

AN

ORATION,

ON THE

RECENT MEASURES OF THE

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT,

PRONOUNCED

AT

DEDHAM, JULY 4th, 1809.



BY ERASTUS WORTHINGTON.



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DEDHAM, JULY 6, 1809.

SIR,

THE citizens who assembled at the Rev. Mr. BATES' meeting house on Tuesday afternoon, to commemorate the era of our independence, highly gratified with the eloquent, spirited and pertinent address, which you there delivered, have appointed a committee to present to you their thanks, and to request a copy for the press. By a compliance with this request you will enable us to communicate such information as must be pleasing to every true American.

*By order of the Committee,*

BENJAMIN FAIRBANKS, jun. Chairman. }

ERASTUS WORTHINGTON, Esq.



DEDHAM, JULY 6, 1809.

GENTLEMEN,

I RECEIVED the thanks which you have this day presented to me, with great pleasure. I submit the copy which you request to your disposal.

*Gentleman, I am your  
devoted servant,*

ERASTUS WORTHINGTON.

Capt. BENJ. FAIRBANKS, jun. }  
Chairman of the Committee. }

# ORATION.

FELLOW CITIZENS,

I DO not appear in this place to perform the cold ceremony of pronouncing a set oration, but to speak plain truths concerning our liberties. They who have invited me to speak on this occasion, demand of me a statement of facts, which I will presently make; but let us first take notice of our brave ancestors. It is our duty to commemorate their sufferings and their exploits. They have procured us the blessings of freedom. We will therefore here again make our vows to honour their virtues, to transmit their fame, and to celebrate their deeds of valour. We will here pledge ourselves to defend the rich inheritance which they have bequeathed us.

It might be grateful to your feelings to recount some of the most brilliant achievements of the revolution. The commemoration of these illustrious deeds tend to elevate the genius of the nation and to warm our breasts with patriotism. But as you have all heard so much cold harangue on this subject, I fear I could hardly make it interesting; you will excuse me therefore for omitting to make this the theme of my observations.

There is another subject, to which I would invite your attention. It is the recent measures of our government. In the whirlwind of inordinate passions, neither the advocates nor the opponents of a measure are likely to understand its real merits. When the passions have subsided it is our duty to review it again. It is the peculiar privilege of free-

men to review the measures of their government, to censure or approve them, as by experience they are found to be impolitic, or salutary. This privilege we will now exercise. We will exercise it honestly. Let us spurn the idea, that we are devoted to any man, or class of men. We must never forget our high station of freemen. To support the dignity of this station, we must freely censure our rulers when we believe they do wrong, and warmly approve them when they do right, and this we must do without any regard to party. This will give majesty and force to our censure and approbation. I hope I am sufficiently impressed with these truths.

In making comments on the measures of government, I would gladly avoid saying any thing, which may be offensive. I wish to have it expressly understood, that I do not intend to impeach the motives of a party. The liberal and elevated spirit of republicanism teaches us to impute the supposed errors of our fellow citizens, to good intentions. Our difference of opinion arises in a degree from the difference in the education, and the circumstances of men, not from depravity of motive.

My design in noticing our embargo and non-intercourse system, is to give you a concise and general history of its operation and success. Hitherto we have spoken only of its probable effects. Now I can speak of its success, as it is proved by events which we ourselves do know, by actual experiment.

Never perhaps had a government to contend with greater difficulties than the last congress. On the one hand, Napoleon had commenced an attack on our commercial rights. Our honour, our interest, and our duty forbade an acquiescence in his anti-commercial decrees. Our minister at Paris had remonstrated against them, and in bold and unequivocal language told the French emperor, that America ought not and would not submit to them. Here

was our government pledged to oppose the greatest monarch in the world.

On the other hand, England had commenced a similar attack. Her orders of council without being resisted would with one death blow, have annihilated our commerce. Submission to these orders, would have been an abandonment of our independence. Every motive which sways the minds of freemen, the suffering of unprovoked injuries, the remembrance of former aggression, the fear of British monopoly, the shame of paying tribute, yea and the spirits of our departed heroes all called on the government to resist them. The administration never hesitated for a moment to begin, in a proper manner its opposition to these obnoxious orders. Although by doing this, it became bound to oppose another nation, which in the language of her boasting, holds with an iron grasp thirty millions of the eastern people as her slaves, which makes the islands her tributaries, and vexes both the Indies with her maritime depredation, which insults the Turks in the Bosphorus, attacks the Danes in their capital city, and puts all maritime cities in fear, and as some have said, might demolish our own towns, and bury us in their ruins. These were our foreign enemies. And in addition to them, the administration was assailed by a powerful and enterprising opposition. This last opponent being intimately acquainted with the weakness and foibles of the nation, stimulated by the remembrance of former defeat, eager to regain power, and well organized in the work of opposition, was not the least powerful antagonist with which the administration had to contend. For it was easily foreseen that the wholesome and necessary restrictions of the government might be represented to honest men, as tyrannical and unjust.

With all these difficulties fully in view, undismayed at the danger, self-collected, intent on the defence of our rights, mindful of their awful re-

sponsibility to this nation, and posterity, the administration first clearly ascertained our rights, and then firmly resolved to maintain them.

Upon mature deliberation of all the different measures which could be adopted to repel the invasion of our rights, the resolution of withholding our supplies seemed the most safe and efficient. This measure had its inconveniences. Its advocates could not know the length of time necessary to produce its intended effect. The then future and contingent events of Europe might either accelerate or retard it. It was greatly to be feared that the impatience of the people under their privations, would prevent a fair experiment of its efficacy. A violent and unreasonable opposition in conjunction with other causes, might in a great measure prevent its coercive effect on those who had done us wrong. The correctness of this measure appeared principally from the circumstance, that its opponents never could propose any other mode of resistance as a substitute. Although they were urged over, and over again, to propose their own plans, they never did propose any which they themselves would at last support. They were fastened on this point, and tortured with the most urgent and repeated demands to state in a specific manner, what ought to be done. It is a fact which will hereafter, when the passions have subsided appear with a damning effect, that the opposition to the embargo was not dignified, even with the pretence that any other measure should be adopted in its place.

With these views of their own measure, the administration looked forward to its final result, with the greatest solicitude, for they clearly saw the intrinsic difficulties with which it was attended. But when in addition to all these, they found every artificial impediment thrown in their way they were astonished.

They were grieved, they were distressed, they were agonized to see the embargo opposed, by the

most indefatigable exertions of the opposition. The pungency of their grief arose from the reflection, that the passions dictated this opposition, not the reason of men, and that its direct and inevitable tendency was to precipitate the nation into the calamities of a war.

In the noble spirit of that Grecian general who said to his passionate fellow general, "strike, but hear me," the administration steadily persevered, and bore the greatest abuse with moderation. They constantly asserted that their embargo would at last produce a favourable result, that it would at last work on the selfish propensities of the wrong doer.

They who approved this measure were denounced as enemies of their country, enemies of liberty, slaves of France and of Congress. The most cutting reflection of all was, that many of the merchants whose particular rights were intended to be protected by the embargo, should be so ungrateful as to condemn it. These events have no doubt made a deep impression on your minds. The fact that at the very moment when we ought to have been united to oppose our foreign enemies, the opposition united all their efforts to detach the citizens from the support of their government, did seriously alarm you. But let us have the magnanimity to forget all these things, and provide against a future and similar emergence.

Thus far all had been struggle, debate and toil, on the part of the administration. Now let us look to the result of these exertions. Britain has again conceded to America! She has promised to rescind the orders of council on the very terms which, you demanded their repeal last August. There is a general relaxation of the anti-commercial decrees; if not a total abandonment of them as respects ourselves by both the belligerents.

Here is the reward of republican exertions. Here is our triumph. Here may we pluck laurels, for the head of that great man, who has so eminently

contributed to this desired event. Now can we enjoy the pleasing truth, that the mild spirit of democracy is compatible with that energy which is necessary to repel the attacks of our maritime foe.

I would here seize an opportunity to impress on your minds an important truth. The success of our system of non-intercourse has taught us, where we can strike Great Britain in a vulnerable point; where we may pierce this *sea-monster* to its vitals.

The general alarm among the English merchants at the loss of our trade; the derangement which it has caused in the system of British manufactories; the distress which it created among their weavers and mechanics, and the final impression it made on the British government itself, are all arguments to prove this very important truth.

That our non-intercourse has availed us more than the employment of one hundred line of battle ships, with the expense of fifty million of dollars, and twenty thousand lives! What will the advocates for navies say to this, when this flood of new evidence has burst upon them? If they do not now correct their opinions then are they incorrigible indeed! If a time ever existed when we should employ a naval force to coerce our enemies, it was last winter, when our rights on the ocean were invaded. Suppose we had gone to the very extent of our power, in building a navy and had directed all its force to reduce Great Britain. Would it in eighteen months, have made an impression on the haughty minister of England? No my fellow citizens! But it would have allured into our ports, the British navies and tempted them to commit the same horrible murders and depredations which they committed at Copenhagen. It would only have been food for the overgrown British sea-lion to live upon. Had our navy been all manned and equiped for service last winter, would not the advocates for a declaration of war have urged its immediate employment? Had we undertaken to contend with our



enemies on the ocean, probably at this time we should be suffering the calamities of war, in addition to the evils of an embargo, we might now be relating some disastrous battle where our friends were killed and country beaten.

Who will now withhold his approbation from the administration? Who is here so sullen that he will not bestow the meed of merited praise? Who is here so base that he will not rejoice at the success of his country?

My fellow citizens! the impression made on the British cabinet is not the only success, which has attended the embargo. It has gained a glorious victory over its late opponents, for our federal brethren now are satisfied with its final effect, although they condemn the means necessary to produce it. Here is the height of our good fortune. A measure, which in its operation excited the most angry and boisterous passions, has in its result calmed them into complacency and approbation. The republic is again united in a great national question.—The embargo has produced another good effect. It has engaged us in the wholesome, virtuous and truly republican system of manufacturing our own cloaths, and our own wares. If this system thus happily commenced be carried to its just and natural extent; it may prevent future wars, and possibly may save our liberties. It was greatly to be feared that the long continuance of the late state of society would so have inspired us with the shop-keeping spirit, that our merchants would barter our liberties for broadcloths and gewgaws.

The events of the last year show that these fears were well founded. In point of mere pecuniary advantage, I think it no extravagant conjecture to say that the improvement which this country is making in the single article of Spanish wool, will in a few years more than counterbalance all the losses occasioned by the embargo. The same thing may be said of our cotton manufactories. I look forward

to the time when it will be fashionable to date the commencement of our manufacturing system with the beginning of the embargo.

Some pretend that the desired adjustment of our difficulties with the British government, relative to the orders of council is the effect of a change of measures by the new president. Does any man believe this assertion? Can any man of reputation look us in the face, and with a steady countenance and composed muscle say he believes it. No! No! The British government itself did not pretend it. It did pretend however, that the last modification of the embargo, had induced it to rescind the orders of council, and to treat with America. And let it be observed, that the last alteration of the embargo was, with few exceptions, opposed by the federalists.

When our minister at London proposed to the British government to repeal the embargo, on condition that England would rescind her orders of council, the reply was, that the repeal of the French edicts, was the only condition on which the British king would rescind the orders of council. Mr. Madison in his late message, recognized this principle of the reply, and praises the British government for abandoning it. Although the English government was pledged in the face of the world to continue her orders, yet your non-intercourse has driven them from that wicked resolution. They who pretend a change of policy by the new president have an utter contempt for our understanding, they know better. It is impossible that any man of discernment should be deceived on this point. This pretence of a change of policy is an attempt to divert our attention from the real merits of the embargo, for so irresistible, so overwhelming is the evidence of its success, that were men permitted to reason upon it, and make their own decision, there would be but one universal sentiment on the sub-

I cannot, in this place, omit to make one ob-

servation on the general character of the last administration. The concise review I have just made forcibly obtrudes it. Although the evidence that the spirit and measures of the last administration were correct had gradually conquered the most obstinate prejudices against them. Although fanaticism and voluntary ignorance were at last dispelled by the clear light of its wisdom. Although its most determined opponents were dazzled with the blaze of its popularity, and compelled to acknowledge it had merits. Although the stubborn New England temper had yielded its reluctant approbation. Still it was said that one thing was wanting to make a fair trial of its policy. During ordinary and peaceable times, the genius of the administration was admirably well qualified to promote the happiness of the nation. This was almost universally acknowledged. But the opposition had always asserted that the same pacific policy which was so salutary in our day of sunshine, would be miserable in times of turbulence and danger. Late experience has refuted this charge. The events of the last year have proved in a manner most glorious for the administration, and most fortunate for the American people, that the mild and just spirit of democracy, which vigilantly guards the exercise of power, and the minutest rights of the individual, is compatible with energy.

My fellow citizens! although we have made Great Britain think it for her interest, to make us concession; it is still dangerous to think ourselves secure from her future aggression. We may yet be called on to support our government in resistance to British outrage. I will make a few observations on the points of dispute between this country and England, with this view, that you may now resolve what part you will perform in case your support is demanded by the government. Let us examine these subjects of dispute now; that artful men may not, at the very time our personal assistance is want-

ed withdraw it from the government. I mention the case of impressed seamen ; because the modest poor unfriended sufferers seldom make us hear their complaints. We are not republicans if we do not feel an attachment to our fellows, and sympathize with their sufferings. Let us consider the enormity of the injury done the impressed seaman.

The approach of the king's armed ships is many times more terrible to the American seaman, than the whirlwind or the storm. When the British officer boards a merchant ship to search for hands, he calls all the crew on deck, selects the most hardy and enterprizing, takes him by the collar, forces him on board his own vessel and invites him to enlist, and on refusal puts him in chains, throws him into a dark and pestilential hole, there starves and torments him. On the second trial the savage commander who impressed him, on refusal to enlist inflicts his cruel stripes on the bare flesh of his victim. The unfortunate seamen through pain and hunger is obliged to engage in the king's service, and is thus obliged to fight for that very power which so cruelly oppresses him, and for all this, he may receive the uncertain and pitiful reward of six pence per day.

Thus is an American citizen torn from his family, his friends, and his country, lost to liberty, lost to the endearments of home, lost to the pleasures of convivial mirth. In despair of regaining his liberty, ridiculed for his attachment to freedom, menaced with blows and perpetual bondage the unfortunate sufferer many times, in the agony of his grief implores his tormentors to throw him into the ocean. It is of no avail that the unfortunate man cries out "I am an American citizen!" It is of no avail, that he produces a certificate of his citizenship? The savage monster who commands him will probably enough, in a vulgar manner peculiar to himself, damn the protection and throw it into the sea. It is of no avail that he declares himself a

freeman, and exempted by the laws of nature and nations from impressment. Here do we see the life and liberty of an American citizen depend on the caprice of a British sea-officer (many times a mere barbarian) from whose decision there is no practical appeal. Shall not the voice of the republic be raised in favour of these men? Shall they be left to the mercy of a British press gang, when they generously risque their lives, to bring us the luxuries of the foreign world? Does the tar which covers them, shield them from our pity? They are the most generous hearted fellows alive. They love their friends and their country with a noble sincerity. Thousands of these men are now wasting their lives on board British men of war, who were they here to day with us, would make their offerings to the God of liberty, with as much enthusiasm as we do. President Adams has nobly defended the rights of seamen to be exempted from impressment. It is a pleasing reflection that his voice appears to be distinctly heard on this subject, and likely to produce a unanimity of sentiment.

I notice a fact relative to British depredation on our carrying trade the record of which for the honour of my country, I wish was blotted from her annals. In the year 1805, American merchants without any distinction of party in all the most considerable towns in the United States, implored congress to defend them against these encroachments; and pledged themselves to support any measures, which the government might see fit to adopt to oppose them. Last winter we saw a strong propensity in the minds of some men, to justify these very encroachments, which they had before unequivocally condemned. At the very time that it was expected that these men would regard their plighted honour, and contribute their share to the support of government in repelling encroachments on our commerce. Many of them treacherously withdrew their support. There is a warning to us in this.

The admonition is, Americans never do so again ! Despise him who would make you violate your faith. Now in your cool moments deliberately make up your opinion and adhere to it in opposition to the wicked suggestions of party men.

I introduce these subjects because it is our duty to examine them. I should not dare to amuse you with the trifles of a flowery address. I know you have a higher object than such amusement. As men and citizens we must on every proper occasion, inquire into the measures of our government. The more we know ourselves the less capable are designing men of imposing upon us.

There are men among us who scoff at our pretensions to capacity to judge for ourselves. They say, with a sneer, "the people fine legislators indeed ! Much do they know !" This is still the cant in many circles. The idea of our incapacity is so rivetted in some minds, that we must with the majesty of true sovereigns tell these men that we do not want their services. We will not be laughed out of our opinions. But to support the dignity of the character of freemen we must continually make inquiries into public measures, and into our national and individual rights. Should we neglect our public duties, others will indeed perform them for us ; but they will pay themselves most generously for their services, and at our expense ; they will soon make themselves lords and aristocrats, and then we poor underlings must bend the knee to them if they do but nod at us.

"I was born as free as Cæsar so were you, we all can endure the winter's cold as well as he." This is the spirit that must be alive within us. Should we become ignorant, they who direct their consciences in spiritual things, would invent a hell out of which they will not pray our souls without a fee. The imprecations against antichrist which you have probably heard a thousand times from the spot whereon I stand, should at least remind

you of the corruption of which the human mind is susceptible even under the special commission to be ambassadour of God. It is your knowledge and good sense which makes the American clergy modest and virtuous men.

It is said that there will be an aristocracy of talents and wealth and experience, even in a free country : then let us watch that there be not an aristocracy of power. Men of aristocratical propensities, by boasting that they have more knowledge and more experience do many times put down plain honest men. " I cannot tell what you or other men think, but as for my single self I had as lives not be as to live in fear of such a thing as myself." This is a motto for Americans.

That man who believes that a particular class of men possess more knowledge and integrity than any other description of men may very honestly endeavour to throw all power into the hands of that supposed righteous order. This I fear is the design of many citizens, who are honest in their intentions. I know it to be the avowed wish of some.

Who are they who compose this imaginary aristocracy of talents and virtue. Rich merchants, lawyers, priests. These men it is true have temptations to wish for a concentration of power and knowledge in a few hands. Their honesty and firmness does no doubt entirely overcome it in many instances. That good common sense and honest independence of mind, which without an altar, without a sacrifice, and without a confessor carries a man directly to heaven and his God makes the priest a mere adviser and friend.

The more people feel their incapacity to take care of their souls and their property, the more necessary it is, to call for the assistance of lawyers and priests, and consequently the greater the fees which they can command. I hope you will not misunderstand me. I do not speak against any order of men. I do highly respect the American clergy.

men, they are the guardians of morals, and religion. I only advise you to watch their conduct not to oppose them.

Some may call this mere declamation. Would my sense of propriety permit me to take an oath on the occasion, I should dare under that solemnity to affirm to you the sincerity of my opinion. I speak of things which you yourselves do know, and which I have heard with my own ears, and judged by my own understanding. The great influence of lawyers in the administration of our laws, and government calls for your most vigilant attention. I make exceptions to the general rule when I say, that the very employment of an attorney does some how or other, disqualify an ordinary mind for the business of legislation. It tends to eradicate from his breast that delicate sensibility for the rights of man, and that respect for modest merit which is the ornament of a legislator, and which you ought to demand in a republican ruler. Lawyers are employed in the government, not because they better understand the principles of legislation, not because they have more liberal views, for the reverse is frequently the case, but because they are more acquainted with the *forms* of administration.

I would contrive a way to make you feel the glory of being free. You have no doubt felt it a thousand times. What would now be our condition had Britain fastened a yoke on our necks? Some of us would be on board the floating prisons of England contributing to establish her maritime domination. Some of us would be in the royal army. The rest of us might stay at home, and cultivate this the king's soil. But then three days in a week, at least, should be obliged to work for king George. Every time we drank a little beer or cider, we should be taxed for it. Every time we warmed our rooms with a fire, or illumined them with a candle, we should be taxed for it. Every time we made a note, deed or any written obligation



we should be taxed for it, we should be taxed for every thing we could eat or wear, yea we should be taxed for the light of heaven, or else like the Englishmen stop up our windows. And then to compensate us for all this, the king would send over his royal governours, and royal governours' servants all great men. And we poor plebians on foot, might stare at their splendour pull off our hats, and make our bows to their carriages and horses. And then the king would quarter upon us his holy bishops, and their right reverend fathers in God, and we must pay them tithes and lowly reverence. Perhaps the redoubtable duke of York might condescend to be our king, and then would you hear our pretty womanly gentlemen shout "long live the king of America!" Could you afford to purchase stuffs to make your wives and daughters fine? No you would not dare to it, you would not dare to cultivate their minds, lest their elegance and beauty should chide you, by a contrast with your mean spirit and dulness.

They would have no inducement to please us by their vivacity, while we were content to live slaves and own a master. For the exquisite taste and fine sense of American ladies has always made them esteem whigism a necessary quality in a husband and a lover. What a picture of degradation is here my countrymen! yet it does not half equal the real misery of the English people. Compare your own real condition with the one described, and then will you feel the blessings of freedom, then will you see that you do not celebrate your independence in vain.

I must not omit on this occasion to remonstrate against a political sin, which of late has menaced us, with the most dreadful effects. I allude to the habit of speaking against our southern brethren. It has become fashionable with some men to criminate our fellow citizens of the southern states, for the most wicked designs on our rights. The prevalence of this custom will inevitably divide the American

people, in their affections, by local limits, and whenever the case exists, wherein the parties of the country shall be distinguished by geographical lines, that moment there is a broad foundation laid for the separation of the states, and nothing less than an almighty power can preserve this union. This is our most vulnerable point. The union of the states is the ark of our salvation. Our union and liberty are now one and indivisible. My fellow citizens! consider the price of it. Think of the sufferings of the pilgrims and the hardships of our early forefathers! remember the toils, the danger and the misery of the revolution! consider how much American blood was shed in that memorable contest. Recollect the exertions of our political sages to establish the constitution. Consider how many times we have participated like brothers in the distresses, and the glory of the war. This is not all that should make us hate this vice. We are the only conservators of genuine liberty, the hopes of freemen throughout the world are in America. Should we turn monsters, and destroy the most precious deposit ever confided to the keeping of man, then might the world and posterity reproach us with perfidy and baseness. Away then with these base suspicions of our southern brethren! away ye traitors to our liberties! Frown indignantly upon them Americans! we are a great family of brethren, we have toiled, fought, bled and conquered together. The brave New-England men boast of their achievements at Bunker and Saratoga. So may the southern people boast of their exploits, at the king's mountain, the Cowpens and the Eutaw. While the hostile arms of Britain in one period of the war, cast a dark gloom over our affairs in New-England; the Virginians under their brave chief, flew to our assistance, and our brave men in their turn when they found they could serve their country with success, rushed to the southward and helped Washington conquer at Yorktown. The generous spirit of

these times was above that sordid, and low mind, which would throw away our liberty for a supposed pecuniary advantage. The tone of patriotism at that time would have silenced the man who should harbour in his mind these suspicions against our fellow citizens at the south. It would make him mute, it would make him a tory wretch.

I implore you now in our day of peace to fix in your minds an abhorrence of this wicked suspicion. How would you agonize to hear the story of our revolution, when our liberties were gone? Washington was anxious on this subject. It has always appeared ~~to me~~ as odious as atheism, to hear the pretended disciples of that great man denounce our southern brethren, when he has so explicitly warned us against this danger. Hear what he says. "In contemplating the causes which may disturb our union, it occurs as a matter of serious concern that any ground should have been afforded for characterizing parties, by geographical discrimination. Northern and southern Atlantic and western, whence designing men may endeavour to excite a belief, that there is a real difference of local views and interests. One of the expedients of party to gain influence within a particular district, will be to misrepresent the views of the other districts. You cannot shield yourselves too much against these jealousies and heartburnings. They tend to render alien to each other, those who should be united by paternal affection."

There is another habit, which really appears to be anti-republican. Some men are always representing our government as defective and incapable of self preservation. I pity the man deluded with this opinion; he cannot feel the happiness which we now do, while recounting the blessings of our country. Is our constitution really so weak as some represent it, would it not be best to dissemble a little, and speak in its favour? The government depends on popular opinion, and when that opinion is unfa-

yourable, it is really weak. When an event occurs which threatens our constitution with destruction it will be faintly resisted by that man, who believes its destruction inevitable.

I will say something on that trite subject the influence of demagogues. On no subject perhaps, have we heard so much senseless declamation. A class of men appear to be tormented with the idea, that here and there, a man of popular talents, will flatter the people out of their rights, by flattering their vices. It is our duty to guard against impositions in this way. But what is there terrible in all this, if a bad man does find his way to power, by flattering the people? What can we do to turn him out. There are many other ways, in which men may introduce themselves to power; which are equally as exceptionable. They may use their monied interest, they may pretend to frown on popular manners, and in that way to make themselves popular.

What in the name of heaven, do these men intend by disclaiming against popular manners? Do they mean to introduce a taste into this society, which shall make us look with complacency on that haughty, reserved and aristocratical demeanour which overlooks a plain man, a farmer, a mechanic or a trader? If this be the design, then will we in our turn spurn their narrow greatness.

The idea that a few men of popular manners, disconnected from the great body of the legislators, and depending on their talents alone, should cheat us out of our rights is ridiculous and absurd. It betrays the opinion of a class of men towards us. It necessarily supposes us a herd of slaves, an Athenian mob, a Roman populace, a rabble without integrity or understanding. This notion that we are in danger of the popular arts of demagogues, was first entertained by a class of men, who found their own popularity declining; like the rest of mankind they wished to shift off the blame from

themselves, and they imputed it to the arts of demagogues. But my fellow citizens there will be demagogues in this country, who if it be in their power, will raise themselves over your heads. I will not tell you who these men are, but I will tell you how they will conduct themselves. They will form associations to counteract the government. These are the arts which Washington foresaw and denounced as destructive, and of fatal tendency. These are the arts of which he earnestly cautioned us to beware. His words are memorable and deserve to be written on your minds with a steel pen. "All combinations for the execution of the laws, all combinations under whatever plausible character, with the real design to direct, controul, counteract or awe the regular deliberations and action of the constituted authorities are destructive and of fatal tendency. They serve to organize faction to give it an artificial, and extraordinary force, to put in the place of the delegated will of the nation the will of a party often a small but enterprizing minority of the community."

The late fortunate choice of a man, to preside over the councils of this nation is an event which increases our good fortune at this time. Lately we had to defend him from the imputation of undue foreign partiality, and the heinous sin of having pledged himself to pursue the system of his predecessor, and now when he is scarcely warm in the presidential chair, his former opponents go before us in pronouncing his praise. As on the one hand we will avoid the unmanly vice of adulation, so on the other we will practice the virtue of bestowing just praise. Mr. Madison's services while member of congress, and secretary of state, and his conduct since his inauguration to the presidency are his pledges to us, that he will act worthy the ruler of a great nation.

There is another illustrious character in this country serving it, in another capacity, but not per-

haps with less success and benefit. President Adams better than any other man can develop the views and characters of particular men in the United States. This he has already done, and is still doing it more completely. It is gratifying to see this venerable man, again in the service of our country. It revives in our minds the recollection of his revolutionary deeds. In gratitude to him we will esteem his late communications a precious revelation.

I am obliged to pass with rapidity from subject to subject.

I hold this to be a maxim, *that in bringing a citizen, we must early inspire him with a passion of liberty, and when he rightly feels that passion he will attempt to acquire the necessary information, to perform his political and civil duties.*

This observation suggests the inquiry, for what purpose did our young men come here to-day? Was it to see themselves dressed in their holy-day cloaths, or to feed on some rarities? No; the sons of freemen have higher objects. They came here to hear the declaration of independence read, and to inhale the noble spirit which breathes throughout that unrivalled production. They came here to catch the flame of patriotic love, which they might see exhibited by older citizens. They came here to pay their respects, to those men who did their duty in the revolution, and who honour this assembly.

Nothing gives a young man so much consequence, as the manly virtue of inquiring into his rights. No matter in what manner he may first have gained his existence, whether an European lord, or an American wild man is his father, no matter in what place he may have spent his life, whether in the polished circles of a city, or in a country village, no matter with what attention he may have decorated his person, and smoothed his manners, no matter whether fortune has smiled on him with plen-

ty, or frowned on him with penury, the moment he resolves to exercise his reason, and his power, in the defence of his rights, all the casual distinctions disappear in the eye of genuine democracy, his soul becomes regenerated and susceptible of all manly virtues, and all the pleasures allotted to those politically redeemed. The outward appendages of the private man all vanish at the exhibition of republican virtues and republican spirit.