[illegible] the eye is thrown back, through the [illegible] of ancient greatness in the [illegible] of human nature.

[illegible] of the papal power, that stretching [illegible] of religion in [illegible] and [illegible] a chasm of darkness [illegible] that swallow down [illegible] — when [illegible] to assert their sovereignty, [illegible] and advanced by another and [illegible] attempt to arrest the darling revolution, as it [illegible] the dawn when the arts were renaissant, and science [illegible] a future reviver.

The discovery of the new art of Printing, so all-important in its consequences, and that of the western continent, so immediately succeeding—presume the entusiasm of these great and wonderful events. They opened a further and new sphere for reflection, and forcibly precipitated in the minds of the thoughtful and unprepossessed, new opinions and new wishes, with a distant prospect of the time when their objects and their expectations should be fully accomplished.—Patriots behold how totally adversary to the rights, degrading to the nature, and destructive to the felicity of mankind, were the prevailing institutions. It was glaringly evident the church was wanting to render men what they were intended to be. Yet from the want of the incitement of previous successful examples, nothing was performed in remedy of the evil.

Indeed, liberal opinions, being principally confined to the enlightened, were too strange, too novel, to be generally comprehended and warmly felt.—The page of history recorded no instance of a people that had obtained and possessed every advantage [illegible] of which their natures were susceptible. Happiness, or even a remote approach to it, appeared to have been always denied; and the state of Arcadian peace and Arcadian innocence, were [illegible] the fond fables of poets. It was highly probable that if such scenes were any where presented, they must have been, like verdure in the burning desert, circumscribed to narrow and secluded spots amidst surrounding desolation.

Though the evils of the existing state of the old world, were seen and felt, the remedy was misunderstood, and the risk of facing its dangers willing to be encountered, by those who were anxious to remove them, were either not attempted, or if attempted, were weak and unavailing. However partial and local improvements might appear, the general state of society continued, as it now remains, without exception of the prominent truth, that until the Independence of the United States, there never had been a single people possessing all those attributes of freedom and those requisites to felicity, to which man was entitled and should always aspire. Freedom and licentiousness grew together. Luxury & depravity polluted learning and refinement. When men were rude and unpolished they were revengeful and inveterate: When fraugal and industrious, insulting neighbours and fierce enemies. The progress towards one blessing was only the concomitant of an approach to some fresh evil. When the powers of government were limited, they were too weak for defence; and when its strength was adequate to protection, its weight pressed and ground the subject to the dust! Idolatry for a time pervaded the earth, & when false worship was in a measure rooted out by Christianity, even the profession and practice of its hallowed tenets were disgraced by bigotry and intolerance! Nothing reached even human perfection: and the learning, the science, the genius, and the turbulent liberty which glittered throughout the times rapidly glanced as were nothing but splendid flashes on the storm of midnight, only serving to exhibit, in more striking features, its appalling horrors and confusion!

But the morning of American Independence broke in upon the world, and afforded to the enraptured view of the philanthropist, that for which he had in vain searched the stories of nations and the archives of empires. It united, in its result, all the usefulness of power with the privileges of freedom. It placed religion, unattended by bigotry, upon its only true and proper basis, perfect toleration.—Learning and science found a home, unassociated with licentiousness. Prosperity, untainted by luxury, was firmly secured. And public spirit, instead of scathing the fruitful fields of neighbouring nations, suspended the sword and the spear upon the olive tree of peace. The people assumed their proper rank and character. They became enlightened freemen, industrious citizens, firm patriots, tolerant christians and friendly neighbours! and long! long may they preserve the great and dignified titles!

The steps which led to the memorable work, identified on this auspicious day, are too well within the recollection and knowledge of every one, to need particular enumeration. The gradual settlement of the American continent by emigrants and adventurers from Europe; the difficulties they had to encounter; their manner of treating the natives; the different forms which attended various settlements under the direction of different councils; and the policy pursued towards them by the several mother countries—would neither form an uninteresting part of the present subject, nor an instructive lesson of history; but the records which relate to them, and ample information on all the points connected with their advancement, are, likewise, already known to all or of the most easy access. I will not, at this time, even enter into a detail of the immediate events of our revolution—that revolution which cannot be too often called glorious. Whatever genius and enthusiasm could invent or dictate has been lavished on the theme; and I feel that I should not only be presumptuous, but fatiguing, were I to go over the same ground, when I could do little else than repeat—and that, too, a repetition, imperfect and inferior.

It is not for me to seize the pencil which should delineate those scenes of suffering, of enterprize & of atchievement, which the orator and the poet have pourtrayed in all the aspects that can delight, charm and exalt. From the eulogium of the statesmen, the heroes and the martyrs, who planned, executed or fell in accomplishing the work, I retreat as from a task to which my powers are utterly unequal. Let me merely point, as their richest praise, to the liberties we enjoy, the tranquility with which we are blessed, and the prosperity which attends us—to the principles we cherish and the government by whose regulated energy, every one is protected under his own vine and his own fig-tree—to the devotion they secured from the good, the applause of the wise, the gratitude of posterity, and the admiration of the world.

I should even on this occasion, omit that name which fills all American hearts with veneration—the name of WASHINGTON—did I not [illegible] a small tribute of love and admiration at an [illegible] when [illegible] the glorious [illegible] for liberty. Amongst the [illegible] and first amongst the [illegible] to the [illegible] and firmness in the fatal Washington was the very head and soul of the cause! On centre of perfection in the combination which fired, animated and gave order to all the various parts. To cancel each of his separate wrinkles in the enterprise, is needless and would be impossible. Nor, indeed, can any thing be more [illegible] to their memories who are no more, and nothing to their feelings who still shed lasting beams of splendor on our country, their encomiums and gratitude towards him, who, winning unlimited confidence by his genius and all hearts by his virtue, bestowed upon them his acknowledgments and lasting friendship. The companions of Washington, when they hear him named, swell with honest pride and grateful recollections. They shake off the weight of years, "and stand erapoos," at the remembrance of the difficulties gone by, and the cheerful share they bore in suffering and in danger. But I attempt not to do justice to the chiefs and the warriors of 'seventy-six. Like the subjects before alluded to, I leave it with those who have preceded me, and who have acquitted themselves so honourably of the task. Suffer me only, giving way to my private feelings, to say, that as a hero, a statesman, a private citizen, a patriot and a christian, amidst all the mighty luminaries of every age, Washington stands unmatched in merit and unrivalled in fame!

Rather than dwell on topics so often and so ably handled, I prefer attempting a short enquiry—Into the means best adapted for continuing our admirable system of government and for perpetuating our freedom and independence—

Into the open and hidden dangers which now threaten our liberties or lie in wait to destroy them—and

Into the probable effects which may flow to the world from the success of the American revolution and the introduction of our republican institutions.

Our present form of government, is one springing from reason, and flowing from the people's choice. The public voice is the source whence all power is derived, to which it periodically returns, and from which it can never be rightfully alienated. Consequently the stream, to be pure, must proceed from an unpolluted fountain. The emanation is impregnated with the spirit of its original; and if that be debased all that proceeds from it must be corrupt. The people depraved—their government must be vicious; and when the spirit of freedom is abandoned by the multitude, their rulers must soon cease to consult its dictates. Here, then, arises the necessity for instilling into the common mind those principles of stubborn virtue and unbending patriotism, which, generally imbibed, conservate the rights of nature, and render a free people unconquerable! Good seed must be sown, that a rich and abundant harvest of wholesome fruit may be gathered. But as the seed of political usefulness can never regenerate and take root in the shallow soil of ignorance, in the mire of luxury, or among the weeds of passion, care must be taken that education and proper information, fit the mind to appreciate the rights of citizens, and to discern the course which republicks should invariably pursue. An enlightened, a generally enlightened public, can alone remain a free people. Liberty courts the temples of learning and the domes of science. Tyranny and despotism lurk in the clouds of error & the shades of deception. Private tuition, multiplied seminaries, and wide spread means of knowledge, are indispensible to the perpetuation and preservation of our privileges and institutions. For to the instructed judgment of the patriot, alone, can the beautiful fabric of our government appear in all its fair proportions. He perceives that its foundation and base are reason and the people's choice—that virtue, patriotism, religion and toleration, are the pillars by which it is supported—that it is embellished by learning, the sciences and the arts—and that the noble roof supported by the whole, is a glorious covering of refuge, security, prosperity and felicity. Seeing this, every faculty will be exerted to transmit the renowned structure unimpaired to posterity; and destruction shall be buried upon his head and execration load his memory—the sacrilegious wretch who can hurl a destroying brand at the perfect pile!

No other country than the United States, ever presented so many securities to freedom and so few dangers to Independence. But let us never forget that human institutions are still insecure, fleeting and evanescent—that human happiness is always suspended by the most feeble tenure. Let, then, every nerve be strained, every mean be employed, to deserve, and do all that human ability can do towards preserving, the bountiful gifts with which this nation has been hitherto distinguished. Let us take warning by the examples, by the perishing remains, and the yet smoking ruins of other countries. Luxury must be shunned as the plague which covers with loathsome disease the body politic—war, as the sluice, which sooner or later sucks the life-blood of a people—hazardous experiments, as medicines, whose properties and operations, to be wholesome, must result from perfect confidence and cautious application—and recriminations, jealousies and dissentions, as the corrosives which crumble and remove the cement and the bonds of a nation's union.

The culture of the earth and the pursuits of husbandry must be regarded as the rock and the very palladium of our safety. The fields of labour are the schools of untainted virtue and manly firmness. While they flourish, a nation cannot be otherwise than prosperous. It may bid defiance to every design, assault and machination. While there remains amongst us a great body of hardy, enlightened and virtuous planters and farmers, breathing the very air of liberty, political diseases may visit our skirts & run round our extremities, but the heart will be sound and the public pulse still beat in healthful vigour. Firm and knit as the oak, which is hurled from the mountain's side to encounter storms and waves, such a set of men would sweep upon the assailing foe like the whirlwind and the overwhelming torrent.

As connected with agriculture, commerce, manufactures and the arts, should be encouraged with zealous and wise attention. And uniting, as we do, within the compass of our own empire, the advantages of every soil and of every climate, what is there that we may not hope for and receive? what that we may not desire and enjoy?—Oh! if America be more thankful nations, there remains not a [illegible] in [illegible] breast, one particle of gratitude for one [illegible] of nature!

The great dangers which lie in wait to destroy or openly threaten our liberties, will be found in the propagation and encouragement of erroneous political opinions—in the demoniac spirit of a separation of the states—in ambitious usurpations at home—and in external assaults from abroad.

Every one should be aware of the fatal tendency of prevailing sentiments and vicious principles on the subject of government. Dangerous doctrines are to be the more minutely guarded against, as they are generally veiled by shewy reasoning and subtile argument. There is no pit, however dark, which cunning design may not conceal by flowers and fragrance. Yet plain honesty and watchful zeal may still hope to detect imposition, however often, Proteus-like, it varies its ground and its appearance. Frequently do we see the lurking enemies to liberty, stealing from their hiding places, and whispering the advantages of aristocracy, the efficiency of kingly power, and the magnificence of Imperial sway, into the ears of the weak and the vain. Such pests are dangerous, and must be unremitingly guarded against. If the enlightened exert their proper influence, in nipping the very buds of deceit, all attempts at disseminating deadly sentiments, will be futile and unavailing. The first approaches are made by insinuating, that there is, as to freedom little difference in governments except in names; and that names are mere sounds of no efficacy. I maintain that we must not only guard against degradation in reality, but in appearance also. Even this resort shall not be left to them. There is virtue even in names. Show me the man who is willing to bear a disgraceful appellation, and I will shew you one who is already lost to principle. We should no more consent, however essentially republican our government might be, to have a chief magistrate with the title of king; than we would wear, with all the privileges of freemen, the abject name of slaves! Let me entreat all who value the welfare of their country to combat such attempts to delude the public understanding. The people must be shewn by precept, and convinced by past and present examples, that republicanism is the health of nations—aristocratical, monarchial and Imperial hereditary rule, the diseases of which kingdoms decay and empires perish. If even, leaving out of view the substance, even the terms of our government shall be assimilated to those of Europe, our liberties will have already received the death blow; for depend upon it, wherever the shadow of despotism appears, its tangible reality cannot be far distant.

When I advance to the subject of an eventual separation of these United States, the former fond and undaunted associates in spurning foreign usurpation, I feel an oppression of grief and hesitation which I cannot well describe. I lament that such a topic should force itself upon the mind at this joyful period, and I doubt whether it might not be better to permit it to remain in silence and obscurity. Yet the danger remotely menaces us; is even now distinctly hinted at; and surely is the most obvious and would be the most successful weapon in the hands of our enemies, to be wielded for our conquest and destruction. The chain of our union once dissevered, every link would become broken and disunited. Every slight cause would create jealousies, and jealousies terminate in bloody and fratricidal warfares. And thus, subdivided and weakened, amidst feuds and anarchy, we should fall beneath the sword of the conqueror, the workers of our own prostration and the artificers of our own chains!—To escape this most horrid of all national calamities, let us attempt to follow the parting advice of the immortal father of his country. His farewell warning still rings in our ears; and let us never forget the solemn and instructive lesson. He begged us to remember, that the Constitution arose from a spirit of compromise and from the mutual surrender of exclusive advantages for general benefits. He said us to beware of state jealousies, and of drawing artificial lines of distinction between different sections of the union. Having well nigh defeated the efforts to secure our independence, Washington at once comprehended all their alarming & disastrous consequences. We behold, however, that these jealousies and artificial lines are now excited and drawn for the most shameful purposes. One section of the union is told that the other is its deadly enemy and the enemy of the constitution, and thus suspicion, distrust and animosity are wide awake. It is fervently to be hoped that these poisonous feelings have not yet infected, to any serious degree, the great body of the people. I believe they have not. Indeed it would take much to prove that the people of the South are foes to those of the North. No! the free spirits and frank hearts of the Southern population, embracing within the benevolent expansion of their wishes, universal happiness, can never harbour fatal rancor and rooted hatred, towards their Northern brethren, who first reared the tree of liberty and nourished it with their blood.—And would it not be monstrous to suppose? can we bring ourselves to imagine? that the pious and enprising citizens of the north, unless grossly deceived, would take the one woeful step which would must irremediably crush the fabric of greatness and glory erected with so much mutual toil and hazard! It grieves me when I hear from different quarters, insulting and opprobrious epithets retorted with encreasing anger and fierce asperities: for I cannot avoid seeing the possibility that such "play" may one day end in the overthrow of the federal compact. Surely at such a sight, nature would present some dreadful prodigy; the graves of those who fell in the revolution exhibit horrid convulsions, and the tomb of Washington weep streams of blood!—Separation is our most vulnerable part; and for mercy's sake let nothing be omitted to guard against and avert it.

I do not, for myself, feel much apprehension as to our welfare, on the score of the ambition of individuals who might spring up amongst us. Notwithstanding, I am well aware that the thirst of power is a passion fruitful in conceiving schemes for its gratification and mighty in executing them. It can either wind, like the serpent, to its object; or spring upon its prey with the tiger's fury. Every country has in its bosom, dissatisfied and restless spirits—

"——— Some prefer,
Smoothly o'er an unwrinkled sea to glide;
Others to ride the cloud-aspiring waves,
And hear, amidst the rending tackle's roar,
The spirit of an equinoctial gale!"

—Every man must therefore be narrowly watched. The guardians of our liberty should constantly bear in mind that the appearance of humility, of moderation, and of patriotism, frequently serves as a [illegible] for purposes of the basest character. [illegible] we [illegible] and therefore they may [illegible] the moment when the mask shall [illegible] even for appearance. But if detecting [illegible] there should consider some fiend, [illegible] might [illegible] in resources to elude the skill and [illegible] the force of [illegible] patriotism.—Oh! [illegible] ture! without thy [illegible] and from the [illegible] memory, and [illegible] the hoofed [illegible] or the sacred [illegible] with his hideous presence!

Still less have we to fear from the [illegible] lawless than from the machinations of [illegible] Invasion, however, is amongst the dangers [illegible] prudence should apprehend. Barriers [illegible] barrages behoves us in the way by a [illegible] respectable preparation; by encouraging [illegible] between the states; by necessary works along [illegible] oasis and upon our frontiers; by a small army and navy always kept on the best footing; by a general dissemination of military science; and by [illegible] up a great body of well organised, armed, and [illegible] cipline militia. With these precautions and the natural advantages of our country, we may [illegible] contempt and defiance at the invader's approach. He would be met on the threshold of our country and addressed in terms like these—"Fly! you advance to encounter a host of freemen, a nation of warriors!—Away! this is the soil of liberty, the land of peace!—Back! you would desecrate were the ground enriched by the blood and the graves consecrated by the bones of heroes of the revolution!—Begone! you shall never pollute the scenes of our [illegible] our duty, our affections, our love and our felicity! —The attempt is madness! Our country is unconquerable 'till we be destroyed, and shall it be rendered a barren desert and a trackless waste?"

If, however, the United States should escape all these agents of destruction—if the federal institutions continue to progress in peace and in prosperity, the influence of the example will extend in future time throughout every nation and to all parts of the earth. Slavery and war will be gradually expelled; liberty and harmony be permanently produced. Reason must triumph at last; and, reversing the order of the physical system, the moral light of truth roll on from the West to the East, expanding to the distant poles! This I believe to be the fixed purpose of providence, and I shall not [illegible] abandon the exalted idea.—In vain will men tell us that other countries never can embrace our system, that it is foreign to their genius and inapplicable to their situation. Although their present state may not be favourable to impressions of freedom, the moment of their fitness is fast approaching. In vain will they adduce the miserable, absurd and guilty termination of the French revolution. What does it prove? It only shews that their attempt was premature; that they gave movement to a vast machine, whose velocity they were unable to control. Is it surprising then, that it rent and tore its projectors? They sought freedom before they were acquainted with its essence; before they knew how to estimate its value. Intoxication followed to drunkenness which is always exhilirating; and the torrent of national liberty was seized to match away the liberties so lately won. France did not awake from a deathlike sleep to the enjoyment of cool reflection. Her transition was from torpor to frenzy—from lethargy to madness!—Proscription, persecution and murder, pioneer an adverse course to the temple of freedom; and no wonder the weak and despised subjects of Louis, instead of reaching, found their career terminated at a greater distance from their object than ever. France proves nothing against the desirable events which I have been supposing. Perhaps there are those living who may yet see the change commenced, and may feel a glow of delight at the certain anticipation of its completion. Not hoping to be so indulged, I will only say—may the great disposer of all things further the means and the end!—To a period of universal peace and liberty, the forerunner of that more perfect state which is the sheet-anchor of Christian faith and dependence, let the mind look with undoubting confidence—

"Father of mercies! speed the promis'd hour,
Thy Kingdom come with all restoring power;
Truth, virtue, knowledge, spread from pole to pole,
As round the world the ocean waters roll.
—Hope waits the morning of celestial light;
Time plumes his wings for everlasting flight!
Unchanging seasons have their march begun!
Millenial years are hast'ning to the sun;
Seen through thick clouds by faith's transpiercing eyes,
The new creation shines in purer skies!
—All hail, the age of crime and suffering ends,
The reign of righteousness from heaven descends;
Vengeance forever sheathes the afflicting sword,
Death is destroy'd and paradise restor'd.
Man, rising from the ruins of his fall,
Is one with God, and God is all in all!"

I cannot do otherwise than deeply feel, how little credit I have reflected on the selection which has placed me, for the first time in my life, in so conspicuous and flattering a situation—as well as how entirely I am indebted to the indulgence and patience of this elegant and enlightened assembly, for the attention which has accompanied me through a desultory, imperfect, and even intrusive course. I will, therefore, only obtrude a single paragraph, in conclusion, upon your time.

There are in every community, beings who derive a sullen satisfaction from the constant prognostication of misery and ruin—wretches who like ravens perch upon the house tops to screech forth death and desolation. Some of these delight in foretelling the downfal of the American government, and the termination of American Independence. Perhaps, in the midst of dangers and of gloomy prospects, such forebodings might be indulged. But let them be spurned! True it is, that every created thing, even from its first formation, is progressing towards its end. Kingdoms, empires and worlds, are all hastening to decay. But let us cheerfully believe that there is reserved for the United States a long and splendid track of pure and radiant lustre. When we look round, nothing meets the eye but smiling appearances of peace, plenty and prosperity; and, in spite of occasional difficulties, we have a reason to hope, that they will bless, for an extended period, this first land of freedom and toleration. Much depends on ourselves.—If the virtues of those whom the federal compact shelters, remain unimpaired, indestructible as adamant, it will resist the trials of ages. But if corruption, crime and contention, creep into its composition, it will soon split and totter to its base. Before the heat of offended justice, like a palace of ice in the noon-day sun, it will melt and disappear in the stream of time and the ocean of oblivion!