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ORATION:

DELIVERED BY APPOINTMENT OF THE COMMITTEES OF THE CORPORATION, AND THE SEVERAL CIVIC AND MILITARY SOCIETIES, OF THE CITY OF ALBANY, AT THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN NORTH PEARL STREET:

IN COMMEMORATION OF
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE:
JULY FOURTH, 1839.

BY SOLOMON SOUTHWICK.

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O R A T I O N .

“WHEN the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy,” the burthen of that celestial song was the freedom of mankind. Well indeed then might the vaults of Heaven resound with the shout of triumph and of exultation, when the seal of redemption was to be set upon the human race, and the celestial spirit of liberty was to descend upon the earth in the person and companionship of the Son of God. This is no fiction of a poetic imagination, but a sober reality. Man was made a slave by the fall of Adam, and became free by the blood of Christ, and by that alone : Nor was the freedom, for the birth of which, when sung in heavenly strains, “the sons of God shouted for joy,” a spiritual freedom only : It was, at the same time, the harbinger and the principle of moral and political regeneration ; the harbinger of all the pure and innocent joys that spring from human existence, human society, and human skill or labor ; all the blessings that flow from communion with God ; all the rights and privileges of self-government ; all the delights of love and friendship ; all the pleasures of intellectual intercourse and enjoyment : And, in short, all the harmonies of Nature, which bind man to man, which fill up the measure of his happiness, and constitute the climax of his glory.

The same Almighty Being, therefore, who said, “Let there be light ;” and physical light came forth to dispel the chaotic darkness of the material world ; said also, Let man be free ; let moral and intellectual light dissipate the mist of his mind, whilst the fire of liberty shall warm his heart : And let these impel him onward in the paths of devotion, the labyrinths of politics, and the fields of literature and science ; in exploring the heavens with all their planetary orbs, and searching into the secrets or mysteries of the air, the earth, and the ocean ; thus ascending the steeps that lead to the

summit of human science, happiness and fame; and thence to the everlasting heights, where saints and angels pour forth songs of gratitude and praise to "the giver of every good and perfect gift."

That God intended man should be free, must be admitted at once by all who have studied his divine word. One passage of holy writ alone demonstrates it, beyond the shadow of a doubt. "God said, Let us make man in our own image:" And who that reflects for a moment on this passage, can believe that the Creator intended the being, upon whom He impressed the stamp of His own divinity, should ever become a slave! Common sense, without the aid of logic, intuitively perceives the gross absurdity of a conclusion, so insulting to the wisdom and majesty of God, and the understanding and dignity of man.

After creating man in his own image, it was perfectly natural and consistent, that God should confer, as he expressly did, upon this favorite being, "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

Here again we instantly perceive, that God would not have bestowed upon his favorite, MAN, absolute power over all other animals, and endowed him, at the same time, with the exalted privilege of self-government, if HE had intended that this superior, erect and graceful being, should ever bow the knee to earthly kings or tyrants, or become in any shape the slave of his own race.

These passages of the DIVINE WORD also clearly unfold the reason why the Hebrews, as every thorough student of History knows to be the fact, were the only free people, the only true Republic that ever existed, until, by the Providence of God, the Republic of the United States had its birth in our glorious Revolution of 1776.

The chosen people of God were absolutely and entirely free, as HE intended they should be, under the pure and mild system of the Judges, and the Sanhedrim of their own choice, until they provoked HIM, by their impious disobedience, to give "them a king in wrath, which HE refused to take away in mercy." Well might HE exclaim, when HE beheld their mad infatuation:—"I had planted Thee a noble vine; how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me!" Jer. ii. 21. And well might HE resolve, at the same time, that since they had rejected His government, they should be given up, at least during His pleasure, to the delusion of their own corrupt imaginations, and ignorant and obstinate wills; to that slavery and degradation which their ingratitude, in disobeying His Divine Injunctions, so justly merited.

Thus we see that MONARCHY flowed at first from the wrath of God: And hence we are not surprised, in spite of all the sophistry of its advocates, from the silly sons of Samuel, down to such rages as Filmer and Salmasius, that although it has inflicted curses innumerable, it has rarely, if ever, bestowed a solitary blessing, upon mankind: It has been, it still is, and it ever will be, no matter what shape be given to it, the bane of the earth, until the returning mercy of God, which has already dawned upon the United States, shall relieve the human race from its cruelties and oppressions, and banish it back to its native regions of darkness.

For a period of from two to three thousand years, MAN labored under this curse of Monarchy, when God, whose mercy never tires, whose justice never fails, at length saw proper to lay the foundation of his deliverance. He inspired FAUST with the sublime idea of the invention of printing; and COLUMBUS, shortly after, with the still more sublime conception, if that be possible, of the existence and discovery of a new world; a new and a vast theatre of action for the human race: And on that vast theatre, of which "our own, our native land," constitutes so fair a portion, He commenced the divine operation of restoring to man his long lost political rights; of re-investing his own image with its original brightness and divinity.

Hither, in due season, came our pilgrim fathers, flying from their monarchical and hierarchical tyrants and persecutors: And here did they find time, not only to make "the wilderness blossom as the rose," but to reflect seriously upon the creation, nature and destiny of MAN—his relationship to God—his duty to that Supreme Being, and to himself—the government that best suited him in this world, and the means by which he should find his way to another and a better one.

Here, independent of vain, pompous and arrogant Hierarchs, tyrannical and despotic Kings and Princes, and titled and tinselled iniquity of every description, they breathed and enjoyed in its fullness the pure atmosphere of freedom. Here, without let or hindrance, they opened, read, and understood for themselves, the Sacred Volume; and from that only true fountain of spiritual, moral, historical and political light, they found themselves more and more confirmed in their pre-conceived opinions, that Freedom was the original gift of Heaven—that Monarchy was afterwards inflicted as a curse—and that hence Rebellion to Tyrants was Obedience to God.

Here too our gallant, our venerated fathers, renewed their acquaintance with those inimitable writings of Milton, Harrington,

Sidney, Locke, Hoadley, Trenchard and Gordon, in vindication of the freedom and dignity of mankind: And thus did they prepare the way for that glorious revolution, the success of which we this day celebrate; and of which WASHINGTON was the MOSES, and GREEN the JOSUA; the Congress of 1776 the nursing fathers; MORRIS (Robert) the SULLY or grand financier, and PAINE the TYRTÆUS. If indeed, great and unsurpassed as were the merits of Washington and Green, still, had not the unrivalled financial skill of Morris devised the means of raising money, and the vigorous pen of Paine delineated the charms and delights of liberty, the cause might have totally failed: For in that day PAINE was an effectual instrument, in the hands of Divine Providence; then his muse, like the lyre of the deformed son of Archimbrotus, on the plains of Lacedemon, kindled in the bosoms of our fathers the sacred flame of freedom, cheered the toils of our sages in council, animated the hearts of our warriors on the battle field, and impelled them onward to victory and to glory. O! how lamentable, how humiliating to the pride of human nature, that a man to whom God had given a genius so brilliant, sublime and useful, should afterwards become the miserable dupe, the wretched victim, of his own bewildered reason and wayward passions: And having forgot his God, and lost his conscience, should expire at last like Swift, his prototype, “a driveller and a show:” For what Swift was, in a certain crisis, to the people of Ireland, Paine was, in a far more important crisis, to the people of these States. While, therefore, we lament his degeneracy, and his melancholy end; let us not forget his invaluable services, nor prove ungrateful for them; let his virtues live in our hearts and our memories, while his errors and his vices lie buried with his bones.

We owe, then, under Divine Providence, to Washington and Green, the Congress of 1776, Morris, Paine, and their coadjutors, “Solomons in council, and Sampsons in the field,” that great and glorious Revolution, which gave birth to the only free nation, the only true Republic, or Democracy, that has ever existed, since God overwhelmed with destruction the Egyptian Tyrant and his host, and with His “cloud by day,” and His “pillar of fire by night,” led His chosen people through the wilderness, and finally crowned their exertions with the blessing of a pure Democratic government.

I cannot, for obvious reasons, go into the proof here, that this is only the second Republic that has yet been instituted on earth. Would time and the occasion permit, however, I could prove, that excepting the Hebrews, neither the Persians nor the Egyptians, neither the Greeks nor the Romans, nor the men of the Middle

Ages, nor any of the Modern European Nations, have ever enjoyed even the shadow of a true Republic or Democracy; for to talk of Aristocratical Republics, Oligarchical Republics, and Monarchical Republics, and some other similar crudities, as one of our great and good men has done through a large volume, is, in my humble opinion, a waste of words. Any philosophic mind may indeed perceive, on a mere glance at the subject, that before the invention of the art of printing, the excitement of the Reformation, and the sublime and unparalleled discovery of COLUMBUS, nothing in the shape of a true Republic, excepting that alone which God instituted in mercy, and dissolved in wrath, could possibly exist: For how, I ask, without the special exercise of Divine Wisdom and Power, could either a true simple, or a true representative, Democracy, like our State and Federal Democracies, exist among nations immersed in ignorance and barbarism, and consequently the miserable dupes of a mere handful of selfish, cunning, unprincipled and aspiring men.

O! what great reason have we to rejoice, that God has thus singled us out as the pioneer of nations, in reviving and extending on earth the sacred flame of liberty; that hallowed flame which shall eventually consume, and scatter to the winds, the last vestige of MONARCHY, and the last minion of TYRANTS, and restore to the human race the unsullied image of their Creator, with the rights which he originally intended they should enjoy.

Let us, then, on this day, briefly consider, how we shall preserve this lofty stand, this high and sublime character; how we shall preserve the precious and the glorious privileges conferred upon us, and hand them down unimpaired to posterity.

In the first place, permit me to ask, is it not our imperative duty to recollect, and never for a moment to forget, that God destroyed the genuine Democratic Republic, which He had bestowed upon His chosen people, and inflicted upon them the heavy curse of Monarchy, because they were ungrateful and disobedient to Him, from whose goodness they had received the precious boon of freedom. We are eager enough to look into profane history for lessons of wisdom and experience—and shall we not once recur to Sacred History, for a lesson, on the proper understanding and remembrance of which depends the salvation of our liberties, and those of all other nations. God gave freedom—pure Democratic Freedom—to the Jews: But they forgot their Divine benefactor—they deserted his holy altars—they disobeyed his laws—they became idolaters—they gave themselves up to avarice and soul ambition—they made money, instead of Jehovah, their god, and became the tyrants and

oppressors of their species : And lo ! where are now all their splendid cities, and their lofty towers and battlements ? JERUSALEM, their ancient capital, has dwindled into insignificance ; and where are the cities of the plain ? Alas ! they are prostrate in the dust. Those which the sword of the conqueror spared, the fire of indignant Heaven descended upon and destroyed : And the owl and the bittern, the fox and the wolf, the lion and the jackall, as predicted by a prophet of God, now reign the sole tenants and sovereigns of the barren hill and the desolated vale.

Having pointed out the first great duty, which we owe to God and to ourselves, it cannot be expected that I should dwell at large, on this occasion, upon all the other important duties, which our condition as freemen demands at our hands ; but I feel myself, nevertheless, bound to go as far at least as your candor and patience and my own strength will permit.

Exert, then, I conjure you, all your energies, to extend the blessings of sound education, without which there can be no true virtue ; and without true virtue there can be no solid and permanent freedom. To CHARONDAS, of Greece, we owe the origin of common schools. Though this ancient law-giver enacted some very silly laws ; yet he ordained, “ that all the sons of every family should be taught reading and writing under masters in the pay of the public.” “ This law alone,” says an American Sage, “ has merit enough to consecrate to immortality, the memory of this legislator, and deserves to be imitated by every free people at least.”* Let us, then, never remit our exertions to attain this great end. Let us never rest contented till all our public lands are divided equally between the several States of the Union ; and by each State constituted a fund, the interest of which to be perpetually appropriated to the support of common schools, and the education of teachers to conduct them.

Never lose sight of the union of these States, on its just and proper foundations of State Sovereignty and limited Federal Jurisdiction ; yielding neither to Nullification on the one hand, nor Consolidation on the other. With written fundamental Constitutions, such as no other nation, now in existence, has ever enjoyed, in possession of the ballot boxes and universal suffrage, it will be owing to our own criminal neglect, if we split upon the small rock of nullification, or the great ice-berg of consolidation.

Nullification is the extreme of State Sovereignty ; Consolidation, the extreme of Federal Jurisdiction. We must indeed abhor and

* John Adams.

detest Consolidation under any pretext whatsoever: And respecting Nullification, though we might possibly find it necessary in some *very extreme case*; yet we should never forget, that the great cases, in which it has been more or less successfully resorted to—I allude to four cases of great and universal importance—do not apply to us now, as they once did to our fathers.

Moses nullified the laws of Egypt, because their tyranny was insupportable; and there was no written constitution, no ballot-box, or right of suffrage, either limited or universal, to appeal to for redress. The sword was the only resort.

The great head of the church, and his Apostles, for the same reason, among others, nullified, by the sword of the spirit, the laws both of Jews and Gentiles: For the words of the Saviour—“*Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s*”—implied neither submission nor opposition to the Roman Government.

Luther, and his party, on the same ground, nullified, at least so far as they could do it, the laws of the Papal See.

Washington, and his gallant companions in arms—the author of the Declaration of Independence, and all who signed it with him—did the same with George III. and his tyrannical laws: for as England never had a written constitution, nor universal suffrage, to appeal to, the sword was the only weapon with which our Fathers could cut their way to the Temple of Liberty: And thanks be to God, who inspired them with the virtue and the courage to do it, they drew the sword, and threw away the scabbard; and none but cowards, or willing slaves, will ever shrink from striking the same blow, under the same circumstances.

The time must and will come, when the sword may be turned into the ploughshare, and the spear into the pruning hook, and peace and liberty be preserved without the aid of either. This is a promise of God, which will not fail. But till this promised blessing shall descend upon us, never yield the right to possess arms, and to bear them, if necessary, in defence of your altars and your fire-sides, against domestic tyrants, as well as foreign foes: And never forget, that it will always be easier to drive a hundred legions of foreign invaders into the ocean, than to dispossess one domestic tyrant, who has become firmly seated in power, with the sword and the purse-strings at his command, and a servile majority to obey his nod. Never therefore give up your arms; but never draw the sword to procure a redress of grievances, until all possible constitutional means have been repeatedly tried in vain: And then let your tyrants know, that your courage and fortitude are

equal to your generosity and forbearance. This example our gallant fathers gave us—let us never forget it.

Never suffer a standing army, exceeding five thousand effective men, to be kept up in times of peace. A free people, indeed, ought to have no standing army at all ; but every citizen should be a soldier, and ready, at a moment's warning, to gird on his armor for battle against foreign foes or domestic tyrants. Standing armies have, in all ages, been the instruments of usurpation and tyranny. This was the creed of our fathers ; and rather than keep up such an army of more than five thousand men, it would be better policy to encourage the voluntary formation of such companies, not exceeding a regiment to each State, as our noble-spirited BURGESSES CORPS, by furnishing their military equipments, on a pledge of honor that they should be carefully preserved in good order as long as possible. The companies thus voluntarily organised and equipped, would constitute citizen soldiers in the true sense of the terms ; and being composed, as they would be, of young men of fair characters, would feel the more forcibly the obligations of civil and political liberty and justice, which bind men to the true interests of their country.

Never suffer the liberty of the press, or the liberty of speech, to be unjustly invaded or impaired ; and never attempt to curb the licentiousness of either by *ex officio* informations, or public prosecutions. It is sufficient that individuals have the right of private or personal action for damages against the writers or publishers of libels that affect their characters or lawful pursuits and interests. But the arm of the public should never be raised to crush the press under any circumstances. This, however, is not the time or the place for the argument. I will merely remark, therefore, that the only proper use of the press is to spread useful knowledge, and in this respect alone it is the Palladium of Liberty. The publishers of licentious books, like the novels of Bulwer and his wife, and the editors of licentious newspapers, whoever they may be, are the worst enemies of mankind : And it would indeed be much to the honor of the press, and the credit of our country, if all of our publishers and editors would recollect, that the pens of those immortal spirits, to whom I have already alluded, Milton and Harrington, Locke and Sidney, “overthrew the tyranny of the Stuarts, without the aid of ribaldry or licentiousness ; and that the illustrious Reformers of the fifteenth century, contributed largely to confirm the morality of Europe, while they beat down the arrogant pretensions of sacerdotal and papal usurpation.”*

* Helen Maria Williams.

Nullify at once and forever the doctrine of gratitude to your public servants, unless it be for some very great service, beyond the ordinary routine of their public duties. CLINTON, though Governor of a State only, was the benefactor of the Union, and hence he was entitled to public gratitude. But as a general rule, when you pay a President Twenty-five Thousand Dollars a year for his services, you owe no debt of gratitude either to him or any of his family. The obligation is altogether on the other side. The salary is both remuneration and gratitude enough for the ordinary services of any man at the head of any government in the world. Public gratitude is due only to those who serve their country gratuitously, as Washington did with his sword, and Jefferson, Franklin, Jay, John and Samuel Adams, Thomas Paine, Ezra Stiles, Solomon Southwick,* and many others did with the logic and the eloquence of their pens in the revolution. This is the true foundation of public gratitude. Can there be a grosser delusion, than to allow any man to pocket, as President, Two HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS of the public money, of which, if he make the office, as he ought to do, "*an office of business and not of show,*"† he can save with ease One Hundred and Fifty Thousand; and then allow him to tax the people with a debt of gratitude at the same time!

Never give up annual elections for your State legislative departments, biennial for the Executive chair of a State, and for the house of Representatives of the Union, or quadrennial for the President thereof.

So perfect do I conceive our federal constitution to be, that I am fearful of any attempt to amend it. Still I think it would be much gained for freedom, if the term of service of the Senators of the United States should be reduced to four years: That no Senator or Representative should receive any appointment from the President who should be in office at the same time with them:—And that no man under forty years of age should hold the office of President, Senator or Representative. A volume would not suffice to portray the evils, which history clearly proves to have arisen from the inexperience and rashness of precocious and undisciplined ambition.

Never elect any man to any office whatsoever, whose private life is profligate or licentious; for no such man can be safely trusted as

* My father, one of whose works alone fixed the minds of the people of Rhode Island for the Revolution, as Gordon, the historian, acknowledges. In an article, which appeared in a Rhode-Island paper of 1813, written by a distinguished lawyer of Newport, it was said—"When the history of this state shall be fairly written, justice will be done to Solomon Southwick."

† It was John Quincy Adams, who said the Presidency "ought to be an office of business: and not of show." We owe Mr. A. a small debt of gratitude at least, for this maxim.

the guardian of a free constitution: But look out steadily and vigilantly to secure able and honest law-makers, as well as able and incorruptible judges: For if you elect, or appoint, incapable or corrupt men to responsible stations, you not only jeopardise your liberties for the time being; but you dampen and destroy the ardor and emulation of all men to qualify themselves for the service of their country. Why should any man labor day and night, in studying the works of historians and philosophers, to qualify himself for a statesman, when he sees every day ignorant men preferred to learned ones, and stupid men and knaves to men of genius and integrity.

Never wish to discard a President at the end of his first term, if he has been faithful in that: And never, under any circumstances of peace or war, pestilence or famine, elect him more than twice. The example of declining a re-election, and retiring to private life, established by Washington and Jefferson; and confirmed by Madison, Monroe and Jackson, ought ever to be considered a sacred law of the Republic. It should be considered the more binding, the more sacred, inasmuch as not only two such illustrious civilians as Jefferson and Madison, but two such immortal military chieftains as Washington and Jackson have sanctioned it; the former by setting the first example, and the latter by following it: For it is well known, that like Washington and Jefferson, the farmer of Tennessee, the hero of at least two great wars, had popularity enough to have ran a third time with success; but he had too much democratic virtue to attempt it. This, then, I repeat it, should be considered an inviolable and sacred law of the Republic.

As a safe general rule, never suffer the expenses of your government to exceed its just and legitimate income; and consequently never incur a state or federal debt, if it can be reasonably avoided; nor tax the mouth of labor unnecessarily.

Never yield to the Federal Government the right of making internal public improvements: To do so, will be to destroy, without hope of redemption, both the Sovereignty and the Union of the States. Usurpation and Consolidation must and will be the inevitable consequences. If we do our duty to ourselves and our posterity, we shall never permit that government to stick a spade or a pick-axe into the soil of a state beyond the limits of tide-water; and then only for purposes clearly essential to "the common defence," or the "general welfare." On this one question alone, we shall find, that with us, "the price of liberty is eternal vigilance."

Above all other considerations, would you perpetuate the precious privileges which you now enjoy at the hand of Divine Pro-

vidence; would you hand down unimpaired to posterity, the glorious Democratic Constitutions of your country; then, I beseech you, never forget, that the Christian Religion is indispensable to the preservation of those precepts, principles, and moral virtues, on which alone liberty and justice can safely repose. The bare circumstance, that our blessed Saviour chose his Disciples and Apostles without respect to persons, without the least reference to worldly station, wealth, or influence, proves clearly that CHRISTIANITY was the ancient cradle of LIBERTY. It is indeed because there is little if any thing more than a merely nominal Christianity in Europe, that Tyranny there rides triumphant over the rights and dignity of human nature; and that Monarchs, Hierarchs, Lords, and their minions, revel and riot in luxury and splendor on the hard earnings of the honest and industrious mechanics and tillers of the soil. It is a remarkable fact, worthy of being remembered on this day, that one of the Fathers of our Republic, Thomas Jefferson, acknowledges, "that he received his first correct notions of a republican form of government from the proceedings of a Baptist"—that is, a Christian, "Congregation in his neighborhood." Let us then, fellow-citizens, cherish the pure spirit of Christianity, and the safe and salutary institutions of piety and devotion, which flow from it, and cannot flow from any other source. These, rely upon it, are the main pillars of our freedom, prosperity and happiness.

I could multiply these brief admonitions, would the occasion permit, and were it not that I feel it my duty to be rather more prolix, on a subject which has been lately revived, though never fairly discussed, among us. A correct view of it, however, is important, at least to the stability of our freedom and prosperity. To come to the point, then, fellow-citizens, as the means of preserving that social harmony and good feeling, on which our freedom and happiness, as a people, so much depend; let us beware of creating invidious distinctions, or exciting groundless jealousies, between the rich and the poor. Such distinctions, such jealousies, have heretofore done much evil, involving whole communities in anarchy, violence and bloodshed; for when once begun, there is no end to the heart-burnings, and the animosities, which grow out of them. In this country, where there is no ground in our civil, political, or religious institutions, for any such feelings, it is to be regretted, that they were first excited, whilst the present federal constitution was under discussion, by a book, written by Mr. John Adams, ostensibly in support of the constitution, and by a speech of Mr. Gouverneur Morris, in the Convention of 1787, which framed that instrument.

The doctrine of Mr. Morris's Speech, which is in spirit, if not literally, the same as that of Mr. Adams's book, is, that the House of Representatives, originating from the people, will ever be subject to precipitancy, changeability and excess. To check these evils, he proposed, that the Senate should be composed of none but men of great and established property, an Aristocracy; and that besides their riches, to make them completely independent, they should be chosen for life, or they would be a useless body. This permanent, rich and aristocratic Senate, was to keep down the turbulence of Democracy! "History proves, I admit," said Mr. Morris, "that the men of large property will uniformly endeavor to establish tyranny. How, then, shall we ward off this evil? Give them the second branch, and you secure their weight for the public good!" Again, said Mr. Morris, "the wealthy will ever exist; and you never can be safe, unless you gratify them as a body, in the pursuit of honor and profit!" Mr. Morris concluded by avowing himself the advocate of a strong government; and he asserted expressly, that "a government by compact is no government at all."

The last clause is a hard saying of Mr. Morris; for if the idea of a compact be excluded from the idea of a government, the latter is of course an absolute despotism. It denies the people to be even the source of power, much less the sovereign power itself. It is at war with sacred history; for we there find that David especially made a written compact with the people, by which he was to be guided in his government. It is at war with all the republican writers on government; for they all contend for a written social compact, and all insist, that where it is not written, it is implied from the principles of natural justice.

It is not even remarkable, much less surprising, that such doctrines should have caused, as they did, great murmurings among the people, and especially among the poor of that day. I myself heard those murmurings, and witnessed the excitement which they created in my native state; for though Mr. Morris's speech had not then come to light; yet Mr. Adams's sentiments were well known, and generally promulgated: And as we have lately witnessed something in the shape of an appeal to the poor on this subject, in several public journals, let us now come to the question:—

Does history prove, as Mr. Morris asserted, that the rich will uniformly endeavor to establish tyranny?

I think not. I believe it is not supported either by sacred or profane history. I shall however pass over the rich Noah and Abraham—the richer Job and David, and the still richer Solomon,

and other rich worthies of Scripture History, because they were cured by divine grace of any inordinate desire to oppress the poor, arising from their enormous wealth. Abraham proved his forbearance in his noble spirited and generous conduct to Lot, in relation to the first dispute about property, of which we have either legal or historical record : And Job was literally the father of the poor ; for he not only fed and clothed them by hundreds, but defended them against every oppressor. Job, xxix. 30.

Without further reference, therefore, to the ground of antiquity, I will at once come down to modern history, and refer you to the Italian house of Medici. They were rich—splendidly rich : But such was their noble spirit, that their wealth contributed largely to the advancement, not only of their native land, but of all Europe in science and freedom. A large portion of their splendid wealth, the just reward of their great commercial genius and enterprise, was lavished at the dawn of the revival of letters, in patronising the learned Greeks who fled from the capture of Constantinople, when, through its fall by the Turkish arms, the last ray of old Roman Power and Glory expired ; “ whilst a new era, pregnant with a purer philosophy than that of Aristotle ; a more diffusive spirit of intelligence ; a more improved state of the arts ; a more extensive cultivation of letters ; a more cordial and universal social and commercial intercourse between men and nations ; a more enlarged and rational view of human rights and duties ; and finally, a more mild and tolerant religious feeling began to shed its bright and cheering beams on the horizon of a too long benighted and barbarous world. Gibbon, Voltaire, and Roscoe, and indeed every writer on those times, concur in applauding the munificence of the Medici, than whom no family ever obtained popularity and power more deservedly. I may indeed safely add, that by the universal consent of his own countrymen, the Republic of Letters, and mankind at large, Cosmo de Medici was denominated the protector of the needy, the refuge of the oppressed, the constant patron and supporter of learned men.”*

Another rich Italian, Niccolo Niccoli, devoted his life and fortune to the advancement of literature and science, and was the first man to establish, at his own expense, a public library in his native land.

I could point even to a Monarch of France, a rare instance, it is true, among kings, but not the less deserving of credit, and his illustrious Prime Minister,† than whom no two men ever expended more treasure in diffusing happiness around them.

* See Roscoe's Life of Leo X.

† Henry IV. and the Duke of Sully.

Juan Padilla was one of the richest men in Spain in the 15th century ; yet a purer, a more generous and exalted spirit never existed. Even the *Poet Laureat* of the British Monarchy, has bestowed a glowing epitaph on the virtues of this illustrious enemy of kings, and friend of the people. From 1420 to 1422, the genius, valor and generosity of this noble Spaniard, sustained the cause of Freedom, to which he finally sealed his attachment with his heart's blood : And to the honor of her sex, as well as her own glory, his illustrious wife, not only participated in all his toils and dangers, but after his death assumed the command of the patriot forces, defended Toledo bravely, gained several victories, and did not quit her post, till she was deserted by the cowardly citizens, unworthy of so glorious a leader, and a disgrace to their country and to human nature.

The De Witts of Holland were rich. They held the highest posts of honor, and had the best opportunities to accumulate great wealth ; yet John De Witt, like Juan Padilla, suffered a glorious martyrdom in the cause of liberty. He was a republican, and that was a sufficient crime, in the eyes of a royalist faction, for taking his life in the most barbarous manner. We have seen in this State, a descendant of this illustrious man, draw his sword for our liberties in the revolution, and live among us fifty years after that event, surrounded by well-earned wealth and prosperity ; but always the virtuous and inflexible friend of liberty and of mankind.*

The two great German Reformers, John Wickliffe and Martin Luther, the former of whom, though of a rich and noble family, was called the "morning star of the Reformation," as we may justly style Luther the meridian sun, were both of them surrounded by all the comforts of life, and might have had these heaped upon them ten-fold, perhaps a hundred, had they not preferred what they believed to be their duty to God and mankind, to the sweets of luxury and monastic ease.

Lord Bacon, whom Pope basely, but vainly, attempted to hold up to the scorn of the world, was splendidly rich ; and whilst his unrivalled genius created a new era in Philosophy, his immense wealth was lavished in acts of the purest humanity, and the most disinterested benevolence.

John Hampden was one of the richest merchants of England ; and "the greatest patriot Statesman of his times ; the man whom the tyrant Charles I. would gladly have seen drawn and quartered ; whom even Clarendon," the scribe of monarchy, and the friend of

* The late Simon De Witt

Charles, "paints as possessing, beyond all his cotemporaries, a head to contrive, a tongue to persuade, and a hand to execute; and whom the fervent Baxter, another Royalist, "revered, as able, by his presence, to give a new charm to the repose of the saints in Heaven:"* And yet we know, that this very rich and all-accomplished private citizen of England, and Lord William Russell, one of her richest, most learned and illustrious noblemen, did not shrink from meeting death, the one on the field of battle, and the other on the scaffold, for the freedom and glory of their country.

Algernon Sidney, that inflexible and immortal republican, born to inherit a title of nobility, and a splendid estate; whose mind was illumined by the brightest beams of genius, whose brow was adorned by the proudest trophies of learning, and who wrote altogether the best book ever yet published on the subject of human government; voluntarily sacrificed all these brilliant possessions, and the fair prospects connected with them, in the same glorious cause, for which Hampden bled on the field and Russell on the scaffold. What reflects the most lustre on the memory of this rich patriot, is the fact, that like Curtius, he made a voluntary sacrifice of himself to his country. He was indicted for writing an essay in favor of Liberty; but the tyrants who thirsted for his blood, had no proof of the authorship, but the circumstance, that the manuscript was found in his house. But rich as he was, possessed of all that could render life the more dear and death the more dreadful, he confessed himself the author of the work, sealing his own doom, and at the same time securing his immortality, by a declaration the noblest that ever flowed from the lips of man:—"When God," said he, "has brought me into a dilemma, in which I must either tell a lie, or forfeit my life, he tells me that it is time for me to die!" And what are we to think of the royal monster, and his servile judge, who could sacrifice such a man?

In the late French Revolution, when it would not have been surprising, if a different spirit had prevailed amid the scenes of anarchy and blood that shocked the universe, many of the richest citizens proved their zeal for the cause of their country at the imminent peril, and in many cases the absolute sacrifice of their lives.

I could fill a volume with such examples of self-sacrifice and hallowed devotion to the cause of freedom, by rich men abroad; but it is time to come home, and ask a few questions of our own altars and fire-sides, before we join in such sweeping denunciations

* See Bancroft's immortal History of the U. S. vol. 1

of the rich, as this of Mr. Morris—himself a rich man—or those which I have lately read in several of our political journals.

First and foremost, then, in the galaxy of illustrious men, who shine on the page of history, or occupy the Temple of Fame, was not our beloved Washington as rich a planter in Virginia as John Hampden was a merchant in London? And did that rich planter, surrounded by all the endearments and luxuries of life, hesitate a moment to risk his fortune, his fame, and his heart's blood, to redeem his country from the grasp of Tyranny? No—he did not hesitate;—but emerging from his plantation, at the call of his country, as the morning sun ascends the horizon to warm and cheer the animal and vegetable worlds; he came forth to animate the hearts, and direct the energies, of his fellow-citizens, in a glorious struggle for freedom; ready, alike, to wave the Olive Branch, in the spirit of mutual justice and benevolence; or, that being rejected, to “ride upon the whirlwind and direct the storm” of war. In imagination I now hear him urging the brave and the patriotic to defend the rights of their country and the cause of freedom:—Let us, says he, my friends and fellow-countrymen, have Peace, if with Peace we can have Liberty: But if not, then let us meet our enemies as they land upon our shores. Let us show them that we have minds to understand, arms to defend, and hearts ready to bleed for the freedom and glory of our country. If driven from one stand, let us seize upon another: If we cannot do better, let us fall back and erect our standard upon the rocky mountains: And if hunted at last by the myrmidons of tyranny and oppression, to the verge of the Pacific Ocean, there let us give shout for shout, and blow for blow, till we turn the tide of battle on our foes, or be driven into the waves to become food for the monsters of the deep!

And who were the compatriots, that with Washington put their names to the Declaration of Independence? Many of them were rich, very rich for the times; and of whom the latest survivor, the noble-spirited Roman Catholic Carroll, was among the richest: And yet with the gibbet or the scaffold, and the executioner with his instruments of death, in the gloomy perspective, did these rich and noble-spirited men fearlessly sign the document which proclaimed the liberty and independence of their country, which proclaimed through the universe, from shore to shore, and from pole to pole, the downfall of tyrants, and the freedom of the human race: And to this Declaration they added the noble pledge of their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor, that they would persevere in the glorious strife till Liberty or Death should close the scene

Again, look around this vast country, made free by the generous sacrifices and the deathless deeds, of those rich, noble-spirited, and immortal patriots : And ask yourselves, fellow-citizens, whose money, whose liberality, whose patriotism and piety, have reared among us so many temples of literature, science and religion ; so many academies, colleges, churches and chapels, so numerous and so magnified, that almost every beam of the sun is obstructed by their spires.

Who, may I not ask, can at this day travel from Albany to Lansingburgh, without passing by the way a Temple of Science, established and liberally endowed, by one alone of those rich individuals, who are the ornaments of their country and of human nature ; and who, notwithstanding many of their benevolent deeds are published by the voice of gratitude, still delight to

“ Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame ? ”

Nor was the establishment and endowment of this Temple of the Muses, all that the rich individual alluded to could boast of having done for the good of his country and mankind, if his taste and education, his delicacy, dignity and elevation of mind and of heart, had permitted him to boast at all : For I can truly affirm, that from the same source, many other valuable public institutions were munificently aided ; while far more numerous, if not more generous, streams of bounty flowed in private than in public channels, to cheer the habitations of poverty, alleviate the pangs of sickness, heal the wounds of adversity, and animate the exertions of genius for the public welfare. Nor can we forbear, even on this pressing occasion, to pay one more tribute to the memory of that good rich man, whose modest pathway through life, shone with a mild and steady splendor, illumined by the rays of his own goodness, mingled with the blessed beams of faith and of grace : For who more ready than he, when the trump of war called his country to arms, to forego the delights of social and domestic life, gilded, as they were, by the kindest and purest affections, and the most splendid gifts of fortune, for the privations of the tented field, and the perils of the day of battle ! O ! how beautiful in the eyes of the generous, how refreshing to the souls of the just, to behold the tears of regret and of gratitude flowing in a thousand streams, when this good man died : And long, long will it be, before his country, and especially the sons and daughters of adversity, will again “ look upon the like ” of STEPHEN VAN RENSSELAER !

There is another illustrious name in the annals of our country, which, whenever I think of it, or hear it mentioned, comes upon

me, in the language of a beautiful poet, "like the memory of past joys, pleasant and mournful to the soul." I knew De Witt Clinton, when he was splendidly rich. I know him again when he was assailed by the chill blasts of poverty, and the keen arrows of persecution. But neither in prosperity nor adversity, did that great and good man ever harbor a wish, much less make an effort, to injure the liberties of his country: But calm and serene, amid the cares and toils of state, he was found faithful to her free Constitutions, steadily pursuing the Grand Improvements, which will enrich her through all time, and ensure his own imperishable fame.

So Jefferson, Monroe and Tompkins, an illustrious trio, were all rich at one time, but all died in poverty: And where, at any time of their lives, did the poor ever find better friends, or the cause of liberty firmer advocates?

And again I ask, whose money has carried Missionaries, with the glad and glorious tidings of salvation, to the remotest corners of the earth? And who are they that have built houses of refuge at home, for the blind, the deaf, the dumb and the insane; for the unprotected orphan, the penitent Magdalene, and the worn out or aged seaman? The rich, fellow-citizens, have done all this great good; and without them it could not and would not have been done.

With all due deference to the talents and memory of two such illustrious men as John Adams and Gouverneur Morris, I have said enough to prove, that wealth does not uniformly make tyrants of its possessors; nor does poverty uniformly make patriots: For many a poor, vicious and worthless demagogue has enriched himself and his posterity, by usurping the liberties of his country, and tyrannising over it. Of this we find sufficient examples in the conflicts, from time to time, between the Plebeians and the Patricians of Rome; and also in those numerous and bloody struggles for power and popularity, which occurred during the Middle Ages, a period of about a thousand years between the fall of the Western Empire of Rome in A. D. 475 and that of the Eastern in A. D. 1453; such struggles as will never exist, where true religion and a corresponding education prevail.

In the course of such conflicts, sometimes a poor native Demagogue has destroyed his country, and at others a poor foreign adventurer. But I must pass over these at present to come nearer home.

When the poor Corsican Adventurer, Napoleon Buonaparte, grasped the sword and the purse-strings, in a country where he

was a stranger, and by various wheedlings, as well as daring deeds, deceived the people, the liberties of France fell before him. No warning voice, like that of La Fayette, could stay his career; no patriot pen nor sword could for a moment arrest the course of the Usurper. Those who had escaped the guillotine, under the tyranny of such poor demagogues as Robespierre, Marat and Cloots, were now driven by a more daring upstart, to be sacrificed on the field of battle, to sink into the morasses of Italy or Germany, or perish by thousands on the frozen plains of Russia: And here let me give you a friendly hint. Trust no man, who, being poor himself, sets out in life by declaring war against his rich neighbors. It is not by pulling down others, that a just man wishes to rise in the world, but by honest ingenuity, industry and enterprise: And the man who thus succeeds, will never, whilst running the race, envy either his immediate rivals, or those who have successfully gone before him.

Of poor demagogues, rising by the basest means, from the lowest conditions, and doing great mischief, the occasion will not allow me to give but one more striking example, in the character of an adventurer, from whom not only Buonaparte, but other intriguers and usurpers, have learned the detestable lessons of a false and a foul ambition. Not far from the times, when some of the illustrious rich men I have named, were shedding their blood for the liberties of their respective countries; and when the rich and truly illustrious house of MEDICI, by their great commercial enterprise, their immense wealth, and their Christian benevolence, were scattering blessings over their native land and the neighboring states; cherishing by the noblest munificence, genius and science, literature, liberty and religion; a base and unprincipled upstart, the ABBE DE RETZ, whose poverty was exceeded only by his private vices, and his profligate sentiments, was raising himself, amid the civil commotions of France, by means of a vile and wicked system of intrigue, crime and corruption, to the highest station, save one, which either the state or the church could bestow. This poor and detestable profligate sat out with a determination to become Cardinal of France; and he resolved, at the same time, that he would not stop at any means, however base, to gain his end. He corrupted the youth of France, so far as his machinations could reach them; and the young men, in the Parliament at Paris, he made the instruments of his foul ambition, by exciting their jealousy against the aged, talented and venerable members; and having accomplished his designs, he left the victims of his duplicity, of all

parties—for he cajoled and cheated all by turns—to take care of themselves. His success was equal to his expectations; but it was obtained through a series of complicated and unparalleled crimes and corruptions, such as none but the vilest of mankind could stoop to contrive, much less to execute.

Having briefly noticed what this poor and vicious Demagogue was doing for his own benefit, at the expense of the ruin of France; whilst the rich and virtuous Cosmo de Medici, was devoting his life, and his immense fortune, the fruit of his honest industry and enterprise, to the prosperity and happiness of Italy; let us return for a few moments to a more grateful theme.

This, of all others, is the day to do homage to the memory of Washington; and the more especially as a celebrated British Statesman has justly said, that “it will be the duty of the historian and sage, in all ages, to omit no occasion of commemorating this illustrious man.” Several more able pens than I can pretend to, have delineated the character of Washington, as it stands alone in its sublime native dignity—

“As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm;
Though on its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.”

But I will now, in my own humble style, compare this rich patriot—this Patriarch of Liberty—with a once poor Demagogue in France, to whom I have already alluded; a base and unprincipled adventurer, like De Retz, but aiming, by the same or similar vile means, at a far loftier flight.

GEORGE WASHINGTON and NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE were both practical mathematicians and soldiers in early life; but from the difference of their dispositions, they directed their civic and military talents to far different ends. Washington had acquired a splendid fortune by his honest industry, before he came forward to risk all in attempting to redeem the liberties of his country. Napoleon was poor, if not penniless, when he commenced his career of usurpation. Washington attempted in one shape, and a very proper one, what Napoleon did in another shape, and a very odious one. Washington nobly and generously aimed at leaguings the United States in a confederacy for the good of the whole; for the purpose of establishing liberty and justice, and the benign arts of peace and civilization, under the protection of law, and the mild, salutary and indispensable influence of religion. Napoleon aimed at forming all Europe into a grand consolidated mass, not for the good of Europe,

but for his own personal aggrandizement : It was, that he might sit upon his blood-stained and blood-cemented throne, like Jupiter on mount Olympus, and receive the servile homage of the nations he had conquered and enslaved. Washington aimed at becoming, and by the blessing of God did become, the benefactor of his country and of mankind. Napoleon aimed at becoming the universal subjugator and tyrant of the human race. If Washington, through the frailty of human nature, ever committed an error, calculated to shed a malign influence on his grand enterprise ; the whole life of Napoleon was a tissue of such errors, to say nothing of the crimes connected with them. The course of Washington was the path of the just, shining brighter and brighter at every step. The path of Napoleon was that of conquest, ruin and desolation, in which no solitary gleam relieved the gloomy perspective, or enlivened for a moment its cheerless aspect. Washington was the modern Fabius, Napoleon the modern Alaric. Washington, even in the heat of battle, was as anxious to spare the blood of his soldiers, as he was to gain the victory. Napoleon, eager for the victory alone, cared nothing for the blood and carnage which it cost. Washington signed with painful reluctance the death-warrant of an enemy, although taken, tried and convicted as a spy, in league with Arnold, the traitor. Napoleon, with cold-blooded malignity, ordered his enemy, the Duke de Enghein, to be shot, not for having acted as a spy, but as a man of frankness, honor and romantic heroism ; qualities which Napoleon neither possessed himself, nor respected in others. Washington served his country during the revolution, without pay or reward, excepting his bare expenses, the moderation of which excited the surprise of many, and the admiration of all. Napoleon knew no such magnanimity, and not only grasped immense sums from the public treasury, for his own benefit, but enriched every member of his family with the spoils of office, and the fruits of public plunder. Washington was never known to tremble at danger, or exhibit fear in any shape, however appalling may have been the circumstances by which he was surrounded. Napoleon, the fact is well established, when, like Cromwell, though from far less nobler motives, he turned the national representatives out of the capitol, trembled from head to foot, his blood recoiled upon his heart, and his face turned as pale as though the hand of death had passed over it ; whilst his brother Lucien, who was also his brother conspirator, though President of the Convention, reproached him in the presence and hearing of the spectators, for having betrayed his want of courage and self-possession. Wash-

ington was great in every sense of the term. The God of Nature had stamped the character of his mind with grand and majestic features, and had given him at the same time a heart alive to every just and good impression. Napoleon was great in strength and brilliancy, but not in dignity, of mind; and his heart was the seat of the worst of passions: And while we are not a little surprised, that so many brave and able generals followed in the train of a tyrant so selfish and unprincipled, we derive some small share of pleasure, at least, from the fact, that two of the best and bravest among them, Bernadotte and Moreau, denounced his tyranny, and disdained to submit to it. Plutarch gives to Romulus more honor than to Theseus, because he rose from small beginnings; but he does not tell us whether he rose by fair or foul means; for here lies the honor or the shame. We know that Washington, by a stern and steady adherence to truth and justice, rose from the humble station of a land surveyor, to the Presidency of a great and free people. Napoleon, by every species of intrigue and deception, raised himself to Empire, it is true, but only to sink again into his original insignificance. Washington treated not only his own soldiers, but his prisoners, with kindness and humanity. Napoleon would at any time sacrifice a regiment or a legion to gratify his selfish pride and vanity. Washington adhered faithfully, through life, to the woman who had won his early affections, and to whom he was married. Napoleon divorced himself from his first wife, basely deserting the woman to whom alone he owed all his prosperity and splendor, to take another far less amiable and accomplished, from motives of the meanest selfishness and the foulest ambition: Nor did he in this case alone, exhibit his total destitution of principle, in his disregard of the matrimonial law, which God ordained: For he divorced his brother Jerome from the beautiful and talented young American wife, whom he had married in Baltimore, because she was not of royal blood, forcing his dependent brother to marry the daughter of a petty prince; thus violating the most sacred of obligations, and severing the tenderest ties: For although he had no affection for the wife whom he had abandoned, nor for any other human being, any further than some selfish interest bound him; yet Jerome did sincerely love his wife, and felt the separation as a keen and incurable wound of the heart. Such was the pride of Napoleon, on this occasion, that he would not suffer the beautiful American wife of his brother to land on the shores of France! Where, then, is the noble-spirited and virtuous woman—where, then, is the brave and honest man—of the United

States—who can either respect the memory, or regret the fall, of this upstart tyrant? Washington was the sincere professor and friend of Christianity:—“Of all the dispositions and habits,” said that great and good man, “which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness—these firmest props of the duties of men and of citizens.” Napoleon was devoted to the cross or the crescent, as his interest dictated, being a Christian one day, and a Mahomedan the next; a Roman Catholic one day, and a Protestant the next; one day grossly insulting and basely plundering the Pope, and the next courting his favor, inviting him to his court, and pretending to be his obsequious admirer. Washington’s religion was of one complexion, one steady flame of pure piety and rational devotion. Napoleon’s religion, if it be not a profanation of the term, had all the colors of the rainbow, with none of their brilliancy; and all the changes of the moon or the winds, without any of their benign effects. Washington, secure in the affections and the gratitude of a free people, voluntarily retired from power, to adorn and dignify the scenes of domestic ease and tranquillity.

• And O! Columbia, by thy sons caressed,
 There dwelt the Father of the realms he blessed:
 Who, no wish felt to make his mighty praise,
 Like other chiefs, the means himself to raise,
 But there, retiring, breathed in pure renown,
 And felt a grandeur that disdained a crown!”

Napoleon, with no security in the affections, and no claims on the gratitude, of his country, or mankind, grasped the sword and the purse-strings, till they were wrenched from him by force, and then sought safety by an inglorious flight. Washington, thanks be to our God, and the God of our fathers, lived to see his benevolent and grand design accomplished, to see his country free, prosperous and happy; and died at last with all his laurels fresh upon his brow, without having lost a solitary ray of his pure and imperishable glory. Napoleon, totally defeated in a career of usurpation and tyranny, unparalleled in the history of mankind, was banished to a narrow, solitary and dreary rock, in the midst of a vast ocean; there to die a lingering and a miserable death, in which the justice of Heaven was as vividly displayed on the one hand, as the mean malice, treacherous hospitality, and cowardly fears of his enemies, and especially of the British Government, were clearly evinced on the other. The life and death of Washington attract the universal admiration and envy of mankind: for who would not live the life,

who would not die the death, of the great and the good, the just and the righteous man ! The life and death of Napoleon, on the contrary, attract no admiration, excite no envy, from any enlightened and philosophic mind, or any honest and generous heart. Great, good, and brave men have wept at the tomb of Washington, the unassuming, honest and faithful republican chief. None but drivellers or dotards ever shed a tear over that of Napoleon, the upstart usurper and the remorseless tyrant.

Again—Washington died glorying in the cross of his Divine Master ; and in the full assurance, that there was eternal life and unspeakable joy laid up for him in heaven. But Napoleon, in his last moments, found his future prospects as cheerless, and his heart as cold and comfortless, as the rock to which he was chained. Every view which Washington took of his by-gone days, could serve only to enliven his hopes of the future, and gild his prospects beyond the grave : For like Enoch he had walked with God, and like Abraham he felt assured that his faith was imputed to him for righteousness. But whenever Napoleon turned to the past, every view brought some fresh sting with it, to goad his conscience and to pierce his heart ; while the future was clothed with terrors that haunted him by night and by day. I have studied all history, both sacred and profane ; and I fear not to assert, that its pages exhibit no spectacle more disgusting to a correct mind, or more degrading to human nature, than that of this Usurper and Tyrant, subdued by adversity, but unsustained by grace. Behold him fretting and fuming like a beldame at every trivial vexation ; and daily, if not hourly, venting his spleen, in the most unmanly and even childish ebullitions, upon his brutal military keeper, instead of rising superior to the insults which he received from that insignificant and contemptible tool of power, and sustaining himself by communion with his creator, and the page of inspiration. But alas ! poor Demagogue, he had sunk the Emperor in the Exile, and the philosopher and hero in the dotard and pitiful complainer. He felt himself abandoned both by God and man, whilst no ray of peace or consolation enlivened the gloom of his solitude, or pointed the way for him to another and a better world. We learn from the Journal of Las Casas, who shared his exile, and was his bosom friend, that just before his death he lamented bitterly his want of religion. On one occasion he called for the reading of our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount ; and though struck with the highest admiration of the simplicity and purity, the beauty and sublimity of the morality it contains, still he could not find in that divine composition the con-

solation which his hopeless condition required. It was in this state of mental anxiety and uncertainty, although flattered by his vanity to believe, that he had committed no great wickedness, that he exclaimed:—"What, then, would be my happiness, if the bright prospect of futurity presented itself to crown the last moments of my existence!" O! miserable man! He had ridden upon the whirlwind, and directed the storm of a tremendous revolution! He had usurped the power, and subverted the liberties of a mighty people. He had wielded that power to the prostration of Kings, and the destruction of Empires. He had received, on their bended knees, the homage of millions of slaves and sycophants. Even genius and learning had stooped from their high career to minister to his pride, to flatter his vanity, and to aid in perpetuating his power! But in vain had minions bowed, and kings and empires fallen before him. In vain had the pride of learning and the splendor of genius been humbled and obscured by the fame of his achievements, the blaze of his glory, and the colossal magnitude of his power: And instead of looking forward with the great and good Washington, to a crown of righteousness and glory in heaven, his imagination was harrowed with the spectre of a crown of thorns in a far different region. The sun of Washington had set in mild and majestic splendor, cheering with its departing beams the liberal hopes of the votaries of liberty and religion of all nations: But the sun of Napoleon had gone down in clouds and darkness, leaving none to mourn his fall but the ignorant and deluded, or those congenial spirits of foul ambition, who had shared with him the spoils, won by his unparalleled crimes and corruptions. Let no sickly sentimentalist say, that I am treading rudely on the ashes of the dead: I am, if I know my own heart, the last man to forget what is due to the memory of the good and the great, or to lose sight for a moment of that decorum which the grave silently but impressively exacts from all who approach it. But the sacred cause of truth, freedom and humanity demands, that history should no longer veil the crimes and corruptions of usurpers and tyrants; and that their tombs should be stripped of the false glory that surrounds them.

The fate of Napoleon, however, does afford one ground of great consolation to the friends of freedom throughout the world. It holds out a perpetual lesson, a solemn warning to mankind. His life is on record; and thanks to the invention of printing, that dark record cannot be lost, while time and art survive: And so of the solitary spot where his relics lie buried. It seems to have been marked out by divine predestination, as a memento to all future

ages. Scarcely a mound or a monument, a turf or a stone, now points the traveller to the tomb of any one of the thousands of tyrants and oppressors, who have heretofore disturbed the peace, and trampled upon the rights of mankind. But the tomb of Napoleon, I rejoice to repeat it, can never be either lost or forgotten. Men of all nations, and of all ages to come, will pass in sight of it with every breeze that shall ever blow. Often will they find themselves becalmed around it in numerous ships, bearing the flags of every country and of every clime; their eyes will behold the lonely spot; their meditations will dwell upon it; and they will hold converse of the Tyrant, whose ashes it entombs: And there will it thus stand through all time, as a beacon to warn the world against all such as he was: And let every one such, before he commences his foul career of usurpation, visit, in imagination at least, if not in reality, the solitary rock of St. Helena: And as he there hears the dark storm of the ocean sweep with a howling blast over the desolate tomb; and beholds the thunderbolts of heaven descending with awful sublimity on the desecrated and gloomy scene: Let him pause, let him meditate on the fate of this modern Alaric: Let him commune with his conscience and his God: Let him stay his foul purpose, and nobly resolve to become the friend of freedom, and the benefactor of his race, instead of the enemy of the one and the tyrant and destroyer of the other. Let him not reconcile himself to usurpation, by saying with Cæsar, Cataline or Caligula, that his country is so degenerate as to need a master; but let him say with Plato, that if he cannot contrive to exalt and save, he will not contribute to degrade and enslave her.

But to return from this digression, if it be one:—I have been rather prolix on the subject of the rich and the poor, from a sense of duty alone to the cause of liberty, which must depend upon social harmony: For I have been taught to believe, that men are to be distinguished by their ignorance and their vices, in contrast with their talents and their virtues: And as God has made no other distinction than this, excepting that of male and female, we cannot justly acknowledge any other. Let us not, then, excite or cherish prejudices between those, who, on the principles of our republican constitutions, ought to be united, if possible, in the common cause of liberty and humanity: But let us enquire of TRUTH, and she will teach us, that if Paul had been as rich as Cræsus, he would still have died as nobly as he did, without a solitary murmur, in defence of her cause: And believe me, that riches would not have transformed COLUMBUS into an ALMAGRO or PIZARRO; nor would

poverty have made either of these cruel and mercenary tyrants to resemble him in his matchless genius and god-like virtues. So if the Medici, or Hampden, or Washington, had been as poor as the vile demagogues and upstarts, De Retz and Napoleon, their virtues would have been the same, whilst the possession of all their wealth would not have cured the latter of their vices.

I cheerfully admit, what no well informed man will deny, that the unequal distribution of property, carried to extremes, may affect if not totally destroy the liberties of a nation; for we know that it has, for nearly three thousand years, subjugated nearly all Europe. All that I have aimed at is, to convey the impression, that in proportion to their numbers, there have been no more conspirators against the rights of man among the rich than among the poor; and that it is neither wealth nor poverty, but perversion of mind and of heart, that makes men proud, imperious, or unjust: And this can be cured only by the light and the spirit of revelation, though it may be mollified by the light of nature and common education: And here it may not be amiss to remark, that the greatest and vilest conspirator this country ever knew, the man, who, in the revolution, sold us all and received his price in British gold, though defeated in performing his contract, was Benedict Arnold, the poor demagogue of Connecticut, whilst the vigilance and fidelity of Washington, the rich planter of Virginia, foiled the Traitor, and saved his country. Arnold was involved in debt beyond the hope of extrication; but still, if he had been an honest man, his poverty could not and would not have betrayed him into the commission of so great a crime.

If the bulk of property in Europe be in the hands of the rich, it is owing to their old feudal system, and their ancient barbarism and ignorance. These gave to the crown, the nobility and the hierarchy, the chief possession of the soil, and rendered the tillers of it, the farmers, not merely political slaves, as our fathers were before the revolution, but personal slaves, the same nearly as our colored slaves in the south. But here, with the exception just alluded to, the tillers of the soil are the lords of the soil; the tenants are but few and far between; and the proprietors nearly the whole population. Here no proud lord—for we have, thank Heaven, no such vermin as lords among us—with his parasites, his hunters and his hounds, in his train, can leap the land-marks and trample down with impunity the grass or the grain of the husbandman, or gather it into his own garners, when ripe for the scythe or the sickle, leaving only the gleanings for the mouth of labor: And here no

Priest or Bishop can demand tithes of us, or take them by force if refused : For here our rulers and our priests are our servants and not our masters ; here no man or set of men can impose laws, tithes or taxes, upon us, without our consent ; nor can tithes or taxes for the support of a priesthood be imposed at all : And here, then, we shall never have either the rich or the poor, but ourselves, the whole people alone, to blame, if by sanctioning unequal and unjust laws and privileges, we make the rich richer and the poor poorer, till property shall entirely change owners, and what is now so equally distributed among the many, shall be grasped in the hands of the few. But this can never be, so long as we preserve our state rights and constitutions as they now are ; the federal constitution of the Union as it now is ; all being based, as they now are, upon the principle of representation before revenue or taxation ; and the choice of our rulers by the ballot boxes and free and universal suffrage, instead of having them imposed upon us by a king or a despot, and their tools or minions : And above all, so long as we shall feel, and act upon, the obligations which flow from Christianity, and form the strongest and the only permanent foundations of freedom.

Surely, then, where all possess equal rights under the constitution and the laws of their country, none can have a right to complain. Still, even under a political state of things so just and equal, the most ingenious, industrious and enterprising, if Divine Providence smile upon their exertions, will obtain the most wealth : And why should they not ? For to complain of this would be impious : It would be to find fault with our Creator, for having bestowed upon our friend or fellow-countryman his superior qualifications for the toils and enterprises of life. On the contrary, so long as the superior skill, enterprise and industry only of our rival, give him the advantage over us, we ought to rejoice, instead of repining, at his prosperity : For all good men must rejoice in the merited prosperity of their friends or fellow-citizens. But if the constitution, or the laws under it, or in violation of it, give my rival a privilege, which, under the same or similar circumstances, it denies to me ; and by means of this exclusive, unnatural, and unjust advantage, he triumphs and I fail, it makes him so far a tyrant, and me so far a slave ; and I have then a right to complain.

But I now come to a serious question. Since both Mr. Adams and Mr. Morris have argued, that the rich will tyrannise over the poor, and have recommended, therefore, to keep them quiet and good humored by fixing them for life in the Senate and other high

places in the state, the army and the navy ; it is time to enquire seriously, whether these gentlemen—themselves rich men—were in earnest in thus impeaching the rich ; or was it mere policy, adopted for the moment to carry a favorite point : First, to alarm the people, by showing them a Lion in their way ; and then persuading them to put the dangerous beast into a splendid cage, a palace, becoming the ferocious dignity of his royal bruteship, and there to feed him with the richest and the choicest viands, instead of slaying him as Sampson did. I must say, indeed, that of all the rare cataplasms, or quack remedies, for physical, moral and political disorders, this new plan of curing tyrants of their inordinate and foul propensities, by placing them in the highest offices for life ; this proposition to lengthen and strengthen the claws of the Lion, or the fangs of the Serpent, instead of cutting them off or pulling them out, is of all others, ever known or heard of, in my humble judgment, the rarest illusion or hallucination of brilliant minds ! That such truly illustrious men, and profound geniuses, should hit upon such remedies to prevent or to cure political disorders, is at least one more proof that, in the language of Job, “ great men are not always wise !”

Let us, then, I repeat it, away with all mean suspicions, all vulgar jealousies, between the poor and the rich : And let us all unite to secure to ourselves, and our posterity, the continuance of the blessings of UNION, LIBERTY AND JUSTICE.

To the poor and meritorious man of my country, I would say—Does any rich man look upon you with contempt, merely because he is rich and you are poor, remember that it is his individual folly, weakness or wickedness, that excites the frown upon his brow : And upon such an arrogant fool, the poorest mechanic, or the humblest laborer, with a sound head and heart, may justly turn the sneer of scorn and contempt : He may say to him, in the conscious pride of honest American Democracy :—Who art thou, weak and vain upstart, that dares to turn up your nose at a fellow-creature, made like yourself in the image of his Creator ; and who, if his wealth be not equal to yours, has that within him which you do not possess—a mind enlightened and guided by the principles of justice, and a heart warmed and animated by the fire of freedom : And, therefore, as my father once said to thy father, get thou behind me, vain reptile as thou art, and shrink into thy native insignificance !

And to the rich man of my country, I would say :—Forget not your origin in the common clay of which God created man : If born

rich, abuse not the blessing, and be grateful to God who bestowed it upon you : If born poor, still be grateful to God for raising you from poverty and obscurity to wealth and distinction ; unless indeed you feel conscious that your path to wealth and distinction has been the path of iniquity. But seek not, whether your wealth and standing have been justly or unjustly acquired, to trample upon the liberties of your country : For whoever shall attempt that, will find, to his confusion and disgrace, that if his countrymen are poor in purse, they are rich in spirit. He will indeed find, too soon for his vile purpose—and Lexington, Bunker Hill and Saratoga, Monmouth, Germantown and Yorktown, attest the glorious fact—that there is a spirit in the bosoms of Americans, which will make him feel, that he has to encounter—

" Men, high minded men !
 Men, who their duties know,
 But know their rights, and knowing dare maintain ;
 Prevent the long aimed blow,
 And crush the Tyrant while they rend the chain !"

Thus much would I say both to the poor and the rich man : And I would at the same time, sincerely exhort you, my hearers, and all of our fellow-countrymen, never for a moment to suffer intolerance, bigotry, false pride, or party spirit, to blunt your feelings of humanity or benevolence ; but make TRUTH alone the GUIDE, and LIBERTY alone, both temporal and spiritual, the OBJECT, of all your political, moral or religious conflicts. Well indeed might the patriot muse of France, in the fervor of generous sentiment, exclaim—

" O LIBERTY ! can man resign THEE,
 Once having felt thy sacred flame ?
 Can dungeons, bolts, or bars confine THEE,
 Or whips thy noble spirit tame !"

O ! how sublime and beautiful, in its proper sense, is the very name of LIBERTY ! LIBERTY, the gift of God, the glory of men, of saints and of angels ; the terror of tyrants ; and the theme of that song which was sung by the Morning Stars, when all the sons of God shouted for joy ! O ! what a scene for God and good Angels to behold, was that, when Freedom had her birth in the councils of Jehovah ; when the vaults of Heaven resounded with the song of her triumphs to come ; whilst Hell trembled to its foundations, and Lucifer, the father of Kings, Tyrants, and Monopolists, "grinned horribly a ghastly smile," and flew to hide himself in the deepest recess of his dark domain ; there to bewail the fall of his power, and the inevitable fate of his tyrannic offspring, from Nebuchadnezzar, driven by God, for his crimes and corruptions, to

herd and to feed with the beasts of the field, down to Napoleon, his modern Representative, exiled by the same Divine Providence, for the same crimes and corruptions, the same hostility to his country and to mankind. In comparison with these two Tyrants, whom God so justly doomed to destruction, the present Monarchs of Europe are but the dwindled and insignificant pigmies of the old Satanic brood. Still, they are the same enemies to freedom and humanity; the same enemies of their people, and of the human race: And moreover, they are at this moment plotting the ruin of this country, because it is the only abode of Freedom on earth, and they dread the example it holds out to mankind: But thanks be to God, a storm is now gathering, which will sweep them all, not, I hope, after Nebuchadnezzar and Napoleon; but into the ranks of private life, where, uninfluenced by the arts of their old master, and yielding to a purer and a holier spirit, they may redeem their lost time, by repenting of their crimes, and praying for acceptance at the Throne of Grace: For there the blood of thousands of martyrs, like Warren and Montgomery; Brissot and Roland; Emmet and Fitzgerald; Lunt and Matthews; Von Schoultz and Perrault; Abbey and Woodruff; still cries aloud to Heaven for vengeance, and will be heard: For never yet did the Almighty turn a deaf ear to the cry of innocent blood. Yes, I repeat it, from the tombs of these martyrs, and of thousands of other martyrs, to the sacred cause of freedom, a flame is now ascending and spreading, from "the Towers of Julius," in the modern Babylon, to those of the Tyrant Turk on the banks of the Euxine; and from the Palace Royal of Madrid, to that of the Northern Autocrat, upon whose soul the guilt of destroying the liberties of Poland, and butchering her heroic defenders, now presses with a weight, which divine grace alone can prevent from bearing it down to the dark realms of eternal perdition: And that flame, by the blessing of God, shall sweep all Tyrants from their blood-stained Thrones, and consummate and consecrate the freedom of the human race.

GENTLEMEN OF THE CIVIC AND MILITARY ASSOCIATIONS!

I should fail in my duty here, were I to pass over in silence the harmonious and delightful manner in which you have come together to celebrate the birth day of freedom. It is a beautiful and sublime spectacle, and excites emotions to which words would fail in giving utterance, to behold so many different associations, resting on so many various foundations, and with such variety of laudable

objects in view, rushing like the mingled waters of so many pure and limpid streams into this sanctuary, to rejoice with one accord in the possession of that LIBERTY WHICH WAS THE FIRST BEST GIFT OF GOD TO MAN. The moral which it conveys should never be lost sight of—never, for a moment, be forgotten:—In Union there is moral beauty and sublimity: In Union there is civil, political and religious liberty: In Union, there is national strength, safety, and glory. This, gentlemen, is the grand and impressive moral, which the union, on this day, of so many different civic and military societies, whose brilliant emblems and decorations blend together like the colors of the bow of promise, must convey to every liberal and enlightened mind, every warm and generous heart. I could not say less, and I need not say more, to gentlemen, whose presence here, under such harmonious circumstances, evinces that they are devoted, intellectually and sentimentally, to the liberty, prosperity and glory of their country.

BRAVE AND VENERABLE HEROES OF THE REVOLUTION!

How ought you to rejoice, that the hallowed flame of liberty, destined to consume the tyrants of the earth, first kindled by the breath of God in the bosom of Moses, was re-kindled by the same Divine Power in the bosoms of Washington and his fellow-laborers of 1776, with whom you had the honor to stand, side by side, in defending with your trusty swords the liberties of your native land. I congratulate you on the return of this day, in which you have so much reason to rejoice at the recollection of what God has graciously done for your country and yourselves. On her HE bestowed the precious boon of liberty in the revolution: And you HE saved through the perils of that awful conflict, to enjoy the fruits of your generous valor, in her prosperity and happiness, and to witness on this day the commencement of the sixty-fourth year of her freedom and independence. Well, then, may you look back with honest pride and joy upon the past: And well may you look forward with the calm eye of hope to your future prospects, and with pure and unmingled delight on those of your country: For, believe me, the present day is but the dawn of that light, freedom and glory, which, thanks, under God, to your valor, and that of your brethren in arms, the nations of the earth are destined to receive from these shores.

There seems, indeed, to have been a prophetic ministering spirit at the side of Rogers, when, in the last canto of his beautiful poem,

“**THE VOYAGE OF COLUMBUS,**” he introduces the vision of an Angel, addressing Columbus in his sleep. “Not thine,” says the Angel, to the slumbering but immortal son of Genoa—

“Not thine the olive but the sword to bring,
 Not peace, but war ; yet from these shores shall spring
 Peace without end : From these, with blood defiled,
 Spread the pure spirit of thy master mild !
 Here, in his train, shall arts and arms attend,
 Arts to adorn, and arms but to defend !
 Assembling here, all nations shall be blessed,
 The sad be comforted, the weary rest !
 Untouched, shall drop the fetters from the slave,
 And HE shall rule the world, HE died to save !
 Hence and rejoice ! The glorious work is done,
 A spark is thrown that shall eclipse the SUN !”

Such, my venerable and venerated friends, is the destiny of your country, which I rejoice to believe can neither be retarded nor averted, by any Aristocracy, Oligarchy or Hierarchy ; by any upstart Usurper, Despot or King : And to that high destiny, how grateful ought you to be, that your valor and achievements have been made instrumental by the Divine Power. Did purer glory ever glitter on the brows of the living ! Did brighter laurels ever bloom on the graves of the dead ! FAREWELL, my friends : And since my race as well as yours is nearly finished, let us pray for the precious hope, that should we never meet here again, we may, through the merits of our Divine Redeemer, meet hereafter in another and a better world !