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AN

ORATION,

PRONOUNCED AT BROOKFIELD,

JULY 5, 1813:

AT THE

CELEBRATION

OF THE

INDEPENDENCE

OF THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

BY THOMAS SNELL, A. M.



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1813.

ORATION.



MY CIVIL FATHERS AND BRETHREN,

ON this interesting occasion I address you, by particular request, not in my professional character, but as one of your fellow-citizens, who with you has enjoyed, and knows how to appreciate the privileges of freedom and independence won by our fathers; and must equally suffer in the sufferings and degradation of our common country. I may therefore enjoy the privilege, enjoyed by other men, of expressing my sentiments without reserve; trammelled neither by fear, nor affection.

This anniversary presents to our minds a group of interesting subjects for contemplation. Our national independence, with its attendant privileges, furnishes a theme of praise to that kind Providence, which shielded us in the day of battle and gave us a distinguished triumph over our foes. While our declining prosperity, our national debasement, and the dark prospect daily thickening with gloom, furnish a tale of sorrow, that allays the joys of this once bright and happy day.

Propriety forbids our dwelling upon the great things achieved by our fathers, to the neglect of the subsequent fortune and present state of our

country, and the means by which existing evils may be remedied. While with gratitude and pleasure, though mingled with regret, we are to remember what we *once* were ; for a right direction of our energies and our political safety, we must learn what we *now* be, however painful the lesson to our feelings.

The separation of these States from our mother country, and their rising to the rank of an independent nation, was an important event in the political world, and an object we purchased at a great price. Denied a representation in the English Parliament, and still subjected to taxation, without our consent, was the first ground of our complaint, and the leading principle of final separation. After employing humble entreaty, respectful petition, and manly remonstrance in vain ; we met their arbitrary encroachments with the spirit of freemen and weapons of war, upon the just principle of self-defence. This Commonwealth has the honor of being first in the struggle for equal rights. Yes, this *rebellious* State is the cradle of American Liberties ; and may we not indulge sanguine hopes, that she will never see them die, without first making one strenuous effort to snatch them from untimely death.

Though at first we were engaged in the unequal contest alone, yet the spirit of the colonies, their arms and fortunes soon became one. A determined resistance, between hope and fear respecting the final result, was general. The spirit and perseverance with which the affair was pursued, rendered it a long and expensive contest. Many of our fellow-citizens sealed the righteous cause with their blood ; even many of our most *valiant* and *worthy* men lost their lives in defence of their families and the liberties of their country. Their widows, their children, their friends could tell us their worth, while they bedew their memory with tears of grief.

In the weakness of our national infancy, without a disciplined militia or military stores, without revenue or pecuniary resources, and even without an efficient government to call forth and concentrate the feeble energies of the country, we were subjected to peculiar embarrassments and distress, and compared with our means, burdened with enormous debt, that seriously threatened our safety, after having achieved our Independence. Though at a great price and with extreme difficulty, we purchased our liberties, yet the acquisition of the object, so precious and invaluable, compensated for all our toil and solicitude, for all our treasure and blood. When under the auspices of the God of armies, and the conduct of WASHINGTON, that wisest and greatest of men, the American revolution was brought to a pleasing result, it was ardently desired and reasonably expected, that we should have wisdom and patriotism, at least for one generation, to preserve our liberties and maintain our Independence—that the rich inheritance won by our fathers' valor, and purchased with their blood and treasure, would be transmitted to our unborn race.

But has our national Independence been honorably maintained? Have we respected ourselves and cherished our interests, amidst the conflicts of foreign nations and the intrigues of their Courts? Have we maintained an independent neutrality, when imperiously demanded by the good of our country, and secured the best advantages which the times and circumstances offered? If we have sacrificed our own interests, and oppressed and destroyed our growing commerce, by which we were becoming wealthy and great—if we have blasted the hopes of our enterprising and worthy citizens, as well as destroyed their incentives to industry, merely to humble the pride of England and second the ambitious views of Bonaparte; we have basely laid our independence at the foot of that tyrant's throne, and

participated in the guilt and consummate folly of attempting to give him universal empire.

Nations have generally used their power, as though power were right. That we have been irreparably injured by the leading belligerents of Europe, is unquestionable. That they have adopted measures to secure their own interest and retaliate upon each other, regardless of neutral rights, measures that will admit of no justification, is a solemn truth. No apology shall be admitted for either; but still the following difference is remarkable.

The British Administration, however unrighteous has generally transacted her concerns in open day, and every power, with whom she has had intercourse, knew whether to calculate upon her friendship or her enmity. While duplicity and intrigue have been characteristics of the French Cabinet from the dawn of our revolution. Full of friendly professions, she has carried envy and malice in her bosom and a hidden dagger by her side, that, in some unsuspected moment, she might immolate the defenceless States, and even her allies, upon the altar of her ambition. Napoleon himself, with his iron foot; has ground to dust, or insultingly kicked, from his presence, those fawning powers, which have eagerly caught the drivellings of his loving professions.

For the truth of this general observation, respecting the political character of the belligerents, I refer my fellow-citizens to the following particulars.

When England would subdue us to her pleasure in our revolution, she came against us like an open and avowed enemy: While France, under strong professions of love, encouraged us in the struggle with dissembling promises, till our successes ensured our final triumph without her assistance. She then lent her aid with the real design of dismembering the empire, crippling the strength, and humbling the pride of her rival; while she might bind these States to

herself as dependent colonies, instead of rendering them an independent nation.

When in the treaty of peace, England would allow us the Eastern Fisheries, and fix the Mississippi and the Lakes, the western and north-western boundary of our realm, France, fearing our future growth, and still hoping to make us a prey, under professions of friendship, would have artfully curtailed both our privileges and territory, had it not been for the vigilance of our able ministers. Therefore the peace of 1783, which involved an acknowledgment of our national independence, and secured to France a pecuniary compensation for her services, was to cancel all the obligations of America, and bury forever her enmities toward England and her partialities for France, and leave her standing upon the high and honorable ground of independence, to act in future emergencies as her interests required.

Having tasted the sweets of liberty, we beheld the French revolution of '89, with pleasing expectations, and hailed it as the dawn of a bright and glorious day in Europe, when the rod of the oppressor would be broken and the oppressed go free. But the illusion was short. When the revolution became a furious storm, and though unmanageable by wise, still wildly ruled by faithless and bloody men, demolishing social, civil, and sacred institutions, bidding defiance to heaven, and burying in one indiscriminate ruin men of rank, influence, and worth, we *knew* that this was not the liberty that WASHINGTON had bequeathed to his sons. As if we could never discharge our obligations for her services, and were to be held her eternal vassals, she sent her ministers with commissions, that supposed our servile subjection to her will, and our humble devotion to her interests. This attack upon our independence was firmly resisted by the father of his country, whom the people had happily delighted to honor with the highest trust in the nation. The next attack

was made by assailing the virtue of our special envoys, to obtain a tribute to replenish her exhausted treasury, which she had the good fortune to secure under another name, by Mr. Jefferson's memorable purchase of Louisiana, an unwieldy and useless appendage to the United States.

What evidence stands upon record in the secrets of the cabinet, that our servile aid has been pledged, and our independence bound to the altar of Napoleon's ambition to be sacrificed, I will not presume to conjecture. But the friends of peace, for the purpose of undeceiving the public and saving our beloved country from impending ruin, would contribute millions, for a fair exhibition of the diplomatic correspondence between France and America, for the last twelve years. Nothing of this correspondence but garbled extracts, have we ever been permitted to see; while every syllable of that between us and Great Britain, has been presented to the public. Why this difference in the cases? Or why this suppression of an important correspondence respecting the vital interests of the nation, for so many years, when so much desired;—Why? if there be no hidden iniquity, that would alarm the public mind and consign its authors to merited infamy? Such continued secrecy excites *just* suspicion: And in the present case, this suspicion is greatly strengthened in the public mind, by the consideration that Mr. Madison, as well as his predecessor in office is understood to be a naturalized citizen of France.

Some particular events and striking coincidences afford a comment, unfortunate for our Administration, upon certain of their measures, strongly intimate an obsequiousness to Napoleon's will, while they glaringly show that our independence has not been honorably maintained.

In November 1807, the French minister of foreign affairs, directed a letter to Mr. Armstrong, in which he told him, "that all complaints with respect to

France would cease, if the government of the United States would take part with the continent in their system of war upon English commerce." On the 17th of the ensuing month, Bonaparte issued the Milan decree: And in five days after this decree was issued, our first embargo act was past. By this, in obedience to her tyrant's will, we united with France against England. To cover the real design, it was alledged that the embargo was laid to save our defenceless shipping from the fatal effects of the belligerents' decrees: And in proof of it, all our trade with Canada was prohibited; as though our merchant-men and the British navy sailed upon the dry land and traversed the wilderness, as well as the ocean. Forbidding our trade with Canada, perfectly explained the views of our government as a party in the European contest. Accordingly we soon hear Bonaparte commending the measure, as designed solely against England; as he has since commended our war. Why are these things so—why do all our measures meet the feelings of that usurper, if, with relation to the belligerents, our transactions have been conducted upon fair and equal ground, and in an honorable support of our national character?

With relation to our impartiality toward the belligerents and an honorable support of our national sovereignty, what shall be said of the President's Proclamation of the 2nd. of Nov. 1810, certifying the repeal of the French decrees, when the act of repeal bears date, April, 1811, and was never brought forth into light, till May, 1812? As to its bearing upon this subject; what shall we say of Bonaparte's declaration to his senate, the very month Congress confirmed the President's proclamation, that the Berlin and Milan decrees should be the fundamental laws of his empire? Did he mean to inform England in the face of Mr. Madison's proclamation, that those decrees were not revoked, and to convince

her of the truth, did he instruct his public ships to plunder and burn our merchantmen upon the high seas, and his courts to condemn those taken by his cruisers, upon the principle that they had violated the decrees, which *his* minister, and *our* President had declared to have been repealed?

What shall we think of his refusing an authentic act of repeal, when requested by our minister, and when so pressingly necessary to deliver Mr. Madison from his dilemma, to silence the murmurs of the American people, and to convince the British cabinet that the French decrees were actually revoked? Upon this refusal, and in view of the continued operation of these decrees, did not the honor of the administration, combined with the safety, the interests, and independence of the nation imperiously demand a prompt and public revocation of the President's proclamation? Such a step might have preserved him from the disgrace which now attaches itself to his character, as a humble servant to his majesty, and saved our country from this humiliating and destructive war. But this ground was too honorable and independent for the servile spirit of the times. Unfortunately for our Administration, the President's proclamation is predicated upon the repeal of the French decrees; while this act of repeal, dated six months after, is predicated upon the proclamation and a subsequent act of Congress. If any one will explain this jumbled affair, and reconcile it with honor, truth, and honesty, both in the Emperor and the President, he will do both his Majesty and his Excellency an essential service.

Provided the French Emperor withheld his repealing decree for more than a year after it was made, while he authorized depredations upon our commerce, according to the spirit of his obnoxious edicts, we can easily read his motives. He was confident that the English Government would not repeal their orders in council until such an authentic instrument of the revocation of his own decrees

was furnished : And that this delay on their part, would furnish the United States with a specious pretext for declaring war against Great Britain ; and, indeed compel them to the dreadful measure, in view of the public pledge they had given.

But if, as stated by Bassano to Mr. Barlow, Bonaparte's act of repeal, at the time of its date, was delivered to Mr. Russel, and also sent to Mr. Serrurier, to be communicated to Mr. Monroe, and by him to the President, but was never brought forth from darkness, till affairs were in a sure train for war with England, then our men in power have chosen war rather than peace, and picked a quarrel with a power that will humble their pride.

As soon as the decree of the Emperor, revoking his injurious edicts, was presented to the British cabinet, they immediately removed their orders in council, and relinquished their principles of blockade. But unhappily, a few days previous, our administration took the fatal plunge, seeming to fear, lest every pretext for war would be removed. Just when Napoleon with a mighty army, with all the strength and flower of his empire, was ready to invade Russia, and by fire and sword to compel her to pursue the continental system of commercial hostility against England, we stepped forward in hostile array to increase his gigantic strength, and to ensure him victory over his foes, more righteous than himself. Who can view these events in their order and connection, and consider these remarkable coincidences between the measures of the French government and our own, and not be convinced of our fatal partialities, and feel indignant, that we have thus foolishly committed ourselves and exposed our most precious interests, instead of maintaining the honor and promoting the prosperity of the nation ?

The ostensible object of the non-intercourse, and the overture made to the belligerents respecting the repeal of their unrighteous decrees, completely involved the sentiment, that the orders in council were

the only serious ground of complaint against England—the only subject of controversy that *could* lead to war, and that were these removed we should be upon terms of friendly intercourse. I say, this sentiment is the prominent feature in the proposition made by the Administration to the belligerents. Why then, upon receiving the intelligence of the revocation of these orders, and before hostilities were commenced upon the part of England, did not our rulers settle a peace, unless at all events, determined upon war? A peace, I say, upon more honorable and advantageous terms, than we shall ever have the good fortune to obtain, when we have exhausted our strength, and lavished thousands of lives and millions of treasure.

When one subject of complaint is removed another is easily found if nations wish to contend. From time immemorial, England and France have exercised the right of searching neutral vessels upon the high seas for their own seamen. In some cases they have abused their power, and either knowingly or by mistake, pressed our native born citizens; still they have never claimed the right to take them, and have uniformly discharged such as were claimed upon proper evidence that they were Americans. Our rulers are to be justified in their complaints against England for abusing the right of search; and England is to be justified in her complaints to our government, for alluring her seamen into our service. Before we make war upon England for taking our men, we ought to do her justice by excluding British seamen from our merchant vessels. Then we might urge our complaints at the point of the sword, and appeal to heaven for the righteousness of our cause. But without this measure, we claimed the privilege of having all our vessels exempted from search upon the high seas, and to support this claim we professedly continue the war.

But for whose protection and interest is this war continued? Not for the protection of our native

seamen ; for they are never knowingly claimed by the English government, and comparatively few are taken by their officers.* We cannot suppose a wise administration would risk and sacrifice so many lives and advantages as are lost in the war, to rectify this wrong. While all the commercial States in the union, from whence are three fourths of our seamen, are most deeply injured by this war, and with united voice and mingled tears plead for peace.† And why should we endanger our country, and spill the blood of our own citizens, for the protection of British seamen ; whose services we do not need ; whom, remaining in our bosom, indeed, we would shield, but to whom, venturing upon the high seas and into foreign ports, we neither owe, nor will we guarantee our protection ?

And why should we deny to the belligerents the right of search, since under a change of circumstances we should claim it ourselves, and since England declares herself willing to indulge us in the exercise of the same right.

When these days of infatuation shall have passed away, under another WASHINGTON who will arise to cherish our commerce and foster a growing navy ; in distant prospect we behold our country rising to be the first commercial nation in the world, and by her maritime strength riding mistress of the seas.

* The statements which make the number of our own seamen, pressed into the British service, and still kept in bondage, to be no less than from 6,000 to 20,000, are a gross exaggeration for party purposes. Believing this statement correct, the hearts of many of our citizens have boiled with anger toward England, while they have cried for war to avenge the wrong, and liberate our oppressed seamen. If I understand Lord Castlereagh's statement in his speech at the late session of Parliament, the greatest number of our sailors that could be in their service, either of choice or by constraint, and who could be proved to be Americans by birth, was about 850. Mr Taggart's examination of the subject gives a different result, making the number only 116.

† It serves to excite the risibles of considerate men to hear gentlemen from the western States, who perhaps have never seen salt water, and own not a cent of property in shipping, or aboard our merchantmen, ravingly declaim on the floor of Congress in support of the war, for the rights of our seamen and the interests of commerce ; while the States most deeply concerned in this subject, know the war to have a most deleterious influence upon their interests.

Under wise and virtuous rulers and the smiles of Providence, such an event is not improbable. With this change of circumstances, let us suppose England to give her seamen double the wages we allow our own. The influence of this allurements induces thousands of our sailors to enter her service. They are daily deserting our vessels and leaving our country. By legislative interference we attempt in vain to prevent the growing evil; and in vain we remonstrate against the employment of our seamen in the British service. What shall be our remedy? The very measure of which we so loudly complain, and for which we are involving our country in deep distress. Our public ships must be instructed to search British merchant vessels upon the high seas and take our own men; unless we could have the fullest assurance, that they had excluded from their service, our native citizens. No other measure could secure the interests of our country, or preserve our declining navy from extinction.—A measure, however abused, is dictated by sound policy and supported upon the principles of righteousness.

But whose mark does this war carry in its forehead? What are its prominent features? And what will be the gain to this country, if we succeed in every respect, according to the avowed wishes of its advocates?

Is it a measure strictly American? Does it not bear the impress of Napoleon's hand? Is it not a *party* war, in which we side with one of the belligerents to oppress and injure the other, who has done us no greater wrong? *Not* as France declared for America in our revolution; *she* did it for her honor and profit, but *we* are doing it to our disgrace and ruin. Our commerce and revenue are already sacrificed, our expenses are swelling, burdensome taxes are just falling upon our shoulders, a series of disasters has followed our forces for the conquest of Canada. Though a continent has been armed against that quiet and defenceless province they have made no im-

pression but to increase her strength. Nothing have we gained, while honor, territory and lives, we have lost. At all this expense, we have not purchased even a distant prospect of making Canada a conquest, or bringing England to our terms. Almost every step we have taken has darkened the prospect and disgraced our arms. Of nothing can we glory, but the several successes of our little navy; and are these, though they display the gallantry of our seamen, sufficient to enstamp this war with honor?

Is it a well-timed war, a measure for which we were in such readiness as to promise security to ourselves and defeat to the enemy? For an answer to this enquiry, look to the state of our country. The commencement of the war found us without a regular and disciplined army of even two thousand men ready to invade the enemies territory; which fifty thousand would have been unable to subdue.—Without a naval force, but a few frigates and sloops of war, for the defence of our merchantmen and a sea board of more than a thousand miles extent.—Without a single seaport in a state of competent defence—and by reason of the long continued restrictions upon our commerce, without a cent of money to meet the expenses of the war, which will probably amount to thirty millions a year. It is true, that such were the engagements of England at that juncture, that she could assign but a small portion of her land and marine force to the prosecution of the American war. And but a small portion was necessary for the effectual defence of her provinces, the destruction of our commerce, and the embarrassment of our country.

Is the present war a struggle for liberty? surely a free people should espouse the cause of freedom and equal rights and not the cause of despots. But have we not engaged in this war at the instigation, or been drawn into it, by the artifices of Bonaparte.—Have we not entered into his views, and made common cause with him, against the pow-

ers with which he is contending? Is this enemy of all free governments contending for equal rights? Then are we. Is he attempting to extend his despotic sway and more firmly establish his throne amidst the tears, the groans and desolations of Europe.—Has this been his object in the subjugation of the German and Italian States, in his ravaging Spain and Portugal, and in his unprovoked and ever-memorable invasion of Russia? Then have we been virtually binding Europe's liberties in sacrifice, to be offered at the shrine of this tyrant's ambition.

And here I cannot refrain from congratulating my fellow-citizens, that the bonds of enslaved Europe are bursting asunder; that the nations are asserting their independence and casting off the yoke of oppression; that by the singular interposition of Heaven the arms of Russia have completely triumphed over the boasted strength of the despot, and “marked where the waves of his conquering ambition shall be stayed”. May we not address him in the words of the prophet to the king of Babylon: *How art thou fallen—O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground which didst weaken the nations! They that see thee shall say, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms: That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? The kings of the nations shall say, Art thou become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us?*

What influence this singular change in Europe will have upon the policy of our rulers and the state of our country, is still uncertain. While it may raise the demands of England in settling a peace, and animate her to a more vigorous prosecution of the war; must it not destroy the confidence of our administration in the French Emperor as invincible, and induce them to abandon his commercial system, as a desperate cause?

Have we made a judicious selection of the European powers for our enemy? England had injured us by abusing the right of search and by her orders in council. France had been faithless to her engagements, insulted our flag, captured and burnt our vessels, and imprisoned our men. If we *would* have war, we could fight which of these powers we pleased. If we had selected France, we should have been safe from her power, under the wings of the British navy: And had nothing to apprehend but the loss of disposing a few millions of domestic produce in her ports, which is wholly lost by our present war. But we chose England for our enemy—a power vulnerable to us only in one point; where still we make no sensible impression: While to whose thundering navy our vessels and seaports lie continually exposed; who is able to destroy our fisheries, with all our foreign and coasting trade; and who, in peace, received more of our domestic produce than all the world besides.

Should all we contend for be obtained, the gain will be small. Should Canada be conquered, it would be wisdom to restore it again to the enemy, without any consideration; being as useless and dangerous an appendage to the North, as Louisiana is to the South. I verily believe that the cost of this war was never counted at Washington; that the result will prove it a most improvident and injudicious measure, if not fatal to our interests; that posterity will execrate the day on which it was declared; while the manner of conducting it will be recorded in history, as a standing evidence of our consummate folly.

But where did our calamities originate? From whence sprung the root of bitterness so fruitful in evil, and what is its history? Calamities are sent by his righteous Providence who judgeth in the earth: And He sendeth by whom he will: oftentimes by the hands of men born to thrones, and sometimes by

those raised to power by the suffrages of a free, but a blind and deluded people.

* The first event in the series which served to warm the passions and divide the mind of the public, was the contest between the advocates of the National and of state governments. Those who manifested a strong predilection for the constitution, which united the states under the President, as the supreme executive, and rejoiced to see him clothed with a limited power, that promised to give energy to the general government, were stiled federalists. While those were called democrats, who discovered an anxious solicitude for the sovereignty of the individual states, lest it should be swallowed up and lost in the national government, through the exorbitant power of the chief magistrate. This is the first principle of the political division, which has destroyed the harmony, and now threatens the ruin of our country. But many were the tributary streams, which were made to swell the tide and accelerate the current of this calamity.

The establishment of public credit upon a sound and permanent basis, was essential to the character and prosperity of the United States ; and constituted one of those political maxims to which WASHINGTON invariably adhered ; and was among the first objects of his ambition completely to effect. For this purpose an attempt was early made to fund the national debt, to establish a national bank, and to form a system of internal revenue,† which was to constitute a sinking fund. All these subjects served to increase the opposition to the administration, and were represented by the leaders, as assimilating our government to that of England and tending to the establishment of monarchy. And notwithstanding

* For the correctness of the following history of democracy, see Marshall's life of WASHINGTON, to which the author acknowledges his indebtedness.

† The reader will observe that no reference is here had to the internal duties imposed in Adams's administration, which were voted for in Congress, by the democrats themselves, in order to render the administration still more unpopular.

ing these measures, and the funding system in particular, were of incalculable benefit in establishing public credit, giving a character of rectitude to the government, and inspiring the citizens with a spirit of industry and enterprize ; they were a fruitful theme of invective against the administration, and originated the first regular and systematic opposition to the principles on which the affairs of the union were conducted. The opposition was generally led in the house by Mr. Madison and Mr. Giles.

This unhappy division also existed in the cabinet, which unfortunate circumstance served to increase it among the people. A disagreement between Mr. Jefferson then secretary of state, and Col. Hamilton secretary of the treasury, originated in an early stage of the government, and regularly gained strength from circumstances perpetually occurring, till it resulted in avowed hostility.

The circumstances of our revolution created in the American people a strong attachment to France and a violent antipathy to England ; still the most candid and judicious thought it unwise to sacrifice our commercial interests by forcing our trade to the former, while we could find a better market in the latter. Commercial regulations in favor of France were supported by Messrs. Jefferson and Madison, but opposed by Col. Hamilton, on the principle that for the prosperity of our country, commerce must be left to seek its own most lucrative channels.

The declaration of war by France against Great-Britain in 1793, had a powerful influence upon the parties in America. It was deemed almost criminal for any man to be neutral. Therefore the proclamation of neutrality issued by WASHINGTON, being at variance with the prejudices of a large portion of society, met with violent opposition ; and though a most judicious and happy measure for the country, produced an open attack upon the character of our beloved WASHINGTON as an enemy of France.

The opposition derived still further strength and courage by the arrival of Mr. Genet, the French Ambassador. His attack upon our national sovereignty in no measure diminished the extravagant transports of joy with which he was welcomed by many of our citizens. His passionate publications, designed to prejudice the minds of the people against their government as unfriendly to France, increased the flame of democracy and converted many to the party; while all these events put the more stable and judicious part of the community upon serious consideration, and greatly alarmed the fears of our most reflecting men.

Being upon the eve of a war with England, WASHINGTON would make one more sincere and strenuous effort to dispel the gathering storm. He appointed a special Minister to the court of Great Britain, invested with powers to settle existing disputes, and form a treaty of amity, commerce, and navigation. He so far succeeded in the object of his mission as to make a treaty, which, after mature and impartial consideration, WASHINGTON, in a choice of evils, conditionally ratified for a limited period. This treaty, from which accrued essential benefits to our country, was suffered to die in the reign of Mr. Jefferson. This measure of WASHINGTON gave new strength to the opposition, and furnished another mighty weapon with which to combat the administration.

Another theme of censure was the advice President WASHINGTON gave to Congress in his last speech to that body with respect to building a navy. He observed; "To an active external commerce, the protection of a naval force is indispensable. It is manifest in our own experience, that the most sincere neutrality is not a sufficient guard against the depredations of nations at war. To secure respect to a neutral flag requires a naval force organised and ready to vindicate it from insults or aggression.—These considerations invite the United States

to look to the means, and set about the gradual creation of a navy.—So that a future war of Europe may not find our commerce in the same unprotected state in which it was found by the present.” This wise policy was adopted in the administration of Mr. Adams, in building our present navy, and passing an act and preparing materials for building several ships of the line.

The election of Mr. Jefferson to the presidency, unfortunately, as we all now perceive from sad experience, and when too late to remedy the evil, put a sudden stop to the good work; and most of the collected materials were left to perish. WASHINGTON’S advice was considered, by the opposition, to be a link in that chain of measures which would soon lead to the establishment of a royal government. This was the light in which they exhibited the system of internal revenue, funding the national debt, establishing the national bank, and the contemplated navy. I say, all these measures of WASHINGTON were represented by the rising opposition, headed by men now in power, as so many mighty engines to prostrate by their united force, our republican institutions to make way for a king and nobles. Also the President’s proclamation of neutrality, his resisting the efforts of the French ambassador to make us a party in the war, and his signing the treaty with England, were construed into acts of ungrateful opposition to France, and of partiality toward her rival.

Further to show the opposition of democracy to the policy of WASHINGTON, I will cite the words of Mr. Giles, now a leading member of the United States’ senate, occasioned by WASHINGTON’S resigning to congress his resolution to retire from public business. Mr. Giles observed, “That he was one of those citizens, who did not regret the President’s retiring from office. He believed the government of the United States would go on without him. The people were competent to their own government.”

He further expressed the sentiment, that the prominent features of WASHINGTON'S administration he wholly disapproved, "and that no influence under heaven should prevent his expressing this opinion." Mr. Jefferson had long since retired from the cabinet, and was viewed by his friends as a fair candidate for the Presidency. He failed in the first election : But through unremitting and zealous efforts in connection with certain unpopular measures of Mr. Adams's administration, of which, however WASHINGTON expressed his approbation, the opposition gained a complete ascendancy, and Mr. Jefferson, as the highest object of his aim, was chosen President. As fast as the work of change and destruction could now be accomplished with any decency, it was done. The friends of WASHINGTON, his fellow-laborers in the field and in the administration, either retired from office with disgust, or were dismissed without ceremony. Mr. Madison, who had strenuously opposed his prominent measures was appointed secretary of state ; and Mr. Galatin a Genevan, who had been active in the insurrection in Pennsylvania, was made secretary of the treasury. As Mr. Jefferson observed, "he found our government in the full tide of successful experiment :"—Treaties made with the savage tribes on our frontiers—peace with the nations abroad—a flourishing and lucrative commerce—a rich and increasing revenue—an infant but growing navy—public credit established—the national debt rapidly reducing—and a spirit of industry and enterprize among the citizens. But a change of policy at home, in a few years produced a most serious change in our relations abroad, and has opened a scene directly the reverse, according to the prediction of our political prophets on witnessing the triumph of democracy. Many of the savages have become hostile—we are at war upon land and the sea with the most veteran, and the first naval power in the world—our treasury is exhausted—our national debt is

increasing in a ten fold proportion to its former reduction—our commerce is annihilated—our shipping is rotting at our wharves or taken by the enemy—the copious streams of our revenue have failed—our national character is tarnished—and, pursuing the policy which has conducted us to our present state, nothing better than a dishonorable peace, or a wasting and interminable war seems to open in gloomy prospect.

I have thus considered the origin, traced the progress, and described the fruits of that opposition to WASHINGTON'S administration, generally known by the name of democracy. And in view of these facts, with what consistency can men now in power, or the advocates of their measures, call themselves the sons of WASHINGTON! Or endeavor to sanction their policy and give currency to their sentiments by this high and venerable name? Will they kill the prophets and then garnish their sepulchres?—Pierce a man to his heart to gratify their envious feelings and subserve their sinister views, and then with crocodile tears cry over his ashes, O how we loved him! With what propriety do gentlemen say, respecting the new order of things, “we have only returned to the policy of WASHINGTON!” It was his policy to maintain a strict neutrality with respect to the belligerents of Europe: Is this the policy of the present administration? It was his policy never to league our interests with the fortunes of foreign nations, nor to indulge national partialities: Is this the policy of Mr. Madison? It was WASHINGTON'S policy to encourage commerce and build a navy for its protection: But what has the present or past administration done to increase our navy and cherish our commerce, except to build the gun boats, impose an embargo, pass a non-intercourse, and declare war? WASHINGTON'S policy was to be always prepared for war that we might live in peace: Was our administration prepared for the war on which they were previously resolved, and in which they en-

gaged at their option? We have then utterly departed from WASHINGTON's best counsel in his farewell address, instead of adopting that system of policy, which he inflexibly pursued with unrivalled success, for the permanent prosperity of his country. Let no man so prostitute that venerable name, as to call himself the son of WASHINGTON, while he supports men in authority who pursue so different and opposite measures, and who, in devotion to foreign interests, seem to have lost all love to America.

But is there no relief for our distressed country?—No remedy for existing evils?—Nothing that may clear those lowering skies, and brighten our prospect? Is our case so desperate as to discourage all exertion, and render the wisest measures fruitless? No! my fellow-citizens, do not indulge the despairing thought.

But what measures shall be adopted? I need offer no apology for saying, since it is a sentiment written as with sun-beams on the page of inspired truth, that our first duty is repentance. Such calamities never light upon a nation without a moral cause, and a moral reason; nor can we expect their removal without a moral reformation. Amongst other offences, we have to bewail our folly in cloathing with power so many unworthy and unchristian characters, who neither fear God nor work righteousness.

We might adopt measures, with a view to our relief, which we are utterly to discard. If they have been in contemplation as promising safety, they are to be wholly abandoned, if we would ensure the smiles of heaven. The principle of Machieval, that the end sanctifies the means, is preposterous.

One leading principle in every free and elective government, and therefore in our own, is this, that the majority shall rule. Since the Constitution of the United States has been constitutionally adopted, it must be held sacred, until constitutionally amended. Since men in office have been clothed with au-

thority by the suffrages of the people, we cannot resist with *violence* these constituted authorities, but must submit to their measures, though they should prostrate the honor and expose the interests of the nation. Nothing short of insufferable oppression and folly can justify forcible resistance to the powers that be.

No self-created societies or assemblies of men can rightfully assume the power of controlling the measures of government, or of changing its form. The people of the Commonwealth are represented in the house. The house utters the voice of the people. The voice of the American people is heard in Congress. And no self-created bodies of men, unknown by the constitution, can so correctly express the sentiments of the people.

But since the national government has been established for the common protection and prosperity of the States, may not any section of the Union, whose precious interests are disregarded, and whose advantages are sported with by men in power, peaceably withdraw, or violently break the bond of union? May they not establish a separate government that shall harmonize with their sentiments and more sacredly regard their rights? I answer, When all other means to have their rights respected and to save them from ruin, have utterly failed, and every desirable object which the compact was designed to secure to every section of the common country is lost, a separation may be adopted as their last resort—a desperate measure in a forlorn hope—at best a choice of dreadful evils. Were the eastern States, for instance, to adopt this measure, they would break the social compact,* hazard a civil war, the greatest of

* Some gentlemen have conceived that the social compact has been already broken by our administration in admitting the new states of Louisiana into the Union; not only to enjoy the privileges, but share in the *powers* of the States. They conceive that Congress are invested with no authority to erect and admit states from without our original limits, that they have no right to impart any portion of the power of individual states to any newly acquired territory: Nor to adopt any measure not contemplated by the original framers of the constitu-

calamities ; break down the strength of the nation ; deprive her of important advantages ; blast the prospect of our future greatness ; and lay a foundation for those incessant broils and eternal wars which have distressed and desolated the fairest portions of Europe. Let the union and integrity of the states be regarded as a highly important object. Immense sacrifices are first to be made before we give our consent to a separation, or even admit it into our theory, as a necessary or desirable event. The time may possibly come, when there will remain no other alternative. May a propitious Heaven grant the event to be far remote ; when our children's children shall have long slept in dust ; when no mind shall retain, and no tongue can tell the story of our revolution, or of the golden age of our country under the auspices of the illustrious WASHINGTON.

Nor are we to seek relief from pressing calamities by calumniating our rulers, by misrepresenting their public acts, by imputing their measures to motives by which we have no evidence that they are influenced, or inspiring others with unfounded jeal-

tion, which shall effect the comparative weight in our national councils of particular sections in the Union : And that, since all this has been done by the admission of the newly erected states of Louisiana, the constitution is violated, and the original states absolved from the obligations of the social compact. Admitting all this to be correct, would the probable consequences of a secession of any number of the states, be such as to justify the measure ! Whether there exist in the minds of our rulers a design to separate the states or not, their measures forcibly tend to bring about the event : And have not the friends of the union great reason to apprehend, that in the present course of things, the current will soon run so strong and impetuous, as to baffle all their attempts to impede it.

His Excellency the Governor, in his late speech to the senate and house, makes the following judicious observations upon this subject : “ The national constitution was formed and adopted for our own defence : There is not a clause in it, in which an extension of our territorial limits was contemplated. The congress indeed were authorised to admit new states into the union ; but every man knew that under the confederation it had been proposed to form a number of states in the western territory, and Vermont was even then a candidate for admission. I presume no one thought of giving Congress the power to obtain by purchase or conquest, the territories of other nations, and annex them to the United States, and form them, or subdivisions of them, into constituent parts of the union.”

ousies.* No ! Let us abhor the methods by which men who have brought us into the deep waters of trouble, have obtained their abused power.

If such measures are to be discarded as morally wrong or fraught with evil, what are the means of safety, within our reach ?

In a free government the people are the source of power. By their delegation they framed, and by their voice they adopted the constitution, and filled public places with men of their choice. When this fountain becomes corrupt its streams cannot be pure. The corrupt policy of our administration, has resulted from a previous corruption of the public sentiment. The minds of the people have been misled, and their principles vitiated. The measures of our government have harmonized with the views and feelings of the larger portion of our citizens. This system of policy, judging from its nature and fruits, we believe to be bad, and if inflexibly pursued, ruinous to the prosperity of New-England, if not destructive to the nation. The work of ruin is in rapid progress. To effect a change in national measures we must effect a change in public men; and this must be effected by a change of public sentiment. Here then is the proper field of our labors—the immediate object to which our exertions are to be directed. I say, our immediate business is to correct the public sentiment. If we fail in this there remains no remedy for existing evils, but such as is desperate, such as may draw after it greater calamities than it is designed to prevent. To correct the morals and political errors of the people, becomes

* It is much to be lamented that certain passionate and vehement productions have made their appearance, and amongst others, some few political sermons, in which the faults of our administration have received so high a coloring, as to become gross exaggerations and scarcely reconcilable with truth. By bending the bow too far it has broken in their hands and lost all its strength. Gentlemen may be insensible, that in venting their spleen, they disgust the candid mind and seriously injure the cause they mean to subserve. The *truth* is to be told and warning given when our country is in danger; but false coloring will lessen its influence.

an object of vast magnitude, to which we should direct the whole force of our combined efforts. Its magnitude increases every hour we feel the beating storm which is thickening around our land with dismal gloom. The gathering clouds portend disaster. The rising tempest is spreading wider and wider its wings to deluge these States. What lover of his country, and his country's rights, can sit at ease and fold his arms in sleepy indolence! Then, my fellow-citizens, make one more attempt at this object. Disclose the motives of our public men where they are *evidently* sordid and unworthy, but rob them not of any merited praise. Fairly exhibit the nature, tendency, and probable consequences of their measures. Point out the object at which civil rulers should steadily aim, and the great purpose to be answered by the general government; viz. the promotion of the common and best interests of the union, and their establishment upon a permanent foundation. Open and explain the policy, and exhibit the excellent principles contained in the valedictory of WASHINGTON. Contrast them with the principles and policy of our more modern patriots. His name is venerable, and is still venerated, and will long shed a lustre upon the departed glory of our country. His counsel may be heard in this day of peril, and his warning voice regarded by the living, while he speaks as from the dead. Attempt to impress the minds of your fellow-citizens with a sense of the inestimable value of their liberties, and the danger of entrusting them in the hands of any other than faithful men, who disdain to riot upon the spoils of freedom, or gather laurels at their country's expense.—Not however, with angry and intemperate declamation, but by a candid and dispassionate exhibition of truth.

In the course of public affairs, seasons occur peculiarly favorable to the success of such an attempt. When the feelings of party men are softened—when their prejudices begin to yield to the pressure of the

times—when men begin to consider, then is the time for honest men to labor in the public cause with hopes of success. When men begin to feel they will begin to think. When feeling has wrought a measure of conviction, arguments, judiciously selected and candidly urged, will do wonders. The present is such a time. The current of public sentiment is turned. The tide which has long been flowing in with alarming and destructive success, has begun to ebb. Its force, which already is bearing down long existing prejudices, may be easily accelerated by the weight of truth. To oppose our breasts to the rolling torrent and stem it in its course, is a Herculean labor, but to urge it on is comparatively easy. At the present juncture this becomes a serious duty. Mark the increasing change of public sentiment in this Commonwealth, through the New-England States, and indeed, throughout the Union. The friends of peace publicly expressed their views of the administration at our last Presidential election. Hope and fear long stood on tiptoe from one end of the continent to the other, to see the result. The throne of war did actually tremble. Though contrary to our wishes, and, perhaps, unfortunately for our country, still the issue forebodes the certain downfall of war men, unless they speedily change their policy.

My fellow-citizens, discharge your duty—restrain headstrong passions—discard all violent measures which may sever the bond that unites the States—demean yourselves as quiet and peaceable members of society. With unabating attachment and increasing energy support and disseminate the principles of WASHINGTON, and peaceably await the return of the next Presidential election. In the present train of things you need not fear the issue. Men, who abuse the confidence of their constituents, and basely sacrifice their interests, cannot reasonably count upon their suffrages. Unless given up to delusion and blindness to hurry on their own destruc-

tion, will not the people at that day arise in the greatness of their strength, and say to their earthly gods, ye shall have power no longer. Will they not delight to honor the friends of peace and commerce, "that the mountains may bring peace to the people, and the little hills by righteousness." May Heaven succeed the honest efforts of honest men to save their country: That at a future day we may celebrate the anniversary of our Independence under the bowers of peace, with union of sentiment, with harmony of feeling, and with the high satisfaction of seeing our national character reformed, our national honor relieved, and the sun of our prosperity and freedom shining with fresh and increasing splendor.