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Political.

AN ORATION.

Delivered before the Washington Benevolent Society of Massachusetts on the 30th day of April 1813, being the anniversary of the first inauguration of President Washington.

BY JOSIAH QUINCY.

Assembled in the name of Washington, we inquire of his spirit concerning our duties. In his life and writings, by precept and by example, his spirit responds: "Sons of Washington! Be faithful to your country!"

But in times like ours, what is fidelity to our country? His spirit, living in the record of his acts, replies: "Sons of Washington! Seek to speak what is true and useful!"

We yield to the venerated influence, and devote this hour, to what is true and what is useful to be known, concerning the condition and prospects of our country. Over these, heavy clouds hang. It is a solemn scene; and no time to collect flowers of fancy, or to indulge in sports of the intellect. — May the spirit of Washington rest upon us! May it invigorate our thought; hasten and direct every patriotic purpose; elevate our minds above the poor projects of present life; and teach us to be as true to our posterity as our fathers were to us; and as he was to his country.

The circumstances and prospects of our times are best viewed by the light of Washington. — What is false, or counterfeit, will easily be detected when tried by the standard of his character, conduct and principles. Viewed by his light, what is true of our national rulers, and their principles; and what of our condition.

Our rulers, — who are they, and what is true of them? Mr. Madison is President. Mr. Monroe, secretary of State. Mr. Gallatin, secretary of the Treasury. Mr. Armstrong, Secretary of War. — Every man of them, in Washington's day, the enemies of his policy. — All of them laid the foundation of their present elevation on the ruin of his influence, and that of his selected friends. The President is that individual, who, for almost eight years, was one of the leaders in the house of Representatives of an opposition to him and his measures, equally bitter and determined. The secretary of State is that individual, who, during the same period, publicly and labourously belied his administration, as wasteful, cowardly, and "contrary to the public feeling and judgment." Need I tell you of the clerk of the Pittsburgh insurgents, when they "voted unanimously" — "To withhold all the comforts of life."

* In a book, written by Mr. Monroe, and published in the year 1797, entitled "A View of the Conduct of the Executive, in the foreign affairs of the U. States," he thus expresses himself concerning the situation of America, under the administration of Washington, and of his conduct as the executive of the U. S.

"In her foreign relations, nothing is to be seen, but the waste and pillage of her commerce, sometimes by several powers, always by some one power; and little less than anarchy at home; for the seeds of discontent, jealousy, and dissension have been scattered throughout these states, in the course of a few years past, with a wasteful hand. — By what means, then, was this state of things produced, and why was it produced?"

"It is well known that the executive administration has heretofore guided all our measures; pursuing, in many instances, a course of policy equally contrary to public feelings and public judgment."

"Nor is this all: Our national honour is in the dust; we have been kicked, cuffed, and plundered all over the ocean; our reputation for faith and courage, our government and people blamed as towards, incapable of being provoked to resist, and ready to receive again those chains we had sought others to burst. Long will it be before we shall be able to forget what we are, nor will centuries suffice to raise us to the high ground from which we have fallen." See Monroe's View, &c. printed in Philadelphia, by Benjamin Franklin Bache, 1797, pages liii and lxxvi.

Such is Mr. Monroe's "View" of the administration of George Washington!!!

† Extract from Bache's paper of September 1, 1792.

At a meeting of sundry inhabitants of the western counties of Pennsylvania at Pittsburgh, on the 21st of August 1792, Col. John Cannon was placed in the chair and Albert Gallatin appointed clerk.

The excise law of congress being taken into consideration, a committee was appointed to prepare a draught of resolutions, expressing the sense of the meeting on the subject of said law.

Adjourned until 10 o'clock to-morrow.

August 22, 1792.

The committee appointed yesterday made report, which being read twice, was unanimously adopted.

The following is one of several resolutions unanimously adopted.

And whereas some men may be found amongst us so far lost to every sense of virtue and feeling as to be distressed by this country, as to accept offices or collection of the duty.

Resolved therefore, That in future we will consider such persons as unworthy of our friend-

ship, acting under his authority? Or, need I name the author, now not denied, of the anonymous letters to the revolutionary army, towards whom, Washington invited that army "to express their utmost horror & detestation."

But although, it is undeniable, that the enemies of the living Washington, preside over our destinies, perhaps, now that he is dead, they are converts to his principles. Strange, indeed, if the principles, which, in this day secured our peace, vindicated our honour, maintained tranquillity at home and respect abroad, and raised our country to the highest pitch of greatness, should be the same principles, which, in our day, have lost our peace, sacrificed our honour, scattered discord at home, and made us the scorn of one belligerent and the victim of the other. It cannot be. — The same foundations send not forth sweet waters and bitter."

The principle of Washington, which lay at the foundation of his glory, and was the basis of the blessings of his day, was to introduce virtue and talent, into the conduct of public affairs. The principle of our present rulers is to introduce tools and instruments. With these then the great requisite is political subserviency. The single feature is alone sufficient to account for the whole difference of our political condition. For the particular, in which this difference consists, is, in fact, the corner stone of the republican system of government. The theory of which rests upon this basis, that, in its result, the virtue and talents of a country shall preside over its destinies. Whenever this fails, and attachment to a party, or fidelity to a chief, or subserviency to a cabal, whenever, as was distinctly avowed, in the outset of the power of these men, other considerations than "honesty, capacity, and fidelity to the constitution" became the objects of office and appointment, the moral basis of the republic is gone. Its form may, indeed, remain, but its vital spirit has fled. The stream of corruption, when once it begins to flow in a free country, never retreats to its foundation, nor does the spring which feeds it, ever become dry. At first, it winds its way, in secrecy and silence, attracting to its current, only what is light and hollow, and rotten and feculent; but soon gathering boldness in its course, it advances with an irresistible torrent, and sweeps away every honour of the field, and every mound of safety.

Whenever the rulers of a nation become the mere heads of a party, the last & least consideration with them, is the good of people. How to secure their power; how to manage the elections; who is the fittest tool; who will run the latest, go the furthest, and hold out the longest, for the least wages of corruption, are the only inquiries. To give muscle and durability to their influence is the single end of their political system. For this British antipathies are stimulated. For this British injuries are magnified. For this French afflictions are cultivated and French insults and injuries palliated, or concealed. For this we had restriction. For this, embargo. For this we have war. For this, war shall be continued. And if peace comes, for this peace shall be concluded. For unprincipled ambition in power affects not even public good, except from corrupt motives.

Need I further illustrate the difference of principle, which distinguishes the present times from those of Washington! The spirit of patriotism predominant. Now the cabal. — Then virtue was in high places. Now, there is intrigue. Then we had wisdom for our guide. Now, cunning. Then debate in either house of congress, had an influence upon public measures. Now, what is to be done, is settled, before debate, or without it. A cabinet, or a "caucus," brooding in darkness, decides the fate of the country, and a congress, calling itself free, registers its decrees.

ship, have no intercourse or dealings with them, withdraw from them every assistance, and withhold all the comforts of life which depend upon those duties that as men and fellow citizens we owe to each other, and upon all occasions treat them with that contempt they deserve, and that be, and it is hereby most earnestly recommended to the people at large to follow the same kind of conduct towards them. (Signed)

JOHN CANNON, Chairman.

ALBERT GALLATIN, Clerk.

"Let me conjure you, in the name of our common country, as you value your own sacred honor; as you respect the rights of humanity; and as you regard the military and national character of America, to express your utmost horror and detestation of the man who wishes, under any specious pretences, to overturn the liberties of our country."

Washington's Address to the Army, on the subject of the anonymous letters. — Marshall's Life of Washington, 4th vol. p. 602.

† "It would have been to me a circumstance of great relief had I found a moderate participation of office in the hands of the majority: I would gladly have left it to time and to accident to raise them to their just sphere. I shall correct the procedure; but that done, return with joy to that state of things when the only questions concerning a candidate shall be, is he honest? is he capable? is he faithful to the constitution?"

President Jefferson's reply to the remonstrance of the merchants of New Haven.

Twelve years have nearly elapsed since the above letter was written; but neither Mr. Jefferson nor his successor ever yet have known "the joy of that state of things when" honesty, capacity, or fidelity to the constitution were the only questions concerning a candidate.

We have, indeed all the forms of freedom, but, constitutionally speaking, and as far as the measures of the national government have effect, we wear as galling and soul depressing a chain as ever afflicted a people. All this is natural. All is characteristic. All is necessary. The spirit of cabal put down the spirit of Washington, by appealing to base passions and exciting corrupt hopes. A cabal in power, must maintain its ascendancy by the means through which it was obtained. Base passions must be fostered. Corrupt hopes must be gratified. Power, which lives by corruption, must find, or will make, the aliment necessary for its support. It hastens to glut its ravening appetite on our morals, that it may devour our liberties, at its leisure.

Such are our rulers and their principles when viewed by the light, and tried by the standard of Washington.

In treating of our condition, I shall not waste the hour in idle regrets, or vain criminations. The hand of ruin is upon us and upon our cities. The deep, and ancient root of the prosperity of Massachusetts is withering. Our commerce, navigation and fisheries are gone. A whirlwind from the west, is passing over those massy pillars of our greatness, and they are already prostrate. Lamentation and despair suit not the condition of freemen. Least of all, of the freemen of Massachusetts. To them it belongs to be mindful of the character of their ancestors; men keen to discern and resolute to perform their duties, generous spirits, whom power could not tempt nor fraud ensnare, nor force subdue. The descendants of such men ought to blush, at being satisfied with shuffling along from one mode of oppression to another; and from one stage of corruption to another; each individual happy if his head escapes the bolt, intended for the general ruin; content with life and precarious enjoyment to day and tomorrow; careless of the long extent of time, which is to come afterward. The grave will soon close upon us and our vain joys and vain anticipations. You are fathers. What political inheritance do you leave to your children? Where lie the sources of the evils, which we suffer? What are the remedies? What are our duties?

The sources of a people's sufferings for the most part, lie hidden from casual observation and superficial research. It often requires firmness and fidelity, as well as labour, to penetrate their natures and explore oppression to its fountains. — There is, also, a self-deception, which, from indolence, or apathy, the love of ease, or of business mankind, even the best, are perpetually inclined to practice, and which, for the most part, make such inquiries abortive. They mistake effects, for causes; escape from present suffering, for relief from the disease. When, perhaps, it is only that morbid torpor, which precedes idiocy, or madness; that state of nervous imbecility into which nature sinks, while she prepares fuel for new flames; and collects stimulants, for further sufferings, and stronger convulsions.

Who, that understands the real condition of our country, can refrain from such reflections, when he hears the greetings in our places of public resort and the dreams of our newspapers! "What think you? Is not peace coming? The Russian mediation, — will not that be successful? Can loans be obtained? Without loans can the war be protracted?" As if in this war was included the sum of our evils! As if this was the cause of our calamities, or was any thing else than the symptom of our disease!

Suppose peace. What then! Is confidence restored? Is the anti-commercial spirit subdued? Will the double duties be repealed? Can commercial prosperity revive under these impositions? Or if it revive for a moment, is there any reason to hope, that the machinations against its vital principles, which have now become systematized and already reduced it to the verge of annihilation will not be repeated, and in other modes, and under more favourable auspices, made successful.

Alas! people of Massachusetts! I cannot conceal the deep conviction of my soul, that peace, itself, desirable as it is, and anxiously as every lover of his country ought to pant for it, will be, in truth, only an alleviation from present ills, and will be very far from restoring to your prosperity that solid basis, which a wise people ought to seek, and a powerful people, in the exercise of constitutional rights to demand.

The sources of our sufferings lie deeper than embargo, or war; great as are both these evils. — Washington foresaw and foretold, that these men "would be satisfied with nothing short of a change in our political system." But Washington himself did not foresee, nor could any human eye have foreseen, the change, which, in so short a space of time, has been made in the internal relations of this country much less could he have foreseen the change which artful construction and interested usurpation have made in the principles of our constitution.

These changes make little noise, and excite less sensation. They are treated as topicks of curiosity; yet it is the condition of things, which these changes indicate and make permanent, that encourages the spirit and emboldens the policy of the ruling cabal; that makes intrigue and corruption the necessary instruments of power; and renders commercial embarrassments, modified in deed, by occasional circumstances, inevitably perpetual, as an essential means of success in the project of its ambition.

* Marshall's life of Washington, vol. 5, p. 34 of the notes.

I speak under the sanction of the spirit of Washington. He has told us that "experience is the surest standard, by which to test the real tendency of the existing constitution of a country." He taught us "to resist with care the spirit of innovation upon its principles." He instructed us, that "the spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create, whatever the form of government, a real despotism." And his paternal voice now warns us, as from the grave, against "change by usurpation, as the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed."

I shall speak concerning the changes which time and usurpation have produced in our political condition; I shall explain their effect upon our present and future prosperity; and inquire concerning the remedies, for the evils which we suffer.

It is a notorious fact, that, partly by the operation of the slave ratio on the constitution, and partly by the unexampled emigrations into the west, the proportions of political power among the states of this country have changed, since the adoption of the federal constitution, in a degree as unanticipated, as the result is eventful and ominous. On the proportion of its political power, in an association like ours, does the safety of every state, which is a member of it, depend. And reason teaches, and safety requires, that this proportion should have reference to the nature and greatness of its interests. I shall have occasion to illustrate these principles, hereafter. I refer to them, at present, only as the basis of this imposition, that, inasmuch as the safety of every state depends upon its proportion of political power in association, it is both the right and the duty of every state to inquire into that matter. A free people have a right, and it is their duty, to inquire into the securities they possess for their liberties and properties; and to see, whether they be such as ought to give content to wise and virtuous minds. There is nothing mysterious in the fabric of our freedom. There is no divine right of Kings, or Presidents or Congresses, in the whole compound. By the constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, it is made our duty frequently to resort to first principles. We have not only the right to examine the top and the shaft of the column of our liberties, but, if it appear out of plumb, or out of level, it is made our duty to look at the corner stones and see if they are not falling away. I know that when these topicks are touched, all the craftsmen, those who make profit by the shrines, and are growing fat on the offal of the sacrifices, are in an uproar and run about crying, "The constitution is in danger. These things lead to a dissolution of the Union. Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" What? Are we not freemen? If to any individual, the result of our political institutions appear incompatible, with general, or particular, safety, shall he not speak? How, then, can the evils, which we feel, or fear, be remedied, or prevented? How else can we bring our existing constitution to that test of experience, which Washington has told us is the surest standard of its real tendency. In my judgment, concealment in such cases is not so much an error, as a crime. — For a crime it is, for a citizen, in a free country to see or believe that he sees, distinct dangers surrounding the Commonwealth, and be silent concerning them, either through fear of personal responsibility, or in subserviency to the apathy, or the prejudices of the times.

Now it is not true that such inquiries tend to the dissolution of the Union. On the contrary their natural tendency is to strengthen it. For, if such inquiry result, in the conviction that the rational security we ought to seek, exists, then surely there is content; and thence strength; and thence continuance. But, if the result of the inquiry be that rational security exists no longer then, indeed, this conviction has a tendency to produce a consentaneousness of sentiment and action in the oppressed members of the association which, in its result, we have reason to hope, cannot fail to bring, in a Constitutional way, oppressors to a sense of their duty and their interests. If this should not be the case, still, our duty remains. — The duty of freemen is, frequently, to examine into the basis of their liberties. Unless, indeed, it be asserted, which, at this day, and in this country, I think it will hardly be, that a free people are necessarily of that tribe of Issachery, which must crouch under all the burdens imposed upon it; — and not open its mouth, whatever be its sufferings, provided its sides are belaboured, with sticks of a legal size, flourished practised according to the forms of a written manual.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

* Washington's Valedictory Address to the People of the United States.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA,

IREDELL COUNTY.

In Equity—April Term, 1813.

Milus Nisbet, (administrator of S. S. Savage, dec.) and Elizabeth Savage, COMPLAINANTS,

vs.

John Nisbet, Thomas Blewett, and George W. Davidson, executors of George Davidson, dec.—DEFENDANTS.

IT APPEARING that John Davidson, one of the executors of George Davidson, late of Montgomery county, deceased, lives without the limits of the State—it is therefore ordered, by the Court, that publication be made four weeks in the Raleigh Minerva that the said John Davidson appear before the next Court, to be held on the fourth Monday after the fourth Monday of September next, and shew cause why he shall not be made a party defendant in said suit.

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Wm. Sharpe, c. at. &c.