

Wm. Prescott
with the writer's respectful regards

ORATION,

DELIVERED JULY THE FOURTH, 1810,

AT THE

REQUEST OF THE SELECTMEN OF BOSTON,

ON THE

FEELINGS, MANNERS, AND PRINCIPLES,

THAT PRODUCED

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

.....
BY ALEXANDER TOWNSEND.
.....

*Quis porro, præter periculum horridi et ignoti maris, Britanniam relictam,
Columbiam peteret? infœrnam terris, aspèram cœlo, tristem cultu aspec-
tuque, NISI SI PATRIA SIT "*
Tac. de mor. Germ.

BOSTON:
FROM THE PRESS OF JOHN ELIOT, Jun
1810.

VOTE OF THE TOWN.

AT a meeting of the frecholders and other inhabitants of the town of **BOSTON**, duly qualified and legally warned, in publick town-meeting, assembled at *Faneuil Hall*, the 4th day of July, A. D. 1810—

On motion, voted, That the Selectmen be, and hereby are appointed, a committee to wait on **ALEXANDER TOWNSEND**, Esq. in the name of the town, and thank him for the elegant and spirited oration, this day delivered by him at the request of the town, upon the anniversary of American Independence, in which were considered the feelings, manners, and principles, which produced the great national event; and to request of him a copy for the press.

Attest,

THOMAS CLARK, *Town Clerk*

ORATION.

THIS day commemorates the birth of a nation. Is it a day of pride or humiliation ; of sorrow or joy ? Better never be born than live disgraced. If our character be no longer honour ; if our sovereignty be the sport of the world ; if a foreign minister be suffered without resentment to declare war in our names ; if our vessels are burnt without resistance ; if there be no safety for our commerce, but in flight ; the spirit of our declaration of independence has fled ; and its letter remains, an exanimate relic, only to reproach us with the extent of our loss.

That this is not our condition, the patriot, almost against the evidence of his senses, is bound to believe. Thick clouds may involve the country ; but they are not impervious to the sunbeam of independence, which, this morning, revives her to hope.

The grandeur and importance of a structure can alone be completely realized, by comprehending the depths, to which its foundations are sunk. The feelings, manners, and principles, from which independence sprang, have therefore always constituted the hallowed theme, to which this occasion is sacred, and will always form the subject of delightful contemplation, till the occasion be no more.

If our national career will admit one day of rest ; if we are not in the descent of a precipice so steep, that we dare not look back ; if it be yet in our power to make even a momentary stand, the contemplation of the feelings, manners, and principles, that led the fathers to independence, may possibly arrest the sons in their progress to degradation.

The division of the causes, that produce the freedom of a nation, into feelings, manners, and principles, is no arbitrary division. Feelings put the body in motion ; manners give that motion force ; and without principles both would be fruitless.

These feelings, manners, and principles were the central fires, that animated the political system of America from the first moment the God of nature called it into being. It was their combined influence first prompted the resolution in minds, with whom to resolve was to execute, of exploring another world. It was their energy made the primitive pilgrim dare the horrors of the ocean and the howl of the wilderness ; that nerved the arm of the woodman in his attempt to make that " wilderness blossom like the rose."

I trust, I shall readily be pardoned by a New England audience in confining what remarks I may suggest principally to the New England states. As these were leaders in the war of the revolution, they may not unfairly be considered as having produced the event we this day celebrate.

The first colonists to this country are generally known to have been, many of them, men of liberal

minds and elevated standing. A remnant of their party ; some of the brightest ornaments, that adorned the age, were actually arrested on the point of embarkation by a British order in council.* Archbishop Laud, *strange* instance of blindness to the future *kindly* given ! was thus enabled to keep at home, some of the very individuals, that were to be afterwards instrumental in bringing his head to the block. But for this order in council, HAMPDEN might himself have slumbered “inglorious” beneath the sod of an American wilderness ; CROMWELL been “guiltless of his country’s blood ;” and not left in fragments that column of royalty, which had risen in splendour and magnificence from the labour of ages.

Every feeling, that gives dignity to man ; that stimulates to improvement or excites to glory, is roused into action and enterprise by the hope of independence. It is with nations as with individuals ; subjection takes away half their worth. Hence colonial establishments never were remarkable for literary distinction. It was not as colonies of Phenicians and Trojans, that Greece and Rome gave the world sciences and arts as well as laws. Man is said to be “the disciple of that which surrounds him ;” and in the midst of desolation is desolate. The mind seems not merely to sympathize, but to be absolutely identified with the condition

* Hume, vol. 4, p. 425. Mather’s Hist. New Eng. Book 1. Hutch. Hist. Mass. Bay, vol. 1, p. 42. Hampden, Cromwell, Pym, the Pelhams, Lords Brook, Say and Seal, Sir Arthur Hazlerig and others. See too Eur. Set. in America. Pym and others were concerned in Laud’s impeachment

around it. As that is civilized, so is this; both of them are rude together; where that is humble, this is seldom seen to aspire. Our fathers were not born in the deserts they came to subdue. They were disciples of other countries, the improvements of which they hoped to transplant hither without the corruptions. They brought with them the feelings those scenes had inspired; feelings, that prompted them to act, on their first landing, as if conscious they were then founding national character; as if mindful of the long line of illustrious descendants, that were to look up to them for examples; as if responsible for the reputation of a new world.

With such feelings colonial dependence could not long be tolerable. The first immigrants were from a party, that were pronounced by an English observer,* who could "look quite through the deeds of men," to have before been "impregnated with a high spirit of liberty," and to have a strong tendency to republican government. It was hardly to be expected, that men had fled from religious bondage only to submit to civil; that the indignation, which flashed against restraint in one case, would not soon fire them in the other; that it was the modification of a principle, for which their homes were abandoned, not the principle itself; that a love of liberty, which no "variety of untried being" could appal, beings too familiar to be formidable were suddenly to intimidate. They felt, that rights were no properties of soil; that themselves were the same in America as in Britain; that their sons

* BURKE.

should be born to the same latitude of freedom ; that no badge of servitude should repress in them the ardour of ambition or check the aspirations of genius ; that a continent was not to be marched by mind in shackles : that souls were to be ripened under western suns ; and that freedom, the most pure and perfect, was the only element, through which the influence of their beams could fairly be felt.

Patriotism in them was thus in some degree necessarily blended with paternal affection. They had one duty to their country and children, and were alike fathers to both.

The feelings, inspired by the scenes they had left, must have received new life from those, to which they were introduced. The ocean they had passed ; and land was before them equally boundless. It was the solitude of nature worshipping God. They beheld every where objects of grandeur ; mighty rivers ; ocean lakes ; mountains, whose heads were invisible. It seemed to be a land, where the boldness of nature was to abash timidity or expand it into kindred greatness. Forests waved their proud heads in the skies ; and to men, that evinced dependent, sordid spirits, every look from the unchartered libertine, that inhabited them, would have been a tacit, but eloquent reproof upon their vaunted civilization.

But the most important sentiment, that gave hardihood to their character, was the mere result of their personal exertions. Remote from the parent country ; with little support from it but what their own

fortunes had yielded ; cherished by persecution ; they could not but have felt, that labour in the soil gave far more right to exclusive sovereignty over it, than accidental discovery or any technical title whatever. They looked upon forests prostrate ; and felt proud of this proof of dominion. While their hearts swelled at the prospect, there was no logic could convince them, that the hand, that cleared, was not of itself competent to defend, the land.

Enthusiasm was among the feelings, that first enlisted in the cause of independence and continued in the service to the last. Religion was indeed the point, to which it tended in the outset ; but it gave every thing a tendency to that point. It contemplated civil violations as religious outrages. It fervently adored a Being, that willed the happiness of man ; and of course willed civil establishments, by which alone that happiness could best be effected. Oppression it would therefore resist as impiety, and hostility to such establishments as hostility to heaven. It was thus our fathers adorned their doctrine. Any other profession would have debased the worshipper in the temple. The puritan might thus take the patriot to the altar without profanation. Liberty was seen to lean upon religion ; their common pedestal, the platform of the church ; a sight, well worthy the birth of an empire !

This attempt to ascribe the feelings, that eventually produced independence, to an origin so remote, it is hoped, will not be deemed visionary. It is no suggestion of fancy, that can be mistaken for the tale of

fact. It is the narrative of history merely. That these feelings existed on the first settlement of the country is beyond the power of scepticism to doubt. The primitive adventurers, when they had no express authority to meet an emergence, did not pause and retrace the ocean for an appendix to a royal charter. They took the law from the occasion, and let the act justify itself. Instance the * unauthorized establishment, within the first few years, of a legislative body ; of courts of probate and admiralty ; and the daring to inflict, without authority from home, even capital punishments. They were in a new world, fruitful of new necessities, that required and created new hearts. They assumed the right of self-taxation ; exerted the creative power of sovereigns in acts of incorporation ; and went so far as soon to dispute the very oath of allegiance. These feelings then existed, however they may have slumbered at intervals ; now French wars divert them ; now other events conduct them off harmless and without shock. But the electric fluid is inexhaustible. The principle remained latent ; till at length the body, dreadfully charged, burst in explosion from the parent stock.

Who will deny the influence of manners in producing independence to nations ? Who does not know, that where vice seemed to have doubled its evil by regaining "all its grossness," liberty lost all its charm ? How much more powerfully must that

* Minot's Continuation of the History of Massachusetts. p. 16.

charm fascinate, where vice is kept by simplicity at awful distance? Nations are but the aggregates of individuals. To these manners give, not only dignity of character, but frequently the worth, that makes that character deserved. Manners and feelings reciprocate offices of kindness. Refined feelings naturally express themselves in liberal manners; and liberal manners will at length inevitably produce refined feelings. Little indeed can he have observed human nature, who has not perceived, how the practice of comity, forced at first, will yet in time create the genuine benignity, whence it naturally flows; how elevated deportment, assumed in the beginning, ends at last in the real sense of honour, to which it was originally but the hollow pretension. The habit becomes a second nature and conquers the first. Virtue takes advantage of the homage, that is paid her in hypocrisy, and makes the half way worshipper completely convert. Our fathers however knew neither force nor assumption. No simulation disgraced their character. "Strong in honesty," they were open as day and bold as the shores that welcomed them. With them was no constraint; every thing was natural; every thing spontaneous. Their manners were simple as their hearts were pure. Listen to their own words! They tell you "that they were enured to the difficulties of a strange land;"* that, bound together for the good of the whole, it was not their manner to be discouraged by "small things" or made morbidly desirous of home by "small dis-

* 1 Hutch. p. 12. Words from their application to the Virginia Company.

contents." No small things had they to discourage them; no small discontents to drive them back. Hardly had they landed when half their number was no more. The first six months thus thinned their band. "The path of" ocean led "but to the grave." I pass without notice the mighty hunter of the woods, harmless to the horrors, with which fancy had peopled them. It was not the savage; nor the desert; nor death—Nothing could deter. The enlightened colonist was fixed. The country had the something infinite and immense,* which is calculated so powerfully to strike the imagination. He looked; and every where around him was a vastness of view his faculties would in vain dilate to comprehend. The voice of nature seemed to cry,

"Oh, how canst thou renounce and hope to be forgiven?"

He was cheered with the sight, in the distant vista of time, of new glories rising for the founder of empire. The vision was delightful. It inspired confidence and enkindled hope.

The nature of our fathers' situation was peculiarly favourable for creating and continuing this fairness of manners. They had fled to a distance vast enough to keep them "unspotted from the world." The mediocrity of their condition had a happy effect. The singleness of their pursuit cemented their union. Our fathers worshipped God; not mammon. Their employ for support; commerce, at first among them-

* I should here have introduced Cicero's words, "aliquid immensum infinitumque," but that just at this place I did not dare talk in a dead language.

selves; agriculture; fishery, emphatically "another kind of agriculture," when confined to the coasts; all were peculiarly calculated to produce patriot manners.

The extreme importance of these on the first colonization of the country has not been overlooked. "Exact and sober manners," we are told by foreign authority,* proved at that time a substitute for proper subordination and regular government. It was indeed an admirable substitute. It was the law in their hearts when they had no law beside. In considering this simplicity, let us not however mistake its character. There was then no pastoral simplicity piping upon American plains in idle employment. It was a simplicity, partly the result of wants; partly of virtues; but mostly of passions, the best evidence of the purity of which was the purity of the means, by which alone they could be gratified. It was a simplicity without its usual barbarity. It had grown up with the revival of learning. It was kindled by ancient fires. It was the simplicity of enlightened minds; the plainness, that best polished greatness. It united English refinement with American hardihood; so that what in the new world was simple, the old world had prevented from ever being rude.

To show the force of these manners in subsequent periods of your history, it can hardly be necessary to point to the epoch, when, for a twelvemonth, you were without government; had neither judge nor executive officer; and yet exhibited to mankind the astonishing spectacle of order in anarchy.

* Burke's *European Settlements in America*

One other peculiarity in the manners of our ancestors merits suggestion. It is that discreetness of demeanour, which promotes, by concealing, its end; which evinces firmness by disclaiming effrontery; which is cool in threat, that it may prove collected in execution. Hence the uniform respectfulness and dignified circumspection of their deportment to Britain, till the crisis had come, when it was not their business to rail, but fight. They exhibited the front of fortitude, whose features are settled and firm; not the transient distortions of anger or the momentary marks of convulsive rage. They had nothing of the bully or bravado in their nature. Theirs was not that verbal valour, that "keeps the promise to the ear" it must "break to the hope." They were rather ambitious of doing more than they would say. Posterity was welcome to the glory of saying more than it could do.

It was this trait in their character, that did so much to disarm revolution of horror. They followed nature; who suffers not the ocean to rise into anger without the knowledge and ability to stay its waves: who never broke up a fountain of the deep without power to direct the course of the flood and at pleasure put an end to the deluge. Our revolution was comparatively mild. The people were saved from themselves. Men without fear had seldom less cause for reproach. Riot robbed glory of scarcely a life. Not a drop of the blood, that was to be poured out for liberty, could be spared for licentiousness. Little mob-violence disgraced our proceedings. The din of arms

could not drown the voice of law. Men, hurrying on to liberty, still stopped to do homage to justice. The Fifth of March, 1770, while it did much to establish our independence, did more to prove we were worthy of it. The very soldiers, viewed in the most odious light, as members of a standing army, quartered upon us in time of peace; whose firing upon the populace produced death and liberty; were, almost immediately, by that populace and for that firing, solemnly, deliberately, and righteously, **ACQUITTED OF MURDER!** My friends, this is the greatest glory in our history; the brightest gem in our national diadem. Brutes have passions. Men should govern them. We have another instance. In the temple of justice a voice was afterwards heard; "I WILL THIS DAY DIE SOLDIER OR SIT JUDGE;" and thus was suddenly expressed what since, thank God, has proved a permanent feature of the New England judiciary.

The principles, that give freedom to a nation, apply, some to ascertaining its rights and some to enforcing them. As to instruction in the former, this people had certainly signal advantages. They had originated in a country, where jurisprudence had risen to such a height of perfection, as to exemplify the moral sublime. They had opportunities of observing around them different colonies settled in succession, one of which had **PENN** for a lawgiver, and another had **LOCKE**.*

* The model for the constitution of ^{South Carolina} ~~North Carolina~~ had been furnished by the famous **JOHN LOCKE**. See Burke's Eur. Sett. in America.

divided each of the countries, minds as competent to discuss and decide, as can reasonably be expected to coexist in any civil community. Their decision it becomes not us to revise. They concluded; and were ready to be called out to support the conclusion. It is sufficient that they thought the war just. It was a war, that WASHINGTON could lead; and a mind, conscientious as GREENE's, could support.

But we are not to suppose, that the laying on a tax emancipated a continent, how much soever it may have contributed to accelerate the event. This would be against that rule in philosophy, which requires effects to be solved by competent causes. The truth is, America was of age to be free and determined to be in fact independent. The attempt to keep her much longer in restraint, even had no effort at impost been made, would have been as preposterous, as to keep manhood in leading strings. When the child has strength to go alone, the arms of the mother must be content to give it up. The principle, that broke our hands, was growth; a principle as inexplicable, as how the plant vegetates or life is sustained.

But though taxation served only to accelerate independence, yet as it was one of those questions, which might naturally be expected to arise between a parent country and its colony, it was foretold as the point, on which we should one day divide. Of this the Abbé Du Bos in the reign of Queen Anne seems to have been distinctly aware.* The right of impost by a

* See Note (c.)

parliament of Britain upon American subjects was denied so early as the time of Charles the second, and occasioned a rupture between him and the Marquis of Halifax.* This fact may account for subsequent prophecies.

No matter how correct may be the principles, from which a nation deduces its rights ; no matter with what mathematical certainty the conclusions may follow ; unless it have the power to enforce these conclusions, the labour of demonstration had better be saved. Constituted as is human nature, people owe liberty only to power. Whatever constitutes this power is then to independence a principle in the strict sense of the term, being what precedes as a cause, not what follows as a consequence. Of the constituents of power our fathers had many. They had indeed little of what Tacitus called the sinews of war ; but they had prudence to make the most of that little. They had prudence ; but it was the prudence, that saves by spending ; not that sordid, pitiful penuriousness, whose very saving is extravagance. It was not that bastard economy ; that rickety bantling, that has an eye for the money's worth, but is blind to the worth of every thing else. They knew there was a pearl above price. It was the jewel of their souls ; of which they thought not the less, because to preserve it would take money from their pockets.

* See Barillon's despatches to Louis XIV. under dates of Dec. 7, 13, and 21, 1694. The principles of the doctrine, that led Americans to independence, are asserted under Charles I. by the counsel for Hampden in their client's celebrated trial.

They had too experience. French wars had exercised them not a little as soldiers. So that some of them must have thought, like the allies of the Roman republick, since they had borne the burthen and heat of the day, they had a right to the privileges of Roman citizens.

From noticing the feelings, manners, and principles, that produced the revolution, your minds will rest, with melancholy pleasure, on the memory of him, in whom they were embodied. His shroud turns the day into gloom and our joy into mourning. No longer can we behold the sunbeam play round his hoary head. Of LINCOLN you indeed were proud. New England, pointing to the excellence of his character, as proof of the glory of his birth, exclaimed, with pride and exultation, "This is my son!" In him prudence was ennobled by courage and courage made efficient from prudence. The glare of his glory was finely contrasted with the soft green of his virtues. The hero in war was equalled only by the patriot in peace. Honour was left at loss, which most to admire; his firmness in battle or confidence in friendship.

The war of independence is over, and happy shall we be, if we are yet saved from the revolution, by which we were freed. The national struggle left us national sentiments; gratitude to France; antipathy to Britain.

Gratitude to France! what France? the kingdom or the empire; the monarch or the usurper of his throne;

the humane Louis or the assassin of a Bourbon? *
 Whatever there may have been in the answer at first, that her aid was from calculation, not sympathy; France has since proved herself beyond question to be a nation without heart. Our obligations to Frenchmen † were cancelled with the blood of their sovereign; and the gratitude of America, with the "Son of St. Louis," ‡ should have ascended to heaven.

Antipathy to Britain! What! Britain, our foe! Why, this is natural; but is it noble? The generous and the brave are foes only while the fight lasts. They shake hands the moment it is over. Savages, in peace, bury the hatchet. Go to the wilderness and learn refinement! What has been the conduct of Britain? Has she not given you all the advantages, more than all the advantages in commerce since the peace than before? Talleyrand tells you she has. Why then,

"Like the base Indian, throw a pearl away,
 "Richer than all his tribe?"

"England, at the conclusion of peace, forgot her resentment; reopened speedily her ancient communications; and RENDERED THEM STILL MORE ACTIVE." * This the French minister has told you. *Fas est ab hoste doceri.* What has she done since?

* Duke D'Enghien.

† See Note (b)

‡ See Note (c)

* Memoir by citizen Talleyrand!!! The impudence of this man in hinting in this work the expediency of a French establishment here to counteract what he conceives to be our national character, is well worth the attention of our political watchmen and gives plausibility to the outcry of French influence.

Look ! “ On that blade and dudgeon, gouts of blood !”
 It was the voice of the nation, “ Out, damned spot !”
 It was the voice of glory. The outrage was horrible.
 But by whom was it committed ? By the servant of a
 friend ? Was it good breeding to proclaim to the
 world, that your doors were barred against that friend’s
 other servants, before you knew, whether he autho-
 rized the act ; nay, when, as your President avows,
 you knew he did *not* ? But, then, the servant has since
 been tried ; and not suffered enough. What ! would
 you have Englishmen do what Americans dare not ?
 Would you have the legislative or executive there in-
 terfere with the judicial ? It is the glory of their juris-
 prudence, as of ours, that were the world in arms, it
 would stand unmoved ; that did it behold earth in
 uproar and chaos coming again, it would exclaim,

“ Fint justitia, ruat cœlum !”

You should rather rejoice that this is the case. It is
 the tenure, by which we all hold the breath of life.

But Federalism would sell the country to Britain.
 To those, who make this charge, Federalism scorns to
 reply. She would have a union with Britain only so
 far as there is a union in nature. She would have only
 the identity of pursuits, that results from identity of
 interests. Britain, it has been demonstrated, could
 exist independent of commerce ;* she would have

* See “ Britain independent of commerce ,” a very able pamphlet, “ only
 not equal” to the pamphlets of Baring and Walsh. The writer’s aim seems
 not to be to exhort to any diminution or discontinuance of commerce ; but
 merely to increase national confidence by this view of national resources : to

land enough for support ; but she is surrounded by sea. America has an extent of land almost immeasurable ; but she has an equal infinitude of coast. The language of nature is then the same to you both. The hand of heaven designed you alike for the double character of an agricultural and commercial people.

I shall pass without notice the acts of indignity on the one side and forbearance on the other ; the settlement, from which we hoped our commerce would again whiten the sea ; only observing of this, that though no blame rests upon the British government for disavowing a settlement in direct violation as to them of instructions the most plain and unequivocal ; so none ought to rest upon ours for entering into it. I pass without notice the rupture of the last negotiation ; and the Hotspurs, that bluster blood and thunder. If there be real courage in the cabinet, all yet may be well.

This western continent, from the beginning, has exhibited a strange kind of "Comedy of Errors" for the instruction of men. Mistakes have been so overruled as to produce equal benefit with the wisest designs. Columbus, seeking to ~~discover~~ a new passage to the East Indies by the West, discovered ; England, thinking to restrain religion by law, peopled ; and, thinking to enslave by unrepresented taxation, freed, America. A blunder discovered ; a blunder peopled ; a blunder

show, that if ever, in the providence of heaven, which heaven avert ! they should be driven to this extremity, there is still foot-hold for Englishmen upon English ground.

made independent : and may the genius of late administrations be the blunder, that is to guide it to glory !

Let the moral of all this make us renounce pride ; not wisdom. Let us not be emboldened in error. Let us not think we have a privilege to mistake or immunity to blunder. Let us not impiously challenge Providence by sins, that cry to heaven. We are come here not to try experiments or sport with systems. A world is given us with this injunction ; “ Adorn that, to which you are born !” Let us look at the work, as we contemplate the author ; with holy fear. Let us innovate no violent changes. Let us imitate nature, who operates by slow and imperceptible degrees and brings the oak from the acorn only by the gentle dew and the fine rain.

Classical literature has continually delighted to hover over your land. She has played before your eyes the portraits of your heroes. She has shown you the man,* “ above all Greek, above all Roman fame ;” to whom was given, what was denied Archimedes, a new world, on which to stand and move the old. She has shown you your Hannibals and Scipios, thunderbolts of war ; your Lycurgus and Solon ; a Hercules, that could drag Cacus from his den ; and Monticello has turned her out a hero, whom we have beheld run with affright from every billow of ocean, as did Achilles from every wave of Scamander.

But this is no time for sport. I forget, that I am playing with chains. From the establishment of our

* See Note (d.)

federal constitution parties have grown. Still this is all in its favour. It is proof, that the interest we take in it is lively. We have had our patriots and prerogative men ; our whigs and tories ; and have now our self-styled federalists and self-styled republicans. Together with the rest of the country they divide our own commonwealth. Both sides here number in their ranks the honest and enlightened. We boast a man, who needed no fall from power to canonize his virtues ; “ a man of letters and of manners too ;” the fruits of whose mind have, in the East and the West, been mel-
lowed into rich ripeness under both suns. May God speed our republick ; and not let her last act of justice be to recall Cicero !

Such, however, is the agitated state of party ; its moon-struck wave so sinks and swells ; its sudden and unlooked for storms so beat and buffet ; that many of the first heads in the country have thought office but the Sinope in this tempestuous Euxine ; and he, who dwells remote in easy independence, whose shades refresh with the inspiring influence of departed spirits ; when disturbed in retirement by the obtrusive suggestion, that they have condemned him to be banished from Sinope, may coolly reply, in the words of the Cynic, “ And I condemn them to live in Sinope”.

Party rage will probably soon work out its own salvation, though with fear and trembling. Let us strive to turn it to good use. Let us take the hint from the chymist, who can extract some virtue from every thing in nature. Political alchymy never was the sin of an

age. Party has that within itself must counteract its mischief. It bears the jewel in its head, which is the antidote to its venom. We shall soon learn, that it is the hour of triumph, which betrays the excess, that is downfal to party. This will teach to avoid that excess. Moderation will thus commend itself to all ; not that spirit however, which can temporize with principles ; but the spirit, that can prevent going beyond the bounds, which principles warrant. Our rulers must soon learn this lesson ; or our fathers will not in vain have learned another ; that the contract between sovereign and subject can be broken ; that protection and obedience must be coequal ; that merchants, whom mankind have applauded for giving liberty to a land by resisting commercial restriction, are not to sit down, “ infamous and contented,” under commercial extinction.

That our rulers may thus soon become self-instructed and the nation be made pacifically to revive, let every man exert his utmost ability to illumine publick opinion. Liberty is in danger. She calls upon you all for support. The clergy ; you enlightened minds, who have nearly rid us of the curse of our fathers and purified religion from fanaticism ; who show piety to be not only duty, but the noblest prop of the rights, of man ; you she implores to maintain inviolate that covenant of glory you did so much sacredly to seal ! Merchants ; you, who indemnify by arts for the luxuries you import ; she begs you to extend the blessings of literature, that you may thence have some right to ex-

pect the blessing of heaven ! It was in the Augustan age the Messiah arose. The fair ; “ that give to life “ its lustre and perfume ; and we are weeds without “ them ;” for whom independence was won ; who, if they give not freedom, can at least, like the Grecian daughter, alleviate confinement ; to you she calls, and cannot ask in vain, that you would promote, if not union of sentiments, what is infinitely better, union of affections ! To all she makes her appeal. She prays, that all would equally unite, heart and hand, in upholding her glory, as all have an interest in her cause equally deep.

The tree of our republican liberty, like the fabled myrtle of Æneas, sinks its roots in blood. To agitate it extremely might disturb the repose of our fathers. Like Polydore, they would cry to us from the ground ;

“ That every drop, this living tree contains,
“ Is kindred blood and ran in “ patriot” veins.”

Let us rally under its branches. Its leaves are healing to the taste. Let us banish jealousies of rival powers. Trans-atlantic genius long since predicted, when we were one in government with Britain, that in little more than a century, perhaps, American taxation would be more productive than British ; and the seat of empire change.* Would to God, the prediction might prove prophecy ! It yet may. What is your state ? “ Commerce languishes and we are threatened with a new

* See Wealth of Nations. In a fourth of July orator, this would have been thought soaring into bombast. But the authority of SMITH is ample protection.

“debt.” Had commerce but been left, as once, to defend itself; government would have had money to lend. Where now are your vessels? On the French coast. They cover it nearly. Go to your cities! The wharves are empty for the ports of France. Fly to the country! The thought will follow you; and throw

“a browner horror o’er the woods.”

My country, rouse from your lethargy! Sleep not the sleep of death! Wait not, till the air be vocal with the cry, “**THAT THE GAULS ARE UPON US,**”* or to us, as the Romans, the air will be vocal in vain! What though the French be powerful? Look to the heights of Bunker, where your sires fell, not in obedience to laws, but volunteers in support of principles! Consult the shades of Vernon! You will there find an oracle of no equivocal response. What though Napoleon be great and every Goliath is not to fall from a sling? Are Americans therefore to tremble? We are indeed, from the weakness of government, much unmanned. But it is hoped, cowardice in council has not yet engendered cowardice in the field. National resources are still left. It is not policy to despond; never was magnanimity in despair. If there be spirit enough in the head of our union to dare to be just, the path of glory is still open before us; if not, what will you do? Form an alliance with France?—Better sink at once into the graves of your fathers!

* Livy.

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 ⊕ Turn to the shores of Tripoli! They are laved by waves, that would blush indignant at want of spirit in a native American.

NOTES.

(a) Du Bos was a diplomatist in the service of Louis XIV. at a period (1711) when, according to Hume, Queen Anne had thought of following up her successes in Europe by an attack upon the French North American settlements. A pamphlet of the Abbé, entitled, "The interests of England ill understood," has the following passage. "England, which seems now in the full tide of success, may end by getting possession of the whole American continent; but when this great region shall come to be peopled in a great measure at the expense of the mother country, what line of conduct will England then pursue? Will a free communication with all the world be permitted? and will the Americans be allowed to pursue their own interests, *paying no taxes but those of their own imposing*, and bound by the acts of the English parliament so far only as they may think proper to adopt them, and at liberty to give the preference to their own manufactories?" "If the government of England, actuated by the only principle, which can lead to the establishment of colonies, by a desire of promoting national interests, should think of governing as the Spanish court does and treating the people of the colonies like conquered subjects; rely upon it, that this fine and fertile country, at the distance of 2000 leagues, and peopled by men of English minds, will not long submit! They will have inherited too high a sense of their rights as freemen, not to be desirous of throwing off such a yoke, and their very rapid prosperity, their increase in wealth and numbers, and their improvement in every art and science will soon enable them to do so." For this extract the writer is happy to own his obligation to "THE PORT FOLIO;" a literary journal, that has established a character at once brilliant and solid; and of which it may be said, without disparagement to others, of which Boston is proud of one, that it cannot receive patronage beyond its merit. Considering how long it had been successfully supported by the effort of one man; its conductor's editorial talent; the heroism of his attempt, in an infant country, to *live by literary labour*; we cannot but apply to him the language of BURKE. Let us applaud him on the run; console him in the fall; cheer him on recovery; but "let him pass on, for God's sake, let him pass on." Happy, could this line procure him another subscriber! A fourth July oration would not then have been written wholly in vain.

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(b) I would not be thought by any general remark to be for a moment unmindful of the generous valour of LA FAYETTE. But when we remember his aid was afforded before the French alliance was formed, and how the French have treated him since; as they have seen fit to consider him in a light distinct from the nation, in that light we are proud to behold him. We are no longer constrained from gratitude to this individual to think well of the French. The reputation of La Fayette was never without blemish;

and recent events have tended to augment the spots upon its disk. Perhaps recurrence to the character he disclosed in the revolution may furnish a clue to the labyrinth, in which fate since has involved him, and convince us, whatever may have been his errors, that they were not those of intention. We recollect that Washington had to keep him constantly in check. He was employed only where ardour was wanted; and the flame, that could enlighten, was carefully watched, lest it might desolate and destroy. He was rather a man of feeling than reason; no politician, but an enthusiast. His lightning required Franklin for a conductor; his wild fire Washington to restrain.

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(c) I cannot forbear obtruding an apology for thus mutilating a most sublime sentence by introducing part of it only. When Louis XVI. bowed his head to the block, the last human articulations he heard, were, "*Enfant de St. Louis, montez au ciel!*" When we consider the danger; so great, that the friend, who was with him, quitted home by stealth for fear of detention; the nature of the occasion; a king, that never dies, about to be beheaded; a mob around, more monstrous than ever made man sick at heart of his species; that one, the peaceful minister of a prince of peace, should not only be able to stand unappalled at such horror; but should put forth every power of his mind and make uproar produce what the utmost quiet of seclusion cannot improve; stands among the rare instances of moral sublimity, that adorn the annals of man, and must give EDGEWORTH on earth the immortality he looked for only in heaven.

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(d) I cannot forego the pleasure of transcribing a character from CHARLES FOX to show how Washington laudatur à laudato viro. "A character of virtues so happily tempered, and so wholly unalloyed with any vices, as that of Washington, is hardly to be found in the pages of history; but even Washington himself might not have been able to act his most glorious of all parts, without the existence of circumstances uncommonly favourable, and almost peculiar to the country, which was to be the theatre of it. Virtue like his depends not indeed upon time or place; but although in no country or time, would he have degraded himself into a Pisistratus, or a Cæsar; or a Cromwell; he might have shared the fate of a Cato or a De Witt; or, like Ludlow and Sydney, mourned in exile the lost liberties of his country." This character, from the list of his own party, would, I should think, go far to make a certain calumniating senator of the union of democratic fame hang his head. One more extract on this subject surely cannot tire. It is an admirable sentence from the *unsuccessful* application of some Maryland memorialists to the New York legislature merely for leave to sell within this state tickets of a lottery granted by that for the purpose of erecting a monument to the memory of our country's saviour!! "In delineating General Washington, the dimensions of the portrait swell insensibly beyond the ordinary standard of human perfection, and exhibit, not merely the dignity of Solon or Epaminondas, but an imposing, although temperate and natural majesty, like the Apollo of Belvidere."