew it, but the proposal was not accepted by our government.

In May 1806, Great Britain declared that all the rivers and ports, from the Elbe to Brest, should be considered as blockaded. But they also declared that this blockade should not extend to prevent any neutral ships laden with goods, not the property of their enemy and not being contraband of war, from approaching said coast, and entering, and sailing from said rivers and ports, except from Ostend to the Scin, already in a state of strict and rigorous blockade, provided the ships and vessels so approaching and entering shall not have been laden at a port belonging to or in possession of an enemy: and that the ships and vessels sailing from said rivers and ports shall not be destined to any port or place belonging to or in possession of an enemy.\*

In November 1806, while our treaty with France was yet in full force, Napoleon passed his Berlin Decree. This declared, The British Islands are in a state of blockade. All trading and correspondence with them are prohibited. All trading in English merchandize is prohibited, and every article belonging to England or coming from her colonies or of her manufacture is

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\* *This blockade, which now appears to be made use of as a cause of war, was merged in the Orders in Council and has had no effect since Jan. 1807. It cannot be revived, as Mr. Foster assures us, without the application of a sufficient force and notice being given. Mr. Monroe, who was our Minister in England when the order for this blockade was passed, wrote concerning it as follows. It is couched in terms of restraint and professes to extend the blockade, nevertheless it takes it from many ports already blockaded, except in articles contraband of war and enemy's property which were seizable without blockade. It admits the trade of neutrals to be free in the productions of enemies' colonies, in every but the direct rout between the colony and the parent country. I am strengthened in the opinion that the order for this blockade was drawn with a view to our trade with the enemies' colonies, and that it promises to be highly satisfactory to our commercial interests and must be viewed in a favorable light.*

*The Committee of Foreign Relations, in their War Report of June last, say of this blockade, We are persuaded it was conceived in a spirit of conciliation intended to lead to an accommodation of all differences between the United States & G. Britain.*

**declared lawful prize.** No vessel coming directly from England or the English colonies, or which has been there since the publication of this decree, shall be admitted into any port.

On the last of December 1806, a treaty was concluded with England, by Messrs. Monroe and Pinckney, to continue in force for ten years. This secured a reciprocal and perfect liberty of commerce and navigation, between all the British dominions in Europe and the United States, a direct trade with all her dominions in the East Indies, and the same rights of commerce with the West Indies as had been before enjoyed, till more satisfactory arrangements could be made. It allowed not only a free trade from our own ports to those of an enemy and from an enemy's ports to our own, but stipulated that we might freely trade from an enemy's ports in Europe to her colonies, and from her colonies to her ports in Europe, with only this restriction; that all such goods should be landed in the United States, and pay, to our own treasury a duty of one per cent ad-valorem, on European goods, and two per cent on colonial produce. It provided that the searching of merchant ships, by ships of war and privateers, should be conducted as favourably as the course of the war then existing will possibly permit towards the most friendly power that may remain neuter, observing, as much as possible, the acknowledged principles and rules of the law of nations. That all commanders of ships of war and privateers, and all others should forbear doing any damage to the neutral, or committing any outrage, and, if any act to the contrary, they shall be punished and bound in their persons and estates to make satisfaction and reparation for all damages, of whatever nature; and that each commander of a privateer, before he receives his commission, shall give bond, with at least two responsible sureties, in the sum of from ten to twenty thousand dollars to make good all such damages. This treaty was signed under notice, from the British ministers, that unless the French government should formally abandon the Berlin decree, or the United States, by their conduct or assurance, should give security that they would not submit thereto, the king would not be bound to ratify the same. This treaty the President saw fit to reject, without laying it before the Senate for their advice and consent.\* In

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\* *The President in his late message recommending the declaration of war, says, "So far were the attempts carried to overcome the attachment of the British cabinet to its unjust edicts, that it received every encouragement, within the competency of the executive branch of our government, to expect that a repeal of them would be followed by a war between the United States & France, unless the French edicts should also be repealed." Here*

January 1807, to retaliate the Berlin Decree. Great Britain passed her first Order in Council. In this she declared, no vessel shall be permitted to trade from one port to another, both which ports shall belong to or be in possession of France or her allies, or be so far under their controul as that British vessels may not freely trade thereat.

In June 1807, the attack was made upon the Chesapeake, and four persons were taken from her, by force, as British deserters. This act was immediately disavowed by the British government and compensation tendered to our minister in London; but our government directed that this affair should not be separated from others, and, consequently, no reparation was made. Early in July the President issued his proclamation, commanding all armed vessels of Great Britain to depart immediately from our harbors and waters, and forbidding them and all others under commission from that power to enter; and if any should remain or enter, prohibiting all intercourse with them, or supplies being given them. This was done without seeking any explanation from the British government, or knowing whether the attack was authorised thereby or not.

In November 1807, Great Britain made another order. This enacted that all the ports and places of France and her allies or any other country at war with England, and all other ports and places in Europe from which the British flag is excluded and all ports and places in the colonies belonging to the enemy should be subject to the same restrictions as though the same were actually and strictly blockaded; and that all trade, in articles which are the produce or manufactures of the said countries or colonies, should be considered to be unlawful, and every vessel trading from or to said countries or colonies shall be captured and condemned as prize to the captors. From this order were excepted such vessels and their cargoes as should belong to and be cleared from such places as were not by their order considered to be in a state of blockade, direct to some port or place in the colonies of the enemy, or from those colonies, direct to the country to which such vessel belongs, or bound from or to some port or place of Great Britain, her allies or some of her dependencies, under such regulations as should be prescribed. This order also declares that any vessel which shall have on board a certificate of origin, from a French commercial agent, or any

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*let it be asked, what more was required by the note accompanying Mr. Monroe's treaty? Had Mr. Jefferson, then, been willing to do what Mr. Madison now confesses he has since been anxious to have an opportunity of performing, how much trouble and mischief to the nation would have been prevented?*

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document referring thereto, shall be lawful prize.

In December 1807, the French Emperor passed his Milan Decree, declaring that every ship, to whatever nation it may belong, that shall have submitted to be searched by an English ship, or to a voyage to England, or shall have paid any tax whatever to the English, is thereby, and for that alone, declared to be denationalized, to have become English property and to be good and lawful prize, whether taken by ships of war or privateers, or seized after entering the ports of France or her allies: and any vessel sailing from or to any port of England, her colonies or of the countries occupied by her troops, shall also be good prize.

Thus has decree been added to decree, and order to order, against neutral commerce, by both belligerents. Those of England have uniformly allowed time for their becoming known before they took full effect, but those of France have had no such limitation. Each nation has declared its own acts to be in retaliation for those of the other and each has pledged itself to remove his, when the other shall have rescinded on his part. Under these decrees and orders, our property to a vast amount has been taken and sold, our seamen plundered and left in distress in foreign countries, thrown into loathsome prisons, or forced or entered on board the armed vessels of the contending powers.

In the same month in which the Milan decree was enacted, by the Emperor of France, our own government saw fit to lay the general embargo. This continued in force until the rising of the next session of Congress after the first of March, 1809.

In the spring of 1808, Mr. Rose had again signified the readiness of the British government to make satisfaction for the outrage upon the Chesapeake; but, as he was instructed not to do it while the President's proclamation was in force, excluding British armed vessels from our harbors and waters, and the President would not recall that proclamation, the negotiation came to an end.

At this time the seizures made by the belligerents on our property were to a vast amount. So great was the sum sequestered in France that our Minister informed his government that "its magnitude alone rendered hopeless all attempts at saving it."

On the first of March 1809, the non-intercourse law was passed, prohibiting, immediately, the entrance, into our harbors & waters, of all public ships and vessels of Great Britain and France, and forbidding any intercourse with them, or giving them any succour should they enter. After the 20th of May next following, it forbid the entrance of any vessels whatsoever, or the admission of any goods, wares or merchandize from any port or place belonging to those powers, their colonies or depen-

dencies, and the importation from any foreign place whatever, of any goods, wares or merchandize of the growth, produce or manufacture of Great Britain or France, their colonies or dependencies, or any place in the actual possession of either of those powers. It also declared that if any vessel or any merchandize should enter, contrary to this act, they should be forfeited and seized.

This act seemed to bear equally on both the contending powers. At first it appeared to be favourably received by both, but, in the sequel, produced very different effects.

In April 1809, Mr. Erskine informed our government that, as by this act, both belligerents were put in a state of equality, he now offered reparation and satisfaction for the affair of the Chesapeake. This offer was accepted by the President. Mr. Erskine also stipulated that the orders in council, as respects the United States, should have been revoked on the tenth of June following, and measures should be taken for a full settlement of all difficulties. In making this arrangement, the British government conceived that Mr. Erskine departed widely from the letter and spirit of his instructions, and the President of the United States had also inserted, in his acceptance of reparation for the affair of the Chesapeake, a clause stating that his Britannic Majesty had omitted what best comported with what was due to his own honor. This clause was considered as full of disrespect to his Majesty, and for both reasons the arrangement was not ratified by the British government, and the whole come to nothing.\*

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\* *Mr. Canning, on receiving this arrangement, from Mr. Erskine, wrote to him to this effect. It was distinctly stated, by me, as a preliminary to an adjustment of the affair of the Chesapeake, that such ships of war of France as were in ports of the U. S. should have been warned to depart. Of this condition you appear to have taken no notice whatever. It is much to be regretted that, in points of so much delicacy, you should have thought yourself authorised to depart so widely, not only from the letter but from the spirit of your instructions. "It remains for me to notice the expression so full of disrespect to his Majesty, with which that note (accepting the reparation) concludes. I am to signify to you the displeasure which his Majesty feels, that any minister of his Majesty should show himself so far insensible to what is due to the dignity of his sovereign, as to have been contented to receive and transmit to be laid before his Majesty a note in which such expressions were contained."*

*On the same subject, Mr. Jackson observed; "there was an expression of Mr. Smith, on the face of the arrangement, which,*

In May 1810, was published the French decree of Hamboulet, bearing date in March preceding, and declaring that, because we had passed the non-intercourse law, of March 1809, all vessels sailing under the American flag, or owned in whole or in part by any of its citizens, which, reckoning from May 1809, may have already entered, or shall subsequently enter the ports of France, her colonies, or the territories occupied by the French armies, shall be seized and sold.

Seizures, to the amount of many millions, were immediately made under this decree, avowedly on the principle of reprisal, and on the same principle have been retained to this time.\*—England viewed the non-intercourse law as opening a door for peaceful negotiation, and improved it as such. France viewed it as just cause of war, and seized on all our property she could find.

The law, which was the pretext of this universal seizure, was suffered to expire, at the time to which it was limited, and, as its substitute, the law of May 1810, was passed. This prohibited both English and French armed vessels from entering our ports or receiving succour or aid, and declared that if either power repealed its obnoxious orders or decrees before the third day of March ensuing, so that they should cease to violate the neutral commerce of the United States, the President should declare it by Proclamation, and all restrictions as to that nation should cease. But if the other should not, in three months thereafter, do the same, the non-intercourse should be revived against her, to take effect from and after the expiration of three months from the date of the President's proclamation.

On the fifth of August following, the French government presented to our minister a note declaring that, in consequence of the non-intercourse law, reprisal was a matter of right, commanded by the dignity of France; but as Congress now tread's

*at all events, put it totally out of his Majesty's power to ratify and confirm any act, in which such expressions were contained."*

*Notwithstanding all this, the President declares, in his late war message, that "the whole arrangement was disavowed by the British government without any explanation which could at that time, suppress a belief that the disavowal proceeded from a spirit of hostility to the commercial interests and prosperity of the United States."*

*\* In consequence of the seizures made under this and other decrees, so many of our seamen were left in distress, in the ports of ~~France~~ and her dependencies, that 100,000 dollars, in addition to what had been before granted, were appropriated from the Treasury, at one time, for their relief.*

back its steps, the decrees of Berlin and Milan are revoked, and from the first of November, they will cease to be in force, it being understood that, in consequence of this declaration, the English shall revoke their orders in council, and renounce the principles of blockade which they have attempted to establish, or the United States, conformable to the act of May 1810, shall cause their rights to be respected by the English.

In consequence of this note, and without seeing any official act of repeal or revocation, the President, on the second of November, proclaimed the revocation of the Berlin and Milan decrees. Great Britain contended that this repeal could not take place without an official act of the Emperor; and as no such act had been produced, they refused to revoke their orders in council, until that evidence should be given. The President, therefore, on the second day of February, by proclamation, revived the non-intercourse against Great Britain, and this was sanctioned by an act of Congress of March 1814.

In this state things remained till the late embargo and declaration of war against England. The great question seems to be, whether the decrees of Berlin and Milan are repealed. That they are, nothing has been shown but the note of the fifth of August, declaring that they should be on certain conditions. That they are not repealed, it is alledged that on the 31st of March 1814, Napoleon declared they were the fundamental laws of his empire. Thus he confirmed what his minister of foreign relations had said to him in November; "so long as England shall persist in her orders in council, your Majesty will persist in your decrees." So lately as the 10th of March last, the same minister declared, in a report to the Emperor, that until the British orders in council are rescinded, the Berlin and Milan decrees will remain in force against those powers who allow their flags to be denationalized. The ports of the continent shall not be opened to denationalized flags or British merchandise.\*

This is a brief sketch of the progress of our negotiations, their issue, and the present situation of our foreign relations. On

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\* On the sixth of February last, Mr. Barlow wrote to the Duke of Bassano as follows, "I understand the brig *Belisarius*, of New-York, and her cargo, is about to be confiscated, after a report made to his Majesty, because this vessel and her cargo are liable to the decree of Milan, of December 1807." By a late New-York list of condemned vessels, the brig *Belisarius* appears to have been confiscated, notwithstanding the letter of Mr. Barlow. How could she be liable to the Milan decree, if it was revoked in August, and ceased to be in force in November 1810.

this hasty review, it will be proper for each one to ask some such questions as these.

Which nation has broken their solemn treaties? Had not our treaty with England expired and had not *we* refused to renew it before her first orders in council were passed? Had not our president rejected a second treaty, even without showing it constitutional respect, before her most obnoxious orders took effect? Were not the decrees of France enacted in violation of an express treaty, signed by Napoleon himself, and then in full force and virtue? That violated treaty expired in 1805, and has France ever, since, offered us a new one? Has not the *Hornet* lately returned without such treaty, or being able to tell us when *we* may expect one?

What would have been our situation had the treaty made by Messrs. Monroe and Pinckney been ratified? In consequence of subsequent revolutions and conquests, would it not have opened to us a free trade to almost all the world? \* What need would there then have been of embargoes, non-intercourses and non-importations? Look at that instrument and ask, what could we expect more than is there contained? It is true, France would have opposed; but would not her opposition soon have subsided, or been, what our government was pleased to call it, an empty menace? Had that treaty been adopted, what could have hindered our being as happy as in the days of Washington; as prosperous as any nation that ever existed?

Who has seized our property on principles of reprisal, and without giving us due notice? Has Britain ever done either? We look for a solitary instance, in vain. She has indeed wrested much from us, we have just reasons of complaint, but has she not ever given us due notice of her orders and warned us of the consequences if we did not observe them? Has not the case been directly the reverse with France? Have not her decrees all taken place immediately, without any previous notice, and sometimes under the most inviting encouragements of safety. Look to the sweeping decree of Ramboulet, which wrested from us so many millions; did not its operation include twelve months before its existence, and fourteen before it was known even in France? Was it not an act of reprisal, of hostility, an avowed chastisement because we had presumed to pass a certain municipal law? Was it not waging war, for which no concession has

*\* By authentic documents it appears that, for some years past, about seven eighths of our exports, of domestic products, have been sent to those countries which are not under the control of France, and to which a treaty with England would allow us full access.*

been made, for which no reparation has been offered? And yet are we on terms of peace with this nation, and at war with the other!

At this time to enquire which nation has caused the greatest sum of our losses, would perhaps be fruitless as it would certainly be useless and disagreeable. On both sides we behold captures, condemnations, impressments,\* imprisonments, increasing in numbers and atrocity to a black catalogue. But we find confessed reprisals, sinkings and burnings only on the side of France. Why then are we at war with England and not with France? Must not this be the true answer? We contend with England because France will not show the act repealing her Berlin and Milan decrees. If she has no such document, & her decrees have not been repealed, is there one who would wage war with England? If she has such an act and will show it, England has pledged herself to repeal her orders and then the cause of war would be no more.

With this view of things before us, what is our destiny? In the present hour of gloom and foreboding apprehensions, no

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\* *It is computed that, in the height of our commerce, we employed more than 20,000 seamen, nearly one third of our whole number, who were not native or naturalized citizens. These were chiefly British subjects and were either without protections, or obtained them by fraud. These, and not our native or naturalized seamen, the British government has claimed a right to take from our merchant vessels. But, through mistake and the unauthorized arrogance of naval commanders, many of our own citizens have also been taken; and, in consequence of our giving protections to known British seamen, they have often become useless to our own.*

Great Britain has ever professed a willingness to adopt any method that can be devised to protect our seamen and not prevent her from taking hers. She offered to Mr. King, to relinquish the right on all parts of the ocean except the narrow seas contiguous to her native islands. She offered to Mr. Monroe to pass laws making it penal for British commanders to take American seamen, if we would make it penal, by law, for our officers to give certificates of citizenship to British seamen. Neither of these offers were acceded to by our government. An arrangement on the subject was made by Messrs. Monroe and Pinckney, which Mr. Monroe has said, was both honorable and advantageous to the United States, containing, a concession in our favour on the part of Great Britain, never before made, by a formal and obligatory act of their government. This arrangement shared the same fate as the treaty, made by these gentlemen.

question can be more important. It is our duty to understand and exercise the rights of freemen. To examine, for ourselves, the propriety or impropriety of measures. To discover the reasons, investigate the grounds and discern the consequences of these measures which we are called to support. To act, not with a blind zeal for or against, but to search carefully, try candidly and determine with all the deliberation and gravity which become those on whom the fate of their country ultimately depends. In a government like ours, the voice of the people is supreme ; but it must be expressed according to the rules of the constitution. By every constitutional exertion, we should endeavour that public measures should conform to our individual wishes, as much as possible.

At no period, since our independence was declared, have our prospects been so gloomy. It is not surprising to see melancholy countenances on this anniversary festival. The operations and consequences of war are ever to be dreaded. The derangement of our affairs and moral principles, the destruction of much property, health and life, are inseparable from its train. These we have to dread, with the utmost certainty. In adverse fortune and defeat, we discern consequences which will endanger not only our prosperity, but our freedom and existence as a nation. If victorious, can we expect more than has been offered in former negociations ? We may have the friendship of France, but is that safe ? Has any nation flourished that has enjoyed it ? Look to Holland, to Switzerland, to Spain, to Germany. These have all enjoyed the friendship of the Emperor and king. To their destruction they have experienced his loving assistance and kindest wishes.

What course then shall we take ? Shall we shrink from the duty to which we are called by our rulers. This would be contrary to our most solemn constitutional engagements, and confusion and anarchy would stare us in the face at every step.—Constitutional principles must be preserved or all is lost. Evils, if they exist, ought to be removed, and we have ample powers for that purpose. But to endeavour to repair the building by undermining its foundation, would be folly in the extreme. By the steps of the constitution and by these only are national grievances to be redressed, and national blessings to be sought.

It is with propriety enquired, what are our prospects of success ? Is this war, that defensive one, which alone can be lawful ? Can we appeal to Heaven for the rectitude and propriety of our measures ? Can we rationally and piously hope that Jehovah will be our shield and our defence ? Can we in faith call on God to teach our hands to war and our fingers to fight ? Believing in a divine providence, and realizing that, for success,



we must depend on the blessing of the Supreme Being : to be obliged to answer any of these questions in the negative, must diffuse gloom and darkness in our way. It must be peculiarly unhappy to be called to act and yet be unable to discover a sufficient reason for our conduct. But unhappy as this circumstance must be, it is doubted whether it affords a sufficient reason for disobeying the calls of our rulers. We are more likely to be deceived than those who can take a more extensive view of the subject. They are our servants. We have appointed them to act for us, and, while we continue them in their stations, we must follow their recommendations or all order is subverted. If the head and members are at variance, what must become of the body ?

If the decisions of our rulers are obtained by any unconstitutional and improper means, this lessens our obligation to obey. But this impropriety must be very apparent before we can be justified in disobedience. If the measure be constitutional, and the error rests in the judgment or integrity of those whom we appoint to administer, we have no proper remedy but in the exercise of our right of suffrage. This is the constitutional and sovereign remedy for all our political evils. On the careful and candid exercise of this depends our national happiness and existence. When this becomes the tool of a party, or is driven about by the wind of individual ambition, destruction and misery must ensue. But when it is exercised with a proper remembrance of its high importance, and a solemn regard to the oath of God, whereby we are constituted freemen, it is the highest civil privilege we can enjoy. When the people will thus come forth in their constitutional majesty, they may speak and it shall be done, they may command and it shall stand fast. They may say to the tempests of war, peace ! be still ! and to proud individual ambition, hitherto shalt thou come and no further ! and their command shall be obeyed. If in the present darkness they say let there be light ! there will be light.

Important duties at this time devolve on all. Independence is the palladium that *must* not be lost. It will now require the exertions of every individual to preserve it. Civil magistrates, you must be at your posts. You must be vigilant to preserve order, prevent increasing irregularity, and lessen as far as possible the calamities of war. Military officers and soldiers, on you it devolves, as you are called, to take the field and maintain the liberties and independence of your country. Show yourselves the true sons of those who established these blessings at first. You are our shield, our buckler, and, under God, our last defence. Tarnish not your glory by base inaction, nor by those wanton exertions which are often more disgraceful. It belongs

to ministers of the gospel and professors of religion to be messengers of peace, promoters of harmony and intercessors with Heaven for needed blessings. Freeman, it is yours to change the face of the present scene, to give beauty for ashes and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Stand at your posts, be true to your oath, to yourselves, to your country and you cannot fail of success. Wives and daughters, it belongs to you to encourage, to animate and console. Yours is a pleasant, an agreeable but most necessary part. All will find sufficient employment, and, under the blessing of the God of hosts, the union of all will procure that happy issue, which is so highly important and desirable.

My address now turns to the society, at whose request I speak. Though unacquainted with your constitution or proceedings, from what little I have learned and seen respecting you, I have a very favorable opinion of your institution. Your professed design is to cultivate benevolence, disseminate correct political information, and inculcate the principles of that eminent patriot whose name you bear. Having assumed this venerable name, so justly dear to every American, see that all your actions comport with its illustrious dignity. Washington! the name demands from you every thing that is great and worthy. While you bear it, you must never be the promoters of a party, but the friends of your country. The Constitution must be the foundation and remain the main pillar of the edifice you build. You must be ever ready at your country's call. For her you must live, and for her you must be willing to die. It is noble for citizens, by every proper measure, either as individuals or connected in societies, to seek the welfare of their country. While this is your aim, you have certainly the privilege of devising, for yourselves, the best means, nor have any a right, officiously to censure you till you are convicted of wrong motives or unfriendly conduct. You will not however forget that Washington condemned the self-created societies of his day, and will condemn you if you deviate from the pure principles which he maintained. Go on, Benevolent Washingtonians, in the path of your great patron, and do much for his and your beloved country. The present crisis will demand your utmost exertions. Wake to action every benevolent power. Ardently and continually seek the peace and prosperity of the nation. With one heart and one hand, may you and your brethren in the different states, promote the freedom, independence and happiness of our common country, and the latest generations shall call you blessed.

Washington hearts and principles should not be confined to any societies or names among our citizens. All should feel a

glowing love to their country. There should be but one heart and one sentiment to confirm, extend and perpetuate our independent privileges. Individuals and parties should be forgotten and our country be all. With this union of exertion our constitution shall be preserved and our liberties be coeval with time. The cause of freedom is glorious indeed. It must, it will prevail. The God of Glory will maintain it. Through the smiles of his providence the final victory shall be ours. Though now a gloom is spread, the prospect shall brighten and future anniversaries of independence shall be joyful, till all people shall welcome its perpetual smiles, and liberty and peace become extensive as the world.

C

## O D E.

1. Independence, gift of Heaven,  
 Best of boons to mortals giv'n,  
 In joyful, grateful, tuneful throng,  
 Thy birth we greet, with festive song.  
 Thy charms alleviate our toils,  
 Our joys increase beneath thy smiles,  
 Our nation feels thy genial rays,  
 And every bosom burns with praise.  
     Every heart unite to day,  
     Every voice exalt the lay.  
     Hence contention, strife and war,  
     Sullen grief be banish'd far,  
     Notes seraphic each employ,  
     Independence wakes our joy.
2. Back we look, with gladden'd eyes,  
 Whence her natal beauties rise.  
 Amidst the toils and din of war,  
 Where fell destruction rolls his car,  
 'Midst shouts of foes and savage screams,  
 Th' embattled field and bloody streams,  
 O'er fields laid waste and towns on fire,  
 Where captives groan and hosts expire,  
     See the angel form arise.  
     Catch her beauties with your eyes,  
     Independence! yes she comes,  
     Precious to her favorite sons.  
     Bid her welcome, tune your voice,  
     Independence cries, rejoice.
3. Blessings rich her hands bestow,  
 Choicer gifts than tyrants know.  
 She breaks th' oppressors galling chain,  
 Bids peace, content and freedom reign,  
 Extends our commerce far and wide,  
 Brings wealth untold with every tide,  
 Gives aid to useful enterprise,  
 And science raises to the skies.  
     Round her all the virtues stand,  
     Prompt t'obey her high command.  
     All that virtue can desire,  
     All that Freedom's sons admire,  
     All that Patriots wish to know,  
     Independence can bestow.

4. What confusions shock the world !  
 Princes from their thrones are hurled,  
 See truth and law and right contemned,  
 And innocence without a friend ;  
 Slaughter and famine waste each shore,  
 And ocean swell, with human gore ;  
 The Corsic tyrant's cruel wand,  
 Destroy the peace of every land.

Why are not these curses ours ?  
 Who protects our happy bowers ?  
 Who forbids our sons to die ?  
 Who prevents the bondage sigh ?  
 Why do we in safety dwell ?  
 Independence, she can tell.

5. Lo ! a voice salutes our ears,  
 Fills our souls with boding fears.  
 Is Independence yours ? it cries,  
 Have you not sold the precious prize ?  
 Do you not stoop to foreign wiles,  
 And cringe to gain a monarch's smiles ?  
 Do you not wait your master's nod,  
 And bow before a foreign God,  
 Second continental schemes,  
 Madly rave with baseless dreams ?  
 O that each could answer, no,  
 We can never stoop so low.  
 Every foreign wile's in vain,  
 Independence we'll maintain.

6. What then means this warlike sound ?  
 Why restrictive laws abound ?  
 Can taxes, loans, embargoes be  
 The means to make a nation free ?  
 Can gain arise from constant loss,  
 Submission strengthen freedom's cause ?  
 Will base deception make us wise,  
 And want of faith bid virtue rise ?  
 Northern warfare can it be  
 Sure protection on the sea ?  
 Rouse to action every power,  
 Now's the dire decisive hour,  
 True to freedom's high command,  
 Independence bids you stand.

7. Horrors thick around you wait,  
Fell divisions waste the state.

Awake from slumber, ope your eyes,  
See where impending danger lies.

Let base intrigue no more controul.

Delusion break. Awake each soul.

Your constituti'nal rights assert,

Be one, be one in hand and heart.

Else your liberties will fly,

Independence soon will die,

Freedom's sons must feel the chain,

Despotism infernal reign,

Soon you bid with doleful knell,

Independence long farewell.