

AN ORATION

COMMEMORATIVE

OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

Delivered at the Presbyterian Church in Savannah,

BY

ALEXANDER TELFAIR, ESQ.

ON THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1812.

AT THE REQUEST

OF A

Committee of Citizens.

SAVANNAH:

PRINTED BY FREDERICK S. FELL,

ON THE BAY.

SIR,

The undersigned Committee of Arrangement for the 5th instant, respectfully solicit that you will favor them with a copy of the Oration delivered on that day, for publication. In making this request, they are actuated by a sincere wish, that sentiments like those, should be promulgated.

We have the honor sir,

to be, very

respectfully,

M. SHEFTALL,

J. T. BOLLES,

ALEX. HUNTER,

L. S. D'LYON,

J. S. BULLOCH,

*Committee of
Republican Citizens.*

ALEXANDER TELFAIR, esq.

Savannah, 7th July, 18 3.

Savannah, July 8th, 1813.

GENTLEMEN,

In conformity with your request, I send you a copy of the Oration, pronounced by me, on the 5th instant.

I duly appreciate the motive by which you were actuated, in making the application.

Very respectfully,

your obedient servant,

ALEXANDER TELFAIR.

To Messrs. Moses Sheftall, Job T. Bolles, Alexander Hunter, Levi S. D'Lyon, James S. Bulloch, Committee of Republican Citizens.

AN ORATION, &c.

—:x:—

TO SOFTEN the iron hand of despotism, it has been the business of princes to amuse their subjects with shows; with games; with jubilees, and triumphs. The fiftieth year of the reign of a king; the return of a conqueror from a foreign war, or some other circumstance conducing as little to the happiness of the nation, is chosen for these exhibitions of royal favor. The people are amused; the force of prejudice is strengthened; the chains of submission are more firmly rivetted; the object of the government is attained. What a contrast, my countrymen does such a picture present to the annual rejoicings, which mark the return of that day, hallowed in the history of our country, by the solemn act of our fathers, separating us forever from the kingdom of Great-Britain:—To celebrate a return of which, kind Heaven has permitted us to assemble on this day.

More than twelve months have elapsed since war has been declared against our ancient and implacable foe the British government; and though unpractised in the art of war, we have seen our Flag triumphing upon the ocean, and our army generally successful; and even when foiled, exhibiting a valor which does honor to the cause, the country, and themselves. The violations of our rights which led to the declarations of hostilities, are familiar to you; for years had you writhed beneath their pressure; you have just heard them read.* Need I then ask you are they sufficient to sanctify the deed? Need I attempt to prove to you that the enemy have forced us into the measure? or endeavor to enlist your feelings in your country's cause? No--the zeal and attachment which on so many occasions you have evinced for its welfare, is a sure pledge of the continuance of your support, and a proof of the alacrity with which you will meet danger for the public good:—and to him who would require higher evidence, I would point out the plains of Florida.† Possessing then this ardent attachment for the government under which you live; an attachment not founded in prejudice, but approved by your judgments:—zealous in the cause in which it has embarked, no subject can be more grateful to your hearts than the celebration of those events which have given a brilliancy to the American character, that time can never tarnish or misrepresentation disfigure.

In pursuance of the proposed plan it will be my duty to mark the progress of our arms upon the land and on the ocean, in as cursory a manner as the interesting subject will admit:—briefly to no-

* The report of the committee on Foreign Relations.

† Alluding to the Georgia and Tennessee Volunteers.

rice some few occurrences attendant upon the war and their influences upon its prosecution. To describe the manner in which the contest has been carried on by ourselves and contrast it with the mode adopted by the enemy : to enquire whether we have not ample cause to rejoice at the events which have already transpired, and the probable results of the present campaign: —And lastly, it will be my mournful duty to do homage to the illustrious dead, whether they have fallen amidst the blaze of victory or the gloom of defeat. Should the conduct of the subject be marked by a loose and desultory manner, I must crave a repetition of that indulgence, which, on a former occasion, you so kindly extended.

At the moment when the declaration of war was made, a gallant little army composed principally of volunteers from the states and territories in the vicinity of our north-west frontier.—An army assembled at its country's call, without the agency of conscription, of impressment, or draught; composed of the flower of the west, generous as the soil they cultivate, and impetuous as the rivers that water it; led on by officers above the reach of any other influence than individual fame and the public good, and commanded by a general from whom much was expected, was advancing upon the adjoining colony of the enemy. From the plan of the campaign, the description of troops, the disaffection of the territory to be invaded and the supposed qualifications of the general in command, the most sanguine hopes were entertained of the speedy subjugation of the province of Upper Canada. Our eyes were anxiously turned to that quarter, not doubting victory, but only eager to

hear it announced: We beheld with deep interest the gradual advance of this band of Freemen to the confines of our country; with admiration we viewed their patient perseverance and patriotic ardor overcoming every obstacle which the nature of the country presented. Supported by these, the trackless wilderness became a highway, and the almost impervious swamps opened a passage for their military train. At length their arrival at Detroit is announced: they encamp upon the banks of that river. The standard of the gallant 4th regiment, is unfurled upon the plains of Canada: they flock around it. No constitutional discussion preceded their embarkation; these were left for disaffection to suggest, and cowardice to canvass. No arguments were offered against the policy of the movement. Their officers commanded it, and they obeyed with alacrity. They did not attempt to prove the preposterous assertion that it was *impolitic, unjust, and cruel to wage war upon Canada*, because the British channel does not wash its shores: No: this was left for the piety of opposition to advance and to advocate.

We behold them penetrating the enemy's country; victory attends their arms: security is offered to the unresisting, liberty to the whole country—the inhabitants rally around their standard. Already in idea had the walls of Malden sunk beneath the fire of our cannon, and its haughty banner bowed to the supremacy of American valor; when suddenly we are informed that our army is retreating; that under the cover of night they have recrossed the river; that the savage tribes of the north are associated with the enemy; that Detroit is invested; that all communication with the set-

lements is cut off: and presently are informed, that this army, the pride of the west, upon which hung the hopes of our country and the freedom and happiness of Canada, has surrendered to an inferior force without an effort to defend itself.

What think you Americans must have been the feelings of these brave men, who had so successfully pushed their bayonets at Bronstown and Miguago, when they were informed that they were prisoners. ~~by~~ by their general into the hands of the enemy: and robbed forever of that fame which was to be the solace of past labors, and the reward of that days conflict. No language can depict them. But that you may form some faint conception of the tumultuous grief which pervaded this abused and insulted army, let me place before you an individual. Imagine that you behold the indignant colonel Cass tearing from his shoulders the insignia of his profession; breaking in pieces that good sword upon which rested in the hour of battle his honor and his life; nay, melted into tears by this disgraceful surrender: then conceive the whole line equally affected.

Turning our view to the north during the campaign of 1812, we find little to recreate the eye. We behold one general sacrificing his judgment and his fame as a soldier to the clamours of his troops; and another exciting hopes only to produce disappointment. The invasion of Canada below the Falls, under the direction of the first, ended in the destruction and capture of many of our brave officers and men; and the descent from Black-Rock above, under the management of the

*A coward or traitor in command!
 let infamy be their reward, not
 withstanding they are and*

other, served only to inspire the enemy with a still higher idea of American valor and enterprize.

After this effort the rigor of the season put a period to the prosecution of the war in this quarter; and our valiant troops, chafed by disappointment and panting for the contest, were compelled to drag out a dreary winter, within view of the enemy. Prudence, however, required this restraint upon their wishes, that our forces might be increased, and that the preparation necessary to give efficacy to the ensuing campaign might be made.

It was different with the army ~~in the~~ north-west. To regain what had been lost by the disgraceful capitulation of general Hull, it was deemed necessary to brave the inclemency of a northern winter. There are some men who seem born for noble purposes, and appear destined to reach the summit of human perfection, by the proper exercise of the attributes of greatness with which nature has gifted them. When with exalted genius is associated the most resplendent virtue; and occasions arise which give to their possessor an opportunity for the display of these qualities, he becomes the admiration of his contemporaries, and is held up as a model for posterity. Such is Harrison, the leader of this army; such will be his reward. Taking advantage of the new impulse given to patriotism by the surrender of Detroit, he embodies the ardent spirits of the west, and an army is seen advancing upon the enemy, ere they had ceased rejoicing at this bloodless victory. By his approach, the savages are dispersed, our besieged Forts relieved, and the frontier protected. A chain of blockhouses connecting the main body with the settlements is formed, which secured the advance-

ment of reinforcements and supplies, and ensured retreat in the event of disaster. Great were the difficulties which he had to encounter, ere the advance guard reached French-Town on the River Raisin, where we are once more called upon to admire valor without success, and glory without advantage. Ah! fatal village! yesterday secure in the protection of your brethren in arms, you forgot the ravages of the enemy, and hailed with rapturous joy the return of tranquility to your abodes: to-day your morning slumbers are broken by the yells of savages, and the roar of cannon. Where yesterday, in your peaceful groves were heard "the gentle accents of love dropping with melting sweetness from the rosy lips of beauty;" to-day is seen "the solitary raven feasting on human carnage." But I will not pursue the picture, for the pencil must be dipped in blood which gives to it its proper coloring.

Pained by this disaster, but undismayed by its consequences, Harrison advances and fortifies a position on the banks of the Miami. The enemy inflated with success and strengthened by a vast accession of savages lay seige to his camp. Whatever wisdom could devise, or valor execute, was done to thwart the efforts of the beseigers, and protect and maintain his position. The firmness of our troops in sustaining the siege, and the success of the different sorties are matters of proud exultation, and fully prove that they only want genius to direct them, and victory will be theirs. But for the inconsiderate valor of the impetuous sons of Kentucky, the events of the fifth of May, would have formed one of the brightest pages in the history of the war. Notwithstanding, however, the

loss of many of these brave men, we have ample cause of rejoicing when we associate the capture of York with this repulse. By it the talisman is broken which bound the savages to the enemy, for it is contrary to the nature of these beings, to be true to misfortune: and when it is known to them that their noble ally is deprived of the means in case of defeat, of furnishing from his own store-houses, what plunder, in the event of success would make unnecessary, it is to be expected that they will desert his standard, and we shall on this as on a former occasion obtain from the *necessities* of Great-Britain, what her *injustice* withholds.

Victory, whose dawn we have just contemplated around Harrison, we have seen shining with meridian splendor upon the exertions of Dearborn. Already has the capital of Upper Canada submitted to the valor of our combined forces, and its rich depots yielded up their stores. Already have the fortresses along the Niagara been levelled with the earth by the fire of our artillery and their defenders, panick struck have fled before our victorious generals.

Not less successful have we been in repelling, than in attacking the enemy. A chosen band of Britons, led by the governor-general of Canada, to the attack on Sacketts Harbor, is foiled in its efforts and is compelled to seek safety in a precipitate flight. Honor to the citizen soldier, who commanded on that day, and humbled the pride and thwarted the plans of the knighted minions of royalty. An example for imitation is presented to our army in the conduct of general Brown. Danger calls; he obeys the summons. The battle over and security restored, he returns immediate-

ly to the quiet of domestic life. Such I trust, will be the conduct of every American, when peace shall be restored to our country. Such was the conduct of their fathers.

Recent occurrences it is true, seem to have changed in some measure, the prospects of the Northern Army, but of its ultimate success, there can be little doubt. The co operation of our Lake Fleet, so important in its movements, will give a different aspect to the appearance of things on the Niagara. Much good not unfrequently arises out of seeming evil: this I doubt not will be the case with the retreat to Fort George; and the useful lesson which our officers and men have learned in the glorious attack on the twenty-seventh of May, and in the subsequent surprise at Stoney creek, where fresh honors were acquired by our troops, and an increase of glory and knowledge by our officers, will whilst it excites the ardor of the one, temper the inconsiderate valor of the other.

Through all the vicissitudes of fortune, our army has supported the high character of freemen. Much glory has it acquired: never has its honor been tarnished: not even in defeat.

The exploits of our navy next claim our attention. The splendors of life, the love of fame, and the power of popular applause, are amongst the highest incentives to honorable renown. Urged by these and love of country, man is capable of the noblest daring. Opposition animates him, difficulties inflame him, and dangers attract him. The hazardous life of the sailor seems peculiarly formed to entice spirits of this ardent and enterprising temper to brave the perils of the ocean, and court fame

amidst the roar of cannon, and the dash of waves; and hence it is that our navy has displayed a romantic gallantry and successful valor, which has called forth reiterated bursts of applause throughout America, and commanded the admiration of the old world. The continued success of the naval power of Great Britain, during the present reign, has been the wonder and the terror of Europe. So constantly has victory attended its exertions in every quarter of the globe, that its enemies felt a dread at beholding its flag, and when fortune did not favor their efforts to escape, it was rare indeed, that they did not strike to the superior skill of British tactics. The navy of France has for years been exiled from its proper element; and when occasionally a single vessel has left the protection of its Ports, it has only been to increase the number of its enemy's force. A similar fate was prophesied for our navy by those hostile to the present struggle for our rights: the falsity of this prophecy, is the proudest boast of the American patriot. A like opinion prevailed amongst our foes, and they confidently spoke of its annihilation in a very few months. They affected to feel a contempt for the budding honors of our Heroes of the Mediterranean, and pretended to despise the incipient fame of Hull, Jones, Bainbridge, Lawrence and Porter, who had so ably contributed to make the Bashaw of Tripoli tremble in his Capital: and seem to have forgotten that Decatur, he who pursued the perfidious Turk, that slew his brother, to the very base of the enemy's castle, and there sacrificed him to appease the shade of the fallen hero; that he too remained to support the honor of his country's flag. Though the naval comman-

base

ders of Britain evinced a pretended disregard of these promises of exalted and sublime actions in these heroes; yet long, very long, will they remember the victories achieved by them since the commencement of this war, and never, never can they forget the unexampled carnage and destruction attendant upon these triumphs.

It would be superfluous in me, my countrymen, particularly to describe the naval conflicts which have reflected so much honor upon our country. The impression they have made upon you, can never be effaced. Five times have you hailed with joyful acclamations, the annunciation of victory upon the ocean. Five times have you beheld the British Flag tumbling from its proud and elevated height, or torn, by our triumphant tars, from the stump of the mast to which desparation had nailed it. The first victory brilliant beyond our hopes: the second not less so, and more beneficial in the safe arrival of the captured frigate; and each succeeding one differing from the foregoing only in superior splendor; till the last more glorious than the rest, terminates in converting a British ship into a tomb for its brave defenders. Matchless prowess! unexampled skill!

The circumstances under which the opposing Navies met, were calculated to present a spectacle of the sublime. Both parties were alike unacquainted with defeat: both equally alive to the applause of victory. Both eager for the fight; neither avoided the conflict. The one rushed into it confident of victory from former success: the other, relying upon its innate though untried prowess, determined to merit it. The one fought to maintain a name: the other to acquire celebrity. The

one contended for another gem to deck its already brilliant crown : The other to snatch this diadem from the brow that wore it. The one struggled for the tyranny of the seas, with the madness of desparation : the other contended for the freedom of the ocean with the enthusiasm of Liberty. The motto of the one was the Orders in Council and British Impressment : that of the other, "FREE TRADE AND SAILORS' RIGHTS :". The latter prevailed : Britain writhed ; America exulted ; the Universe admired.

To bestow rewards suited to the grandeur of the victories achieved by our seamen, has been the pride and glory of America. Every part of the continent has vied in the expression of its high admiration. The acclamations of crowds, the homage of distant cities, the liberality of their government, the gratitude of freemen, have flowed spontaneous from the hearts that gave them. These are the richest rewards which Republicans can bestow : which freemen can receive.

It seems decreed, that, beyond a certain point in their ambitious march to greatness, nations shall not pass. To reach it, the whole physical power of the country is called into exertion ; all the virtues which adorn the individual, or give lustre to society, promote, sustain and support it ; and when these loose their influence, the spirit which gave energy to the progress of the monster, becomes weak and powerless. A decline ensues. Either gradual, but sure, from internal corruption, or sudden and violent from the blows of more potent rivals. The British government has long since reached this state of improveless exaltation and national depravity : and may I venture to as-

exaltation

sert that America is chosen as the chief instrument of its destruction. The hope is not vain. Already has she humbled her pride upon the ocean, and should Heaven continue to favor us in bringing our vessels in contact with enemy's ships of equal force, I doubt not American valor will give a blow to British naval power far more severe than any which its enemies of the eastern continent have been able to inflict during a twenty years war. And should we continue victorious, it is to be expected that the nations of Europe emulating our example, will join their efforts with ours, to crush this monster of the deep, and restore liberty to the ocean, and commerce to the world.

Amidst the coruscations of victory upon the ocean, a passing cloud is seen veiling its splendor for a moment, only I trust to make the succeeding brightness still more glorious. It may be confidently asserted that its effulgence will receive little diminution from the capture of the Chesapeake; but I doubt not it will receive a melancholy grandeur from its accompanying horrors, an awful sublimity from the desperate nature of the struggle. Accidents, my countrymen, may defeat the best laid plans, or victory had been ours: Success does not always crown the efforts of the brave and skillful, or Lawrence had prevailed. Of this be assured, the honor of our flag was safe whilst he was its guardian, and when he was no longer able to command, his officers preserved it untarnished by disgrace, though it be partially obscured by defeat.

The prowess and good conduct of our flotilla upon the Lakes, are worthy of the highest praise. Its exploits have increased the naval glory of the country, and been of essential advantage to the in-

vading army. At one time we have beheld the intrepid Canunze, striking such terror into the enemy's squadron, as to drive it over shoals, and pursuing it into a fortified port, anchoring his fleet, and pouring death and destruction into the shipping, the town and the forts, and returning without loss.

At another covering in a most masterly style, the embarkation of our troops, silencing the batteries of the enemy, and mowing down their advancing columns. May Heaven prosper the future exertions of this active and gallant officer.

We now pass to the consideration of some few occurrences attendant upon the war. Among these, not the least conspicuous is the organization of a party in opposition to the views of government, denominating itself the *Friends of Peace*. Names are not always descriptive of things: and in this instance the attributes of the thing named, are so much in opposition to the qualities associated with the appellation by which it is known, that the veriest credulity cannot be deceived: If to clamor against the acts of its own government and falsify its intentions; and to palliate, nay advocate the conduct of the enemy: if to foment state opposition and promote disunion: if to strive to injure the public credit and prevent enlistment; if to exult at our disasters, and evince a satisfaction at the successes of Britain, indicate a love of peace, then indeed are they the friends of peace. The springs of action in this party may be discovered from an examination of the materials of which it is composed. It is made up of the disappointed of all sects; commercial agents; British hirelings; men who have abjured the countries which gave them birth, for the purposes of gain, and some, who were ori-

ginally distinguished from us, only in choosing a different track to reach the same end, but who have incurred a high culpability by lending their influence to advance the views of a combination, hostile to the government. Its principal motive of action is a deadly hate of its successful political rivals, which by long indulgence, has destroyed all love of country; and as there is, from its very constitution, a place in the human heart to be occupied by those feelings which constitute the pleasures of the patriot and which vacuity cannot fill, when love of ones' own country ceases, foreign attachment must supply its place. To this cause are we to ascribe the celebration of "*Russian victories.*" These men can celebrate the successes of Russia (the ally of Great-Britain the enemy of America) with all the solemnities of religion; all the pomp of declamation, and all the festivities of joy, but have not one poor tear to shed over the fallen dead of their own country; one solitary acclamation to hail the announcement of victory upon the shores of Canada. If the sainted spirits of our sires are permitted to behold the transactions of this world, may Heaven in its mercy veil forever from their view this unholy sight.

The change in the Department of War is to be numbered amongst the most important occurrences of the year. By it, order and arrangement have taken place of the chaotic confusion which prevailed under the preceding secretary. The change of a minister in other countries usually produces ferment, but under our virtuous and philosophic President, the alteration was made almost without the knowledge of the people, and the beneficial results alone informed us of the change.

The sudden death of the distinguished citizen, who had in charge the interests of our country at the court of France, is to be viewed as a national calamity. At this period, the friendship of that nation is desirable, as the means of annoying the British commerce, would be greatly increased by finding within its ports a place of refuge and safety for the vessels captured from the enemy by our adventurous privateers. The duty of completing the unfinished negociation, has devolved upon a citizen of our own state.† The acuteness of his mind, and the vigor of his understanding, combined with his unbending republican principles, peculiarly fit him for the station, and place him far above the reach of the deceptions of a court or the machinations of a despot, and I doubt not he will very soon compel the varying policy of France to assume a decided shape.

In our ordinary intercourse with society, we discover a variety of character, arising from different powers, operating upon the judgment and the passions. The force of habit, the influence of education, the mandates of custom, the power of ambition, the diffusion of learning and the form of government, have a plastic influence upon the constitutional temperament of the individual who comes within the reach of their separate or combined operation. The power of external causes, moving in unison with these and others, tend to form a national character. In monarchies it is dependent in a great measure, too, upon the temper of the prince and the fashions of the court: in republics, upon the action and reaction of the people and the government, and its collisions with other states. Of the American character it may be said, that

† W. H. Crawford.

oppression forced it into being, and that it was fostered in the nursery of war. The success of the revolution infused into it a love of liberty, which has been increased and confirmed by the happy form of government arising out of the establishment of our independence. Our peaceful pursuits for the last thirty years, afforded few opportunities for the display of its noble and warlike characteristics, and the nations of Europe beholding it slumbering for such a lapse of time, falsely imagined it extinct forever: whilst the misrepresentations of travellers, who viewed it through the misty medium of prejudice, have attempted to disfigure the humbler attributes of this quiet state. A people ingenious, bold, and generous; ardent in their love of Liberty and justice; industrious beyond example, unostentatious and frugal, have been represented as weak, lawless, ignorant; have been described as a race of avaricious merchants, and indolent and tyrannical land-holders. The display of our national character, already made is a full refutation of this calumny, and I doubt not its future developement will give an increased dignity to the American name. The day is not far distant when, by this resuscitation of character, the American Flag will be honored wherever seen, and the nations of Europe remembering its terrible aspect in war, will respect its mild lustre in peace.

The re-election of the present chief magistrate is perhaps the most important political occurrence, associated with the war. In vain has a presumptuous rival attempted to shake the confidence which the people reposed in him: in vain has he attempted to deceive them with the Syren song of peace. Calm in his dignified seat, encircled by

the love of Americans, sits this good and great man, unmoved either by state opposition or party violence. Elevated by his own native excellence above the reach of malice or detraction; sublimated by the purest patriotism, the most exalted love of virtue; confident of the continued support of the friends of Independence, he disregards the struggles of opposition, and pursues with unwearied constancy the glory and happiness of his country; looking forward to an honorable peace as the end of all his labors, the reward of all his toils. As long as virtue has its admirers; justice its advocates, and America its Liberty, the name of Madison will receive the homage of applause; the gratitude of his country.

I now proceed to describe the benevolent spirit with which the war has been carried on by ourselves, and the savage manner adopted by the enemy.

There is something in the exercise of mercy so lovely in itself, and it carries with it such a rich reward, that man seems to violate his nature, when he ceases to indulge this godlike impulse.

“Its quality is not strain’d :

It droppeth, as the gentle dew from heaven,

Upon the place beneath : it is twice bless’d.

It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes :

’Tis mightiest in the mightiest ; it becomes

The throned monarch better than his crown :

His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,

The attribute to awe and majesty,

Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings ;

But mercy is above this scepter’d sway,

It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,

It is an attribute to God himself ;

And earthly power doth then show likes: God's
When mercy seasons justice."

In proportion as the practice of this virtue excites esteem and admiration, does the violation of its dictates enkindle horror and detestation. Perhaps no situation in which a human being can be placed more imperiously demands its exercise than that of the captive. His state should

" Pluck commiseration

From brassy bosoms, and rough hearts of flint
From stubborn Turks, and Tartars, never train'd
To offices of tender courtesy."

His life, his liberty and his happiness are at the disposal of his more fortunate enemy: and he who takes from him the first; or spares it only to embitter the last, is a wretch unworthy of the name of man. What higher earthly gratification can the generous soul desire, than its own approbation; the gratitude of a vanquished foe; the applause of virtue:—All these await him who pours balm into the wounded spirit of the captive: who by the exercise of generosity blunts the arrow of adversity, and mitigates the pangs of the dying Hero.

I rejoice, Americans, that the history of the war furnishes many illustrious examples of such admirable conduct in our countrymen, and would to God I could add, that the enemy have been equally humane. We have seen Hull and Decatur, not only exerting themselves to preserve the lives of the wounded, and afford comfort to the well, but even restoring, to the vanquished, property, which became theirs by the right of capture: Lawrence snatching from a sinking wreck the almost lifeless bodies of his enemies, and sacrificing by this magnanimous effort, the lives of his own men: And

Bainbridge, extorting friendship from a foe—tears from a soldier. Illustrious champions! I repeat it, yours is a fame, which time can never tarnish, or misrepresentation disfigure.

With a few solitary exceptions as in the conduct of captains Byron and Hardy, the enemy seem to have sought a fiendlike satisfaction in adding to the miseries of captivity by the practice of inhumanity. Witness this in the confinement of our sailors in loathsome prison ships, in the scanty allowance of unwholesome food furnished them; in the indignities heaped upon them; in the imprisonment of our soldiers in gloomy dungeons; in crowding them on board small transports, destitute of comfort for the sick and a sufficiency of food for the healthful; and in returning them to their homes by the most circuitous routs. The recital of these circumstances alone, ~~are~~ sufficient to chill the heart of humanity. But what shall we say of the cruel, barbarous imitation of a Roman triumph, in the entry of our troops into the city of Montreal. What shall we say of a country, which can instigate a race of beings, who attack without discrimination and murder without remorse, to take up the tomahawk and scalping knife against their fellow man:—Of a nation calling itself civilized, forming alliances with such barbarians, and increasing their habitual appetite for blood, by the rewards which they offer for the scalps taken from those who fall in battle:—Of that government which can ornament its council chamber with these savage memorials of its victories. The black catalogue of epithets which the multifarious crimes of the world have given rise to, cannot furnish appellations sufficiently strong to express the horror and

enormities

detestation which such ~~emotions~~ engender. For these and other acts of inhuman barbarity, this government should be forever exiled from the pale of civilized nations, and be suffered to rank only with its eo-adjutors in this war, the pirates of Tunis and Algiers and the savages of North America.

To cap the climax of wanton cruelty, the destruction of some happy village alone was wanting. Behold it in the smoking ruins of Havre de Grace. Turn your eyes, my countrymen to that once lovely village. Behold a licentious soldiery let loose upon its defenceless and unresisting inhabitants. Behold the aged matron, from whose memory is not yet obliterated the inhuman barbarities practiced during the revolution by the troops of the lords Rawdon and Cornwallis: Too feeble now for flight, her body sinks to earth beneath infirmity and fear—her soul ascends in prayers to the God of Heaven. Around her are seen, youth, innocence and beauty, mingling their devotions with hers. The Russian band approaches; they entreat that their lives may be spared and their little all: but half their prayer is heard; nay not half: for the consuming element which takes from them their little all, robs them of the means of future support. Iron hearts! which the prayers of age, the shrieks of innocence and the tears of beauty assail in vain. Inflamed to madness by the savage fury of their leader; checked by no remorse of conscience; dead to the feelings of humanity, this unresisting town is given up to pillage, its inhabitants to insult, and their once happy abodes to devouring flames. Even the sacred temple of God, not erected by the munificence of a prince, but built

by the humble piety of honest industry ; unostentatious as the religion to which it is dedicated, and simple as the votaries that weekly kneel before its altar, even it did not escape the fury of these marauders. Disappointed at not discovering within its sanctuary a ransom for its exterior, they despoil and disfigure it, and with difficulty are dissuaded from applying the torch. Sacrilegious wretches ! inhuman barbarous foes ! The honest historian of your country, whose painful task it shall be to record the events of the reign of George the Third, when he shall come down to the history of the American War, will blush over the pages as he writes them, and sigh that he cannot erase them forever from the annals of his country and the memory of the world. But Oh ! what a delightful task is reserved for you future historian of America. It will be yours to dwell with admiration on the calm and dignified conduct of a virtuous administration ; the matchless valor and transcendant generosity of a gallant navy ; the patient constancy and patriotic ardor of a daring army. And though thy feeling heart will be pained whilst it records some few successless enterprises, it will never be sickened or disgusted by the recital of their crimes or their barbarities.

In conformity to the proposed division of the subject, it would here become my duty to enquire, whether, amidst all the privations incident to war, we have not ample cause to rejoice at our present state and future prospects : but I have already too far trespassed upon your patience : I will therefore wave this part of the subject. The unusual splendor of this day's celebration, tells me you exult in your situation : The general expression of joy

which every where behold, informs me, you indulge the brightest anticipations. Oh! may they be realized. May this war prove as fruitful in blessings, as it has been abundant in honors. May the offspring of the present generation have reason to view with the same sacred veneration the conduct of these times, with which we, Americans, contemplate the actions of our fathers.

In conclusion. So great are the calamities of war, and such the necessary results of any conflict, that even victory is compelled to mingle tears of sorrow with the acclamations of joy. No matter how disastrous the battle to the one: no matter how splendid the success of the other, grief demands her tribute alike, from the victor and the vanquished. In every conflict many must fall. In the contests of armies, destruction knows no distinction. The lover and the husband—the brother and the sire—the general and the private—the glory of his country and the idol of the army, fall in undistinguished death. Age and youth, genius and virtue—present worth and future excellence sink alike before this resistless tyrant.

When it occurs that the fame of those who fall had not yet passed beyond the circle of their associates in arms, the eulogies of friendship and the solemn dirges of the camp sanctify their doom. But when the spirit which pervades the whole body and flashes enthusiasm into the advancing columns, takes its flight from the field of battle, the regrets of the whole nation are joined with the exultation which success occasions. Such are the feelings inspired by the capture of York and the death of Pike. It was a noble victim which fate demanded when she claimed his gallant soul.

The loss of a general is at all times a great bereavement, but when in that officer are discovered traits which promised the most exalted greatness; when in him are seen all those noble qualities which give lustre to the profession of arms, the mind contemplates with awful gloom, the fall of such a Hero, and sighs that he is no more.

“As the young Olive in some sylvan scene,
Crown'd by fresh fountains with eternal green,
Lifts the gay head in snowy flowrets fair
And plays and dances in the gentle air,
When lo! a whirlwind from high heaven invades
The tender plant, and withers all its shades,
It lies uprooted in its genial bed
A lovely ruin now defac'd and dead:”

Thus lay Pike extended on the plain of York.
Widow and daughter of the fallen Hero! let the honorable renown he acquired in the arms of death mitigate thy pangs. Remember that though lost to you, he yet lives in the annals of his country, & in the hearts of Americans. ~~in the hearts of Americans~~
~~in the hearts of Americans~~ *in the hearts of Americans*

The fall of him is blissful who sinks in instant death, compared with that of the dying naval hero, who survives only to a consciousness of defeat. It is a dreadful fate which permits him to outlive the conflict for a few hours only; to hear the shouts of victory from the triumphant foe mingling with the expiring groans of his companions in fight; to behold his slaughtered brothers consigned one by one to a watery grave; which preserves his mind uninjured amidst the anguish of his body, just long enough to contemplate all the horrors of his situation, and behold his sun of glory setting

amidst the murky gloom of defeat ; and, which, just at that dreadful moment, when his feelings are wrought up to the highest pitch of misery, ere reason and reflection have had time to pour the balm of consolation into his wounded spirit, or friendship to solace with the whispers of hope, at this awful moment of mental misery and bodily anguish, bursts his mighty soul. Such was thy dreadful doom Oh! gailant Lawrence! pride of thy country—brightest ornament of thy profession! Oh! may thy spirit wake to joys above, ethereal, exalted and sublime. May thy future bliss equal in brightness, the gloom of thy fall

Sacred, in the celebrations of this day, be the memories of all those who have fallen in battle : honored be their lives. May the grateful recollections of a bereaved country sooth the sorrowing spirits of the widow and the orphan : may the admiration of succeeding generations gild anew the lustre of their names, and give an eternity to their existence. May history when it would set before the youthful mind examples of disinterested patriotism and generous valor, point to thy names, Bush, Dudly, Pike, Mills and Lawrence, and thy companions in death : and poetry, catching inspiration from the contemplation of thy enthusiasm, and grandly swelling with the majesty of its subject, wonder at the greatness of its powers, whilst it celebrates thy achievements.

FINIS.