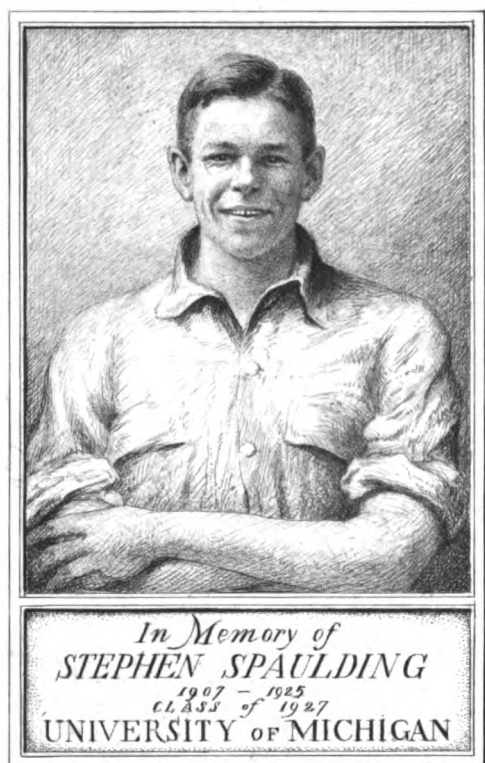




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WASHINGTON: FIRST IN THE HEARTS OF HIS COUNTRYMEN



GEORGE WASHINGTON



WASHINGTON

First in the Hearts of His Countrymen

The orations by men who had known Washington in person and who thus could speak with authority • Edited by William Buckner McGroarty, president of *The Washington Society of Alexandria*



Published by GARRETT & MASSIE, Richmond Virginia, in February, nineteen hundred and thirty two, the two hundredth anniversary of his birth

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IN RECOGNITION
OF THE WORLD-WIDE CELEBRATION
OF THE TWO HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH
THE WASHINGTON SOCIETY OF ALEXANDRIA
DEDICATES THIS BOOK TO THE MEMORY OF
GEORGE WASHINGTON
AND TO THE MEMORY ALSO OF THOSE
OF HIS FELLOW COUNTRYMEN, WHO IN
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA
ON JANUARY FOURTEENTH, EIGHTEEN HUNDRED
FOUNDED THIS, THE FIRST SOCIETY IN AMERICA
TO EXTOL HIS VIRTUES AND
PERPETUATE HIS FAME.

PREFACE



THE purpose of this book is to preserve for posterity, and to present to the student of history, a graphic picture of the remarkable reaction of the personal friends and neighbors to the news of the death of Washington; kings and emperors—the great ones of the earth—throughout the ages have had their State funerals, followed by long periods of official mourning; but here there was no decree of the State, nothing “official”, nothing “ordered”; all was spontaneous, sincere and voluntary; how really great he was these friends and neighbors seemed to realize, while striving, unconsciously, for adequate methods of expression.

Washington died at twenty minutes past ten on Saturday night, December 14, 1799, at Mount Vernon, seven miles from Alexandria. Two of the three physicians in attendance were from that city, and all day long, messengers had been hurrying back and forth. Before midnight all of the citizens were aware that their great friend and neighbor was no more. A funeral lodge was held by the Masons on Monday, the 16th, and after conferences with Mrs. Washington, arrangements were perfected for the interment on the following Wednesday.

Any person reading the description of Washington's funeral will realize that it was, practically, an Alexandria demonstration; that it was conducted with striking dignity and solemnity; and that but for the people of that town it would have been a very simple ceremony, indeed. Of the four clergymen who officiated, three were from Alexandria and one from the Maryland shore just opposite. The six honorary pallbearers, all colonels in the Revolution, in State or National service, the four lieutenants who bore the body, the various military organizations and their officers, the members of the two Masonic lodges in attendance, the town officials, and the citizens generally—all belonged to Alexandria or the immediate vicinity.

On January 14, 1800, exactly one month from the day of Washington's death, a number of gentlemen who had officiated at his funeral met at Gadsby's Tavern, and organized themselves into an association, to which they gave the name of The Washington Society of Alexandria. This society functioned for almost fifty years, true to its original ideals,

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and numbering among its members men of the highest intellectual and moral standing in the Nation. One of its vice-presidents was Chief Justice John Marshall; another was Edmund Jennings Lee. William Fitzhugh of Chatham, Dr. Elisha Cullen Dick, William Herbert, and George Washington Parke Custis held the office of president; and among its members who were great orators were Francis Scott Key and Hon. David Hoffman of Maryland, and Hon. John Fenton Mercer and General Henry (Lighthorse Harry) Lee of Virginia. The seat of government was transferred to the District of Columbia, coincident with the organization of the Society, and from the ranks of the newly resident officers and legislators, it immediately attracted a number of its most distinguished members.

To the present generation The Washington Society of Alexandria was not even a memory. The aftermath of civil war spelled destruction in the community, and countless records of all sorts were swept into the pool of oblivion. After a lapse of more than seventy-five years, the records of the old Society were discovered. So highly honorable and distinguished had the functioning of the Society been, it was felt that it should be revived, and accordingly, on January 14, 1928, the reorganization was effected in the same Gadsby's Tavern, where the original Society had been formed one hundred and twenty-eight years before, to the day and hour. The original constitution and rules were adopted, with only such changes as present-day conditions demand, and retaining as far as possible the language of the original.

The Washington Society of Alexandria was the first society organized after his death, bearing his name, and dedicated to the perpetuation of the name and fame of Washington. It was composed of those who had known him longest and most intimately in every relation of life and who, ere the parting tear had dried on the cheek, banded themselves together to give permanent expression of their devotion to the man and to the principles of which he was the glorious exponent. His marvelous career, "All of which they saw, and part of which they were," was fresh in their memories, coupled with grief at the irreparable loss his death had occasioned. Out of these memories and this grief The Washington Society of Alexandria was born.

Those who founded the Society had two objects in view: to hand

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down to posterity the Washington they had known, and to carry on the works of benevolence which he had inaugurated. The records show that at one time (1785) he was providing for the care and education of twenty orphan children in Alexandria and vicinity.

Within the two weeks following his death, the citizens of Alexandria listened to four funeral sermons by the ministers who had attended Washington's burial. Two of these sermons, delivered on the same day (morning and afternoon), were preached from the same pulpit and the same text — 3d Chapter of 2d Samuel — "A Great Man Has Fallen." Notices were published in the *Alexandria Gazette* "To the Uniform Companies, the Artillery, and the Company of Horse" to attend these services; interspersed with these were other public gatherings, religious, fraternal, and municipal—truly a community of grieving souls. The text of none of the four sermons has been found, but the *Gazette* informs us that they were delivered before large and attentive congregations. From the volume, *The History of the Lodge of Washington* (1876), we have culled the short oration delivered before the lodge by the Worshipful Master, Dr. E. C. Dick, who had succeeded Washington in that office. This address was delivered on St. John's Day, December 27, 1799, after which the lodge formed in procession and marched to the Presbyterian Meeting House to hear a sermon by Rev. William Maffitt.

Meantime, the public mind was centered, also, upon Philadelphia, where the Congress was then in session, and where two of their neighbors and familiars, John Marshall and Henry (Lighthorse Harry) Lee, were voicing to Congress and to the Nation the same emotions of regret and grief that oppressed their friends at home; the public post, almost daily, brought private letters and news of what was transpiring in Congress and elsewhere, all of which was of a nature to intensify rather than to alleviate the prevailing sadness.

The resolutions offered in Congress by Mr. Marshall were the same in essentials as had been voiced in their own assemblies; a copy of the oration delivered by General Lee, on December 26th, reached Alexandria in due time, together with President Adams's proclamation calling upon the people of the Nation to prepare for a fitting celebration of Washington's birth on the ensuing twenty-second of February; the publication of Lee's oration in the *Alexandria Gazette*, with heavy black borders, on

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January 11, 1800, brought the month of mourning to a climax — the measure was full. Two "Notices to the Public" signed by the same committee, appeared in the same issue of the paper on January 13th, one calling upon the citizens to take note of the President's proclamation, and the other calling for a meeting, in Gadsby's Tavern, for the purpose of organizing a Washington Society; in both cases the call fell upon eager ears and brought enthusiastic response; the Society was organized on the following night, January 14th, and the ensuing birthday was fittingly celebrated, as these pages show.

As Judge Marshall and General Lee were citizens of Alexandria—as was Washington—and had much to do with inspiring the organization of The Washington Society (of which both immediately became members) their historic eulogies have been incorporated in this volume as an integral and important contribution to a striking and most interesting incident, not lacking in historic attributes.

It has been the intent, in presenting the orations here reproduced, to confine them to those delivered by members of the Society who had known Washington in person and who thus could speak with authority; it seemed wise not to go beyond the year 1814; and, indeed, that year was included not only because the orator happened to be Francis Scott Key, but because that year happened to be the one that saw his name inscribed among the Immortals.

Unfortunately, all of the orations delivered within the period selected could not be found; in some instances, copies of the paper in which they had been published could not be located; in others, they had been published in pamphlet form of which no copies had come down to us. In connection with those which we present, an increasing tendency to discuss political matters is apparent; Washington once said of Alexandria, that it was "Federal to a man," and the orations disclose that, up to 1814 at least, there had been no radical change in sentiment in that respect.

The fact that for several years the information at our command, as to the activities of the Society, is meagre, does not indicate that the zeal and patriotism of the people of Alexandria and vicinity was the less active; sufficient has been preserved in the way of contemporary records to prove the contrary but, unfortunately, not sufficient for our purpose. The loss must be acknowledged with deep regret; in form and substance it would,

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as is true of what is here presented, prove its worth and historic value if it were available.

For the year 1805 we have record only that The Washington Society of Alexandria, on February 22d, with the citizens, the Masonic brethren, and the military marched in procession to the Presbyterian Meeting House, where an oration was delivered by Dr. Elisha Cullen Dick; and that on July 4th, a similar assemblage took place at the Episcopal Church (now Christ Church), with Edmund Jennings Lee as the orator of the day.

The year 1809 is another with incomplete records. We know only that the Society on February 22d marched, with the Masons and the military, to the Episcopal Church, where an oration was delivered by Rev. Dr. James Muir. The public observance of the Fourth of July by the citizens was conducted on an elaborate scale, after which The Washington Society "Repaired to Mr. Caton's Hotel, where they were attended by the children of the Washington Free School, for the purpose of Exhibition and Examination, particularly the scholars which have been placed in the Latin School at the expense of the Society."

On February 22, 1812, the orator was Rev. William Meade, the celebrated Bishop Meade of later years. Diligent search has been made in an effort to locate a copy of this oration which was delivered at the Episcopal Church, but without success. On July 4th, the same year, the Society with the military and citizens assembled at the Presbyterian Meeting House as a part of the general exercises of the day, on which occasion *The Declaration of Independence* and Washington's Farewell was read by John Douglas Simms, the orator of 1808.

The Washington Society of Alexandria feels that this volume will add an important item to the general sum of interest that naturally attaches to the two hundredth anniversary of Washington's birth. Through all of his life Washington's greatest longing was to be allowed to pass his days in tranquility and peace, among his neighbors and friends. It is these neighbors and friends who take their places in these pages to show to our own, and to coming generations, how sincerely his sentiments were reciprocated and how completely he had enshrined himself, in a way purely personal, in their esteem and affection.

WILLIAM BUCKNER MCGROARTY.

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INTRODUCTION



AS THE county seat of Fairfax, in which county Mount Vernon was then, and is now located, Alexandria was the home town of Washington and, consequently, the center of his local activities in a business, social, political, and military sense. These or a part of them can be itemized as follows:

In 1749 he platted the city; and the original plat, an important specimen of his early work, can be seen in the Library of Congress. Here in 1754, with his headquarters in the old Town Tavern, which is still standing, he recruited his first command, and here in the following year, 1755, in the Carlyle House, he was made a major on Braddock's staff. In 1763 he became a vestryman in Truro Parish, in which Alexandria was then located, and continued to serve in that capacity until the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. Washington was first elected to the House of Burgesses from Frederick County, in 1758, and continued to serve that constituency until 1765, when he was chosen a member from Fairfax; he continued to represent his home county until transferred to the Continental Congress, in 1774. In 1766 he was elected a member of the town council, and a little later a member of the magisterial court of Fairfax. These offices he also held until the outbreak of the Revolution.

He, with George Mason of Gunston Hall, and other leading spirits recruited, organized and equipped several companies of local militia or independent commands of which Washington became the commander, which commission he resigned when elected Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army. In 1774, in conjunction with Mason and his neighbors, he called the freeholders of Fairfax County in conference, and presided over their meeting in Alexandria. It was at this meeting that Mason presented his celebrated Fairfax County Resolves which were unanimously adopted. These resolutions constituted one of the first, as well as one of the most vigorous and illuminating, protests against the iniquitous policies of the King and Parliament of Great Britain offered during the entire Revolutionary period.

After the Revolution Washington renewed his local activities, helped

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to organize and became a trustee of the Alexandria Academy, and subsequently established the first free school in Northern Virginia as an adjunct of this educational institution. It may be observed that this little free school, the Alexandria Academy where, in 1786, he was educating twenty orphan children, was the foster father of the free school system of this city; augmented by other contributions and the endowment by Washington in his will, it continued to thrive until the establishment of the State system of free schools in 1871. As early as 1806 forty-two free scholars were being educated in the free school of the Alexandria Academy. The original school building is still standing, and is occupied as a school for primary courses.

In 1792 the General Assembly of Virginia incorporated the Bank of Alexandria, of which institution Washington became a director, a patron and a depositor. In 1785 he organized the Potomac Company, the forerunner of the present extensive system of internal waterways in America.

Briefly stated, these are a few of Washington's local activities, but the most important, perhaps, was the little convention he called here in March, 1785, which consisted of representatives from Maryland and Virginia. The ostensible purpose of this conference was to regulate the impost and commercial duties between Maryland and Virginia; but it had a far-reaching effect, and in its sequence resulted in the establishment of our constitutional republic. After conferring for three days in Alexandria, the commissioners moved to Mount Vernon and continued their deliberations until the twenty-ninth of March. The resolutions adopted by this conference led to the Annapolis Convention which, in sequence led to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787. (See Fiske's *Critical Period*, beginning on page 213; also *Washington's Diary*, vol. 2, pp. 352, 353, 354.) Another event of singular interest and importance, which ought not to be omitted, was the resolution adopted by the five royal governors during their conference with Braddock in the Carlyle House, in Alexandria, in 1755. This resolution recommended that the British Ministry levy a tax to defray the expense of the French and Indian War in proportion to the benefits derived by the colonies. The resolution incorporated in Braddock's report to the Ministry resulted in a tax on drugs, paints, dyes, etc., in 1760, and finally to the Revolution and American independence. (See Callahan's *Washington, The*

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Man and The Mason, footnote on page 54.) The Carlyle House is still standing, as are the following places of interest with which Washington was intimately associated: Christ Episcopal Church, the Braddock House, the Ramsay House, the old City Tavern in which he joined his neighbors in the first celebration of the ratification of the Federal Constitution (June 28, 1788), and from whose steps he held his last military review just thirty days before he died; in it, also was held the last celebration of his birth, with Washington present, in 1799; the old Presbyterian Meeting House, where the second eulogy was delivered after his death. Here, too, still stand the homes of Dr. James Craik, last Surgeon General of the Central Division of the Revolutionary Army, and Dr. William Brown, the first to occupy that position in the Continental service. Dr. Brown wrote the first pharmacopœia for military hospitals. The Masonic lodge, of which Washington became first Worshipful Master in 1788, is still functioning and, with its rare collection of Washingtoniana, attracts universal interest and attention. Here, too, is the old fire-engine house in which was organized the company of which he was an active member, and to which he presented the first fire apparatus in 1774.

These occurrences seem far away when measured by the flight of time, but in the presence of the ancient landmarks mentioned, and many others not mentioned, they constitute a vivid reminder of the activities of Washington and his Alexandria neighbors which, extending over a period of fifty years, had developed a mutual bond of affection, evidences of which are fully recorded. To have been the home town of Washington is a distinction of which any city in the land may justly be proud; and such was, and is, Alexandria, Virginia.

CHARLES H. CALLAHAN.

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PART I

THE MONTH OF MOURNING



COLONEL DENNIS RAMSAY

WASHINGTON AND HIS NEIGHBORS

WASHINGTON left Mount Vernon on the morning of April 16, 1789. to proceed to New York for his first inauguration; he had been invited to stop in Alexandria to dine with his friends and to receive a farewell address. When he passed out of the Mount Vernon gates he found, drawn up along the roadside, a large body of citizens, civil and military, on horseback, to serve as an escort and guard of honor. In this state he was escorted to the town where, at Wise's Tavern, a public dinner was served. At the end of the feast an incident of great historic moment occurred: Colonel Dennis Ramsay, the mayor, arose and addressed the guest of honor as "George Washington, President of the United States"—the first time Washington was so addressed in public; the first time any man was so addressed. Colonel Ramsay said:

"George Washington, Esquire, President of the United States:

"Again your Country demands your care. Obedient to her wishes, unmindful of your own ease, we see you again relinquishing the bliss of retirement; and this too at a period of life when nature itself seems to authorize a preference of repose.

"Not to extol your glory as a soldier—not to pour forth our gratitude for past services. Not to acknowledge the justice of the unexampled honor which has been conferred upon you, by the spontaneous unanimous suffrage of three millions of freemen, in your election to the supreme Magistracy. Not to admire the patriotism which directs your conduct,—Do your neighbors and Friends now address you. Themes less splendid, but more endearing, impress our minds. The first and best of citizens must leave us. Our Aged must lose their ornament. Our Youth their model. Our agriculture its improver. Our Commerce its friend. Our infant Academy its patron. Our Poor their Benefactor. And the interior Navigation of the Potomack, an event replete with the most extensive utility, already, by your unremitting exertions, brought into partial use—its Institutor and Promoter.

"Farewell! Go, and make a grateful people happy; a People who will

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be doubly grateful when they contemplate this recent sacrifice for their interest.

"To that Being, who maketh and unmaketh at his will, we commend you—and, after the accomplishment of the arduous business, to which you are called, may He restore you to us again the best of Men, and most beloved fellow-citizen.

"In behalf of the People of Alexandria.

"April 16, 1789.

DENNIS RAMSAY, *Mayor.*"

In reply, Washington addressed himself to "The Mayor, Corporation, and Citizens of Alexandria" as follows, his voice at times betraying deep emotion:

"Gentlemen:

"Although I ought not to conceal, yet I cannot describe, the painful emotions which I felt in being called upon to determine whether I would accept or refuse the Presidency of the United States.

"The unanimity in the choice, the opinion of my friends, communicated from different parts of Europe, as well as of America, the apparent wish of those who were not altogether satisfied with the Constitution in its present form, and an ardent desire on my own part, to be instrumental in conciliating the good will of my countrymen towards each other have induced an acceptance.

"I hope those who have known me best (and you, my fellow citizens, are from your situation, in that number) know better than any others my love of retirement is so great, that no earthly consideration, short of a conviction of duty, could have prevailed upon me to depart from my resolution, *never more to take any share in transactions of a public nature.* For, at my age, and in my circumstances, what possible advantages could I propose to myself; for embarking again on the tempestuous and uncertain ocean of public-life?

"I do not feel myself under the necessity of making public declarations, in order to convince you, Gentlemen, of my attachment to yourselves, and regard for your interests. The whole tenor of my life has

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been open to your inspection; and my past actions, rather than my present declarations, must be the pledge of my future conduct.

"In the meantime, I thank you most sincerely for the expressions of kindness contained in your valedictory address. It is true, just after having bade adieu to my domestic connections, this tender proof of your friendship is but too well calculated still farther to awaken my sensibility, and increase my regret at parting from the enjoyments of private life.

"All that now remains for me is to commit myself and you to the protection of that beneficent Being, who on a former occasion hath happily brought us together, after a long and distressing separation. Perhaps, the same gracious Providence will again indulge us with the same heartfelt felicity. But words, my fellow-citizens, fail me. *Unutterable sensations must then be left to more expressive silence; while, from an aching heart, I bid you all, my affectionate friends, and kind neighbors, farewell.*

G. WASHINGTON."

It was eight years before these old friends met again. As soon as he had arrived at Mount Vernon, 1797, an invitation was extended by the citizens of Alexandria to attend a dinner in the town, which he accepted, and to which he was escorted in the same formal manner as before. He was received by the discharge of cannon and every manifestation of joy on the part of the people. The mayor, Colonel Francis Peyton, voiced the feeling of pride with which his old friends viewed his achievements, and their great satisfaction in welcoming him home.

In his reply, Washington spoke of the citizens of Alexandria as "My neighbors and friends, some of whom have been the companions of my juvenile years." And at the great public dinner which followed, he proposed the toast, "Prosperity to the town and citizens of Alexandria."

Washington, of course, was entertained by the people of Alexandria, publicly and privately, many times. The citizens, collectively and individually, seized every opportunity to do him honor, a gesture to which he was always responsive. A student of Washingtoniana, and a recognized authority, calls attention to the fact that in all of his replies to public addresses, presented to him, Washington grows more formal in speech as he draws farther away from Mount Vernon, and more imbued

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with sentiment as he draws nearer and nearer to that beloved spot. To the people of Alexandria he spoke from the heart. There was always a hint of tears in his voice when taking leave of them, a gleam of happiness in his eye as he greeted them on his return.

II

THE DEATH OF WASHINGTON

AT THE time of Washington's death, methods of communication were crude; news traveled slowly; but the feeling of dismay and sorrow at his passing, which was first felt in Alexandria, lost nothing in intensity as it slowly penetrated to all countries of the globe and into every household in every civilized land. When, about midnight on that fateful December 14th, the sable vestments of grief descended like a pall upon Alexandria, the bells of the little city began to toll, and for four days and nights their muffled tones were not stilled. To its people it was not alone the passing of the hero—they mourned the man, the neighbor, the friend; mingled with their veneration and respect was a more subtle emotion which welled from the heart—they wept the loss of one beloved.

In every land, in ancient as in modern times, nations have been wont to entomb their honored dead with every possible mark of respect, and with public demonstrations of the most imposing character; it is to the everlasting credit of the citizens of Alexandria of that distant day that they were able, alone and unaided, to invest the interment of Washington, the greatest of of them all, with a dignity and stateliness that, under the circumstances, seems to us in this day truly the result of inspiration. This done, the people of Alexandria returned to their homes, and for four weeks devoted themselves to open and continuous expression of their sense of loss.

* * * * *

"On Monday last we announced the death of General George Washington. On Wednesday his remains were consigned to their native earth.

"Vain would be our attempt, by any post-humous eulogy, to do justice to the memory of him whose character and virtues will forever irradiate the 18th century on the pages of history:—the subject bids defiance to language. Vain will be the most strenuous efforts of our contemporaries to discribe the services he has rendered his country; his brilliant

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Alexandria, Dec. 16.

It is our painful duty first to announce to our Country and to the world, the death of their illustrious benefactor—

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

This mournful event occurred on Saturday evening, about 11 o'clock. On the preceding night, he was attacked with a violent inflammatory affection of the throat, which, in less than four and twenty hours put a period to his mortal existence.— Conscious of his approaching dissolution, he bore the excruciating agonies of a violent and painful disease with that heroic and Christian fortitude for which he was ever distinguished, and expired in the possession of that serenity of mind resulting from a consciousness of integrity, and a well-spent life.

THE DEATH OF WASHINGTON

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achievements; the illustrious qualities he so conspicuously possessed, which encircled with glory the man, the patriot, the hero, and the sage, and which secured to him the unbounded confidence and love of his fellow citizens, and the merited plaudits of an admiring world. The evidences of his greatness and of his worth are impressed on the hearts of his countrymen in an infinitely more glowing, energetic, and indelible form than it is in the power of expression to convey—in characters which the impairing influence of time can never efface.

“He has rested from his labors, and taken his departure from this transitory world: but his memory will forever live—unhurt amidst the wreck of empires and the ‘crush of worlds.’ Succeeding generations, while they recount with pride to their children his toils and sufferings in the establishment of their freedom, will inspire them with emulation to imitate his exalted virtues. In honor of him, by posterity, will ‘the song, the Statue, and the Pile’ be dedicated. To celebrate his praise will annually be raised the acclamations of millions yet unborn, till, like Washington, our Country is no more.

“The last illness of our departed friend was short, but painful. He bore the excruciating agonies of his violent disease with that heroic magnanimity and Christian fortitude for which he was ever distinguished; and expired in possession of that serenity of mind resulting from a consciousness of integrity and a well spent life. The effect of the sudden news of his death upon the inhabitants of Alexandria can better be conceived than expressed. At first, a general disorder, wildness, and consternation pervaded the town: the tale appeared an illusory dream—as the ‘ravings of a sickly imagination.’ But these impressions soon gave place to sensations more suitable to the awful nature of the event—to sensations of the most poignant sorrow and extreme regret. On Monday and Wednesday the stores were closed and all business suspended, as if each family had lost its father. From the time of his death to the time of his interment the bells continued to toll, the shipping in the harbour wore their colors half-mast high, and every other public expression of grief was observed. On Wednesday the inhabitants of the town, of the county, and the adjacent parts of Maryland, proceeded to Mount Vernon to perform the last offices to the body of their illustrious neighbour.



COLONEL GEORGE DENEALE

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"All the military within a considerable distance, and three Masonic lodges, were present. The concourse of people was immense. Till the time of the interment the corpse was placed in the portico fronting the river, that every citizen might have an opportunity of taking a long and lasting farewell of their departed benefactor.

"At four o'clock the troops were drawn up in open rank on the lawn before the house, and after reversing arms and closing ranks, were wheeled by divisions, when the procession moved (from the house to the vault where the body was deposited) in the following order:

One squadron of horse, swords reversed.

One company of Artillery, swords reversed.

Col. Deneale's regiment of Infantry.

Band of Music.

Guard.

Clergy.

Six Lieut-Colonels

CORPSE

Pall Supported By

The Horse of the deceased, led by his own servant.

The Relations of the deceased.

Lodge No. 22, of which he was formerly Master.

Lodge No. 15, of Washington City.

Lodge No. 47, of Alexandria.

The Mayor and Commonalty of Alexandria.

Citizens.

"On arriving at the place of interment, the troops wheeled backwards from the centre of divisions, and formed a lane on their arms reversed, through which the procession passed. After his interment and the funeral ceremony ended, there were three rounds fired from eleven pieces of artillery, one regiment of infantry, and one squadron of horse.

"During the procession the most solemn tunes were played by the music, and a vessel in the stream fired minute guns.



REV. WILLIAM MAFFITT

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"The military were commanded by Col. Deneale, and the Masonic ceremonies were performed by Doctor Dick."

Alexandria Times.

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"The Worshipful Master delivered an oration on the day and decease of our late worthy brother, General George Washington; and on motion of Brother Deneale, and seconded, the Worshipful Master agreed that the oration delivered by him should be entered on the minutes of the day—which was in words following, to wit: ' . . . After having fulfilled the primary duties of the day, it has been heretofore our custom to indulge in festive gaiety; and, indeed, nothing can either so fully sanction such an indulgence, or capacitate the mind for a real and rational enjoyment of it, as the due observance of this preliminary injunction; but on the present, my brethren, a cloud of sorrow surrounds our prospect; a recent and heavy calamity has obstructed every avenue to mirth—our great and good Grand Master is no more—he who hath so often united in our annual celebrations, is gone, to return not again. He, whose presence was wont to inspire surrounding multitudes with reverence and admiration. He who was but lately the boast of his own country and the wonder of the world. now lies cold and prostrate in his tomb—thus, my brethren, is lost from the Treasury of the Universal Lodge its brightest Jewel. Feeble is the language of eulogium when applied to a character of such uncommon fame—of such uncommon worth. Statues of marble will prove the love and gratitude of his survivors, but his virtues, and his services have already implanted a monument far more durable than these in the bosoms of his Countrymen. May it be particularly nurtured by the fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons to the end of time. So mote it be.' "

From the minutes of the Alexandria-Washington
Lodge, No. 22, A. F. & A. M., December 27, 1799.

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NOTICE

"The managers of the Assemblies have thought proper, in consequence of the death of our common Parent, General George Washington, to postpone these amusements for the present."

*Alexandria Times and District
of Columbia Daily Advertiser.*

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FUNERAL SERMONS

"Friday last, being St. John's Day, the Masonic lodges of this town marched in procession from the court house to the Presbyterian Meeting House, where a charity sermon, interspersed with reflections occasioned by the death of their late brother, George Washington, was preached by the Rev. Brother Maffitt. Each of the brethren wore a crape around his arm, and those of lodge No. 22, of which General Washington was the first master, were dressed in full mourning.

"Yesterday being the day appointed for the funeral sermons of the late General George Washington to be preached by the respective clergymen of this town, the different military and Masonic bodies assembled at 10 o'clock, and marched in procession to the Presbyterian Meeting House, where a discourse was delivered by the Rev. Thomas Davis, rector of the Episcopal Church, from the following words, from the 38th verse of the 3d chapter of II Samuel—'A great man is fallen.'

"In the afternoon, before a large congregation, the military and the Masons being also present, the Rev. James Muir preached from the same text."

*Alexandria Times and District of Columbia
Daily Advertiser, December 30, 1799.*

* * * * *

"Yesterday the Masonic lodges, and the different military corps of the town, again paraded and went in procession to the Presbyterian Meeting House, where a funeral sermon occasioned by the death of our respected fellow citizen, George Washington, was preached by Rev. Mr. Tallison, minister of the Methodist Church, from the following text, Ecclesiastes, 12th chapter, 5th verse: 'Because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets.' "

*Alexandria Times and District of Columbia
Daily Advertiser, January 6, 1800.*

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"We are sorry to announce the death of that illustrious man, General George Washington, who departed this life on the 15th ult., after an indisposition of twenty-three hours. The decease of this truly great man will be lamented by the admirers of genius, integrity, and genuine

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patriotism; for however his exertions prevailed in depriving Great Britain of one of her most important possessions, the whole tenor of his conduct sufficiently proves that he acted from the most thorough convictions, and from the purest principles. His memory and character, therefore, must be held in the highest veneration by every lover of public virtue and private worth. Unlike the upstart Tyrants of the present day in France, he fought and bled not to degrade and enslave, but to render free and happy his native land; and having done everything his country could expect, or true patriotism could accomplish, like another Cincinnatus, he resigned his richly merited power into the same hands from which he received it, and virtuously retired into the tranquil bosom of honorable retirement. Peace to his illustrious Manes!"

From a London paper, and reprinted in the *Alexandria Times*
and *District of Columbia Daily Advertiser*.



HONORABLE JOHN MARSHALL

III

CONGRESSIONAL SOLEMNITIES

THE first information of the death of General Washington, was given to Congress on the eighteenth of December, in the following manner: Mr. Marshall, in a voice that bespoke the anguish of his mind, and a countenance expressive of the deepest regret, rose and delivered himself as follows:

"Mr. Speaker,

"Information has just been received, that our illustrious fellow-citizen, the Commander in Chief of the American Armies, and the late President of the United States, is no more.

"Though this distressing intelligence is not certain, there is too much reason to believe its truth. After receiving information of this national calamity, so heavy and so afflicting, the House of Representatives can be but ill fitted for public business. I move you, therefore, they adjourn."

The motion was unanimously agreed to; and the House adjourned till the next morning at 11 o'clock.

On the following morning, Mr. Marshall with deep sorrow on his countenance, and in a low, pathetic tone of voice, rose and addressed the House as follows:

"The melancholy event which was yesterday announced with doubt, has been rendered but too certain. Our WASHINGTON is no more! The hero, the sage, and the patriot of America—the man on whom in times of danger every eye was turned and all hopes were placed, lives now only in his own great actions, and in the hearts of an affectionate and afflicted people.

"If, sir, it had even not been usual openly to testify respect for the memory of those whom Heaven had selected as its instruments for dispensing good to men, yet such has been the uncommon worth, and such the extraordinary incidents which have marked the life of him whose loss we all deplore, that the whole American nation, impelled by the same feelings, would call with one voice for a public manifestation of that sorrow which is so deep and so universal.

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"More than any other individual, and as much as to one individual was possible, has he contributed to found this our wide spreading empire, and to give to the western world its independence and its freedom.

"Having effected the great object for which he was placed at the head of our armies, we have seen him convert the sword into the ploughshare, and voluntarily sink the soldier into the citizen.

"When the debility of our federal system had become manifest, and the bonds which connected the parts of this vast continent were dissolving, we have seen him the chief of those patriots who formed for us a constitution, which, by preserving the union, will, I trust, substantiate and perpetuate those blessings our revolution had promised to bestow.

"In obedience to the general voice of his country, calling on him to preside over a great people, we have seen him once more quit the retirement he loved, and in a season more stormy and tempestuous than war itself, with calm and wise determination, pursue the true interests of the nation, and contribute more than any other could contribute, to the establishment of that system of policy, which will, I trust, yet preserve our peace, our honor and our independence.

"Having been twice unanimously chosen the chief magistrate of a free people, we see him, at a time when his re-election with the universal suffrage could not have been doubted, affording to the world a rare instance of moderation, by withdrawing from his high station to the peaceful walks of private life.

"However, the public confidence may change, and the public affection may fluctuate with respect to others, yet with respect to him they have, in war and in peace, in public and in private life, been as steady as his own firm mind, and as constant as his own exalted virtues.

"Let us then, Mr. Speaker, pay the last tribute of respect and affection to our departed friend. Let the grand council of the nation display those sentiments which the nation feels.

"For this purpose, I hold in my hand some resolutions which I will take the liberty to offer to the House.

"Resolved, That this House will wait on the President of the United States, in condolence of this mournful event.

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"Resolved, That the Speaker's chair be shrouded with black, and that the members and officers of the House wear black during the session.

"Resolved, That a committee in conjunction with one from the Senate, be appointed to consider on the most suitable manner of paying honor to the memory of the man, first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen.

"Resolved, That this House when it adjourn, do adjourn to Monday."

These resolutions were unanimously agreed to. Sixteen members were appointed on the third resolution.

The President received the House the same day, and in response to the address of condolence, made the following answer:

"Gentlemen of the House of Representatives:

"I receive with great respect and affection the condolence of the House of Representatives on the melancholy and afflicting event in the death of the most illustrious and beloved personage which this country ever produced. I sympathize with you, with the nation, and with good men through the world, in this irreparable loss sustained by us all.

JOHN ADAMS."

The Senate waited on the President on December 23d, and addressed him as follows:

"The Senate of the United States respectfully take leave, sir, to express to you their deep regret for the loss their country sustains in the death of General George Washington.

"This event, so distressing to all our fellow-citizens, must be peculiarly heavy to you, who have long been associated with him in deeds of patriotism. Permit us, sir, to mingle our tears with yours; on this occasion it is manly to weep. To lose such a man at such a crisis is no common calamity to the world; our country mourns her father. The Almighty disposer of human events has taken from us our greatest benefactor and ornament. It becomes us to submit with reverence to Him, who 'maketh darkness his pavilion.'

"With patriotic pride we review the life of our Washington, and compare him with those of other countries who have been preëminent in fame. Ancient and modern names are diminished before him. Greatness and guilt have too often been allied; but his fame is whiter than

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it is brilliant. The destroyers of nations stood abashed at the majesty of his virtue. It reprov'd the intemperance of their ambition and darkened the splendor of victory. The scene is closed, and we are no longer anxious lest misfortune should sully his glory; he has travelled on to the end of his journey and carried with him an encreasing weight of honor; he has deposited it safely, where misfortune cannot tarnish it, where malice cannot blast it. Favored of Heaven, he departed without exhibiting the weakness of humanity; magnanimous in death, the darkness of the grave could not obscure his brightness.

"Such was the man whom we deplore. Thanks to God, his glory is consummated. Washington yet lives on earth in his spotless example—his spirit is in Heaven.

"Let his countrymen consecrate the memory of the heroic general, the patriotic statesman, and the virtuous sage; let them teach their children never to forget that the fruits of his labors, and his example are their inheritance."

To which the President returned the following answer:

"Gentlemen of the Senate:

"I receive with the most respectful and affectionate sentiments, in this impressive address, the obliging expressions of your regret for the loss our country has sustained, in the death of her most esteemed, beloved, and admired citizen.

"In the multitude of my thoughts and recollections, on this melancholy event, you will permit me only to say, that I have seen him in the days of adversity, in some of the scenes of his deepest and most trying perplexities; I have also attended him in his highest elevation and most prosperous felicity; with uniform admiration of his wisdom, moderation and constancy.

"Amongst all our original associates, in that memorable league of the continent in 1774, which first expressed the sovereign will of a free nation in America, he was the only one remaining in the general government. Although, with a constitution more enfeebled than his, at an age when he thought it necessary to prepare for retirement, I feel myself alone, bereaved of my last brother; yet I derive a strong consolation from the unanimous disposition, which appears in all ages and classes, to

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minge their sorrows with mine, on this common calamity to the world.

"The life of our Washington cannot suffer by a comparison with those of other countries, who have been most celebrated and exalted by fame. The attributes and decorations of royalty could have only served to eclipse the majesty of those virtues, which made him, from being a modest citizen, a more resplendent luminary. Misfortune, had he lived, could hereafter have sullied his glory only with those superficial minds, who, believing that characters and actions are marked by success alone, rarely deserve to enjoy it. Malice could never blast his honor, and envy made him a singular exception to her universal rule. For himself he had lived enough, to life and to glory. For his fellow-citizens, if their prayers could have been answered, he would have been immortal. For me, his departure is at a most unfortunate moment. Trusting, however, in the wise and righteous dominion of Providence over the passions of men, and the results of their councils and actions, as well as over their lives, nothing remains for me, but humble resignation.

"His example is now complete, and it will teach wisdom and virtue to magistrates, citizens and men, not only in the present age, but in future generations, as long as our history shall be read. If a Trojan found a Pliny, a Marcus Aurelius can never want biographers, eulogists or historians.

JOHN ADAMS."

In the House of Representatives, General Marshall made a report from the joint committee appointed to consider a suitable mode of commemorating the death of General Washington.

He reported the following resolutions:

"Resolved, by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United State of America in Congress assembled, That a marble monument be erected by the United States at the capitol of the city of Washington, and that the family of General Washington be requested to permit his body to be deposited under it, and that the monument be so designed as to commemorate the great events of his military and political life. And be it further

"Resolved, That there be a funeral procession from Congress hall to the German Lutheran Church, in memory of General George Wash-

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ington, on Thursday the twenty-sixth instant, and that an oration be delivered before both Houses that day; and that the President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives, be desired to request one of the members of Congress to prepare and deliver the same. And be it further

"Resolved, That it be recommended to the people of the United States, to wear crape on their left arm, as mourning, for thirty days. And be it further

"Resolved, That the President of the United States be requested to direct a copy of these resolutions to be transmitted to Mrs. Washington, assuring her of the profound respect Congress will ever bear for her person and character, of their condolence on the late affecting dispensation of Providence, and entreating her assent to the interment of the remains of General Washington in the manner expressed in the first resolution. And be it further

"Resolved, That the President of the United States be requested to issue his proclamation, notifying to the people throughout the United States, the recommendation contained in the third resolution."

These resolutions passed both Houses unanimously.

On December 24th, the House was informed that Major-General Henry Lee had been appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House to prepare and deliver the oration in honor of our late illustrious commander in chief, on Thursday next, which appointment he had been pleased to accept.

In compliance with a resolution introduced in the House, by General Marshall, the President issued a proclamation, as follows:

A PROCLAMATION

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

"WHEREAS, the Congress of the United States have this day resolved, 'That it be recommended to the people of the United States, to assemble on the twenty-second day of February next, in such numbers and manner as may be convenient, publicly to testify their grief for the death of General George Washington, by suitable eulogies, orations and discourses, or by public prayers;' and, 'That the President be requested to

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issue a proclamation for the purpose of carrying the foregoing resolution into effect.' Now, therefore, I, John Adams, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the same accordingly.

"Given under my hand and the seal of the United States, at Philadelphia, the sixth day of January, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and of the independence of the said States the twenty fourth.

JOHN ADAMS."

"By the President,

"Timothy Pickering, Secretary of State."

FUNERAL ORATION

On the death of General Washington, delivered at the request of Congress, by Major General Henry Lee, member of Congress from Virginia:

"In obedience to your (the two Houses of Congress) will, I rise, your humble organ, with the hope of executing a part of the system of public mourning which you have been pleased to adopt, commemorative of the death of the most illustrious and most beloved personage this country has ever produced; and which, while it transmits to posterity your sense of the awful event, faintly represents your knowledge of the consummate excellence you so cordially honor.

"Desperate, indeed, is any attempt on earth to meet correspondently this dispensation of Heaven; for, while with pious resignation we submit to the will of an all-gracious Providence, we can never cease lamenting in our finite view of Omnipotent Wisdom, the heart-rendering privation for which our nation weeps. When the civilized world shakes to its centre; when every moment gives birth to strange and momentous changes; when our peaceful quarter of the globe, exempt as it happily has been from any share in the slaughter of the human race, may yet be compelled to abandon her pacific policy, and to risk the doleful casualties of war; what limit is there to the extent of our loss? None within the reach of my words to express; none which your feelings will disavow. The founder of our federal republic—our bulwark in war, our guide in peace—is no more. Oh! that this was but questionable! Hope, the comforter of the wretched, would pour into our agonized hearts its



GENERAL HENRY LEE

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balmy dew. But, alas! there is no hope for us; our Washington is removed forever. Possessing the stoutest frame, and purest mind, he had passed nearly to his sixty-eighth year, in the enjoyment of good health, when habituated by his care of us to neglect himself, a slight cold, disregarded became inconvenient on Friday, oppressive on Saturday, and defying every medical interposition before the morning of Sunday, put an end to the best of men. An end did I say?—his fame survives, bounded only by the limits of the earth, and by the extent of the human mind. He survives in our hearts, in the growing knowledge of our children, in the affection of the good throughout the world; and when our monuments shall be done away; when nations now existing shall be no more; when even our young and far spreading empire shall have perished, still will our Washington's glory, unfaded, shine and die not, until love of virtue cease on earth or earth itself sinks into chaos.

"How, my fellow citizens, shall I single to your grateful hearts his preëminent worth? Where shall I begin in opening to your view a character throughout sublime? Shall I speak of his warlike achievements, all springing from obedience to his country's will—all directed to his country's good?

"Will you go with me to the banks of the Monongahela, to see your youthful Washington supporting, in the dismal hour of Indian victory, the ill-fated Braddock, and saving by his judgment and by his valor the remains of a defeated army, pressed by the conquering savage foe? Or, when oppressed America, nobly resolving to risk her all in defence of her violated rights he was elevated by the unanimous voice of Congress to the command of her armies. Will you follow him to the high grounds of Boston where to an undisciplined, courageous and virtuous yeomanry, his presence gave the stability of system, and infused the invincibility of love of country or shall I carry you to the painful scenes of Long Island, York Island, and New Jersey, when combating superior and gallant armies, aided by powerful fleets, and led by chiefs high in the roll of fame, he stood the bulwark of our safety, undismayed by disaster; unchanged by change of fortune? Or will you view him in the precarious fields of Trenton, where deep gloom unnerving every arm, reigned triumphant through our thinned, worn-down unaided ranks; himself unmoved. Dreadful was the night; it was about this time of

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winter; the storm raged; the Delaware rolling furiously with floating ice, forbade the approach of man. Washington, self-collected, viewed the tremendous scene—his country called—unappalled by surrounding dangers, he passed to the hostile shore; he fought; he conquered. The morning sun cheered the American world. Our country rose on the event; and her dauntless Chief pursuing his blow, completed in the lawns of Princeton, what his vast soul had conceived on the shores of the Delaware.

"Thence to the strong grounds of Morris Town, he led his small, but gallant band; and through an eventful winter, by the high efforts of his genius, whose matchless force was incalculable only by the growth of difficulties, he held in check formidable hostile legions, conducted by a chief experienced in the art of war, and famed for his valour on the ever memorable heights of Abraham, where fell Wolfe, Montcalm, and since our much lamented Montgomery; all covered with glory. In this fortunate interval, produced by his masterly conduct, our fathers, ourselves, animated by his resistless example, rallied around our country's standard, and continued to follow her beloved Chief through the various and trying scenes to which the destinies of our country led.

"Who is there that has forgotten the vales of Brandywine—the fields of Germantown, or the plains of Monmouth? Everywhere present, wants of every kind obstructing, numerous and valiant armies encountering, himself a host, he assuaged our sufferings, limited our privations, and upheld our tottering republic. Shall I display to you the spread of fire of his soul, by rehearsing the praises of the hero of Saratoga, and his much loved compeer of the Carolinas? No; our Washington wears no borrowed glory: To Gates—to Green, he gave without reserve the applause due to their eminent merit; and long may the Chiefs of Saratoga, and of Eutaw, receive the grateful respect of a grateful people.

"Moving in his own orbit, he imparted heat and light to his most distant satellites; and combining the physical and moral force of all within his sphere, with irresistible weight he took his course, commemorating fully, disdaining vice, dismaying treason and invigorating despondency, until the auspicious hours arrived, when, united with the intrepid forces of a potent and magnanimous ally, he brought to submission the since

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conqueror of India, thus finishing his long career of military glory with a lustre corresponding to his great name; and in this his last act of war affixing the seal of fate to our nation's birth.

"To the horrid din of battle sweet peace succeeded, and our virtuous chief, mindful only of the common good, in a moment of tempting personal aggrandizement, hushed the discontents of growling sedition, and surrendering his power into the hands from which he had received it, converted his sword into a ploughshare, teaching an admiring world that, to be truly great you must be truly good.

"Were I to stop here, the picture would be incomplete, and the task imposed unfinished. Great as was our Washington in war, and as much as did that greatness contribute to produce the American Republic, it is not in war alone his preëminence stands conspicuous; his various talents combining all the capacities of a statesman with those of a soldier, fitted him alike to guide the councils and the armies of our nation. Scarcely had he rested from his martial toils while his invaluable parental advice was still sounding in our ears, when he who had been our shield and our sword, was called forth to act a less splendid but more important part.

"Possessing a clear and a penetrating mind, a strong and a sound judgment, calmness and temper for deliberation, with invincible firmness and perseverance in resolutions maturely formed, drawing information from all, acting from himself, with incorruptible integrity and unvarying patriotism, his own superiority and the public confidence alike marked him as the man designed by heaven to lead in the great political as well as military events which have distinguished the era of his life.

"The finger of an overruling Providence, pointing at Washington, was neither mistaken nor unobserved; when to realize the vast hopes to which our Revolution had given birth, a change of political system became indispensable.

"How novel, how grand the spectacle! Independent states stretched over an immense territory, and known only by common difficulty, clinging to their union as the rock of their safety, deciding by frank comparison of their relative condition, to rear on that rock, under the guidance of reason, a common government through whose commanding protec-

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tion, liberty and order, with their long train of blessings, should be safe to themselves and the sure inheritance of their posterity.

"This arduous task devolved on citizens selected by the people, from knowledge of their wisdom and confidence in their virtue. In this august assembly of sages and of patriots, Washington, of course, was found—and, as if acknowledged to be most wise, where all were wise, with one voice he was declared their chief. How well he merited this rare distinction; how faithful were the labors of himself and his compatriots, the work of their hands and our union, strength and posterity, the fruits of that work best attest.

"What was the burst of joy through our anxious land on this exhilarating, event is known to us all. The aged, the young, the brave, the fair, rivalled each other in demonstrations of their gratitude; and this high wrot, delightful scene was heightened in its effect, by the singular contest between the zeal of the bestowers and the avoidance of the receiver of the honors bestowed. Concerning his administration, what heart is not charmed with the recollection of the pure and wise principles announced by himself, as the basis of his political life? He best understood the indissoluble union between virtue and happiness, between duty and advantage, between the genuine maxims of an honest and magnanimous policy, and the solid rewards of public prosperity and individual felicity; watching with an equal and comprehensive eye over this great assemblage of communities and interests, he laid the foundations of our national policy in the unerring, immutable principles of morality based on religion, exemplifying the preëminence of free government, by all the attributes which win the affections of its citizens or command the respect of the world.

"But to have essentially aided in presenting to his country this consummation of her hopes, neither satisfied the claims of his fellow citizens in his talents, nor those duties which the possession of those talents imposed. Heaven had not infused into his mind such an uncommon share of its ætherial spirit to remain unemployed, nor bestowed on him his genius unaccompanied with the corresponding duty of devoting it to the common good. To have framed a constitution, was showing only, without realizing the general happiness. This great work remained to be done, and America, steadfast in her preference, with one voice sum-

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moned her beloved Washington, unpracticed as he was in the duties of civil administration, to execute this last act in the completion of the national felicity. Obedient to her call, he assumed the high office with that self-distrust peculiar to his innate modesty, the constant attendant of preëminent virtue.

O fortunatus nimium, fua si bona norint!

"Leading through the complicated difficulties produced by previous obligations and conflicting interests, seconded by my succeeding houses of Congress, enlightened and patriotic, he surmounted all original obstruction, and brightened the path of our national felicity.

"The Presidential term expiring, his solicitude to exchange exaltation for humility returned, with a force increased with increase of age, and he had prepared his farewell address to his countrymen, proclaiming his intention, when the united interpositions of all around him, enforced by the eventful prospects of the epoch, produced a further sacrifice of inclination to duty. The election of President followed, and Washington by the unanimous vote of the nation, was called to resume the chief magistracy: what a wonderful fixture of confidence! Which attracts most, our admiration, a people so correct, or a citizen combining an assemblage of talents forbidding rivalry, and stifling even envy itself? Such a nation ought to be happy, such a chief must be forever revered.

"War, long menaced by the Indian tribes, now broke out; and the terrible conflict deluging Europe with blood, began to shed its baneful influence over our happy land. To the first, outstretching his invincible arm, under the orders of the gallant Wayne, the American Eagle soared triumphant through distant forces—peace followed victory, and the melioration of the condition of the enemy followed peace. Godlike virtue which uplifts even the subdued savage.

"To the second he opposed himself. New and delicate was the conjuncture, and great was the stake. Soon did his penetrating mind discern and seize the only course, continuing to us all the felicity enjoyed. He issued his proclamation of neutrality. This index to his whole subsequent conduct, was sustained by the appropriation of both houses of Congress, and by the approving voice of the people. To this sublime

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policy he inviolably adhered, unmoved by foreign intrusion, unshaken by domestic turbulence,

*Justum et tenacem propositi virum,
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus instantis tyranni
Mente quatit solida.*

"Maintaining his pacific system at the expense of no duty, America faithful to herself and unstained in her honor, continued to enjoy the delights of peace, while afflicted Europe mourns in every quarter, under the accumulated miseries of an unexampled war; miseries in which our preëminent Washington had been as firm in council as he was brave in the field.

"Pursuing steadfastly his course, he held safe the public happiness, preventing foreign war, and quelling internal discord, till the revolving period of a third election approached, when he executed his interrupted but inextinguishable desire of returning to the humble walks of private life.

"The promulgation of his fixed resolution stopped the anxious wishes of an affectionate people from adding a third unanimous testimonial of their unabated confidence in the man so long enthroned in their hearts. When, before, was affection like this exhibited on earth?

"Turn over the records of ancient Greece — review the annals of mighty Rome — examine the volumes of modern Europe; you search in vain. America and her Washington only afford the dignified exemplification.

"The illustrious personage called by the national voice in succession to the arduous office of guiding a free people, had new difficulties to encounter: the amicable effort of settling our difficulties with France, begun by Washington, and pursued by his successor in virtues as in station, proving abortive, America took measures of self-defence. No sooner was the public mind roused by prospect of danger than every eye was turned to the friend of all, then secluded from public view, and grey in public service; the virtuous veteran, following his plough, received the unexpected summons with mingled emotions of indignation

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at the unmerited ill treatment of his country, and of a determination once more to risk his all in her defence.

"The annunciation of these feelings, in his affecting letter to the President accepting the command of the army, concluded his official conduct.

"First in war—first in peace—and first in the hearts of his countrymen, he was second to none in the humble and endearing scenes of private life; pious, just, humane, temperate and sincere; uniform, dignified and commanding, his example was as edifying to all around him, as were the effects of that example lasting.

"To his equals he was condescending, to his inferiors kind, and to the dear object of his affections exemplarily tender; correct throughout, vice shuddered in his presence, and virtue always felt his fostering hand; the purity of his private character gave effulgence to his public virtues.

"His last scene comported with the whole tenet of his life. Although in extreme pain, not a sigh, not a groan escaped him; and with undisturbed serenity he closed his well-spent life. Such was the man America has lost. Such was the man for whom our nation mourns.

"Methinks I see his august image, and hear falling from his venerable lips these deep sinking words:

" 'Cease, Sons of America, lamenting our separation: go on, and confirm by your wisdom the fruits of our joint councils, joint efforts, and common dangers. Reverence religion, diffuse knowledge throughout your land, patronize the arts and sciences; let Liberty and Order be inseparable companions, control party spirit, the bane of free government; observe good faith to, and cultivate peace with all nations, shut up every avenue to foreign influence, contract rather than extend national connexion, rely on yourselves only. Be American in thought and deed. Thus will you give immortality to that union which was the constant object of my terrestrial labors; thus will you preserve undisturbed to the latest posterity, the felicity of a people to me most dear, and thus will you supply (if my happiness is now ought to you) the only vacancy in the round of pure bliss high Heaven bestows.' "

The Columbian Mirror and

Alexandria Gazette, January 11, 1800.



HONORABLE WILLIAM FITZHUGH

IV

THE WASHINGTON SOCIETY OF ALEXANDRIA

“THOSE Gentlemen who have subscribed to the establishing of a Washington Society are informed that there will be a meeting of Subscribers at Gadsby’s this evening at 6 o’clock, January 14th.

“At a meeting of the Subscribers to the establishment of a Washington Society held at Gadsby’s Hotel on Tuesday, the 14th day of January, 1800, William Fitzhugh, Esq., in the Chair, on motion, *Resolved*, That William Fitzhugh, Elisha C. Dick, C. Simms, Jonathan Swift, James Muir, William Herbert, G. Deneale, Roger West, William Maffitt, and Walter Jones be appointed a Committee to prepare and report a Constitutional Plan of Association, together with such Rules and Regulations as shall appear to them best calculated to promote and preserve the objects of the Society; and that the same be submitted to the consideration thereof at the next meeting to be held on the 28th inst., at the place above mentioned.

WILLIAM FITZHUGH, *Chairman*.

JOHN C. HERBERT, *Sec’y.*”

“At an adjourned meeting of The Washington Society held at Gadsby’s Hotel, the 28th of January, the following Gentlemen were elected to fill the offices annexed to their respective names for the coming year: William Fitzhugh, Esq., President; E. C. Dick, and R. West, Esqs., Vice-Presidents; Rev. W. Maffitt, Chaplain; Jonathan Swift, Treasurer; George Deneale, Secretary. William Herbert, James Keith, Rev. J. Muir, and Charles Simms were chosen a Standing Committee.”

Columbian Mirror and Alexandria Gazette.

* * * * *

CONSTITUTION OF THE WASHINGTON SOCIETY OF ALEXANDRIA

JANUARY 14, 1800

Our Country having lost a Citizen in the late illustrious George Washington, the able, successful and heroic leader of our armies during

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the Revolutionary War, which gave us Independence; the late wise, moderate and pacific President of the United States, whose unsullied Virtue, Wisdom and Magnanimity in discharging the duties of his public functions, whose rectitude and benevolence in his station, of a Man and a Citizen, were at once an elevated example, and the source of unequalled benefits to the Community; *we deem it*, not only a tribute justly due to his memory, but the important and useful means of giving a lasting impression, and exciting a generous emulation of exalted merit, to adopt a plan the best calculated to preserve in our minds, and in those of our fellow citizens, an animated recollection of those virtues which so eminently contributed to his Glory.

As human nature derives, from its peculiar capacity for social institution, all its greatness and many of its exalted qualities; as every effort of individual man, unaided by social coöperation, is comparatively weak and inefficient of the greatest moral and political ends, so particular objects of beneficence have been ever found to be advanced with most energy and effect by subordinate associations of men, pursuing sincerely, in concert, the attainment of their purpose.

To the end, therefore, that we may, in the most becoming and effectual manner, commemorate the virtues and the glorious actions of that much lamented Citizen, and that we may aid and perpetuate certain charities which his humane and munificent mind delighted to exercise—we do voluntarily associate ourselves under the appellation hereafter mentioned, and do adopt the following articles for our Constitutional regulation; to an honorable observance of which we acknowledge ourselves to be solemnly pledged:

ARTICLE I

Section 1. This Society shall be unlimited as to the number of its members, and shall be known, and called by the name of The Washington Society of Alexandria.

Section 2. This Society shall meet quarterly, for the purpose of discussing useful subjects—and that the question for discussion may be maturely considered, it shall be agreed upon by the Society at each meeting preceding the one at which it shall be discussed. The days of meet-

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ing shall be the 22d of February, the 22d of May, the 22d of August and the 22d of November, in each year. If either of those times of meeting should happen on Sunday, in any year, the same shall be postponed until the day following.

Section 3. The 22d of February shall be considered and observed as *an anniversary* by this Society, and on this day, each year, an *oration* shall be delivered by a member of this Society, to be chosen by ballot at the preceding anniversary.

Section 4. A number equal to one-third of the members resident in the Town of Alexandria, shall constitute a quorum, to do business; and for the admission of new members, each candidate shall be proposed at the quarterly meeting next preceding that at which he is to be ballotted for; and a majority of three-fourths of the members present shall be necessary to elect him.

Section 5. Every member, upon his admission and subscription to this Association, shall pay four dollars for the establishment of an immediate fund, and shall, moreover contribute one dollar at the expiration of every three months thereafter. A sum not less than Two hundred dollars shall be annually appropriated to the support of the Washington Free School, in the manner deemed most expedient by the Committee hereafter mentioned; Provided always, that if any member upon his admission, shall pay in advance Thirty dollars, he shall be thereafter exonerated from all contributions required by this Constitution.

Section 6. A copperplate diploma, or certificate of membership, shall be provided by the Society, a copy of which shall be furnished each member, at a price that will reimburse the expense of procuring it. Each member shall be provided with a medal, at his own expense; the weight, model, and device of which shall be agreed upon by the Society.

ARTICLE II

Section 1. The Officers of this Society shall consist of a President, two Vice-Presidents, a Chaplain, a Treasurer, and Secretary; who shall be elected by ballot, annually, on the 22d of November.

Section 2. The President, or in his absence either of the Vice-Presi-

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dents, shall be the organ of the Society when assembled; shall preserve order, and be the sole judge, thereof, except in those cases provided for by the standing rules, and ordinances; and shall sign all instruments of writing made out in the name of the Society.

Section 3. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to make application to the several members of the Society for the payment of all contributions required by this Constitution. He shall submit his accounts annually to the examination of the Society, at the meeting to be held on the 22d of November.

Section 4. It shall be the duty of the Secretary to keep an exact journal of the proceedings of the Society, and to insert them from time to time in a book furnished him for the purpose. He shall also be provided with another book, wherein he shall, from time to time, record the Orations annually delivered, and such other compositions or instruments of writing as the Society shall be pleased to direct.

Section 5. A standing Committee of five members shall be annually elected, by ballot (of which the President shall be *ex officio*), a majority of whom shall have exclusively the power of drawing on the Treasurer. They shall superintend the disbursement of all monies appropriated by the Society to particular purposes, and especially direct the expenditure of the specific sum set apart by this Constitution, for the support of The Washington Free School.

ARTICLE III

Section 1. To alter or amend this Constitution, it shall be indispensably necessary that notice thereof be given at the quarterly meeting next preceding the one at which such alteration or amendment will be proposed, and the concurrence of a number, equal to two-thirds of the resident members, shall be required for its adoption.

RULES AND ORDINANCES

1. As soon as the President takes the chair, on the day of the meeting, the secretary shall read the journal of the proceedings of the previous meeting.

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2. A motion made by any member must be seconded by another, before any question is taken thereon.

3. Every member when about to speak shall arise respectfully from his seat, and address the President.

4. No member shall be allowed to speak more than once on the same subject, unless leave be first obtained from the Society.

5. If the President wishes to take part in any discussion, he shall be at liberty to call one of the Vice-Presidents to the chair, to enable him to do so.

6. All questions, other than those of order, shall be decided by a majority of those present.

7. No member shall remain standing while the President is putting the question.

8. The place of the ensuing meeting shall be settled by the Society before adjournment.

9. The Secretary shall give public notice of each meeting, that absent members may be informed thereof.

PROVISIONAL ARTICLE

The several officers of this Society shall be elected at the present meeting and the first quarterly meeting to be held, agreeable to the Constitution, shall be fixed for the 22d of May, in the present year.

G. DENEALE, *Sec'y.*

Published in the *Columbian Mirror and Alexandria Gazette*, February 13, 1800, the only known copy of which is preserved in "The Harvard Treasure Room," Harvard University Library.

COMMEMORATING THE TWENTY-SECOND OF FEBRUARY

AT A MEETING of a number of the Inhabitants of Alexandria, at the Court House, on Tuesday, 14th of January, 1800, agreeable to Notice — William Fitzhugh, Esq., was appointed Chairman, and George Deneale, Secretary. On motion it was resolved that Charles Simms, George Deneale, Thomas Marshall, Rev. James Muir, Dr. E. C. Dick, William Fitzhugh, and Jonathan Swift, be appointed a Committee to adjust and carry into effect a plan for commemorating the 22d of February, next, in such manner as shall appear to them best calculated to harmonize with the feelings of the inhabitants of this place, and to meet the views of Congress.

GEORGE DENEALE, *Secretary.*
The Columbian Mirror and
Alexandria Gazette, January 16, 1800.

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WASHINGTON'S ORPHAN WARDS

"In Council, January 22d, 1800; The Gentlemen appointed as a Committee on behalf of the citizens of this town to make arrangements for the purpose of paying suitable tribute of respect to the memory of our deceased fellow-citizen, George Washington, in conformity to the Resolution of the Congress of the United States, having intimated their intention of providing a suit of cloathes for each of the poor scholars educated at the expense of the said deceased, in order that they may join in the procession of the citizens, on the 22d of February next, it is therefore ordered that Amos Alexander, George Taylor, and John V. Thomas be appointed to procure a suit of cloathes for each of the poor Scholars educated at the expense of the Corporation, in order that they may join in the same procession.

A True copy of the minutes:

HENRY MOORE,
Clk of The Council."

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"Note: Pupils of the Alexandria Academy, known as 'Washington's Free School.'"

*Alexandria Times and District of Columbia
Daily Advertiser, January 24, 1800.*

* * * * *

"The Committee appointed to adjust and carry into effect a plan for commemorating the 22d of February, in such manner as should appear to them the best calculated to harmonize with the feelings of the inhabitants of the town and its vicinity, and to meet the views of Congress, respectfully report, that they have adopted an order of procession to be observed on that day, calculated to unite all classes Citizens. The procession will be formed in King Street, precisely at 11 o'clock from which place they will march in order to the Presbyterian Meeting House, where an Oration will be delivered by Dr. Elisha C. Dick, accompanied with religious Solemnities by the Rev. Messrs. Davis, Maffitt, and Muir; the colours of the shipping to be hoisted at half-mast; and the committee recommends that all business be suspended, and no stores or shops to be opened.

"The Committee respectfully invite all classes of their Fellow Citizens to join in the proposed solemn tribute to the illustrious man whose loss is so justly and universally deplored.

"The plan of procession is lodged with George Deneale, who is appointed Officer of the Day, and who will give any information respecting the procession; as also of the military evolutions to be performed on that day.

By Order of the Committee,

GEORGE DENEALE, *Sec'y.*

"Alexandria, Virginia, February 4th, 1800."

*Alexandria Times and District of
Columbia Daily Advertiser.*

* * * * *

"The gentlemen composing the company of Elders, commonly called the Silver Greys, are requested to meet on Saturday next, the 22d inst.,

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precisely at half after 10 o'clock at the Market House Square, in full uniform, with Arms, &c., complete, in order to attend the Procession set apart for the honor of our illustrious Chief, now deceased. No further animation can possibly be necessary.

By order of the Captain,

P. MARSTELLER, *Lieut.*"

"The officers of the 106th Regiment are requested to meet this evening at Captain McKnight's Tavern; all Masters of vessels now in the harbour to meet at the Union Tavern, to perfect arrangements. Captain McKnight's Company; Captain Smith's Rifle Company; Troop of Alexandria Independent Dragoons; The Company of Artillery; Captain Lynn's Uniform Company; the Silver Greys."

Alexandria Times and District of Columbia

Daily Advertiser, February 18, 1800.

* * * * *

THE PROCESSION IN ALEXANDRIA

FEBRUARY 22, 1800

"America's Jubilee is passed—and the day of gladness is now cloathed in mourning for him we most loved and delighted to honor. Though the day of mirth has been transformed into a day of sorrow, it afforded one elevating consideration to the citizens of Alexandria—that they should once more publicly manifest their grief for the loss and respect for the memory of their illustrious neighbor, General George Washington.

"The morning of 'the day of Mourning' was announced by a discharge of 16 rounds by Captain Harper's company of artillery, and a procession was formed in King street, precisely at 11 o'clock (from a signal gun), by Colonel Deneale, who was appointed to marshal the procession, which was in the following order:

"Officer of dragoons four paces in front, sword drawn.

"Eight dragoons dismounted, two abreast, swords drawn.

"16 misses, from 9 to 12 years old, with white veils and scarfs,

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trimmed with black, and linked together with garlands of evergreen, two abreast.

"Major William Johnston, an old Continental officer, who served with reputation during the revolutionary war, and who was dismissed at the conclusion thereof, the last of the Virginia line, bearing a stand of colors of the 11th Virginia regiment, which was used in the war and preserved by him, and produced on this solemn occasion.

"16 boys in complete uniform of blue and buff, from 7 to 9 years old, each having an infantry cap, with a motto in letters of gold, in front, 'Washington Our Model'—and an espontoon shouldered—marching by files.

"Captain Simm's company of Silver Greys, by platoons.

"Orator of the day and clergy.

"Children of the free-school supported by the bounty of the illustrious deceased, cloathed in a new suit of mourning (at the expense of the corporation) two abreast, headed by their teacher.

"The high sheriff of the county, and justices of the peace, the sheriff bearing a white staff.

"The mayor, aldermen, and common councilmen of Alexandria, preceded by the sergeant with a staff.

"The gentlemen of the Bar.

"The president and directors of the Potomac Company.

"The officers and brethren of Lodge No. 22, with their regalia properly shrouded.

"The officers and brethren of Lodge No. 27.

"Band of music.

"Militia officers of the county of Fairfax, belonging to the 60th regiment, by sections.

"Captains and mates of vessels, two abreast, bearing two globes, a chart, ship completely rigged, quadrants, log, reel, &c., &c.

"Mechanics of the town.

"Taylors with a flag emblematic of the profession, borne by Mr. John Longdon, who has followed his profession for upwards of 30 years, and who served as a dragoon in the revolutionary war.

"Citizens four abreast.

"After the line was formed, Captain Simms's company of Silver Greys

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were sent for, Major Johnson, and his stand of colors; they approached the line on the left, and passed in review to their station in the line, when the whole were wheeled to the right, and marched down King street, up Royal street, through Cameron street, and down Fairfax street to the Presbyterian church, which had been previously handsomely dressed in mourning, and which, for the present occasion, was additionally ornamented in the following manner:

"On the front of the pulpit was affixed in gold a large 'W.'

"The rostrum, which accommodated the Orator, three officiating Clergymen, the Master and Wardens of Lodge No. 22, was raised in front of the pulpit, and covered with black. Two large arches were raised on the East and West galleries, and handsomely ornamented with evergreen, on the key stones of each appeared in gold the letter 'W.' Under the arches, on the side, were arranged the ladies dressed in white, with white veils and scarfs, wreaths, &c., who obligingly assisted in the musical part of the ceremony; and under those on the opposite side were arranged the 16 misses, as described in the order of the procession, their wreaths hanging in festoons in front of the gallery. In their rear appeared the 16 little boys in uniform before mentioned. On the front of the East, South and West gallery was suspended a portrait of the illustrious Washington, with the following inscriptions annexed to each of them:

"East side: 'The ornament, Example, and defence of our Nation.'

"South: 'First in war — First in peace — First in the hearts of his Countrymen.'

"West: 'Millions unborn shall venerate thy name, and call thee Saviour of their Country.'

"The service of the day commenced, with an anthem accompanied by instrumental music, after which the Rev. Mr. Davis delivered a prayer calculated to lead the devotions of the audience to that God whose beneficence had bestowed and so long continued the invaluable life of our now lamented, and ever-to-be-remembered, Washington. Vocal and instrumental music. A narrative of the honors usually paid to the memory of distinguished characters, by the Rev. Mr. Muir. Music and anthem. Eulogy by Doctor Dick. Music and anthem. The Throne of

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Grace was addressed in an affectionate prayer by the Rev. Mr. Maffit. Instrumental music.

"Major Johnson advancing the stand of colors, the little boys saluted them, uttering the words 'Hail Sacred Relict', after which they were presented to the 16 young misses, in rotation, who ornamented them with their wreaths, pronouncing at the same time the following appropriate sentences:

1. Thus we offer our tribute to the memory of Washington.
2. The Daughters of America shall long lament thy loss.
3. He was acceptable as the return of Spring.
4. He was ornamental as the flowers of Summer.
5. He was beneficial as the fruits of Autumn.
6. He was terrible to oppressors as the storms of Winter.
7. Washington was a stately oak.
8. Washington as a Sun illuminated the Western Hemisphere.
9. The Sun set, and gloom overspread the land.
10. Washington sleeps with his fathers.
11. Let the willow shade his grave.
12. Let the grass mantle it.
13. Let the fragrant herb perfume.
14. Let the birds of the wood serenade it.
15. Let human voice chant a melancholy dirge.
16. Let the sons of Columbia emulate the character of Washington.

"The procession returned from the Meeting House, in the same order, to King street, where the whole were dismissed, except the military, who were formed with a piece of artillery on the right and left, and Captain Simpson's company of Dragoons on the right of the whole, where they fired 16 rounds, each by divisions and platoons, with military exactness."

Columbian Mirror and Alexandria Gazette.



EDMUND J. LEE, ESQUIRE

VI

THE SILVER GREYS

THE military company, known as the Silver Greys, organized in Alexandria in 1798, was unique in character and of especial note; it was composed of men crowned not only with the silvery wreaths of honorable old age, but men in whose hearts still glowed the embers of the patriotic martial flame which had lighted them through the ever-memorable years and trials of the Revolutionary War; with a distinguished colonel of the Revolution to command it, and with another of the same rank serving as its captain, it numbered in its ranks men from every walk of life, military, lawyers, doctors, bankers and tradesmen, all in their declining years, fraternizing as brothers—brothers still faithful to and inspired by the same patriotic ideals that had marked their glorious youthful days.

Every man enrolled in the ranks of the Silver Greys was known to Washington, and many of them were his intimates. That he felt an especial interest and pride in the organization is evidenced by the letter, marked "private," which he wrote from Mount Vernon to his old friend, Col. James McHenry, in Baltimore, on July 27, 1798:

"Dear Sir:

"The Greyheads of Alexandria, pretty numerous it seems, and composed of all the respectable old people of the place, having formed themselves into a company for the defence of the Town and its Vicinity, are in want of Colors; and it being intimated that the presentation of them by Mrs. Washington would be flattering to them, I take the liberty of requesting the favor of you to have made and sent to me as soon as it is convenient, such as will be appropriate to the occasion. Handsome, but not more expensive than becomes Republicans (not Bachite Republicans) is reqd. If you think a motto would be proper, the choice of one, 'chaste and unassuming,' is left to your own judgment. Send the cost, and the money shall be remitted by yours always.

G^O. WASHINGTON."

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At every public gathering the Silver Greys was accorded the post of honor; it may be imagined with what heavy hearts they assumed that position on the twenty-second of February, 1800. At the celebration of the Fourth of July in that same year they assisted to the limit of physical ability; the event is recorded in the columns of the *Columbian Mirror and Alexandria Gazette*, on July 7th:

"Col. Simms' Company of Silver Greys is composed of Gentlemen whose age would not admit of their conveniently sharing in the fatigues of the day; they, however, appeared in their uniforms, and when the Military evolutions were over, retired to Mr. Duff's, a member of the Company, where, after partaking of a handsome entertainment, the Toasts annexed were drank:

TOASTS

1. The Fourth of July: May it always be remembered with joy, and celebrated with gratitude.
2. The Constitution of the United States: The Pole Star of American Patriots.
3. The Congress of the United States.
4. The President of the United States.
5. The Vice-President of the United States.
6. To the memory of our truly inimitable fellow citizen, GEORGE WASHINGTON: May his virtues be imitated and his services never forgotten.
7. The Territory of Columbia: Within which may Intrigue, Vice, and Faction never rear their heads.
8. The Heroes and Patriots of 1776.
9. The rising Navy of the United States.
10. The Army of the United States.
11. The Militia of America: The Defence of the Nation.
12. Agriculture.
13. Manufactures.
14. The Commerce of America.
15. The Commissioners in France.
16. The Town of Alexandria: May her proximity to the City of Washington revive her trade, and accelerate her improvements.

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VOLUNTEERS

17. By Mr. Faw — The Silver Greys of America: May their conduct and example be such as to be worthy of imitation by the young men.
18. By Captain Simms — Health, happiness and prosperity to the members of the Company of the Silver Greys.
19. After the Captain had retired: To the Captain of the Silver Greys.

As time rolled on, the "Greyheads," "pretty numerous" in 1798, disappeared from the ranks one by one; the curtain falls upon the activities of the organization with the death of its venerable commander. Col. Charles Simms, on August 29th, 1819. George Washington Parke Custis, who delivered the oration before The Washington Society, on February 22, 1820, in his address paid tribute to Colonel Simms:

"In the list of departed worthies, we have to mourn our late venerable President, Colonel Charles Simms, whose memory will be cherished by this Society and his country in happy recollections of his worth as a soldier of liberty, a patriot, a friend. Col. Simms was engaged in military service on the frontiers of Virginia previous to the War of the Revolution. In the contest for liberty he particularly distinguished himself in defense of the Delaware in the campaign of 1777.

"Also William Herbert; a native of Ireland; he was ardently attached to the cause of American Liberty, and a member of the old Blue and Buffs, the first volunteer commanded by Col. Washington, and uniformed in the opposition colors. When the *Roebuck*, and other British vessels were in the Potomack and threatening the mansion of the General, Mr. Herbert repaired to Mount Vernon; and he was one of that familiar coterie who were always welcome as its guest at its great master's board."*

*William Herbert, intimate friend of Washington, pioneer banker of Alexandria and the District of Columbia, died February 24, 1819. He was a member of the Silver Greys, and was for a number of years president of The Washington Society, of Alexandria.

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PART II

ANNIVERSARY ORATIONS



REV. JAMES MUIR

I

THE MUIR AND DICK ORATIONS

AT PRESBYTERIAN MEETING HOUSE

FEBRUARY 22, 1800

DISSERTATION delivered by Rev. James Muir, on Saturday last (prefatory to Dr. Dick's eulogy on General Washington) on the respective modes pursued by different nations at different periods, for perpetuating the memory of deceased persons of eminence:

"The methods which, from experience have been found best calculated to perpetuate the memory of eminent men, is the investigation assigned to me in this day's service. To render a detail interesting, especially when the facts are numerous, and drawn from remotest ages, and from nations widely separated, is extremely difficult, but I flatter myself with your indulgence, whilst in conformity to your wishes I attempt what has been judged proper in the present arrangement.

"When we hear of great and dignified actions, we immediately realize the actor as possessing, in appearance, and in manner, something correspondent. The mind impresses a distinguishing characteristic upon the body. The fire of the eye, and the vivacity of the countenance, bespeak fire and vivacity in the unseen and the animating principle. The inventive genius of man has contrived methods to perpetuate the characteristic both of the body and mind; of the mortal, and of the immortal part.

"*Embalming* was practiced by the Egyptians from an early period. They brought this art to great perfection. The body was in no way disfigured; the hair remained on the brows and eyelids, and the countenance could easily be recognized. Their relicts were deposited in magnificent apartments, and held in great veneration. Embalming was never generally practiced except by this people; it originated partly in respect for the dead, but chiefly in a belief that the soul derived benefit from the practice. Among other nations, the lineaments of the body and the expression of the countenance have been preserved by a different art. The canvas has appeared to breathe, and the marble to speak. Great proficiency was made by the ancients, both in sculpture and in painting.

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The images which Rachel was so anxious to convey with her when she left her father's house, were probably the portraits of her ancestors, upon which she had set her heart.

"The soul constitutes the best distinction of men. It is the principle of what is great and excellent. It possesses a power and freedom of operation, which matter in no state, and in no degree of refinement could possibly possess. This divine principle raises us to a rank next to angels. The dignity of the soul is a spiritual and immortal substance, has always been the boast of the good, but the dread of the bad.

"A friend of Socrates waited upon him in prison, to know how he would be buried. 'As you please,' said Socrates, 'if you can lay hold of me, and I not escape out of your hands,' and addressing the company he observed, with a pleasantry peculiar to himself, and which did not forsake him even in that awful crisis—'I can never persuade Crito that Socrates is he who converses, and disposes the different parts of his discourse, for he always imagines that I am what he is going to see dead in a little while, he confounds me with my carcass, and therefore asks how I would be interred.'

"The same sentiments exist in Cyrus's address to his children on his death-bed—'You cannot suppose that I cease to exist because you cease to see me. You never saw my soul to this instant, but you must know by its actions that it does exist—would honors be paid to those who moulder in the dust were the soul extinct? Shall the soul live in the mortal body only, and die when separated from the body? No—this I could never imagine.' The Emperor Adrain, whose prospect in futurity was more gloomy than the prospects either of Cyrus or of Socrates, was conscious of the dignity of the soul, but dreaded existence in a separate state; demanding of his soul whither it designed to go; repeating, at the same time, verses of his own composing, in which painful anxiety is strongly expressed, to the following effect:

*'Poor, little pretty fluttering thing,
Must we no longer live together?
And dost thou prune thy trembling wing,
To take thy flight thou know'st not whither?
Thy hum'rous vein, thy pleasing folly
Lies all neglected, all forgot,
And pensive, wavering melancholy,
Thou dread'st and hop'st, thou know'st not what.'*

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"The characteristics of the soul which possess such preëminence over the body, is impressed upon what men have written, and upon what they have done. Our writings bear the impression of the mind as evidently as wax the impression of the cypher. A style, clean or confused, strong or feeble, simple or affected, bespeaks in the mind a correspondent clearness or confusion, strength or weakness, simplicity or affectation. Homer's sublime, and copious, lively and animating soul, is diffused through the Iliad; the Æneid, everywhere chaste and correct, is the very image of Virgil's chaste and correct mind. Their writings give each man an immortality on earth and introduce them to the esteem and to the imitation of distant ages.

"*Memoirs* collecting and arranging sayings and correspondence, incidents of a private and public nature, portray the character. The pillars of Seth, so celebrated in ancient history, on which were written what he believed and what he taught of natural history and astronomy, or moral duty and religious conduct, gave a currency to his name. We are indebted to the writings of Plato and Xenophon for our acquaintance with Socrates. The commentaries of Cæsar, and the memoirs of Sully unfold the characters of men eminent in their time, each possessing a merit of a particular kind.

"*Orations* are memoirs on a narrow scale. They were in use among the ancient Egyptians, and I believe were not uncommon among other nations. Valerianus pronounced the eulogy of Brutus, the first Roman Consul. During the Peloponnesian war, the Athenians solemnized the funeral rites of those who had fallen in battle, and were delighted to hear Pericles speak in their praise. The eloquence of every age, and of every nation, has been employed to honor the memory of those who had deserved well of mankind, and to display the excellency of their character.

"In the historic page, the individual who holds the most conspicuous place, is one spring only among many in a great machine. The real character is best known in less complicated detail.

"*The song* has from earliest ages celebrated deserving actions, and displayed, in a striking light, what in the characters was amiable and worthy. In songs, the history of nations are to be sought; in the first

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stages of society, they were the authentic records from whence the historian compiled. Lucian speaks of bards—

*'Whom sacred raptures fire
To chant their Heroes, to their Country's Lyre,
Who consecrate in their immortal strain,
Brave patriots, souls in righteous battle slain.'*

"*Epitaphs* are of very ancient date, and when judicious, combine in one point what is most excellent in the character. Among the Greeks they were very simple. The name of the deceased was engraven on the stone, and in a single word his characteristic—such a one 'The Good'—'The Just'—'The Brave.' Among the Romans more art was introduced into their epitaphs. The dead, by a living personification, were brought up; giving advice to the living. Their tombs, both among the Greeks and the Romans were often adorned with some expressive hieroglyphic. One instance, I recollect, a human face, joined to the head of an elephant; a peacock to a scepter; the face being a strong likeness of Socrates; the whole combination was meant to represent the beauty, majesty, and strength of his mind.

"By one or the other of the methods now mentioned, or by the same methods variously combined, an accurate idea of the characters, and even of the external appearance, of persons eminent in their day, has been given to distant ages.

"There is in man a dangerous propensity which leads to extremes; either they far exceed, or fall far short of their mark. This must have suggested itself to your own minds from some instances now produced. A good likeness of the benefactors of mankind is calculated to gratify, and to please; but why should it become the object of religious worship? Were the real person, not the likeness presented to the view, is even this any more than the carcass? Was not the Athenian philosopher perfectly correct in rallying Crito, for supposing what he saw to be Socrates? This did not occur to a late writer, who imprudently recommends the picture of a respected citizen to be hung in our chambers as a 'Tutelar Divinity.' Language of this kind ought never to be used in a Christian land; never let it grate a Christian ear.

"*The song, the memoir, the oration*, portray the character. The *por-*

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trait is often too partial. There is no shade; we are hereby in danger of being misled. To this extravagance the worship offered to the dead in darker ages must be imputed. It is a peculiar excellency of the Scriptures that in the characters, with which they present us, we see men. If they have excellencies, they have also defects. If the good predominates, it struggles with the bad, and obtains by a persevering contest, the victory. Such a likeness is immediately recognized. This is human nature. The character drawn by the panegyrist may amuse, surprise, astonish—but it is not the character of a mortal. I shut the book, and the phantom disappears. But when the Scripture presents a character—if it does not amuse, surprise or astonish—it effects a more important purpose. It calls down vain imagination. I see myself; I learn caution; I receive hope; I am roused to diligence.

“You will easily perceive to what these observations tend. Whatever method be taken to represent a character, and to immortalize it on earth, let the representation be accurate, and complete, and there is no doubt of its being useful. In a correct statement of their sayings and correspondence of what they have written, and of what they have done, we see the men. Has any great object engaged their attention where here, you can not do them a greater honor, when gone, than to promote that object. ‘Take care of yourselves,’ was the last advice given by the Grecian sage to his friends. The worship of the Deity, and the practice of all the private, and the social duties were, with him, favorite objects. The Athenian youth, becoming devout worshippers and exemplary citizens, their master’s name must live, being engraven in indelible characters on the heart.

“Virtue gives an intrinsic value to the character, and throws a radiance far around. The perfections of the Deity are discovered in the inanimate parts of nature, but on the intelligent principle His image is impressed. Any degree of wisdom and energy; of goodness and power in the creature gives an idea of the wisdom and energy of the goodness and power existing, in the highest degree in the Creator. The stream may dry up; the ray be absorbed; but the fountain remains. With the Father of light, there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. When the display of eminent powers, and the practice of eminent virtues lead men to God, cherishing in them a veneration of His name,



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and a regard for His worship, the persons who have been thus endowed, and thus exemplary, have not lived in vain. They have done the world the most essential service; and I cannot conceive what could be more gratifying to spirits in a separate state, supposing them acquainted with the affairs of mortals, and interested therein, than to know that any endowments which they possessed, or any conduct which they pursued, has produced the effect which I have just mentioned.

"Are we deprived of those who were orderly, and active, deliberate and firm; the friends of their country, and the friends of mankind; attentive on the smallest matters, and scrupulously just, sympathizing and helpful? If struck with the representation, you become orderly and active, deliberate and firm, friends of your country, and friends of mankind, attentive to the smallest matters, and scrupulously just, sympathizing and helpful, you show a becoming respect to the merits of your deceased friends, and raise a monument to their remembrance which time cannot efface; such was the merit of the lamented Washington; let the remembrance be impressed upon the hearts of his countrymen, and stamp the national character. His name shall thus be more lasting than marble—it shall shine, when even that sun has set to rise no more."

* * * * *

ORATION BY ELISHA C. DICK

AT PRESBYTERIAN MEETING HOUSE

"In attempting to execute the part assigned me by your committee, on this sorrowful occasion, I rise with a confidence in your indulgence, upon which I rest an only hope, that my humble efforts may be found in any degree commensurate with your most moderate expectations.

"The people of America are this day assembled in multitudes, to mingle in grief, and to express to the world in one united voice the cause of their afflictions; to cherish the recollection of departed worth; and to evince to distant nations that they are grateful to a benefactor.

"If there be an animating thought, while yet the tear of sorrow hangs upon the cheek, may it not be drawn from an imaginary view of that

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most interesting picture, which America would at this moment exhibit, were it possible to be comprised within the scope of vision?

"Four millions of the human race, free in their thoughts and affections—unrestrained in their actions, widely dispersed over an extensive portion of the habitable globe, are seen devoted to a single purpose; a people detached by local causes—actuated in common life by opposite views, or rivals in the pursuit of similar objects; jealous in all other matters of general concern—are offering the tribute of affection to the memory of their common friend. In vain shall we examine the records of antiquity for its parallel. Worth so transcendent as to merit universal homage, with a correspondent desire to bestow it, mark an event in the history of our country that may be considered as a phenomenon in the annals of man.

"The institution of games, the denomination of cities and empires, the erection of monuments of marble and bronze, have severally served to perpetuate the memory of illustrious characters; but how often may the parentage of their celebrity be traced to either a single accident, or to a fortuitous combination of circumstances. To which of the sages, patriots, or heroes of past ages shall we recur for an example of that uncommon assemblage of virtues and talents that were blended in the character of our beloved Washington? Be it the privilege of posterity, when it shall desire to honor unusual merit, by comparative commendation, to employ his name as a term of superlative applause; but let us no longer mutilate his well-earned fame by looking back to antiquity for his model. His early manifestation of extraordinary capacity—his uniform preference of the public good to private enjoyment—his unwearied labours in the service of his country, for upwards of forty years, deservedly place him on the highest point of human exaltation.

"Preëminence in social life is more frequently the effect of exertion than of unusual talents; and most men might have been wiser and better than they are, had improvement at all times been their fixed purpose; but the individual whom a beneficent Providence selected, as his favorite instrument to dispense the blessings of political life and liberty to his country, seemed peculiarly fitted for that resplendent commission, by the munificent hand of nature. Presages of his future eminence were to be drawn from his earliest life. While yet at school, his deportment

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was such as to procure him the confidence and respect of his young companions. He was the common arbiter of their juvenile disputations, and his decisions were conclusive and satisfactory.

"Possessing a mind peculiarly collected in its structure, elevated in its views, and firm in its purposes, he saw at once the importance of intellectual ascendancy, and soon acquired the absolute dominion of himself. Endowments so rare and inestimable drew him early into general view, and attracted the notice of the constituted authorities.

"At the age of twenty-one years, bearing a major's commission in the provincial forces, he is selected by the colonial executive of Virginia, for the performance of a critical and momentous embassy to the French commander on the Ohio. He engages in the perilous and responsible enterprise. Undaunted by the chill blasts of winter—undismayed by a view of the pathless wild that lay before him, he takes his departure from Williamsburg, and moves on with unshaken purpose to his point of destination. Having produced his credentials and remonstrated ineffectually against the incursions of the French, we see him on his return, environed by imminent and complicated dangers, from which the providential hand of Heaven alone can extricate him. He has already escaped the murderously meditated volley of the savage in ambush—he is now contending with the elements. Embarked with his few attendants on a hastily constructed raft, the impetuosity of the torrent, with assailing bodies of ice, bear him along their turbulent course, and threaten inevitable destruction. The youthful hero, opposing his utmost strength to the wayward current, is plunged into its icy bosom. For a moment he is invisible, and his disconsolate companions deplore the loss of their leader; but he rises again, and buffeting the angry surface of the flood, recovers the raft, which is arrested in its progress by an insulated cluster of rocks. The night approaches, and patiently to wait the return of day is a point of necessity. Disconsolate and drear the abode, but more terrible the surrounding prospect. The intense severity of the weather is recompense for his sufferings presented in the morning an animated spectacle. The ice locked and firm, enables him to proceed in safety to the destined shore, and he pursues without further impediment his homeward way.

"The extraordinary capacity, first exemplified in the prosecution of this inaugural mission, was afterwards more amply displayed on the

banks of the Monongahela. On that occasion, the several important properties essential to military command, were manifested in the preservation of the remnant of a vanquished army. A youth untutored in the schools of war—by the peculiar strength and ingenuity of his own mind, effected an achievement that would have given additional lustre to the fame of a distinguished veteran.

"An eventful page in the book of fate was yet undisclosed. An era approached when the hero of Monongahela was to be introduced to an admiring world; a memorable epoch, that was at once to give existence to one of the most extensive empires on earth, and to stamp a brilliant immortality on the individual, who was chosen by Heaven to execute its mighty mandate. The American colonies, the legitimate offspring of Britain, feel the hand that should foster, become oppressive and severe. They venture but affectionately to complain. The parent rebukes, urges submission, imposes with augmented rigor and threatens coercion. Petitions and respectful expostulations are tried ineffectually. In pacific, but in more dignified terms, they now remonstrate. They appeal to reason, to justice and truth. Parental displeasure is kindling into wrath and revenge. They view at a distance the gathering storm and prepare to encounter it. Dreadful the impending conflict and incalculable the issue; but the price of victory is inestimable. A sense of common injury, common danger, and common interest, inspire union and energy. They collect their little army, untried, undisciplined. In the hands of their beloved Washington, they at the same moment deposit the chief command and their hopes of success. Pledged to himself, his fellow citizens and to his God, he accepts the sacred trust, and determines to give liberty to his country, or perish in the enterprise. Thus prepared and thus headed, making a solemn appeal to the inhabitants of the earth, they implore the Almighty aid, and enter upon the unequal and terrible combat.

"It is unnecessary to our present purpose to trace minutely the chain of succeeding incidents. The issue at once gave birth to our wide-spreading empire, and crowned the hero with wreaths of immortal glory. Gazing nations passing in wonder from the magnificent work to its author, are unsettled as to their chief point of admiration; while Colum-

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bia, growing with celestial rapture, greets with boundless gratitude and affection her favorite son.

"The savior of his country, disbanding his martial ranks, tenders his sage advice to his fellow citizens, bestows a benediction on his companions in arms, and retires to the calm retreat of private life.

"Smiling peace resumes her gentle reign. Agriculture and commerce, reviving from their bed of anguish, lead on in triumph to the altar of liberty, their long train of national blessings. A plan for the preservation of the altar, and the equitable distribution of its blessings, requires the aid of the aggregate wisdom of the United States. Amidst this brilliant assemblage, this constellation of enlightened minds, the father of his people again appears and shines supremely refulgent. Restraining, by his harmonizing presence, the discordant operation of social interests, tempering the ardor of discussion, and holding up to view the balance of relative rights, he saw their united labors terminate in the production of a system or general government which, receiving the sanction of his approbation, became the palladium of the national independence.

"Once more, in obedience to the united suffrage of his country, he foregoes the enjoyment of domestic scenes, and accepts the superintendency of the great and mighty concerns of the empire. Events arise in the course of his administration that call forth fresh demonstrations of his superior wisdom.

"The existing relations between America and the two great contending nations of Europe necessarily placed the former in a situation peculiarly hazardous and embarrassing. Devotees in the cause of republicanism, it was impossible for its citizens to become unconcerned spectators of the eventful contest. Lively impressions of gratitude still remained for the magnanimous succors formerly received from one of the powers, which naturally inspired a warm interest in the issue of the war, and had a strong tendency to draw them ultimately within its destructive vortex. But the vigilant guardian of his country's safety, by basing his position on the broad and commanding ground of neutrality, most effectually securing our peace, our honor, and our independence.

"After eight successive years, in the autumn of his life, exclusively devoted to the national interest, he is permitted to repose a while his venerable head on the pillow of domestic ease; and but a little while is

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his repose free from interruption. The establishment of a military force is deemed necessary for the public safety, and the laureled veteran is solicited, and agrees to take the provisional command. But the stirring and variegated scenes of his probationary existence were drawing to a close. The inauspicious gloom which had excited the apprehension of America having, in a great measure, disappeared—the soul of this great and good man took its final departure to the mansions of eternal rest.

“To his survivors, in the unexampled tenor of his actions, he has bequeathed a legacy of inestimable value. In the walks of private life, he was no less exemplary than in the more conspicuous scenes of public employment. His private friendship terminated only with his latest breath. Modest and unassuming, yet dignified in his manners—accessible and communicative, yet superior to familiarity, he inspired and preserved the love and respect of all who knew him. For the promotion of all public and useful undertaking, he was singularly munificent. The indigent and distressed were at all times subjects of his sympathy and concern. His charity flowed in quiet but constant streams, from a fountain that was at no time suffered to sustain the smallest diminution. No pursuit or avocation, however momentous, was permitted to interrupt his systematic attention to the children of want. His anxious solicitude on this score is pathetically exemplified in a letter written in 1775, at a time when the unorganized state of the army might have demanded his exclusive concern. Addressing himself to the late Lund Washington, he writes, ‘Let the hospitality of the house be kept with respect to the poor. Let on one go away hungry. If any of this kind of people should be in want of corn, supply their necessities, provided it does not encourage them in idleness. I have no objection to your giving my money in charity, when you think it will be well bestowed. I mean that it is my desire that it should be done. You are to consider that neither myself nor my wife are now in the way to do these good offices.’

“Such, my fellow citizens, was the man whose memory we have assembled to honor. It has been your peculiar felicity often to have seen him on the footing of social intimacy. That the inhabitants of Alexandria held a distinguished place in his affection, you have had repeated testimony. You have seen his sensibility awakened on occasions calculated to call forth a display of his partiality. The last time we met to

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offer our salutations and express our inviolable attachment to the venerable sage, on his retiring from the chief magistracy of the Union, you may remember that in telling you how peculiarly grateful were your expressions, the visible emotions of his great soul had almost deprived him of the power of utterance.

"But heaven has reclaimed its treasure, and America has lost its first of patriots and best of men — its shield in war, in peace its brightest ornament, the avenger of its wrongs, the oracle of its wisdom and the mirror of its perfection. His fair fame, secured in its immortality, shall shine through the countless ages with undiminished lusture. It shall be the statesman's polar star; the hero's destiny; the boast of age; the companion of maturity, and the goal of youth. It shall be the last national office of hoary dotage, to teach the infant that hangs on his trembling knee, to lisp the name of WASHINGTON."

* * * * *

"Alexandria, February 24, 1800.

"Doctor Elisha Cullen Dick,

"Sir, The Committee appointed to make arrangements for the 22d of February, take pleasure in expressing to you the entire approbation of the Eulogy pronounced by you, on our late illustrious Neighbor and Fellow Citizen, which they are well assured gave general satisfaction to your Fellow Citizens; and they request your permission to have it published.

"We are, Very respectfully,

Your oben't serv'ts,

WILLIAM FITZHUGH,
CHARLES SIMMS,
JAMES MUIR,
THOMAS MARSHALL,
GEORGE DENEALE,
JONATHAN SWIFT."

"Gentlemen:

"The approbation which you have been pleased to express, of the Eulogy pronounced by me, on our late illustrious Neighbor, and the

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Assurances you entertain of the general satisfaction of the audience, afford me ample testimony of the good wishes of my Fellow Citizens, and produce in my mind the most lively and appropriate impressions.

"Without considering it as possessing any intrinsic title to publicity, I feel bound to comply with your request, and send you a copy for publication.

"I am, Gentlemen, With great respect,

Your Obed't Serv't,

ELISHA C. DICK."

II

THE ORATIONS IN 1801

THE records of the activities of the Society during the year 1801 are, unfortunately, incomplete. Orations were delivered by members of the Society on February 22d, and on July Fourth, as usual but, apparently were not published. From *The Alexandria Advertiser*, of Tuesday, February 24, 1801, we copy as follows:

COMMEMORATIVE OF THE 22D OF FEBRUARY,
THE BIRTH OF OUR MUCH LAMENTED DECEASED FRIEND,
THE ILLUSTRIOUS GEORGE WASHINGTON

"Yesterday the Washington Society assembled at Gadsby's Hotel, whence they proceeded in procession to the Presbyterian Meeting House, accompanied by a number of their fellow citizens and the Military, and others, where an eloquent and appropriate address was delivered by the Reverend Mr. Maffitt, one of the members of the Society. After the delivery of the address the procession returned to Gadsby's where they were saluted by a discharge of 16 guns, and then separated. The Society partook of a sumptuous dinner provided for the occasion, after which the following toasts were drank:

TOASTS

1. To the Memory of him whose name dignifies the title of our institution.
2. The day we celebrate; May the benefits derived from our institution be commensurate with the benevolent views and wishes of the Patriot whose virtues it is designed to commemorate.
3. The People of the United States; Let them duly appreciate those inestimable advantages, which, but for the peculiar agency of the incomparable WASHINGTON, they would probably never have enjoyed.
4. The amiable and venerable relict of the American Fabius.
5. The President of the United States.

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6. The Vice-President of the United States.
7. The Senate and House of Representatives of the United States.
8. The heads of the Departments.
9. The memory of the deceased brethren of the Washington Society.
10. The people of the Commonwealth of Virginia.
11. The Militia, Navy and Army of the United States.
12. The District of Columbia.
13. The town and trade of Alexandria.
14. The Charitable Societies of the World; Success to their laudable exertions for the happiness of mankind.
15. May the contending nations of the earth speedily exchange the horrors of war for the blessings of permanent peace.
16. The fair daughters of America.

VOLUNTEERS

17. After Mr. Maffitt had retired; The Orator of the Day.
18. May the administration which is shortly to take place prove adequate to the task, and deserve the thanks of their countrymen.
19. After the President had retired; The President of the Washington Society.

At the annual meeting of the Society, on February 23d, William Fitzhugh of Chatham, had been re-elected president; Dr. Dick and David Steuart, vice-presidents; Rev William Maffitt, chaplain; Jonathan Swift, treasurer; George Deneale, secretary, and Walter Jones, orator. Mr. Jones delivered an oration on the succeeding Fourth of July."

III

THE ORATION BY COLONEL CHARLES SIMMS

JULY 8, 1802

IT HAS ever been the practice of nations who have loved liberty to commemorate important events, and to celebrate the achievements of those, by whom their freedom hath been attained or preserved.

The day which gave birth to the United States as a nation, which is distinguished as the era of their sovereignty and independence, the achievements of the illustrious Washington and his compatriots in the Revolutionary War, eminently deserve to be commemorated with every demonstration of gratitude and joy.

Such commemoration tends to keep alive and perpetuate the sentiments to which Americans are indebted for the enjoyments of the noblest attributes of man, to awaken the memory of the past and to excite each succeeding generation to emulate the virtues of those who have preceded.

No theme can be more splendid than that of the independence of our country; few events are more illustrious and memorable than that of the declaration and establishment of our national sovereignty. To Americans it must ever be interesting and important, and the day on which they resolved to be free will not cease to be distinguished with triumph and rejoicing.

I feel most sensibly the incompetency of my abilities to do justice to the subject on which I am about to address you; but I have the consolation to believe that what I shall say will be indulgently received.

Not being capable of delighting you with the fascinating charms of eloquence, or rousing your feelings by the powers of oratory, my humble effort shall be to trace the causes of the Revolutionary War, and to bring to your recollection some important and interesting events in our glorious contest for liberty and independence.

The English colonies were originally established not for the sake of revenue, but on the principles of a commercial monopoly; while those principles were pursued the colonies were but little oppressed, and the increase of the commerce of England was astonishing.



COLONEL CHARLES SIMMS

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The whole export trade of England, including that to the colonies, in the year 1704 amounted to £6,500,000 sterling, but so immensely had the colonies increased that the exports to them alone in the year 1772 amounted to £6,022,132 sterling.

In the year 1764, colonial oppression commenced; in that year the design was formed by the British ministry of raising a revenue from the colonies, and sundry resolutions passed the British Parliament relative to the imposition of a stamp duty in America. And in the year 1765 a bill was brought into the House of Commons for that purpose.

A member of Parliament concluded a speech in its favor with words to the following effect: "And now will these American children, planted by our care, nourished by our indulgence, till they are grown to a degree of strength and opulence, and protected by our arms, will they grudge to contribute their mite, to relieve us from the heavy weight of the burthen which we lie under?" To which a friend to the colonies replied, "They planted by your care? No, your oppressions planted them in America; they fled from tyranny, to a then uncultivated and unhospitable country, where they exposed themselves to almost all the hardships to which human nature is liable; and among other, to the cruelty of a savage foe, the most subtle, and I will take upon me to say, the most formidable of any people on the face of God's earth; and yet actuated by principles of pure English liberty, they met all hardships with pleasure, compared with those they suffered in their own country, from the hands of those who should have been their friends.

"They nourished by your indulgence? They grew by your neglect of them; as soon as you began to care about them, that care was exercised by sending persons to rule them in one department or another, who were perhaps the deputies of deputies of some member of this House, sent to spy out their liberties, misrepresent their actions and to prey upon them; men whose behaviour on many occasions had caused the blood of those sons of liberty to recoil within them; men, promoted to the highest seats of justice, some who, to my knowledge, were glad by going to a foreign land to escape being brought to the bar of justice in their own.

"They protected by your armies? They have nobly taken up arms in your defence, and exerted a valour amidst their constant and laborious industry, for the defence of a country whose frontier was drenched in

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blood, while its interior parts yielded all its little savings to your emolument. And believe me, remember I this day told you so, that same spirit of freedom, which actuated that people at first will accompany them still; but prudence forbids me to explain myself further."

Notwithstanding the opposition of the ablest men and best patriots in England, notwithstanding the remonstrances and petitions of the colonists, the stamp duty was imposed, but was not to take effect until a period of more than seven months thereafter—the colonists were at first struck with silent consternation, but finally determined to oppose the execution of the law.

In this opposition Virginia stood foremost—

The patriotic Henry brought into the House of Burgesses of that colony a set of resolutions (which were adopted) to the following effect, that the first adventurous settlers of the colony of Virginia brought with them, and transmitted to their posterity, all the liberties, privileges and immunities that have at any time been held, enjoyed and possessed by the people of Great Britain.

That by two Royal Charters, granted by King James the First, the colonists are declared and entitled to all liberties, privileges and immunities of denizens and natural subjects, to all intents and purposes, as if they had been abiding and born within the realm of England.

That they had enjoyed the right of being thus governed, by their own assembly, in the article of taxes and internal policy, and that the same had never been forfeited or yielded up, but had been constantly recognized by the king and people of Britain.

That the General Assembly of the colony, together with His Majesty, or his substitutes had, in their representative capacity, the only exclusive right and power to lay taxes and imposts upon the inhabitants of the colony, and that every attempt to vest such power in any other person or persons whatever, was illegal, unconstitutional and unjust, and had a manifest tendency to destroy British, as well as American liberty.

That the inhabitants of the colony were not bound to yield obedience to any law or ordinance whatsoever, designed to impose any taxation whatever upon them, other than the laws or ordinances of their general assembly.

And that any person who, by speaking or writing assert, or maintain,

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that any person or persons other than the general assembly of the colony, had any right or power to impose or lay any taxation on the people of the colony, should be deemed an enemy to the colony. These resolutions were forwarded to the other provinces.

The countenance and example of so respectable a colony as Virginia confirmed the wavering and emboldened the timid. The fire of liberty blazed forth from the press, some well-judged publications set the rights of the colonists in a plain but strong point of view. The tongues and the pens of the well-informed citizens laboured in kindling the latent sparks of patriotism. The flame spread from breast to breast, till the conflagration became general—associations against importing British manufactures were entered into by the colonists. And the effigies of the stamp masters were burnt in various places. From the decided opposition to the stamp act which was made by the colonists, it became necessary for Great Britain to enforce or repeal it.

The latter method was adopted, and in the year 1766 the act was repealed; when it was known in America, the colonists recinded their resolutions against importing British manufactures, and recommended their mercantile intercourse with the mother country.

The churches resounded with thanksgivings, and their public and private rejoicings knew no bounds—but their joy was not of long continuance; in the year 1767 the British Parliament passed a law, granting duties in the British colonies, on glass, paper, printers' colours, and tea.

The fire of oppression which had been smothered by the repeal of the stamp act, burned afresh against the same principles of taxation exhibited in its new form, and the latter act produced resolves, petitions, addresses, and remonstrances, and associations similar to those with which the stamp act was opposed.

In 1768 two regiments and some armed vessels were sent to Boston to support and assist the officers of the customs in the execution of their duty. In February, 1769, both Houses of Parliament went one step further than all that had preceded: they then concurred in a joint address to the king, in which they expressed their satisfaction in the measures His Majesty had pursued, gave the strongest assurances that they would effectually support him in such further measures as might be found necessary to maintain the civil magistrates in a due execution of the laws in

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Massachusetts Bay, and beseeched him to direct the governor to take the most effectual methods for procuring the fullest information touching all treasons, or misprisions of treasons committed within the government since the 30th day of December, 1767, and to transmit the same, together with the names of the persons who were most active in the commission of such offences within the realm of Great Britain, pursuant to the provision of the statute of the 35th of Henry the 8th. The latter part of this address, which proposed the bringing of persons from Massachusetts to be tried at a tribunal in Great Britain, for crimes committed in America, excited great alarm and indignation. It was asserted to be totally inconsistent with the spirit of the constitution, for in England, a man charged with a crime had a right to be tried in the country in which the offence was supposed to have been committed.

Justice is regularly and impartially administered in our courts, said the colonists. And yet, by direction of Parliament, offenders are to be taken by force, together with all such persons as may be pointed out as witnesses, and carried to England, there to be tried in a distant land, by a jury of strangers, and subject to all the disadvantages which result from want of friends, want of witnesses, and want of money. In consequence of the American non-importation agreement, founded in opposition to the duties of 1767, the manufacturers of Great Britain experienced a renewal of the distresses which followed the adoptions of similar resolutions in the year 1765; the repeal of those duties was therefore solicited by the same influence which had procured the repeal of the stamp act, and in the year 1769 assurances were given for repealing all the duties imposed in 1767 excepting that of three pence per pound on tea. Those assurances were received with transports of joy, the colonists relaxed in their associations in every particular, except tea, and immediately recommended the importation of all other articles of merchandise, and the repeal actually took place in the year 1770—many hoped that the contention between the two nations was finally closed, but reciprocal and frequent insults soured the tempers, and mutual injuries embittered the passions of the opposite parties.

On the 5th of March, 1770, the soldiers when under arms in Boston, were pressed upon, insulted and pelted by a number of persons armed with clubs, sticks and snowballs covering stones; they were also dared

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to fire — seven of the soldiers discharged their pieces, three of the inhabitants were killed and five were dangerously wounded. The town was immediately in commotion; such was the temper, force and number of the inhabitants that nothing but an engagement to remove the troops out of town, together with the advice of moderate men, prevented the townsmen from falling on the soldiers. The killed were buried in one vault, in a most respectful manner, to express the indignation of the inhabitants at the slaughter of their brethren by soldiers quartered among them, in violation of their civil liberties. The events of this tragical night sunk deep into the minds of the people, and were made subservient to important purposes. The anniversary of it was observed with great solemnity. Eloquent orators were successively employed to deliver an annual oration, to preserve the memory of it fresh in their minds on these occasions—the blessings of liberty—the horrors of slavery—the dangers of a standing army—the rights of the colonies, and a variety of such topics were presented to the public view, under their most pleasing and alarming forms; these annual orations administered fuel to the fire of liberty and kept it burning with an incessant flame.

In 1773 the East India Company sent a large quantity of tea to Boston. On its arrival seventeen persons, dressed as Indians, repaired to the tea ships, broke open 342 chests of tea, and without doing any other damage discharged the contents into the water. In consequence of these proceedings, the British Parliament, in 1774, passed the act commonly called the Boston port bill, by which the port of Boston was precluded from the privilege of landing and discharging or of loading and shipping of goods, wares and merchandise; also an act for the better regulating the government of Massachusetts, whereby the charter of the province was materially altered. And in the same session they passed an act respecting the government of Quebec, extending the government of that province southward to the Ohio, and westward to the banks of the Mississippi, and northward to the boundary of the Hudson Bay Company.

It was conceived by the colonists that the evident tendency of this act was to make the inhabitants of Canada fit instruments in the hands of power, to reduce them to a state of slavery. The shutting up of the port

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of Boston occasioned great distress to the inhabitants of Massachusetts. The colonists, sympathizing with them, felt themselves called upon to do something for their relief, but to determine on what was proper to be done did not so obviously occur. It was a natural idea that, for harmonizing the measures, a congress of deputies from each province should be convened, as the best means of procuring union and concert among inhabitants removed several hundred miles from each other. And within four months from the day on which the first intelligence of the Boston port bill reached America, the deputies of twelve provinces had convened in Philadelphia. Perhaps there never was a body of delegates more faithful to the interests of their constituents than the Congress of 1774. The public voice elevated none to a seat in that august assembly but such as in addition to considerable abilities possessed that ascendancy over the minds of their fellow citizens, which can neither be acquired by birth nor purchased by wealth.

Congress, soon after their meeting, agreed upon a declaration of their rights, by which it was among other things declared, that the inhabitants of the English colonies in North America, by the immutable law of nature, the principles of the English constitution, and the several charters or compacts, were entitled to life, liberty and property, and that they had never ceded to any sovereign power whatever, a right to dispose of either without their consent. That their ancestors, who first settled the colonies, were entitled to all the rights, liberties and immunities of free and natural born subjects within the realm of England, and by their migrating to America they by no means forfeited, surrendered or lost any of those rights. That the foundation of English liberty and of all free government, was a right in the people to participate in their legislative council, and that as the English colonies were not, and could not be properly represented in the British Parliament, they were entitled to a free and exclusive power of legislation in their several provincial legislatures, in all cases of taxation and internal policy, subject only to the negative of their sovereign. Congress also resolved that the colonists were entitled to the common law of England, and more especially to the privilege of being tried by their peers of the vicinage. That they were entitled to the benefit of such of the English statutes as existed at the time of their colonization, and which they found to be applicable

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to their local circumstances, and also to the immunities and privileges granted and confirmed to them by royal charters or secured by provincial laws. That they had a right peaceably to assemble, consider of their grievances and petition the king—that the keeping of a standing army in the colonies, without the consent of the legislature of the colony, where the army was kept, was against law.

That it was indispensably necessary to good government, and rendered essential by the English constitution, that the constituent branches of the legislature be independent of each other, and that therefore, the exercise of legislative power in several colonies, by a council appointed during pleasure by the crown, was unconstitutional, dangerous and destructive to the freedom of American legislation. All these liberties congress, in behalf of themselves and their constituents, claimed, demanded and insisted upon, as their indubitable rights, which could not be legally taken from them, altered or abridged by any power whatever without their consent. They then resolved that sundry acts which had been passed in the reign of George the Third, were infringements and violations of the rights of the colonists, and that the repeal of them was essentially necessary in order to restore harmony between Great Britain and the colonies. Congress declared that they could not submit to these grievous acts and measures, in hopes that their fellow subjects in Great Britain would restore the colonies to that state in which both countries found happiness and prosperity, they resolved for the present only to pursue the following peaceable measures:

- 1st. To enter into a non-importation, non-consumption and non-exportation agreement or association.
- 2nd. To prepare an address to the people of Great Britain and a memorial to the inhabitants of British America.
- 3rd. To prepare a loyal address to His Majesty.

Congress also addressed the French inhabitants of Canada, stating the right they had, on becoming English subjects, to the benefits of the English constitution, and earnestly inviting them to join with the other colonies in one social compact formed on the general principles of equal liberty, and to this end recommended that they would choose delegates to represent them in congress. All these addresses were written with

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uncommon ability; coming from the heart, they were calculated to move it. Inspired by a love of liberty and roused by a sense of common danger, the patriots of that day wrote, spoke and acted with an animation unknown in times of public tranquility. Congress having finished all this important business in less than eight weeks, dissolved themselves, after giving their opinion that another congress should be held on the 10th of May then next ensuing, at Philadelphia, unless the redress of their grievances should be previously obtained, and recommending to all the colonies to choose deputies as soon as possible, to be ready to attend at that time and place, should events make their meeting necessary. The determinations of congress were no sooner known than they were cheerfully obeyed. Though their power was only advisory, yet their recommendations were more generally and more effectually carried into execution than the laws of the best regulated states. Every individual felt his liberties endangered, and was impressed with the idea that his safety consisted in union. A common interest, in warding off a common danger, proved a powerful incentive to the most implicit submission. Provincial congresses and subordinate committees were everywhere instituted. A disposition to do, to suffer and to accommodate, spread from breast to breast; and from colony to colony, beyond the reach of human calculation. It seemed as though one mind inspired the whole. The merchants put far behind them the gains of trade and cheerfully submitted to a total stoppage of business, in obedience to the recommendation of men invested with no legislative powers. The cultivators of the soil, with great unanimity, assented to the determination that the hard-earned produce of their farms should remain unshipped. The sons and daughters of ease renounced imported conveniences, and voluntarily engaged to eat, drink and wear only such articles as their country afforded. In the midst of their sufferings cheerfulness appeared in the face of all the people; they counted everything cheap in comparison of liberty, and readily gave up whatever tended to endanger it. The animation of the times raised the actors in these scenes above themselves, and excited them to deeds of self-denial which the interested prudence of calmer seasons can scarcely credit.

On the other hand, the ministers of Great Britain determined to persevere in enforcing obedience to the laws for raising a revenue in Amer-

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ica. An act of Parliament was passed restraining the trade and commerce of the colonies to Great Britain, Ireland, and the British Islands in the West Indies, and to prohibit them from carrying on any fishery on the banks of Newfoundland. A large reinforcement of troops were sent to Boston. On the 19th of April, 1775, eight hundred grenadiers and light infantry were ordered by General Gage to march to Concord and Lexington, to destroy the stores and provisions collected in those places for the use of the provincial army. They executed their design, but on their return to Boston were attacked by the adjacent inhabitants who had assembled in arms. In this action the regulars had 65 killed, 180 wounded and 28 made prisoners; of the provincials 50 were killed, and 38 wounded and missing.

As arms were to decide the controversy, it was fortunate for America that the first blood was drawn in New England—the inhabitants of that country are so connected with each other by descent, manners, religion, and a general equality, that the killing of a single individual interested the whole. The blood of those who were killed at Lexington and Concord proved the firm cement and of extensive union. The crisis had now arrived, when the colonists had no alternative but either to submit to the mercy or to resist the power of Great Britain. An unconquerable love for liberty could not brook the idea of submission, while reason, more temperate in her decisions, suggested to the people their insufficiency to make effectual opposition. They were fully apprized of the power of Britain; they knew that her fleets covered the ocean and that her flag had waved in triumph over the four quarters of the globe; but the animated language of the times was, "it is better to die freemen than to live slaves."

A martial spirit pervaded all ranks of men, they believed their liberties to be in danger, and were generally disposed to risk their lives for their establishment. Elevated with the love of liberty, and buoyed above the fear of consequence, by an ardent military enthusiasm, the people of America seconded the voice of their rulers, in an appeal to Heaven, for the vindication of their rights.

A military opposition to the armies of Great Britain being resolved upon, it became an object of consequence to fix on a proper person to conduct that opposition, and on the 15th of June, 1775, George Wash-

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ington was, by the unanimous vote of congress, appointed commander-in-chief of all the forces raised, or to be raised, for the defence of the colonies. It was a fortunate circumstance attending his election that it was accompanied by no competition and followed by no envy. The same general impulse on the public mind, which led the colonists to agree in many other particulars, pointed to him as the most proper person for presiding over the military arrangements of America. On his appointment being announced to him by the president of congress he, with his usual modesty, replied to him in the following words:

"Though I am truly sensible of the high honor done me in this appointment, yet I feel great distress from a consciousness that my abilities and military experience may not be equal to the extensive and important trust; however, as the congress desire it, I will enter upon the momentous duty, and exert every power I possess in their service, and for support of the glorious cause. I beg they will accept my most cordial thanks for this distinguished testimony of their approbation.

"But lest some unlucky event should happen unfavorable to my reputation, I beg it may be remembered by every gentleman in the room, that I this day declare with the utmost sincerity, that I do not think myself equal to the command I am honored with.

"As to pay, Sir, I beg leave to assure the congress that as no pecuniary consideration could have tempted me to accept this arduous employment at the expense of my domestic ease and happiness, I do not wish to make any profit from it. I will keep an exact account of my expenses, those I doubt not they will discharge, and that is all I desire."

A special commission was drawn up and presented to him, and at the same time an unanimous resolution was adopted by congress—that they would maintain and assist him and adhere to him with their lives and fortunes in the cause of American liberty.

Although an army was raised, the battles of Lexington and Bunker Hill were fought, and several British posts on the lakes were taken by the Americans in the year 1775. It was not until the fourth of July, 1776, that congress declared the colonies to be free and independent states. The limits necessary to prescribe to my discourse will not permit a particular relation of the sufferings, fatigues and glorious achievements of the illustrious Washington and his brave and patriotic fellow soldiers

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—throughout the eight years' war which Britain waged against America actuated by the purest patriotism, animated by the love of liberty and enthusiastic military ardour—they suffered every hardship and fatigue with patience; they bore every misfortune with resignation, and encountered every danger with alacrity. Providence smiled on their exertions, and they were victorious. The British lion crouched to the American eagle, and in the year 1783 Great Britain was constrained to acknowledge the sovereignty and independence of the United States. The American army was disbanded, the officers and soldiers peacefully returned to their former occupations, and crowned the merit of being good soldiers, by being good citizens.

The commander-in-chief delivered to the comptroller, in Philadelphia, an account of the expenditures of all public money he had ever received; nothing was charged, or retained as a reward for public services, and actual disbursements had been managed with such economy and fidelity, that the whole sum, which in the course of the war had passed through his hands, amounted only to £14,497, 18s 9d sterling. He then proceeded to Annapolis, and informed congress of his intention to ask leave to resign the commission he had the honor to hold in their service, and desired to know their pleasure, in what manner it would be most proper to be done. They resolved that it should be done in a public audience; when the day fixed for that purpose arrived, a great number of distinguished personages attended the interesting scene. The illustrious patriot addressed the president of congress in the following words:

"The great events on which my resignation depended having at length taken place, I have now the honor of offering my sincere congratulations to congress and of presenting myself before them to surrender into their hands, the trust committed to me, and to claim the indulgence of retiring from the service of my country. Happy in the confirmation of our independence and sovereignty, and pleased with the opportunity afforded the United States of becoming a respectable nation, I resign with satisfaction the appointment I accepted with diffidence—a diffidence in my abilities to accomplish so arduous a task; which however was suppressed by a confidence in the rectitude of our cause, the support of the supreme power of the union, and the patronage of Heaven.

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The successful termination of the war has verified the most sanguine expectations, and my gratitude for the interposition of Providence, and the assistance I have received from my countrymen, increases with every view of the momentous conflict. While I repeat my obligations to the army in general, I should do injustice to my feelings not to acknowledge in this place, the peculiar services and distinguished merits of the persons who have been attached to my person during the war. It was impossible the choice of confidential officers to compose my family, should have been more fortunate, permit me, sir, to recommend in particular those who have continued in service to the present moment, as worthy the favorable notice and patronage of congress.

"I consider it as an indispensable duty to close this last solemn act of my official life by commending the interest of our dearest country to the protection of Almighty God, and those who have the superintendence of them, to His holy keeping. Having now finished the work assigned me, I retire from the great theatre of action, and bidding an affectionate farewell to this august body under whose orders I have long acted, I here offer my commission, and take my leave of all the employments of public life."

To this affecting address the president of congress returned the following answer:

"The United States in congress assembled, received with emotions too affecting for utterance, the solemn resignation of the authorities under which you have led their troops with success, through a perilous and doubtful war. Called upon by your country to defend its invaded rights, you accepted the sacred charge before it had founded alliances, and whilst it was without friends or a government to support you. You have conducted the great military contest with wisdom and fortitude, invariably regarding the rights of the civil power through all disasters and changes. You have by the love and confidence of your fellow citizens enabled them to display their martial genius and transmit their fame to posterity; you have persevered till these United States, aided by a magnanimous king and nation, have been enabled under a just Providence, to close the war in freedom, safety and independence, on which event we sincerely join you in congratulations.

"Having defended the standard of liberty in this new world—having

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taught a lesson useful to those who inflict and to those who feel oppression, you retire from the great theatre of action with the blessings of your fellow citizens; but the glory of your virtues will not terminate with your military command; it will continue to animate remotest ages. We feel with you the obligations to the army in general, and will particularly charge ourselves with the interests of those confidential officers who have attended your person to this affecting moment. We join you in recommending the interests of our dearest country to the protection of Almighty God—beseeching Him to dispose the hearts and minds of its citizens, to improve the opportunity afforded them of becoming a happy and respectable nation. And for you we address to Him our earnest prayers that a life so beloved may be forfeited with all His care, that your days may be happy as they have been illustrious, and that He will finally give you that reward which this world cannot give.”

Fellow-citizens, let us pause here, and adore that Almighty Power, whose arm supported and protected us through all our struggles for liberty. Who raised these United States from the humble state of colonies to the rank of a free, sovereign and independent nation, and who placed at the head of their army a man whose only aim was his country's good. Unlike a Cæsar, a Cromwell, or a Bonaparte who availed themselves of the powers entrusted to them to establish their own authority on the ruins of the liberties of their country, Washington resigned all public employments and returned with delight to the walks of private life, to the pursuits of agriculture, and to friendly and familiar intercourse with his neighbors, friends and acquaintances.

He affected no pomp or state, he claimed no preëminence over his fellow citizens, but conducted himself with so much humility that of him, it may be truly said, like Moses descending from the Mount, while all admired, he alone seemed unconscious of the glory that surrounded him.

Delivered in the Presbyterian Meeting House.

Copied from the *Alexandria Advertiser* of July 8, 1802.

* * * * *

“At a meeting of the Alexandria Washington Society, July 5, 1802.
Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of the Society be presented to

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Colonel Charles Simms, for his appropriate and interesting Oration, this day delivered, and that a copy of it be requested for publication.

(A Copy.)

G. DENEALE, *Sec'y.*"

IV

THE ORATION BY DR. W. A. DAINGERFIELD

JULY 4, 1803

ALTHOUGH chosen by the Washington Society of Alexandria, under circumstances necessarily grateful to my feelings, to deliver an appropriate oration on this day—still I did think, whilst influenced by the idea of not having expected, nor wished to be called to the performance of a task so wholly above my powers—I should long since have apologized to my worthy associates for declining to act in conformity to their flattering choice. But when I considered, that though the task assigned me could have been assigned to many others, whose far superior talents are completely competent to its full and masterly execution—yet their more valuable time and pursuits might have prevented them from carrying into effect its objects on the present occasion. Again, when I considered it should be deemed a matter of serious obligation, by every individual amongst us, when called upon in this or any other way within the sphere of duty, to willingly meet such call with the earnest exertion of whatever talents he may possess, and without suffering himself, for a moment, to be restrained by motives not of paramount authority to a sense of inferior capacity—I determined, therefore, forcibly impressed by such considerations, to conform to the Society's choice, and views, to the best of my humble ability, and to ask respectfully of its liberality, and that of the rest of my fellow citizens present, a charitable allowance for the many defects and marked feebleness that will be found connected with the manner in which I shall acquit myself of the difficult labour I have undertaken to perform.

The subjects to be noticed in an oration like this—as will readily be conceived—are for the most part of a political character, whether they relate to persons or events.

The nature of my previous habits, and my professional pursuits, for several years past, have almost wholly abstracted my attention from political studies and inquiries—for during a great part even of the late convulsive and awful period of politics, in which human blood was so copiously shed, national treasure so profusely expended, and the social



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order of nearly the whole family of man, in its different parts, more or less extensively agitated and deranged. I have been living in the shade of philosophic retirement, where peaceful science, in scenes of uninterrupted tranquility, her native element, has but little to do with the more noisy turbulent, and, too often, unprofitable affairs of politics—and where she neither asks, nor claims of political authority any other boon or right than that of being permitted to conduct free, unmolested, and according to the best of dictates of a dispassionate judgement her calm, deliberate and highly useful investigations. Under such circumstances of disadvantage and impediment, and the additional one of having never before addressed a public assembly in this manner, I must, of necessity, be deemed peculiarly unqualified for the successful performance of the undertaking in which, perhaps, too rashly and inconsiderately, I have embarked; but I will do my best, and when I shall have done that, however great my failure, however far I may fall short of the expectations of my liberally indulgent hearers, I can still console myself with the reflection that I have earnestly endeavoured to discharge my duty, and that, if the rest of my worthy associates will do the same, when called upon, the views of our society will be properly sympathized with, its interests duly promoted.

In every age and country in which the human mind has been in any degree cultivated and improved—the true character of man, the nature, sources, and constituents of his happiness have justly been deemed the most important and highly interesting subjects of inquiry—and though much difference and contrariety of opinion on such subjects may still exist, yet there are certain results in which enlightenment and competent inquiries are unanimously agreed, and that now have not only the sanction of reason—but confidence of experience—as one of those results, it is incontrovertibly proven by argument and demonstrated by experiment, that for man, a being destined by the laws of his nature for social intercourse and happiness, to live happy in society, he must be independent and free; he must be previously protected and secured in his property and person against every species of attack that individual or national injustice may mediate and make on those his most sacred and inalienable rights—for without independence and freedom the inestimable blessings of such protection and security, reason and experiment

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both forbid his aspiring to the enjoyment of that substantial, refined and elevated happiness which a highly improved state of society is capable of affording—a state of society, for instance, in which religion, morality, arts, sciences, literature and all the valuable relations and employments of social life are maintained, cultivated, improved and their blessings generally diffused. The power whose peculiar province it is to furnish this important protection and security, and thereby dispense the blessings of rational liberty, is government, which, to answer in the best possible manner its true and legitimate purposes should, through the medium of representation, derive its authority from the governed, as well with respect to its fundamental or constituted powers, as to laws enacted and executed under their sanction. The political principle that government, to answer best its purposes, should derive authority from the governed, is another well-supported result of those investigations which have had for their object the true character and happiness of man. It is supported not only by the opinions of such inquirers as have made themselves most accurately acquainted with the definite nature and appropriate objects of government, but also by the evidence of facts and experience—for history, the faithful record of virtue and vice, happiness and misery caused in society by the different modifications of the powers of government—too truly informs us that governments of whose constituted powers this principle is not the basis, of the authority of whose laws it is not the cardinal point, can, will and have restrained and limited individuals in the enjoyment of their essential rights for other purposes than those of protection and security. Yes, often as her sacred page lamentably instructs us, for the most wanton purposes of the most wanton ambition. The same high authority further informs us that they have done, that they will do more—they have imposed and will do so whenever opportunities offer, laws upon whole nations of individuals separate and distinct from their own, and have most rigorously enforced obedience to the provisions of such laws, however tyrannical in their spirit, however oppressive in their operation. And here, my fellow citizens, to illustrate in a more particular and detailed manner the tyranny and abuses of such governments, I could adduce from the same dignified source of evidence, numerous and striking examples, both of ancient and modern times; but of such tyranny and abuses no

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genuine American mind will or can require examples of more appropriate and forcible illustration than the causes that gave birth to our own Revolution. I trust, then, it is wholly unnecessary to adduce any others on the present occasion — besides — others, a more recent date might, in a manner unavailingly painful, excite our most poignant sympathies with the existing oppression, degradation and misery of a large proportion of our species. It is for the want, therefore, of well-constituted representative government, as is proven by the most abundant and conclusive historical evidence, that the independence and freedom both of individuals and nations and with them the true dignity and happiness of man have fallen, and I am afraid will too long continue to fall victims to the tyranny and abuses of the powers of government.

Let us now, for a moment, consider this opinion in relation to certain causes and events of the American Revolution—one of the most interesting epochs in the history of nations—an epoch most highly interesting, because it exhibits a memorable and instructive contest between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, liberty and oppression; and furnishes a school in which both oppressors and oppressed may learn many valuable lessons from the unerring philosophy of experience. Of that total want of national independence and freedom, with its concomitant evils that ever result from one nation being governed by the laws of another, and in the enacting of which the governed has no participation we, ourselves, fellow citizens, but for our enlightened, indignant and magnanimous patriotism, would long since have furnished, to the weep-friends of representative government and rational liberty, a truly deplorable example, and to rejoicing tyrants, whose pleasure it was to oppress and enslave, motive of proud triumph and exultation. Whilst British colonies, and not freed from the pressure of difficulties inseparably attendant on the establishment of new countries, and which for a long time retard the growth of their prosperity—the British government, with an injustice aggravated by the unnatural circumstances of its being wantonly practiced by a wealthy parent towards her child, in the indigent helplessness of infancy, sordidly conceived, and oppressively attempted to execute the plan of augmenting her revenue by taxes to be raised in the colonies, under authority of acts of a legislature in which our coun-

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trymen had not, nor could they have had to answer a useful purpose, any representation whatever. We were to have been governed by laws, the operation of which our legislators could feel in no other way than that of pecuniary benefit, or gratification of lawless ambition; nor did their avaricious and ambitious views suffer them for a moment to contemplate the operation of such laws under any relations; the necessary consequence of which government, according to the uniform result of experience, would have been the hard but common fate of other nations under such circumstances, one of complete oppression, degradation and misery. Besides illustrating in a manner most valuably instructive, the evils that of necessity result from the want of representative government, this attempt, fellow citizens, made and persisted in by the government of a nation than which none, at that day, understood better the principles of rational and productive liberty, nor practiced more of them in the management of her own internal affairs; persisted in, too, in opposition to the sage councils of her best and most enlightened patriots, and proven to be in direct hostility with both the chartered and natural rights of the colonists, by the incontrovertible arguments of their eloquent petitions, addresses and remonstrances, has most lawfully and memorably demonstrated a truth too often before and since demonstrated by the words of impartial history, that wherever there exists power unduly limited and restrained, whether in the hands of individuals or nations, it will, it must, from the necessity of human nature, be abused.

In further consistency with this truth, the most instructive, though painful lesson, that history teaches those who have rights and liberties to protect and secure, the British government, after a long period of dispute, in which she alternately desisted from and reverted to her wicked purpose, according as influenced by considerations of sound policy, or stimulated to the abuse of power, by the impulses of avarice and wanton ambition, at length determined to enforce her unjust pretensions by the sword. The colonies, during the whole of this period, though ever ready for such an adjustment of differences as would have protected and secured them in the enjoyment of their inalienable rights, had daily become more confirmed and united in their determination to resist the measures of renewed tyranny; they knew the benefits of free-

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dom, and had learned some of its most fundamental principles and valuable doctrines, from that very nation, the government of which, then strangely insatiated by views of ambition and avarice, was contemplating a scheme of enslaving them, equally distinguished by its folly and injustice. They were the friends of good government, peace and its blessings, but an enthusiastic love of liberty, incited by ample and eloquent discussions of the truth and of the justice of their cause, lively fears of future and aggravated oppression, excited and maintained by daily experience of the disposition and views of the mother country, had united them, almost to a man, in the magnanimously patriotic resolve of encountering the horrors and calamities of an unequal war, and, if necessary to the defence and support of freedom, of losing the last drop of their blood and spending the last shilling of their treasure in the glorious cause of her wantonly invaded rights.

The unavoidable consequence of this state of things was bloodshed—yes, fellow citizens, a question of truth and justice, as is often the hard lot of oppressed humanity, was made a question of force, and referred for decision to the tribunal of arms. Yes, the blood of the innocent and almost helpless child was to be coolly and deliberately shed by the strong hand of the unnatural and merciless parent. But, happily for the cause of freedom, that blood of innocence, once wantonly and tyrannically shed, instantly became an indissoluble bond of union amongst her sincere friends and brave defenders, and afterwards sealed their magnanimous purpose of declaring themselves free and independent of a government under whose oppression they had already suffered, and which suffering furnished conclusive evidence that if they remained dependent states, their rights and liberties would, forever after, be at the disposal of the caprices of its ambition, or the cupidity of its avarice.

Armies, therefore, having been raised, a commander-in-chief appointed, battles fought, all hopes of conciliation past, and the cause of truth, justice and liberty fully and completely made a question of force, and referred to the decision of arms—the American Congress, that chosen band of virtuous and enlightened patriots, to the astonishment and confusion of tyrants, and joy of the friends of liberty in every part of the world—magnanimously declared the colonies free and independent states, and thereby gave birth to this day of principle, the anniver-

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sary of which we are here met to commemorate. That its anniversary may ever continue to be commemorated by Americans, must be the sincere wish of every friend to his country. Not merely to comply with the established custom amongst nations of commemorating great events, but annually to hold up this, the most truly interesting event in American, perhaps in any history, to the admiring view of our patriotic countrymen as a correct standard of republican principle and unconquerable attachment to representative government and freedom. It must also be the sincere wish of every true friend to his country, that to this standard may be referred, from time to time, the political feeling and conduct of the day, in order that if there be found any degeneracy in either, genuine patriotism may virtuously and wisely endeavor to correct it, and bring back both such feeling and conduct into harmonious agreement with principles, the defence and maintenance of which have cost so much blood and treasure, to the enthusiastic lovers and brave defenders of rational liberty.

Perhaps there is not to be found in the numerous and comprehensive records of the affairs of nations a more truly sublime and magnanimous event than the declaration of American independence. For the Americans, an infant people, and almost wholly destitute of every species of resource for carrying on war, to have declared themselves free and independent of one of the most powerful nations in Europe, with the firm resolution of maintaining that declaration by the sword, would seem, at first view, to exhibit rather a specimen of national folly and madness than of national magnanimity. But, when we consider that congress had previously, by the unanswerable arguments and commanding eloquence of their writings, aided by the appropriate and well-timed publications of certain individuals, so completely developed to their country and the world the justice and general importance of the American cause—had so fully roused the martial spirit of their countrymen to the level of the great occasion—when we consider the most probable consequences of submission at that day—when we consider lastly the darling object that must have pressed itself with an influence irresistibly persuasive upon the minds of all our distinguished patriots—that of obtaining a complete independence of the mother country, and forming, on true principles of liberty, a government of our own, which might be

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transmitted as the most precious inheritance possible to their remotest posterity—we can but regard the declaration of American independence as the fairest specimen of sublime and magnanimous patriotism that graces the annals of liberty. The event proved the political calculations of those enlightened patriots just—the ardent love of liberty, vigilant fear and fierce hatred of oppression which constituted the spirit of the times, and gave them the tone of energy, had so completely existed, and fully brought into action the energies of every description of the American people, as to compensate, in a great measure, the want of numbers in their ranks, as well as of arms, discipline and funds. The general importance of our cause, as foreseen by an enlightened patriotism, procured us foreign alliances, and after eight years of doubtful, expensive and bloody war, for the great and varied calamities of which there can be no public atonement, but the establishment of our liberties, and the valuable example of imitation, which that great event will ever hold up to the enraptured view of other oppressed nations, the haughty spirit of the British government, though supported by great wealth and immense naval and military force, was compelled to make the painful acknowledgement of our sovereignty and independence. It was compelled to acknowledge our right to exercise the proudest and most important prerogative of a nation, that of forming for itself a government united to its own local circumstances and agreeable to its own ideas of rational liberty, and consequent individual general happiness.

I could, if the limits of this oration and adequate capacity would permit me, to notice more particularly the character of such American worthies as have preëminently distinguished themselves by their virtues and talents; either as writers, statesmen, or heroes in conceiving, planning, or accomplishing the glorious conquest of our independence. But though I am precluded from doing so relative to others, yet there is the character of one, elevated far above the rest by the conspicuous part he acted during and since our Revolution, the comprehensive greatness of which I cannot possibly pass by in silence.

Called upon, as a member of the Washington Society, to deliver, on this day, an appropriate oration—what I have to offer in obedience to such a call should be appropriate not only to the day itself, but also to the peculiar connection with it, in which our Society is placed by its

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constitution. The links of adamant which peculiarly and inseparably connects us with the Fourth of July is the character of the late illustrious George Washington, to commemorate whose virtues and talents, and to promote whose charities, are the important objects of our association—I must, therefore, fellow citizens, feel myself impressed with a most lively sense of the difficulty in which I am involved by this circumstance. It requires of me, and without the smallest pretension to adequate capacity on my part, to speak the appropriate praise of our country's, nay, the world's great benefactor—the eulogy of the immortal Washington is the arduous task it imposes—a task, the difficult execution of which is proven by the fact that when his transcendent merits have been the theme of praise, the talents of few, very few eulogists have risen to the exalted level of the occasion—mine, more humble than ordinary, must fall far below it.

But such is the pure, unmixed and, if I may be indulged in the expression, sterling worth of that great man's character, as strongly to impress me with a belief that its best eulogy will ever be found in the simple yet impartial and dignified pages of competent historians and biographers—whose statements of facts relative to his virtues and talents shall not be clouded, obscured, nor involved in suspecting doubt by the pomp, parade, or splendid exaggerations of the language of fury and fiction, whether expressed in poetry or poetic prose. I shall content myself, therefore, with stating, merely for the purpose of drawing a few inferences from them, certain facts relative to that conduct in military, political, and civil life, which has so justly procured him the admiration, esteem and love of all good and unprejudiced people in his own and every country, where there is sympathy for virtue and talents, and will transmit his character to future ages as a correct model of imitation for the truly patriotic hero, statesman, or citizen.

To congress, deliberating on the important subject of appointing an appropriate commander-in-chief to their beloved country, fighting under the banners of liberty, Washington, the destined saviour of his country, stood forth demonstrated by the singular virtue and inflexible firmness of his general character; by the heroic bravery, and great military enterprise he had evinced, whilst in the service of the mother country, whose ungrateful tyranny was now to be repelled, as the man preëminently

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worthy of a trust of such high and awful responsibility. Congress, therefore, gave, and he, with modest diffidence accepted, supreme command.

How far the talents he displayed in that elevated, but most difficult and trying station, justified the choice of their country and the world, let the rapid growth of discipline amongst his new-raised troops; their great and efficient energies excited by the implicit confidence in his character; the caution never to be surprised, the perseverance never to be fatigued, with which he conducted those energies to victory—let that uniform magnanimity of soul, which viewed disaster and success with the same composure of countenance, disarmed, by the hope and courage it inspired, calamity of a great share of its destructive influence, and gave him command in the hearts and affections of his officers and soldiers—let the more than Fabian talent displayed on the banks of the Delaware and at Trenton—in a word, let the independence and freedom they conquered for his country say, and speak his praise. This is the praise of military talents—Washington had also military virtues. Let then the eulogy justly due those rare and exemplary virtues, which so highly graced his talents as a general, be pronounced by my recalling to your memory that fascinating modesty, the never-failing test of virtuous worth, with which he accepted the sacred trust of commander-in-chief, that nobly generous and unexampled disinterestedness of motive with which he served his country—but above all, that exalted greatness of soul which, in correct sympathy with true glory, soared above the temptations of ambition, and confounded the wicked designs of party, at the awful and critical period when, under circumstances acutely painful to the lively feelings of every patriot, it was necessary to disband the brave defenders of their country's rights.

The independence of America was accomplished, Washington was no longer a general—his transcendent military talents had surmounted all difficulties and commanded victory; but the immortal virtues of the patriot pronounced that victory to have been achieved for his country and not himself.

Where the views of men are not jaundiced, nor their judgments perverted by the malignant influence of party spirit, magnanimous virtue like this must ever command its just tribute of reverential respect. Grateful, therefore indeed, has it been to my feelings, whilst in a foreign coun-

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try, to hear eulogies on the splendid achievements of the most accomplished usurper of modern times, then in the full blaze of their sinful brilliancy, and their short-lived lusture untarnished by time, qualified by this memorable expression, "but he is no Washington." It was in a like manner grateful to my feelings, to hear it said of a truly great character, who, with unrivaled ability fought and conquered for his country; but then retired to improve and enjoy with the rest of his fellow citizens, the blessings of society, "that he was the Washington of France." Having accomplished the emancipation of his country, and his virtuous ambition fully gratified by the event, the Cincinnatus of America would, in obedience to the impulses of his peaceful nature, have spent the remainder of his days in the cultivation and enjoyment of social blessings, now fully protected by the shield of his own greatness against unjust foreign interference.

But his country, though independent of foreign power, was not independent of the injurious influence of jarring local interests and distracting views of party. A short course of experience had fully proven that, though the old confederation formed for a temporary purpose only, had conducted us safe through the Revolution; because supported by what was almost the vital principle of its authority, our common dangers and fears, yet it was then no longer adequate to the maintenance of union, and that designing men were disposed to take advantage of its feebleness to foment dissensions amongst the people and effect a separation of the states. It remained to be proven by the measures of virtuous and enlightened patriotism, whether independence, her proud boast, and in the conquest and establishment of which she had so recently suffered every calamity and braved every danger, was to cause the happiness or misery of our country, whether it was to be its blessing or curse. The evil was great and urgent, the remedy required prompt and radical—that which seemed indicated by the valuable results of experience, was a government formed upon a liberal representative scale, and thereby possessed of powers adequate to harmonize jarring local interests as much as possible, conciliate parties, support federal union, and protect and secure rights and liberties, recently defended and maintained in consideration of their great importance, at the expense of much blood and treasure.

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To effect this momentous purpose, and with requisite promptitude whose influence so important, whose coöperation essential as his, who harmonized, concentrated and united every description of his fellow citizens in one common sentiment of admiration, esteem and love of his character, Washington, therefore, rising superior to the Roman patriot and hero, left retirement and presided in that august assembly of enlightened and justly influential statesmen, the fruit of whose labours is the constitution of government under which we now have a free, prosperous and happy people. A representative, free and efficient government formed in our happy country and ready to be submitted to the test of a patient and fair course of experience, who was there so completely qualified to preside over its administration in that truly interesting state of infancy and incipient experiment? Washington was, by the unanimous suffrage of his countrymen, elected president; his administration of the newly formed government of his country furnished a luminous commentary on the virtue of his motives as last commander-in-chief of her armies. The complete protection and security our liberties enjoyed under his government, the revival of political harmony, the rapid increase of public credit, industry of every species and wealth, the promising, though infant growth of arts and sciences, and the general morality and happiness of the people furnished the most satisfactory evidence that the objects for which he had fought and conquered were rational liberty and the well-protected blessings of good society. In the latter most difficult and trying period of his administration, when his increasing love of retirement, in consideration of threatening dangers, had again given place to the paramount love of country, the maintenance of social order and tranquility at home, and the relations of peace and amity abroad—as far as the spirited foreign policies, and the designs of party, both at home and abroad, incessantly tending to involve us in the distracting vortex of their influence, would possibly permit, unequivocally proved his transcendent and peculiar talents as a politician to protect and even cultivate and improve in the face of all the most adverse circumstances, the blessings he had so virtuously fought for and gloriously obtained. The experiment patiently and fairly made, our government proven adequate to the protection of liberty and the blessings of society, even in the worst of times, the twice saviour of his country

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announced by his valedictory address, that valuable legacy of correct political principles, his intention of retiring to the enjoyment of those tranquil blessings of social intercourse, with which the republican virtue and simplicity of his nature even sympathized, and the constant enjoyment of which nothing had induced him to forego but the good of his country. But though he had long, and with transcendent virtue and ability, served her in the important characters of general and statesman, yet such was the variety and extent of his capacity to do good, such the force of his propensity to exert it, that he was now only changing the sphere of his utility. For in retirement, still consistent with that character, of which the calculations of sordid self made no part, he unremittently continued to advance the improvement of his country—he was the friend of learning, arts, sciences, and all the efficient means of ameliorating the conditions of man destined for society and happiness; some of those means he cultivated and improved himself, others he promoted by his patronage—with all he had the lively sympathies of an ardent friend—his character as a retired citizen most beautifully illustrated those of the general and statesman—its features obviously proved, that he fought for rational liberty, that he governed for her protection and security, firmly convinced by his knowledge of the true character of man, and the constituents of his happiness, that it must be under the benign influence of her reign and hers alone, that society in an exalted state of improvement will unfold those great advantages she has in reserve for her free, virtuous, enlightened and energetic members.

There is one of the virtues of Washington, considered as a patriotic citizen, which I must notice a little more particularly; it is the high respect he entertained for the education of youth, and this I shall do, not merely because our society promotes a charitable donation of his, destined for that important purpose, but because it will serve to illustrate, in a manner peculiarly interesting, his decided attachment to representative government and liberty. His correct mind was duly impressed with the basis of genuine republicanism—that for representative government, to answer best its purpose, the protection of liberty, the elective franchise should be maintained in a state of requisite purity, and that purity depends upon public opinion being duly instructed and

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informed—hence his lively sympathies with that important object—hence his liberal donations for the truly patriotic purpose of its accomplishment. This comprehensive greatness of character thus rounded off and completed, thus shaped in the most harmonious agreement with true standard of varied excellence, must, until man shall change his nature, and by a perversion of his sympathies cease to admire transcendent virtue and talents, embalm the immortal Washington in the grateful remembrance of his species, and cause him still to live in the essential benefits they will and must derive from imitating so perfect a model of the virtuously and wisely patriotic hero, statesman and citizen.

Yet this sacred character, though rendered invulnerable by the shield of his own purity has been attacked, and Washington called traitor and co-plotter against the representative government and liberty of his country—but, happily for its immortal glory, the blow was levelled by party spirit; yes, by that very party spirit, the existence of which he denounced and its evil consequences predicted with prophetic truth, in his valedictory address, the political opinions of which evinced his mind to have been richly stored with the most valuable results of experience, relative to the governing motives and ruling passions of designing and ambitious men. Party spirit, at that period of vigorous growth, and a composite of all the dissocial passions, uniting in its own existence, and in a state of refined and concentrated malignity, the peculiar properties of each, had its objects of ambitious pursuits—impediments in its way were next to be removed. Under such circumstances, what character more precisely suited to its attack, than patriotic Washington's? What instruments more worthy of its use, than those unnatural combinations of exquisite vice and talents, of which too many splendid specimens have of late years been exhibited amongst us, abusing the patient liberty of our country. But though such finished models of refined depravity, possessed of every motive to do harm, by the essential malevolence of their nature, supplied with all the requisite modes of action by the most appropriate talents, may cause incalculable mischief for a time, yet, happily for humanity, and in spite of the steady malignity of their propensities, they ultimately promote the cause of virtue. They form such disgusting and odious contrasts with characters like Washington's, that at length they free the prejudiced and deluded of their error and infatu-

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ation, and waken them to a just sense of their dangers; when, astonished at past errors, frightened by impending ruin, they fly from the calamity of vice and folly to the protecting shield of virtue and wisdom, and thus instructed by the scourge of painful experience, become the firm friends of rational freedom and good society. Party spirit, in all countries, must be an evil, in republics it is their greatest curse—but for its disastrous influence the sincere attachment for representative government and freedom, transferred from America to France, there, like the pebble in the lake, might, before this, have covered the bosom of Europe with the calmly succeeding waves of rational liberty. But for the same disastrous influence, our own country, though still prosperous and happy, might, at the present day, have exhibited to the world an example of national prosperity and happiness unheard of before in ancient or modern times. The evil, therefore, fellow citizens, may become most calamitously destructive in its consequences; it should be deemed the sacred duty of every true patriot to oppose its growth, which though now, perhaps, limited by refraining virtue and wisdom, may yet, unless unremittingly watched, swell into gigantic stature, and revive in our ill-fated country the horrors of revolutionary France. When we shall remain drenched in blood, and oppressed with every other species of calamity, by the despotism of contending and succeeding parties, until some Jacobinical general, mightier than the rest, shall, in the transcendent superiority of his influence, envelope all opposition, rise triumphant on the ruins of all parties, and for the gratification of his ambition, restore us to a state of tranquility and calm; but the tranquility and calm of deep-rooted and permanent despotism. Its calamitous influence, even now, is truly alarming, and calls with an imperious voice on every feeling patriot to coöperate in the application of appropriate remedies; for such remedies let us consult the oracular opinions of the departed saviour of our country, through their salutary advice save her again from impending ruin. They will tell us to promote the instruction of youth—a remedy the application of which is so patriotically begun and so forcibly recommended by his own illustrious example—they will tell us to correct and inform public opinion, through every possible fair medium; not by opposing and combating misrepresentation by misrepresentation—falsehood by falsehood—but by opposing truth to error; not speculative

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truth, but the well-established and valuable results of sober expression. Though the contest, thus conducted, should be long and tedious, owing to the adverse circumstances under which truth may have to contend, yet the victory will be certain and decisive—the elective franchise will be maintained in its purity, and our country governed by virtue and talents.

In this glorious conflict between truth and falsehood, the heroes worthy of composing the army of the former should be such virtuous and enlightened citizens as are competent to draw the proper line of distinction between the true purposes and benefits of government and those of society; who nobly discarded the ignominious idea of regarding the former as a mere caterer for the appetites of avarice and ambition—a mere broker of places—but justly conceive it answers but its legitimate and dignified purposes, when by affording a complete protection to individuals in society, it enables useful citizens to cultivate and improve social blessings, and thereby add to the common flock, from which all derive their true happiness. In what I have just said, I by no means wish to be understood as intending anything disrespectful to those who, by the application of their talents and time to the conscientious discharge of the duties of public offices, are justly entitled to a liberal remuneration for their valuable services. I only meant to characterize that fierce animosity and hatred between parties, the soul of which is too often contending views of avarice and ambition.

Thus, associates and fellow citizens, have I humbly attempted, in the discharge of my duty, to trace the links of necessary connection between liberty and happiness, representative government and liberty—thus have I, more humbly still, endeavored to show that the illustrious patriot, whose name so highly honors our society, fought, conquered, governed and discharged the duties of a good citizen, for the establishment, protection and advancement of those sacred truths and their inestimable blessings. That I have not fulfilled my duty, I perfectly know, but that I earnestly endeavoured to do so, I have the most lively consciousness.

Delivered in the Episcopal Church.

Copied from the *Alexandria Daily Gazette*.

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“At a meeting of the Washington Society of Alexandria, the 4th day

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of July, 1803, it was *Resolved*, That the thanks of this Society be presented to Dr. W. A. Daingerfield for his elegant and appropriate Oration, delivered this day, and that a copy thereof be requested for publication.

G. DENEALE, *Sec'y.*"

V

THE ORATION BY G. W. P. CUSTIS, ESQUIRE

JULY 4, 1804

WE ARE assembled, my countrymen, to celebrate the 28th era of American independence. This is our national birthday. On this day, 1776, we first beheld the light of freedom; we burst the bonds of oppression, and espoused the cause of liberty. Like the infant Hercules, we strangled the serpent in the cradle and, like him, arose to power and greatness.

Unite, my fellow citizens, in thanks to the Author of all good, for permitting you as freemen to behold the return of this auspicious day.

The morning of our political life was dark and gloomy, the meridian has been bright and glorious, the evening remains with fate. The history of the rise and progress of the American Revolution forms a vast era in the history of mankind. A people born to the inheritance of freedom, become the objects of foreign oppression; but firm in defence of their birthright, they appeal to Heaven, to justice and the sword. The contest is doubtful, and fate for a while holds the balance in suspense till, my countrymen, aided by the hand of Providence, "burst the dark phalanx" of oppression to "let in the light" of freedom.

'Twas then we arose to the rank of a nation; 'twas then we filled the character we were destined to assume. Full many a time during the arduous struggle did the bravest heart despond; the American eagle had begun to droop its wings, and the spark of freedom seemed glimmering to its end; but the genius of liberty, the guardian spirit of my country, watched over our safety in the hour of danger; the spirit of animation again revived, and our noble exertions were crowned with independence.

The history of those times afford a useful lesson to the inhabitants of these.

It shows what can be achieved by honest endeavor. It shows that a people impressed with a reliance on the source of all faith, and aided by a just and noble cause, can rise from the ruins of an empire, to become an empire themselves. The force of discipline, of science and experience, were vanquished by the enthusiasm of liberty.



G. W. P. CUSTIS, ESQUIRE

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At that great name our fathers left their fields for the field of danger; abandoned the peaceful scenes of domestic happiness for the awful trial of war and trouble. No longer did the patriot look back with lingering respect on the objects of his affection, but looked forward with hope, to the great object of his country. 'Twas this vast spirit which breathed into his soul, 'twas this holy work which he conceived it his duty to perform, 'twas to give freedom and happiness to his native land that he fought and bled in her cause.

Noble character! Brave, patriotic soldier! Long shall a faithful history transmit thy fame; long shall delighted posterity dwell with rapture on the story of thy worth, and pay the tribute of respect to thy exalted merit. Go teach the youth this lesson of virtue! Tell them the way to national greatness is by performing deeds of national worth, and the road to national happiness leads by the fountain of virtue and truth.

The return of this day should bring returning joy to every American bosom. It should teach us the lesson of humanity, for while we glory in what we now are, we ought to remember what we once were; the true spirit of adoration should ascend to the Throne of Grace, for the mercies of Providence.

The eventful period of the Revolution is fresh in the memory of many who now exist. What must be their feelings on the return of a day forever held sacred in the annals of their lives! What a train of reflections must arise at the mention of '76. When you think of the dangers which encompassed you at that time, think of the joys which surround you at this, and with a heart overflowing with gratitude offer up your tribute of praise. Think you 'twas the effort of man alone which effected the vast work of our happiness? O think of Him to whom such praise is due, and without whose aid, how weak is human endeavor.

To enumerate the many distinguished acts of valour and worth which occurred in our struggle, would far exceed the powers of your orator. 'Tis a theme which has excited the talents of abler eulogists; 'tis enough to say, that the page of American history will be brightened by the recital, and future ages gather wisdom from the tale. From our example shall posterity learn to be wise. From our wisdom shall they learn to be great, and the history of America will form the basis of future republics.

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The great work of our Revolution accomplished, behold us uniting in a government at once wise, firm, and just, thus giving to the world an example of national prudence. A few years, and we are seen quietly enjoying the happiness we had labored to attain, and cultivating the arts and useful employments, the peaceful occupation of a tranquil state.

At once all eyes are turned upon us. Astonishing Europe will scarcely credit the tale that her lately obscure colonies have become a virtuous republic, and is fast arising to a first rank among nations. In vain do the enemies of our happiness look for that state of local jealousy which usually arises in the commencement of republics. In place of which they behold a people endowed with a spirit of content, uniting in one common welfare.

These, my countrymen, were the happy days of our first existence as a nation. How long they will continue, future events must determine.

The federation of these states was the great cause of our national jealousy. As we had separately contended for the glorious object of liberty, so we jointly enjoy the blessed effects of freedom and, united in one general principle, we became united in one common interest.

The ancient republics of the world afforded us much matter in the formation of our system of government, and from their history we gained many valuable truths. Science, thus aided by experience and supported by patriotism, formed the excellent constitution we now enjoy; a work whose merit will stand the test of ages, and whose happy influence is its best eulogium.

Formed by the sages and patriots assembled in America's councils, this great character of our rights received the sanction of the states, and at once became our pride and safety.

While this great monument of our wisdom shall remain, while this palladium of our nation shall continue inviolate, so long shall we be free. But when, with unhallowed hands, this fabric is defaced, our national structure falls to the ground. 'Tis a vast machine whose relative parts are so intimately connected that destroy but one and the whole is lost; 'tis a paternal gift from our fathers to us, and should descend in primitive excellence to our latest posterity.

When your children shall prepare to destroy this system—the work

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of wisdom, of time, and experience—let them reflect on the labour their fathers did to obtain it and prize it as a legacy of inestimable value.

While we remain united, my countrymen, our constitution will remain with us, and when we fall, it will serve as a memorial of our former greatness.

While we preserve this charter of our liberties, we need not fear foreign aggression or domestic intrigue. While our government shall remain, it will create respect abroad and confidence at home. But if you cancel this bond of union you become a prey to foreign usurpation and domestic ambition. It is not when the fortress is entire that the enemy makes his assault, but when the opening breach invites his entrance; so when united, we may defy the world, but when divided we are lost as a nation.

The constitution is the basis of our national government, it embraces all that can make us just and happy, it binds our interests, it forms our safety; 'tis the great national compact, where many interests unite in one general welfare.

Preserve then, my countrymen, this excellent system of republican government; preserve it as a doctrine, whose truths are evident and whose principles tend to the welfare and happiness of your country.

While we contemplate the many blessings we have enjoyed; when we reflect on the many dangers we have experienced, and rejoice in the happiness of our present state, let us pay the grateful tribute of remembrance to the memory of those who are gone. Let that eye which beams with joy at the recital of our happiness be suffused with the manly tear of sympathy at the mention of departed worth. How shall I begin the list, or where shall I close the tale? How many now sleep in the peaceful grave, how many are fast approaching the end of life?

These were once the pride of my country; they lived to do honor to the American character, and to leave a lasting fame. Alas! a few years, and scarcely one will remain of the many distinguished worthies of the American Revolution; their race is run, and they are called to their fathers, to receive the reward of their eminent merits.

When the son of true glory shall arise his first beams will irradiate the tomb of Washington — good old man! He lies interred in your

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neighbourhood. The simple turf with unaffected grace, alone cover his honoured head.

*" — What tho' no sculptur'd forms bedeck the place,
Or marble monument his ashes grace;
Still for the deeds of worth, which he has done,
Wild flowers unfading, flourish o'er his tomb."*¹

He is gone! But he lived to see the first wish of his heart accomplished. To see his country free and happy. The vast task assigned him on this earthly stage was amply fulfilled. The great part he was directed to act on the theatre of life was nobly performed, and he sunk to rest, cheered by the blessings of a grateful people, and great in the esteem of an admiring world.

His services shall live with feeling affection in the breasts of his countrymen, and the exalted character of the illustrious man will add a dignity to the age in which he lived.

I call not for the generous tear of affection from those who loved him—it would flow unbidden—I call for the manly sentiment of sympathy in every American bosom.

When Fame shall seize her trump to usher to distant ages the actions and virtues of illustrious men, the name of Washington will thunder in the blast. When the proud monuments of human grandeur shall be mouldering in the dust; when the future barbarians shall overrun this Western empire, at the tomb of America's chieftain will they bow with reverence, and their rugged souls be touched with sympathy. There is a charm in virtue, which even the savage feels, and the wild, untutored sons of nature will venerate the name of Washington.

Youth! would you be great? Be truly so. Will you ascend to the temple of Fame? Go by the road of virtue. If the path be rugged or uneven at first, when you reach the top, you attain the summit of every earthly happiness.²

From that proud height may you look with compassion on the vices

¹Here the orator emphatically points to the Capitol, and every American bosom should vibrate at these lines. Yes! the Government denied to the illustrious Washington a monument of gratitude. The monument of his fame is so vast that it shall survive the wreck of time, and convey to admiring posterity the primitive virtue of the American character.

²The youth under the patronage of the Washington Society of Alexandria.

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of a degenerate world; from thence may you behold, with pity, the depravity of man, and rejoice in the sublimity of virtue.

Under the patronage of that respectable body^a I have this day the honor to represent, no doubt you will be instructed in the right way, and prompted to acquire that knowledge which shall render you respectable in society and useful to your country.

Adhere to the precepts of morality; imbibe the true principles of religion; cherish the noble spirit of patriotism. The one will render you esteemed in your intercourse with the world, the other will cheer you with its healthful influence in the hour of adversity, and the love of your country is that laudable excitement which shall lead you to honor and fame!

The American republic has now existed for many years, in which time it has shown to the world the truth of many arguments in favor of civil liberty, and by defeating the sophism of the contrary opinion, evince the truth of the doctrine to future governments.

All nations are not alike worthy of national liberty, and where the struggle has arisen from motives of ambition or aggrandizement, the attempt has rarely succeeded.

Without recurring to ancient history, the history of the French Revolution affords us an instance, even in our day, how different are the effects of causes not widely dissimilar.

'Twas from oppression we each sought relief. 'Twas to redress our grievances we each arose in arms and struggled for that freedom, which nature bids us secure.

But mark the result! The American Revolution began with an appeal to Heaven. The first blood flowed from an American bosom, and though deficient in force, we were not wanting in vigour, and proceeded in the manly effort with firmness and resolution; the event is the glorious epoch we this day celebrate.

France began in impiety, proceeded with vengeance, and ended in folly. The visionary ideas of her philosophers were like the wild enthusiasm of her citizens, and after a brilliant conflict of many years, she laid her laurels on the tomb of her liberty. The virtuous spirit which

^aThe Washington Society of Alexandria.

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once breathed in her nation now sighs to its end, and she realizes only the shadow of her freedom.

The transcendent genius of the Corsican Cæsar rode triumphant on this storm of error. His vast soul, like the meridian sun, dispelled the mists of theoretic policy and grasped the destinies of France. Thus have the talents and ambition of one great man risen superior to the fortunes of a people and seized the sovereignty of the state.

Heaven forbid, my fellow citizens, that our country should ever be debased by a foreign usurpation, or domestic ambition. Long, long may we preserve in primitive purity our national liberties, and withered be the hand that dare infringe our rights.

Yet it has happened, and may happen again. Perhaps, though, in humble retirement now lives the future arbiter of our fate. Perhaps, that hand that which shall wield our destinies, now holds the plough, or that tongue which shall give us laws, now faintly lisps its mother's name.

When that dark day arrives, may every free-born son of America be numbered with his fathers, nor one survive the liberty of his country. Why say that as we increase in prosperity the prospect of misfortune may lessen? Rome fell even in the zenith of her greatness, though upheld by the wisdom and virtue of her most illustrious citizens.

'Twas when the majesty of Pompey lived. 'Twas when the stern virtue of Cato shone. 'Twas when the eloquence of Cicero breathed, yet the genius of Cæsar rose superior to the fortunes of his country and laid the foundation of an absolute government.

Rome had become a monster of such ambition that the world could no longer satiate her desires; her vast dominions served to embrace the poles, and her power gave laws to the remotest stations. Yet the Gothic barbarian usurped the seat of science, and built his dominion on the empire of the world.

Such are the wondrous changes of humanity. Such is the end of human ambition. It rises till its surface exceeds the bounds of reason, and then it sinks to its primitive level.

We have viewed the history of republics, and observed the blessings that form of government affords; would we could close the tale without remarking the dark side it presents.

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Ingratitude has been a leading feature of the ancient system, and is not unknown in the present day. It has been an error in republics to forget the services of their citizens. Many have found that a nation can forget her friends and forgive its enemies. Many have found to their sorrow, that to have been faithful is not to have been worthy, and that a long life spent in the service of their country may be rewarded by an obscure death in its bosom.

If we recur to the Roman commonwealth, we shall find that a decree of banishment often followed a vote of thanks, and when great men had performed illustrious actions they served to create national jealousies.

In Rome, Camillus returned from exile to serve his suffering country; and the illustrious Scipio, indignant of his wrongs, denied her his ashes.

In Greece, Miltiades the hero of Marathon, perished in a jail. Themistocles, the conqueror at Salamis and saviour of Greece—a foreign exile; and Aristides, so justly named the just, was banished from that country which his virtues had served to adorn and his services rendered immortal.

May the patriot soldier of the American Revolution, the brave defender of my happy country, never feel the cold chill of ingratitude in his native land, but cheered by the notice of a grateful people, may he "sink to rest with every fame and honour blest." May his children, in losing a father, find a father in their country, and the veteran's merit insure the orphan's welfare.

But alas! America which was once the nursery of patriots, has become the school of parties. Parties have ever been inimical to good government, destructive to national aggrandizement, and injurious to peaceful occupation, and form a striking contrast between the effects of sound politics and the [blight] of faction.

When parties have their origin in ambition, and a nation becomes a prey to its influence, no tie can bind, no virtue protect, and the afflicted patriot may mourn the fate of his fallen country. 'Twas this ambition which destroyed the Roman commonwealth. 'Twas this ambition which perverted the republic of France; and the same cause will destroy any government on earth.

'Tis the prevalence of party which shall create a political distinction

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among us; and only esteem those worthy who are the advocates of opinion, and the true interests of the American government will be absorbed in this political vortex.

'Tis then we shall forget the first and best we ever prized. 'Tis then the aged veteran shall languish in unmerited obscurity—methinks I hear this verenated character, the victim of political intolerance,⁴ lamenting the ingratitude of his country.

"If I am the advocate of opinion," says the aged patriot, "'tis the glorious opinion for which I fought; 'tis the interest and happiness of my country. These are the sentiments I am proud to acknowledge. These are the feelings of my heart, and have formed the tenor of my life. And am I unworthy of my country's confidence, I who have spent the flower of my youth, and sacrificed the vigor of my age in her service? Am I unworthy to be trusted with the concerns of the state? I could be trusted when the vital principle of our republic hung in doubtful suspense. When the hostile legions of Europe, in dread array, seemed ready to overwhelm our little band; when the big cloud darkened and the storm threatened to burst on our devoted heads; when danger appalled and death threatened around, I was in arms in defence of America's rights.

"My hoary locks bespeak the lapse of time, my unfurrowed cheek the ravages of care. Full many a sleepless night has this head, now whitened with age, rested on the cold lap of earth, covered alone by the canopy of heaven.

"Ah! my country, what toils have I borne for thy happiness. And in return have lived to see fair freedom grace my native land. To see munificent heaven reward our labors by the blessings of a free government, and to see the veteran soldier left, in the winter of his days, to languish in obscurity.

"The post I lately enjoyed was sufficient for my wants, and grateful to my heart as being a mark of my country's confidence. Yet take the little all which would cause the few remaining years of an old man to be comfortable and happy. But a soldier's honor is dear unto him, and is far beyond the reach of power. My fame shall descend as a legacy to

⁴We are inclined to believe that the character here alluded to is Colonel Rufus Putnam, a brave and distinguished officer in the American Revolution—but it would apply with equal propriety to any of that patriotic band.

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my children, and the remembrance of my services awake the respect of posterity.

"The first wish of my heart was to see my country blest and happy, and the labour of my life has been to make her so. May she in future generations find that integrity and worth which so eminently distinguished her first-born sons. May she, in the hour of danger, find a patriotic band to espouse her interests and protect her cause, and may she learn to discard the sycophant, and reward with her smiles the virtuous and brave."

Calling his children around him, the soul of the American patriot yet shines superior to misfortune. "Take my sword, it has never been drawn to inflict an injury but, faithful to its master's hand, has leapt forth with joy at the call of my country, to give freedom and happiness to my native soil."

If this is the world, O my countrymen, who dare be virtuous in such a world if this is the example to future patriots? When will liberty again have votaries, or oppressed humanity vindicate the rights of man? This picture requires the coloring of an abler artist, but I speak to you the sentiments of my heart, and the language of an American.

May the rage of political intolerance cease to affect this favored clime. May the persecution of party lose its force, and all distinction be lost in one national sentiment. May all ranks cleave to the constitution as the charter of their national rights and the great cause of their national prosperity, and may an union of sentiment produce an union of brotherly affection throughout these United States.

Then shall the happy day of our first existence, as a republic, again visit our clime. Then shall the brilliant Sun of American glory reglad-den with his beams our native soil. Then shall science progress in improvements. Then shall the arts and useful employments arise and flourish, and Commerce spread its whitened wings to waft increasing wealth to the shores of America.

Let the youth be taught to love their country, to cherish the Christian virtues, and aspire to be useful to the state. Let the rising generation catch wisdom from the history of America, and learn to emulate its first-born sons.

Remember, you have a national character to support. The splendid

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reputation of your fathers lives with you. Let the love of your country be the leading feature of your political life, and the constitution the polar star to guide you. Steering by this beacon, shall the national bark arrive in the road of prosperity, and avoid the miseries of a tempestuous world.

Let the kindred arms of America be open to receive the persecuted patriot, and afford an asylum to the oppressed of all nations. Then shall the age of my country be the age of science, of virtue, and of philanthropy; then shall the enjoyments of nature attend the meridian of our life, and the bright sun of glory set upon our day. Be free—be happy.

May that Providence, whose supporting arm sustained our sinking state, and whose fostering hand nurtured our infant republic, protect my country—and may the sweet spirit of liberty forever descend to bless my native land.

Delivered in the Episcopal Church.

* * * * *

“At a meeting of the Washington Society of Alexandria, the 4th day of July, 1804, it was *Resolved*, That the thanks of this Society be presented to G. W. P. Custis, Esq., for his elegant and appropriate oration, delivered this day, and that a copy thereof be requested for publication.

G. DENEALE, *Sec'y.*”

VI

ORATION BY HONORABLE CHARLES FENTON MERCER

FEBRUARY 22, 1806

IT HAS been the immemorial custom of some of the wisest, as well as greatest nations, to commemorate those brilliant epochs of their history connected with the foundation or extension of their empires; with the establishment, or renovation, of their laws. Assembling in the public celebration of those sublime events all the powers of genius, they sought to give them an eternal existence, not in the memories alone, but in the hearts of their people, to awaken and cherish in them a noble sense of independence; and, under the canopy of their own glory, to unite them in the sacred bonds of union and harmony. And, lest the celebration of the events themselves, abstracted from the gratitude due to their illustrious authors, should not sufficiently arouse the national pride or enkindle the ardent spirit of emulation, they distinguished, as occasions of public rejoicing, those auspicious days on which God, in the plenitude of His power and the extent of His mercy, vouchsafed to send on earth those sublime geniuses to whom they ascribe their prosperity and glory.

To him, indeed, whom we commemorate, while rapt in celestial happiness, he enjoys the reward of his virtues, our applause may be as vain as were the tears with which we deplored his death. That melancholy event, however, closing, in a manner so solemn and august, the career of his temporal greatness, enables the purposes which, today, assembles us; refines our loftiest praise from every semblance of adulation, and confers the charm of disinterestedness on the public expression of our admiration and gratitude. And may we not be permitted to believe that the immortal spirit of our Washington yet delights to hover near the beloved retreats of his age, and now perhaps bends from yon azure heaven to receive the grateful, though, indeed, humble tribute of our praise.

But, while your hearts, my audience, are kindling with enthusiasm at the very name of Washington, I tremble at the task with which this respectable Society has honored me. I beseech, I would fain claim your



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indulgence, at the moment I confess my utter incompetence to do justice to his fame. The actions of other men borrow an additional, though transient lustre, from the fancy which labors to adorn them; but, feeble, indeed, as are my powers, there is, moreover, a sublimity in my subject which defies eulogium; a sublimity which swells at my breast, but to which my tongue in vain aspires to give utterance. Before so resplendent an original the sculpture retires in despair; the pencil drops from the hand of the painter, and all its colors fade away. The figures of rhetoric, the variety of language, the melody and harmony of sound, serve but to obscure and confuse the object of your enraptured view. Airy vapors; they arise beneath the expansive warmth of the sun and cloud, for a while, his orient splendor. Ah! my audience, pardon the weakness which has betrayed me into an effort so far above myself; and thou, blest spirit of Washington, if thou dost, indeed, hear my feeble accents, as some atonement for the vain attempt of my humble, zealous love. A perfect hero! A nation emancipated! An empire founded and maintained by virtue alone! Such are the subjects which this day recalls to us.

Columbus had no sooner discovered America than his successors enslaved her. Europe, presuming on her superior refinement, or relying on her superior power, parcelled out this vast continent among her princes. The right which she arrogantly usurped over its soil, she extended over the persons of her own children, whom she planted amidst its immeasurable wilds, not in the spirit of an anxious mother, providing for a numerous and indigent offspring, but of an artful and insatiable tyrant, who cherishes, for a while, the victim which he means to destroy.

Her rival princes, not content with the theatre which three quarters of the habitable globe and the boundless ocean afforded to their restless ambition, often transferred the seat of their wars to the shores of our rivers, and even to the lonely valleys of our mountains. The roar of their cannon, descending along our western waters, and penetrating the inmost recesses of our forests drew the bloodthirsty savage from his gloomy covert. Fire and sword laid waste our defenceless frontier; the merciless tomahawk was imbrued in the blood of the aged and infirm; of helpless mothers and infants. Peace returned. But peace yielded to

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America a slender atonement for the complicated evils of such a war. Instead of liberal commerce unbosoming on her shores the treasures of every clime, and bearing away her productions in return, to every market, the monopoly of a single nation, jealous of her growth, limited her supplies to its own resources and contracted the demand for her superfluities to its own wants. At length, the insatiable avarice of her oppressor sought to rob her of the poor pittance, which even a narrow policy had hitherto spared. America supplicated—her supplications were proudly rejected. She remonstrated—her remonstrances were indignantly spurned. She determined to resist—and the armies and fleets of a mighty nation prepared to overwhelm her with ruin.

In this awful hour which threatened to extirpate liberty from the earth, the people of America rose, undismayed, to vindicate their rights. Searching for a chief to conduct them to battle, their unanimous, their heaven-directed choice fell on Washington. Full of that noble spirit which the love of freedom inspires to a generous breast, but with that diffidence which is the inseparable companion of genius, he obeyed the voice of his country.

In those boundless wilds, whose dreary surface then presented scarce a solitary trace of civilization; and whose awful and gloomy silence was occasionally suspended only by the nocturnal howlings of beasts of prey, the frantic orgies of savages, or the dreadful note of war, the soul of Washington had been early formed for the high and noble destiny which awaited him.

His mind had attained all the qualities of a hero before his body had reached the vigor of a man. He had achieved a victory which surpasses those of the greatest conquerors, which no enemy, not Fortune herself, could ever after wrest from his constancy and firmness; a victory over himself, over all the allurements of pleasure, and the incentives of vice—over every vindictive or malignant passion; a victory, without which, indeed, all the triumphs of conquest are but an empty pageant, and all her laurels liable to speedy decay.

That Providence, which so often guarded him in the most imminent hazard and thrice rescued his life, as it were, from the grasp of death, permitted him to receive his first military lessons in the school of adversity.

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In four years of unsuccessful war with the most savage, united with the most subtle enemy, he had learnt the hard duties of obeying commands which his judgment condemned; of beholding with fortitude a misery which he could not relieve; of curbing his ardour for military glory by the higher ambition of being useful to his country.

Before the fortunate termination of this disastrous war, he had added to invincible courage, consummate experience. His body he had inured to fatigue and hardships, his soul to the tranquil contemplation of unremitting toils, danger, and death. His fortitude and courage were founded on the same immutable principle of conscious rectitude. Actuated by no partial or sinister views, beyond desire of personal aggrandizement, all his objects centered in the single hope of promoting the glory of his country.

Such is a faint portrait of the man whom America opposed to all the hosts of Britain. To appreciate the merits of the chief, let us recur to the peculiar circumstances of the contest in which he was about to engage. It was in vain that America asserted the sacred truth, "resistance to tyranny is obedience to God." An unnatural mother armed for the destruction of her own offspring. A brave and generous people were proclaimed rebels—and Washington himself, a traitor. America, not yet weaned from a sense of colonial subjection, then extended her hopes no farther than to a redress of grievances. Success offered to the champion of her liberty a dangerous reward; the gratitude of rebellious subjects, the resentment of an offended monarch. Defeat, on the other hand, presented to him the hazard of an ignominious death. But what were the chances of success? By the jealous and insidious policy of that government, whose open injustice had at length aroused us to arms, we had been almost subdued before hostilities commenced. Destitute of the most necessary arts of defence; of wealth, the chief spring of modern wars; of standing armies, the boasted security of modern empire, we were to encounter a nation whom, for two centuries, we had contributed to render the emporium of the commerce of the world; a nation, great in arms, as in arts; whose prowess had recently humbled the pride of the most potent states in Europe, and whose triumphant navy covered the ocean.

To the power of our enemy was to be added disunion among our-

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selves. The provincial governors dependent upon were, consequently, in the interest of our foe, and thundered their anathemas against the authors of resistance. An army was already landed to support their authority, and our coast darkened with hostile fleets. What had we to expect from foreign aid? The rivals of Great Britain might, indeed, be expected to behold our exertions with favorable interest; and a few generous minds to offer up prayers for our prosperity; but the nature, as well as the subsequent events of the contest proved, that assistance from abroad was to be purchased only by success at home. How sublime, therefore, was that spirit which neither the vast inequality, nor the peculiar dangers of such a war could for a moment appall! He surveys his camp. He beholds not hardy veterans like those with whom he was about to contend, inured to the discipline, the toil, and the danger of arms; but simple ploughmen, whose only knowledge was that their country had been wronged, and whose chief armour was a resolution to conquer or perish in her defence. They were in confusion; he arranges them. They were untaught; he instructs them. They were only half-armed; here, indeed, the narrow resources of his country limited his ability, but, in his presence, they forget their weakness. The unvarying serenity of his countenance fills them with hope; a delightful confidence banishes dismay. Britain had, indeed, truly counted the number of our soldiers, but she had not dreamt of the wisdom of their general. In her pride she had laughed at the feebleness of our resources, but she had forgot to reckon that creative mind which was to call them into action. An enemy who, in imagination, had overrun this vast empire before they had unfurled their standard on our shores, are themselves blockaded, shut up in their own entrenchments and in danger of starving. With a secrecy and boldness as necessary at the time, as they were unexampled in military annals, the American general prosecuted a siege in which for many days he was without ammunition enough to defend his own lines. In the face of a formidable enemy he disbands one army and forms another without yielding a foot of ground. With indefatigable assiduity he disciplines his new recruits. He reminds them of the objects for which they were about to fight: their fields, their dwellings, their wives and children, and their sacred liberty. Pointing to the graves of their fallen countrymen, invoking the name of the im-

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mortal Warren, first among the illustrious martyrs whose hallowed blood streamed as a sacrifice to tyranny, he inspires them with a noble ardor for battle. They cry aloud to be led to the assault of Boston. It is prevented only by the flight of the enemy.

Our brothers of the north, liberated from a long series of cruel persecutions, now gained time to breathe. For a moment war ceased along our whole coast. The hopes of America rose with the glory of her chief. Tearing off the vile chain of colonial dependence, which till then had hung about her and encumbered all her exertions, she claimed an illustrious rank among the nations of the earth.

Britain, on the other hand, indignant at her late defeat and mortified at the disappointment of her haughty predictions, resolved to put forth all her strength. To her own disciplined bands worthy indeed of a better cause, she added hordes of those German mercenaries who, themselves the victims, are also trained from their infancy to be the instruments of oppression.

Before such a host of enemies, after ineffectual resistance, Washington was compelled to retire. Many of his brave companions attested by their blood the purity of the cause in which they were engaged. Suppressing the sad and tender recollections which bound them to their absent friends, their distant homes, their widowed wives and helpless orphans, from the field of carnage they raised their feeble eyes and poured out their last breath in imploring the benediction of heaven on their beloved country.

Victory could not be expected to attend an army composed principally of men unused to war; who were enlisted for a few months, drafted for a single campaign, or were to be tempted to the field by the promise or the hope of a speedy termination of their dangers and their toils. Nor were the arms of a superior enemy among the greatest of the calamities which now assailed the American general. He had to teach his harassed troops to support the burden of the most complicated sufferings—the sword of a merciless and vindictive enemy, without arms; the rigor of cold without clothing, and the gnawings of hunger without bread. The beam of hope in the East, which had been taken for the dawn of success, was now enveloped in dark and portentous clouds. The lukewarm join the standard of the enemy; the timid retire, and the despond-

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ing consider America as already subdued. Around the dreary horizon there is but a single light to be seen. Ah! It is the undaunted soul of Washington. Armed with conscious virtue he "looks comfort" through his wasted, retreating army. He appeases the inquietude of his troops, shares their fatigues and hardships, commiserates their wants, even weeps at their distress. Penetrated by his example, his faithful soldiers cling to him through every danger, suppress their complaints, smile amidst their deprivations, and lament that the traces of their bleeding feet on the flinty frozen ground speak to the heart of their general how much they endure. "Washington still lives," they exclaim, "and is their not hope?" Patriotic army! Virtuous soldiers! Who, spurning in glorious ease at the sacred call of liberty, embraced the toils and dangers of unequal war, surrounded by the dreadful phantoms of nakedness, cold and hunger, rather than wear out your lives in ignominious bondage amidst your country's ruins, the God of our fathers crowned your pious hopes with success, and led your Washington to victory. He retreats from the Hudson to the southern shore of the Delaware, as if it were only a part of his intended campaign, in order, like the great Horatius, by separating his enemy in the impetuosity of their progress, the more easily to destroy them. Wearied of fruitless victories and a vain pursuit, and not daring to attempt the passage of the Delaware in the presence of Washington, the enemy considered their campaign as closed, and spread along the northern bank of the Delaware, in winter quarters. On that ever memorable night of the 25th of December, in the first year of our independence, after the carousals of a festivity heightened by the consciousness of security, arising from a great superiority of numbers, a wide, rapid and interposing river, and the excessive severity of winter, they yielded to the softness of repose. But the dread reign of winter stops not the campaigns of Washington when his country requires him in the field.

In despite of the rain, the hail, the snow and the gathering ice, at the dead of night, he repasses the river at the head of one-third of his little army. How dismal that night. How joyous the ensuing morn. The commander of the enemy is slain, and a thousand of them are captured. Of the gallant followers of Washington only four fell, and two of those were frozen to death. Once more he crosses the Delaware, to secure his

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prisoners; and in three days he is, a second time, on the ground where the triumphant standard of the enemy had just been planted. They were astonished, confounded, and dismayed, but yet greatly superior to Washington in numbers, to these emotions quickly succeeded mortification and resentment. The half-frozen river, now presenting impassable obstructions to a second retreat, the British general indulged the confident belief that his enemy was caught in his own toils. Two days only elapse before the hostile armies meet. After a slight skirmish the Americans retire before superior numbers; and a narrow creek and the approach of darkness separate them from the enemy. Around their fires the British soldiers rest upon their arms, secure of approaching victory. Burning before them are the fires of Washington. Their light sheds a deceitful gleam upon his guards who, performing their accustomed rounds, order fresh fuel to be added to the flames as the night wastes away. While the enemy are waiting impatiently for the return of day, Washington takes up his silent march towards one of the posts, twelve miles from the ground on which they supposed him to be still encamped. He reaches it, by a circuitous route, at sunrise; but, unfortunately, instead of completely surprising it, he meets a considerable detachment of the enemy under arms, hastening to the ground which he had just left. An engagement ensues. The van of his army, consisting chiefly of raw troops, is immediately defeated, and its unfortunate general, in bravely, though vainly, attempting to rally it, is mortally wounded and left weltering in his blood. Believing the safety of his army and the liberty of his country to depend on the issue of the battle, Washington surpasses himself. Despising danger, he flies through the ranks, encourages, exhorts his troops, and turns the fortune of the day. Routed and dispersed, the enemy fly in different directions. The gathering clouds which hung over the hopes of America once more bursts assunder, and victory illumined the banks of the Delaware, and the heights of Princeton, as she had done the shores of the Mystic.

But, my audience, let not the glittering standard nor the brazen trumpet of victory dazzle or confound us. It was, while pressed by an enemy of thrice his numbers, full of confidence, abounding in resources, and equipped for the most rapid pursuit; it was, when vanquished himself and retreating, that Washington displayed the talents and the skill of a consummate general.

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To lead an army along the flowery path of victory, from conquest to conquest, to command troops flushed with a series of successes over a foe too feeble to oppose them in the field, is a task, indeed, of no great difficulty. Such an army is a torrent deriving, in its rapid course, an additional velocity from every obstacle it surmounts and strength from every obstruction it removes. The essential difference between success and merit, which passion is so apt to conceal from ordinary discernment, is not obvious to a common soldiery. Such an army, therefore, will cheerfully obey the will of its general. But to sustain a course of unavoidable defeats, and then to retreat, without flying, before a superior enemy, across many large rivers and through a country in dismay, equally disposed to assist the victors as the vanquished. To conduct such a retreat without sustaining an attack, or successfully repelling it; and, at the same time, to continue the object of filial gratitude and reverence to an army covered with wounds and scars, were the peculiar and distinguishing merit of the hero of our liberty. To a foresight which left futurity nothing to unfold, he added a penetration which no artifice could elude. To a prudence which no temptations could betray, he united a firmness which no persuasions, no reproaches could shake. With a vigilance which never slumbered, he combined an activity which no toil could overcome, with a fortitude which no misfortunes could subdue—a courage which no dangers could appall.

He was, at once, the Fabius and the Marcellus; the shield and the sword of his country. Does he decline a hazardous engagement with a superior enemy it is because he believes that time, alone, will reduce them; because he sees them at a distance from their reinforcements, consumed by their victories; because he beholds them wasting away, in a vain effort, to hold in subjection a country which they could only overrun. Is it necessary to save a city from being taken, villages from being reduced to ashes, a whole country from being ravaged and laid waste? He advanced toward the enemy with all his forces, pursuing Fortune if she smiles, but submitting to her caprice, and never risking the fate of his country on the event of a single battle.

Does he occupy a post rendered impregnable by nature and art, and necessary to cover a valuable country, or to keep open a communication with the sources of his supplies, and between the different parts of the

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empire? In vain may the enemy tempt him to forsake it. If he leave it, for a moment, in the hope of striking some important blow, it is with a certainty of not being intercepted in his retreat. Like an eagle nestled in some high and craggy eminence, at early dawn he wings his rapid flight in quest of prey, but returns with evening to his nest again.

Obliged to take the field with inferior forces, he is still formidable, hovering around his foe, watching his indiscretions and seizing with avidity every opportunity of successful attack. Now he hangs over them, like a fearful, angry cloud. Now, like the lightning of heaven, he withers and disperses them.

Although himself vanquished, and retiring, he allows the victors no rest, If they stop, he marches toward them, drives in their advanced guards, galls them on either flank, and deprives them of supplies, or reduces them to the necessity of obtaining them at the hazard of being exhausted or cut to pieces in detail. Is he, at length powerful enough, after being joined by a brave ally, to meditate a deadly stroke against the enemy, by a series of skillful movements, concealing from them his designs, he keeps them in suspense as to the point at which he aims, until they find it is too late to unite all their strength for its defence? Vain conquerors! would you reproach our hero with the weakness of his forces? Have you swelled your glory higher by the numbers whom you have led to battle? By the torrents of blood which have flowed round the detested altar of your ambition?

'Tis not to countless thousands that fame awards the palm of glory: she marks only the relative strength of combatants; and, with a louder trump, sounds, "Leonidas, and his Spartan band," than "Xerxes, and his hordes of Persians."

My audience, could I paint to you all the varying scenes of that arduous conflict, in which the liberty of our country was now lost in defeat and despair, and now illumined by victory and hope, I would display to you the character of our illustrious hero, in colors which should excite your eternal admiration, your gratitude and love. But impossible as it is for me to aspire to such a labor, I should, perhaps, only tell you what you have yourselves witnessed, or your fathers have related. The glorious events of the Revolution are engraven on your memories; they are interwoven in the hearts of many of you, with the most tender recollec-

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tions of your own lives. I see you, insensibly borne forward to that memorable period, when the independence of America was universally acknowledged, and the commander of all her armies, by a voluntary resignation of his high authority, consummated the glory of his military career. When adored by his soldiers, he allayed their murmurs at the supposed injustice of their country whom, they had been told, by an artful demagogue, would "trample on their rights, disdain their cries and insult their distresses." In reply to this inflammatory address which dared to recommend it by the army, to "court the auspices and invite the directions of its illustrious leader"—to accomplish its wicked purpose, "Let me conjure you," says he to his soldiers, "in the name of our common country, as you value your sacred honour, as you respect the rights of humanity, as you revere the military and national character of America, to express your utmost horror and detestation of the man who wishes, under any specious pretexts, to overturn the liberties of our country; who wickedly attempts to open the flood gates of civil discord and deluge our rising empire in blood." Well, indeed, might he conclude with adding, in generous tribute to the merit of others, what is so peculiarly applicable to himself, that "had" that "day been wanting, the world had never seen the last stage of perfection which human nature is capable of attaining." Other heroes, my audience, have sought to gain renown by subduing other countries, or enslaving their own. As if terror and sublimity were the same, they have hoped, by affrighting, to secure the admiration of the world. To be a hero has been, in common language, to desolate the earth, to moisten it with the tears and fill it with the groans of its peaceful inhabitants. Destroyers of mankind! Rather than pass away unnoticed from the earth, you have inscribed your names on it in blood. Think you that the glory having preserved your country from foreign domination, confers on you a right of tyrannizing over her yourselves? Is parricide a crime less detestable than murder? Does treason afford a better title than conquest, to trample on the lives and liberties of men?

How many heroes have been made their country detested as the scourge and curst of the world! But the glory of Washington is reflected back on America. She owes to him the uncommon fortune, if fortune it may be called, of achieving a revolution by arms, without

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affrighting humanity; of asserting the cause of freedom without staining her purity; of rearing a fair, and we trust, a durable fabric where licentious passion has so often spread a frightful and dreary wilderness.

Shall we search in history for merit superior to his? Shall we open the fables of the earlier and darker ages of the world, or turn to the more enlightened annals of ancient or modern nations? The legends of superstition have fancied no hero so fair. They proclaim the impetuosity of the passions, and the weakness and credulity of human reason. Even Plutarch, when he conducts us from the gloom of barbarism, within the cultivated borders of refinement, entertains us with little else than the struggles of ambition and the triumphs of a vain glory. The monuments of his principal heroes are erected on the smoking ashes of villages and cities; on the desolation of provinces and the ruins of empires. Here we behold a Cæsar who, after tearing the bosom of the state which cherished his infancy with tenderness, and crowned his maturity with honor, devises plans for the conquest of the world; or an Alexander who, having conquered it, in the ravings of his ambition, sighs for another to subdue. Are we called upon to admire virtue? 'Tis in a Cato, feebly sinking under misfortune, and burying in his own grave the last hope of his country. 'Tis in a Brutus who, in an effort of despair turns against his bosom the avenging sword which heaven had lent him to destroy a tyrant. How unlike their virtue was that of Washington, I appeal to you, ye gallant soldiers who, in the fearful distress of war, drew from his unshaken constancy your best reliance. Like Epaminondas and Pelopidas, he had the glory of rescuing his country from the grasp of tyranny. Possessed of superior wisdom, he preserved what his valor had acquired—Thebes fell as he had risen, with her brave defenders. The liberty of America survives her champion, but that life she owes to his counsels and his influence. Yes, my audience, the advice and the fame of Washington preserved us from disunion and ignominy; withstood the overbearing eloquence of so many orators, and ratified that constitution of government "now indeed" becomes the pride and boast of America, but which, at its adoption, was viewed through the false and jealous mediums of preconceived theories of local and clashing interests.

America had scarcely time to form her new institutions intended to

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correct the errors and supply the defects of the confederation which conducted her through the Revolution, and to place her illustrious chief at the head of them, before a war of unprecedented extent, calamity and horror revived in Europe. An administration, scarcely organized for the purpose of internal government and tranquility, was at once exposed, in its external relations, to a situation more embarrassing than war itself, a neutrality towards our former friends and enemies. By persuasions, by intrigue, by threats and insults, sought to make America abandon a neutrality as necessary to her as it was odious to themselves. The most subtle of those nations, placed in a situation peculiarly interesting to humanity, endeavored to profit by her generosity and to identify their cause with hers. Believing that a strict adherence to neutrality, if not of indispensable necessity, was of inestimable value to the national credit, the infant arts, the rising commerce and newly acquired liberty of his country, Washington opposed to their efforts all his strength. He was successful. The design, however, which had been foiled in its attack, now sought a circuitous route to its object, by undermining the popularity of the illustrious statesman who stood in its way. Here again it was baffled. But it was not without its use. It afforded the genius of that great man, who always improved, to the benefit of his country, the attack of her enemies an opportunity of inculcating among his fellow citizens an important lesson: to beware of the treacherous seductions of foreign influence; and, doubting the friendship, the justice, and the faith of other nations to found their hope of security on a just reliance upon their own courage and resources; and their love of tranquility, on a preparation for war. It cannot be said that, until that moment, he had perfected that independence which he had so bravely asserted for his country.

In the general administration of the federal government, he evinced that he was as profoundly versed in the spirit as he was faithful in the execution of the laws.

Availing himself of all the talents and virtue of his countrymen, without regard to the narrow and selfish distinctions of party, he composed an administration of the most splendid and useful materials which his country afforded.

Abundance waving on our plains; the spires of cities rising from

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their ashes; the busy hum of innumerable arts; social ease and security, endeared by the roar of distant war; the vessels of all the nations of the globe crowding our ports; our own returning from the remotest regions—the shores of the Baltic, the Archipelago and the Levant, the isles of the Southern Ocean, and the frozen boundary of the icy seas, attested the quickening impulse of liberty, and the wisdom of that government which, succeeding colonial dependence and national bankruptcy, derived the happy spring of its operations from the genius of Washington. Illustrious statesman! such are the laurels. Fame has indeed woven for thy brow a rich wreath; and, in it there is not a leaf which Philosophy would pluck away, or Innocence refuse to adorn with her smile.

Having conducted his country to the term of his hopes, to prosperity and glory; with that grandeur of soul which ever elevated him above human greatness, he retired from his civil, as he had done from his military station, amidst the plaudits of a grateful people, to a shade which he had planted himself, to be the shelter and the solace of his declining years; and here he could have glided gently down the vale of life had not the government of an unfortunate nation, long oscillating between anarchy and despotism, dared to assail the service he had spent so many years of his life. But the alarm occasioned by those preparations in the parts of France, which a new movement of caprice diverted from America to Egypt, had scarcely subsided when a sudden death robbed us of the sword of Washington. What universal sorrow spread throughout America. Was ever man more beloved while living? Was ever a death more deplored? He died, indeed, in peace with God and his own conscience, and such a death as reflected a lustre on his whole life. He was not afraid to die. No. Piety to God had been mingled with all his affections a sense of thoughts and actions. He was about to appear before that Merciful Being, to whom he had so often recommended his beloved country; who had guarded him in the hour of battle, and who now supported him in the more awful hour of dissolution. Celestial music descended on his ear, the gates of heaven opened to receive. He fled to the bosom of his God.

What principally occurs to me, here to remark, my audience, is, that time, which has done so much to bury the failings of other heroes, has yet done no more for the memory of Washington than to soften our

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grief for his loss. In comparison of the age of which I just took occasion to speak, and from which have come down to us so many illustrious names, he died indeed but yesterday. His imperfections, his vices, his crimes (if any he had) are yet as fresh as his virtues. We are now pronouncing judgment on his whole life, and in assigning him his portion of terrestrial glory, all his imperfections should be weighed alongside of his virtues. He has left behind him no power capable of seducing, by its smiles or silencing by its frowns, the reproaches of truth. *Come forth, then, ye accusers of Washington, and ye shall be heard.* Alas! the only tongue which could have uttered, and the only hand which could have recorded his failings is cold and motionless in the grave with himself.

If, in such a character, my audience, there be anything to regret, it is that its apparent perfection elevates it, as it were, above human calamity, and therefore, almost above our sympathy. Allied so nearly to the Divinity from which it emanated and to which it has returned, it overawes and confounds our limited conception. I appeal to you, however, citizens of Alexandria, for many of you knew him, if his manners were not as gentle as his soul was sublime. You recollect how fondly he cherished, in his beloved retirement, those milder virtues which shrink from the thoughtful labours of the cabinet, and fly affrighted from the din of arms. 'Though not so fortunate, a fortune which would have been, perhaps, without example, and could not have added to his merit, as to escape reproach, while living, and always capable by his influence of overwhelming it with the odium of his country, how generous, how modest was his conduct. In his dispatches, sometimes, announcing victories over the enemies of his country, when her most sanguine friends almost despaired of her safety; in all his letters to that power from whom he derived his high authority; in all his speeches, whoever read or heard him utter one expression intended to exalt his own fame or depreciate that of his rivals? Even the malignity of his worst enemies could not extort from him a cruel recrimination, nor provoke him to any other species of defence than a simple avowal of his innocence. I allude, not here, to the opposition of some of the political measures which he recommended, or which received the sanction of his approbation; an opposition, which proceeded from that difference of opinion common

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among all men, and often, doubtless, from the purest motives. Far indeed am I from supposing, that to render just tribute to the memory of Washington, it can be necessary to disturb the ashes with which, on a day so auspicious to our country, the zeal of party is wont to sprinkle her flames. Washington was born and lived for America. His virtues, his services, his fame are dear to all Americans. When those political distinctions which divide us shall be forgotten, and we ourselves lie mingled together in the common dust from which we sprung, his name will survive to inspire future Washingtons with an ardent zeal to promote the glory of the republic. As those of the heroes of Thermopylæ, of Marathon, and Platæa, or of the Decii and Fabii, in the decline of Grecian or Roman liberty, it will be employed by future orators to unite our descendants to unite against the common enemy—to deter the bold invader, confound the views of faction, baffle the arts of intrigue, and uphold an empire which luxury may have enervated, and the pride of prosperity, with its attendant train of vices, threatened to dissolve.

Although, therefore, Washington has yielded to the inexorable law of humanity, in his spirit infused into the hearts and his principle engraven on the understandings of his countrymen, he yet lives, and will be as immortal as our union and liberty.

Among the excellent lessons which he has left us, for the preservation of those sublime objects, permit me to recommend that, of which we are here forcibly reminded, by this little assembly, the peculiar children of his adoption, to whom he has bequeathed the greatest of all temporal blessings, that of instruction. The offspring, in some cases, of misfortune, these little children found in our hero a father and a friend who, by his example, induced the Society of this city, which bears his name, to assume the benevolent task which he resigned only with his breath and, which, through the liberal provisions of his task, will he still aid them in performing. A task, indeed above all others, congenial to the warm feelings of humanity and the enlightened principles of republican government. For amidst the awful vicissitudes of human affairs, in which wealth and power, like life itself, are but airy meteors, disappearing at every sudden turn of fortune or unexpected change in the inconstant opinions of men, how consolatory is it, to

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humanity to know, that while the expiring parent seeks repose in that charity which reigns above, he leaves a charity on earth zealous to guard and instruct his orphan children. How comprehensive, moreover, is this lesson. It teaches us to regard woman, the mother, indeed but unhappily too often the slave of man, as his equal. His tender nurse in infancy, his indulgent, and often his only teacher in childhood, his affectionate companion in youth, manhood, and old age, gratitude, love, interest, all prompt him to elevate her condition in society to a level with his own. But the influence of this lesson extends beyond the circle of private life. It reaches the law, the frame, nay, the very existence of our republican government.

My audience, from the moment that most free states advance in glory they begin to exhibit symptoms of decline. The extension of commerce, and the progress of the arts create as much poverty as opulence; and, unhappily, as much corruption as refinement. The increase of population, which expedites the division of property, multiplies the number of the indigent even more rapidly than that of the wealthy. These causes combined destroy, in many parents, the disposition to educate their offspring, and rob a still greater number of the ability to do so. Ignorance in the bulk of the community progresses with the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few. As the temptations of avarice and ambition, the natural foes of liberty, increase the only restraints which a free government imposes on them are diminished. A corrupt mass arises, easily set afloat by abandoned men and as easily directed by the impulse of passion, to the most destructive purposes. Against such an evil, education is the only remedy.

Written constitutions of government, with whatever wisdom and foresight they may have been framed, oppose but a feeble barrier to degeneracy, and, necessarily, partake of the imperfection of those who make and those who administer them. They serve but as imperfect guides to the national bark in the stormy night of faction. As unsteady fires kindled on a dark and rocky beach, often obscured by lowering mists, they unfold his danger to the pilot only in the awful and fruitless hour of his shipwreck. Education, on the other hand, by diffusing, far and wide, its constant and tranquil light, warns him of that danger before it arrives.

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The tribunals of justice expound the law to the trembling culprit only when about to pronounce on him their fearful sentence. Education, by instilling the spirit of the laws into his infant mind, before it has contracted the stain of guilt, preserves his innocence.

Legislators of America imitate the beneficent example of Washington. Alongside of the vast dungeons which you have built to incarcerate your fellow men, erect humble schools for their instruction. Let the spires of academies and colleges enliven the gloom of your bastiles. Attract to your laws the generous image of virtue, instead of that sullen terror with which they are calculated to inspire the guilty and the ignorant. Dungeons, whips and gibbets are the degrading insignia of despotism; at most, they can only punish. It is education, national education alone, that can prevent crimes. Attack them in their source, purify the fountain and the stream will be clear—enlighten the minds of the rising generations. Unfold to them the loveliness of virtue, so often clouded by prejudice and habit. Your code abounds with laws which protect the property of the citizen—how few have you hitherto enacted to preserve his innocence. How wisely you encourage the culture of the soil from which a large portion of the people are, of necessity excluded, by securing its fruits to their legal proprietor, but you have neglected a common soil far more worthy of your care—the human mind. You have labored to shield the mere machine of man from the violence of others, but, leaving it to the blind impulse of passion, you have doomed him to self-destruction. Would you banish idleness, the parent of so many vices? Make labor, the natural duty of man to the source of his subsistence, respectable, by early inculcating habits of industry among the children of the poor. Would you cherish, among those who have least interest in the institutions of society, a love for their country? Enable them to regard her as a common parent. Let the republic discharge towards her children the duty of a mother, and she will receive from them filial obedience and affection. Genius is not partial to wealth or ancestry in the distribution of her favors. From the number of those unfortunate children whom you would adopt might arise. What do I say!

Perhaps, from these children of Washington may arise a patriotism as pure, a wisdom as profound, and a courage as dauntless as inspired

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Washington himself. Ah! is it not, here, that simple ailment invigorates the body, health quickens the pulse, and genius, urged by necessity, presses with unceasing effort along the arduous ascent to fame? Of the poets, the orators, the statesmen, the heroes and philosophers who have delighted, instructed and adorned the world, how many, in every age, have sprung from the hardy school of adversity? As if to confound presumptuous wealth, it is to such men that a nation chiefly owes its glory. Cheer up, then, my young friends, and let us join our prayers to that Omnipotent Being, in whose temple we are assembled, that He may be pleased, in His infinite mercy, to draw from the inexhaustible treasurers of His providence, future Washingtons, to perfect the plans of him whose birth we commemorate, whose life we honor, and whose principles we ardently cherish.

Delivered in the Episcopal Church.

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"At a meeting of The Washington Society, on February 22d, 1806, *Resolved*, unanimously, That the thanks of the Society be presented to the Hon. Charles Fenton Mercer, for his appropriate and interesting oration, this day delivered, and that a copy of it be requested for publication.

G. DENEALE, *Sec'y.*"

* * * * *

"At twelve o'clock The Washington Society moved in procession with the children of the Washington Free School, 42 in number, at a signal gun from Gadsby's Tavern, to the Episcopal Church, escorted by Captain Cohagen's company of riflemen and Captain Lyon's company of light infantry. On approaching the church, the military opened to the right and left, and saluted the Society in passing through. After entering the church a solemn piece of music was performed by a band placed in the gallery, which was followed by an address to the Throne of Grace by the Rev. Mr. Davis, followed by music, after which an elegant and appropriate oration was delivered, which we shall have the pleasure of laying before our readers. The services of the day concluded with enchanting music, when the Society returned in the same order. On their arrival

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at Mr. Gadsby's the Society and military opened their ranks, and the children of the Free School, preceded by their teacher and a band of music, passed in view, which afforded every person whose heart delights in the practice of charity an opportunity of beholding the grateful countenances of 42 infant members of the human race who have been annually and decently clothed at the expense of a benevolent institution, and instructed in knowledge upon the bounty of him whose virtues it is our highest pride to endeavor to imitate. On the Society's returning to the house a salute of 16 guns was fired by a piece of artillery from the market square, when the company dispersed, with every eye bespeaking a participation in the festivity of their annual jubilee."

Alexandria Daily Advertiser, February 24, 1806.

* * * * *

The following address was delivered by one of the children belonging to the Free School in presence of the Washington Society after their return from church, February 22d, 1808:

My Honored Patrons:

Assembled to commemorate the day which gave birth to the illustrious hero of the American Revolution, I have presumed to address you on so interesting a subject. To recount the praises of the great and good, was of old the task of Roman orators; shall I claim your indulgence to add a feeble tribute to the memory of our native worth? How shall I commence the recital of his fame, or where date the period of his first distinction? While young in years he showed the child of promise, and his early deeds were but the prelude to his distinguished life. When age had ripened his wisdom, the hopes of his early days were most amply fulfilled, and Fate soon called him to the high destinies for which he was chosen. And now the world beheld a people arise in arms to oppose oppression and protect their rights. The sacred flame is lighted on the altar of Freedom, and a gallant host arises to combat in her cause. 'Twas then, far retired in the shades of rural tranquility dwelt the illustrious man. His country calls; nor calls in vain. With modest demeanor he accepts the chief command, and the great energies of his soul are

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alive in the cause of his country. "I will lead an army of Freemen," cried the chief. "O Liberty, I am thy votary. O my country, I am thy friend."

To detail the events of eight long years would be to awake those feelings to which we are all alive. In those dark days when adversity frowned upon our cause and patriots trembled for their country's fate, Washington, unappalled, beheld the scene. His soul, unused to fear, could but weep for America. His mind is formed. "Should we not now succeed," cries the chief, "we may succeed hereafter. The sun of glory may now retire from our sight, but will yet cheer our hearts. The American Eagle may droop o'er our cause, but will not fly our clime; and when driven to the last extremity I will retire to the passes of the mountains and erect the standard of freedom in the western wilds of America."

This, my countrymen, though little known, was his great resolve. O Washington! In thee liberty had a votary, humanity a friend, and thy country a father. In thy illustrious example youth has a model, posterity a guide, and the world a source of admiration. Exalted man! But yesterday the chief of a great republic, today the humble farmer of Mount Vernon. Yet even in retirement the good of his countrymen was ever his object, and in diffusing useful knowledge he left a noble example. And now he is called to preside in the council of the Nation, and assist in forming a government on the basis of those rights for which he fought. 'Tis done, and with one voice he is called to the chair. Leaving his beloved retirement he proceeds to assume an office in which he may assist the progress of early legislation and add the weight of his advice to the great experiment. And here occurs a scene worthy our notice. Passing the bridge at Trenton he receives the unfeigned homage of national gratitude, and that memorable spot is strewn with flowers on whose rugged surface he retrieved the fortunes of his country. The laureled crown is woven by the hand of affection to grace the hero's brow. Arrived at the then capitol of the Union, he is hailed with welcome to those shores no longer filled with hostile bands, and received with that enthusiasm which his presence always inspired. This scene was truly grand and impressive, and heightened by incidents affecting to all. The little children now press to behold this wondrous being. "Then, look, my child, there is America's chief." The little innocent amazed replies,

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"It is a man." "Yes, my child, and such a man as thy country delights to honor, the world to admire; whose name shall be dear to freemen while liberty shall constitute a blessing, or virtue hold a place in the human heart." Having retired from the office of chief magistrate, he repairs as a private citizen to attend his successor to the chair. On entering the august assembly of America's sages, all rise; all feel his presence. What a luxury was here. How must he have felt who, after resigning the office of a chief magistrate, receives the same honors when a private citizen; but the love of his countrymen attends him in retirement and remembers the Hero in beholding the Man.

Such was the progress of him who lived in the hearts of all, and such was the tribute of a nation's love. More glorious than the triumph of conquest, no captive princes graced his chariot wheels, nor conquered nations indignant shook the air. 'Twas the splendid triumph of virtue, gracious in the presence of the Almighty and the bright reward of a patriot's labors.

The good old man had now retired to taste the sweets of domestic tranquility and spend his declining years in the bosom of his family. His mansion, so long deserted, and the seat of his many hospitalities, again receives its venerable master. Time and long service had whitened his locks, and an arduous life had bent his manly form. While enjoying those pleasures so incident to a rational mind, and embosomed in a society whom long acquaintance had endeared, the alarm of war is given. While many suppose he will not relinquish his peaceful abode to again enter the tumultuous scenes of life, the nation's chief makes this memorable reply, "I know him well; Washington will never refuse to serve his country. His length of years requires rest, yet he knows no rest but in his country's happiness."

We have now arrived at an awful period, and are called to witness the closing scene. The king of terrors appears to demand his victim. "I obey," cries the chief. "I have often braved thee in the field of battle when fighting for the liberties of my country, and do not fear thy stroke. I die content. It has pleased kind heaven to grant me length of days. I have lived to see my country blessed in the enjoyment of her rights and happy in the government of her choice. 'Twas in her virtuous cause I drew my sword. 'Twas to give freedom and happiness to my

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native land. The great work in which I labored, so dear to my heart and the object of my fond desire, I have seen accomplished. O my beloved country! the vigor of my life has been devoted to thy cause and my last days are spent in thy service. May every blessing attend thee is the last prayer of thy old servant, and may that providence which protected thee in infancy smile upon thy growth." Then bidding a last farewell, he expires like a Christian soldier, in fear of naught but his God. Pause, and mourn; weep, humanity, for thou has lost a friend; mourn, my country, for thou must weep a father. Let us repair to the tomb. No sculptured forms attract the eyes, nor proud mausoleum rises to the view. No labored epitaph bespeaks his praise, or classic verse recounts his deeds of fame. Beneath a humble turf the chief is laid. His tomb, like the modest tenor of his life, derives no lustre from external things. The good old man now softly sleeps in his native earth soothed by the blessings of a people and great in the esteem of a world. A simple slab, engraven with his name and the last gift of his country, would have adorned the spot. It would not have increased his praise, but might have added to theirs. 'Twas little to do for him. He has done much for us. But while others are interred in vaults of marble, he is enshrined in the hearts of his countrymen. O Washington! were thy sepulchre equal to thy fame, how vast would be the monument! Yet shall the humble spot where lies the chief be sacred to virtue and ever dear to the patriot's sight. Returning spring shall freshen the turf on the hero's grave, and choicest flowers breathe incense at his shrine. Thither shall the youth repair, and amid the stillness of the scene behold the end of real greatness. The veteran soldier of the Revolution, as he passes by, will doff his tattered hat as a last respect to his old commander, the tear of remembrance will trickle on his cheek and the touch of sympathy tremulate his heart. Adieu, great man. The virtues of thy life will letter thy urn and the love of thy countrymen give it a place in their hearts. The faithful historian will catch a tint of the brilliancy of thy fame to adorn the picture of human greatness.

*Frail things shall pass, thy name shall never die,
Rescued from fate by immortality.*

Delivered in the Presbyterian Meeting House.

VII

THE ORATION BY FRANCIS LIGHTFOOT LEE, ESQUIRE

FEBRUARY 23, 1807

A RULE of your institution makes it my duty to discuss a subject which was pleasing to the illustrious man whose nativity we commemorate. To liberate his country and establish its freedom on a lasting basis were his favorite employments. It was fortunate for the liberty of America, and the glory of her chief, that those objects were attempted when her strength and disposition were ripe for their accomplishment. This temperate, fertile region was destined to be the theatre and Washington the conductor of a great political experiment.

At a period when civil and religious tyranny prevailed in Europe; when superstition had exploded knowledge, and feudalism destroyed liberty, this newly-discovered country offered an asylum to oppressed humanity and an extensive field to enterprising genius. It was seized with eagerness by our ancestors, who were weary with servitude and charmed with adventurous life. The scenery of a wild country enlivened their native attachment to liberty; the activity of enterprise invigorated their faculties; the habits and pursuits of infant society improved their morals and simplified their manners. They were habitually animated with independent feeling, and could not submit to an arbitrary power. At a favorable conjuncture their concealed temper and genius were aroused into effectual resistance by irritating encroachment on their rights. Statesmen immediately arose from obscurity of private life to enlighten the mind, regulate the feelings, and direct the energies of the people. The tenants of rural fields, the inhabitants of cities, relinquished agricultural and commercial employments and rallied around the standard of their country. Community of danger united, necessity disciplined, despair armed, and liberty inspired them. The brave people, who were struggling to repel invasive hostility from their country, were presented with a chief whose corporeal vigor and military toil could not weaken; whose deliberate valor danger could not intimidate; whose temperate firmness prosperity could not elate, nor misfortune depress; whose penetrating mind artifice could not deceive, nor stratagem surprise; whose active



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spirit and discerning wisdom no successful enterprise or prudent measure could escape; whose ambition was patriotic, and genius material and pacific. This consummate soldier conducted a feeble band of undisciplined warriors against veteran legions, and planted the standard of liberty on the ruin of the enemy.

At the close of the Revolution a concurrence of favorable circumstances facilitated the establishment of republican government. From common misfortunes of revolutionary states, our rising nation was preserved. Love of liberty had been animated, and feelings of social attachment enlivened by the difficulties of an oppressive war. The patriotic leaders of the state had no other view than its independence, and the people no other objects than security and freedom. The nation was happily unconnected with the world. No jealous or ambitious neighbor endangered her tranquility, no aspiring citizen disturbed her deliberations. The liberal views of political philosophy, which her enlightened statesmen entertained, corresponded with the feelings and habits of the people. These advantages, assisted by the wisdom and benevolence of nature, who seems to have tempered the climate, prepared the soil and divided the territory for republics. The local situation of a people has powerful influence on their political institutions. If our soil, by profuse fertility, had cherished indolence or discouraged labor, by sterility; if the climate, by intemperate warmth, had produced enfeebling lassitude, or by cold severity a torpitude of mind, the genius of liberty would have continued her flight to a happier region.

The American people instituted government under the smiles of those auspicious circumstances. Their political invention is admirable for simplicity and wisdom. Love of happiness is the ruling passion of mankind who would pursue it with undeviating rectitude; is governed by instinctive justice or benevolence. But human nature is incapable of such sublime and extensive virtue. Self-love overleaps the boundaries of justice, and requires the restraining arm of authority. Nature prescribes no limits to the pursuit of happiness but the rules of social justice. To define those rules for the regulation of civil conduct is the object of government. But that power cannot be committed, with safety, to the discretionary virtue of independent rulers. It is necessary that popular views of justice and utility, in some degree, influence the civil au-

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thorities. The people will never restrict the pursuit of happiness nor extend its limits unwisely; while common welfare requires the adoption of expedient laws. These principles are true in theory, and our fathers esteemed them too just to be false in practice. To protect weakness from violence, to place poverty on political equality with wealth, render constrained obedience consistent with freedom, and secure the happiness of all, they established a republican government. To strengthen their system and avoid the dangers of too extensive or confined dominion, they adopted the federate principle, whose operative force is unlimited, and increases, like the power of gravity, with the accumulating body.

It was reserved for the inventive genius of America to contrive a government which operates with mildness and benignity on its subjects, with formidable power on its enemies. A splendid and important spectacle has been exhibited to the world. A great nation has vindicated the rights and dignity of man, removed oppressive impediments from the liberty of action, and raised humanity from political degradation. The spirit of philosophy has seen, with delight, that its theory of a primitive convention and derivation of authority from the agreement of mankind is not a dream of speculation. The severe politicians, who had pronounced freedom inconsistent with civil security, have seen a government instituted on principles of rational liberty. Princes, who had claimed proprietary interest in their people and despised plebeian meanness, have been astonished with the miracle of popular sovereignty. The people of Europe have been surprised with a magnificent display of political wisdom in a wilderness, where art had scarcely subdued the rudeness of nature or civilization diffused its beams.

We are considered a nation of political theorists by the world. The fortunate result of our experiment embraces the happiness and virtue of mankind. If, with distinguished advantages the American people are unfit to be free, liberty may suit angels, but not men. If futurity prove our institutions too theoric and incompetent to restrain the violence of passion, humanity must deplore its feeble virtue and submit to the disgraceful misery of servitude. But if experience demonstrate the practical usefulness of our policy, the liberty of civilized man will be recovered, and his awakened spirit will subvert the mountains of oppression which ages have accumulated.

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It is unfortunate for mankind that the peculiar excellence and danger of representative government proceed from the same principle. The sovereignty of their popular will is the distinguishing merit of republican policy; but its liability to corruption and error may render it an improper depository of power. The general will, however, is never incorrect, unless the public mind is corrupted or deceived. It is, therefore, infinitely important to enlighten the understanding, purify the morals, and improve the manners of a free people. The machine of government is moved and regulated by their virtue and intelligence. Its members are disordered and their operation obstructed when those principles are defective.

The laws may define rules of conduct and limits of authority; the people, for a time, may repress disobedience, prevent encroachment, and repel the assailing violence of foreign power; but can never resist the slow and silent ruin of ignorance and vice. When a free people are unacquainted with the principles of government, with the tendency and effect of measures, the civil authorities may transcend their power or be impeded in its exercise. The rulers of a republic mingle with the popular mass, and participate its feeling and opinion. They are responsible to the public, dependent on its favor, and will be submissive to its pleasure. If incorrect ideas of political expediency are prevalent, they will operate in every department of government. The executive arm will obey, and the legislative voice reiterate, prevailing error. When an ignorant people direct the conduct of their rulers by undue exercise of electoral influence, the powers of government are effectively revoked and administered by popular folly. If, on the other hand, they place unlimited confidence in favorite rulers, the vital principle of republicanism is extinguished, and the general will has merely nominal sovereignty. Unanimity and correctness of sentiment are important in republic, but never exist in unenlightened communities. To produce dissension and circulate falsehood are the objects of many; to examine freely is the privilege of all; but to judge correctly the ability of few. The popular eloquence, the artifice of aspiring men playing on the credulity and ignorance of the people, disseminate error, create disunion and inflame dissension. The wisdom of the legislature, the unpolluted justice of the magistrate, and prudent activity of the executive, are

examined with senseless rigor, and condemned with misguided resentment. Unprincipled ambition, bending submissively to the people to enslave them, proclaims that the republic is endangered by the prodigality or ambition of its rulers. Ignorance listens to the false alarm—passion rises to vindicate liberty, but destroys it in the conflict. Does freedom impel her votaries in this mad career? No, ignorance, her inveterate enemy, has inspired them with turbulence and folly

If you would preserve a republic, enlighten it. Employ every vehicle of information; multiply seminaries of learning, and distribute advantages of knowledge. When the people are instructed in the principles of government and policy, their judgment is invariably right. They entrust authority with wise and virtuous men; consider the laws inviolable contracts; and their observance the perfection of equality and freedom. The degree of political illumination which would regulate the public will may be easily produced. Republican government is extremely favorable to the cultivation of useful knowledge. The objects of pursuit are various and extensive; advantages of wealth and honor attainable by all; and intellectual superiority a powerful means of advancement. The mind is animated by prospect of reward, and its faculties improved by emulous exertion. Genius is stimulated to bold, unwearied endeavor; learning pursues its luminous, unrestrained inquiry; eloquence has all subjects to examine, every citizen to enlighten and persuade. Science, with the attendant arts, has been moving, for ages, in a slow, brilliant, wandering journey from the east. While our institutions require her enlightening presence, let us hasten her arrival; prepare temples and ministers for her service, and invite her to the society and friendship of Liberty.

It must be remembered that virtue is the principle of free government; and is no less essential than intelligence to republican character. The system of policy which gives freedom to individual conduct, and commits the delegation of office to the people, is founded on a presumption of their virtue. Voluntary obedience must increase wisdom and purity of choice, with the extended limits of election. But a republic will inevitably fall if the citizens violate municipal justice or improperly exercise the elective privilege. It is necessary to counteract inducements to disobedience and corruption with moral and patriotic principles. The

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desire of happiness must be regulated by virtue, or refined into a feeling of patriotism. The principles of right are more accurately defined by the feelings of mankind than in the volumes of legislators. Virtuous sentiment operates more effectually on the passions than the rigor and solemnities of justice. Patriotism preserves its ardent, inflexible attachment to the state when the seal of national pride and the courage of discipline have failed. To inspire a people with republican virtues it is necessary to enlarge their conceptions of utility. When they perceive that the exercise of suffrage is an alienation of their sovereignty; that the power, prosperity and misfortunes of the state are distributed among its members; that the concerns of peace require their collective attention; the dangers of war their united resistance; that the republic will be subverted if the laws be disregarded, but powerful, tranquil and happy if they are respected, they will then see the necessity and usefulness of virtue, the correspondence of private with public welfare, and the desire of happiness will receive a virtuous, noble and patriotic direction. To defend the state and respect its authorities will be the resolution of all; for the people and the republic are the same. Will it be said these principles are too theoretic; the mass of mankind, the miserable vulgar, are incapable of speculative refinement? This may be unfortunately true. But if they are so unalterably stupid or perverse as to resist the influence of early discipline, education may perform the office of reason and make them virtuous and patriotic by habit. Observe the savage, who seizes pleasure with passionate eagerness, and has no principle of conduct but ungovernable feeling. View the civilized man, who restrains the freedom of action with limits of propriety, and submits to the feeble authority of custom. Early discipline established its dominion when the infant passions were unable to resist. Is it impossible to extend the refinement—to create a system of virtuous and patriotic education? Ancient republicans displayed a devotion to their country which was sometimes stronger than the feeling of nature. It contracted the partiality of friendship, and tenderness of parental attachment; suspended its love of indolence and pleasure, and dissipated the alarms of danger and death. To live for the republic was the desire of peace, to die for its glory the passion of war. Is this eminence of virtue unattainable by modern republicans? Was there any inimitable

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peculiarity in the ancient system of education and policy? If reason and discipline, however, be disregarded by a citizen, he may respect the authority of public opinion. The man whose limited understanding cannot include extensive views of utility; whose frail virtue would yield to seducing vice; whose feeble patriotism cannot delight in general welfare, may tremble at public inquisition and contempt. While there is dependency in civil employments, and social intercourse is conducive to felicity, public opinion will be the sum of our social system, and private inclination will obediently revolve around it. It will shed on character the light of impartial truth, and merit will be brilliant in its beams. But it is important that the public mind be preserved from incorrect ideas of freedom and equality, and public manners from extravagance and luxury. When the love of liberty becomes a political passion it inclines too strongly to licentious irregularity. If civil liberty be derived from the protection of authorities, constituted by the general will, no one can resist the laws without assailing the principle of security and freedom. But when the people are deluded with chimerical notions of liberty, the rules and administration of justice are esteemed oppressive. The legislature may ordain expedient regulations, but the magistrate can never enforce them if delinquency obtain relief from the protecting sympathy of the public. When the civil powers are so unwisely resisted; when the people reject municipal restraints, wild disorder will prevail and real liberty be destroyed.

Nothing is so pleasing to republican temper as equality; but the popular conception of its nature is sometimes inimical to its existence. If it consist in the uniform operation of laws which create no particular disability or privilege, it does not annihilate civil distinction, or require even distribution of wealth and honor. If a free people be delighted with visionary notions of equality, wisdom and virtue will be objects of odium and insurmountable obstacles to civil and military advancement. Genius and integrity will flee, or be driven, from employment. Cowardice, or thoughtless courage, will lead the national armies to disgrace and ruin. Stupidity will sleep, passion redden on the tribunals of justice, and folly, in official robes, vociferate the praises of ignorance, the danger and inutility of knowledge. To preserve an appearance of equality, inferior classes of society will assume the indolent leisure and expensive

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habits of opulence. To avoid plebeian encroachment, the affluent will redouble the splendor of parade and extravagance of luxury. The absurd contention will terminate in corruption of manners, venality of suffrage and violation of laws. Liberty never resided among a poor, indolent, expensive commonalty; a proud, incapable, indigent aristocracy; for the society of villiany and madness is incompatible with the purity of her nature.

Extravagance and luxury are inconsistent with republican manners. In proportion to the number of desires are our labor and solicitude to indulge them. If a republican be devoted to this selfish employment, patriotic feeling will be extinguished; and if he pursue it with iniquity, virtue and the laws will perish. No man can be a good citizen who labors with unceasing toil to accumulate riches; regrets the departure of opulence, or contrives expedients to enjoy the ease of indolence and delights of luxury without corresponding affluence. The features of republican character are firmness, simplicity and temperance. A timid, sensual, wavering being is incapable of the dignity and virtue of a free-man. To him who wishes to repose in indolence, or languish with voluptuous pleasure, liberty is of little importance; but the activity and plainness of republican manners are more intolerable than servitude. When the Romans became wealthy and luxurious, their republican manners, liberty and patriotism expired. The wonderful people who have subdued the world at last submitted to a seductive philosopher. Rome was the mistress of nations, and Epicurus the master of Rome.

The excellence of your government has been displayed and its dangers exhibited. Cultivate political knowledge and virtue; preserve equality and freedom, but avoid licentiousness; gather wealth from your fertile soil, but dash the chalice of luxury from your lips. Let it not be said the mind has conceived a policy too pure and liberal for the heart; but be as perfect as your government, and it will last forever. The genius of Liberty was driven from the old world, and fled to your fathers, who conducted her into the temple of concord and appointed their valiant sons her protectors. Will you be encouraged by her smiles of condescending benevolence to prostrate order and decorum? Will you permit ignorance and vice to enter the temple and murder its divine inhabitant? If such deplorable misfortune happen, you may see, with

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anguish, the reign of barbarism reëstablished in your country, or the palace of Tyranny erected on the grave of Liberty.

Your fathers constructed an extensive edifice, whose beauty and convenience are much admired, but whose perishable nature is lamented by the world. Endeavor to preserve it from decay, and protect it from storms of violence. Alarming dangers threaten its existence. While the civilized world is convulsed, kings fall from their thrones, and nations disappear, will your fabric remain unshaken by the extending ruin? Lo, Sedition waves his torch in the West—Hostility frowns in the East. Fly and extinguish the flame which is kindling in the wilderness. Carry your Eagle to the Atlantic, to protect your shores, and remind the world that he never yields to an enemy while there is a tree or mountain of refuge.

Delivered in the Episcopal Church.

* * * * *

"At a meeting of The Washington Society of Alexandria, the 23rd February, 1807, it was unanimously *Resolved*, That the thanks of this Society be presented to Francis Lightfoot Lee, Esquire, for the elegant, appropriate, and sensible Oration, this day delivered by him, and that a copy thereof be requested for publication.

G. DENEALE, *Sec'y.*"

Alexandria Daily Advertiser, February 25, 1807.

VIII

THE ORATION BY JOHN DOUGLAS SIMMS, ESQUIRE

JULY 4, 1808

BEFORE I commence the task your unmerited favor has assigned me, permit me to solicit that indulgence to which youth and inexperience have so just a claim. To add one new emotion to the number of those which are already awakened by the remembrance of our national nativity—to unite to the accuracy of fact the elegance of expression, or the beauties of arrangement, are objects to which ingenuity and eloquence alone can aspire. How, then, shall a youthful orator attempt the performance of a task so arduous? Or where should he find confidence but in that liberality which has been uniformly extended to his predecessors, and to which he would urge, as an additional claim, the difficulty of a subject so trite and so familiar.

History, fellow-citizens, records but few events so well entitled to the admiration of the world as that which we are assembled to commemorate. The acquisition of a territory, or the subjugation of an empire, may excite a transient plaudit, a momentary admiration, but the triumph of a virtuous people contending for the inherent rights of nature, will be remembered with delight when the victories of ambition are forgotten, and the proud monuments of wealth and splendor are viewed only with abstract curiosity or cold indifference.

The history of revolutions is too often a recital of the vices of mankind, and in tracing the progressive steps which have led to the abolition of one government and the establishment of another. The heart sickens at "the huge enormity of crime on crime accumulating" that marked the reign of tyranny, rather than the progress of liberty. To this general reproach, the Revolution which gave birth to our independence, forms a happy exception. We fought, not to exterminate, but to save; not to abridge the rights of man, but establish them.

So long as the mother country evinced attention to the interests of her colonies they acquiesced in her authority, but when that attention ceased they renounced an allegiance which lost its obligation when it failed to command a correspondent protection. England, regarding us



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only as the ministers to her appetite, the mine from which she could occasionally replenish her exhausted treasury, forgot that the duty of the sovereign and the subject was reciprocal. Lost in the golden dreams of sinecure revenue, she never once remembered that a people, who in the spirit of enterprise had relinquished a country, endeared by the ties of birth and affinity to acquire new possessions in a remote and uncultivated land, would imbibe a spirit of independence which could not tamely submit to a deprivation of its rights.

Ours was not the mad contest of ambition, or the sudden ebullition of a rebellious spirit. When petition and remonstrance were alike disregarded, and oppression grew with submission, it was time for a more cogent appeal. Arms alone could give redress. The olive branch had been rejected, and the pride of Britain left us the painful but necessary alternative of the sword.

The appeal to arms had been preceded by every effort for conciliation consistent with the spirit of freemen. We recounted the various acts of oppression and injustice under which we suffered. We examined with boldness and impartiality the rights of nature and of nations. These expostulations were disregarded—this examination, bold and conclusive, was treated with a contemptuous silence.

'Twas at this period that the people of America rose to resist the encroachments of tyranny, and to offer to the world the novel spectacle of an infant nation contending for its liberty, in opposition to a people bound by the most sacred obligations to cherish and protect it. We have seen the anxiety of nations excited, when two contending armies have met to decide the fate of a city, or the extent of a boundary—what then must have been their sensations when they beheld this great and interesting contest? To an army accustomed to the discipline of war and inured to its hardships were opposed an assemblage of men whose habits and pursuits were all averse to bloodshed and devastation. But though inferior in numbers and in discipline, we exceeded our invaders in virtue and in patriotism.

When an oppressed people, animated by the resistless spirit of liberty, rise to assert their rights—when private interest is immolated on the altar of public utility, and every arm nerved by the sense of impending

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danger, discipline cannot sustain the shock, or numbers impede their progress to success.

The mercenary hireling who is impelled to battle by the expectation of reward or the hope of plunder, is unequal to contend with the native citizen whose aim is freedom, and whose reward is the consciousness of having served his country with zeal and with fidelity. In no instance, perhaps, were these truths more fully established than in our Revolutionary contest. It is here we perceive the superiority of the untutored native to the disciplined foreigner—the soldier of freedom—to the slave of despotism.

To enter into a minute detail of the circumstances which marked our progress to liberty would be unnecessary and uninteresting—they have already become the brilliant subject of history; and by consulting the page on which they are recorded, future tyrants may be taught to remember that a people strong in the spirit of freedom are invincible; they will serve as beacons to direct succeeding revolutionists in the arduous task of acquiring independence: in our soldiers they will perceive a dauntless bravery, a persevering activity and a fidelity to be found only in the breast of incorruptible patriotism; in our officers, instructed only by the dangers they had escaped, they will find a facility of design and a promptitude of action which would do honor to the wisdom and energy of a veteran.

It is much to be regretted that the wisdom of the nation should be opposed to the erection of monuments expressive of the public gratitude. Other nations have employed the painter's and the sculptor's art in commemorating the birth of a poet, or the conquest of a city, but America cannot boast a single monument on which the deeds of patriotism are recorded or inscribed with the splendid virtues of a Washington, a Green, a Wooster, a Morgan, a Montgomery, a Warren, or a Mercer.

"The storied urn or animated bust" cannot revive the ashes of ancestral worth, but they cherish in posterity a spirit of patriotism and a laudable emulation for similar testimonials. The youthful hero wandering among the cenotaphs of his forefathers feels a patriotic inspiration: fancy translates him to the field of battle, reanimates the mouldering victor and reëchoes in his ear the triumphant acclamations of an

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emancipated people; in the kindling glow of enthusiasm he anticipated the day of peril, and the last reward of valor, when his mausoleum shall arise to perpetuate the remembrance of his services.

The pleasing emotions which arise in the American bosom from the contemplation of the great events that marked our Revolution, and of the glorious characters of the heroes and statesmen by whom they were achieved, are greatly heightened when that Revolution is compared in its progress and result to that of France, which was so speedily to succeed it, and which it, in some degree, contributed to produce.

Eventful epoch in the history of France and of the world. How little did the great agitators of the political atmosphere foresee the extent of the storm they were laboring to produce, and which has been destined in its progress to overwhelm with ruin its authors and their schemes—to bury in devastation the surrounding governments and to banish liberty from the continent of Europe.

The sympathies of the American nation were naturally interested in the success of a people complaining of similar grievances, and professing the same principles which had actuated them in the assertion of their rights. Its sensibilities were alive to the appeal of liberty—and impetuosity allowed no time for analysis. In the ardor of enthusiasm with a generous though mistaken zeal, they hailed the brilliant dawn of French regeneration. The more wise and considerate portion of our citizens condemned this hasty espousal—and however they might rejoice at the prospect of a reformation of abuses in the government of France, they trembled at the extent of their views when they reflected upon the versatile, volatile and voluptuous character of Frenchmen, so unfit for republicanism. Their fears, alas! were too well founded, and experience has demonstrated the accuracy of their foresight—for what has France gained by all the bloodshed, cruelties and devastations of her revolution? She has gained only the knowledge of her incapacity for the enjoyment of a republican government—but she has lost in the experiment that portion of liberty she before possessed, and has witnessed the truth of a principle advanced by her illustrious Montesquieu, that “the natural place of virtue is near to liberty, but it is not nearer to extreme liberty than it is to servitude.”

The political convulsions which have agitated the world at various

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periods will always serve as instructive lessons to succeeding ages; but the history of France during the eventful years of her revolution is peculiarly adapted to crush the restless spirit of insurrection, and to guard popular credulity against the subtle poison of intrigue and ambition.

When the passions of a deluded populace are excited, when prudence is lost in prejudice, and each discontented spirit ready to commence the work of desolation, there generally appears among them some prostituted genius who, like the Demon of Destruction—

*Rides on the whirlwind, and
Directs the storm!*

So it was with France. In the midst of anarchy and confusion, we behold Robespierre, Condorcet, and Marat, adding fuel to the flame, and directing the hand of extermination—magnifying the errors of the existing government and indulging in the delusive theory of the people's sovereignty, they persuaded their fickle countrymen that they who till then considered themselves free and happy, were oppressed and miserable. The constitution of France at that time excelled any that had preceded it in the security and protection of the property and person of of the subject. It became necessary then to excite odium against the monarch—and by representing him as cruel, arbitrary, and unjust—to impute the same imperfections to the source from which he derived his authority—and even admitting the truth of the accusations reiterated against the unfortunate Louis, the conduct of his subjects will ever merit the detestation of the world.

*And pity, like a naked, new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or Heaven's cherubin, hors'd
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind!*

Another monarch, fallen from the pinnacle of greatness, is a subject which cannot fail to touch the heart of sensibility, even the heart that is united to him only by the cord of sympathy. What then shall we say

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of France when, renouncing the ties of loyalty and discarding at the same moment the feelings of nature, we behold her exulting in the sufferings of her degraded sovereign? At that awful moment, when the wounded spirit waits the stroke of liberation, humanity would believe that the debt of retribution was discharged, and every heart would swell with compassion for the bleeding victim. But Frenchmen hailed with savage triumph the blow that annihilated at once the monarch and the man! They have no longer a Louis—nor can the traveller find where he, who once filled the most splendid throne in Europe, is interred—for “no trace or vestige remains of that spot where, shrouded by the doubtful gloom of twilight, ancient loyalty might have repaired and paid the tribute of a tear—or, superstition breathed its ritual for the departed spirit.”

Happy would it have been for the world if the effects of this revolution had been confined to France. All civilized nations feel its influence—and from the contemplation of more limited misfortunes we turn with increased anxiety to the picture of universal affliction. Nations have resigned their liberties, purchased with the blood of their ancestors, and cherished for ages with religious devotion into the hands of a tyrant whose vast ambition, not satisfied with the subjugation of one country, seeks a more worthy object in the acquirement of universal dominion.

Institutions, venerable for their antiquity and endeared by the experience of their utility, have vanished at his imperial nod. Nations, intimidated by his power, have renounced their laws and customs, compelled to acknowledge defects in their constitution where none existed, and to supplicate the healing aid of this great political regenerator.

Among the victims to French dominion the eye of sympathy first discerns degraded Switzerland. On her wild and inaccessible mountains the genius of Liberty seems to have fixed her residence, and her hardy sons, desired by nature, to officiate at her altar. But Switzerland was the first to attract the eyes of France and to feel the baleful influence of that revolution which, by progressive steps, has prostrated the liberties of the greater part of Europe. Under the sacred name of friendship, and professing the philanthropic wish of restoring freedom to their country, she desolated and enslaved it. The name of Uri, the first to assert her rights, and the last to defend them, will never be forgotten. The spirit

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of Tell animated and inspired his descendants. Those hills which till then had reëchoed only the shepherd's pipe, or huntsman's horn, now rung with the wild acclamations of Liberty or Death! and their rude inhabitants, armed only with the implements of husbandry or the fragments of the rock, sallied forth to oppose a disciplined army. The issue of a contest so unequal, was the triumph of oppression and the subjugation of Switzerland. She is no longer known as the residence of Freedom, and all that remains unchanged in this once free and happy country is the wild magnificence of its scenery, so congenial to the temper of its inhabitants.

The fate of Italy, too, remarkable for its ancient splendor and its modern degradation, will be remembered with regret. The statesman, the hero, and the scholar will be equally interested in the contemplation of a country once prolific in political eminence, in valor and in literature. Polite literature, with the arts and sciences, which seemed lost in discord and ignorance, revived in Italy; and having lost the splendid title of mistress of the world, she now obtained the less magnificent but more honorable appellation of its instructress. It is here we see Dante, Tasso, and Ariosto; here Petrarch sung the pains of a hopeless passion, while the rare combination of painting, poetry and sculpture distinguished Michelangelo. While Venice afforded but little symptoms of improvement, Florence was the temple of science and the nursery of genius, confirming the much contested fact that literature can flourish only in the sun of Liberty; for can it be expected that the politician will examine government in its various forms with the freedom of enquiry, when he is compelled to ascribe perfection to his own? Can the subject of a despot venture to admire the freedom of a republican? Or can the poet clip the excursive wing of fancy, and find a subject for his music in the panegyric of his master or the splendor of a court?

It is unnecessary to proceed with the melancholy catalogue of nations whose independence has been beaten down by the arms of France, or seduced into the toils of her intrigue.

From the contemplation of changes in the political state of Europe, so great and important, we are naturally led to a consideration of the cause by which they were produced.

To change suddenly systems of government—to abolish at once insti-

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tutions confirmed by time—and to eradicate the prejudices of habit, are objects seldom attempted, and more rarely attained. In the history of nations we generally discern an enthusiastic attachment to the form of government under which they had lived for ages, a religious veneration for institutions founded by their ancestors, and a pertinacity in local prejudices too strong to yield at once to the influence of reason and of truth.

If alterations have been made in their civil or religious ordinances, it has been the work of time; but within the last and present centuries, Europe has exhibited phenomena in politics unequalled in the annals of history. By the potent hand of Bonaparte, governments have been subverted, institutions dissolved, and habits either changed or eradicated. What was once the work of ages has now become the effect of a campaign.

Superstition, ever ready to ascribe great and unexpected occurrences to miraculous interposition, would regard this universal victor as a malignant spirit liberated for a time to be the scourge of the world. Intriguing discontent will hail him the universal philanthropist, while servile timidity would represent him too good to err and too powerful to be opposed. But it is not unusual, in times of trouble and confusion, to see instances of individual elevation. Popular impetuosity must be directed by some superior hand, or it is necessarily exhausted by the violence of its own exertion. Is it then wonderful that while France was distracted with intestine commotions—when rage had grown weary with indulgence, and cruelty sick of destruction—a genius should appear capable to direct, and artful enough to concentrate, the national energies? To the native feebleness of infatuation, of the conquered, and the vast superiority of the conquerors in skill and in numbers, is to be attributed his success in arms.

Let us now, fellow citizens, turn our attention to America. Hitherto in the enjoyments of peaceful industry, we have remained the silent spectators of the revolutions in Europe—we have seen regal government abolished and imperial authority established on its ruins. Our indignation and regret have been alternately excited at the pusillanimity that relinquished freedom without a struggle, and the spirit of independence which rose in opposition, only to render its fall more lament-

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able. Events so replete with instructions cannot fail to make a lasting impression on the minds of reflecting republicans. They will teach them to repress the rising spirit of innovation, to preserve that integral strength without which the republic is endangered, and to distrust the professions of designing ambition.

Ours is a nation free and independent, intrinsically great and powerful. We claim no celestial origin, no superior lustre from the records of antiquity, or the splendid achievements of imaginary ancestry. We trace not our extraction to some immaculate priest who attained the honor of Apotheosis—or to the titled robber who, having followed glory “through a sea of blood,” returned to his throne to contemplate the vast destruction his villainy had accomplished. The spirit of liberty created us. Heroes, whose names yet vibrate on the ear, were our progenitors.

The evils which generally result from extent of territory are diminished by the form of government under which we live. It must necessarily happen that the interests of a remote people are neglected or misconceived by a legislature too attentive to local advantages, or ignorant of their temper and of their habits. But in a congress of representatives each portion of our extensive country has its proper influence in the system of legislation. This equal participation, by consolidating interests, unites exertion, and renders each state equally jealous of innovation on the general system of government, and equally prompt in defending it against the attacks of foreign aggression.

By a wise separation of the executive, legislative and judiciary departments, we may enjoy the rare advantages of laws dictated by an honest zeal for the public welfare—an exposition of those laws, free from bias and constraint, and an impartial fidelity in their execution. But if the executive should leave the sphere to which he should be confined, if the legislature should cease to be actuated by patriotic motives, and the judiciary lose that independence which should characterize the expositors of the law, we may retain the name of a republic, but we no longer possess its essential principles. Destroy the equipoise of power, and we cease to be free and equal.

The judiciary has ever been considered the palladium of the people's rights. Founding its decisions on the firm and immutable principles of

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reason and of justice, or upon the known and fundamental maxims of established law, it gives certainty to right, and precision to its exercise. But surely we cannot expect decisions founded on principles like these from the venal judge who sacrifices honesty to interest, and dares not evince a spirit of independence lest, perchance, it cost him his office.

The legislative branch of our government is not less calculated to promote the general welfare, when properly exercised, or more detrimental to its interests when committed to the hands of ignorant or prejudiced representatives.

Popular elections, though well calculated to maintain equality of influence, are nevertheless peculiarly inviolable to artful and designing demagogues. By flattering the prejudices of the people—by withdrawing their attention from measures and confining it to men, they acquire an influence which in times of truth and conviction they could never have obtained. Aspiring folly, jealous of the superiority of talents and of knowledge, will represent its Utopian system as the only talisman by which the republic can be preserved. Kindred ignorance listens with credulity to a tale so flattering to its prejudices and exalts men to seats in the national assembly whom nature never destined to move beyond the precincts of private occupation. Liberty and equality are the constituent principles of a republican government, but it is a liberty restrained by law—an equality founded in personal security. When liberty becomes licentiousness and equality consists in an equal indiscriminate title to the dignities of the nation, personal security is at an end, and the complicated machine of government, committed to the direction of political empyricism, must cease to operate for the public good.

To correct fortuitous errors, and to preserve unimpaired the native excellence of their constitution, are objects worthy the attention of a people dependent on its integral strength, and sensible of the advantages which have hitherto resulted from its salutary provisions. May we not then, fellow citizens, cherish the pleasing hope that at a time like this, which demands unanimity and exertion, party spirit may be taught no longer to distract our councils—the odious distinctions of federalist and republican be lost in the conciliating terms of friend and brother—and proscription be denounced only against wilful error or established guilt.

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The system of retaliation adopted by France and England threatens annihilation to our commerce. Neutrality has become criminal, and rights, till now uncontroverted, are violated upon the broad plea of necessity. A preventive policy has been introduced, to which Copenhagen fell the first instructive victim. Her mouldering ruins will eternize the disgrace of a nation who deemed perfidy justified by policy and robbery legalized by emergency.

We need no longer consult the antiquated pages of Grotius, Puffendorf or Vattel—we shall derive more applicable instruction from the novel system of imperial edicts, royal manifestoes, and blockading decrees.

It remains for America to determine whether she will submit to violations so gross and unexampled. It remains for the world to witness whether the spirit which actuated her in the acquirement of liberty will continue to animate her in the preservation of her rights. Let it never be said that our ancestors acquired independence but degenerate posterity had not the courage to defend it.

We have attained an eminence in the scale of nations—let it ever be employed in preserving that equilibrium of power which can alone set bounds to the progress of ambition, or preserve, uninterrupted, the political harmony of the world. Stimulated by the example of our progenitors, and sensible of the invaluable inheritance they have transmitted us, may we preserve unimpaired its native lustre; and while the nations of Europe rise or fall with the tide of fortune, may each succeeding anniversary of our national birthday be peaceful, free and independent.

Delivered in the Presbyterian Meeting House.

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“At a meeting of The Washington Society, July 4th, 1808, *Resolved* unanimously, That the thanks of the Society be presented to John Douglas Simms, Esq., for his appropriate and interesting Oration, this day delivered, and that a copy of it be requested for publication.

G. DENEALE, *Sec'y.*”

Alexandria Gazette, July 11, 1808.

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IX

THE ORATION BY HONORABLE ROBERT GOODLOE HARPER

FEBRUARY 22, 1810

TO CELEBRATE the birth of the good and great; to recount the events of their lives and recall the recollection of their virtues and achievements, has been regarded in every age as a solemn and important duty. It awakens the best feelings of the heart. It suspends for a while the operations of low and selfish passions. And though it cannot transform every man into a patriot and hero, it inspires all with a generous, though too often a transient ardor, to imitate the virtues and emulate the fame of those on whom these glorious appellations have been bestowed, by the voice of their country.

Hence, almost every nation has selected from its annals, fabulous or authentic, the character of some illustrious individual as the theme of praise and the object of imitation. Thus England has her Alfred, Scotland her Wallace, Sweden her Vasa, France her Henry, and Russia her Peter, whose glory is regarded as the inheritance of the nation, their character as its brightest example, and their birth as the most interesting epoch in its history.

Where the truth of history fails, resort is often had to fabulous legends or poetical invention for decking out imaginary heroes in colours suitable to render them fit objects of national admiration.

And too frequently has it happened that nations, wanting examples among themselves of heroic virtue, guided by wisdom and employed in promoting the good of mankind, have been induced, and in some sort compelled, to bestow this high meed of admiration and praise on the fortuitous success of wild and adventurous ambition, the useless or pernicious display of romantic valour, or the more guilty achievements of dark and perfidious policy combined with force.

But it is our happiness and glory, Americans, to be alike exempt from the temptations of admiring what ought to be pitied or detested, and from the necessity of resorting to fiction or fable for a proper object of national veneration. The authentic history of our country presents to our view, and many of us have ourselves seen, a man more exalted



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and perfect than the poets of other nations have imagined or their fabulous traditions have portrayed. While on this day which gave him birth, we dwell with delightful recollection on his actions, and draw lessons of wisdom and virtue from his life, may it not be permitted to us to indulge an honest pride in contrasting him with those who have heretofore been deemed most great among men, and displaying the sublime superiority which he maintains above them?

In drawing this contrast we must not dishonour his name by bringing it into competition with the crowd of kings, warriors and politicians whom in every age vanity, ignorance or adulation have been miscalled great. Still less must we admit into the contest those ferocious and blood-thirsty destroyers, whom divine Providence seems from time to time to have let loose on the earth as the instruments of its vengeance on guilty man. However dazzling their achievements or widely extended their devastations; however triumphant their arts or their arms, they are to be regarded as the enemies and not the friends of mankind. Their progress has been directed by perfidy, violence and fraud, and their footsteps are marked with ruin and blood. Their names, when rescued by too officious history from merited oblivion, far from being held up as fit objects of admiration, ought to be gibbeted to fame, and remembered only to be abhorred. Successful crime must not usurp the palm of greatness. That high reward is reserved for great talents directed to good purposes; for valour and wisdom united with justice, humanity and benevolence; for magnanimity, disinterestedness and fortitude, which in prosperous or adverse fortune, maintain, like the sun, in a serene or stormy sky, the even tenor of their way, and steadily pursue their great and useful designs.

*Who noble ends by noble means attains,
Or failing, smiles in exile or in chains,
Like good Aurelius, let him reign, or bleed
Like Socrates, that man is great indeed.*

But when we have confined the comparison with Washington, as truth and justice require, to the small number of those who possess a well-founded claim to the name of great; who have united the character of lawgiver and warrior, were adorned with some of the milder

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virtues, and produced by their actions a lasting or a beneficial effect on the destiny of nations, we shall still find reason to glory in the result and to assert the claim of our country to the honor of having produced the first of men.

In what age or country, indeed, shall we find that rare assemblage of great and opposite qualities, by which our Washington was distinguished? Where shall we see united his calm deliberation, his promptitude and correctness of decision, and his ardour, caution and perseverance in execution? Where but in him shall we find a courage which no danger could appall, joined to a fortitude which no complication of difficulties and misfortunes could shake, a prudence never surprised or disconcerted, and a wisdom which, in situations the most untried and arduous, always discerned the right course, and continually found new resources in the midst of disaster and universal dismay? Where else shall we perceive a discernment, which always discovered and correctly estimated the talents of others; united with a magnanimity unceasingly endeavoring to draw them forth, to avail itself of their aid, and to acknowledge their merit and its own obligations? In what other man shall we find strong passions completely controlled and governed by the soundest judgment; like a ship impelled by a strong breeze, but ever obedient to the helm; and all the mild and amiable virtues of private and domestic life blended with the highest qualifications of the statesman and hero? Where but in him shall we look for a modesty which always endeavored to retire from public view, and avoided instead of courting employments, honors and applause; combined with dignity which threw a fascination greater than that of royalty around his person, and even in a private station, impressed on his equals in rank, and his superiors in age and in fortune, a respect mingled with veneration and awe?

Where in fact shall we discover a man, whose ever ruling motive was a desire to do right, whose wisdom always discerned what was right, and whose courage and fortitude never for a moment faltered in its pursuit?

Such was Washington, and Providence, no less propitious to him in the part allotted him to act, than bountiful in the qualifications for filling it, placed him in scenes which required the display of all his great

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endowments, and set them all in the fairest light. There, contending on the side of justice and weakness, against power and oppression, he was enabled, with means the most inadequate and, in despite of difficulties the most appalling, to perform, without one act of inhumanity or violence, the most illustrious of human achievements, the establishment of an empire. This empire he established for his country, and not for himself. He watched over it with paternal solicitude while it seemed to require his care; and when that appeared no longer necessary, he consummated his last great triumph over the love of power, the peculiar passion of great minds, and retired, amidst the universal regrets of his country, to exercise the virtues and enjoy the calm and rational delights of a private station.

To such a character we look in vain for a parallel in the history of the world. Whether we ascend to the earliest times and, passing beyond the confines of authentic history, penetrate the regions of fable; or come down through modern ages to our days, the search is equally unavailing. Were we to regard as a true history the beautiful romance which Xenophon has left to us under the name of the "Cyropædia" or education of Cyrus, we should find a man brave, temperate, enterprising, active and persevering. We should perceive in his character many traits of justice, humanity and benevolence. But we should find him passing his whole life in attacking and subduing his unoffending neighbors, instead of laboring to promote the happiness of his own countrymen; running eagerly from conquest to conquest; and spreading continually over a large portion of the earth the miseries and horrors inseparable from invasion. Though he commanded his own passions, and governed mildly those whom he had unjustly subdued, he must be reduced to the level of a mere conqueror, less destructive and odious than others of his class, but not worthy to be brought in comparison with the sublime character of the hero and sage who drew his sword from necessity and not from choice; who fought for his country, not for himself; who wept over the calamities which the injustice of others compelled him to inflict; and constantly exerted his great talents, not in extending his own power, but in promoting the happiness of others.

The delusive glare spread over the actions and character of Alexander by the eloquence of the Greeks, may mislead some into the belief that

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he is worthy of being compared with Washington. He displayed indeed great talents and extensive views, with here and there an act of seeming humanity. But when we remove the veil by which he is surrounded, we discover a fierce and bloody barbarian, whose understanding the lessons of Aristotle and the literature of the Greeks had enlarged and refined, without softening his savage nature, or instilling virtue or justice into his heart. Cruel from disposition and from policy, he was ever the slave of his own passions, and trampled with remorseless fury on the rights and feelings of others. He murdered his friend in a sally of brutal rage; coolly crucified many thousand Tyrians on their own shores, because they had bravely defended their country against his unprovoked invasions; and at length suitably ended his detestable life in the midst of drunken orgies instituted to grace the funeral of a companion of his debaucheries. The comparison of such a monster with Washington cannot for a moment be endured.

Epaminondas, the most illustrious of the Greeks, was a patriot, statesman and hero. More worthy than any of his countrymen to be compared with Washington, he was still inferior in the wisdom of his plans, the extent of his views, and the purity of his motives. The whole object of his policy was to raise his country to an unjust superiority over her sister states. In the prosecution of this plan he had few difficulties to encounter. The operations were simple and limited, and the contest of short duration. Such a contest called for no display of those great qualities which, during a long course of adverse fortune, in a most unequal struggle, were so conspicuous in Washington. And the early death of Epaminondas, in the midst of the conflict, deprived him of the opportunity of consummating, like Washington, his glory by laying down his power when it was no longer necessary for the safety of his country.

As Epaminondas among the Greeks, so the elder Scipio may be selected as the most perfect model of Roman greatness. Mild, amiable, virtuous and just, learned and polite, wise in counsel and great in action, distinguished in public affairs yet fond of retirement, successful in war yet preferring the arts of peace, he seemed born to adorn his country, and to throw lustre on the age in which he lived. Scipio, too, was a citizen and a patriot; and his most splendid military achievement, his

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victory over Hannibal, may be said to have been performed in defending his country.

But Scipio had not, like Washington, to contend against superior force, superior discipline, and superior military and political institutions. He was not obliged to create continually the means with which he acted; to struggle continually against the indecision, the division and the imbecility of an infant and ill-organized government, limited in its powers, and thwarted in their exercise by the jealousies, the langour and the local views of numerous subordinate but independent sovereignties. He was not impeded continually in his operations by the perpetual tendency of his army to dissolution, through the vices of its construction; or by the constant weariness and frequent despondency of a peaceful people, wholly unused to war, and accustomed from their infancy to ease, plenty and domestic comfort. On the contrary, he was aided by the most perfect military constitution that the world has ever seen. His nation had for many ages been a nation of soldiers, cradled in war and brought up in conquest. And, to crown the whole, he was supplied, directed and supported by a government equally renowned for bold, profound and steady policy, for the vigour and wisdom of its measures, and for unshaken constancy in the prosecution of its plans.

The triumph of Scipio was, therefore, the triumph of Roman institutions, Roman discipline, and the warlike character of Roman native troops over the feeble, factious and divided government and mercenary armies of Carthage; a fabric illy constructed and rotten in its foundation, which even the genius of Hannibal could not sustain. The triumph of Washington was the triumph of genius, courage and constancy over superior force and superior means from without, and difficulties of every description within.

The great talents and splendid qualities of Cæsar have bestowed a lustre on his name, by which the eyes of mankind have been too much dazzled to perceive easily the defects of his character. He was wise, brave, magnanimous, learned and eloquent; and the splendour of his military achievements was scarcely greater than that of his personal accomplishments and political abilities. But ambition and the lust of power were the ruling passions of heart. For their gratification, and for that alone, were his talents unceasingly exerted; and for that at

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last he turned against the liberties of his country those arms which she had confided to his hands. How far does he sink below Washington, whose ruling passion was the love of his country, who fought only for her safety, and who laid down his arms when she no longer needed them.

Still further below him must we place Pompey, first the confederate and afterwards the rival of Cæsar. Superior to Cæsar in nothing, inferior in many things, equally ambitious, but less skilful or less fortunate, he had the same object in view, and would have enslaved his country had he succeeded.

In the character of Germanicus we find the promise of a Washington. But he lived in inauspicious times; the subject and adopted son of a jealous and cruel tyrant, by whose treacherous arts he was cut off in the full blossom of his virtues before they had time to bear the fruit which their spring had promised. His great qualities, his love of his country, his obedience to the laws, his industry, patience and fortitude, his humanity, justice and mild disposition, and the grief of his countrymen and of the surrounding nations for his untimely fate, the expression of which not even the fear of his vindictive and all-powerful murderer could suppress, give us reason to believe that had he lived in better times and more fortunate circumstances, the world might have seen another Washington.

Titus, too, is an illustrious and beloved name, whose virtues inspired the highest hopes, and who died too soon for the happiness of mankind. But he had no difficult part to act, no formidable enemy to oppose, no country to save. He was called on for no display of those great talents and heroic qualities which shine in the life and actions of Washington, with whom therefore he cannot be put in competition.

The emperor Trajan may be considered, in many points of view, as the most fortunate of the human race. Raised by lawful means to absolute power; ruling in peace over the whole civilized world; possessing an enlightened and elevated mind, a virtuous heart, and an amiable temper, with great vigor and activity of body, he united within himself more means of promoting the happiness of his species and of gratifying every noble passion of our nature than have fallen to the lot of any other mortal. An unfortunate passion, however, for military glory hur-

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ried him into unjust wars against his neighbors. He there consumed that time which ought to have been devoted to the good of his people, inflicted misery instead of diffusing blessings, and impaired the strength of his country in useless efforts to extend her limits.

The same capital defect appears in the character of Julian, a man still more extraordinary, though less amiable and less fortunate. If we add to this defect the observation that they were never called on to exert, and therefore cannot be known to have possessed the virtues of disinterestedness and patriotism, or the qualities which adversity calls forth, we must pronounce them great and illustrious as they were incapable of sustaining a comparison with Washington.

In Marcus Aurelius we see a wise and virtuous man seated on a throne; where he lived like a philosopher and governed like a statesman. The best education, aiding the happiest dispositions, fitted him to be what Washington in the same situation would have been—a perfect monarch; the delight of his own times and the admiration of the wise and good in every succeeding age. But though we knew that Washington possessed all the virtues of Aurelius, we cannot know, and have no reason to believe, that Aurelius united with them the talents and extraordinary qualities which bore Washington triumphantly through the trying scenes wherein he was called to act.

In a long lapse of ages which succeeded, we find nothing which can enter into this competition till Alfred of England arose, to break for a while the deep gloom of barbarism, ignorance and crime which had settled over mankind. Having delivered his country from bondage, reëstablished her government and reformed her institutions, he ruled like a sage over the kingdom which he had conquered like an hero and as a legislator restored. In the conflict with the Danes who held his country in bondage, he sustained and triumphed over the utmost severity of fortune; and when seated peaceably on the throne he displayed, with the talents of a monarch, all the virtues of a man and a citizen. A still more glorious victory was that which he achieved over the blindness of brutality of a barbarous age. And to crown his good fortune, he enjoyed in a protracted life and continued health the opportunity of laboring for the completion of his wise and benevolent designs. Here we find a character that might seem, at first view, to approach near to

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that of Washington. It comes indeed much nearer than any other on record. But a closer inspection will show how far it falls short.

Alfred, like Gustavus Vasa the Swedish hero, in a later age, fought for himself and not for his country. Like Vasa, he struggled to regain a throne from which he had been expelled, and risked nothing in the contest but a life which, in exile, obscurity and indigence, was not worth preserving. Even this life they hardly could be said to risk; for it was pursued with unceasing vigilance and activity by the usurpers, and was probably more safe in resistance than in concealment or flight.

But Washington fought for his country alone. He had no personal interest in the contest; and had he not been impelled to the field by his patriotic ardour, he might safely have enjoyed at home, in the midst of opulence, respect and pleasing occupation, that retirement which he so much loved.

Alfred, moreover, was the legitimate monarch of his country, to whose authority all who joined his standard or adhered to his cause implicitly submitted. He was therefore master of his own measures and means. He had to encounter none of those innumerable and perpetually recurring obstacles which must be surmounted by one who acts in such affairs by a delegated authority, depending on a distant and numerous body; whose apprehensions and alarms often counteract, or their indecision and delay wholly defeat, the best concerted and most important plans.

Alfred's nation was inured to war and hardships by its situation and the state of its manners. It smarted under a present and galling bondage which inflicted evils far more dreadful to it than those of war. The nation of Washington, on the contrary, was a nation of peaceful agriculturalists, wholly unused to war, its hardships or privations, and possessing almost universally the comforts of ease, plenty and personal independence. The evils which they took up arms to resist were in a great degree speculative and remote. They were descried by reason in their distant approach but had not come near enough to be felt, except by a few. But the evils and privations of resistance were immediate, palpable and painful. It is easy to see how much more difficult it was to keep alive the spirit of resistance and to maintain the conflict in one case than in the other.

On these accounts we must place even Alfred below Washington; and

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still more, Gustavus Vasa, whose character and action, though inferior to those of Alfred, very much resemble them.

Nearly in the same age with Alfred lived a man into whose name the appellation of great has been incorporated: Charles the Great, or Charlemagne, as he is always called in history. We might, therefore, expect to find in him a fit competitor with Washington; but if we inspect his character and actions, we shall find little to distinguish him from the host of conquerors whose crimes have stained the earth. Superior perhaps to Tamerlane, Genghis Khan and Attila, though greatly inferior to Cyrus or even to Alexander, he was engaged through a long life in unjust and sanguinary wars for the subjugation of countries which he could not govern, and the formation of an empire which he could not consolidate. He possessed, indeed, ideas of legislators above the age in which he lived; and might have been a great monarch had his mind been imbued with the love of justice and his heart open to the feelings of humanity. But let us dismiss him by repeating the maxim, that successful crime must not aspire to the palm of greatness.

Nearer to our own times lived a man whose objects, actions and character eminently entitle him to the name of great; and with whom this parallel must be concluded. Peter of Russia may claim, on various grounds, a lofty eminence over all who have lived before him or whom Europe has since produced. The idea, conceived by an innocent youth, of civilizing a barbarous nation and of beginning the work by civilizing himself; the courage, vigor and address with which the first and most formidable obstacles were encountered and subdued; the profound views of legislation and government which his untutored mind conceived at an early age; the resolution to quit in the full glow of the passions, all the delights of absolute power, all the gratifications which it affords to every youthful desire; and to travel in the character of a laborer into foreign countries, for the purpose of learning useful arts, which he might afterwards teach to his subjects; the determination in a young emperor to serve as a common soldier in his own army, and to rise slowly through all its different grades, in order to qualify himself for command, and to give his subjects an example of obedience and subordination; his skill in war; the vigor and constancy with which he bore up under a long course of defeat and disaster; the new resources

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which his genius continually found or created; and his ultimate triumph, with a few militia, over the best troops and greatest commander of the age; the wisdom, unshaken constancy and unwearied perseverance with which he pursued his plan, through his whole life, the magnanimity with which he sacrificed his ease, his pleasures and even the affections and feelings of his heart, to its accomplishment, for the good of his people; all mark a character of the most transcendent greatness, and compel us to acknowledge that it is only in the milder and more amiable virtues, that Washington can claim the superiority over Peter. It is by the union of those virtues, with all the great qualities of the mind and the heart, which Peter possessed; by the complete empire which he established and always maintained over his own passions; by a character to which detractions has not imputed a view, a life in which envy has not discovered a blot; that he rises above this his last and greatest competitor, and fixes himself immovably on the highest column in the temple of fame.

In this temple, dedicated by the human race to the great and good, he shall find a suitable place, though the little-minded malignity of party spirit denies to his ashes the tomb decreed by his mourning country. Although in this land which he saved, no monument be raised to his name, by the government which by him was established; although no public honors be decreed to his memory by those to whose freedom and happiness he devoted his life, yet his fellow citizens have entombed him in their hearts, and the veneration of mankind has given him a monument loftier than the pyramids and more solid than the granite of his native river. And the day shall soon arrive when the base passions which rose like a pestilent vapor to cloud his setting day, shall vie with the nation in works and institutions for doing honor to his memory.

. . . *Monumentum aere perennius,
Regalique situ pyramidum altior.*
(Horace.)

But, Americans, it is of little avail that we yield to a generous indignation at the neglect with which he is treated by the government of his country, or indulge the proud sentiment which results from a comparison of his character with the most illustrious in history, unless we endeavor

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to draw from his life some practical lessons for our own conduct. His mission to this world was not confined to the benefits which, while living, he might bestow on his country.

It was a part of his sublime vocation to live for us beyond the grave, and to leave us in his example a guide for our conduct through all future ages. "Though dead, he yet speaketh." Harken then to his voice. In the awful circumstances in which we are placed, take counsel from his wisdom. Let his spirit still guide us to safety.

A monster, the most fierce, sanguinary and relentless that has hitherto ravaged the earth, with his fangs fixed in the almost lifeless carcass of continental Europe, now casts his eye, with a baleful and malignant scowl, on our happy country, destined by him, though vainly I trust, as his future prey. Two powers alone resist; one with generous devotion and heroic constancy, but unequal means; the other with strength unimpaired and courage undismayed. Against her, as the only obstacle to his designs, all his efforts of fraud and force are directed. In the mighty struggle for her own preservation, she wards off the danger from our house; but sometimes in the heat of the conflict she trends inadvertently on our grass, or finds it necessary to throw down a fence on a distant part of our farm. The fierce assailant whom she struggles to repel haughtily and preëmtorily calls on us to resent these trespasses, as inexpiable injuries. He cries out that to avenge them we must aid him in destroying her. He tells us that to assert our honor and secure our own safety we must assist in pulling down the last barrier between ourselves and him. This demand he enforces by insults and menaces, each surpassing the other in aggravation; and by striking us whenever and wherever he can reach us. Shall we obey his call? Shall we blindly or basely submit to be cajoled or whipt into this act of self-destruction? Shall we light the torch which must consume our own dwelling in order to further the views of a desperate incendiary who wishes to burn the house of our neighbor? Ask how he would have acted in a situation so new and so awful. Look to the maxims of his policy and to his conduct for an answer.

Discarding all passion, prejudice and sinister motives from his mind; raising himself above the influence of resentment and of fear, he would calmly scan the character of the contest and the nature and extent of

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the danger to be apprehended from each contending party. He would quickly perceive that on one side it was a struggle for universal dominion, and for independence and existence on the other. He would see that in the attack every principle of justice, and every feeling of humanity, were scornfully set at nought; the rights of nations and of individuals trampled under foot; and their prosperity and happiness sacrificed without hesitation or remorse. In the defence against such an attack he would not be surprised to find that what was strictly due to others was sometimes overlooked; that weapons, the use of which in ordinary times could not be justified, were sometimes employed; that the blows levelled at the assailant should, sometimes through proximity of situation and sometimes through want of sufficient caution, rebound on those who stood behind the party assailed; or that leisure or even inclination should not always be found, in the pressure of so momentous a crisis, to attend sufficiently to complaints or make atonement for acknowledged though comparatively inconsiderable injuries.

In estimating the dangers to be apprehended from either contending party, he would perceive that the aggressor, being held in check by his antagonist, and having no arms long enough to reach us, could do us little hurt during the continuance of the struggle; but in case of success might instantly overwhelm us. Because success would unite the long arms of his antagonist to his own force, already irresistible wherever it can reach. Washington would also observe that the power which this success would place at our door has been uniformly employed in crushing all whom it could circumvent by fraud, or master by force; that its instruments have in every instance become its victims; and that while some respect, and even something like forbearance has sometimes been shown by it to such as bravely and firmly resist, the bitterest dregs in its cup of contempt, rapacity and oppression have always been reserved for those who seek by meanness and submission to propitiate its wrath or soften its fury.

On the other hand, he would perceive that the defending party, being placed in contact with us by the nature of its force, could do us great mischief during the struggle; but could never, in case of success, acquire that species of force which alone could render it formidable to our independence, our internal safety, or even our ultimate and permanent

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prosperity. He would discover that maritime power, however pre-eminent, may be mischievous on the sea, but cannot, unless united with great military power, be dangerous on the land; that it may molest, restrict or destroy maritime commerce, but cannot endanger national independence; that the military force of Britain, even if exerted against us, is not sufficient to make a lasting impression on our country; and that situated as she is, by the side of a most formidable foe infinitely superior in military means and even threatening her with maritime competition, she never can think of employing in an attack on us the forces which must forever be indispensable for her own defence.

In fine, he would perceive that the views of Britain are and ever must be confined to commerce and maritime power as the means of defence and independence; and never can extend to foreign conquests, for which it is no more fitted than a shark is for ravaging the forest.

Hence he would clearly perceive that we have much injury to fear from the hostility and resentment of England during the contest; but no permanent or important danger from her ultimate success.

Reversing the picture he would see, that should Britain sink in the struggle, the maritime superiority which she now holds and which in her hands is checked and balanced, by the maritime faculties of the rest of Europe, by the formidable military strength of her neighbor and rival, and by her own paucity of military means, must pass into the hands of her enemy. It would be there united with the most formidable military power that the modern world has seen; which, by this union, would be thenceforth rendered irresistible and omnipotent. The tiger, imbued with the faculties of the shark, would no longer find the ocean an obstruction to his ravages. To such a power no country would be distant, no retreat inaccessible. The hands of the French emperor, like those of Tiberius and Caligula, would reach to the utmost extremities of the earth. National independence, the life-spring of human dignity, energy and virtue, being crushed under the weight of universal despotism, the human mind would become inert, torpid and corrupt, and mankind would sink again into a state of darkness and barbarism from which nothing could rouse them but the long convulsions produced by some new eruption of fierce but uncorrupted barbarians.

Such, and not the "freedom of the seas," that shallow and hypocritical

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pretence set up by knaves as a trap for the weak, and a cloak for themselves, would be the ultimate effect, to us and to the civilized world, of the triumph of France in her present contest with Britain.

To us the immediate effect would be, not some interference with our commercial rights or speculations; not the exclusion of our ships from some countries of Europe, but a total destruction of our rights and freedom on the ocean; the application of our entire means and resources to the remaining purposes of the despot; the entire direction of our affairs, at first perhaps under the name of advice, but very soon in the undisguised shape of command; and should we presume to resist or refuse, then an attack on us here at home, with a combination of external and alas! of internal means, which though we might successfully withstand, would expose us to a long, painful and bloody struggle, calculated to inflict unspeakable misery on the generations sustaining it, and to throw our country a century back in the career of prosperity and improvement.

These efforts, certain as death and as permanent as time, the profound wisdom of Washington would perceive and would duly estimate. On that estimate he would found the system of measures which his country ought to pursue. He would say to Britain, "our danger is common, though you are first exposed. Your house is first assailed by the torrent, but should it sweep you away, we must next receive its shock. Our situation, and the nature of our institutions, which confine our power of exertion to defensive operations within our own country, render us unable to give you any direct assistance; but you shall have our countenance, our cordial good wishes, and such indirect aid as a free and friendly intercourse can afford; nor shall any menaces or artful suggestions of your and our foe induce us to omit these duties to ourselves and to you; much less to prepare the way for our own destruction by aiding him in yours. Some of the measures indeed which you adopt in your defence, are very inconvenient to us. Some of them militate against what we deem our incontestible rights. In the use of those means which we admit to be lawful, much abuse sometimes takes place. To nothing of this in common times would we submit. But these interests, when compared with the stupendous magnitude of the stake which we have in the contest, sink into insignificance. Their discussion shall therefore be postponed to happier times. We trust that when the danger is past

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you will readily adjust them; and if, contrary to our expectation, you should then refuse, we shall be able to adopt suitable measures for doing justice to ourselves without hazarding objects infinitely more important."

Such, in the present awful state of the world, would be the language of Washington to Britain. To Spain, her noble fellow-combatant, he would then turn, and cordially stretching out the hand of friendship would say, "You are also fighting in the cause of humanity and national independence. The cause is ours as well as yours. We admire your heroism, sympathize in your sufferings, and look with anxious solicitude on the vicissitudes of your fortune. We are too far removed to give you direct assistance; which, indeed, in any extent within the reach of our means, could not perhaps be useful to you. But you possess our warmest wishes; and so far as friendly intercourse, countenance and encouragement can aid your glorious struggle, on that aid you may rely."

Thus would Washington speak, and thus would he act; for it was a part of his great and elevated character never to deal in professions or unmeaning declamation, but to give a practical effect to the feelings of his heart and the dictates of his judgment. Let us then, Americans, with this highest of human authorities to support us, turn to those in whose hands the direction of our affairs has been placed, and pointing to "the great example which ought to be ever before them," to the conduct of him who was "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen," say unto them, "Go ye and do likewise."

Here the subject appointed for the usual exercises of this day would permit us to stop. But we have still a mournful and tender duty to perform, which belongs more immediately to this Society. Since we last assembled, our much loved president, dear to his family, his friends, to us and his country, has departed from us forever. It would illy befit us, who were associated with him in this noble institution, and many of whom were the companions of his latter years, to permit this first occasion of mutual condolence, which has occurred since his loss, to pass without some public testimony of our affection and respect.

Let us then be permitted to descend from the sublime elevation, to which we were raised in the contemplation of Washington, and drop a parting tear on the grave of one who in all the private and domestic virtues, in all that adorns and sweetens life, was fit to be, as he was, the

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friend and companion of that father of his country. After gazing with aching sight on the splendid orb of Washington's greatness, we turn with pleasure to the soft and mild lustre of private worth which, like the moon in a summer evening, enlightens without searching, and spreads a sweet serenity over the mind of the beholder.

To you who intimately knew him, I need not recount how just he was in his dealings, how humane in his conduct, how beneficent in his disposition; how kind was his deportment, how polished his manners, how candid and liberal his mind, and how unbounded his hospitality. To his friends and neighbors I need not say that he was the truest friend and the kindest neighbor. To his mourning family and relatives I need not relate that he was the tenderest husband, the fondest father, and the most indulgent master. The poor who partook of his charity need not be reminded how full and how constant was his esteem. Nor need the people of Virginia be told with what steady devotion, in the most trying times, he adhered to the cause of his country. But this Society is known beyond the limits of private reputation; and when it boasts of Washington as its founder and patron, it ought to indulge an honest pride in proclaiming to the world, "such was Fitzhugh of Chatham, once our president."

Delivered in the Episcopal Church.

* * * * *

"At a meeting of The Washington Society, on February 22d, 1810, *Resolved* unanimously, That the thanks of the Society be presented to Robert Goodloe Harper for his appropriate and interesting Oration, this day delivered, and that a copy of it be requested for publication.

G. DENEALE, *Sec'y.*"

X

THE ORATION BY HONORABLE RICHARD BLAND LEE

FEBRUARY 22, 1811

SHALL I exhibit our Washington to your view on the embattled plain—mounted on his war-like steed leading the free-born sons of America to victory? Glorious as are these deeds—precious as is the achievement of his valor, in the blood honors of the field he may be rivaled by the destroyers of mankind. Different from them, he fought to save—they to destroy; he to maintain his country's rights, as transmitted by a brave and generous ancestry¹—they to overwhelm unoffending nations with desolation, misery and oppression.

But already the hero has been portrayed to your view by the able pencil of a brother soldier² who shared his toils and his dangers, and now participates in his glory.

Rather let it be my humbler task to trace him along the slippery path of untried youth to ripened manhood—to show him in maturer years adorning the domestic scene, enlivening and instructing the social circle—adding grace and dignity to the bench of justice, performing the sacred duties of a Patriot Legislator; and finally wielding the awful scepter of the supreme magistracy of the nation his prowess had created. Ample is the field, glorious the theme, and, oh, that my powers were equal to the sublimity of the subject.

It is in the infant years of man that the seed of future greatness is planted. In the tender soil of youth it vegetates—the germ shoots forth its stem, extends its roots—grows with the boy—till in the man it un-

¹George Washington, the third son of Augustine Washington, was born in Virginia, at Bridges Creek, in the county of Westmoreland, on the 22d of February, 1732. He was the great-grandson of John Washington, a gentleman of respectable family in the north of England, who had emigrated about the year 1657, and settled on the place where young Washington was born. *Marshall's Life of Washington*.

His mother was Miss Ball, of a highly respected family of the county of Lancaster, in Virginia, who was the second wife of his father, and he the oldest son by this marriage. He had two half-brothers by his father's first marriage, Lawrence and Augustine. Lawrence left no children, appointing George, his half-brother, his heir. Augustine was the father of the late Col. William Washington, father of the Hon. Bushrod Washington, now (1811) of Mount Vernon, Samuel, and Charles, and one sister, who married Col. Fielding Lewis, of Fredericksburg.

²Colonel Charles Simms.



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folds its fructifying blossoms—and in the ripeness of time displays its spreading branches laden with the wholesome fruits of virtue.

Such was the life of Washington. Born in that happy mediocrity—equally removed from the low passions of the vulgar, and the splendid follies of the great, he received from his pious and exemplary parents that early impression of deep and solemn reverence for religion—that immovable love of truth and of justice—that unchangeable respect for the rights of his fellow men—and springing from these that ardent patriotism which never forsook him in all the after scenes of his eventful life, but shone forth the conspicuous and generous motives of every action. With a mind imbued with such principles, strengthened not more by the unremitted care and daily monitions, than by the uniform and steadfast example of his parents, performing every duty and displaying every charity of life, he was placed under the best instructors within their reach to acquire an accurate knowledge of his mother tongue, and of those useful though humble branches of education, writing, arithmetic, and surveying.

About the age of ten he had the misfortune to lose his father. But this loss was amply compensated by the watchful care of his mother, his own steady conduct and assiduous industry in the pursuit of useful knowledge, as well as by the unceasing affection of his oldest half-brother, Mr. Lawrence Washington.

Having at the age of fifteen completed the limited course of his education, a war then breaking out between our mother country and France, his ardor for military life blazed forth at once. Nor could he be contented till the post of midshipman in the British navy was solicited and obtained for him. His baggage was actually sent on board the ship to which he was attached—when filial piety conquered the strongest passion of the generous youthful breast he yielded to the entreaties of his mother and consented to relinquish the post of honor and of danger which he had so eagerly sought. Thus, instead of becoming the mighty stay of a vast empire, Heaven reserved him to be the future shield and bulwark of his native land.

But he remained not in his own country to spend his youth in listless inactivity, pernicious pleasure, or inglorious ease. He felt that man was made for man, and owed to society the useful employment of every

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moment of his existence. Qualified to perform the duties of a surveyor, and deriving from nature a strong and vigorous constitution, his first attention was directed to that useful and laborious employment. Fortunate for him his natural friend and foster-father having married into the illustrious family of Fairfax, had a ready opportunity, by means of that alliance, of introducing to Lord Fairfax, the head of that house and then proprietor of a great portion of Virginia, his young and promising brother. His lordship received him into his service with alacrity and kindness, appointing him, young as he was, one of his surveyors. In this employment he continued several years actively engaged, performing his duty to the entire satisfaction of the proprietor and of all concerned.

We next find him, at the early age of nineteen, recommended by his extraordinary merit, and no doubt aided by the approbation of such high patronage, appointed, with the rank of major, one of the adjutants to train the militia of Virginia for actual duty. Three years after, offering his service and undertaking a dangerous mission, at the most inclement season of the year, through a wilderness of savages, to the French commandant on the Ohio, performing that mission with unexampled promptitude, celerity and propriety—on his return receiving the thanks of the governor and council and of the legislative body of the colony which he had so faithfully served—nay, the narrative of his journey, a narrative which his modest diffidence had prepared only for the eye of the executive, was from its merit forced to the press, and thereby preserved a monument of his early promise.

The government of the colony having ascertained by this mission the critical situation of their frontiers, determined to raise a regiment for their protection. In this regiment young Washington was deemed worthy of holding the second place. His superior officer sometime after dying, he succeeded to the command. We find him with his incomplete regiment and an inadequate force advancing in a bold attempt against Fort Du Quesne—now Pittsburgh—frustrated in that attempt by overwhelming numbers, defending himself with heroic courage in Fort Necessity, and when compelled to yield to superior power, retiring with honor—his laurels untarnished—the confidence of his country undiminished.

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During these transactions his affectionate brother Lawrence died, leaving him heir of Mount Vernon, with an extensive property. And soon afterwards, owing to a degrading preference established by the government of the mother country, in favor of British over colonial officers, which the lofty mind of Washington, conscious of his worth, could not brook, he gave up his commission and retired to the scenes of private life. In this situation Braddock found him at Mount Vernon when he arrived at this place with a British army deemed sufficient to expel the French from the Ohio. The British general regretted the absence of Washington from the service—solicited his return, and finally the love of country and of glory conquering every other feeling, he consented to accompany Braddock on the expedition as a volunteer aid.

As far as he dared, he warned his chief of the subtle character of the foe—his warning disregarded, animated by patriotism alone, and obedient to discipline, he continued to afford to his commander the most faithful and zealous aid. Too soon the incautious Braddock found the snare which Washington had feared, where, vainly struggling with unshaken valor, he fell the victim of his own rash confidence, with half his army—the remainder was saved by the prudence and courage of Washington—who, on that disastrous day, performed not only the part of a valiant soldier but of an able commander. Exposed to every danger amid that dreadful carnage, the guardian angel of America shielded him from harm—for though two horses were killed under him and four balls passed through his apparel, he escaped unhurt. Thus, in the midst of disaster he acquired new glory—the confidence of his country increasing with every display of his courage and his conduct.

The British army defeated, soon after abandoned Virginia to its own resources—the government of the colony resolved to raise a numerous regiment for its protection. The eyes of all were turned to Washington as the only person capable of conducting with success the public defence. And though sensible of the inadequacy of the force provided for the object intended, and well knowing the feeble character of the rulers he must serve, yet swayed by that love of country which was the ruling principle of his life, he yielded to the universal wish and accepted the dangerous and difficult charge.

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Nearly four years he continued in this arduous command, exposed to every peril, enduring every hardship and submitting to every humiliation which a weak and parsimonious government could inflict—but always performing his duty and affording to the distressed frontiers the best protection which his limited means permitted—continually urging the necessity of more decisive measures and of a more effective force—above all recommending the propriety of raising an army sufficient at once to expel the French from Fort Du Quesne, their stronghold on the Ohio, as the only effectual means of overawing the savages and restoring permanent tranquility to his country. At length his advice was adopted, and a British army under General Forbes, which Washington accompanied with his regiment, was directed to proceed against Fort Du Quesne. Arriving within a short distance of the enemy's post in the fall of 1758, the French abandoned the Fort, destroying the works and such articles as could not be removed. The British general took possession of the vacant ground, rebuilt the fort, calling it Fort Pitt, after the then unparalleled minister of England, and garrisoned it with a part of Washington's regiment.

Here Washington left the army, never more to fight under the banners of the British monarch. Having been elected during the expedition a member of the House of Burgesses, by the county of Frederick, the theatre of his actions and witness of his conduct, he conducted to Winchester the remainder of his regiment and immediately repaired himself to the seat of government where the legislature was then in session.

Believing his country at length safe by the expulsion of the French from the Ohio, and the victories of Britain in the north, and foreseeing little chance of being promoted in the British army in proportion to his merit, owing to the partial preference of the government for their European subjects, he resolved to quit forever the pursuits of war for those of peace, and shortly after a second time surrendered his commission. Having determined on the future condition of his life, he soon found that Eden itself must be to man a gloomy wilderness without the sweet converse, the chaste delights, the meek virtue and tender offices of woman. The accomplishment of his object could not be difficult to Washington.

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In the prime of vigorous manhood with a person formed by nature in the mould of majesty, with a mind enlarged by assiduous cultivation; with a heart chastened and improved by the habitual control of every unruly and of every unselfish passion—by danger, by hardship and privation, with manners refined by intercourse with polished society—but above all, with a name irradiated by virtue and by glory—what female bosom could be proof against such an assemblage of attractions. We therefore soon find him married to the young, the amiable and accomplished widow of Mr. John Custis.^a Nor did he display less correctness of judgment in this choice than in every other act of his life. Whether his lady be viewed in the relations of Domestic duty—of Benevolence, of Charity, of Piety—whether she walked the rural plain, appeared in camps among the embattled ranks of war or in palaces surrounded by the awe and pomp of power, she looked and moved—she spoke and acted as become the consort of Washington.

Thus happily united, in the delightful shades of Mount Vernon, years on years rolled away in tranquil ease and conjugal felicity.

Active by nature in body and mind, inured by habit to hardship and to toil—he readily accommodated himself to his new situation, entering with zeal and delight into the pleasing, the useful and every other employment with the same uniform, solid judgment, energy and industry. In a few years his rude estate exhibited a new face. Adorned with taste and cultivated with skill, it yielded to its generous proprietor the most ample returns. Method, order, and economy pervaded all his business. Their natural consequences, success and increase of wealth, followed. But his time was not wholly occupied by the pursuits of gain and personal concerns. A due portion was reserved for his God, his country, his family and friends. A firm though not a bigoted adherent to the religion of his fathers, he conformed to the mode of worship in which he had been educated. But his worship was not the empty observance of forms. By a faithful discharge of every social duty, and a true compliance with the benevolent precepts of the Gospel, he displayed the reality of his faith and the sincerity of his devotion. To his friends open, kind and sincere, his house was ever ready to receive and his heart to

^aHer maiden name was Martha Dandridge, sister to Bartholomew Dandridge, one of the judges of the general court of Virginia.

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assist them. Nor were his doors shut against the stranger and the indigent; the first was received with kind hospitality, the last relieved with generous humanity. Virtue in distress ever found in him a protector and benefactor, but vice was driven from his presence "with an unforgiving frown."

In his family regular, steady, affectionate and humane, his residence was the seat of order, comfort and happiness. In his expenses neither parsimonious nor profuse, a just and exemplary economy was observed. Generous plenty crowned his boards, a sincere welcome placed his guests at ease. Instructive conversation and innocent hilarity accompanied his feasts, which were never polluted by midnight revels or Bacchanalian orgies. Such conduct, added to the lustre of his military services, could not fail to endear him to the society in which he lived. To them ever ready to perform his duty, he declined no office, however humble in which he might be useful. In his parish as a vestryman he was faithful and exemplary. In his county as a justice of the peace he exhibited the firmness, the attention, sound judgment, and that impartiality which becomes the office. But his public services were not confined to these limited duties. They were claimed in the legislative councils of his country. From his first election by the county of Frederick, he continued a member of the legislature either for that county or the county of Fairfax, till the controversy between our mother country and the colony of Massachusetts Bay threatened to extinguish its liberties, and with them those of the other colonies.

So general an alarm was produced throughout America by their transactions, that in the year 1774 the colonies, as it were by a simultaneous impulse, resolved each to send deputies to meet in general congress in the city of Philadelphia to concert measures of mutual safety. An ardent admirer and a steady supporter of the rights and liberties derived from our wise and heroic British ancestors, justly esteemed for his courage, his military services, his firmness, his purity and his wisdom, and always his country's friend, Washington was of course one of the deputies sent by the colony of Virginia to that august and immortal assembly of sages and of patriots. Pardon me if, in honor of my native state, I name the illustrious dead, who accompanied him on that important mission.

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There was Randolph,⁴ formed by nature to preside with dignity in solemn senates and to rule the deep debate. There shone Lee,⁵ in every private duty, in generous feelings, in ardent love of liberty, a Hampden; in firm and unconquerable virtue, a Cato; in manners, in learning, and in eloquence, a Tully. Close by his side stood a comate of equal fame and equal worth, Patrick Henry,⁶ the Demosthenes of his country, whom Athens would have gloried in her proudest days to have called her own. Nor was there wanting an experienced Nestor, in the mild, the sage, mellifluent Pendleton.⁷ There too was Harrison,⁸ the polite, the generous and the hospitable; and aged Bland⁹, renowned for piety, benevolence and patriotism. But amid this galaxy of talents and of virtues, Washington shone the superior star—fitted alike to sway in deepest councils or to direct the bannered war.

No wonder that Virginia, with such a sample of her sons, a just specimen of the brave and generous people whom they served, should then have acquired that eminent station among her sisters which she still maintains.

This first Congress, having solicited a reconciliation with our mother country on terms compatible with our honor, our safety, and our liberty, by a respectful address to the people of Britain, and an affectionate petition to the king, expressed in the mild, though dignified language of freemen, did not neglect any measure necessary to inform the minds of their constituents, and to prepare them for the last appeal should the misguided counsels of their rulers render it inevitable. Nor did they forget the propriety of endeavoring to conciliate the newly-acquired, extensive and neighboring province of Canada. Having performed these acts in such a manner as to enroll them on the page of history as the first of men, after a session of about eight weeks, on the 26th day of September they dissolved their meeting, recommending to their constituents the appointment of another Congress, to meet in the May following.

⁴Peyton Randolph, first president of Congress.

⁵Richard Henry Lee who, in obedience to Virginia, moved the Declaration of Independence—afterwards president of Congress, and senator from Virginia in the first Congress under the present Constitution.

⁶Patrick Henry, twice Governor of Virginia.

⁷Edmund Pendleton, afterwards Chief Justice of the Court of Appeals of Virginia.

⁸Benjamin Harrison, afterwards Governor of Virginia.

⁹Richard Bland, who resigned and died soon after his third appointment.

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This second congress was elected and met according to appointment. The deputies from Virginia were the same. Britain having refused to harken to our petitions, and manifesting a determination to coerce by arms unconditional submission, it finally became the duty of congress to prepare to repel the assault; and war becoming inevitable, to provide with vigor and firmness for the conflict.

In this awful crisis, Washington was unanimously chosen commander-in-chief of the American armies. With modest diffidence, the sure attendant of merit, he accepted the high and responsible trust—but with a disinterestedness unexampled he declined any pecuniary reward, limiting his demands against the public to his actual expenditures in their service.

Thus, after an interval of seven years, he again appeared in defence of his country, clad in the panoply of war.

Far be it from me to attempt to describe his actions and his conduct through that memorable struggle. The theme belongs to the splendid and faithful historian and to the lofty bard. Suffice it to say that, displaying courage unshaken by disaster, patience not to be subdued, caution not to be surprised, and enterprise which astounded his enemy, he brought, after an eight-year war, to submission, the legions of Britain, till then victorious o'er the world, and secured to these United States their present rank among the nations. May they ever preserve it. May they ever cherish the precious boon, acquired through so many dangers, so many toils and sacrifices. May neither the rude hand of unprincipled and desperate factions within, nor the seductive arts, insidious intrigues or open violence of despotism without, be ever able to shake the solid foundations of that temple, reared by the genius and cemented by the wisdom of Washington, which now enshrines our liberties.

But scarce was our independence acknowledged when the brave army which had accomplished it, goaded to despair by the supposed neglect and ingratitude of their country in whose service they had met every peril, endured nakedness and hunger, and wasted property and health, discovered symptoms of mutiny, even in the camp, and under the eye of Washington. The voice of their beloved chief, always heard with reverence, in a moment recalled their wavering fidelity to the standard of honor and patriotism. They again reposed on the gratitude of their

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country. Congress, sensible of their just claims, urged with zeal by the commander-in-chief, but from the feeble texture of their powers, unable to provide the necessary means for their immediate relief, could only pledge the nation to a future and ample renumeration. The brave defenders of their country, imitating the great example of their leader, and guided by his counsels, accepted from an impoverished nation a promise in lieu of the substantial rewards to which they were entitled, and instantly sunk the soldier in the citizen.

Washington having now accomplished for his country and his faithful army all that could be required from a patriot soldier and an affectionate commander, prepared to resign the weighty and honorable charge which he had so nobly, so ably and so successfully sustained for more than eight years.

Taking a last and solemn leave of his brave associates in arms; leaving them with his blessings and in turn loaded with their universal benedictions; attended too, by the gratitude and prayers of rescued millions, he repaired to Annapolis, the then residence of congress, and restored to the hands of the nation, their liberty and safety established, the sword with which he had been entrusted for their protection.

But previous to this act he had felt it his duty to address a circular letter to the states. Having during his long and difficult command often seen his country brought to the brink of ruin by the nerveless power of congress; fearful that his brave army might be disappointed in their greatly earned and promised reward; and anxious that his fellow citizens should derive all the blessings expected from their independence, with paternal zeal he urged on the people of the several states the necessity of union, and obedience to the federal head, in the legitimate exercise of their powers; he warned them of the fatal consequences of disunion, and neglect of their federal duties, to their happiness, their safety, their liberty and power; in fine, to use the words of a statesman¹⁰ of gigantic mind, he endeavored "to save them from themselves." He then fondly hoped that no future occurrence would render it necessary for him to appear again on the theatre of public action, and expressed a determination to spend the remainder of his days in the peaceful shades of private life. But vain are the resolutions of short-sighted man. None can

¹⁰Mr. Gouverneur Morris.

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anticipate the imperious calls of duty which compel us to relinquish our fondest pursuits and most determined resolves.

Having pressed these salutary lessons on his beloved country, and afforded to an admiring world the grand spectacle of a victorious general at the head of a devoted army, voluntarily stripping himself of the almost unlimited power with which he was invested—he returned as a private citizen to his long neglected home which he had not seen during the whole period of his command, except in the performance of his duty on his passage to the siege of York, and on his return from the capture of Cornwallis.

He immediately resumed with delight his long suspended occupations, repairing with activity the ravages of a destructive war, and restoring to order again his extensive concerns. But even then he did not forget his country or the state in which he was born; a plan which he had fondly cherished before the war of opening and extending the interior navigation of the James and the Potomac Rivers again occurred to him. And he urged with so much force the importance of these measures, both in a commercial and political view, as binding our great western, by the ties of interest as well as affinity, to our eastern territory, that for a time local rivalships were suspended and the states of Maryland and Virginia united in passing an act to incorporate a company for opening and extending the navigation of Potomac River, while the legislature of Virginia passed a similar act for opening and extending that of the James.

These great undertakings, springing from the foresight and patriotism of Washington, could not fail to recall to the recollection of Virginia his many and faithful services and the lustre shed upon her by his virtue and glory; and though she had already voted a statue of marble in honor of her heroic son, which now stands executed in the center of her capitol, unlike the votes of congress which yet remain dead letters on the statute book, the legislature of the state unanimously resolved that these improvements, founded on his recommendation and monuments of that liberty which he had been instrumental in acquiring, should also be monuments of their gratitude, and directed their treasurer to subscribe for fifty shares in the Potomac Company, and for one hundred shares in the James River Company for his use. Here arose a difficult struggle in

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his mind. How could he refuse a token of gratitude so unexpectedly offered in terms so delicate and soothing, and yet how could he accept in violation of his solemn determination to receive no pecuniary compensation for his services? In this dilemma, after mature reflection he decided neither to offend his generous countrymen by an absolute refusal, nor yet to violate his fixed resolve by an unconditional acceptance. He therefore signified to the legislature at their next session the high sense entertained by him of the honor and benefit intended to be conferred on him, and that while he felt himself conclusively restrained from accepting their proffered favor for his own emolument, that if it pleased them so to modify their acts as to enable him to apply their gift to public uses, he would endeavor by the selection of the most proper objects to evince his gratitude. The legislature instantly complied with his wish and passed an act in conformity thereto. We all know how he has complied with that promise, having in his lifetime transferred his shares in the James River Company to the support of a college on the waters of that river, and having by his last will devoted those in the Potomac Company to a similar establishment on ours.

Soon, however, he saw with grief, the states neglecting their federal duties—the faith of the nation violated to their patriotic army and other public creditors. The states treating with contempt the authority of congress. The states themselves making conflicting regulations, generating jealousy, distrust and hate. Nay, a general dissolution of the ties of moral obligation pervading the society and even the laws passed prostrating the rights of property. The good and the wise throughout the nation mourned with Washington this progress to evil, and began to fear that a revolution so gloriously achieved might in the end prove a curse instead of a blessing to their country. Amid this gloom, in his native state in Virginia, under the auspices of Madison,¹¹ who then laid the foundations of a permanent fame and established the most solid claims to his country's gratitude, the first attempt was made to arrest these accumulating ills.

A convention of deputies from the several states was proposed to digest some uniform system for the regulation of commerce. Deputies only from five states met at Annapolis. Being too few in number to

¹¹James Madison, fourth President of the United States.

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execute the objects of their meeting, and finding, moreover, the disease too extensive and too radical to admit of a cure within the compass of their powers, they wisely determined to recommend to the nation the appointment of a general convention to take into consideration the deplorable condition of their country and to provide a complete and durable remedy. Fortunately for America this recommendation was adopted. In this perilous situation of our affairs, more perilous than any period of the war, the unanimous demand of his services by the state of Virginia, and the ardent solicitations of every patriot throughout America, compelled Washington, ever obedient to duty, to leave again his loved retreat.

This august assembly of statesmen met—Washington presided—from their wisdom emanated the constitution which now rules these United States. Wisely it was framed for the common good—a difficult point remained—its adoption by the states. State pride, state jealousy, combining with every wayward human passion, almost stifled in its birth this last hope of patriotism. Even in Virginia, the great author of the measure, the people were nearly divided. But a kind Providence ordained that wisdom should prevail over folly—virtue over vice—order over anarchy—and this stupendous fabric of human wisdom and human liberty was, I trust, immovably established.

But vain was the adoption of the constitution unless the nation derived from a wise and firm administration a relief from the evils which had so long degraded and oppressed it. But where was to be found that weight of character; that popularity built on the most faithful substantial and eminent services; that patriotism; that purity; that awe and majesty of virtue; that sage foresight and solid wisdom, taught in the schools of trial adversity and danger, sufficient to control the tempest of conflicting passions which threatened to annihilate the very elements of social order? Where were these to be found except in the firm, the pious, spotless, Washington? Those who condemned fortunately united in opinion with those who approved the constitution, that he alone was capable of giving to the yet untried system a safe and salutary impulse.

We therefore find him again called into the service of his country by the unanimous voice of three millions of people to fill the station

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of first functionary of the regenerated republic. How could he resist a summons so solemn—an appeal so impressive. Already, too, had anarchy and wild misrule¹² reared their hideous banner, and to the northern section of our states threatened desolation and ruin. However anxious for peaceful retirement in a crisis so difficult and dangerous, it was impossible for Washington, without “attaining the lustre of his former name,” to refuse his hand to a distressed and fallen country. Duty, therefore, vanquishing every lesser feeling, he flew to her rescue.

Repairing to the station to which he had been called in a manner so sacred and so forcible; summoning around his person the courage, the wisdom, and the virtue of the nation; and strenuously assisted in the legislative councils by those patriots who had most signally contributed to the adoption of the constitution, under his guidance order, as it were by magic, rose out of chaos; impartial justice held again her equal scales; confidence revived the drooping spirit of industry; “yellow harvests shed again their mellow lustre o’er our fields”; commerce filled the ocean with its swelling sails, and the hum of happy labor was heard in every busy haunt. The war-worn soldier, too, with eyes beaming with joy, saw at length that liberty for which he fought and bled securely fixed, and felt in every pore his country’s gratitude cheering his declining age. Under thy plastic hand, immortal Hamilton,¹³ a renovated credit restored to health, to strength, to power, a sinking people. Foreign nations beheld with deep and silent wonder a change so sudden and so grand. Abroad, respect succeeded to contempt; at home, wealth to poverty; power to weakness; happiness to misery; confidence to distrust. Nor was there a corner of these United States so remote and inaccessible to which the benign rays of the government did not extend their vivifying influence.

Some may forget, but we cannot all forget the man to whom, next to one, we owe these blessings. Though cut off by too cruel and severe a doom in the meridian of his days, in the splendor of his virtues, from family, friends and country, he yet had lived enough for fame. In war, taught by Washington the way to glory, on the perilous edge of battle he stood the intrepid defender of his country’s rights. In peace a statesman, firm and incorrupt, he planned with zeal, with courage and with

¹²Shay’s Rebellion in the State of Massachusetts.

¹³Alexander Hamilton, first Secretary of the Treasury of the United States.

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wisdom, her happiness and glory. May both remain immortal as his name.

But hardly was our political bark safely moored in port, escaped from the tempests by which it had been buffeted and almost foundered, when the French revolution, like a vast volcano, began to forebode, by distant and hollow rumblings, that dreadful explosion which has since shaken Europe to its centre and desolated the fairest countries with its destructive lava. Even our remote and peaceful shores felt, and still feel, the shock. In the garb of liberty it approached us—liberty, dear to the American heart—the fair outside concealed the rottenness within—but it could not deceive the Argus eyes of Washington. While all hailed the revolution as a new Saturnian age returned, his sagacious eye found in it no solid base whereon to build the temple of liberty.

The prostrate power of the Bourbons was succeeded by an impious licteniousness more terrible than despotism itself. Through havoc, blood and rapine each successive party waded to power. Religion, morality, justice, virtue, honor, innocence, learning, patriotism were overwhelmed in one common ruin. The nations of Europe rose to check the mighty mischief. Even Britons in their sea-girt isles trembled for their safety, and prepared to meet in arms the stern defiance of their fierce antagonist. Then, America, thy Washington lived, thy faithful Palinurus stood at the helm. With an eagle eye he described at a distance the coming storm, and prepared his feeble bark to meet its utmost rage. Exploring in his capacious soul the path which justice, honor, duty, interest, safety, liberty required, with firm unshaken fortitude he took his course. He declared our nation neutral in the dreadful conflict.

Disappointed in the object of his mission by this act, a daring minister of France, mistaking our ardent wishes that she might find the way to stable liberty and, like us, might taste the sweets of free, well-ordered government, for a zeal to fight her battles and avenge her wrongs; with bold, audacious insolence strove within the limits of our territory to exercise a sovereign power, and to sever from the government the people. Little did he know the man, the government or the people whom thus he outraged. Then Jefferson¹⁴, second to his chief, shone with unfading lustre. With firmness, with dignity, with all the

¹⁴Thomas Jefferson, third President of the United States.

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splendor of eloquence and majesty of reason he repelled the base assault, and maintained his country's character and rights. The nation, too, proud of their liberty, frowned indignant on the attempt. And France, appalled, recalled the offending minister.

But still he left a lurking poison in our land. In imitation of the Jacobin clubs of France, those hideous political monsters whose range was anarchy and whose food was sacrilege, the blood of innocents and rapine—under his patronage certain self-created societies were organized to watch, to censure and control the citizens of a government instituted, approved, and appointed by the people themselves. Such nurseries of action, such hotbeds of sedition, such rallying points to disorder and to vice, were viewed by Washington in their proper character; and as he never temporized with duty, he did not hesitate to denounce at once to the nation these bold usurpers of the public power. Liberty felt the insult and swept the loathsome nuisance from the land.

But our difficulties were not with France alone. The animosity against Britain, excited by our revolutionary conflict, had not entirely subsided. The incomplete execution of the treaty of peace on their part, founded, as alledged by them, on an infraction by us, had kept alive the hostile feelings generated by the sufferings of the war. There were, therefore, not a few who panted for another opportunity for renewed revenge. There was also a numerous body who sincerely believed the cause of France to be the cause of liberty and mankind. Nor were there wanting those cormorants who, in every age and in every country, feed on the agitations and convulsions of society, as their natural ailment. When to these causes was added a flagrant and violent attack on our commerce by the British orders of November, '93, it was not wonderful that the most ardent spirit for war with that nation burst forth at once. Washington saw, with deep concern, the tendency of so many causes to produce a second conflict with a people whose maritime means and pecuniary resources enabled them, though they could not conquer us, to annoy and cripple our power, and to check our progress to prosperity and strength, to happiness and security. All the resources of his mind were therefore employed to prevent so destructive a contest.

The British government having harkened to his remonstrances, and declared that their orders were neither intended as an injury or insult

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to our country, but were solely directed against their enemy, having promised that if any improper procedure had taken place in the execution of them that it should be corrected—in fine, having actually revoked them—he felt it his duty, under such circumstances, to arrest certain measures under discussion before the legislature the adoption of which might inevitably lead to war, by the appointment of a special embassy, not only to demand from Britain retribution for recent wrongs committed, but to propose a complete and final adjustment of all points in controversy between the two countries. John Jay, Chief Justice of the United States, not less distinguished for his patriotism, his firmness, his wisdom and his eminent services than for the unblemished purity of his private character, was wisely selected for this weighty and solemn mission.

Instant war was thus avoided, and the hope of peace still cherished. But though this measure checked, it did not subdue the feverish temperament that existed. In a certain portion of the empire newly peopled with citizens born under other skies who, having never before tasted, knew not the true relish of liberty, resistance by arms to the execution of the laws was openly essayed. Congress had exercised their constitutional power of levying an excise on distilled spirits. Could there be an act more constitutional? Could there be a subject of taxation more proper? It was employing the power of taxation in support of morality, of decency, of order, of industry—so that while the treasury was replenished vice was discountenanced. Yet against this wise and wholesome law infuriated and misguided ignorance rose in arms. Washington knew his duty, and never hesitated to perform it. Bound to see the laws faithfully executed, he immediately summoned the armed force of the nation to suppress an insurrection so unprovoked and daring. Obedient to the call of their government the people moved with alacrity and zeal to vindicate the offended majesty of the law. The refractory, awed into submission by a condemnation so unequivocal, sought the mercy of their country, and received it. And Washington had the heartfelt satisfaction of quelling this bold attempt without shedding the blood of one fellow citizen.

About this time Mr. Jay had fortunately succeeded, by an able negotiation, in settling, on fair, just and reasonable terms, all the material

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points in dispute between the two countries. Our western posts, so long detained, were surrendered to us. Compensation to our merchants was secured in all cases of unlawful capture. We on our part stipulating that justice should be rendered to British subjects for property detained from them—and the commerce of the two nations was placed on a safe and advantageous footing.

Such were the prominent features of this important treaty. And thus it was the rare fortune of Jay twice to give his country peace. By his first treaty he established our independence—and in despite of the artful machinations of the French court to prevent it, secured that extensive boundary to our empire which, by his second, he immovably fixed. However the acrimony of party may endeavor to distort his actions and to shade his character, impartial history must exhibit him to posterity as the first of patriots and the best of men, and in public usefulness next to him whose birth we celebrate.

Washington immediately submitted the treaty to the senate, who advised a ratification. But notwithstanding this solemn approbation by the constitutional tribunal, the factors of war still attempted to control the decision of the President. No means were left unessayed to excite the public passions. Resolves, addresses and remonstrances innumerable were presented to the chief magistrate. Like a rock, he stood unmoved amid the agitated billows. Consulting only his duty and looking steadfastly to the interest of his country, after deep and mature deliberation, he gave his awful sanction.

The nation was satisfied, and approved. Not so a majority of the house of representatives. Unwillingly arrested in those measures which led inevitably to war with Britain, they did not offer opposition after a treaty, which gave us peace, had been solemnly ratified, and thereby become the supreme law of the land, to which legislatures and courts were bound to submit as to the constitution. The bold, unheard of, and it is to be hoped never to be heard of again, attempt was made to bend the treaty-making power to the uncertain and wavering passions of the house of representatives. They maintained the dangerous doctrine that they were not bound to pass laws to carry into effect treaties which they did not approve. They advanced further, they demanded from the President to open to them the arcana of the executive department, intruding on the

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ground from which the constitution had wisely excluded them. But Washington stood at the portal and forbade the impious entrance. Though there was nothing necessary to be kept secret, and which had been communicated to the senate, the proper tribunal, he felt it his duty to repel the unconstitutional attempt, and for the first time brought to light the journals of the convention which had formed the constitution, in support of his decision, by depositing them among the archives of the United States. The people supported their firm and virtuous chief magistrate, and in terms not to be resisted, commanded submission from the house of representatives. They obeyed the awful mandate, and all was peace, happiness and prosperity again.

Here it becomes us, my fellow citizens, to pause and to look back with pious wonder and gratitude on the perils we escaped. We have seen the progress of the French revolution. We have seen its ephemeral governments built on the phantom, not the reality of liberty; and evanescent as dreams though stained with blood and rapine pass away. We have seen a mighty military despotism rise on their ruins, incorporating in one wide domain allies, friends, republics, kingdoms, princedoms, hierarchies. A despotism in principle capable of infinite action and of interminable extension.

To the power of the ancient monarchy of France some bounds existed. Provincial privileges, personal and feudal rights, and a powerful clergy formed some barriers to the despotism of the prince. By the revolution the ancient boundaries of provinces were demolished, local privileges and personal rights and distinctions were annulled. And the Church has been made the obsequious and passive instrument of arbitrary power; to these a military system has been added, which bears down in its effect the very appearance of public opinion and of public feeling. The youth are drawn successively to camps, and taught the art of war, and inspired with the love of conquest and of spoil, an insatiable passion which will never cease to excite to enterprise and action as long as a people remains to be conquered, and riches can furnish temptation to the spoiler. Already has continental Europe yielded to the overwhelming force. And had not the wisdom of Washington prevented, we should have been first the allies and ere now perhaps might also have been victims to the ambition of France. To check her widespreading

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dominion but one country remains—the country of our forefathers. Britain still keeps at bay the mighty conqueror, and defending her own prolongs our safety. Whenever she shall fall, what power will remain on this globe to resist the seductive intrigues, supported by the disciplined millions of France?

Are the dangers past from which Washington saved us? Will not a French alliance be the inevitable consequence of a war with Britain? And where a French alliance may terminate let the fate of other nations tell. Can we hope for the maintenance of our independence and liberty from such an union? Can our free institutions be acceptable to a military despot? Are we certain that he would not barter us away for an advantageous peace with his enemy? But are these our only hazards? Will our union stand such a war? Has not the adhesive principle of our government been already so weakened as to afford to the anxious patriot but a feeble hope of our political fabrics being much longer able to support even its own weight, much less external violence? Were the populous and maritime part of our nation to sever from the rest, what would be our situation? And in the rapid rotation of human affairs in our day, is it not possible that a crisis may arrive when mutual interest might dictate the combination of the maritime strength of America with the maritime strength of Europe? Where, then, would be the power—where the liberty of Southern America? Are these ideal apprehensions? May they prove so. Is not the proscriptive spirit of party—are not the daily scenes passing before our eyes, portentous of some mighty change, which destroying our union, may obliterate forever our happiness, our power and our freedom?

Pardon reflections arising from the events which have been recounted to you—and springing from an ardent desire to render perpetual that liberty for which Washington fought, and that government which his best faculties were exerted to form and maintain.

But while he successfully managed our exterior relations so as to preserve our honor, and our peace with the two great belligerents of Europe, and by treaties with the Barbary States to release our citizens from captivity, and to render safe our commerce on the coast of Africa, he was not negligent of our internal interests.

He brought to an honorable close the Indian War. But not content

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with subduing, he strove to humanize the savage by teaching him the arts of civilized life. By him was adopted that generous and humane system which has been so successfully pursued by subsequent administrations, a system which preserves peace with our untutored neighbors not only by a strict observance of justice towards them, but by instructing them in agriculture and household arts, the great sources of every human comfort and "all the soft civility of life." He secured also, by treaty with Spain, the free use of the River Mississippi for our western brethren. Under him was established a wise and productive system of revenue, partly by impost on commerce, partly by internal taxes on the luxuries and ostentation of the rich, and on the bane and poison of the idle and profligate—a system adapted to our situation, ramified to every part of the nation, and capable of extension to meet future exigencies. How far the repeal of the internal taxes has had a tendency to weaken the political machine, it remains for time of difficulty and danger to tell. All our fiscal arrangements were also facilitated by the establishment of a national bank, whose beneficial operations being coextensive with the empire, contributed to bind it together by the ties of interest and convenience.

Believing at length the nation safe by the firm establishment of a free, wise and energetic government—at peace with foreign nations and the Indian tribes, prosperous at home and respected abroad—he rejoiced that it was now in his power consistent with those ties "which bind a dutiful citizen to his country" to seek again the peaceful abode of private life. He accordingly declared this determination by a second solemn address to his fellow citizens, containing the wisest and most emphatic monitions for the future conduct of their affairs—particularly pressing the importance of union—and recommending above all things religion, morality and the proper education of youth as the great props by which alone our happiness, our safety, our power and our liberty could be supported.

Retiring from his high station after two unanimous elections, and another eight years' laborious service, he was again accompanied to his retreat by the gratitude and prayers of millions and the plaudits of mankind.

But his retirement seemed to be the signal to France to endeavor to

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awe, by fear, the nation which she could not seduce by art. The grossest injuries were committed on our commerce—the most atrocious insults offered to our ambassadors, so that the general voice of a brave and high-spirited people called for reprisal.

A small navy was immediately equipped which, under the firm conduct of Adams, restored safety to our commerce and added glory to our flag. Not knowing to what extent the hostile ambition of France might proceed, an adequate army was raised to repel any insult which might be offered to our territory; and as if destiny had ordained that the public services of Washington should only terminate with his life, to protect that independence from the grasp of France which he had forced from the hands of Britain, the voice of the nation again summoned him to lead their armies. Ever obedient to his country's commands, he once more clothed his aged limbs in the habiliments of war. France, awed by the dignified attitude of the nation, again retraced her steps. But amid these scenes Washington suddenly died in the fulness of years, of usefulness, and of glory. Death had no terrors for him. Supported by the consciousness of a life devoted to duty, and by the consolations of a sincere Christian belief, though in the severest agony of bodily pain, he met his end with patient resignation and unshaken fortitude, thus exhibiting in death, as in life, the majesty of piety and virtue—and leaving not one blot to stain the snow-white purity of his fame.

His example is full of instruction to man in every condition, from the most humble lot to the throned monarch. It is the undeviating course of virtue through every station, from the lowest to the highest. It is the uniform sacrifice of selfish passions to honor and to duty. His glory, unlike that of the guilty great, was built on the happiness, not the miseries of man.

But you, my young friends,¹⁵ you the children of his adoption—for though his bones moulder in the tomb he still lives your father—ought to learn from his example that the path of virtue is the only certain road to happiness, to usefulness and to fame. You have seen him rise, with an education hardly superior to your own, by this steadfast course, from an humble beginning to the pinnacle of human greatness. May

¹⁵The children of the free school, endowed by General Washington.

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his example stimulate your efforts. May the blaze of his virtues lighten and direct your passage through life.

I have thus, my fellow citizens, in obedience to the Society of Washington,¹⁶ whose generous and benevolent designs are worthy of the name they bear attempted, though in unequal terms, to describe to you the "man first in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen."¹⁷

*And thou, Virginia, boasts his glorious birth.
His fame for wisdom fills the spacious earth.*

Delivered in the Presbyterian Meeting House.

* * * * *

"At a meeting of The Washington Society of Alexandria, at Brook's Hotel, the 23d of February 1811, *Resolved*, That the thanks of the Society be presented to Richard Bland Lee, Esq., for his elegant and appropriate Oration, delivered yesterday, and that he be requested to furnish a copy thereof for publication.

G. DENEALE, *Sec'y.*"

¹⁶This society was instituted to commemorate the birth of Washington, and to aid his charity to the free school in Alexandria, by their own benevolent contributions.

¹⁷Resolve of Congress on the death of Washington.

XI

THE ORATION BY DAVID HOFFMAN, ESQUIRE

FEBRUARY 22, 1813

IN AN age so portentous as that in which we live, at a time so fertile in wonderful and unparalleled events, when the moral and political relations of the most ancient and deeply rooted empires are dissolving, and scarcely the elements of what they were remain, it becomes a duty of peculiar moment, in all who cherish a lively and heartfelt interest in their country's welfare, not only to cast forward an anxious glance towards approaching events, but to be continually watchful of the times, for they are pregnant with much evil; not to slumber and sleep in fatal and infatuated security, when empires, kingdoms and republics, populous, wealthy, and powerful, have from their foundations been razed in rapid succession, and in one general, undistinguished ruin sunk and overwhelmed.

How replete is the history of our own times with useful knowledge to the philosopher and the statesman! How sterile and unprofitable, in the lessons of political wisdom, are the lengthened records of preceding centuries when compared with a faithful narrative of the present age! Who can take a retrospect of the past few years without the mixed emotions of wonder and of horror! Who, without dread and apprehension, can contemplate the future!

If there ever was a period in which those who administer human affairs were perplexed and confounded in their policy; when all their wisdom is but foolishness, and all their intelligence but darkness; if there ever was a time which needed a wisdom almost celestial and a virtue incorruptible, that crisis, my friends and countrymen, is the present.

The various alterations and revolutions of empires and states, their progress from the imbecility of youth to the vigor and power of manhood, their subsequent decline, which seems to indicate the pressure of years, and lastly their dissolution, afford to a contemplative mind a subject of interesting and profound speculation.

If it be conceded that nations, like the individuals who compose

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them, advance from youth to maturity, and like men have their appointed periods of final dissolution, it is nevertheless our duty, and a duty of the most imperative nature, to use our best endeavors that this period shall not be anticipated to guard against the effects of those complaints and diseases incident to the peculiar constitution of our nation, and by a vigilant attention to its healthy or disordered action, to be speedy in the application of the required remedies.

If it be not pursuing the analogy too far, the existence of a nation, like that of man, is a forced state, and its preservation essentially depends upon the judicious administration of such excitements as to keep the action of all its parts in a healthy and vigorous state. In order to effect this great and desirable end, it is absolutely necessary that we should be acquainted in the detail with the genius and nature of its original conformation, with the principles and maxims upon which it was founded, and with the objects it especially contemplated; for, as the Duke of Sully justly observes, "we may be assured an awful change is at hand when we see a state conducted by measures contrary to those made use of in its first foundation."

If we revert to the period when the assembled virtue, wisdom and intelligence of this nation, raised from confused elements and chaos into a beautiful and harmonious system, that admirable Constitution and form of government under which we live; if we investigate the principles upon which it was established and the objects it particularly had in view, we shall find that the maintenance of religion, and good morals; *general* and *impartial* protection of the interests of *every section* of the union; preparation for *defensive* war; freedom from foreign influence and alliance; honest and impartial negotiation; love of peace; encouragement of commerce and the arts and sciences; furtherance of justice, and the harmonious union of the states, were the massive pillars upon which was gradually to be raised the fabric of our national prosperity. If all or any of these pillars, my countrymen, are loosened or torn from their foundations, this fabric must totter or fall, and with it our liberties, our happiness, and our existence as a nation. Is it not then a matter of great moment to inquire in what respect we are *deviating* from the principles upon which our government was established, and according to which, for a *short* period, it was most successfully

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administered? If we neglect the examples, and abandon the principles of our ancestors, of those who laid the deep foundation of our government in the rock of religion, and who, both in precept and action, took virtue as their guide, and the only faithful directress to prosperity and honorable fame, shall we expect to be partakers in their deeds and sharers in the imperishable glory of their names?

Religion, my friends and countrymen, is intimately, nay indissolubly connected with the permanency, the happiness, and the dignity of a nation. In proportion as a government approximates the popular form; in the degree in which the people have the sovereignty, and are their own legislators, so is the necessity of the general diffusion of religious principles and the appreciation and practice of good morals. In these we have the best pledge of a prompt and willing obedience to the laws; we have an assurance of the prosperity and stability of the nation; for when the heart and understanding unite in imposing an obligation, its observance is more voluntary and certain than if enacted by a tyrant's mandate or enforced by penal sanctions the most severe.

It should, therefore, ever be an object of primary consideration in those who rule, to preserve the morals of the people free from every impurity; to evidence in all their acts a graceful dependence on the aid and protection of the Most High, and a deep respect and reverence for His holy religion. But, it is not sufficient that a government merely discountenance immorality, or lend its aid to the diffusion of good morals, or even encourage by its approbation intellectual worship. The tree of religion, that it may flourish, should be continually supplied with a genial soil and refreshing waters or, to drop the metaphor, it should be the object of every government as the most certain mode of securing its duration, to foster religious institutions of every description, by enabling those who serve at the altar to live in comfort and ease by the altar, by establishing those institutions on that solid and permanent basis which is calculated to secure the respect and steady regard and admiration of men, and which may be adapted to win and fix them in the exercise of their religious duties; for there is something too spiritual and abstract in the operation of devotion or intellectual worship for the great mass of mankind. In order, therefore, to give a fixity to their ideas, to impart to them an ardour and enthusiasm, their temples of

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worship and other religious institutions should exhibit an imposing and dignified character; and this is only to be effected by placing religion generally under the peculiar care and protection of the powers that be.¹

That religion is closely, nay inseparably, connected with the interests of a state; that it is the firmest basis of national as well as of individual happiness and dignity, and that it forms the strongest bond of civil union, is a truth with which the wisest legislators of pagan times appear to have been deeply impressed. But this sentiment was by no means confined to the legislator, the philosopher, or the statesman; it pervaded the minute interstices of society, was the mainspring of action, formed the rule of individual conduct, and was the earliest lesson impressed on the youthful mind.

Rome might never have been the mistress of the world had not Romulus and Numa, in her infancy excited by their policy a profound and constant veneration for the gods, and given a lustre and majesty to the rites and ceremonials of religion. So deeply impressed were the Romans with the opinion that the gods superintended and regulated the destinies of men, that they never presumed to declare war, give battle, create magistrates, or even to make journeys, without some appropriate religious ceremony. Religion, as the spring of successful policy, has also received the eulogy of most of the heathen writers of eminence. "'Tis much easier," says Plutarch, "to build a city without ground to hold and support it, than to make a commonwealth either unite or subsist when the people reject a deity, or have no respect for virtue." And another celebrated historian observes, "that it is an immutable law, and one founded in nature, that those who are superior in virtue, become so likewise in power and authority."

If the heathen world then, accorded to religion its just influence, dignity, and importance; if pagans were assured of its connection with the best interests of nations and individuals, should not we, who bear the stamp and image of the Cross, who denominate ourselves Christians, look to this as the only genuine and never-failing source of national

¹It has been intimated to the author that this passage is susceptible of misconstruction. Nothing can be more foreign to his intention than to give countenance to the doctrine of the necessity of a union between Church and State; both history and his own judgment assure him of the entire propriety of their entire separation. His idea simply is, that as government should extend its fostering care to education, religion, as a subject of still greater importance to the interests of a State, is entitled to a proportionate degree of attention.

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aggrandizement, collective and individual happiness? Yes, my friends, and countrymen, that Great Being by Whom the hosts of Heaven are ruled, also guides and directs the destinies of men; if regardless of His all-seeing eye we, in our councils act as infidels, as self-created beings, responsible to no one but ourselves, be assured that national calamities will inevitably follow; when this is the case, be assured our liberties are imminently, vitally endangered; for thought the rose and the deadly nightshade may bloom and flourish under the same climate, and in the same soil, the tree of liberty must wither and die where the noxious plant of infidelity diffuses its deadly exhalations; they have no common nature, they delight in separation. Let us then not be unmindful of that kind and special Providence which now presides over our destinies; of Him whose protecting wings hovered over us in the hour of great peril, who fought our battles, broke the yoke of royalty, and cut the cords of our bondage, and the wisdom and virtue of whose temporal rulers are but the feebly reflected rays of His divine attributes. In our prosperity, my countrymen, let us behold the kindness of our heavenly Parent; in our adversity, the merited chastisement of our vice or our folly; let us build our hopes of national prosperity on the religion and morals of the people; let our maxim be that "nothing can be durable which is not erected on the solid and deeply laid foundation of virtue." With this maxim as our guide, we follow the order of nature, we step in the paths of Washington.

If religion be the main principle which unites, holds and energizes government, especially of the republican form, education, it should be conceded, is the next in power and efficiency.

As virtue imparts to the mind a disposition to exert its energies for the general good, education unfolds the means by which this desirable end may be attained; gives to the mental eye a lucid and comprehensive vision of all the relations of man, and endues it with the faculty of prying into the dark chaos of morals and politics, whence may be collected the elements of governmental science best adapted to the nature and genius of a people.

At a period when the virtuous maxims of our forefathers are deserted, or their impulse but slightly felt; when vice and corruption are fast attaining the point of undisputed domination; at a time when ignorance

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is triumphantly seated on the throne of venal power, and the sullen sophistry of Hobbs, the cold and ridiculous Pyrrhonism of Hume, and the learned nonsense of Gallic philosophy, are preferred to the sublime morality and wholesome truths of Christianity; when men, crowned with their country's honors, and eminent in power and station, have not blushed to enforce, both in precept and example, that dangerous and most preposterous of doctrines, the distinction between moral and political virtue; when this monster, sprung from infidelity, nurtured by state policy, and upheld by the worst passions and prejudices of our nature, stalks forth from the hidden recesses of its den, to the full blaze of noon-day, to poison and corrupt, we have abundant cause, my countrymen, to lament, but need not be surprised that education and the seminaries for the diffusion of learning and science have received but little or no patronage, and from some characters have even encountered opposition and denunciation.

It will not be requisite to dive into the arena of political philosophy, nor need we make laborious researches into the history of nations to arrive at the conclusion that the ignorance of the people and despotism are nearly allied, and that in intellectual darkness tyranny has its best security.

Education, as the friend of religion, in dissipating the mists of superstition, as the fulcrum of liberty, by enlarging the mind and imparting to us more expanded ideas of our dignity, more just conceptions of our rights, and more definite opinions on the relations between government and the people; education, as the great promoter of civilization, and the parent of the refinements of civil life, and the pleasures of social intercourse, must be considered by every enlightened and virtuous community as a subject of primary importance and of great national concern.

It presents a gloomy but striking picture of the deep perversion of our nature, that there is no nation in which ignorance has not had its advocates, or in which some individuals have not been interested in blending the darkness of error with the light of truth.

Illumined as the present age vainly boasts itself, all the resources of genius and of learning have nevertheless been exhausted in delineating the beauties of ignorance, in describing in rich and varid imagery the beautitude of the savage state, and in enforcing, with the whole artillery

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of rhetoric, its superior claims over that of polished and ameliorated life. Remote as this doctrine is from common sense, conspicuous as it is in the history of the eccentricities and follies of the human mind, and separated as we are from the country which ushered it to light, there is yet distinctly to be seen more than a glimpse of its sad and deleterious influence.

Many among us, not as St. Paul, mad with too much learning, nor sobered by copious potations from the Pierian spring, but whose mental the beauties of ignorance, in describing in rich and varied imagery the intoxication will perhaps be coexistent with their lives, have been captivated by the splendor of a system which promises once more to place mankind in pristine ignorance and enviable savagism, exempt from the cares and toils of civil life, and disenthralled from the trammels of law, or the irksome decorums of society.

Pleased with the illusions of a brilliant sophistry, they have mistaken the splendid delineations of the pencil of fancy, on the canvas of a heated imagination, for the representations of truth. Destitute of penetration to discern the fallacy of such baseless theories, they are deceived in the very nature and essence of happiness, and devoid of the benign influences of a liberal and scientific education, they sigh for the imaginary ease and freedom of nature, and find themselves isolated in the midst of society, separated from its endearments, its interests and its hopes.

In the breasts of such deluded beings, spleen must soon establish its empire; and to give vent to its feelings, it rails with all the gall of invective against science as the enemy of virtue; against law as the foe of liberty; against philosophy as the art of enslaving the unenlightened; against the forms of religion as the visor of hypocrisy; against the fine arts as pampering the imaginary wants and whims of the great and wealthy; and against commerce as the prolific source of luxury, of avarice, dishonesty, and a long train of consequent evils.

That a serious doubt should ever have been entertained whether knowledge increases our happiness; that any one in an enlightened age should be bold enough to assert that ignorance is the genial state of man, and that the approximation to civilization and the physical and intellectual refinements of polished life is but a proportionate recession

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from that sphere of innocent illiteracy in which nature placed us, and from which she is supposed to have intended we should never deviate, is indeed "passing strange," but how infinitely more so is it that this wild and misshapen chimera which prostrates every barrier between man and the brute, and severs the link connecting us with celestial intelligences, should (in a country where the proud preëminence and dignity of man is so confidently asserted) be so generally fostered; by some openly and without the blush of shame, and by many in their total neglect of learning, and learned men; their indifference to the diffusion of knowledge, and institutions for its advancement; and finally, by their levelling doctrines, which accord to vandalism the rights and privileges of the learned, and place in the seats of office and power the unenlightened votaries of ignorance and of folly.

Who can contrast the wonderful arts of uncultivated man, and the transcendency of ameliorated and refined life, with the ignoble and contracted views of untutored nature, and for a moment embrace so preposterous a tenet? Who can behold the houseless savage, for whom the seasons have no regard, but who leads a sad, dissocial life amidst the desert, seeking an occasional asylum from the violence of the tempests in some gloomy cavity of the earth or rocks, and not hail education with great delight as the inexhaustible source of individual and collective happiness, and the fountain of legitimate and wholesome authority?

As nature has given us minds highly susceptible of improvement, and endowed us with faculties infinitely progressive; and as happiness is one of the final causes of our creation, it is irrational to suppose, nay, impious to assert, that the exercise and cultivation of these faculties induced a counteraction of our endeavors after happiness.

Man, in his physical organization, is not distinguished by any very decided superiority over the brute creation. It is the intellect—the mind—the soul, which exalts him to the highest point of dignity in the scale of being, links him with the Intelligences, confers on him a sovereignty over animate and inanimate creation, enables him to pry into the secrets, to evolve the mysteries of universal nature, and finally which in the eye of Deity has rendered him the only created being worthy of immortality.

But before the powers and brilliancy of the human mind are devel-

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oped to any profitable or splendid extent, like the diamond they require much continued care, elaboration and polish; for such is the intimate connection between the mind and body that the former is much influenced by the inert and sluggish nature of matter, and but seldom appears in its beauty and lustre until measurably freed from its trammels by the arts and the refinements of education.

What was it that so preëminently distinguished and crowned with the never fading laurels of mental and of moral grandeur those illustrious persons who occupy the brightest pages in the history of human greatness, but the high cultivation and exquisite polish of their minds?

What is it that has given to Homer, to Bacon, to Franklin, Descartes, Jones, Linnæus, Ames, Scaliger, and many others, a *terrestrial* immortality, but the expansion and full development of those faculties and affections with which Nature had endowed them?

What but the elaborated and refined mind of Newton enabled him, in the language of Horam, to bring down the moon from the realms of night, to influence and actuate the tides; to write in his book the laws of the tumultuous ocean; to mark the courses of the stars with his wand, and to reduce eccentric orbs to the obedience of his system; to catch the swift-flying light, and divide its rays; to marshal the emanations of the sun under their different colored banners, and to give symmetry and order to the glare of day; to explain the dark, eternal laws of nature, and to appear acquainted with the very dictates of Heaven?

Man thus cultivated, his faculties thus improved, becomes indeed the noblest work of God. It is then, and then only, that with Shakespeare we can exclaim,

*What a piece of work is man!
How noble in reason!
How infinite in faculties!
in form and moving how express and admirable!
in action how like an angel!
in apprehension how like a god!
the beauty of the world!
the paragon of animals!*

As the sole object, therefore, of education is to unfold the mind, to exercise, enliven and strengthen its powers, to refine and invigorate its

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affections, to divest it of the habitating influence of the body, and to exhibit it in its real character with all its dignity and splendour, it necessarily becomes a great and important duty, the due performance of which cannot be productive of *infelicity*.

If we cast our eye over the pages of history, and contemplate the rise and fall of empires, we cannot fail to see that whilst the arts and learning flourished in a state, individual and national virtues, happiness, *liberty*, and power were proportionately great, but when knowledge dropped, and

Laurell'd science, arts and public works

declined, vice and wretchedness, disaster and tyranny established their dominion, and soon after terminated the existence of the nation.

Rome maintained her liberties as long as Mars and Minerva acted in concert; but when the goddess winged her flight, when Science hung her head, and Knowledge lost her power, the virtue, happiness and the liberties of the mistress of the world departed.

*Learning and Rome alike in empire grew,
And arts still flourished where her eagles flew;
From the same foes at last, both felt their doom,
And the same age saw learning fall, and Rome.*

That "*knowledge is power*," was a maxim of the illustrious Bacon, no less practically than philosophically accurate. With the statesman and the politician this maxim should ever be their polar star, the ruling principle; for to the learning and wisdom of their legislators is it that a people owe their dignity and their power.

Whatever may be the physical force of a nation; however vast its resources; extended its empire and infinite its population, that nation must be weak and inefficient if unenlightened by the beams of knowledge. India, a country populous, and abundant in the sources of exuberant wealth, boundless in extent, and favoured with the finest climate and most luxuriant soil is, nevertheless, as an empire, insignificant and destitute of power. Persia, with her millions of subjects, whose monarch is the shah or "disposer of kingdoms," and whose laws are said to be "given by him whom the universe obeys," is yet but of little im-

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portance in the scale of nations; and the Ottoman empire, with all its territory and riches, presents but the phantom of power compared with what it would possess were the general mind warmed, invigorated and expanded by the rays of science. When did Russia first become respectable and formidable among the nations of Europe? When Peter forced her to acquire knowledge. What enables England and France nearly to divide the world between them? "The answer," says a writer of our own country, "is obviously because they nearly divide the knowledge of the world."

It is then to the collective wisdom and learning of a nation that we are to look for its formidable power. Where these are wanting, the state is imbecile, devoid of dignity, incapable of *self-protection*, and at last becomes a mere *political weathercock* regulated by the frowns or flattery of more powerful and intelligent nations, and not unfrequently is wafted the whole *sweep of the circle* by the simple breath of their wishes.

As knowledge, therefore, is not only productive of happiness but of power, it should be universal, and like the rays of the sun diffuse its light and genial warmth among every class or condition of society.

Here let us in our subject pause for a moment, for this was the sentiment of Washington. And what, my friends and countrymen, that is orthodox in religion, education and governmental science, was not the sentiment of Washington? His heart was the repository of all the brightest virtues; his mind a constellation of the most resplendent endowments. Like the great orb of day, his lustre is bounded by no country, and will continue to shine to the remotest ages.

Amidst an assemblage of excellence so rare, amidst the halo which encompassed the character of this great and good man, we are lost in the mingled emotions of reverence, admiration, gratitude and love.

My friends, I was young, very young, when Washington held the helm of state. But well do I remember, and never can I forget those good old times of public and private virtue, when every heart swelled with gratitude, when every eye glistened with admiration, when every tongue lisped his praises. My youthful mind then received a strong and exquisite impression which, I trust in God, will ever remain; for when

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we neglect to cherish the fame of Washington, and to revere his principles, farewell to all that is estimable in the human character.

But Washington, perfect as he was, had yet his enemies; and his *fame* is not without them. Some who pine at the good name of another, live on detraction, and grow sick in the serene and uninterrupted current of national felicity; and others, maddened by the lust of ambition, or deprived of their virtues and good principles by the thirst of gain, "who would sell their birthright for a cooling draught," have presumed to question not only his wisdom, but his virtue and his patriotism. These men, as if "resolved on bondage, fierce for chains," have labored hard to sully the purity of his name, and to bring into disrepute and contempt his admirable doctrines—but Truth will live.

*Clearly to reason she reveals her light,
And errors vanish like midst before her.*

However triumphantly seated in the chair of power these men may now be, their reign cannot be long; they "are but the beings of a summer's day," and the fame of him who

*Held the scale of empire, rul'd the storm
Of mighty war, then with unwearied hand,
Disdaining little delicacies, seized
The plough and greatly independent liv'd,*

will prove itself imperishable as Virtue's self.

Nothing which relates to man was sovereign to the bosom of Washington. He therefore was a strong and practical friend to the general and unrestricted expansion of the human intellect. Education presented to him the surest pledge of obedience to the laws, the prolific source of national wealth and power, and the strongest barrier against the inundation of vice and corruption.

In the illumination of the general mind and in affording to the heirs of poverty and wretchedness the means of knowing their rights, and of duly estimating them, this great and best of men saw nothing which would endanger governmental powers; this is a dread which tyrants only feel, a vision seen by none but despots. But Washington loved not

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power for power's sake; its only charm to him was what the people gave it. In the beams of knowledge, therefore, he saw no consuming fire to his power, but a genial warmth which strengthened and invigorated it. Actuated by these sentiments, what Washington has done need not be mentioned—it is known to you all; and whilst gratitude remains a virtue, the children of indigence will celebrate his benevolence and venerate his name.

In a bird's-eye view of the progress of the human mind during the last half century, nothing is more eminently conspicuous than the simultaneous success (even to an unprecedented extent) of religion and infidelity, government and anarchy, liberty and despotism, valor and pusillanimity, patriotism and treason, *learning* and *ignorance*.

This age of contradictions and extremes, therefore, not only affords us numerous systems which, if reduced to general practice, would degrade the human species to a point beyond redemption, but others which reflect the greatest honor on their ingenious and humane projectors and are calculated in the highest degree to exalt the mind and ennoble the character of man. Among these excellent inventions none so immediately claims our grateful notice as that admirable system of practical education invented and successfully introduced by Joseph Lancaster, by which knowledge is carried into the very recesses of indigence and wretchedness, and the haunts of vice and ignorance are made the joyful tenements of virtue and intelligence.

Without impiously ascribing omnipotence to education—for we would ever wash our hands of every tenet of Gallic philosophy—this invention may, with strict propriety, be considered as the most illustrious epoch in the history of the advancement of the human intellect. What will be the probable effects upon society, nations, and the world at large from the universality of knowledge; to what point of virtue, happiness, learning and power this extraordinary system may lead, is not for me to discuss; to the profound and speculative I leave it, as a subject infinitely fertile in useful and interesting topics.

But to the distinguished and humane Lancaster we are prompted, both by our feelings and duty, to pay our tribute of deep respect and grateful admiration; to raise our voice against the licentious Mandeville who, to make the prince powerful and the nation happy, would keep

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the people both ignorant and poor; against the false apprehensions, the illiberal insinuations and ridiculous sophistry of Trimmer, and in opposition to the eloquence of Daubney, who even from the pulpit sounded the tocsin of alarm, and would have you believe that Lancaster is an infidel and his glorious system "calculated to answer no one purpose, so much as that of amalgamating the great body of the people into one great deistical compound."

In abhorrence and detestation we turn from these faithful servants and vicegerents of the great enemy of all that is good and learned, to those distinguished and liberal patrons of Mr. Lancaster who, with heartfelt zeal labored in his cause, and have triumphantly succeeded in silencing his numerous enemies. Upon the bright page of immortality let there be inscribed that noble saying of the English monarch, "that he with delight looked forward to the day when every poor child in his dominions should be able to read his *Bible*." On the same luminous page let there be written, in golden letters, the names of George, Prince of Wales; Bathurst, Bishop of Norwich; Sir Thomas Bernard, John Abott, Dr. Wallis of Ipswich, and Brown, mayor of Canterbury; and let us, my friends, in this new world, by a liberal, assiduous and persevering attention to this economical, rapid and easy method of spreading the blessings of knowledge (which we have already most successfully commenced), entitle ourselves to distinguished places in the catalogue of generous patrons of the Lancasterian system.

When we contemplate the vast numbers in society whose only patrimony is ignorance, and whose only legacy is vice, we cannot hesitate to pronounce that there is no direction of benevolence more favorable to morals and good government, or attended by more gratifying results to a feeling and liberal mind, than that which has for its object the intellectual and moral education of the poor.

A century since, the peasantry of Scotland were in the most abject and degrading state of ignorance. Vice, in her blackest forms and most shocking modes of exhibition, triumphed without check, and the dark catalogue of human depravity seemed to have been extended for the admission of new and unheard of crimes. This contagion of moral turpitude at length became so general and destructive as imperatively to demand the attention of the Scottish Parliament. The poor were edu-

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cated. Industry and good morals supplanted idleness and vice; and Scotland, from one of the most vicious has, by the powers of education, been transformed into one of the most virtuous communities.

If we compare the very distressing and gloomy picture which has been drawn of that country by Fletcher of Saltoun, in 1698, with its present state, we have presented to us one of the brightest and most convincing examples recorded in history of the positions which I have—perhaps tediously to my auditors—been endeavoring to establish, viz.: that religion is the corner stone in the governmental fabric, and that national happiness, virtue and power are the immediate offspring of the illumination and expansion of the *general mind*.

But notwithstanding these are obvious truths, and in an age different from that in which we live would not have needed illustration, they suit not the genius of the times. Religion and education but ill accord with the philosophy of the day; and consequently—to say the least—have received but little or no patronage. It is no matter of surprise, therefore, that “the times are out of joint,” for when the fundamental principles of good government are theoretically obsolete, minor doctrines are sure to be practically deserted.

Accustomed since the establishment of our independence to unmingled prosperity, abstracted from the turmoils and miseries of transatlantic contest, viewing but in perspective the scenes of desolation and carnage which for so many years past have afflicted every other nation, and pampered by the wealth and comforts flowing from extended and successful commerce, the recollection of the hardships we endured in the glorious struggle for our liberties but faintly remains. In the delirium of this unalloyed happiness, and in the pride of precocious and temporary vigour, we appear to have forgotten the honor of war, and to have lost our estimation for the blessings of peace. God forbid that I should think—much less assert—that our country has not suffered by the wrongs of England. But the first rule of political wisdom teaches us that although in theory we should never yield a *principle*, 'tis not at all times wise and expedient to assert its practice by resort to arms.

The hum of busy commerce has now given place to the din of arms; the sound of warlike trumpets has drowned the noise of prosperous industry. No longer do our ports, animated with returning sails, “groan

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with the mingled harvests of mankind." No longer are they the repositories into which the tributary streams of wealth pour their abundant riches. The East retains her spices, and her gorgeous treasures. The golden South in exchange no longer receives the products of our soil. The genius of commerce has fled to distant climes, and the sun of our prosperity has risen to warm and fertilize some other favored region.

That the interests of a country and the method of pursuing them are greatly dependent on the local situation of that country, the nature of the government, the character of its people, and in a minor degree its climate and soil, is a position conceded by every enlightened author on the polity of nations. It follows, therefore, that a people should never be moulded and fashioned by the laws, but that these should be the offspring of the constitutional tendencies and inclinations of the people. As our geographical situation, the genius of our government, and our predominant dispositions peculiarly fit us for an extended commerce, does not the anti-commercial spirit, which has for some time prevailed, seem like a perverse and voluntary aberration from the very paths to which the finger of Heaven itself appears to direct? How philosophically beautiful was the idea of the ancient stories, which has been revived and charmingly illustrated by the estimable Fencion, that the human species, however separated by rivers and mountains, by seas and oceans, and divided and subdivided into empires and kingdoms are, nevertheless, in the eye of our Creator contemplated as one *grand republic*, mutually ministering to each others' comfort, happiness and refinement!

As society owes its amelioration to an harmonious and reciprocal communication so nations, by the maintenance of a continued and friendly interchange, attain their polish, wealth and power. We accordingly find that commercial nations have from the earliest ages been distinguished in polity and refinement, whilst those which despised commerce, or from their local situation were unable to pursue it, remained in pristine ignorance and rudeness.

To the Egyptians, Phœnicians, Arabians, and the commercial states of Greece are we to look for the principles of most of the sciences and fine arts and, as Cicero justly observes, we are to expect wealth, influence and civilization where trade and commerce flourish. History and

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his own good mind had taught the Roman the value of commerce; but pride and prejudice and the force of early habits prevented his countrymen from pursuing a policy which would have rendered their country permanently free and powerful, the neglect of which laid the foundation of their final ruin.

But Rome and Bonaparte, without the aid of commerce, could do much better than we or other nations; for, having devoted themselves almost exclusively to war, and by a most unprecedented and uninterrupted series of conquests of the richest countries of the world, filled their coffers with the treasures long accumulating by the industry of others, the necessity of commerce was not so urgent. We read of the rich donatives of Nero, the immense wealth of Lentuius, the great estates of Cræsus, the splendid wardrobe of Paulina, and the vessels of gold and silver and the exquisite paintings and statues which decorated the palaces of the proconsuls. But alas! these were not the products of successful commerce! They were the ill-gotten riches of legalized robbery, of unprincipled plunder. But notwithstanding this immense wealth, flowing from conquered provinces, Rome herself was at length obliged, in order to keep in continued motion all the wheels of that vast empire to have recourse to commerce. The civil and military establishments grew to such an inordinate bulk as would soon have terminated in national bankruptcy had not the sluices of commerce been opened and her provinces, particularly Egypt, been encouraged in the pursuit of commercial gain.

This country, therefore, in order to be great and powerful without commerce, must bid adieu to principle, disregard the dictates of reason and justice, devote herself to arms, and setting aside the moral, direct her entire energies to the physical education of her people. This done, who knows, but like the Romans, we may have conquered countries sufficient to give a principality to every military chief. We shall then have uninterrupted sovereignty over interminable deserts and woods, over numerous nations and tribes of savages; but alas! with this very different result, that our conquerors will not, as Julius Cæsar, return in triumph with vessels of gold and silver and diadems of immense value; it will then, as with the Romans, terminate in this result: we

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shall be obliged to retrace our steps and, following the channel prescribed by nature, again become commercial.

But, my friends and countrymen, we are not to attribute this dilapidation in the edifice of our national prosperity and dignity solely to the general decay of sound *morals*, indifference to *education*, and contempt of commerce. The fourth main pillar which supports this august fabric has suffered much by the exacerbated state of *party feeling*.

To such a lamentable and destructive extent has this animosity already attained that, when I contemplate its probable consequences, I tremble for my country's safety.

Great God! why has Thou endued us with reason, if our passions are to forge our chains? Why are we blessed with vision if, in the most important of all temporal pursuits we blind ourselves with the veil of prejudice?

When Passion is dethroned and Reason assumes her empire, the paroxysms of party rage surprise and terrify us. The dangers which encompass us are then seen in all their dark and genuine colors. We mutually court a union, and reciprocally determine—on the altar of public good—to sacrifice all intemperate zeal.

But alas! how fleeting and unproductive are these resolves. In this great ocean of political controversy how seldom do we find a calm! How rarely are the clouds, the waves, and storms of factious animosity succeeded by the lucid and transparent atmosphere, through which the eye of candor beams unmolested, or by the smooth and quiescent surface on which the bark of state may securely ride, unimpeded by the gentlest undulation or the breath of an opposing zephyr. This is a state of political repose, but seldom enjoyed by us. We speak and think of it as something that was, and admire and sigh for it as something attainable, and yet within our reach.

Yes, my countrymen, it is not lost to us forever. The blissful seat of Eden was by man's disobedience forfeited, and by the Light of Truth regained. So may the beams of political virtue direct you once more to honor, to happiness, and to power.

Delivered in the Episcopal Church.

* * * * *

"At a meeting of The Washington Society of Alexandria, the 22nd

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of February 1813, it was unanimously *Resolved*, That the thanks of this Society be presented to David Hoffman, Esq., for his elegant and appropriate Oration this day delivered, and that he be requested to furnish a copy thereof for publication.

G. DENEALE, *Sec'y.*"

XII

THE ORATION BY HONORABLE FRANCIS SCOTT KEY

FEBRUARY 22, 1814

THE return of this day, in times like these, presents us with a new and affecting proof of the uncertainty of all human expectations, of the vanity stamped upon every work and purpose and device of man.

A nation in the pride of its triumph, in the exultation of prosperity, sets apart the birthday of its deliverer as a day of national festivity, and decrees that its annual return shall be welcomed by acclamations of joy and be the signal of universal gladness. But alas! a few short years pass away, and the pride of triumph and the exultation of prosperity are gone. The feelings that once prompted the song of deliverance and the voice of thanksgiving are dead.

In the gloom of present distress, in the still more awful anticipation of approaching calamity, the usual exhibition of national rejoicing would be impossible. A period arrives in which patient courage, pious submission and humble enquiry into the means of preservation are the virtues demanded of us.

That all the vicissitudes of human affairs are ordered and controlled by the Almighty Governor of the world, who means, in all his dispensations, mercy to men, is a truth we freely acknowledge; but how faintly do we feel it? How little do we manifest by our conduct its influence upon our hearts?

Hence, when affliction is sent among a people, we are all too ready to charge it exclusively upon those to whose fault or folly we choose to impute it, and each man deems himself an innocent sufferer for the offence of others. And hence those mutual revilings and reproaches which show a spirit unsoftened by adversity, which present neither remedy nor alleviation, but serve to aggravate the common guilt and the common punishment.

If then, in the dark and evil times that have come upon us, this day must lose its brightness; if the sad and dispirited heart seeks in vain to be revived by the recollections it excites, it will become us to ob-



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serve it with a solemnity suited to the circumstances in which it finds us. If it may no longer give unmixed delight, it may teach us wisdom, may prompt us to timely consideration, and prepare us for the trials we may be called on to endure.

I shall not endeavor to distress you by a display of the fall of our national prosperity, the causes which produced or the consequences to be expected from it; nor shall I enter into a discussion of the many questions that occupy and disturb the public mind.

Were I to speak of those things, I should speak of them as they are, and it would be a task, I hope, as repugnant to the feelings of those by whose request I have the honor to address you, as to my own, to excite in your minds those portentous forebodings which at times fill and agitate my own bosom, which I feel to be adverse to my own peace and the discharge of my own duties, and which I, therefore, strive to repress.

This day is here celebrated by a society formed for no low or ordinary purpose, seeking no political distinction or emolument; seeking nothing for itself, but aiming with a substantial and devoted patriotism to promote the good of all our country by actual works of beneficence. A society which, if these were not its motives and its views, would be put to shame by the name which it has assumed.

I have thought that he who speaks to you at such a time, under such a sanction, should not be emulous of that distinction which is to be obtained by sounding the praise of one sect of politicians and denouncing another—that the speaker of a society bearing the name of your Washington, a society loving that name to enthusiasm, possessing and cherishing his principles, imitating his example, as to minister to the pride or passion of party feeling, and avow allegiance to anything less than his country. And I have the gratification of believing that such a discharge of the duty I have undertaken is neither expected nor desired by those who have condescended to call me here.

To give due honor to the illustrious object of our regard; to call up his image before you; to awaken your recollections of his worth, of his zeal and devotion to your service; to select from the innumerable proofs of his affection some signal and useful token of his love, to make the memory of what he was, even now that he is no more, a continual defence and blessing to us—these are subjects well suited to

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the proper commemoration of this day—to these considerations I would lead you.

To do honor to the name of Washington; to awaken the glowing recollections of his countrymen; to warm, with these recollections, the hearts of those who were not only his countrymen, but his neighbors and associates. Is this the task I have undertaken? and can I hope to fulfill these expectations? Where is the human eloquence that shall be found equal to such a subject? Shall it be displayed in exhibiting to your view the bright course of a long and honorable life, the assemblage of all the varieties of virtue which have constituted him your hero, your patriot, the deliverer and the father of his country?

Is his worth to be thus sought after and his services to be thus enumerated? No, my friends, the excellence of your Washington is of no common character. It is that excellence that makes panegyric poor, that defies description, that overpowers eloquence.

This part of my duty is done. I call the feelings that are now glowing in your bosoms to witness that it is done, and "bid them speak for me." They have paid a ready tribute of affection and of reverence that I should be ashamed to attempt to express. The name of Washington has been sounded in your ears; at that sound where is the heart that is not kindled into rapture, where is the eye whose glance does not confess it? Can words, poor words, do any justice to these feelings? Can I give language to that which the coldest bosom must feel too big for utterance? The memory of man can receive no higher homage; a mortal name cannot be more ennobled than when at the mere utterance of that name, as if a magic spell had been pronounced, the tide of transport rushes from every heart and throbs through every vein of all who hear it. Let the advocate of false greatness, the assertor of a doubtful fame, the economist of successful ambition, let him exhaust the embellishments of rhetoric to blazen forth a worth which is neither seen nor felt, and to warm with some artificial heat the unaffected minds of his hearers; but let him who speaks to you of your departed chief remember that he cannot be exalted in your affection, let him speak the name of Washington, and catching the contagious impulse it has excited, join you in the reverential homage of the heart.

In the midst of these contemplations I trust we shall all remember

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the high and solemn duty they so obviously suggest to us. That in a time of great national calamity a deliverer was appointed to us; that he was gifted with every quality required by every emergency; guarded for our sakes in the midst of danger, and preserved to establish us in peaceful security. That we have even yet left to us the benefit of his example, the deathless glory of his name and the inestimable excellency of his principles—these are blessings which a kind Providence has bestowed upon us, and for which gratitude and praise cannot be withheld without impiety.

Let us then not be unmindful of this national duty; let us sanctify the commemoration of this day by "reasonable and acceptable service."

It is not merely for some temporary purpose and only for the benefit of the age in which he lives that Heaven, in compassion to the necessities of a people, vouchsafes to raise up a great and favored man in their defence. The good as well as "the evil men do, lives after them," and never was richer inheritance bequeathed by expiring patriot to his country than we have received from ours. Lasting as his name will be the blessings achieved for us by his life if we are not wanting to ourselves—in that name alone he has left us a defence and a perpetual incitement to the highest efforts of patriotism. If the native of England may justly boast that—

*Chatham's language was his Mother tongue,
And Wolf's great name compatriot with his own,*

what should be his exultation who remembers that, in the name of America, he bears a title ennobled by the deeds of Washington? Deeds which asserted and established his country's preëminence over the proudest and greatest nation upon earth, in that conflict when

*All the budding honors on her crest
Were cropt to make a garland for our own.*

Nor has he left us only his name. I trust he never felt the chilling thought that that name would be forgotten or disregarded; but he well knew that even those who might feel the sincerest veneration for it, would be frail and fallible, subject to the assaults of passion, the arts of

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prejudice, and all the various sources of error which might make their efforts, however well intended, worse than useless. He has provided for this, and I have chosen a subject for our reflections this day from that instance of his anxiety for our welfare, which I consider the consummation of his character.

I allude to that last and most interesting act of his official life when, on his retirement from the government to the humbler duties of a private station, he made his parting address to his lamenting countrymen. That concern for your interest, which had animated all his labors, was still working at his heart, and would not suffer him to take his final leave of the nation he had saved without adding to his prayers for his country those maxims of political wisdom which I trust will never be forgotten and which, at this time, it particularly becomes us to call to mind. In selecting any of the last words of our beloved chief, I need not fear that I have chosen an unwelcome topic. In our recollections of a departed friend, the mind naturally turns to the last acts of kindness, to the dying declarations of attachment—advice offered under such circumstances is received with peculiar regard, and though often neglected in the wantonness of prosperity, it recurs in the day of trouble with more than its original influence.

In this address we have everything to excite our veneration and affection. It evinces a disinterested devotion to our good, which no folly can be preposterous enough to deny, no wickedness base enough to question; and it will ever be our own miserable neglect if the wisdom and patriotism of the counsels it contains do not continue to be at all times and under all dangers our guide, our refuge and preservation. He has here laid down for us a course which, in every situation in which we may be placed, will lead us safely and honorably through all the difficulties that may oppose us. No evil can befall us against which he has not guarded us, no temptation can come upon us where his monitory voice has not supplied us with a caution. The remotest of our descendants, to whom the political blessings we have received may be allowed to be transmitted, will find these parental counsels sanctified by experience, and the impartial historian will note the invariable connection between the happiness of the nation and the observance of these hallowed precepts; and if the day shall ever come

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—which may Heaven be propitiated to avert!—that shall cast us down from our greatness; when civil discord, corruption or usurpation shall bend the necks of freemen to a miserable and hopeless bondage, then shall the sorrowing patriot, who may survive the horrors of that day, point to the disregarded admonition of your Washington, and the tear that he drops upon the ruins of his country will be embittered by the recollection of her follies and her crimes.

The feelings which prompted him to endeavor to perpetuate our blessings are thus affectingly displayed in his own words in the conclusion of this address: "In offering to you, my countrymen, these counsels of an old and affectionate friend, I dare not hope that they will make the strong and lasting impression I could wish; that they will control the usual current of the passions, or prevent our nation from running the course which has hitherto marked the destiny of nations. But if I may even flatter myself if that they may be productive of some partial benefit, some occasional good; that they may now & then recur to moderate the fury of party spirit; to warn against the mischiefs of foreign intrigues; to guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism, this hope will be a full recompence for the solicitude for your welfare, by which they have been directed."

To do justice to this inestimable warning; to point out to your view the various excellencies that distinguish it, is a task far too great for the present occasion. I intend, therefore, only to offer to your consideration its most essential and solemn injunction: one, of which no individual of any nation should ever be unmindful which, without exception or excuse, is the bounden duty of every citizen, the indispensable obligation upon the conscience of a patriot. It is that admonition of your Washington which recommends to your regard the religion to which he bore his honorable testimony. Hear then the words which he addresses to you upon this all-important subject:

"Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, Religion and Morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who would labour to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man,

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ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity."

I cannot avoid remarking that there is scarcely a memorable incident or official act of his life in which the strong and just impressions of his mind upon this subject were not manifested. In all our national deliverances we see him ascribing all the glory to their true and Almighty Cause, and calling upon his countrymen to acknowledge and praise the Power that defended them.

I hope I shall be pardoned for presuming to address you on such a subject. I have felt how little I was qualified for such an office, and I have undertaken it relying, for all claim to your attention, upon the influence of that name in which we are assembled; and believing that nothing could be presented to you more worthy of your thoughts, or more applicable to our present situation. When a people are suffering under divine correction, when the arm of the Almighty is raised in wrath against them, surely it is not unreasonable to expect that they will "call their ways to remembrance," and endeavor to ascertain the iniquity that has provoked chastisement. If we do this faithfully, it will lead us to the only remedy for all the evils we either endure or anticipate, and affliction will have "done its errand." But if we are hardened against such suggestions, we need not look to the history of past ages or the speculations of fancy, to learn the nature and extent of the visitation we may expect. The fall, in our own view, of the proudest nations of the earth, once peaceful and prosperous as our own, now groaning in unutterable wretchedness, gives awful warning of the fate that may await us.

Let us then endeavor to ascertain what those duties are, which the religion we profess demands of us in relation to our country, and how they have been discharged.

It has been said that the exalted virtue of patriotism finds no place in this religion, and is incompatible with its tenets. How strangely erroneous is this opinion! A just and disinterested love of country springs from religion as from its natural and proper source, and is ever nourished by its influence. Let the men of other principles tell us, whether the divinity, the work of men's corrupt imagination, which they have set up and which they worship, can supply the patriot with

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that armour of proof which religion furnishes; and if deluded by the error they have loved, they tell us that it can, let us look among the lives of those who live only for this world, and in obedience to its rules, for instances to prove it. If we are dazzled by a few shining exceptions, how are they outnumbered by thousands of the fairest promise, whose lamentable fall shows us the weakness of the power that upholds their virtue?

A man may wear out his life in the toils of the cabinet, or hazard it by his daring in the field, yet if he is prompted to this from the love of power, the dream of ambition, the glory of a name, if these are his motives, who can doubt that it is his own power, his own ambition, his own glory, that he seeks; that it is himself, and neither his country nor his God that he loves and serves.

A man may offer himself to death, may fall exulting in the trappings and decorations with which honor adorns its victim, but if unimpelled by that love to God and man, which is the only incense that can sanctify such an offering, it is a sacrifice unacceptable to Heaven, it is a sacrifice to self.

Look at the efficacy of these principles in the day of trial. Let temptation come upon him; let his evil passions solicit indulgence; let the pomp and glory of the world spread their allurements before him; let a secret path of crooked policy seem to lead to the eminence for which his heart pants; and what shall stop him in his way? Alas! feeble are the barriers which the wisdom of this world can present to the madness of ambition!

He who submits to be guided by the divine light of revelation has learned the nature and condition of man, the engagements to which he is called, and the dangers that oppose him. He has heard of his high origin, of his wretched fall, of his glorious redemption, of the awful and everlasting destiny which awaits him. Grateful for his deliverance, thankful for all the blessings of life, and exulting in the hopes of eternity, he has acknowledged the Almighty as his Lord, and devoted himself to His service. Anxious to manifest the warmth of his gratitude by the fidelity of his obedience, he has humbly enquired into His will. Finding himself associated with numberless fellow creatures, "framed with like miracle, the work of God," he has been solicitous

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to learn his relation to them. He is told they are his brethren, that he is to love them, and that it is to be his business to fill up the short measure of his life by doing good to them.

Engaging in this work, he has perceived himself peculiarly connected with some who are brought nearer to him, and therefore more within the reach of his beneficence. He has observed that he is a member of a particular social community, governed by the same laws, exercising the same privileges, and bound to the same duties. His obligations, therefore, to this community are more obvious and distinct. His own country, by whose institutions he has been cherished and protected, has therefore a peculiar claim upon him. That he may acknowledge this claim, that his zeal may want no excitement to rouse him, it is there that his blessings are fixed, that the charities of life have been exercised, and an impulse of filial affection is awakened within him, that binds him unalienably to the land of his birth.

While, therefore, it is his endeavor to cherish the kindest affections towards the whole human family, while he extends his benevolent wishes over all the nations of the world, and would scorn to seek unjustly the aggrandizement of his own country at the expense of another, yet his reason tells him that the good he would do to all men must be limited to those who are within his reach. Here then he is presented with an object worthy of all his exertions. Here he finds that substantial foundation on which his patriotism is erected, to promote the best interests of those with whom he is thus connected is the direct engagement to which his religion binds him, the ruling impulse which it excites.

He lives not for himself. His own case or advantage is beneath his concern when the sacrifice of either can advance the common cause. What can be wanting to render the discharge of an engagement, thus solemnly considered and undertaken, effectual for his country which his religion does not afford him? Are trials and temptations to be encountered? Shall not he be enabled to overcome, who knows that, whatever is appointed him, a power will be given proportioned to his need? Who knows what is his infirmity, and where is his help? Who, in the failings of his own strength can call upon Omnipotence for aid?

Are toils and perils and sufferings and death the sacrifices which his

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country's good demands? He will not shrink from these in whose estimation they are trifles. Who knows that "the sufferings of these present times are not worthy to be compared with the glories" of that "hereafter" to which he looks.

Not only is he provided with motives to impel him, but wisdom to direct him. Dark and perplexing on some occasions are the paths of life, and our political duties are subject to no inconsiderable intricacies. The patriot who feels himself in the service of God, who acknowledges Him in all his ways, has the promise of Almighty direction, and will find His word in his greatest darkness "a lantern to his feet and a lamp unto his paths." Whatever may be the situation of his country or of himself, the peculiar duties resulting from that situation will be made plain before him.

Who that observes the strange and unaccountable delusions which confound the wise of this world, and knows that these great and ready helps are offered to all, but must wonder that man should persist in leaning to his own understanding and slighting that wisdom which is from above. How innumerable and incalculable are the evils which have flowed from the mistakes of those who are thus misguided! He whose life is governed by the plain precepts of Christianity will be unmoved by the sophistry which would entangle him in the most dangerous errors. Thus, for instance, he whose religion teaches him that the least deviation from right is not to be justified by any consideration; that he is never to do evil that good may flow from it; that he is not to be solicitous about the consequences of doing his duty, but trust them to the wise Providence that directs them, he who is thus taught, will never be brought to believe that truth and justice ever dispense with their precepts, that the political conduct of the public man is to be released from the strictness of moral obligation which he acknowledges in his private capacity, that he may be allowed to practice some artifices, to be a little insincere in his professions, a little unfair in his contrivances. He will not allow any distinction that justifies dishonesty on the plea of necessity or the pretence of patriotism.

Should he, therefore, be called to share in the councils of his country, they will be conducted, as far as he is concerned in them, without intrigue, with the same simplicity and rectitude which mark his private

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character. He will remember that Washington declared "he held the maxim no less applicable to public than private affairs, that honesty is always the best policy," and however foolish or impracticable such a rule of political conduct may appear to others, he knows that he can produce, in its great author, the rare and illustrious instance of a statesman who never disregarded it. He will therefore seek to establish for his country in the eyes of the world and in the estimation of her own citizens, such a character as shall make her not unworthy of the name of a Christian nation. He will strive to save her from the reproach of bearing the name and disowning the obligations it imposes. He will endeavor to advance the public happiness by promoting public virtue. Whatever, therefore, can be done for the establishment of sound principles and correct habits, for the suppression of vice and the encouragement of piety, will receive his unwearied support and constitute the chief aim of his labors.

In any public trust committed to him, the patriot who has never sought or desired it for his own advantage, who feels religion, prompted to undertake it as a trust which Providence has assigned him, and for the discharge of which he is to render an account, will be in little danger of prostituting it to selfish purposes.

He will be mindful that all the capacity of usefulness he possesses, and the favor which may be given him in the eyes of his countrymen are talents delivered to him, not for individual aggrandizement but for the general good.

In his intercourse in such a situation with his political associates, he will be regulated by the principles of the same religion which has taught him the social virtues he has practiced in a private station; a religion which enjoins forbearance, moderation, patience, gentleness, charity to all. He will oppose those who he thinks wrong with meekness though with firmness, and will sacrifice to his connection with none the independence of his judgment or the dictates of his conscience.

Nor does the patriotism of such a man depend on situation; the changes of times and circumstances do not affect it. He does not serve his country only when she has honor and profit to repay him. He manifests the ardor and sincerity of his love in the day of her adversity. His religion inspires him to apportion his efforts to her need; and if

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this should require the blood of a patriot to be shed in her defence, he has learned that he can do no greater act of love than to "lay down his life for his friends." As no selfish considerations have been the motives of his patriotism, so neither can they extinguish it. He has not loved his country for the sake of reward, and therefore if he is neglected and dispised, if injustice, cruelty and oppression are the only returns his services have obtained, he will even then find abundant inducements not only to prompt his forgiveness, but to keep alive his love.

Nor let it be supposed that if an humbler sphere of duty be assigned him, he is not still to remember that the private citizen is not exempt from the claims of patriotism. He will then show his love of country by that exact obedience to her laws which his principles enjoin. Though not called to act in her behalf, his heart will not be unengaged in her cause, and in the eye of the religion he obeys the will is equivalent to the deed: nor is he idle or useless in such a state. He who fulfills with zeal and faithfulness all the duties of private, domestic and social life, who encourages virtue and promotes benevolence by his influence and example is no mean contributor to the stock of public happiness, and will find engagements requiring all his efforts. To purify his own heart and watch over his own ways is his first great work and the indispensable preparation for every other.

*There unfatigu'd
His fervent spirit labors, there he fights,
And there obtains fresh conquests o'er himself,
And never withering wreaths, compared with which,
The laurels that a Caesar reaps, are weeds.*

From these conflicts he derives not only dominion over himself but charity towards others. They have taught him the strength of passion, the violence of temptation, the arts of prejudice and the fallibility of judgment. Hence he is indulgent in making allowances for others, rigid only to himself.

There is also above all one claim upon him to which he cannot be insensible. Religion will not suffer the patriot to forget his country in his prayers. However lightly the world may think of the interces-

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sions of the pious, Christianity teaches us that they are neither unacceptable to God nor unavailing. This is a service equally due from the most low and the most exalted station. He who has a heart warm with affection for his country, though he may have nothing else to give, may yet, by giving this, give greatly. He who withholds this, whatever else he may give, gives comparatively nothing. The mite that is thus humbly cast into the treasure of a nation's blessings, may be more effectual and availing than all the offerings of the great. He who in his retirements calls up the thought of his country, and at that thought breathes forth his secret and devout petitions in her behalf, may be instrumental in drawing down a blessing which only Almighty goodness can grant, and which men can neither know nor estimate.

Here, then, my friends, closes the faint sketch I have attempted of the duties imposed upon him whom religion makes a patriot. Does it require an unattainable state of virtue, an imaginary excellence, to discharge these obligations? Man cannot, it is true, be perfect in any branch of duty, but he may, by Divine help, be making in this and every other a constant progress towards that perfection which is only to begin when this frail life of trial and difficulty shall be over. Mankind has had cause to bless Heaven for the gift of many whose attainments in this virtue have benefited and adorned the age in which they lived. Nor should we be wanting in gratitude for the illustrious instances that have been bestowed on us. Foremost among them, by the confession of the world, stood our Washington. While we dwell upon his precepts let his memory and example excite us to imitation. Let us not in despair presume to say that the flame of patriotism is extinguished, that we have only in his grave the mouldering bones of such a patriot. Let us trust to that Providence whose abundant kindness we have experienced in the time of our necessity; let us strive to conciliate the favor of that Being who can send His spirit among us and make us a nation of patriots.

Need we enquire whether we have been duly impressed with the importance of the great duties I have endeavored to suggest, and how we have fulfilled them? Alas! who is there among us insensible to his want of faithfulness in this respect? The review of them has so filled him, who addressed you, with a sense of his own utter unworthiness,

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that he has with doubt and difficulty ventured to present such a subject to your thoughts: fearful that it might not only seem, but be, presumptuous in one so culpable himself to offer such considerations to others. If individually and nationally we are found most guilty; if we must see and feel and acknowledge our offences, then is there an awful call upon us for deep and universal penitence. Are there no signs in these times that should awaken and alarm us? Are there no marks of disaffection towards God that are a stain upon our nation?

Let me ask if there can be found a region upon the globe that has been more favored with Providential blessings than this land? And where are the proofs of a correspondent grateful piety that should be the distinguishing characteristic of a people saved and defended as we have been? Are they to be found in our hearts and in our lives? Let every man look around him and within him, and answer. Are they to be found in the sanctity of our religious worship, in the solemnity and fervor of our public devotions, in the homage paid to the consecrated houses and altars of God? Let him who sees our cold and ceremonious service, our unhallowed Sabbaths and violated sanctuaries, let him who sees the desolate and degraded ruins scattered over our country, once temples of the most high and vocal with His praise, now frowning in portentous silence upon our land—let him who sees and feels these things tremble and answer.

Are the social duties of life faithfully discharged by those who are thus wanting in reverence to God? Do we remember that Christians are called to be "a peculiar people," that their great commandment is "to love one another?" That we are to "put away from us all bitterness and anger and wrath and clamour and evil speaking and all malice?" That we are to be "kind one to another," tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as "trusting that God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us?" Alas! How does the sacred obligation of these precepts comport with the malignant spirit of party which divides and inflames us? Who would believe that these are principles almost universally possessed among us? For our feelings in this respect we are doubly inexcusable. How has the parental solicitude of our Washington, that strove to warn us against this danger, been disregarded? He has left us the most solemn admonition upon this subject, the most clear and

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affecting display of the ruin to which it leads. And so little have we profited by it, that this spirit which he terms "the worst enemy of a popular government," and advises that a constant effort should be made, "by force of public opinion, to mitigate and assuage it," has corrupted public opinion and is supported by it. Can we be justified or excused in this by the situation of our affairs? Can any situation make it necessary or proper that political differences should be attended with mutual threatening and revilings, and every irritation that can minister to the most revengeful passions? Cannot those in power pursue just and moderate means in the prosecution of their measures? And if they do not, cannot their opponents see both the advantage and the duty of restricting themselves to an opposition firm and decided as it ought to be, yet dignified and temperate? Cannot all who see and lament the excesses of this violence, unite in endeavors to moderate it, and disowning the vassalage of party, assert their independence by refusing obedience to whatever their judgments condemn?

No bad administration can long preserve its influence in this or any popular government unless it is assisted by an intemperate party opposition: an opposition which inflames whom it would conciliate, which keeps alive passion and prejudice, which instead of disposing men to be convinced will never permit them to see that they are mistaken. Let me not be misunderstood to imply that the patriot when occasion calls for their expression is to conceal or deny his opinions. He then owes to his country the honest and independent avowal of what he thinks her good requires; and he who shrinks from such a duty is more a traitor than a patriot. But this will not make it necessary that he should hate those with whom he differs; and should he even have to bear their hatred, he will hold more firmly the reins of his passions and show that he is animated by a charity which "never faileth."

Time will not permit me to notice all the instances and proofs of our offending—alas!—are there not among these some that it would not be prudent to expose? Your own observations and reflections—if turned to such a subject—will sufficiently show among us the marks of a "faithless and perverse generation," a "rebellious people."

What remains for us then, my friends, but that each man rise and do his part of the national expiation and contribute with all his powers

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to that general reformation that will preserve us. The happy consequences of such united efforts cannot fail—they are ratified by the promises of Omnipotence. The God we have offended is “full of mercy, long suffering, abundant in goodness, easy to be entreated.” Let us then make our supplication to Him with the fervor of patriots, with the faith of Christians.

Even in these unexampled times, when the visitations of the Almighty are seen to overshadow the nations of the earth, the believing mind has ample sources of consolation. A ray of hope shines through the gloom that surrounds us, and there is neither darkness nor disquietude to him who contemplates it. In all the apparent confusion and misery around him, he sees the hand of the Most High executing His awful counsels and fulfilling, in His own mysterious way, His benignant purposes to man.

The enlightening of “the nations that sit in darkness” is accomplishing, at a period and by means which man’s poor wisdom would have deemed ill suited to such a work, that religion, which is decreed to cover the face of the world, has been progressing in the brightness of its way with an efficacy that shows the divinity that attends it. How should the joy and triumph of such a thought overbalance any temporal affliction we may be called on to see or suffer? Nor are we without proofs, more peculiarly consoling, of a growing piety in our own country. Some of the many benevolent institutions springing—it is to be hoped—from this influence, and certainly calculated to extend it, I trust I shall be excused for using the occasion of recommending to your attention. One of them, indeed, is particularly worthy of consideration here, for it displays before us the rich fruits of its labors, the most attracting proofs of its success, the most affecting excitement to imitation. That a people who have the government of themselves should be virtuous and intelligent, that this can only be the case where a plain, usful and religious system of education is accessible to all, are axioms that it would be a waste of time to establish.

We have now not only the benefit of knowing, in several remarkable instances, the happy consequences that reward a patriotic attention to this subject, but the world has been blessed by discoveries and improvements in the science of education calculated to extend the bless-

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ings of light and knowledge with a certainty, rapidity and ease unknown and incredible before. Of these means this Society has been the first to avail itself.¹ And they are now brought within the reach of all, and within the compass of the most moderate resources.

If persuasives to the discharge of such a duty were wanting, I could again refer to the precepts of Washington—not only to his precepts—we have this day before us the effects of his patriotism, the work of his beneficence. The institution which gratifies with this spectacle owes its origin to his provident and virtuous liberality.² Let none then refuse that best proof of their veneration for his memory, which is to be shown by the imitation of his example. Let them contribute to disperse—as he has done—in their respective neighborhoods, the blessings of instruction.

As an indispensable auxiliary to schools, for the diffusion of sound principles and real knowledge, I would also recommend the encouragement of those associations whose object is the publication and distribution of Bibles. In the opinion of those best acquainted with the religious state of the world, the propagation of Christianity, in modern times, has owed more of its success to these institutions than to all other human means. Where missionaries had long labored in vain, the Bible has silently but rapidly made its own way and, as in the days of its first manifestation, the idols of ignorance and superstition are falling before it. It has been ascertained that a wide and desolate field is presented in various parts of our country for the labors of those already established among us, and that means are greatly wanting to make the work effectual. We are told that in the days of pagan darkness no habitation could be found without its protecting deities. But in Christian times and in a Christian country, there are hundreds and thousands of dwellings unsanctified by the presence of the sacred volume of life. Nor is there, in many instances, access to other means of improvement. No “holy bells knoll to the church,” there is neither service nor sanctuary; the Sabbath returns and passes away unheeded, or is made a day of more than ordinary depravity. Surely, those who live in the full enjoyment of all the blessings and privileges of the

¹A Lancaster school, established by The Washington Society in Alexandria, in 1812.

²The Alexandria Academy, built 1785, still standing, and used as a school.

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Gospel cannot think of the miseries of such a condition without making an effort to relieve it.

Let us not pretend that these times are unfit for such exertions; that these and other benevolent designs must be deferred to a season of greater ease and prosperity. No time can be so suitable as the present. If discouragements and difficulties oppose their progress, the brighter will be the reward for surmounting them. Now is the time in which they are within our power; now is the time, it may be the only time, in which they may avail us. Of that season of returning prosperity, to which we would defer them, who can assure us?

When the path of duty and the help of Heaven are thus plain before us, shall we listen to the suggestions of despair? Shall we say that all improvement of our religious character is hopeless? Then may we despair of everything that deserves an effort—then may we despair of all national and individual happiness. We shall not cease to be a suffering till we are made a more virtuous people. The experience of the world demonstrates, the voice of our Washington assures us, that "Providence has connected the permanent felicity of a nation with its virtue."

May we be roused to the zealous discharge of our several duties by prosperity, by affliction, by whatsoever dispensations infinite wisdom may think fit to produce this blessed purpose. And, to conclude in the pious and affectionate words of the father of our country, "May the Almighty Ruler of the world be most graciously pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, to demean ourselves with that charity, humility and pacific temper of mind which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion; without a humble imitation of whose example in these things, we can never hope to be a happy nation."

Delivered in the Presbyterian Meeting House.

* * * * *

"At a meeting of The Washington Society of Alexandria, on Tuesday the 22d of February, 1814, on motion, *Resolved*, unanimously, That the thanks of this Society be presented to Francis Scott Key, Esquire, for the elegant and appropriate Oration this day delivered, and that he be requested to furnish a copy thereof for publication.

G. DENEALE, *Sec'y.*"

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PART III

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

I

BIBLIOGRAPHY



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II

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES



CUSTIS, GEORGE WASHINGTON PARKE (1781-1857).

The last of the immediate family of General Washington, at Mount Vernon; son of John Parke Custis, and grandson of Mrs. Washington, was adopted by Washington; his mother was Eleanor Calvert, of Maryland. His architectural taste is displayed in the celebrated mansion Arlington, which he built; as a writer and orator he occupied front rank, and with pencil and brush his skill was by no means inconsiderable. Married Mary Lee, the daughter of William Fitzhugh of Chatham and of Ravensworth. The issue of this marriage was one daughter, Mary Randolph Custis, who married General Robert Edward Lee.

DAINGERFIELD, WILLIAM A., M.D.

The son of William and Sarah (Taliaferro) Daingerfield, was born in Spottsylvania County, Virginia, October 13, 1769. Educated in Edinburgh, Scotland, and attended medical lectures in Paris. Settled in Alexandria in 1800, where he practiced his profession for only a few years, when he retired to his estate in Maryland, near Alexandria. Served in war of 1812-'14 as colonel of militia. Died October 19, 1821.

DAVIS, REV. THOMAS.

Dr. Davis was born in England. During the years 1775-'76 he ministered to the Episcopal congregation in Norfolk, Virginia. He was one of the ministers who zealously advocated the Revolution, on which subject, on at least one occasion he preached at the request of the Assembly. He succeeded the Rev. Byran Fairfax as rector of the Episcopal Church (now Christ Church) in Alexandria, in 1792, and continued as its minister until 1806. He conducted the burial service of the church at the funeral of Washington.

DENEALE, COLONEL GEORGE.

Born in Fairfax County, Virginia, in 1776, made his home in Alexandria in the year 1790; from that date was one of the outstanding citizens. When the town and county of Alexandria became a part of the District of Columbia in 1801 Colonel Deneale was appointed clerk of the Circuit Court. He was an active Mason. Had command of the military at the funeral of Washington. Died in the summer of 1818. Colonel Deneale was active in the formation of The Washington Society of Alexandria and served as its faithful secretary from its organization to the time of his death, a period of eighteen years.

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DICK, ELISHA CULLEN, M.D.

Born in Pennsylvania about the year 1750, moved to Alexandria prior to 1783, where he lived for the remainder of his life, upwards of forty years. He was an eminent physician, and as consultant with Doctors Craik and Brown attended Washington in his last illness. Dr. Dick stood high in Masonry; he served as Worshipful Master of the Alexandria Lodge, December 27, 1787 to April 28, 1788, when he relinquished the office to Washington. He succeeded Washington, in turn, in 1789 and served with one intermission until December 27, 1799. He presided at the Funeral Lodge on Monday, December 16, 1799, and as Worshipful Master performed the impressive ceremonies of the Masonic order at Washington's funeral. On the 22d of February, 1800, Dr. Dick delivered at the Presbyterian Meeting House the oration on "The Day and Decease of Washington," which is published in this volume. Died in 1825. He was an artist of considerable merit; a portrait of Washington painted by him in 1797 from life and presented to General Washington still hangs in the mansion at Mount Vernon.

FITZHUGH, WILLIAM, of Chatham.

Born at the seat of his father, Eagles Nest, in King George County, Virginia, August 24, 1741; his classical studies were pursued under private tutors; delegate to the Virginia Constitutional Convention 1776; member of the Continental Congress 1779-'80; member Virginia House of Delegates 1780-'81, 1787-'88; State Senate 1781-'85; engaged in agricultural pursuits. Died at Ravensworth, June 6, 1809. Interred in private cemetery on the Ravensworth estate. William Fitzhugh, of the fourth generation and the third of the name, established himself, after his marriage to Ann Randolph at Chatham, on the Rappahannock River, where he lived until about 1798, when he moved to his other estate, Ravensworth, near Alexandria. A life-long intimate friend of Washington, it was natural that he should take an active interest in the founding of The Washington Society of Alexandria, and that he should be chosen to be its first president. His will is of record in the clerk's office in Alexandria. His only son, William Henry, was accidentally killed, while riding; one daughter, Mary Lee, married George Washington Parke Custis, of Arlington, and was the mother of Mrs. Robert E. Lee. His only other daughter, Ann Randolph, married a son of Dr. James Craik, the physician and ancient friend of Washington.

HARPER, ROBERT GOODLOE.

Member of the House of Representatives from South Carolina, and of the United States Senate from Maryland. Born near Fredericksburg, Virginia, in January, 1765; moved with his parents to Granville, North Carolina, about 1769; received his early education at home, and later attended grammar

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school; joined a volunteer corps of cavalry when only fifteen years of age, and served under General Nathaniel Greene in the Revolutionary Army. Graduated from Princeton College in 1785; studied law in Charleston, South Carolina, and admitted to the bar in 1786; elected as a Federalist from South Carolina to third Congress, reelected to fourth, fifth and sixth (February 5, 1795– March 3, 1801); moved to Baltimore and began practice of law. Served in war of 1812 and attained rank of Major-General; elected United States senator from Maryland, 1815. Married a daughter of Charles Carroll of Carrollton. Died January 14, 1825.

HOFFMAN, DAVID, ESQ.

Born at Baltimore, Maryland, in 1784, into a family of wealth and culture; was educated abroad; studied law and rose to a high place in his profession; founded the School of Law in the University of Maryland; author of a book in two volumes, *A Course of Legal Study*, which passed through a number of editions, and was highly commended by the leading lawyers of America and England, and which received the approval of Chief Justice John Marshall who maintained an intimate friendship with Mr. Hoffman. Both were members of The Washington Society of Alexandria. Mr. Hoffman died in 1854.

KEY, FRANCIS SCOTT.

Born August 9, 1780, at the family estate, Terra Rubra, in Frederick County, Maryland, the son of John Ross and Ann Phoebe Dagworthy (Charlton) Key, and the grandson of Francis and Ann Arnold (Ross) Key the daughter of John Ross whose substantial Manor House is still standing on the Severn River near Annapolis. One of his biographers speaks of Key as "that richly endowed and very talented man, who combined in such rich profusion and rare perfection all of the most admirable qualities of the Christian, patriot, statesman, lawyer and poet." He was graduated from St. John's College, Annapolis, where one of his classmates and intimates was Roger Brooke Taney, who later became his brother-in-law, and later still, Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

In 1802 Francis Scott Key married Mary Tayloe Lloyd, granddaughter of Edward Lloyd, Royal Governor of the Colony of Maryland 1709-1714. They were the parents of eleven children. As the author of our National Anthem, enhanced by the stirring circumstances under which it was composed, the fame of Francis Scott Key will endure while our Government endures.

LEE, MAJOR-GENERAL HENRY.

Born at Leesylvania, near Dumfries, Prince William County, Virginia, on

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January 29, 1756; was graduated from Princeton, 1773. Captain of a company of Virginia Dragoons (1776) that became attached to a part of the First Continental Dragoons, 1777; by a special act of Congress, April 7, 1778, in recognition of his brave and distinguished services, was promoted to a Major Commandant and authorized to augment his corps by the enlistment of two troops of horse; in 1779 was voted the thanks of Congress "for remarkable prudence, address, and bravery displayed in the attack on the enemy's fort and works at Paulus Hook," and in terms approved his humanity and granted him a gold medal. Promoted Lieutenant Colonel 1780; Major General United States Army 1798; honorable discharge, June 15, 1800; became universally known as "Light Horse Harry." He was a member of the Continental Congress 1785-'89; advocated the adoption of the Federal Constitution in the Virginia Convention, 1788; Governor of Virginia 1791-'94. Commanded the United States forces in the "Whisky Insurrection" in 1794; elected as a Federalist to the sixth Congress (1799-1801); at the request of Congress pronounced the eulogy of President Washington before both branches of Congress, in which Washington is characterized as the man, "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen."

General Lee, in attempting to rescue a number of his friends from mob violence, in Baltimore, July 26, 1812, received serious injuries from which he never recovered. Among these friends were General Charles Ligan (who was killed), John Howard Payne, and David Hoffman. Later visited the West Indies hoping there to recover his shattered health, but to no avail. On his return journey he stopped at Cumberland Island, Georgia, to visit the family of his old Commander, General Greene, and died there on the 25th of March, 1818. Was twice married, first to Matilda, the daughter of Philip Ludwell Lee, whose death occurred in 1790; secondly, to Ann Hill Carter, of Shirley, on the James. By the second marriage was the father of Sidney Smith Lee and Robert Edward Lee.

LEE, RICHARD BLAND.

Brother of General Henry Lee, was born at Leesylvania, January 20, 1761; attended College of William and Mary; pursued classical studies in private schools; member of the Virginia House of Delegates 1784-'88; member first, second, and third Congresses (1789-1795); again member Virginia House of Delegates (1796 and 1799-1806); moved to Washington in 1815; appointed by President Madison in 1816 to adjudicate claims of the war of 1812; appointed by President Monroe in 1819 judge of the Orphans Court of the District of Columbia in which he served until his death, 1827.

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LEE, EDMUND JENNINGS.

Brother of General Henry and Richard Bland Lee. Born at Leesylvania, May 22, 1772; died at Alexandria, May 30, 1843. Married Sarah, daughter of Richard Henry Lee, "Signer," of Chantilly. Edmund Jennings Lee was a most devoted churchman, and undoubtedly the outstanding layman of his generation. Bishop Meade, in his *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, pays warm tribute to his character and works.

LEE, FRANCIS LIGHTFOOT.

Son of Richard Henry Lee, "Signer," and Anne (Gaskins) Pinckard, his second wife, was born June 18, 1782; died April 13, 1850 at Sully, his estate near Alexandria. He was twice married, his wives being sisters, and daughters of Colonel John Fitzgerald, a prominent citizen of Alexandria, who was a warm friend of Washington's, and during the Revolution at one period served upon his staff. Sarah, who married Edmund Jennings Lee, was the sister of this Francis Lightfoot Lee, named for his uncle, who also was a "Signer."

MAFFITT, REV. WILLIAM.

Was a member of the Baltimore Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church, and some years prior to 1800 was in charge of a church at Bladensburg, Maryland. About 1795 he conducted a school for boys, at Langley, in Fairfax County, Virginia, and immediately affiliated with the Masonic Lodge, at Alexandria, and later made his home in that city. He served as Chaplain of the Lodge at intervals. Mr. Maffitt married Harriet Lee, the daughter of Richard Henry Lee, the "Signer" and widow of George Turberville, Esq. Mr. Maffitt was therefore the brother-in-law of Edmund Jennings Lee and of Francis Lightfoot Lee mentioned above.

MUIR, JAMES, D.D.

Dr. Muir was born at Catrine, Ayrshire, Scotland, April 12, 1756; was educated at the University of Edinburgh, and licensed by the Presbytery of Cupar, in Scotland; resided for a time in Bermuda, and in 1789 accepted a call to the Presbyterian Church in Alexandria. He died on the 8th of August, 1820, and was buried under the altar of the church of which for thirty-one years he had been the pastor. A marble memorial tablet in the north wall marks the location of his grave. He affiliated with the Masonic Lodge in Alexandria in 1792, and for the remainder of his life was an active member, serving from time to time as Chaplain. He was present at the funeral lodge of Washington, on December 16, 1799, and officiated as Chaplain of the lodge at Washington's funeral; acted in the same capacity at the "fixing" of the corner stone to mark the southeastern boundary of the District of

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Columbia. The stone still stands, in Alexandria, a prized relic, carefully guarded.

MERCER, HON. CHARLES FENTON.

Born in Fredericksburg, Virginia, June 16, 1778, the son of Judge James Mercer of the Virginia Court of Appeals, and the grandson of John Mercer of Marlboro, an eminent lawyer, who came to Virginia from Scotland in 1720. Washington was the friend of Judge Mercer, the father and executor of the estate of John Mercer. Studied law, and settled in Loudoun County, Virginia, on an estate which he called Aldie, commemorative of an ancestral seat in Scotland, Aldie Castle. In 1798, war with France being imminent he, then twenty years old, offered his sword and his services to Washington in person, and in quick succession was commissioned lieutenant and captain; fortunately war did not occur, but during the war of 1812 he served as Colonel of a Virginia regiment; Inspector General 1814, and Brigadier General in command of 21st Virginia Brigade. Member of Congress continuously from 1817 to 1839. One of the speakers at the dinner given by Congress to Lafayette in 1825, of which event, Sargent (*Public Men and Events*) records:

"Mr. Clay spoke with great feeling and eloquence; Colonel Monroe, who was present less in his official character as President than as an officer of the Revolution, responded by a toast, but Mr. Charles Fenton Mercer enchaind the attention of the company, not only by his very eloquent remarks, but also by relating many circumstances of the Revolutionary struggle, which he must have obtained from General Washington and Light Horse Harry Lee, who had both been his neighbors."

Prior to election to Congress, Mr. Mercer served seven years as delegate to the General Assembly of Virginia. Died May 4, 1858, and was interred in the Union Cemetery, Leesburg, Loudon County, Virginia.

MARSHALL, JOHN, CHIEF JUSTICE.

Born at Germantown, Fauquier County, Virginia, September 24, 1775; began study of law at age of eighteen; at outbreak of the Revolution joined a company of militia; promoted lieutenant, and on May 11, 1777, to captain. Participated in several major engagements 1775 to 1779; ordered to Virginia to take charge of the State Militia then being organized; studied law at College of William and Mary; admitted to the bar 1780; returned to the command of his company; resigned 1781; began practice of law; elected to Virginia House of Burgesses 1780; member Executive Council 1782-'95; member Constitutional Convention (Virginia) 1788; offered cabinet position of Attorney General, and also a foreign commission by President Washington; both declined; special commissioner to France, 1797-'98; declined appointment to Supreme bench offered by President Adams, 1800; elected

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to the sixth Congress and served from March 4th, 1799 to June 7, 1800; resigned. On December 18, 1799, announced to Congress the death of Washington; appointed Secretary of War, May 7, 1800; declined; appointed Secretary of State, May 12, 1800; accepted and served as such until March 4, 1801 notwithstanding he had taken the oath as Chief Justice of the United States, February 4, 1801; member of the Virginia Convention of 1829; continued as Chief Justice until his death, in Philadelphia, July 6, 1835; interred at Richmond.

At the time of his death Justice Marshall was Vice-President of The Washington Society of Alexandria. In that city his death was esteemed a calamity second only to the death of Washington, and the same continuous and elaborate ceremonies of mourning on the part of its citizens were observed. These included somber drapings on all the houses, a funeral procession in which citizens of all ages and of every class marched shoulder to shoulder, followed by orations and religious services in all of the churches.

SIMMS, COLONEL CHARLES.

Born in Prince William County, Virginia, in 1755; joined the Revolutionary Army in 1775 as Lieutenant Colonel 6th Regt. Virginia Line, and had a most distinguished military career; served as delegate in the Virginia Convention 1788; was one of that celebrated committee at that time appointed to recommend Amendments to the Constitution of the United States, among whose members were George Wythe, Patrick Henry, George Mason, James Madison, John Tyler, John Marshall, and others. Son of Alexander Simms, of Cecil County, Maryland; resided in Alexandria for thirty-five years; was a member of the Society of the Cincinnati, and a pall-bearer at Washington's funeral; a charter member of The Washington Society of Alexandria; died in Alexandria, August 29, 1819.

SIMMS, JOHN DOUGLAS.

Son of Colonel Charles Simms; member of the Alexandria bar; graduate of Princeton; Chief Clerk Navy Department, and at one time was Acting Secretary of the Navy.

TALLISON, REVEREND —.

A minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church. No available record.

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W. B. McGraw