

sires suffered scarcely any abatement. But when in the year 1774, the Parliament of Great Britain, contrary to every principle of natural justice, contrary to the very basis upon which their boasted constitution itself rests, assumed the tyrannical prerogative of taxing them without allowing them representation, and that too for the support of the people of Britain, the chord of affection, which had so long bound the two countries in one, was severed at a blow. It is a maxim of civil society "that resistance to the supreme power in a state should not be attempted till the government is so corrupt and its usurpations so exorbitant, as that anarchy and the uncertainty of a new settlement is preferable to the continuance as it is." The colonies therefore petitioned, they intreated, they supplicated, as well the great body of the people of England as their rulers, to pause for a moment, to consider the step they had taken and to abolish the odious and unjust 'Act;' but in vain. The dignified remonstrances of a Congress assembled for the purpose eventually had no effect—so ardent is the desire of power in the human breast. At this awful crisis an appeal to the God of battles, was all that was left them. To arms! to arms! was the indignant cry of an injured and oppressed people throughout the land, and a thousand hearts beat responsive to the sentiment *give us liberty or give us death!*

But although the inhabitants of the town of Boston had been insulted by a British soldiery quartered upon them for the avowed purpose of enforcing the 'Acts' of their sovereign parliament; though the battles of Lexington and Breed's Hill had been fought and Charlestown and Falmouth lay but heaps of smoking ruins, as yet, the most patriotic and enlightened American citizens never thought of a total separation from Britain, and would have scouted the idea as the very climax of absurdity. But when, in the progress of free and dispassionate inquiry, the minds of the public became more illumined and they had attained to a juster sense of their rights, and the relations in which they stood to the mother country, they saw no reason in the nature of things why they should remain forever dependants on a foreign power. The thirteen then British provinces, therefore, entered into a federal compact for mutual protection and defence, and, by their delegates in Congress assembled, in conformity to the usage of nations, published to the world the Declaration of their Independence—setting forth the justice of the cause in which they had embarked and appealing to the SUPREME JUDGE of the universe for the rectitude of their intentions. This Declaration you have just heard read. The deep attention with which you listened to it, evidences the interest you feel in its principles; for surely, in this light, it is to be more admired, at this day, than as being the precursor of a war which had actually commenced—commenced, and with an odds that

seemed to threaten the horrid catastrophe of the total destruction of a people contending for their just rights. Britain, decidedly the most powerful nation on the globe—there was no quarter of the universe that had not felt the influence of her arms, scarcely a port in the civilized world where her flag was not to be seen fluttering triumphantly in the breeze, her resources for war were inexhaustible and her monarchs proudly boasted that they held within their grasp the 'balance' of Europe. On the other hand what was the condition of the colonies? Destitute of allies, without arms and ammunition, without military discipline and without a revenue—the sinews of war—nothing short of their being crushed by the weighty monarchy of Britain, could have been expected. But where hearts and hands unite in a just cause, experience has taught us that resistance is vain. The determination of our fathers to be free at the peril of their lives and fortunes, and their occasional success in arms against a disciplined foe attracted the attention of admiring Europe. The United Provinces loaned them money. The gallant and chivalrous France, at a time when all hopes of success was about to expire, sympathizing with the distresses of the colonies, recognised their independence and sent over her fleets and armies to aid them in the noble struggle. These opportune accessions to their already sinking cause cheered the drooping spirits of the American patriots. Fresh courage was infused into their armies, which returned to the charge with renewed ardor. Need we tell you the issue? Does not this assemblage here to-day point to it in language inexpressible? It would be to no purpose to dwell upon the battles that were 'lost and won,' the disasters that existed in the American camp and the patience with which the soldiers of the Revolution submitted to the hardships incident to their situations. These must be left to the general historian. It will be sufficient to recall to your minds the ever memorable battle of Yorktown in Virginia—the battle in which the American cause was crowned with triumph and which ended in the total defeat of the flower of the British army, whose proud and haughty commander, his name a terror from one extremity of the colonies to the other, was compelled to yield to our illustrious WASHINGTON, so emphatically, but so justly pronounced to be 'first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his fellow-countrymen.'

"Cornwallis first, their late all-conquering lord,
"Bears to the victor Chief his conquered sword;
"Presents the burnish'd hilt and yields with pain,
"The gift of kings here brandished long in vain."

Thus terminated, after a seven years' conflict, the unequal but hard fought contest. We are the people of another generation. The stoutest hearts that braved the front of war are now cold in death. Here and there, it is true, may be seen an aged veteran, marked with the scars of other

times—like the sturdy oak that skirts the mountain's brow, scathed by the lightning's furious blast. They too will soon be gathered together with their compatriots in arms, into that world from 'whose bourne no traveller returns.' But they will live in the brightest pages of history, in the fond remembrance of their successors, in the hearts of their countrymen.

We should do injustice to the occasion were we to pass, in silence, another memorable event, connected with the fourth of July, which renders this day doubly renowned in the annals of our country. You already anticipate it. We allude to the deaths of those immortal patriots Adams and Jefferson. On this day, two years ago, while the people of this extensive Union were hailing with heart-cheering acclamations the return of the anniversary of their independence, those splendid lights in the watch-tower of liberty were extinguished. The day, from one of joy, was converted into mourning and the sad and melancholy spectacle was exhibited of a nation in tears—in tears of gratitude to those two great co-operators in the cause of their independence. Jefferson the author of the Declaration of Independence. Adams its warmest advocate. Jefferson the firm, inflexible and undeviating patriot of the South—Adams a beacon of light in the north; nurtured in Boston, the cradle of the revolution, he was the first to shew, by his correspondence with the British agent, that the colonies no longer owed allegiance to the mother country; among the first to denounce her oppressors and to rouse his countrymen to arms. This tribute is due to their memory. For surely, the sages who planned, as well as the heroes who executed, the grand scheme of our national independence, deserve the highest eulogium;

"The warrior's name,
"Though pealed and chimed on every tongue of fame,
"Sounds less harmonious to the grateful mind,
"Than his, who fashions and improves mankind."

Of the numerous signers of the Declaration of our Independence, one only survives, the venerable Charles Carroll of Carrollton; he too must soon obey the summons of nature and yield to that unsparing destroyer, time. But tho' its original framers may be taken from amongst us, its principles cannot—founded in nature they will survive until the system of universal nature shall be swept away by the awful fiat of that invisible but Omnipotent Being, who, at the creation, commanded the earth to be, and immediately it sprang into existence; who said, 'let there be light, and there was light.' They are abroad through the universe. Their holy influence was imbibed by our generous allies in the war of independence. The consequence is known to you all. They exploded in the French Revolution, the most tragical drama ever acted on the globe,

"The bloodiest picture in the book of time."

But for the ambition of a Buona-

parte, and perhaps we may add, with more truth, the habits of her people, France might now have been the grand focus of illumination, to which the eyes of all the nations of the eastern hemisphere, would be directed for the genial light of liberty. But a change from despotism to independence, in a government founded in the days of ignorance and feudal barbarism, and confirmed by the prejudice of ages, is not the work of a day. The habits of a people, as of an individual, are slowly formed and as slowly relinquished. To turn the current of thought, that, for centuries, has flowed in the same uninterrupted channel, washing in its course the base of monarchical and aristocratical governments, to free and liberal institutions, requires an effort of the human mind beyond all human conception. The change must be gradual. At this very moment, it is operating in France. Whoever reads the newspapers of the day may easily perceive that the same spirit, which actuated that people in their Revolution, continues with them. The virtuous and patriotic La Fayette, the great advocate for the rights of man, still lives and enjoys a seat in the councils of the nation. His name will be the watch-word to freedom, when himself shall be no more. The French Revolution will again be acted over, but, we trust in God, with a different result. Our sister Republics of South America furnish a more pleasing and much brighter example of the progress of free principles. Already, the whole of that vast continent, with the exception of Brazil which belongs to Portugal, is liberated from the shackles of Spanish oppression; and we may look forward, without delusion, to the glorious period when no other principles than those of '76 shall be recognized in this western hemisphere, and that, here at least, man shall attain to the full enjoyment of those rights to which he is entitled by nature, and by nature's God. But would you desire the free institutions of our country to be preserved in their original purity and excellence? Then let the people be instructed. In a government like ours, based entirely upon and recognising no other authority than the *Will of the People*, the dependence of liberty upon popular education is as strong as that of the mind upon the body. In despotic governments, it is a maxim of policy to keep the multitude in gross ignorance as mainly contributing to their durability; but will any person say, to the general happiness, or, eventually, to the general welfare? Happily for North-Carolina, happily for the United States at large, this is not the case with us. It is here alone that the true source from whence all human authority rationally emanates is correctly understood. What does our Declaration of Rights say? *All power is, and of right ought to be, vested in the people.* To preserve their rights and privileges the people must understand them—to understand them aright they *must* be enlightened; let it be repeated, they *must* be enlightened. Will our legislators