AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED

AT

PORTSMOUTH, N. H.

ON THE

FOURTH OF JULY, 1828.

BY WILLIAM PLUMER, JR.

PORTSMOUTH:

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PORTSMOUTH, JULY 4, 1828.

The Committee of Arrangements for celebrating our National Anniversary, return their warmest acknowledgements to the Hon. *William Plumer, Jr.* for the able, spirited, and patriotic Address delivered by him this day, and respectfully solicit a copy for the press. In behalf of the Committee,

SAMUEL GOOKIN, *Chairman.*

PORTSMOUTH, JULY 5, 1828.

I beg you, dear sir, to convey to the Committee of Arrangements my sincere thanks for the very kind and indulgent notice which they have been pleased to take of the Address which I had the honor, yesterday, to deliver at their request. The short time allowed me, for its preparation, is known to the Committee; and should perhaps have excused me from this application. But if, in your opinion, the publication of this Address would be acceptable to my friends in Portsmouth, I am already under too many obligations to them, not to comply with their wishes, on this occasion. *I have the honor to be, very respectfully,*

Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM PLUMER Jr.

Col. Samuel Gookin, *Chairman, &c.*

ADDRESS.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS,—

The Declaration of Independence was the first public act, by which the people of the United States announced to the world their existence as a nation. Hitherto they had been known only as colonies of Great Britain: they now asserted their right to be considered a separate people; and the Declaration, which has just been read in your hearing, contains the defence of their conduct, and their appeal to the justice of mankind. It is unnecessary, at this time, to enter into a minute detail of those interesting events, which, beginning from slight causes, led gradually, and almost imperceptibly, to the adoption of this decisive and irrevocable act. They form, for many years, the most considerable portion of British and American history. A brief statement, however, of some of the leading facts and principal grounds of the controversy, may not be improper or uninteresting, on this occasion.

One of the first observations which strikes us, in this review, is the fact, that the controversy, which terminated in the independence of the United States, was commenced without the most distant expectation, on either side, of so important a result. At the peace of 1763, the attachment of the people, to the government under which they lived, appeared to be as strong in America, as in any part of the British empire. Nor did this deep-rooted attachment of the colonies yield, without a long and painful struggle, to sentiments of an opposite and

hostile nature. The immediate cause of the alienation and final rupture was, (as is known to all,) the attempt of the British government to tax America, without her consent. The sum proposed to be raised was inconsiderable; but the principle, upon which the claim rested, admitted of an indefinite extension; and, if carried into full effect, would have left nothing, which the colonists could have called their own. It was therefore at once resisted by them, upon the broad and acknowledged principle that, under the British constitution, Representation and Taxation are inseparable; and that, as the colonies were not represented in Parliament, so neither could they be taxed by that body.

Regardless of their prayers and petitions, Parliament, in January 1765, proceeded further to enforce its claim to tax the colonies, by the passage of the celebrated Stamp act. This obnoxious act was met by new petitions and remonstrances from all parts of the country, and by non-importation agreements, then, for the first time, adopted, in the vain hope that the sufferings of British merchants and manufacturers, from the loss of the colonial trade, would bring the mother country to a sense of her injustice. Deputies from nine colonies met at New-York, in a General Congress; in which the rights and duties of the colonies were discussed and defined. They felt that, however mitigated in practice, the claim of Parliament was, in principle, nothing short of the most perfect despotism. Still however they entertained no thoughts of resistance by arms: and as to *Independence*, it was a word which had not yet been even named among them. A redress of grievances, by a repeal of the obnoxious taxes, was all that they presumed to ask. In their petition to the King and Parliament, they acknowledged the authority of the mother country over them; but claimed, in the matter of taxation, a right to judge for themselves, when called upon by their sovereign, as to what, on each occasion, they should give, and what withhold.

In the mean time, a change of ministry in England, produced a repeal of the Stamp act; but this repeal was accompanied with an express declaration, by the

Parliament, of its "right to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever." This alarming declaration was not suffered long to remain a barren claim of power. In 1767, new taxes were imposed; and the crown was authorized to establish, throughout America, a general civil list, independent of the colonial assemblies. British troops were, at the same time, sent to the colonies, with the avowed purpose of enforcing obedience to these new and odious edicts. This direct resort to military power, in the civil government of the country, roused at once the republican jealousies of a free and intelligent people.—All that had ever been said, or written, in former times, and in other countries, on the fatal effects of standing armies in a time of peace, was now repeated and enforced by a thousand tongues. Resistance by arms to an armed force, began to be contemplated with less horror than heretofore; and hints were occasionally thrown out, that freemen were no more to be *governed*, than *taxed*, without their consent.

This universal discontent of the colonies produced its natural effects in England: not that any one there apprehended a general revolt, or armed resistance to the royal authority. But the disaffection of three millions of people was not lightly to be incurred, and could not safely be overlooked. In this state of affairs, the Minister adopted one of those doubtful expedients, common to weak minds, which, seeking to please both sides, in the end seldom satisfy either. He repealed all the taxes, except that on tea; which he retained, not as a source of income, but professedly as a badge of the sovereignty of Parliament over the colonies. He thus retained the quarrel, while he lost the revenue. For he was told, at the time, and truly told, that it was less the weight of the taxes, than the preamble asserting the right to tax, which the colonies were unwilling and unable to bear. Their great object had been, not so much to throw off a yoke, already imposed upon them, as to prevent entirely, and in the first instance, its imposition. Their discontents, therefore, far from being allayed, continued daily to increase; until at length Parliament passed the famous Boston port bill; new modelled the

government of Massachusetts; and ordered persons, charged with disturbances in America, to be sent to England for trial. This produced, in 1774, another General Congress, at Philadelphia, in which twelve colonies were represented. This assembly issued, after much deliberation, a *declaration of rights;* in which they claimed, for the colonies, an exclusive authority to legislate for themselves, in all cases of taxation and internal policy, subject only to the royal negative on their acts. They at the same time admitted the controlling power of Parliament, in the regulation of their external commerce, for the benefit of the parent state. A resort to arms, no one was yet bold enough to recommend. The idea of Independence was mentioned indeed, but mentioned only to be rejected. "Your royal authority over us," said this congress, in their petition to the King, "and our connexion with Great Britain, we shall always carefully and zealously endeavor to support and maintain."

The opposition to the authority of Parliament had been thus far conducted under the impression, still cherished by many, that the rights of the colonies were not understood, in Great Britain; and that they needed only to be examined, to secure their immediate recognition. But it began now to be perceived, by all discerning men, that an essential difference of opinion, as to their respective rights, and duties, had arisen between the two countries; that claims, altogether incompatible with each other, were adduced, by the opposite parties; and that, in their present temper, nothing short of the sword could decide the controversy between them. To this last resort of nations both parties were now fast approaching. England, proud and victorious, supposed that she had only to unsheath her sword, and the conquest of the colonies was effected. "Give me but five regiments," said General Grant, "and I will march from one end of the continent to the other"! Nor did Parliament, or the nation, seem to find any thing, either vain, or extravagant, in this idle boast. The colonies, on the other hand, less confident, but inspired with a deeper and more heroic spirit, saw, with anx-

fety indeed, but without dismay, the approaching storm; and prepared, calmly and resolutely prepared, to brave the shock. A principle, dearer to them than life, was involved in the issue; and the intense, but regulated ardour of pursuit raised the minds of men, long intent upon one great object—the freedom of their beloved country—to an elevation of thought and action, which felt not, or disregarded, the degrading influence of the meaner passions. The popular leaders were every where inspired with the noblest enthusiasm; and gave utterance, on all occasions, to the most generous and elevated sentiments. The thrilling words of Warren rung in their ears, "The voice of your fathers' blood cries to you from the ground, My sons, scorn to be *slaves*." In every part of the country the same feeling prevailed. "I know not," said Patrick Henry, "what others may accept; but for me, give me *liberty*, or give me *death*." "If but *one* out of a thousand survives the struggle," said Samuel Adams, "that one will be a *freeman*; and his single life is well worth a thousand *slaves*." This is the genuine spirit of patriotic virtue and self-devotion—the spirit of revolutions—when liberty is the purchase, and life the price, which is freely paid. These ennobling sentiments were now fast diffusing themselves through the breasts of a virtuous and enlightened people. The transition from love to hatred is often sudden and vehement, in proportion as the feeling of regard or esteem has been ardent and sincere. The attachment of America could not long survive the justice of Britain. The colonists felt that they were injured in their most essential interests; that their confidence had been abused, and their rights invaded. They had been free, even in their infancy, when submission might have been made the price of protection; and it was too late, now that they had become numerous, and powerful, and united, and conscious of their strength, to think of binding them down to earth, and confining within the narrow limits of colonial monopoly and dependence, a people unaccustomed to slavery, and ignorant of restraint.

While sentiments like these were gaining ground in America, the Parliament of Great Britain, in January

1775, declared the existence of a rebellion in the colonies. This measure, preceded by the boastful exclamation of Lord North, that "he would bring America to his feet," was equivalent to a declaration of war; and was so understood in both countries. Hostilities soon ensued; and the battles of Lexington and Bunker's hill gave both parties a foretaste of each other's strength and prowess. Finding war inevitable, the Congress of the United Colonies now caused troops to be raised; and issued a declaration, setting forth the necessity, which had compelled them to close with the ministerial appeal from reason to arms. "We are reduced," say they, "to the alternative of choosing an unconditional submission to the tyranny of irritated ministers, or resistance by force. The latter is our choice. We have counted the cost of this contest, and find nothing so dreadful as voluntary slavery, being resolved with one mind to die freemen, rather than to live slaves. . . . . We have not raised armies with ambitious designs of separating from Great Britain, and establishing independent states. We fight not for glory, or for conquest. In our own native land, in defence of the freedom which is our birth-right, for the protection of our property and our persons, against violence actually offered, we have taken up arms. We will lay them down, when hostilities shall cease on the part of the aggressors, and all danger of their being renewed, shall be removed, and not before."

But though thus compelled to take arms in self defence, the colonies had not yet lost all hopes of peace. They determined, once more, to appear as suppliants before the British throne: they proceeded once more, and the last time, to address the inhabitants of Great Britain, by the endearing appellations of "Friends, Countrymen, and Brethren." In their humble petition to the King, they professed allegiance to his throne, and complained only of the injustice of his ministers. In their earnest and affectionate address to the people of Great Britain, they still boasted of their descent from Englishmen, and claimed only the rights of British subjects. In these addresses, they still sought, by the

most energetic and touching appeals, to the good sense and virtue, to the generosity and the interests of Britain, to avert from their country the calamitous effects of a contest, which few minds were yet resolute enough steadily to contemplate. The contemptuous silence with which these repeated appeals were heard, and disregarded, by the mother country, roused the pride of the colonists; convinced them that they had nothing to hope from the justice of their oppressors, and thus served to unite them, more firmly than ever, in defence of their violated rights.

The controversy had been conducted, thus far, upon its original grounds, solely with a view to a redress of grievances, by the repeal of obnoxious laws, and the restoration of former privileges. But the subject of Independence began, from this time, to be the general topic of discussion and enquiry; and the ablest talents of the country were sedulously employed, to prepare the public mind for this momentous change. At what precise time, thoughts of independence began seriously to be entertained, it is not easy to determine. It is certain, that the contest not only commenced, but was long continued, without the desire, or the expectation, of such an event. There were, however, some individuals, whose sagacity foresaw, from the first, the tendency of public measures towards this result. Others came gradually to entertain the same expectation,—first, as an evil greatly to be deplored,—next as an event, which, whether good or ill, it was no longer possible to avoid,—and finally, as an object, of all others, deserving their highest exertions to effect. But it was not till after years of alienation had passed, and fields of blood been shed, that the avowed friends of Independence formed a distinct party in the councils of the nation. In the opinion of this new party, reconciliation with the mother country was as little to be desired, as to be obtained.

——"True reconcilement ne'er can grow,
"Where wounds of deadly hate have pierc'd so deep."

Entire freedom, therefore, from the British yoke, or

unconditional submission to the will of a conqueror, were, according to their view of the case, the only alternatives presented by the nature of the controversy. Between these, it did not become freemen, to hesitate, for a moment, in their choice. Samuel Chase, a delegate from Maryland, and afterwards Judge of the Supreme Court, is said to have been the first person, who, in Congress, had the hardihood to declare, "that he no longer owed allegiance to the British king." For this bold expression, he was censured, and recalled, by his constituents. But the sentiment, which he had expressed, was congenial to the spirit of the times. By degrees, the new party drew to itself the great body of the Whigs; who, seeing no longer any hope of a redress of grievances, abandoned their first ground, and joined with the friends of Independence, to give effect, at once, to this important and decisive measure.

I have thus, fellow citizens, endeavoured briefly to trace the progress of events, from the first attempt to tax the colonies to the Declaration of Independence. By this last irrevocable act, the American Revolution may be said to have been consummated. For the great object was effected, as to its main results, from the moment that the attachment of the colonists to the government of England was destroyed, and the purpose and the desire of independence implanted in the understandings and the affections of the people. This great and happy change in the minds and feelings of the colonists, was the true American Revolution. The war which followed was but the consequence, and not the cause, of that event. The real Revolution preceded the declaration of independence. It consisted essentially in that fortunate train of events, by which, in the course of twelve years, from 1764 to 1776, the people of these states were gradually raised, from the humble posture of dutiful subjects of the British Crown, to the proud eminence of citizens of a free republic. It is this part of our history, therefore, rather than the mere details of battles, which deserves, and will best reward, our deepest and most frequent study. It is to the pacific victories of

Otis and Hancock, of Franklin and Adams, of Jefferson and Henry, of Rutledge and Lee, and the patriot statesmen, their associates in council, that we are principally indebted for our freedom and our independence. It was the irresistible onset of their victorious eloquence, more powerful than the charge of armies; it was their close array of argument, more dense than the phalanx of war, which expelled from our soil the principles and the dogmas of arbitrary power, which drove from our shores the maxims and the morals of tyrants and slaves. It was the gigantic force of their free thoughts, which beat down the towers of despotism; and let in the light of truth upon the startled minds of men. It was this march of intellect over its proudest field of triumph; this war of the understanding against the prejudices, the ignorance, and the errors of mankind, which gave us all that is great, and glorious, and happy, in our free republic. Of these men, it may be truly said, that "the weapons of their warfare were not carnal, but mighty, to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every thing that exalteth itself against knowledge; and bringing into captivity every thought, to the obedience of truth." These distinguished statesmen and patriots were the real authors of our independence; and to them our first and largest debt of gratitude is justly due. They laid the foundations of civil liberty deep in the understandings, and the hearts of the American people. They breathed the breath of life into our nascent republic; they expanded into manhood the intellect, they warmed into action the heart, of an infant world. They gave to the community that moral strength, that enthusiasm of liberty, that "courage of the cabinet," so much more important, as well as more rare, than that mere animal courage, which enables its possessor "to dwell, with composure, on scenes of blood and carnage."

If I have dwelt, fellow citizens, more than might seem to you necessary, on the merits of these peaceful fathers of our republic, it is because the times appear to me to demand it; it is because there is, among us, too strong a

disposition to lose sight of civil services, when brought in competition with mere military renown. Far be it from me, to undervalue the merits and the services of military men. In our present imperfect state, they are, unfortunately for the world, too often necessary. But while we render due honor to the patriot warrior, we should never forget, what all history tells us, what our own experience confirms, that the claims of the patriot statesman, are of a still higher order. Our revolution indeed produced one man, who seems to have united, in his person, both these characters in their highest perfection. That man was Washington; who, in the cabinet and in the field, at all times, and on all emergencies, acknowledged the supremacy of the laws; and while crowned with laurels, in the lap of victory, bowed with reverence to the civil fathers of the state. And is not the present, fellow citizens, the proper occasion for me to say, and to say it boldly too, that our country has produced *no second Washington?* Need I say, that, least of all is *he* entitled to that proud appellation, whose fame, "limited to a single enterprise," rests on the doubtful base of one brief day's successful fight? It would be strange indeed if the intelligent freemen of America could, for a moment, be deceived, by this vain and arrogant pretence of a second Washington.

There has indeed been a most portentous delusion, upon the public mind. The signs of the times have been dark and gloomy; the better genius of our country seemed, for a while, to have withdrawn; the evil principle was abroad in the land; and the wise and the virtuous beheld, in silent dismay, the evil days, and the evil deeds, which seemed about to ensue,—"men's heart's failing them through fear, and looking after those things which were coming on the earth." But thanks be to Heaven! the thick darkness of that night of terror is fast passing away; the day star dawns upon the mountains; the foul mists of passion, the deadly exhalations of a malignant party venom, are dissolving into thin air around us; the light of truth breaks in upon the minds of men; objects appear once more in their

true dimensions, and are seen in their native light. The American people will no longer be deceived, by the base deception of that *lying spirit*, which has gone abroad in our land. They turn, and they will continue to turn, with deep loathing, and unutterable abhorrence, from those monsters of falsehood, deformity, and vice, which have been so rudely forced upon them. They see, and they feel, what their fathers of the revolution never ceased to inculcate, that "civil liberty and the predominance of the military principle, are utterly incompatible." With this knowledge, and these views, spreading far and wide, through our remotest borders, the final decision of the American people, on this momentous question, cannot err. To think otherwise, would be to distrust that kind Providence, which, having spared our favoured land from war, from pestilence, and from famine, will not, we humbly trust, permit it to be visited with the heavier scourge of "military rule, or a blind and heedless enthusiasm for mere military renown."

History has been truly called "Philosophy teaching by examples." It becomes us then, my friends, to inquire what are the lessons, which the history of our fathers teaches to their sons? Time would fail me, to bring before you, much that might be useful, or interesting, on this occasion. Something, however, may be said, applicable to our present circumstances; and more must be left to your own reflections.

The first great lesson, then, taught us by the revolution, is the duty of self-devotion to the public good. Our fathers took their lives in their hands, when they went out to battle—a stripling, with a stone and sling—against the gigantic power of the parent state. The population of these colonies, scattered over an immense territory, was less than three million souls; they were ignorant of the arts of war; unprovided with military stores; destitute of regular governments; torn by convulsive divisions at home; and encouraged by no promise of assistance from abroad. It was under such disadvantages that our fathers commenced their struggle

for freedom and the rights of man—not organized as a nation—not acting under the sanction of regular governments—but coming forward, singly and individually, as private citizens merely, in primary assemblies, in committees of safety, in meetings and conventions, having no legal force or authority, beyond the mere weight of public opinion, to give effect to their resolves. On the one hand, poverty, exile, ignominy, and disgrace—a reward offered for their lives, a price set upon their heads—death on the scaffold, more dreadful than death in the field—met them, at every step of their advance. On the other, bribery and corruption, flattery and intrigue, promises of individual advantage and private emolument, were industriously employed to seduce their virtue and relax their exertions. But these self-devoted martyrs, in the cause of freedom, were raised, by their heroic virtue, above the influence of all selfish motives. They were men, whom gold could not corrupt; whom power could not dismay.

"I am a poor man;" said Read of Pennsylvania, when a bribe was offered him by a British agent, "but tell your king" he added, with the pride of conscious virtue—"that he has not gold enough to buy me." "Blandishment," said the elder Quincy, "will not fascinate us, nor will threats of a halter intimidate; for, under God, we are determined that, wheresoever, whensoever, or howsoever, we may be called upon to make our exit, we will die *free men.*" This was at the very commencement of the struggle. At a later period, when the storm of war had already fallen in blood on their heads, "I am well aware" said John Adams, "of the toil, and blood, and treasure, that it will cost to maintain this declaration, and defend these states; but through all the gloom, I can see rays of light and glory. I can see that the end is worth more than the means; and that posterity will triumph, though you and I may rue."—"Let the consequences be what they will," said that herald of liberty, the enthusiastic James Otis, "I am determined to proceed: since the only principle of conduct, worthy of a public, or a private man, is to sacrifice

estate and ease, health and applause, and even life itself, to the sacred calls of our country." It is impossible to hear repeated this last noble avowal of patriotic self-devotion, without being forcibly reminded by it of the manly expression of the same generous sentiment, recently made by the great orator and statesman of the West. "What," said Mr. Clay, in his late speech at Baltimore, "what is a public man, what is *any* man worth, who is not prepared, if necessary, to sacrifice himself, for the good of his country?" If this unconscious coincidence, at the distance of more than sixty years, between the thoughts and feelings of these two distinguished patriots, give us the pleasing assurance that the spirit of the revolution is not yet extinct among us, ought it not also to remind us, that we, like our fathers, have public duties to perform, from which, if we would not belie our descent, we cannot shrink?

It was not a three-penny tax on tea that called forth all this ardor of public spirit in our fathers. It was the dread of despotic power, *seen in its first advances*, which roused their zeal to action. Like the prophet, on the top of Carmel, they saw the small cloud, which came up out of the sea, while it was yet, in size, but as a man's hand. They beheld danger at a distance; they scented corruption from afar; "they snuffed the approach of tyranny in every tainted breeze." It becomes us, their children, to imitate this example of sagacious forethought and preventive wisdom—to discover the danger, while yet in its embryo—to crush the serpent in the egg. It is not the misfortune, great as that would be, of having the chief Executive office of the Union filled by a man incompetent to the discharge of its duties; it is the fact, that such a man should be advanced to supreme power, upon the mere ground of military service; it is this pernicious example of military preponderance over civic worth, which would stamp our annals with the deepest stain.

It is such a departure from the principles of the revolution, so much at war with the liberal maxims of the age, such a disregard of the solemn warnings of

history, in the fate of all former republics, that we cease to wonder at the gloomy but prophetic remark of Mr. Jefferson, when the shout of senseless clamour, for a military chieftain, first rung in the ears of this peaceful sage,—"That it has caused him to *doubt* of the durability of our republican institutions, more than any thing which had occurred since the revolution." And well might he doubt; and well may we, not only doubt, but despair; if this sudden impulse of military enthusiasm be not checked; if this spring-tide of passion and misguided zeal do not speedily reflow, and subside once more, in safety, to its accustomed channels.

The times do not indeed ask of us those sacrifices of fortune and life, which, at the call of duty, our fathers were ever prompt to make; but they do require of every man, who values his rights as a freeman, and would transmit them unimpaired to his children, at all times and in all places, to exert his talents and his influence, (whatever these may be,) in inculcating just principles of government; in diffusing correct information among the people; and in giving to the men and the measures, which best correspond with the genius of our free institutions, not the barren tribute of his approbation only, but his steady, efficient, and persevering co-operation and support. It is idle to expect that any man, however gifted by nature, or improved by study and experience, should be able to carry forward the ponderous and complicated machine of government, in one uniform direction, while his exertions are checked, and all his movements retarded, by a powerful, vigilant, and unsparing opposition; unless, by equal exertions on the part of his friends, that opposition can be met and repelled, and its pernicious influence counteracted and controlled. The duty, then, of vigilance and devotion to the public service is first among the great moral lessons, applicable to the present times, which are taught us by the history of the revolution.

Other considerations, near akin to these, bring us to the same results. The Declaration of Independence states the ground, upon which the colonies thought

themselves justified in renouncing their allegiance to the British throne. Among the most prominent of these, we find the following heavy charges brought against the British King:

"He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws";

"For imposing taxes on us, without our consent";

"For depriving us, in many cases, of the benefit of trial by jury";

"For suspending our own legislatures"; and finally,

"He has affected to render the *military* independent of, and superior to, the *civil* power."

After enumerating the arbitrary and despotic conduct of the British king, the Declaration of Independence goes on, in these emphatic words, to pronounce his sentence of condemnation. "A prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a *Tyrant*, is unfit to be *the ruler of a free people*." Can we, fellow citizens, mistake the lesson, which this memorable sentence reads to us, in the present day? Do we not know *who* it was that, while Governor of Florida, subjected the inhabitants "to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution and unacknowledged by our laws"—"imposed taxes" on them, "without their consent"—and passed laws and ordinances, so arbitrary and unjust, that Congress was obliged, at its next session, to "declare them null and void," and impose fine and imprisonment on any who should attempt to execute them? Do we not know *who* it was, that, by the mere fiat of his will, "suspended the Legislature" of Louisiana, filling its halls with armed soldiers, and presenting their bayonets to the breasts of its members? Can we forget *who* would have substituted Courts Martial for the "trial by jury," during the late war: or *who*, on the return of peace, for a mere newspaper paragraph, brought a peaceful citizen before a Court Martial, for his life; and

not only refused him "the benefit of trial by jury," but imprisoned the Judge and arrested the Attorney, for attempting his relief? Are we at a loss to name the man, who, in general orders, "prohibited" the army of the south, from obeying "any order, emanating from the Department of War, unless coming through him as the proper organ of communication;" the man, who, in violation of the laws and constitution, by his own authority, raised and officered an armed force of fifteen hundred volunteers; the man, finally, who refused to disband his troops, when expressly ordered so to do, by the President of the United States?—thus "affecting to render the *military* superior to, and independent of, the *civil* power." It was for similar acts of military usurpation over the civil authority, that our fathers pronounced the British king "a Tyrant." If, in the present instance, I forbear to apply the same epithet, I may, at least, be permitted to use their language, while I inquire—while I put it, seriously, to the conscience, and to the understanding of every honest and intelligent man to say—whether, he "whose character is marked by acts such as these, is not," in the words of the Declaration of Independence, "unfit to be the ruler of a free people?"

Friends and Fellow Citizens, there is one other lesson, taught by the history of the revolution, which it becomes us never to forget. It is that of union and perseverance in a good cause. To divide, and thereby to subdue, was the settled policy of Great Britain, during the revolution. For this purpose, no pains was spared, and no expedient left untried. But the people of America were too high-minded, too disinterested, on that great occasion, to be so deceived and betrayed. They deposited, on the altar of their country, every private animosity, every local feeling, every jarring and discordant interest; and in the face of heaven, and, before an admiring world, they united, in one solemn pledge of their fortunes, their lives, and their sacred hon-

or, to be true to their country, to themselves, and to

each other, in the holy cause, which they had all espoused, and were all sworn to defend. And well and truly was that pledge redeemed, through good report, and through evil; amidst losses and misfortunes; in scenes of peril, which tried their courage, and days of darkness and perplexity, when their wisdom and their virtue,—the union of firm minds and honest hearts,—could alone carry them safely through.

Let not this lesson of the union and perseverance of our fathers be lost on their sons. The same arts of deception and disunion are now practiced on us; and it is on the success of these arts alone, that the hopes of the Opposition in New-England rest. Party names, totally inapplicable to the present subject; obsolete distinctions, and quarrels, which, for the last ten or twelve years, had been unfelt, and unknown, in the councils of our nation, have, with perverse industry, been revived and diffused among us; and men, who think alike, on the present occasion,—men, who have but one opinion as to the present policy, and future conduct of our government,—are told that they must not act together, because their fathers, perhaps, or themselves, some twelve or fifteen years ago, differed in opinion, on questions which then agitated the public mind, but which have long since passed away, and are now mere matters of history. And has it indeed come to this, that we must abandon our own opinions, because others, who once differed from us, happen to entertain them? Differing on some points, does it follow that we must differ on all? If respecting certain measures, which are passed and gone, we entertained opposite views of policy, does it follow that we cannot now unite, in support of other men, and other measures, respecting which there is no such difference between us? Or are we so intent on keeping alive these ancient party feuds, that we are willing to sacrifice to them, not our own safety only, but the honor and the interests of our country? And for what purpose? for whose advantage? For what, but that factious demagogues may reap the fruits of our dis-

union—that some imperious dictator, here at home, may be enabled to overawe our Governor, and control our Senate—that some smooth deceiver may misrepresent our views abroad, and barter the interests of New-England for the smiles of southern politicians. Such may be the effects of our divisions; and such will be, if we suffer ourselves any longer to be so betrayed, and disgraced. But there is that in the hearts and the understandings of our people, which will not sanction this petty traffic; which will not give effect to arrangements, thus injurious to our honor, thus fatal to our interests.

The present state of public opinion, with respect to party questions, is essentially different from any thing before known in this country. Those political doctrines—whether originally promulgated by one party or the other—on subjects both of foreign and domestic policy—which had been proved by long experience to be founded in good sense and justice, have, ever since the close of the late war, been making a sure and steady advance, in the minds of intelligent men, in all parts of the country. Those opinions, on the contrary, which were not so founded, and which the good sense of the community had discovered erroneous, have been successively modified, abandoned, or renounced by their authors, and are now no longer the creed of any considerable party in our country. Questions, which once fiercely agitated the popular mind, have been settled, by the mere lapse of time. Experience has put to rest doubts, which the public reason could not solve. Many important, but local and temporary measures—the whole policy of our government, growing out of the French revolution, with a long train of fortunate or adverse occurrences, to which it gave rise, and respecting which, for more than twenty years, our warmest party contests were maintained—are now no longer subjects of dispute between us. They have passed away; and with them should pass away the angry feelings and discussions to which they gave birth. New questions have since arisen to take their place; new objects pre-

sent themselves to view; and new interests require that, neglecting the past, where no longer applicable to existing wants, we should look only to our present duties, and our present hopes. Such are the enlightened views that prevail in other parts of the Union: such are the views which must, and will prevail here; unless in our personal animosities, we have lost all regard for principle and consistency, and are determined to give ourselves wholly up to the worst abuse of party spirit. But it is not so: the people of New-Hampshire are not behind their brethren in other parts of the Union, in the justice of their views, or the liberality of their feelings; nor will they, in the day of trial, be found deficient in a just perception of their interests and their duties.

Fellow citizens, the duties which devolve upon us, as members of this great republic, are of no ordinary import. The fifty-two years which have passed, since the Declaration of Independence, crowded as they are with great events, are but the prelude to the swelling scenes, which are about to open upon our beloved country; and which call for the highest wisdom and the purest virtue, to give them their proper direction and effect, in the formation and developement of our national character. In no other country, has the experiment of a free government been tried, under circumstances such as ours. "A Representative Democracy, on a large scale, with a fixed constitution," never before existed: "a Federal Republic, on Democratic principles" is new to the history of nations. Good fortune, not less than great wisdom, led to the adoption of our present forms of government. The experience of half a century has now given strength and symmetry to the first rude conception; time has moulded its features, and improved its form—has developed its resources, and ascertained its value. It has borne us in safety through peace and through war; and has proved (so far as our short experience can prove any thing) the capacity of man for self government, on the largest and most exalt-

ed theatre of human action. But the men, who gave birth to these noble institutions, have now passed from off the stage of action. They performed their parts well and faithfully, in their day and generation. Nor have they gone without their reward. Our tears mingle with the ashes of the dead; our gratitude attends the illustrious survivors—few in numbers, but dear to our hearts—who, in the cabinet and in the field, toiled for our safety, or bled in our defence. Their deeds and their praise are on every tongue, and their fame fills the earth.

But our sense of the merits of our fathers will be best evinced, by our practice of the principles which they taught. The precious deposit of the freedom, which they won, is now lodged in our hands. We are now the nation—"yes, my friends, we are now the nation." Upon us have devolved the high responsibilities of this sacred trust; and it is for us to determine, whether, what the wisdom of our fathers achieved, shall be preserved, unimpaired, by the virtue of their sons. To found new republics, to declare independence, to frame constitutions, and establish forms of governments, was the high vocation of our illustrious predecessors. Our duties, if less splendid, are not less important. To us belongs the task to preserve and to defend, to enlarge and improve, the glorious inheritance we have received; to develope the resources of this nighty republic; to elevate her character; meliorate her condition; diffuse around us the seeds of virtue, morality, and religion; and by precept and example, by our lives and conversation, every where, and at all times, to lend a helping hand, and a willing heart, to the great cause of human improvement and human happiness. The present has been truly called the Age of Improvement. Let us make it so, in the largest sense, through our extended land. Let us give to the cause of improvement—moral, physical, and intellectual—and to the men who support it, all the aid in our power. So shall we build up, and improve that noble structure of civil and religious

freedom, which our fathers toiled to rear; and which, under the blessing of Heaven, we may fondly hope that our sons, and our sons' sons, to the latest generations, may live to enlarge, and adorn, and enjoy.

But the influence of our conduct does not end even here. Our American Republic exists not for herself alone. She is a city set upon a hill, which cannot be hid: a beacon kindled upon the mountain top, to which the nations look for light and guidance, through the storms of revolution, and the thick night of ignorance and despotism, with which so large a portion of mankind is still enveloped. To the broad light of our bright example, the longing eyes of millions are turned, from every quarter of this benighted globe. Oh let not that light be dimmed, or eclipsed, or extinguished, by our neglect, or our folly; by our indifference, or our crimes. But may we, at all times, and on all occasions, so conduct, that the cause of freedom and the rights of man, not only here, but through the world, may be cheered by our example, and sustained by our success. In this connexion, I cannot better close than with the words of Mr. Jefferson. "The situation" said he, on retiring from the Presidential chair, "which we occupy, among the nations of the earth, is honorable, but awful. Trusted with the destinies of this solitary republic of the world, the only monument of human rights, and the sole depository of the sacred fire of freedom and self-government, from hence it is to be lighted up, in other regions of the earth, if other regions of the earth shall become susceptible of its genial influence. And to what sacrifices of interest, or convenience, ought not these considerations to animate us! To what compromises of opinion and incliration, to maintain harmony and union among ourselves, and to preserve from all danger this hallowed ark of human hope and happiness!" Fortunate indeed will it be for us, fellow citizens, if, in these troubled times, the precepts of our revolutionary fathers be not forgotten, or disregarded by their sons. To reflect therefore, on the path of duty, which lies

before us, the light of their wisdom and their virtues has, on this occasion, been my constant endeavour; as its success would be my highest and best reward. May the farewell advice of the departed sage be never lost on us; may "the sacred fire of freedom" ever glow in our breasts; may the cause of our country find us ever ready to "make sacrifices of interest and convenience, and compromises of opinion and inclination." whenever these are necessary, "to maintain harmony and union, among ourselves;" and thus to preserve the Independence, which is our birth-right; and transmit, unimpaired, the Freedom, which our fathers won. So shall we carry with us, through all the vicissitudes of life, and to the closing scene, this consoling reflection, that, for ourselves and our posterity, for our country and for mankind, WE HAVE NOT LIVED IN VAIN.