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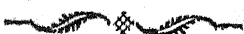
SPOKEN AT

COLRAIN,

JULY 4, 1803.

BEING THE ANNIVERSARY OF

*American Independence.*

  
BY THE REV. SAMUEL TAGGART.  


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PRINTED AT GREENFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS,

By JOHN DENIO,

MDCCCIII.

**I**N behalf of the Committee of Arrangements, we have the honor to express to you their thanks for the excellent Oration you delivered on the Anniversary of the Independence of the United States of America, the 4th instant, and to desire a copy for the press.

We have the honor to be with high  
personal respect and esteem, Sir,  
your very humble servants,

HUGH M'CLALLEN,  
JONATHAN M'GEE,  
CLARK CHANDLER.

REV. SAMUEL TAGGART.

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GENTLEMEN,

**T**HOUGH I am far from supposing my Oration on the 4th instant, justly merits the encomiums bestowed upon it, yet, such as it is, the copy is at your service.

I am, Gentlemen, your  
friend and servant,  
SAMUEL TAGGART.

The Gentlemen of the Com-  
mittee of Arrangements. }

## ADVERTISEMENT.

ON account of the extreme length of the performance, a few passages were omitted in the delivery, These are inserted in the publication.



A N

# O R A T I O N .

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FRIENDS, AND FELLOW-CITIZENS,

**T**HOUGH not wholly unacquainted with the business of public speaking, yet, on account of the novelty of the occasion, and the present being somewhat remote from the usual method in which I have been accustomed to address public assemblies, I feel a degree of diffidence in making the attempt. It being my usual practice to deliver my sentiments in a plain, simple, unornamented style, I shall not deviate from that method on the present occasion. The flowers of oratory or the ornaments of diction, you are not to expect. The subject before us has been so often considered that it is difficult to exhibit any thing new. If something however may be suggested, tending to excite in the minds of this numerous audience, sentiments of gratitude to that Being upon whom we all constantly depend for every blessing we enjoy, and whose hand has heretofore appeared so conspicuously, in enabling us to surmount all the difficulties, and protecting us in the midst of all the dangers which we had to pass through, in order to our becoming an independent nation, I shall esteem the present a profitable service.

THIS Anniversary completes twenty-seven years since a band of Patriots, fired with an heroic zeal, and animated with such a noble enthusiasm, as raised them above all sense or dread of impending danger, put

their lives in their hands, and making a solemn appeal to heaven for the rectitude of their intentions, signed that memorable instrument which declared the thirteen united British Colonies free, sovereign, independent States, pledging, at the same time, their lives, fortunes and sacred honour, to support the declaration, thereby claiming a rank among the nations of the world.

THE event has proved that what was, at that time done on earth, has been ratified in heaven. After a long and arduous struggle, during which we were, in a variety of instances, like Israel of old, a people signally, and eminently saved of the Lord, our independence has been acknowledged, and placed on a permanent basis, exhibiting to the world a literal fulfilment of that scripture prophecy which declares that a nation should be born in a day.

IT is agreeable both to right reason, and to the principles, as well as examples of revelation, to take some notice of an event of such solemn importance : but as men, and, in a special manner as christians, let us be governed, in our public rejoicings by the dictates of reason, and the sober maxims of religion. Let us remember that our liberties and privileges, civil and sacred, are the gift of God, to be improved for his glory, and our own and our fellow creatures' happiness ; left by making them an occasion of licentiousness, we hazard their loss.

THOUGH no human system of government, or civil polity, can be justly termed so perfect as to be incapable of improvement, yet, by comparing her lot with that of other nations, America, if she duly appreciates and improves her advantages, may be justly pronounced to be the happiest people on earth. While almost every other system of government now in the world, has come into operation as a fruit of either accident or force, our American constitutions, have been the result of the free, unawed deliberations of our most enlightened citizens, who had the opportu-

nity of profiting by all the light derived from the experience of past ages ; and they have come into operation by the voice of the people themselves. We have, in general, been favored with peace in our borders, with a plenty and even abundance of the necessaries and conveniences of life, with as great a degree of health as usually falls to the lot of dying men in a dying world, and with, probably, as much personal liberty as is consistent with imposing a due restraint on those unruly passions, which, if permitted to rage without controul, would turn the world into a bedlam, and render every man, every man's foe.

A BRIEF sketch of some of the difficulties surmounted, in order to the establishment of our independence, the dangers with which it is still threatened, and the means of avoiding them, shall now solicit your attention.

MORE than a simple declaration upon paper was requisite to procure us the blessing. It was not obtained till after a long, arduous, and persevering conflict, and after expending much blood and treasure. When we reflect upon the various circumstances of discouragement, which darkened our prospect at the beginning of the struggle, it is truly wonderful, and something which manifests the operation of a divine invisible hand, directing our councils and animating our endeavours, that ever we had resolution sufficient to make the attempt. As a people we were then in our infancy. But little more than a century and a half had elapsed since our forefathers, a few poor wandering pilgrims, in quest of a habitation where they might enjoy the blessings of civil and religious liberty, first landed on our shores, where they found nothing but a vast howling wilderness, inhabited only by savage men and beasts of prey. We were without magazines of arms and other warlike stores, or the immediate means of procuring any ; without either treasures, experienced officers, or disciplined troops, and

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without fleets to defend our extensive sea coasts. We had at the same time, to contend with one of the most powerful and warlike nations of Europe, whose fleets gave law to the ocean, whose resources for military enterprise were, in a manner inexhaustible, and whose troops, some of the most valiant and best disciplined on the globe, were headed by commanders distinguished for their military talents and love of enterprise.

DURING the progress of the conflict, also, our affairs oftentimes wore the most unpromising aspect, being reduced to such a low ebb, that, upon a retrospect view, we cannot but wonder that we did not, in a fit of despondency, give up the cause, and throw ourselves upon the mercy of the conqueror. Even before the close of the memorable 1776, which gave birth to our independence, we were, apparently, very near witnessing its exit. We have seen our resources exhausted, and our feeble armies, almost without pay or clothing, and many times but poorly fed, upon the point of dissolution; but still we were supported. The wasting of our fields, the burning of our towns, the repeated slaughter of our citizens, a vast expense of blood and treasure, together with the sometimes almost unparalleled sufferings of our captive brethren, in prisons, and in prison-ships, were so many items in the purchase of that blessing of independence which we are this day assembled to celebrate. Had not the memorable declaration of 1776 been followed with persevering exertions, which were in the end crowned with success, it would have been regarded as the momentary phrenzy of rebels, meriting the severest chastisement, and our country at large would have been subjected to the most humiliating vassalage. Many of my hearers still remember the various circumstances of this momentous conflict. It is proper that those who have since come on the stage of action should be made acquainted with them. Parents

should inform their children, and they again another generation, of the wonderful works of God.

It is readily admitted that God was the visible king of the Jewish nation, in a manner somewhat different from the usual method in which he rules over other nations; yet there are many things in the history of that ancient chosen people, substantially applicable to these American States. Does the inspired Law-giver of the Jews exclaim in the language of pious gratitude, saying, "Happy art thou O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people saved of the Lord, the shield of thine help, and the sword of thine excellency; and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places." So God has frequently interposed on our behalf, and been our salvation when our power was gone, and there was none shut up or left. And as God whenever he was about to do any great work for his ancient people, always raised up and qualified suitable instruments to carry it on; (such instruments were Moses and Aaron, Joshua, Gideon, David, Solomon, Hezekiah, &c.) so we have had both Patriots, Statesmen and Warriors, men equally distinguished in the cabinet and the field, who have received their endowments from on high; to whom, while they sat in judgment, God has been a spirit of judgment, as well as strength while turning the battle to the gates. Such distinguished characters have, tho' in somewhat of a different manner, been as really fitted by heaven for their respective stations, as these worthies of old. Who but an infidel does not see the hand of heaven, in raising up and qualifying a WASHINGTON for the several important stations he so ably filled? A character justly considered as first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen; a name which will stand unrivalled in the annals of honest fame, when the names of his calumniators, shall be, either buried in oblivion, or re-

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membered only as objects of contempt and execration. But should I attempt so much as barely to mention the names of an host of living and dead worthies, who have filled their respective stations, with dignity and honor to themselves, as well as to the singular advantage of their country, I should tire your patience. They were however only instruments, just such as God was pleased to make them, and to his name be the praise and glory.

BUT even after an eight years' war had terminated in the restoration of the blessings of peace, we found our independence so far from being placed upon a secure and permanent basis, as to be little better than merely nominal. It is not to be wondered that Americans should, at the close of such a long and desolating calamity, highly appreciate those liberties and privileges which had cost them so dear, and be filled with a dread of that arbitrary power they had so narrowly escaped, and be for that reason disposed to delegate authority with a sparing hand. Their principal concern was to guard against all possible abuses of delegated power by a multiplicity of checks, without being duly sensible that government might thereby become useless, by having its operation so clogged as to render it destitute of sufficient energy to afford protection. Being hitherto unpractised in the managing of national affairs, they were, accordingly, till taught by experience, in a measure insensible of the necessity of a stable energetic national government, in order to concentrate their national resources, and direct them to the preservation of their dear bought liberties : The United States were therefore without any proper national system.

THE old confederation, tho' but the mere shadow of a national constitution, was found to be, in some measure, adequate to national purposes in a time of war, so long as the several states were held together by a sense of common danger, but that danger being

past, this feeble bond was found by experience, to be wholly unequal to the management of our national affairs in time of peace. Our commerce being unprotected by any general system of legislation, was, for that reason, in a languishing condition—both public and private credit were greatly impaired—our national debt, the price of our Independence, was in no hopeful train of diminution, but rather in the way to accumulate, until it should be finally annihilated by a national bankruptcy and public convulsion—a circulating medium had in a great measure vanished, so that debts contracted during, and about the close of the war could not be discharged, and taxes necessarily high on account of the circumstances of the times, could not be paid, while our produce lay rotting in granaries for the want of sufficient encouragement to carry it to market. The natural consequences of these various circumstances were a multiplication of suits, and an abundance of private distress. From a mistake of their real cause, these things were followed with uneasiness, discontent, and insurrection.

WHILE our country laboured under this pressure of embarrassments, some of our more enlightened patriots and statesmen, discerning the true cause of our difficulties, clearly saw the necessity of a more energetic national system, and accordingly made that attempt by which our present federal constitution was formed. From that extreme jealousy which is ever watchful against encroachments on our liberties, and which, when not carried to excess, is freedom's best guardian, it required the utmost address to establish and carry this system into operation. Its beneficial effects are the best comments on its excellency. Tho' it had, from its infancy, to combat with a formidable internal opposition, and was brought into operation just at the commencement of a European war, unparalleled in the annals of civilized nations for instances of wanton cruelty, extensive carnage, and the en-

tire destruction of all ancient institutions ; and though we have been frequently in danger of being engulfed in the tremendous vortex of European politics, yet, with a WASHINGTON at helm, we safely out-rod the storm. In the course of a few years we have seen trade revived, public and private credit and confidence restored, our national character retrieved, both at home and in the view of foreign nations, and a system of national finance and revenue established, sufficiently productive to afford not only an ample supply for the ordinary exigencies of government, but a surplus equal to pay the interest, and effect a gradual extinction of the principal of our national debt, while taxes have been lessened and public burthens of every kind greatly lightened. We have seen our merchandize waisted into all parts of the globe, in our own vessels, navigated by our own seamen—the balance of trade formerly greatly against us, turned in our favour, and such an advancement of prosperity and population, as hardly admits of a parallel ; and our people, in general, easy and contented, or at least, without any real cause of complaint.

WHEN our national constitution was in the full tide of successful operation, and not sooner, America might be said fully to enjoy the blessings of her Independence.—From this brief sketch of the complicated difficulties happily surmounted, which stood in the way of our becoming an independent nation, as well as of the various steps by which we have arrived at that height of public and private prosperity, enjoyed under the operation of our national constitution, the pious mind will be naturally led to consider the whole as the work of God. God has, with a clear and distinct voice, spoken concerning our nation, to plant and to build it up. But there is a counter part to the declaration of inspired truth. He frequently also speaks concerning kingdoms and nations, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy, by either permitting a

spirit of infatuation to possess their councils, or by giving children to be their princes, and strangers to rule over them.

HAVING briefly traced the beneficent hand of Providence, which has been manifested in raising the United States to their present rank among the nations of the world, our observations will now be directed, to note some of the dangers which threaten our national prosperity and happiness, and which, unless happily avoided, may prostrate our national Independence.

AND even upon a first view, is it not obvious, that our political happiness, and even our Independence as a nation, is, or may be endangered by the prevalence of vice and irreligion? No mathematical axiom admits of a clearer and fuller demonstration than this observation of the wise man, that, "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." Those ancient Empires of Assyria, Babylon, Greece, and Rome, which appeared to be so firmly established that no power merely human could shake them, soon crumbled to pieces under the weight of their vices. Should vice and irreligion universally, or even generally prevail in the United States, will not our situation become comparatively more critical and dangerous, as we possess unspeakably greater advantages, both for obtaining the knowledge of our duty and for promoting the improvement of virtue? Nothing is plainer to those who believe that God the supreme arbiter of the fates of kingdoms and nations, will punish the guilty, than that prevalent national vices, especially irreligion, destroy the happiness, and endanger the Independence of a nation, by provoking the righteous vengeance of heaven.

WHATEVER the objections are which are made against either the religious, or moral system of the present chief magistrate of the United States, which, whether well or ill founded, as I, probably have not sufficient light to determine, I shall not in this place

spend time to enquire: this one sentiment from his pen, must meet the approbation of all the friends of religion and virtue. "Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure, when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people, that these liberties are the gift of God, that they are not to be violated, but with his wrath; I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, and that his justice cannot sleep forever." Besides provoking the wrath of heaven, vice and irreligion have a natural tendency to destroy the prosperity and happiness of a nation, by loosening or dissolving the bonds of civil society—weakening or eradicating all the social virtues, and that sense of mutual obligation which connects man to man, and by erasing from the minds of men, a sense of the sacred obligations of an oath. At least a nation becoming universally corrupt, can be governed only by the strong hand of force. No liberty can exist among them, unless it be the liberty of mutual destruction; and morality cannot exist without religion.

It is true our modern philosophic reformers, who have been pleading so strongly for the perfectibility of human nature, have, many of them, pretended to be great admirers of morality in the abstract. While they have used the most unwearied endeavours to discard religion, and set aside the obligations of the divine law, and all considerations drawn from the belief of a future state of retribution, they have pretended to introduce a more pure, sublime, and refined morality, under the fantastic notion of practising virtue for its own sake. But what is the virtue or morality they wish to introduce? Is it either more or less than the destruction of all religion and morals? Follow nature, take nature for your guide, is their leading maxim; i. e. resign yourselves up to the uncontrolled dominion of your appetites and passions. Not only piety towards God, but justice, humanity, temperance, chastity, and benevolence, as well the exercise of all

those natural and social affections, which result from the mutual relations of parents and children, husbands and wives, or brethren and sisters, are discarded from the list of virtues, and ranked among the weaknesses and prejudices of human nature, which it is the business of their sublime, and refined system of Philology to eradicate. Tho' great pretences to the inculcation and practice of benevolence, are made by these reformers, yet it is of that visionary impracticable kind, which, while it, professedly, embraces the whole human race in the arms of affection, considers individuals as of no consequence, and even scatters about fire-brands, arrows, and death in sport, for their destruction. A *Marat* and a *Robespierre*, with their fellows, were among the highest pretenders to this kind of benevolence. Their ostensible object was to emancipate the whole human race, while they were butchering their fellow creatures, by hundreds and thousands, with as little remorse as men tread upon a worm, and would have sacrificed whole kingdoms at a stroke, to their lust of dominion, and insatiate thirst for blood. Were such principles so far to prevail as to be introduced into universal practice, they would turn this world into a Tophet, a mere Pandemonium, a fit habitation for the fiends of Hell, rather than human beings.

THAT repeated and unwearied attempts have been made in Europe, to demoralize, and unchristianize the world, and that the plan has extended its influence to the United States of America, is a fact so abundantly attested, that it requires the effrontery of an Infidel to dispute or deny it. And, so far as the practical effects of this system prevail, they not only endanger the future happiness of individuals, but our present happiness and prosperity, and even our liberty and independence as a nation. When persons tainted with this demoralizing leaven, are entrusted with great power, and placed in stations of high responsibility, the danger increases. "When the wicked bear rule the

people mourn," is a maxim of unerring truth. Nations frequently derive their moral and religious complexions in a great measure from their rulers. It will perhaps be objected by some, that a people have no concern with their rulers, any farther than with their political talents, and of consequence they can have nothing to do with either their religion or morality. Even that christian charity which hopeth all things, is sometimes adduced as an argument why men of talents, though known enemies to christianity, ought impartially with its friends, to be considered as candidates for offices of the highest trust and responsibility in a christian country, if not for that very reason preferred. But is this application of christian charity just? What security can a people have in the political integrity of a ruler, without either religion or morals? Tho' it be the duty of christians to submit to the existing civil authority, even should their lot be cast in a Pagan, Mahometan, or Infidel country, this can be no reason why a free, and, professedly, a christian people, blessed with an elective government, should, by their own voluntary suffrages, raise known infidels to the chief direction of the affairs of government. Is it consistent with a due regard to christianity, to invest its enemies with a power which shall place them in a favorable situation to accomplish its destruction? Tho' a thorough infidel may make the most plausible pretensions, to philanthropy, and the most unlimited countenance and toleration of religious opinions, he is at heart an enemy to the whole christian name, and is only waiting a favorable opportunity to accomplish its destruction. It is impossible that as an Infidel, he should be or do otherwise. That great master and promoter of infidelity, Voltaire, filled the world with his syren songs about universal philanthropy, while Crush the Wretch, meaning Christ, was his watch-word among his companions, and he could tell his confidential friends, that if he had an hundred thousand men at his disposal, he

would know what to do. Danger from the prevalence of vice and irreligion has heretofore threatened us : Is it now past ? Let us pause and see.

SUCH are also the circumstances of these United States—such their relative situation with regard to the powers of Europe, that foreign influence and intrigue are fruitful sources of danger. We may naturally expect that while jealousy and rivalry exist between the several European powers, they will not be inattentive to the situation of America. While one rival nation will endeavor to obtain an undue influence or control over our councils, another will strive to counteract it by an opposite influence. We have heretofore tasted some of the bitter fruits of such intrigues, and have reason to dread them in future. But whatever control any foreign nation may obtain in these States, it will be improved in order to promote her own, and not their interest. Whatever private benevolence there may be in the world, and there is, alas ! but little, public national benevolence is not to be expected. Justice and good faith ought always to be prominent features in national proceedings, but national benevolence, or such a favor without an equivalent, as shall lay a foundation for a just claim upon national gratitude, but rarely exists, if ever. The European nations to whose intrigues the United States are most exposed, are Great Britain and France. These have long been the enemies and rivals of each other. Both are deeply interested in rendering the United States subservient to their interest. Our business, as Americans, is to manage our own national affairs, in our own way, unswayed by any undue partialities, either for or against the one or the other. If the time should ever come, which is an event neither impossible, nor very improbable, when either a British or a French faction shall obtain an uncontrollable, or even an undue influence over our national councils, our liberties will be endangered, and our independence become little better than a name.

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Nay the time may not be far distant when our situation may resemble that of ill fated Poland, which, by becoming a prey to foreign influence and intrigue, was first desolated by a civil war, then stripped of some of her fairest provinces, and finally, by the late partition, blotted out of the number of independent nations. Just so far as any undue partiality prevails, we may expect it to become subservient to a foreign interest, and not our own.

Our danger in this respect may be probably heightened, by the circumstance of our possessing an extensive vacant territory, which is to be considered as holding out an invitation to a vast influx of foreigners to visit our shores, and settle among us. These, some of them at least, may, upon good grounds, be supposed to bring, not only their foreign manners and habits, but their foreign prejudices and attachments along with them. It is by no means improbable that some of them may add their weight to the scale of foreign influence to control our councils. Foreigners of industry, respectability, and peaceable habits, ought always to be welcome to our shores. They bring an accession to our wealth and population, as well as promote our improvement in many useful arts. While they are protected by the same laws, and enjoy the same advantages to acquire, possess, enjoy, and protect property, with our native citizens, they cannot reasonably complain, tho' a space of time should elapse sufficient for them to get acquainted with our constitutions, and the nature and spirit of our government, and to manifest their attachment to the same, before they become eligible to stations of high trust and responsibility. Many foreigners of this description have after such acquaintance has been obtained, ranked among our most respectable citizens, and to put any new obstacle in the way of their naturalization, would probably be highly impolitic. But many of a different description, have, from time to time, visited our shores. If they are not fugitives from justice, they are such

uneasy restless spirits as love to fish in muddy water. Having many of them been unhappily engaged in plots to overthrow the government of their own country, they bring their revolutionizing spirit along with them, and are found to be no better qualified for the duties of peaceable citizens in this than in their native land. If in any instance, we find such characters, almost as soon as landed on our shores, claiming, not barely all the rights of native citizens, but enlisting themselves as political champions, and aspiring to be the organs of the public will, and even manifesting a disposition to model our civil code to their pleasure, when they know but little more of either our constitution, or the genius of our government, than the ships which carried them over; and especially if we find them aided and abetted by others, of a similar revolutionizing spirit among ourselves, of whom our country contains sufficient store, their influence is dangerous, and may, in due time, become fatal to our peace and independence; even equally destructive with the Trojan horse of old. I confess that for myself I cannot but feel for my country, as being in a situation which is truly degrading, from the consideration that no native American citizen could be found suitably qualified to hold the purse-strings of the nation, but that our treasury department, one of the most important in the United States, must be under the direction of a foreigner, one who has been, perhaps, justly represented as a fugitive from his own country, and as a fomenter of insurrection in this.

IN glancing at our foreign dangers, I may not pass over in silence, the cession of Louisiana to the French, a measure which promises to give us an uneasy, restless, intriguing, and encroaching neighbour at our doors; and the occlusion of the port of New-Orleans, a measure evidently connected with the cession, and one whereby our Western territory is excluded from the only passage communicating with the ocean, contrary to an express stipulation in our treaty with

Spain. Whether our Government has pursued that manly dignified line of conduct, which became the supreme authority of a free and independent nation, or whether it has not betrayed such a degree of indecision, pusillanimity, and imbecility, as is calculated only to invite injury and insult, I shall not pretend to decide in this place. In favour of the system adopted it is urged, that the immediate objects to be pursued by these States are peace, agriculture, and commerce, and that a different line of conduct would, probably, have led to a war, which in our present situation is above all things to be dreaded, and by all possible means to be avoided, and that by proving to the world our moderation, our justice, and our love of peace to other nations, we will conciliate their friendship, and dispose them to listen to reasonable and equitable terms for the settlement of all matters in dispute, thereby manifesting a similar disposition in return. It is readily granted that peace, upon equal terms, is one of the greatest of earthly blessings, and war a most distressing calamity, to be, by every consistent mean avoided. But such a peace as is worth possessing, a peace consistent with public liberty, or with national honour and independence, cannot, in the present existing state of things, be long maintained, or commerce either promoted or protected, unless a nation is suitably prepared to repel injury and insult. When in a situation to vindicate her injured rights, and repel force by force, a nation is then in the best capacity to negotiate with success. The pious believer of christianity, who has an unshaken confidence in the accomplishment of scripture prophecy, will no doubt look forward with pleasing anticipation to that happy period when peace among the several nations of the world shall universally prevail, when men shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, when nation shall no more rise against nation, nor kingdom against kingdom, neither shall they learn war any more; when even the brute creation shall be at peace, when

the wolf and the lamb, forgetting the antipathy of their respective natures, shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw as the ox, and they shall neither hurt nor destroy in God's holy mountain. Happy they who shall live in that day! When that time comes, as there will be no disposition to aggress, so there will be no need of any preparation to repel. But, in the present existing state of things, the surest way for a nation to secure and enjoy the blessings of peace, is to be in a situation to repel insult, and avenge injury. This method was, during the former administration twice practiced with success. What will, in the present instance, be the issue of a negotiation backed with no similar preparations, remains yet to be discovered. God grant it may be prosperous.

It is true we have been lately informed that our negotiation is in the most prosperous train, as our Envoy extraordinary has been received and treated with the most marked attention, and the most flattering assurances of a friendly disposition on the part of France, have been given by the First Consul, in answer to a communication from our Ambassador. I wish, however, that flattering may not, in this instance, prove to be only another term for deceitful and insidious, intending thereby to lull us into security, till the critical moment be past. The present hostile attitude of Great Britain, doubtless shews this to be not the most proper time to prosecute a system of encroachment upon America with vigor, and two millions of dollars for secret services, probably to be disposed of under the direction of our Envoy extraordinary, *Munroe*, and which may serve for a handsome doctur to the French ministry, may well be supposed to purchase a *store of civility* at least; of which valuable commodity it appears that our resident Ambassador has received but a moderate share heretofore. And it appears that notwithstanding all the assurances of a friendly disposition on the part of France, and the pretended disavowal of the proceedings of the Intendant of New-Orleans, on

the part of Spain, and notwithstanding the soothing, oily, and hand-kissing letter of the Spanish Ambassador, and the affectionate interest taken in our affairs by the French Consul, citizen *Pichon*, nothing more than civility has, as yet been received. According to the latest accounts, the Intendant continues firm in his purpose, the port of New-Orleans continues shut, and the right of deposit denied. It requires a degree of credulity, bordering on absolute lunacy, to believe a thing so incredible as, that the Spanish Intendant should, not only without any orders from his court, but contrary to orders, persist in such an obnoxious measure.\*

NOTHING can be more terrible to a free and independent nation than the arms of France, unless we except her diplomatic skill, her insidious intrigues, carried on under the specious appearance of friendship. More nations have been stripped of their liberties, and reduced to a state of vassalage by the latter than the former. Nay her professions of friendship have been the usual forerunners of conquest by the sword. We have seen Holland, Switzerland, Sardinia, Belgium, and Italy, successively stripped of every thing but nominal sovereignty, drained of their wealth and resources, and reduced to the most abject vassalage, by the fraternal embraces of the Great Nation, and Spain, once the proudest Monarchy in Europe, so effectually paralyzed

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\* At the time when this discourse was composed, no tidings of the opening of the port of New-Orleans had arrived. If the intelligence is authentic, I sincerely rejoice. Still it can hardly be deemed sufficient satisfaction for the wanton violation of a solemn treaty, continued for six or seven months, that the injury ceases at the end of that period. Should even part of the incoherent intelligence about the cession of Louisiana prove to be substantially correct, it will no doubt be an important acquisition to the U. States, especially should no attempt be made to encroach hereafter. Still four millions of dollars in part pay, does not sound quite so well as if we were acquainted with the stipulated price. *Quere*—Had our government acted with that becoming national spirit breathed in Ross's Resolutions, is it not probable that it might have come cheaper?—Peace however is a great blessing.

and humbled, that the haughty Castilian dares scarcely whisper in his closet, any thing which may give possible umbrage to the First Consul. Even when the principal towns in Holland and Switzerland are garrisoned by French troops, to overawe the enslaved inhabitants into the most implicit submission, their ears are filled, and their understandings insulted, with the warmest professions of friendship. These things may serve as a sample of what America may, one day expect. When about to fleece or strip any nation, her words have ever been smoother than oil. Should France but once get a firm footing in Louisiana, she will then possess peculiar advantages to intrigue with success, and will probably set up a claim which will cover more than one half of the territory of the United States, a claim of which she has never lost sight since the peace of 1763; nor has she forgotten her disappointment in not obtaining it at the close of our revolutionary war. Should she then be disposed to improve all the advantages derived from her situation, (and we have no reason to think that such a disposition will be wanting,) should our government continue to adopt such feeble unenergetic measures as are calculated to involve us in war by a mere dread of its approach, as well as to paralyze all the advantages derived from our distance, and our extensive internal resources, it will, most probably cherish in her the expectation of making an easy, bloodless conquest, and thereby adding the United States, at least our immense western territory to the already overgrown empire of the Gauls, and of rendering the Atlantic States subservient only to her national aggrandizement. But I shall, on this subject, wander no farther into the regions of conjecture. God grant that our fears may, in the end, prove to be without foundation.

IN noticing the dangers to which our national independence is exposed, we cannot omit to mention our divisions, and the prevalence of a party spirit among us, as exhibiting a lowering aspect. United we

stand, divided we fall, is a good maxim for America, whether we apply it to a division or separation between the several States, by a dissolution of our national system, or to that spirit of party virulence which separates us as individuals. The latter becomes, in a special manner, dangerous, when parties are pretty equally balanced, and the contest is pursued with a great degree of acrimony and rancour. In such disputes all regard for the public welfare is, many times, absorbed by party zeal. Frequent instances might be selected from history, in which during the paroxysms of party rage, contending factions have rather chosen to subject their country to a foreign yoke, than so far to subdue their party attachments, as to unite with an opposite faction, in any measure for the good of their country.

I CANNOT fully subscribe to the following maxim of that great Statesman and Patriot, Montesquieu, that, "The liberties of a nation are never in danger, till all are united." Tho' a certain degree of difference of opinion may exist without public harm or danger, and probably always will exist in a free country, where the principal affairs of government are laid open to public discussion, yet union in all important measures, is undoubtedly the strength and support of a nation, especially of such a nation as ours, where so much depends upon public opinion.

EVER since the organization of our national government, under the federal constitution, and probably for a considerable time before, a great degree of party spirit has prevailed in the United States. Since that time the breach has become more extensive and alarming, and party feelings have assumed a greater degree of asperity; and some promising reasons for allaying the public heats, have been lost by the alledged intemperance of the dominant party, which is said to have cherished a spirit of political persecution and intolerance, as despotic as wicked. I feel incompetent to a full discussion of the merits of every point in dispute

between the principal contending parties, nor is the present a time when such discussion can take place. In the course of events, we have seen those distinguished by the name of Federalists, ousted from the administration of the government, and their places generally supplied by their political opponents. I had almost said, we have seen the natural friends of our national constitution, those who acted the principal part in bringing it into existence, and who directed its operations for twelve years with success, under the auspices of WASHINGTON and ADAMS, give place to those, many of whom had from its commencement been among its warmest opposers. Whether this change in the administration will be an advantage or disadvantage to us as a nation, must be determined by time. The rapid advancement of the United States, both in wealth and population, during the former administration has been already noticed. Whether that progress will be accelerated or retarded by the change which has taken place, must be finally discovered by the event. We have also seen a great number of dismissals from office, merely for the sake of political opinions, and many charges made against the last administration both before and since their successors came into power. These charges have been retorted, and mutual criminations, and recriminations have taken place, and party feelings, doubtless in many instances, more embittered.

AMONG the numerous charges so liberally bestowed upon the last administration, those of an intention to destroy the liberties of the people, by introducing Monarchical government, and of a want of economy, or a wanton dilapidation of the public treasures, have stood in front. Perhaps none have been either so frequently repeated or made such deep impressions on the public mind. How often have the Monarchical principles of JOHN ADAMS and his adherents, and the peculations of Pickering, Woolcot

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and Co. as well as the public defaulting of others, been trumpeted from one end of the continent to the other? Many particular charges, reducible under one or other of these general heads, have, upon a thorough investigation, been shewn to be demonstrably false, and to be urged merely to serve the designs of a party. With respect to the general charge of a design in the federalists to introduce a Monarchy, it appears to be so fraught with absurdity, as completely to destroy itself. In a country so widely extended as the United States, inhabited by people from different nations, and whose educations, habits, manners and customs are so diversified, as to exhibit nearly all that variety of character which is to be found among civilized nations, there no doubt exists a great diversity of opinion, both on the theoretical, and practical parts of Government. Among this variety no doubt several individuals may be found who would prefer a Monarchy, abstractly considered. But the man who in the present situation of the United States, can either wish to introduce, or cherish a hope of introducing a Monarchy, must be viewed rather as meriting a situation in a mad house, than as a dangerous foe to republican liberty. In a country like this where there is so great a degree of equality, that no individual can be found, so much distinguished either by birth, wealth, family connexions, or the place he holds in public opinion, to give him the remotest pretensions, and where probably not less than ninety-nine to a hundred of the inhabitants are decided Republicans, (whatever variation there may be in their ideas of the best manner in which the republican system may be organized and administered) and where a large proportion of the people dread a Monarchy as the greatest of all earthly evils, and, where there are no privileged orders, no man in his senses, whatever may be his private opinion of the comparative excellence of this or that particular system, would have either the hardiness to make the attempt, or wish that it should be made by another.

I APPREHEND that our greatest danger of at length becoming a Monarchy, even one of the most despotic kind, does not arise from any supposed gradual encroachments of our constituted authorities, which, 'tis probable, will be guarded against with the most scrupulous vigilance; but from such popular tumults as shall either weaken or destroy them. This may, one time or another, fix a Monarchy upon us of the very worst complexion. When a people grow impatient of subjection to their limited constituted authorities, weary of the restraint of laws, the most necessary and salutary, and so absolutely licentious as to grasp after such an impracticable degree of liberty as sets all good order and regular subordination at defiance, they are in the high road to slavery. No doubt our country contains many enemies to all regular subordination. Besides those of our own natural growth, the late tumultuous scenes in Europe have already added to our store, and will, probably, furnish us with an additional supply in future. Should men of this description, either natives or aliens, succeed in inflaming the popular passions, to such a degree as to prostrate the constituted authorities, (an event which may the kind interposition of heaven prevent) it might be then easy for some popular demagogue, some noisy declaimer in favour of liberty, equality, and the rights of man, to take advantage of the storm, so as to seize the supreme power, and prostrate the liberties of America under his feet; should the United States ever experience such an unhappy reverse, the time may, perhaps come, when the most peaceable and best disposed part of our citizens, those who take no pleasure in the tempestuous scenes of revolution, may, however warmly attached to our republican constitutions, in a fit of despair, throw themselves into the arms of a despot, preferring a Monarchy, or any other stable system which will promise them security, to the storms of revolution, the reign of anarchy, or the paroxysms of popular rage, and democratic fury.

NOTHING is more common than to raise a loud cry in favor of liberty and the people, when no interest is less at heart than theirs. *Marat*, *Robespierre*, and other infernal agents in the French revolution, were incessant in their acclamations of *The People*, *The People*; while they were butchering this very people, by hundreds and thousands under the guillotine. We can scarcely find a single instance recorded in history of one successful usurper, from *Pericles* at Athens, to *Benaparte* in France, but who on his first setting out, pretended a more than usual regard for the liberties of the people, and obtained his elevation by courting popular applause. If I see a man uncommonly earnest in his declamations in favor of the people, and, on all occasions, assiduous by courting popular applause, especially, if he is peculiarly dogmatic in his assertions, remarkably impatient of contradiction, or singularly overbearing in conversation, circumstances by no means uncommon, I cannot help thinking of an *Abalom* saying, O that I were made Judge in the land, and even whispering to myself that this man, though a fawning sycophant in the pursuit of power, would most probably prove a tyrant in the exercise of it. I also sometimes indulge a conjecture that he may be tyrannical in domestic life, and that if ever this loud declaimer in favor of liberty and the people, should obtain the elevation he seeks, he will, most probably, take care of himself, and the people will be forgotten. In such conjectures as these, I should gladly find myself to be more frequently mistaken. One honest patriot, who has sufficient courage and regard for the people to tell them the truth, and to vindicate public liberty by supporting the constituted authorities, tho' it should be at the expense of his own popularity, is a character of more sterling value than an hundred such noisy declaimers. If ever our free republican constitutions are overthrown, and a Monarchy or tyranny established, it is, I think, probable, in the present situation of the United States, that it will be effected, rath-

er by inflaming the popular passions, and exciting to the pursuit of such an impracticable liberty as sets at defiance all good order and regular subordination, than by any supposed gradual encroachments on the part of the constituted authorities.

But as it is in the present existing state of things, scarcely credible, that either an individual or a number of individuals, should be so far infatuated with the love of Monarchy as to take any steps designedly aiming at its introduction, so, that such a design should originate, and be principally patronized in New-England, is, if possible, a greater absurdity. The inhabitants of New-England have been nursed up in the love of liberty. They view it as their birth-right, and are almost to a man attached to republican principles, and their manners are, in general, the most republican of any people on the globe. They are disposed to delegate power, as well as the emoluments of office with a sparing hand, and to watch over the exercise of authority with the most scrupulous vigilance. They are also more generally enlightened than any other portion of the United States, and their elections are the most regular, free, and uninfluenced. From the congeniality which is observable between New-England manners and republican principles, it is perhaps something more than mere conjecture, that if ever republicanism should give place to another form of government in the United States, it will draw its last breath in New-England. That Virginia and the southern States, whose manners, habits, and customs, are, compared with those of New-England, so many degrees removed from republicanism, should be disposed to preserve to the United States, and even restore to New-England, that republican government which the latter, in her zeal for Monarchy, is in danger of throwing away, is one of the most extravagant whims that ever entered the brain of a crazy headed politician. In every view of the supposition it destroys itself. But tho' it never can be seriously believed by

men of understanding, yet, so far as it obtains credit, it is well calculated for another purpose; particularly to give the State of Virginia that preponderating influence in the Union to which she aspires.

WITH respect to the charge of a want of economy, or a wanton dilapidation of the public treasures, which has been also a most fruitful source of crimination, my knowledge of the various just and necessary calls for national expense is neither sufficiently extensive, nor have I adequate vouchers for the several items of actual expenditure, to warrant conclusions either for or against their being in every instance, strictly economical. Economy in expenditures, so far as is consistent with the public service, is undoubtedly a virtue, particularly in a Republic, and perhaps there is scarcely a topic which is calculated to make a more favorable impression upon the public mind, than pretensions of that nature, whether well or ill founded. This has not been neglected on the present occasion. The superior economy used by, and the great relief from public burdens obtained under the present administration, have been among the common topics of the day. But with respect to any grievous oppression under the last administration, as none such existed, no great praise is, one would think, due for removing a burthen which was only imaginary.

BUT tho' economy in public expenditures is, in general, commendable, yet it may be sometimes carried to an extreme. Nations as well as individuals, may be what is vulgarly called, penny wise and pound foolish. Whenever an extreme parsimony paralyzes those national energies which the circumstances of our country require to be called into exercise, it is false economy. Under the former administration the calls for expense were undoubtedly urgent. Two insurrections were, successively to be suppressed, an expensive Indian war was to be maintained, and the disputes occasioned by the repeated aggressions on our commerce, both by Great Britain and France, which were finally

settled by treaty, required expensive preparations in order to their adjustment. Previous to the commencement of the present administration, many of the causes of these extraordinary expenses had ceased to operate. The lessening of current expenses was therefore not owing to any change in the administration, but to a variation of circumstances, and followed of course. The present administration has, it is true, abolished the system of internal revenue, and thereby saved the expense of collecting it. But as this was almost wholly collected from articles of luxury, and paid by the affluent, it can, with no degree of propriety, be said to relieve the people at large of any burden. If the body of our citizens were previously burthened, they are so still. The emoluments of the officers of government were a fruitful source of complaint and crimination under the former administration, but I don't find that these have been in any instance lessened, tho' in several they have been enlarged. With respect to some other reductions of expense, particularly what relates to the present situation of our ships of war, time must determine whether they are politic or otherwise.

But altho' pretences to economical savings, have, during the present administration, been carried very high, yet in some instances of expenditure, the justice of the claim is, to say the least, but very dubious. Thirty-two thousand dollars unnecessarily lavished on the repairs of the French frigate *Berceau*; twenty thousand dollars, or nearly that sum, expended on *Dawson's* mission to France in a national ship, merely to carry a treaty which he was not to present, and which might have been, with equal facility, transmitted to the residing Ambassador, by whom it was to be presented, in a merchant's ship free of expense; two millions of dollars, placed under the direction of the President, for secret service money, and upwards of one hundred and fourteen thousand dollars of the sum appropriated by law for the discharge of our na-

tional debt, wholly unaccounted for ; besides an immense sum, if I mistake not, between two and three millions of dollars accounted for in the gross, as being in the hands of agents unapplied, agents none knows who, and to be applied for no one knows what purpose, are at least, very questionable traits in an economical system.

WITH respect to the two millions of dollars for secret service money, to be appropriated under the direction of the President, the alarm which was circulated from Maine to Georgia, when, in a time of public danger, twenty thousand dollars, just the hundredth part of the present sum, were placed under the direction of the late President in the same way, is not yet forgotten. Of this sum he expended, if I mistake not, fifty dollars. We hope the present deposit will be found lodged in as safe hands.

DURING the last administration we were, also, frequently warned of the danger, and alarmed with the progress of executive patronage, as tending to concentrate the powers of government too much into a single hand, and lead to Monarchy. We have been also frequently told that a republican government ought to have no secrets, but every transaction should be laid open to the view of the public. When, on particular occasions, confidential communications from the President required secrecy, it was represented as wearing an alarming aspect, and as a certain index of approaching Monarchy. But I do not find that, during the present administration, executive patronage has been in any instance lessened, tho' in some cases it has been enlarged, particularly by vesting the appointment of the Commissioners of Bankruptcy in the President. And with respect to secrecy, it is probable that during the whole administrations of WASHINGTON and ADAMS there was not more business done in Congress with closed doors, than during the short session of last winter. Upon the whole, that the present administration is, all things considered, either more republi-

can or more economical than the last, is still problematical ; we must wait for farther proofs.

IN connection with several observations already made in this discourse, I might take notice of dangers arising from the corruption of the sources of information, and the consequent misleading of public opinion. Even some of our privileges are sources of danger, not the privilege itself, but the abuse of it. Whatever may be their particular political tenets, the great body of our free independent citizens will be always disposed to promote the true interest of their country, so far as their information is correct. Their interest, safety, and happiness are connected with their country's welfare, what reason can be given why they should not pursue it ? But designing individuals, who for selfish purposes rather choose to inflame the passions than inform the judgments of the public, frequently succeed in misleading the unsuspecting multitude. No so ready way to do this as by corrupting the sources of public information. By these public opinion will be always, in some measure, regulated. A free press when ably and virtuously conducted, is a great bulwark of liberty, an excellent mean of conveying correct information to the public mind. But when conducted by men harboring some dark design, men of talents but without integrity, it is a privilege which is liable to be greatly abused. We glory in this liberty as our birth-right, but of its abuse we may justly complain. When the press so far degenerates that, instead of conveying correct information, its pages can answer no other purpose than to mislead and corrupt, when it becomes the common vehicle of slander and abuse, and the grossest falsehoods, even such as have been frequently and abundantly confuted, are boldly and impudently repeated, till the very effrontery with which they are palmed upon the public, almost forces belief : Then a free press becomes little better than a public curse. It is impossible for a people either to form correct

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opinions, or act right, while subjected to such an undue influence. They may, by such means, be either involved in anarchy, or stripped of their liberties before they are aware. Confidence may be placed where it is unmerited, and men of the most tried fidelity may be neglected or discarded. A great degree of this evil prevails in the United States. Probably it is not confined to one political party. Its consequences have been already alarming, and where they will stop, 'tis difficult to foresee. Unless the evil is checked it may prove fatal. But without a more general return to the paths of virtue, how shall the remedy be applied?

MANY other things of less moment might have been noticed, but the patience of the audience must be by this time exhausted. The means of preserving our independence must form a counter part to the dangers with which it is assailed. The answer to this part of the enquiry, so far as I am capable of giving it, shall be in a breath.

LET us cultivate the public and private virtues, those especially which have religion for their basis. Let us venerate religious institutions, but in a special manner, let us practice the duties which christianity enjoins, and cultivate the temper it is calculated to inspire, i. e. piety towards God, and benevolence to men. We are called a christian nation, let us be christians. We cannot be too much upon our guard against the influence of irreligious and demoralizing principles. They will destroy our social and political happiness in this world, and cast an awful gloom over the prospect of an hereafter. They will sap the foundations of mutual confidence, loosen the bonds of society, and fit people to be ruled only with a rod of iron. In vain shall we look for either political integrity in rulers, or a due sense of the importance of good order and regular subordination among a people without religion and morals. And as government is essential to liberty, so to preserve it, let us duly appreciate our constituted authorities, and rest satisfied in

that temperate rational freedom which is secured by our laws, and is agreeable to our civil constitutions and the genius of our government, avoiding the pursuit of such unbounded impracticable liberty, or rather licentiousness, as is attainable only by the destruction of good order and regular subordination. By grasping at a shadow a people may lose the substance. Whenever a principle of insubordination becomes general, 'tis an almost infallible inlet to tyranny and oppression.

WHILE we manifest our attachment to good order and to the principles of government in general, 'tis of equal importance to cleave to our national constitution in particular. This is the great bulwark of our political security. Its operation has, under the smiles of Providence, been the cause of our unexampled prosperity. This pillar may probably be assailed. 'Tis likely the attack will be commenced by the insidious proposal of popular amendments. These may be multiplied without end. While a multitude of projectors propose to amend, each according to their respective humor, the energy of the system may be destroyed. Of the beneficent effects of this constitution in its present form, we have had sufficient experience, let us beware of dangerous experiments. Great defects in the administration may be remedied by time, and recourse to the returning right of elections, so long as the constitution itself is unimpaired. But let that pillar be once undermined, and probably the entire fabric of our independence will be shaken, if not destroyed.

In our present situation we will also ever find it to be of importance to our peace and independence to be Americans, i. e. to attend to our own national affairs, uninfluenced either by a predilection for, or a dislike to any other nation. Whenever our public national councils are influenced by such partialities, we may expect to be either controlled or duped by the favored nation. Should either a British or French fac-

tion obtain a preponderating influence in the measures of our government, we are no longer independent, only in name.

As a free and independent government cannot be long supported without the general diffusion of knowledge, let it be our study to be well informed, both by cultivating the means of education in general, and by attending to correct political information in particular. Tho' it cannot be expected that the great body of our citizens can, individually, be thoroughly versed in national policy, they may nevertheless understand its general principles. Tho' in the existing state of things, they may be sometimes unable, immediately, to distinguish correct information from that which is calculated to mislead, yet if a loud cry of oppression is raised and often repeated, while no oppression is felt, it will afford to the people, especially the more discerning, a ground to suspect that an interest different from theirs is sought. By repeatedly weighing information, and candidly comparing professions with facts, we may obtain the truth.

LET us place confidence where confidence is due, and withhold it from the undeserving. And while we aim at the good of our country as the ultimate object, let us dismiss, as much as possible, all party feelings and prejudices, aiming at union; and where a real difference in political opinion exists, let us not censure with too great asperity, at least let us abstain from personal reflections. If our party attachments could but universally give place to a sincere undissembled regard for the good of our country, much political heat and intolerance might be avoided, and so much union as is necessary to the common good be obtained. As freemen we ought also to be especially attentive to that branch of government in a due attendance upon which, every man is in a measure independent of every man. I mean the right of elections. In the exercise of this privilege, every man ought to support his independence. Let it be our study to select for places of pub-

lic trust, men of talents, integrity, public and private virtue, and religion.

By reducing these, and similar plain maxims to practice, our liberties and our free republican constitutions may be, under the smiles of indulgent heaven, transmitted unimpaired to posterity. But, on the other hand, if vice and irreligion, with their concomitants, luxury, extravagance, and dissipation, should continue to gain ground, so as at last to become general, and if, in connection with our vices, we are either led astray by designing demagogues, or swayed by foreign influence and intrigue, or suffer a factious disposition or party spirit to absorb all remaining regard for the public good, or if we neglect our elections, or in any other way become ripe for an event so disastrous, the cloud which has, for some time, been gathering and hovering over our heads, may burst with such an electric shock, as shall subject us either to some foreign invader, or domestic usurper, who will demolish the fair fabric of American independence, procured at so great expense of blood and treasure, and forge chains for our country from which generations yet unborn shall not be able to obtain emancipation. To help on such an event when we shall become ripe for it, a *Cesar*, a *Cromwell*, or a *Bonaparte*, will not be wanting. Nay it is not impossible but the master of the future destinies of America, may at this moment be lurking undiscovered in some corner of the United States, exciting no more suspicion of any design against the liberties of his country, than were at the beginning of their revolution entertained by the French nation that a young Corsican adventurer, a soldier of fortune, should in the course of a few years, have sufficient address to establish and place himself at the head of a system of despotism, as inimical to personal liberty and republicanism as the ancient Monarchy which had cost them so many scenes of horror, and such an ocean of blood to abolish, and that the nation should have recourse to this as the seemingly only refuge from the

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effects of that popular phrenzy, which, under the name of liberty and equality, had brought it to the verge of destruction.

THOUGH it be somewhat remote from my usual occupation in life, yet, as the present occasion seemed to call for it, I have used my feeble endeavors to act the part of a political watchman. I have spoken my sentiments with plainness, and sincerity. The picture I have drawn is, it is true, not in every feature flattering, but such as it appeared to me I have endeavored to represent it. Tho' our situation be, in several respects, critical and dangerous, we have as yet no reason to despair. Only let us act the parts which are in our respective situations, incumbent on us as men and free citizens, and any clouds which at this time darken the political horizon may be dispelled. Our national independence has been eminently the work of GOD, let us not forget our dependence upon him; he has frequently been our salvation heretofore, and, if we trust in him, we will yet find that he will not desert the work of his hands.