AN

ORATION,

DELIVERED

IN THE BAPTIST MEETING HOUSE,

IN

THOMASTON,

JULY 4th, 1793.

AT THE REQUEST OF THE

FRIENDLY SOCIETY,

AND

IN COMMEMORATION OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

BY THE REV. THURSTON WHITING.

Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father and he will shew thee; thy elders and they will tell thee.——Moses.

HALLOWELL,

PRINTED BY HOWARD S. ROBINSON.

At a meeting of the *Friendly Society*, July 4th, 1798.

Voted—That Capt. Ephraim Snow, Col. Thomas Starret and David Fales Esq. be a committee to wait on the Rev. Mr. Whiting, and in the name of the Society to thank him for his sensible, well-adapted and animated Address, this day delivered to them, and to request a copy thereof for the press.

Attest, Samuel S. Wilde, Sec'ry *pro tem.*

To the Committee of the Society.

Gentlemen,

It has ever been my sincere aim to cherish the interests—cultivate the esteem and friendship—and conform to the wishes of my brethren of the "Friendly Society;" if they are pleased to think that giving typographical publicity to the address I have had the honor, this day, to deliver to them, will promote any salutary effect, or if it will be a gratification to them, I shall not hesitate to submit the copy, so politely requested, with all its imperfections, to their disposal and the candor of the public.

I have the pleasure to be, Gentlemen,

Your's and the Society's friend and brother,

THURSTON WHITING.

From his friend & humble Ser
Edward of Rob

AN ORATION.

FRIENDS, BRETHREN AND FELLOW CITIZENS!

IT is a dictate of the light of nature—a universal sentiment amongst mankind, as appears from the practice of all nations and ages, by some public monuments, or significant and speaking actions, to recognize interesting events of a public nature, and to do this at stated returning periods; and this practice has received a sanction from heaven. The Jews were enjoined to celebrate the anniversary of their deliverance from Pharaoh's tyranny, by the paschal feast; and their narrow escape from the sanguinary Haman's perfidy and cruelty, by observing the days of purim.

It is very obvious that the proper observance of a custom like this, is calculated to excite and cherish moral and religious sentiments, as well as, in some instances, to promote objects more purely political.

On this joyous anniversary, dear to all true Americans, we are invited to commemorate the birth of American Empire. To minds fraught with patriotism and sensibility, it must be a pleasing and instructive task, to take a retrospective view of the early settlement of America, by our venerable ancestors, to investigate their principles and motives, as well as their sufferings in the arduous enterprize—to mark the rapid progress of population—of agriculture and commerce—of the arts and sciences, and their beneficial and embellishing effects in this new world, and to retrace those signal and interesting scenes, some humiliating and afflicting, and others brilliant and glorious, which paved the way to, which accompanied, and which have succeeded the independence of the United States.

The full development, and minute detail of these particulars, is the province of the elaborate historian. The utmost that the occasional declaimer can promise, or hope to do, is to designate the great outlines, leading traits, and most prominent features of the interesting picture.

To this attempt, with diffidence, I now address myself—and "while we are musing" on our dear country's past sufferings and dangers, and her

preſent growing importance and happineſs, "may the fire burn"—may the ſacred incenſe of devout and humble gratitude aſcend from our impaſſioned boſoms, to that great Supreme of Beings, and Sovereign Arbiter of nations, who has ever ſignalized himſelf as America's friend, guardian and benefactor; and may this be accompanied with the flame of genuine patriotiſm—the love of liberty—of republicaniſm, and of every virtue neceſſary to make republics or individuals happy.

The origin and formation of the American nation lie more directly and completely under the eye, and within the grafp and comprehenſion of the hiſtorian and his reader, than thoſe of any other nation, whoſe annals have been written and preſerved. When we trace back the hiſtories of ancient Greece and Rome to their ſource, we find ourſelves loſt in a *terra incognita*—in the regions of romance and fable. We are bewildered in the labyrinths of Minos, and find ourſelves in the company of preternatural heroes and giants, of ſatyrs and demigods, of Theſeus and Hercules, of Romulus and Remus: Theſe monſtrous and viſionary beings had diſappeared, and "the age of chivalry was gone by," before the diſcovery of America, by European navigators and adventurers; which is but of modern date; and hence the minutiæ of our hiſtory and chronology may be exactly aſcertained. The commencement of permanent ſettlements, and the formation of colonies in North America, did not take place till after the revival of learning and religion on the European continent and its adjacent iſlands. This revival, however, and the reformation conſequent upon it, were but partial at that period. In England they had thrown off the ſupremacy of the Pope, and the tyranny of the hierarchy of Rome—they had aboliſhed many of the idolatrous and ſuperſtitious rites and ceremonies of that corrupted church; in ſhort, they had reduced the exorbitant temporal power and juriſdiction of the clergy and their courts, and recovered ſome portion of their civil and religious rights. But, with all theſe happy improvements and acquiſitions, they retained no ſmall portion of that intolerant, conſcience-binding and perſecuting ſpirit, for which "Mother Church," for many ages, had been ſo famous. The dignified clergy of the eſtabliſhed church of England were diſpoſed to treat thoſe that diſſented from them with but little more indulgence than the Catho-

lics did the Heretics, as they termed the Reformers; and ſometimes carried their zeal ſo far as to burn their bodies out of love to their ſouls.—This was, eſpecially, the temper of the Engliſh court during the unhappy and odious reigns of the four Kings of the Stuart race—the two Charles's and the two James's—they were, at beſt, but weak princes—poſſeſſed of arbitrary, deſpotic principles of government—refined by their religious creed which they received from Rome—and intoxicated with high notions of prerogative, and "the right divine of Kings to govern wrong;" they were a diſgrace to the throne and an awful ſcourge to the kingdom.

The Diſſenters, from whom the inhabitants of the Newengland ſtates in general derived their pedigree (and they may glory in their deſcent) were, at that time, ſtigmatized, by their enemies, by the name of puritans—and if ever there was a people, ſince the more pure and primitive times of the goſpel, who deſerved that appellation, on account of their ſincere and conſcientious regard to the purity of chriſtian doctrine, diſcipline, worſhip and manners, it was that generation.

They and their puritaniſm, however, were to the laſt degree odious and offenſive to the high church Jacobite party, which then bore the ſway in government, and like the haughty, hard-hearted tyrant of Egypt and his cruel taſk-maſters towards their Hebrew vaſſals, they "evilly entreated and dealt hardly with our fathers"—they perſecuted them for righteouſneſs ſake—they enacted laws and with rigor executed them, by which they ſtript the nonconformiſts of their civil and religious rights and immunities, and ſubjected them to every indignity and hardſhip. Fines and confiſcations of eſtate were but a common lot among them—many were confined to loathſome dungeons, till a lingering death put a period to their ſufferings. By an execrable edict, generally known by the name of the "Teſt Act," 2000 diſſenting miniſters were ejected from their pulpits and their livings in one day. Theſe were a glorious band of chriſtian ſoldiers—a noble army of confeſſors—and among the number we may reckon ſeveral great and diſtinguiſhed names, which, together with their pious writings, have been handed down to us, and whoſe praiſe is, deſervedly, in the American churches.

It was in theſe diſmally dark and perilous times, when to worſhip God,

according to the dictates of their own conſciences was a ſtate crime—when their paſtors were thruſt into corners—and they deſpoiled of every thing moſt dear and valuable on earth—when the arm of perſecution and tyranny reigned, and threatened the total ſubverſion of the glorious reformation, ſo happily atchieved, in the preceding century—it was at ſuch a time, and under theſe peculiar circumſtances, that our forefathers firſt meditated a dereliction of their dear native land, and the ſeeking of an aſylum in the, then, unexplored and inhoſpitable wilds of America. And in theſe, and other concurring circumſtances, which attended the tranſplantation of civilization. liberty and religion into this weſtern hemiſphere, we, as chriſtians, muſt ſee and acknowledge an overruling and wonder-working providence. To prepare a refuge for the oppreſſed—a laſt retreat for perſecuted religion and liberty to flee to, providence had commiſſioned and conducted Chriſtopher Columbus, Americus Veſpucius, Sebaſtian Cabot and others, to make diſcoveries of this new continent, and has ever ſince been carrying on ſome great deſigns here. The planting and nurturing a church here, under the auſpices of freedom and good government, has evidently been the peculiar object of providential care and goodneſs. It is the caſe in fact, and ſaid to be agreeable to antient prediction, that empire and the arts and ſciences, which began in the eaſt, ſhould travel weſt; and it is added, that on this continent, under the ſetting ſun, they ſhould diſplay their laſt and higheſt ſplendor and glory; and as far as we can judge, from preſent appearances, the laſt part of the prediction is in train of rapid fulfilment.

But, waving this, I would juſt obſerve, that it was in the cloſe of the year 1620 that the firſt ſhip, freighted with emigrants deſtined for ſettlers, arrived in the harbor of Plymouth, in the now Commonwealth of Maſſachuſetts. They had a long and hazardous paſſage, and upon their arrival, were worn down with fatigue and hardſhip. See, my friends, the poor houſeleſs families, the germe and *ſtamina* of the New-England ſtates, landed on a deſert ſhore—a waſte, howling wilderneſs before them, inhabited only by ſavage beaſts or ſtill more ſavage men—their proviſions ſcanty, and a long cold winter before them. Many died before the return of ſpring by ſickneſs, brought on by want and ſufferings, and thoſe that

ſurvived ſupported their precarious exiſtence, from day to day, by ſhell-fiſh which they found neat the ſhores.

It becomes us, the deſcendants of theſe brave and enterprizing ſufferers who are "fed with the fineſt of the wheat"—"who eat the fat and drink the ſweet," on this auſpicious day to look back to "the day of ſmall things," and to remember what our fair inheritance coſt our fathers.

It was late in the next ſeaſon before any ſupplies or new ſettlers arrived at the young colony; and for ten years following the ſettlement languiſhed or progreſſed but ſlowly. But after that period, immigrations more numerous and reſpectable were annually received, and the buſineſs of plantation was proſecuted with vigor and ſucceſs. Theſe exiled apoſtles of liberty and religion, animated by the idea that they were now beyond the reach of tyranny's vengeful arm, and with the proſpect of better days before them, were induſtrious from principle, and from motives the moſt intereſting and ſtimulating to the human heart. The foreſts, antient as the deluge, yielded to the laboring axe—they ſubdued the rugged ſoil—they planted them fields and gardens—they built them houſes and towns—and whereever they pitched their tents they erected ſynagogues and altars, for the worſhip of God, and the due celebration of the chriſtian myſteries.

Hence we ſee, brethren, what were the principles and motives, and ſome of the concurring providences of Almighty God, which led the way to the ſettlement of this country, and laid the foundation of our riſing empire. Our fathers, at every hazard, planted religion—virtue—freedom in the land. Theſe they loved more than their lives—theſe they cultivated, cheriſhed and ſtrictly guarded—and theſe they tranſmitted, pure and unimpaired, to their immediate deſcendants: and now we, after a few, and but few, intervening generations, have riſen up in their ſtead, and entered upon the precious inheritance.

To be thank'ful for our bleſſings we muſt be ſenſible of their worth and the price they have coſt. For advocating and defending thoſe principles of civil and religious liberty, which are the eſtabliſhed creed of Americans, and recognized by our civil conſtitutions, how many ſtateſmen and patriots, like Hampden and Sidney, have loſt their heads on the martyring

block! How many apoſtles of our liberty and religion, both laity and clergy, have died at the ſtake! and how many in the field of battle!

O tyranny! O deſpotiſm! are theſe thy cruel dreadful rites! theſe thy miſerable, tho' reſpectable victims! canſt thou not be appeaſed but by ſuch coſtly ſacrifices!

O ſacred liberty! dear as thou art to the human breaſt, canſt thou not be purchaſed but at ſuch prodigious expence!

If we, my friends and fellow citizens, can depreciate and think lightly of theſe our birth-right bleſſings, if we can neglect and abuſe them, or trifle them away, we ſhow that we form an eſtimate of them widely different from that of the moſt illuſtrious perſonages the world ever praduced, and "of whom the world was not worthy."

The copiouſneſs and endearment of the ſubject would detain me longer here, did not the ſhortneſs of my time hurry me down the ſtream of American hiſtory to more recent tranſactions and events.

While the colonies remained in their infantile and weak ſtate, and were unable to render their immenſe natural reſources very productive, the Mother Country, as we were proud and fond to ſtile Great Britain, treated us with ſome appearance of juſtice, and even of friendſhip. Tho' it can't be wholly overlooked that the ſame Jacobite party, which expelled our anceſtors from their inheritance and native homes, ſtill kept up their religious ſpleen and perſecuting ſpirit againſt them and their deſcendants in America, and at different periods, ſeveral blows were aimed at our religion and liberty. As to commerce, our Britiſh brethren conſidered us as their factors—their hunters—their fiſhermen—their lumberers—and annually ſent over their ſhips to receive all our exports---they monopolized our trade and the balance was always in their favor---but they did not violently and directly rob or plunder us.

The laſt war in which America bore a part with Great Britain, againſt France, their then common enemy, and the ſeat of which, in its laſt ſtages, was on our continent, bro't the military and commercial importance and internal reſources of this country more fully into view than ever before. From that period we became an object of miniſterial conſideration and ſpeculation. We had indeed, till then, been kept in leading-ſtrings:

but theſe ſat light upon us—ſuch was our deference and devotion to the parent-ſtate, we were willing to contribute our full proportion towards the defence of the Empire: nay, to bear a part of the burden of wars in which ambition and caprice, rather than juſtice and ſound policy, involved it. But the Britiſh miniſtry, not ſatisfied with this, and with realizing all the emoluments of our commerce, apprehending alſo, that as we approached to national manhood we might think of *going alone* without the help of leading-ſtrings, contrived and fabricated ſhackles of iron and fetters of braſs, to impoſe upon us, and at length avowed their intention and their right ſo to do. They declared, that "the Parliament of Great-Britain had a right to make laws to bind the colonies in all caſes whatſoever;" which was equivalent to ſaying, that we had no excluſive rights or property of our own; but that they were ſovereign lords of our ſoil and maſters of our perſons and purſes. This doctrine, ſo degrading and inſulting to every citizen of America, they attempted, both before and after its avowal, to carry into effect. To this purpoſe they had inſtituted ſtamp duties and commiſſioned ſtamp maſters to collect them. The colonies ſo univerſally and violently revolted againſt this daring and direct infringement upon their liberty and property, that, from motives of ſtate-prudence, the meaſure, tho' not the principle, was dropt—the Stamp Act was repealed. The next attempt to raiſe a revenue from us, without our conſent, was by laying duties on tea, glaſs, paper and other articles of neceſſary importation into America. The ſame indignant ſpirit, the ſame manly and ſtrenuous oppoſition appeared againſt this, as the former meaſure; to overcome which, and carry their darling point, the junto of St. James' tried every art and artifice which machievalian policy, or folly and madneſs could invent. They tampered with our Governments and endeavored to intimidate the governed. They ſent their boaſted engines of thunder and deſtruction into our harbors, and ſtationed their ſoldiers in our peaceful towns. The horrid ſcene of murder and carnage diſplayed in the ſtreets of Boſton, on the evening of the 5th of March 1770, when the "Britiſh blood-hounds," were let looſe upon the unarmed and unoffending inhabitants, muſt forever harrow the minds of Americans with horror at the idea of ſtanding armies in time of peace, and teach them

that when civil and municipal law is ſubject to the controul of the military it muſt conſtitute the moſt odious and fearful deſpotiſm.

To divide and diſunite the colonies, and by the example of one to overawe and intimidate the reſt, our then province of Maſſachuſetts was ſingled out as the peculiar object of miniſterial vengeance. The port of Boſton was ſhut up by an act of Parliament, and blockaded by a naval force; and a few months after, that devoted town was invested by an armed force by land, and all communication with the country ſuſpended.

The effect of this cruel, pointed outrage againſt the obnoxious province, inſtead of dividing, was to unite the colonies, "from Dan to Beerſheba." From Georgia to the old province of Maine the Tocſin was ſounded—the alarm was ſpread—one common ſentiment, with few exceptions, pervaded the whole maſs of the people—their intereſts were deemed one, and the danger common—the maxim was adopted, "BY UNITING WE STAND, BY DIVIDING WE FALL."

The expedient of a Congreſs of deputies, from all the different colonies, to conſult upon the moſt prudent meaſures to be taken, at that alarming criſis, was wiſely, and as it were, inſtinctively fallen upon. It was wonderful, and beyond expectation, that the people of ſo many different colonies, whoſe local ſituations and intereſts, as alſo their governments, habits and manners, were ſo diverſe, ſhould be led to form ſo ſtrict a union and confederation, and this too without the ſanction and coercion of formal, eſtabliſhed authority.

The language of the firſt Congreſs was the faithful echo of that of the hearts of all the brave and loyal, tho injured, ſons of America, whom they repreſented. They would then have deemed it unjuſtifiable temerity to have admitted the idea of detaching themſelves from the Britiſh empire. In the language of loyalty and wounded affection, they proſtrated the colonies at the foot of a throne to which they had ever been wont to attach the ideas of wiſdom, juſtice and clemency. To have condeſcended lower—to have aſked for leſs than we did, would have been unworthy and unbecoming the character of Britiſh ſubjects. Indeed, we aſked for no favor—no royal boon—but only for the ſecure enjoyment of what God and nature, and the blood and ſweat of our anceſtors, had made unalien-

ably our own, and which, without a crime, we could not part with. This was denied us—our humble, loyal and dutiful remonſtrances were treated with neglect and ſcorn—we were ſpurned from the throne, and all acceſs thereto barred againſt us.

Thus abandoned—friendleſs and alone—unknown to the nations of Europe—we were compelled to make our ſolemn appeal to the God of juſtice, and under him to the arbitrament of the ſword. Some of us can remember the opening of the dreadful ſcene at Lexington, on the 19th of April, 1775. The Rubicon was then paſſed, and there was no receding—all hope of accommodation vaniſhed with the ſmoke of the firſt gun that was fired on that portentous day—there was no alternative left us, but either tamely and daſtardly to ſurrender our deareſt rights, or valorouſly to defend them in the field. To our everlaſting honor, as a people, we had virtue and ſpirit enough, in the face of every diſcouragement, to chooſe the latter, and "LIBERTY OR DEATH" became the motto of the American ſtandard. We had ſtaked our ALL and muſt ſtand the hazard of the die.

Many intereſting and tragical ſcenes enſued—the mighty iſſue, big with the fate of America, hid from the eyes of mortals by the impenetrable curtain of futurity, hung in long and anxious ſuſpenſe; and at ſome gloomy, diſtreſsful periods, the firmeſt hearts of the firmeſt American patriots felt ſome miſgivings, and trembled in anticipation of the awful, dubious event.

The particular conjuncture of time and of affairs at which we firſt aſſumed national exiſtence and ſovereignty, demands, on this occaſion, our ſpecial notice and conſideration. It was in 1776, and, as you well know, on that day whoſe propitious anniverſary we are now celebrating. No national aſſembly on earth, not even the Amphyctiones of Greece, or the Senate of Rome, ever exhibited a more auguſt, majeſtic or affecting ſpectacle than did the repreſentatives of naſcent America, on that memorable day. To be convinced of this, we need only recur to their perſonal ſituation, and the ſituation of their country, on that critical, trying occaſion. They well knew, that in caſe of failure in the mighty conteſt, then pending, their heads, as well as fortunes, muſt have paid the forfeit to enraged

deſpotiſm. The aſpect of our affairs in the field was by no means flattering. Then no ſuch prodigy as the ſurrender of a fámed Burgoyne or Cornwallis, with their vaunted, veteran armies, to an American ſtandard, had been ſeen; on the contrary, we had met with ſome diſcouraging checks—we had failed in our Canadian enterprize. The Britiſh fleet and army had evacuated Boſton, a few months before, only that they might take a more advantageous poſt, and ſtrike a more ſucceſsful blow in ſome other part, and with that deſign, were then hovering on our coaſts, with an augmented force. Our army was diminiſhing faſter, by the expiration of enliſtments, than it could be recruited by new levies, and our inteſtine enemies, the tories, like the ominous raven, were croaking and foreboding ſwift perdition to the ſons of liberty.

The human character, in the perſon of individuals, never appears to ſo good advantage, as when riſing ſuperior to thoſe difficulties and diſcouragements under which the generality of mankind ſink. It is no uncommon merit for a centinel to maintain his poſt in a ſecure ſituation, where there is no apprehenſion of aſſault or oppoſition: but to do this at the point of the bayonet, with death in one eye and his duty in the other, argues the good ſoldier—the man of courage. The lukewarm and timid thought and pronounced this, of all others, the moſt improper and unſuitable criſis to ſet up for independence. But behold the patriotic Senators of America, on this day, 22 years ago, riſing ſuperior to all the adverſe ſcenes and gloomy proſpects which ſurrounded themſelves or their country! They came forward with magnanimity and firmneſs, and dared, in the face of the world, and in defiance of injurious, formidable Britain, to aſſert their country's violated rights—to declare "That the American Colonies," which they repreſented, "were, and of right ought to be, free, ſovereign and independant States," and in a ſolemn, religious manner, commended their juſt and bleeding cauſe to Heaven's interpoſition and care.

The declaratory act, which they then paſſed and publiſhed, is drawn up in the manly, becoming language of patriotiſm and piety, and ought to be engraven on the heart of every American, and the names of its authors, foremoſt of which ſtands our patriotic and amiable Hancock, tranſmitted to lateſt poſterity, with honour and applauſe.

We have not time to mark all the varied ſcenes and viciſſitudes of a long eight years war to maintain this declaration—it coſt us an immenſe profuſion of our beſt blood and treaſure. But when we ſurvey the glorious and extenſive objects ſecured to us, by an honorable peace, in contraſt with what muſt have been our abject and miſerable ſituation, in a reverſe of events, we muſt ſtill think it a cheap purchaſe.

It has been charged upon MAN, as an odious appendage of his character, that upon realizing a benefit, he is prone to forget the benefactor, together with the inſtrument of conveying the benefit. I wiſh the American people may never be liable to this imputation, in regard either to "the God of our fathers" or to thoſe champions of liberty, who, under him, were the chief inſtruments in defending our rights, and ſecuring our independence, during the courſe of the revolutionary war. Upon recollection, what a long liſt of able and enlightened ſtateſmen and patriotic ſoldiers riſes to view, who have ſeverally acted a noble and conſpicuous part, either on the ſtage of American politics, or the theatre of the American war. At the head of this liſt ſtands the illuſtrious name of WASHINGTON. When we contemplate or ſpeak of this great man, for he is but a man, we are to avoid every thing that ſavours of idolatry or adulation, and if we do this we cannot well be extravagant in his eulogy. Is it extravagant to ſay, that the pen of old Plutarch was never employed upon a richer ſubject?—is it extravagant to place a Waſhington's merit above that of the Alexanders and Ceſars of antiquity, thoſe butchers of mankind, or the Henrys and Fredericks—the Lewiſes and Georges of modern times? or is it extravagant to ſay, that it was reſerved for the honor of America to diſplay the moſt finiſhed character, as a politician and hero, in the preſent expiring century?

How fortunate and happy was it for America that, when ſhe was driven to the dire neceſſity of recurring to arms in ſelf defence, her eyes were directed to this accompliſhed CAPTAIN, to command her armies and direct the operations of the war! and how kind was providence to us in preſerving his important life thro' ſo many hazardous campaigns! had he fallen in battle, or been betrayed into the hands of the enemy, as was attempted by the infamous Arnold, how would all America have groaned

beneath the ſtroke! what a damp would it have ſtruck upon all our hopes! how darkened our proſpects! but he lived to ſee the important ſtruggle crowned with complete ſucceſs; and then retired, reſigning his commiſſion with the ſame modeſty, gracefulneſs and dignity, with which he accepted it, ſince which time, upon the adoption of the Federal Conſtitution, invited, and as it were compelled, by the total ſuffrage of united America, he preſided for eight ſucceſſive years in our general government, and his obliged fellow-citizens, and the impartial world, muſt approve his adminiſtration as wiſe and prudent. Were it not invidious—and did I not behold, in his ſucceſſor, great talents, diſplayed with wiſdom, firmneſs and moderation, in a critical, perplexed ſtate of public affairs, I ſhould ſay, that if any other man had had the conducting of the helm of the nation, during the preſidency of Mr. Waſhington, we had long before this time, been embroiled in the mad politics, and ſhameful and deſolating wars of Europe.

But in eulogizing this univerſal darling of his country, we are not to overlook the merits of others: many ſons of America have done worthily, tho' he may have excelled them all. The hoary Franklin, the American Newton, here preſents to view—he was the "ſage Mentor" in our councils at home, and the able negociator abroad. On this auſpicious day, we hail the memories of a Montgomery, who bravely fell before the walls of Quebec—of a Warren, who nobly died, repelling the enemy, on Bunker's Hill—of the amiable Scammel, who died a martyr to the perfidy and cruelty of a party of Britiſh ſoldiers—of a Mercer, who in the diſplay of his heroiſm met his fate in the battle at Princetown—and a long liſt of Warriors who ſealed their patriotiſm with their blood.

Some, who ſurvived to behold their country in peace and liberty, have ſince died, in their peaceful beds, among whom a Green and a Putnam are conſpicuous.

A goodly number of patriots and heroes ſtill live, the ornament and bleſſing of their country in peace, as they were its protection and defence in war—even the poor worn out ſoldier, the private centinel, ought not to be forgotten by us, on this occaſion—if the officers in an army are the head to govern and the eyes to direct, the ſoldiery are the hands to exe-

cute the enterprize. They doubtleſs have their merit and claim a ſhare in the glory of atchieving the independence of their country, and ſorry I am, owing to an exhauſted treaſury and want of public credit at the cloſe of the war, they have realized ſo ſmall a recompence for all their labors and toils and ſufferings.

With the bleſſing of peace, we were eſtabliſhed in the excluſive, national right, and the quiet poſſeſſion, of a large extenſive territory, embracing 1500 miles of ſea coaſt, endued with fertility of ſoil, ſalubrity of air, healthineſs of climate, and as great abundance of natural advantages and ſources of national wealth, as any empire the ſun ever yet ſhone upon.

We are a nation peculiarly favoured of indulgent and bounteous Heaven. We are happy in the beſt of governments—happy in our rulers—happy in the poſſeſſion of every civil and religious bleſſing, and want nothing but virtue, ſenſe and knowledge to make a due appreciation of our priveleges and a heart to improve them, to make us a great and reſpectable nation. Our growth and proſperity, ſince the adoption of the general government, has been aſtoniſhing, unprecedented and unparallelled in the hiſtory of the moſt thriving nations. America, not long ſince, unknown to the nations on the old continent, or known only as a poor appendage to the Britiſh empire, which, by monopolizing her trade, cramped her growth and kept her out of ſight, is now become the mart of nations, and her canvaſs is unfurled, in all the known ſeas on the globe.

'Tis true our political horizon, at preſent ſuffers a partial eclipſe, our commercial proſperity is interrupted, and our happy national proſpects obſcured, by a dark cloud which has, for ſome time paſt, been gathering over our heads, from the coaſt of France.

When we recollect our paſt connections with that nation—that they eſpouſed our cauſe and befriended us in the day of our diſtreſs—that they fought by our ſides—that in their firſt attempt to throw off the yoke of unlimited monarchical deſpotiſm, and introduce republicaniſm in its ſtead, they profeſſed to take their leſſons from us, and to embark in the ſame cauſe in which we had juſt ſucceeded—I ſay, theſe things conſidered, it is painful to animadvert on the preſent characters, and late conduct, of

the rulers of that diſtracted, ill-fated nation. But friendſhip and even patience and forbearance have their limits.

On the commencement of the preſent European war, our government wiſely determined to take and maintain a neutral ſtand, and has ever ſince ſtudied ſtrictly to obſerve the duties and reſtrictions peculiar to ſuch a delicate ſituation; while at the ſame time, it kept good faith and fulfilled all treaty-obligations to France, its Ally. But this national juſtice and prudence not exactly coinciding with the ſelfiſh, ambitious views and exorbitant expectations of the rulers of France, and not being able, by *fineſſe* and intrigue, to controul our government, and bring us into their meaſures, they have licenſed, by one decree after another, founded on the moſt frivolous pretexts, and their privateers have committed the moſt wanton and unremitted depredations on our defenceleſs commerce, for theſe 18 months paſt, and have plundered our induſtrious citizens of more, perhaps, than 25 millions of property.

Repeated attempts at negociation, on the part of our Executive, with a ſincere view to an amicable compoſition of exiſting differences, have proved fruitleſs; and we ſeem now to be juſt on the eve of a war with that inſolent, imperious nation, which, fluſhed with their career of ſucceſſes, on the European continent, aſſumes to treat us with the utmoſt indifference and diſdain, as well as flagrant injuſtice.

Nothing is more to be dreaded or deprecated, on this ſide of the dominions of the grim tyrant of hell, than ſupreme power lodged in the hands of fools or madmen, or, which is the ſame or ſtill worſe, of men who are abandoned reprobates to religion, juſtice, faith and every principle of political and moral rectitude—whoſe ruling paſſions are the love of domination and the love of lucre—who have the meaneſs to "ſell the mighty meed of their large honors for ſo much vile traſh as might be graſped thus" with their bloody fiſts—and the unbluſhing effrontery to inſult the ears and feelings of upright and dignified miniſters of other nations, with clamorous demands of *douceurs* and bribes, and to extort from unoffending nations, if in their power, immenſe ſums to furniſh their *menes plaiſirs*, or pocket-money—and who, with the Horſeleech's inſatiable daughters, are everlaſtingly crying give, give, *l'argent, l'argent*. This is but part of the

portrait of an infamous, deſpotic, ſelf aſſumed oligarchy, who have the lives, liberties and fortunes of 25 millions of their fellow creatures in their hands—hands, compared with which, Lady Macbeth's, or King Richard the third's are lily-white.

It is ſome relief to humanity's feelings, when contemplating ſuch an odious and horrid tyranny, to reflect that it can be but of ſhort duration; for its neceſſary, direct tendency is to ſelf deſtruction. And while it does laſt, if we remain united and firm, and rally round the ſtandard of independence, we have little to fear, either from its inſidious arts, or open injuries: for ſuch an union and firmneſs will be a ſufficient ſecurity againſt the former, and joined to vigorous exertion, would, in a great meaſure, indemnify us againſt the latter. A ſtate of war, I know is a ſerious calamity—"pregnant" with infinitely more "miſchiefs" than a fair and equal "treaty" to prevent it. But when an aggreſſing power capriciouſly interdicts all diplomatic intercourſe and refuſes to treat, and yet perſiſts in its aggreſſions, what are we to do?

In ſhort, France has already thrown the gauntlet. No formal declaration of war, by her rulers, could evince their vindictive ſpirit or hoſtile intentions againſt us, more effectually, than does their late and preſent treatment of us. And ſhall we remain the tame, unreſiſting victims of their injuſtice and rapacity? Shall Americans, who ſo lately bled in freedom's cauſe, and gained their independence at ſo dear a rate, ſuffer themſelves, ſo ſoon, to be deſpoiled of theſe bleſſings, now almoſt peculiar to themſelves, by French intrigues or French violence? Forbid it, patriotiſm—Forbid it, national dignity, honour and juſt reſentment—Forbid it, a reverence for the memory of our virtuous and patriotic anceſtry—and forbid it, a regard to unborn poſterity.

But I chearfully quit this unwelcome ſubject to conclude with ſome obſervations on a more pleaſing theme, the importance of literature, which my brethren of "The Friendly Society" have a right to expect from me on this occaſion. When we contemplate the influence of literature, on the great ſcale of national proſperity and political happineſs, how forcibly muſt a conviction of its importance and utility ſtrike us, from almoſt every hiſtoric page, both antient and modern. How gloomy the retroſpect on

the nations and ages before the birth of learning and the introduction of the liberal arts! A ſhort life ſpent in this age of light and refinement is of more worth than Methuſelah's term of years in ſuch an age and nation. Conſult hiſtory, and it will invariably be found that a ſtate of ſavage, uncultivated nature, inſtead of that peaceful, happy ſtate, by ſome romantic writers repreſented, is but a ſcene of lawleſs violence, or of abject and wretched ſlavery. It will be found, moreover, that learning, liberty and religion go hand in hand. Greece and Rome, ſo reſpectable, ſo admired, ſo celebrated in the annals of antiquity, became ſo by cultivating learning. By this means they acquired a knowledge of the eſſential rights of human nature—they learned the true dignity of man—that heaven deſigned him to be free—and that life without liberty ſcarcely deſerved the name of a bleſſing—and while they nurſed the muſes and preſerved their virtue, they preſerved their freedom and independence—their national honor and importance.

The learning of the antients was in its zenith in the Auguſtan age, about the commencement of the chriſtian era. From that period, it began its decline, which, tho' gradual, ceaſed not till it became total. At the coming in of the fifth century, when the Goths and Vandals, and other barbarous nations from the "great northern hive" ſwarmed and overſpread the civilized world, learning might be ſaid to expire, and with it expired almoſt every thing valuable in ſociety and civil life. Liberty took its flight. Tyranny, civil and eccleſiaſtical, liſted its hydra head and hiſſed on every ſide. In chriſtendom the proſpect was piteous and gloomy. The lovely religion of the benevolent Jeſus loſt its native ſimplicity and luſtre, and became involved in the darkeſt ſhades of error and ſuperſtition. This fair daughter of heaven, diſfigured and ſtript of her proper ornaments, appeared with a ſour forbidding aſpect and in a foreign, unſeemly dreſs. A ſad millenium ſucceeded—a thouſand years which make almoſt a blank in hiſtory. A blank, did I ſay? No, for the few miſerable pages of the annalsit are inſcribed with the black accounts of the tragical effects of the reign of ignorance, bigotry and tyranny.

In the 15th century, there began a ſmall revival of learning, in Europe, which, gradually increaſing, paved the way for the happy reformation, in

the next century. Since that memorable *epocha* the lamp of literature has been ſhining brighter and brighter, untill this our day, and is, perhaps, approximating its high meridian. And what have been the effects of this glorious luminary? The fogs and miſts, the illuſions and fictions of error have been diſpelled before it—the Dagon of ſuperſtition has fallen before the ſacred ark of genuine religion—tyranny has been hurled from its throne—perſecution has ſhut its devouring jaws—liberality of ſentiment and a ſpirit of free enquiry have prevailed—and philanthropy, humanity, candor and charity have been diffuſed, and ſhed their benign and heavenly influence on ſociety.

Perhaps America, at this day, exhibits the faireſt picture of any country or nation under heaven, of the importance and happy influence of literature and ſcience. The American people, collectively conſidered, are, beyond diſpute, the beſt educated and the moſt enlightened of any in the world, and our infant nation already exhibits many noble ſpecimens and monuments of her genius and intellectual reſources. Witneſs the many valuable literary productions of American growth, and the many uſeful and embelliſhing improvements in the face of the country, which indicate both genius and a public and enterprizing ſpirit, and which have taken place ſince the revolution. Witneſs that important and happy revolution itſelf. A leſs enlightened people would never have been ſo jealous and tenacious of their liberties—ſo eagle-eyed to have ſpied out encroachments upon them—nor been capable of making ſo vigorous and manly, and withal ſo prudent, a ſtand againſt encroachments. Witneſs the happy republican ſyſtems of government which have taken place in the reſpective ſtates, and above all, the Federal Conſtitution which is, undoubtedly, the beſt palladium of liberty and barrier againſt its abuſe, of any ſyſtem of human contrivance, and which, if we have virtue to ſupport it, promiſes to advance the reſpectability, ſtability and glory of the American Empire as much beyond thoſe of every other, as this ſyſtem exceeds their defective, or leſs perfect ones. Here the remark is obvious, that the ſame knowledge, virtue and patriotiſm, which led the way to the freedom and independence of our country, are eſſential and indiſpenſable to the preſervation of the ſame. The more ignorant the ſubjects of deſpotiſm are, the better, on ſome accounts——better for the deſpot—for he can rule

them with leſs reſiſtance—better for the abject vaſſals, for their chains and fetters will ſet the eaſier upon them. For my own part, if I muſt have been doomed a ſlave to ſome imperious maſter, let me never have known the ſweets of liberty; for knowing them, I muſt have ſighed after them, and repined and ſickened in their abſence. But not ſo with reſpect to the ſubjects of a free ſtate and of a republican government. The continuation of their freedom and happineſs depends upon the continuation of their knowledge and virtue—theſe muſt be cheriſhed and diffuſed by proper means and inſtitutions—by domeſtic inſtruction—by ſchools and ſeminaries for deſſeminating the rudiments of knowledge—by colleges and academies for promoting higher ſcience—by honorary and pecuniary emoluments as an encouragement and reward to inventive genius and eminence in ſcience. It is of the laſt importance that the people at large, who have, in a ſenſe, the whole government in their own hands, ſhould be well inſtructed and virtuouſly inclined. The character of thoſe elected to the office of rulers depends upon the information, character and principles of the electors.

We are happy to obſerve, that our civil fathers, well weighing this important principle, have paid very particular attention to the intereſts of literature and religion. They have patronized and endowed colleges and academies of different deſcriptions, and made proviſion for ſchools and public teachers of morality and religion, in every town.

We, who live in this remote part of the country, labor under ſome peculiar diſadvantages, in point of education. We are beginning a new country—taking farms out of the rough, uncultivated wilderneſs, where to make any impreſſion requires exertion and aſſiduity. A great proportion of our time muſt neceſſarily be devoted to making proviſion for our families. We can have but little opportunity for furniſhing our minds with knowledge, compared with people in a reverſe of circumſtances, and even if we could find leiſure for reading, we in general are unfurniſhed with books; and hence we ſee the expediency and utility of ſocial and circulating libraries. To me it appears ſtrange that this happy expedient ſhould have been ſo long neglected, in this eaſtern country. "The Friendly Society" was the firſt inſtitution of the kind that took place in this country; and I do not know but I might add, in the Diſtrict of

Maine—I felicitate you, my brethren, and myself, on the success it has already obtained and the prospect of its enlargement. I am persuaded that it is a laudable and good institution and calculated to promote objects highly interesting to us, considered either in our individual capacities and domestic connections, or as members of civil and religious society.

Personal happiness and the endearments of the domestic circle are vastly heightened by the due culture of the mind, it smooths the unsocial, forbidding roughnesses of human nature, improves and polishes the human faculties, and furnishes a capacity both for communicating and receiving intellectual entertainment.

Learning is religion's favorite handmaid.. This applies even to the higher kinds of science. "Philosophy suggests motives to religion, and religion adds pleasures to philosophy." The same may be said of all the liberal arts. their object is the investigation of nature, and "to look thro' nature up to nature's God" is the *ne plus ultra* of all human researches, the rewarding crowning end.

When I consider the place I now stand in, and the common religion of which we make the profession, it cannot surely be deemed amiss to suggest that, in our several stations and relative situations, we should discharge the duties resulting from them, and in particular display all the virtues of patriotism, from sublimer views, and ultimately to more noble ends than the securing any political or temporary advantages whatever, and in the perusal of books, which providence has put into our hands, we ought to have something more important in view, than the gratifying a transient curiosity, or a taste for literary amusement.

Our religion teacher us to consider our present existence as a state of minority, of discipline and probation, designed to prepare us for our adult age in the next life, which is to be a lasting and unchangeable state, and therefore that our true happiness, which it is our wisdom and duty to pursue, lies above and beyond this world.

Let us then my friends, study to reduce the moral science, and all our religious knowledge, to practice, and seek after and attain that "wisdom whose ways are ways of pleasantness and all whose paths are peace,"—and whose blessed influences and effects shall extend beyond the ruin of thrones, the downfall of empires, and the termination of all political existence in this world, and support and solace the heart forever.