AN ORATION

COMMEMORATIVE OF THE

CHARACTER AND ADMINISTRATION

OF

WASHINGTON,

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE AMERICAN REPUBLICAN SOCIETY OF PHILADELPHIA,

On the 22d day of February, 1810.

BY CHARLES CALDWELL, M. D.

Published at the request of the Society.

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1810.

DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO WIT:

L. S.

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the twenty-fourth day of February, in the thirty-fourth year of the Independence of the United States of America, A. D. 1810, Bradford and Inskeep, of the said district, have deposited in this office the title of a book the right whereof they claim as proprietors, in the words following, to wit:

> "An Oration commemorative of the Character and Administration of Washington, delivered before the American Republican Society of Philadelphia, on the 22d day of February 1810. By Charles Caldwell, M. D. Published at the request of the Society."

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, intituled, "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned." And also to the act, entitled, "An act supplementary to an act, entitled, 'An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the time therein mentioned,' and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

D. CALDWELL,
Clerk of the district of Pennsylvania

AN ORATION.

Fellow Citizens,

Members of the American Republican Society.

To commemorate one of the proudest events in the annals of our country, to celebrate one of the brightest epochs in the calendar of freedom, to give a fresh testimonial of our gratitude to the memory of the most perfect of mortals, and to renew our pledge to each other and to the world, for the faithful discharge of our duties, as citizens of an elective government, constitute the objects for which we are assembled.

I call the event we celebrate a proud one, because it is emphatically our country's boast—I call the day we celebrate dear to freedom, because it gave birth to freedom's most illustrious chief—I feel that we are summoned to the discharge of a debt of gratitude, deep and weighty as we can owe to any thing on this side Heaven, because, next to Heaven's sovereign Arbiter, that champion of freedom to whom our thoughts are to be directed, has been our choicest friend, our most distinguished benefactor.—And, I am persuaded, that.

on the present, as well as on all future occasions, we will hold it our duty not only to renew, but to redeem, the pledge already exchanged, to support the constitution, and to labour for the promotion of the best interests of our country, by every mean consistent with honour, and approved by conscience.

But may it not—nay! has it not, in the ungrateful and cavilling spirit of the times—a spirit calculated to smother the generous, and to pamper the ignoble and unmanly affections—has it not been asked, what is this event, and what this epoch, which bear such an emphasis? And what, and where are the benefactions, for which such demands are made on our gratitude?

What questions for the ear of a Philadelphia audience! or, rather, what questions for an audience of *real Americans*, by whatever subordinate denomination they may be known! Does not the cheek of the most lukewarm and indifferent, redden, at their sound, with the blood of indignation! Do we commemorate the nativity of our political father? And is not that an event worthy of national exultation? Has the birthday of our Washington once more returned? And is not this an epoch dear to freedom and to all her votaries? Is the occasion calculated to invigorate our recollection of the sufferings and services of the hero of our revolution, and the great founder of our political liberties? And are not these objects of love the most ardent, and

of gratitude the most profound? Of love and gratitude as deep and as glowing as our natures can feel, and surpassing the utmost that language can express? Lives there an American citizen in the remotest corner of this wide spreading empire, by whom considerations like these can be held indifferent? Beats there an American heart in any quarter of the globe, with the choicest ligaments of which they are not indissolubly entwined? If such a citizen live—if such a heart palpitate, they are callous to their country's honour, apostates from their country's glory, and unworthy of the name they are permitted to bear.

Though I feel confident, fellow citizens, that I carry with me the assent of your understandings, and the approbation of your hearts, to the sentiments I utter, yet it would be unbecoming in me to appear before you clothed in nothing but the language of assertion. On such an occasion, and on such a subject, I would, if possible, render conviction still more convinced. I would awaken and invigorate the spirit of supine belief, and wrest even from scepticism herself the power of doubting. I must, therefore, crave your attention, while I endeavour to present you with a partial view of the character, the achievements, and the services of Washington. I say a *partial* view; for were I to attempt a full one, the orb of day would descend from

the heavens, and even the setting stars invite to sleep, before I should have finished the glowing story.

Suffer me, however, to premise, that I feel in all their weight, the overwhelming difficulties of the task I have to encounter. The subject has already, and that repeatedly, been the theme of the ablest pens and most eloquent tongues our country can boast. These, though they have not indeed exhausted it, (for it is all but inexhaustible) have, notwithstanding, rendered it familiar to both the eye and the ear of the American nation. Nor is this all. They have thrown around it such a splendid dress, such a rich profusion of the flowers of rhetoric, that scarcely one remains uncropt in all the gorgeous parterre of fancy, for its further decoration. But my difficulties do not terminate here. For were the subject yet untouched, and did my abilities tower to its gigantic level, still the customary time allotted for an oration, would be insufficient to do it, even in its most abridged and summary form, the shadow of justice. My reliance, then, is on your candour alone—my appeal is to the generous feelings of your hearts, for that lenity and that indulgence, which I well know the decision of your understandings will be unable to allow me. The recital in which I am to engage will be the story of your Washington, and that will be my shield from the severity of criticism. Behind that fair, that immortal ægis, I securely intrench

myself, conscious that no one will offer violence to it, merely for the sake of reaching me.

It has been said by certain pretenders to superior wisdom and discernment that Washington was born a common character, and raised to subsequent distinction solely by the operation of fortuitous and favourable circumstances. That he was a mere nursling of fortune, and that, had he been born in ordinary times, he would have been nothing more than an ordinary man. These assertions spring from an ignoble and a contracted source. They will never find an advocate either in the decisions of the enlightened mind, or in the sentiments and feelings of the generous heart. They are as replete with envy as they are destitute of truth. Washington was formed by nature for a hero, a statesman, a ruler, and a sage, and nothing but the hand of premature death, or the most absolute lack of opportunities, could have chilled the noble current of his soul, and checked the irresistible bent of his genius. His mind was not, indeed, a hotbed of glittering hypotheses, which is too often nothing but another name for a hotbed of error. It was a mind altogether practical, commanding and original—not speculative, dependent, and acquired—Like an *electron per se*, it contained within itself an unusual portion of the fire of Heaven, shining independently of borrowed light. It was modelled on a scale of immense compass. Its like

is not to be found in the records of man. Washington had received from the hand of nature herself a head to project, a heart to encounter, and an arm to execute the most gigantic enterprizes—enterprizes calculated, according to their bent and direction, to subvert, to revolutionize, or to build up empires. To a fair and unprejudiced analysis of his character, to a full and candid exposition of the incidents and achievements of his whole life, I would confidently trust the fate of these assertions.

The hero of our story betrayed from his infancy an unconquerable predilection for a military life. At the age of fifteen he had procured, by solicitation, the appointment of midshipman in the British navy. But his mother, being then his only surviving parent, unable to brook a separation from the idol of her affections, disapproved of his choice. In this it would seem as if she had been directed by the finger of Heaven itself, pointing to the future destiny of her son. Our young soldier, though ardently ambitious of distinction and honourable fame, was not formed to give pain in return for maternal kindness, nor to inflict a wound where gratitude was due. He, accordingly, in all the characteristic nobleness of his nature, promptly sacrificed his naval prospects on the altar of filial affection and duty. His country's emancipation interwoven with his own unrivalled renown, was eventual-

ly was his reward for this act of obedience to the wishes of a mother. By persisting in disobedience he might have become the chief of a squadron—the Nelson of his time. By obeying, he was exalted to the chief of an empire—the paragon of his own and of future ages.

Though young Washington appears to have now for ever abandoned all his views of naval glory, yet an irresistible military ardour continued to be the vestal fire of his soul. An inherent love of arms gave a martial character even to his juvenile exercises and amusements. Nor was it long before he was summoned by his country to exchange the mimic for the real warrior—The sports of the campus for the deadly conflict.

Influenced by the intrigues of certain French missionaries, already had the savages of the West made bare the knife, and snatched from its repose the hatchet of destruction. Already had they invaded the frontier settlements of the British colonies, burning for blood, and marking their footsteps with promiscuous slaughter. Pale faced terror shrieked in their van, and gory massacre rioted in their rear. It was in the repulsion of this fierce, wily, and insatiable enemy that Washington's arm of war was first displayed in the presence of the brave. And such was the distinction he acquired even at this early period, such the unprecedented promise he exhibited, and

such the high and universal confidence he inspired, that a pious and eloquent divine of the day, his lips touched, as it were, by a spark from above, declared from the sacred desk, that he was reared up by Providence as the saviour of his country.

Not long after this memorable prediction, an event occurred, which was considered by many, as giving it almost the sanction of prophecy. It was at the defeat of the brave but unfortunate Braddock. In that scene of confusion, carnage, and dismay, the preservation of the life of Washington was regarded as the proximate act of a super human arm. His escape from destruction seemed to offer to his country an earnest of his future services and exaltation. He was the only officer on horseback that survived the wide-spreading slaughter of the day; yet his expanded, noble, and majestic form presented to the deadly aim of the marksman an object preeminently conspicuous and attractive. After Braddock's other aids had fallen, he continued alone to bear the general's orders to every part of the army, through a tempest of war, that swept from the earth even the bushes and the grass. A gentleman of distinction now living, who was present in the engagement, has frequently declared, that nothing but the guardian hand of Heaven itself could have protected Washington from the showers of bullets that were levelled at his individual life. But of his danger and escape on

that memorable occasion, let facts present a living picture—The colouring of language is unequal to the task. In the course of the action two horses fell under him and a third was wounded—part of his cockade was torn away—his sword, as it waved in his hand, was repeatedly grazed by the shot of the enemy—and four bullets pierced his coat—but were not commissioned to drink his blood!—that blood which was to animate the future deliverer of his country.

After Braddock himself had fallen, and a further continuance of the conflict would have been rashness rather than bravery, Washington, by a most masterly retreat, saved the shattered remains of the army.

The events of this sanguinary day, though disastrous in the extreme to the British interest, were no less auspicious to the military renown of our youthful hero. They furnished every heart with motives to love and admire him, and every tongue with cause to be eloquent in his praise. They shew him to be brave yet prudent, ardent yet collected, enterprizing yet cautious and wise, far beyond his experience and his years. They exhibited him to the eye of the world, if not in the character of a consummate captain, at least as a youth possessing the most distinguished attributes of command. From that moment he stood unrivalled in the affection, the confidence, and the honours of his country.

On the cessation of actual hostilities in America, an event which took place about the year 1758, Washington resigned his commission in the army, and exchanged a single and military, for a married and civil life. As the public stood no longer in need of his services, he sunk the warrior and the leader in the husband and the citizen.

Having hitherto shone forth the pride of war, and the terror of the battle, it was now his turn to become the delight of domestic, and the brightest ornament of social, life. For nature, in the exuberance of her bounty, had endowed him alike for either station—for scenes of retirement and peace, no less than for those of turmoil and battle. In him qualities and attributes the most opposite and apparently incompatible, joined and amalgamated in exquisite harmony. Magnificence without extravagance, economy without parsimony or meanness, method without formality, dignity without pride, affability without familiarity, tenderness without effeminacy, goodbreeding without insincerity, politeness without affectation, refinement without an excess of affected sentiment, a perfect knowledge of the world without licentiousness, and exemplary devotion without austerity, are a few of the seeming inconsistencies that were reconciled in the character of that wonderful man. Clothed in such a constellation of virtues and resplendent qualities, his dwelling became the resort of

taste, of science, and of elegance. But though pre-eminently calculated to adorn, he was not fated long to enjoy, the tranquil scenes of private life. He was formed for higher destinies—he lived for his country, and her call was always his signal to sacrifice inclination to duty, and quit the shades he so dearly loved.

From the resignation of his commission till the year 1775, though he might have been occasionally excited by the din of transatlantic battles, yet he never mingled in the strife of arms. Still, however, would his bosom swell, and his eye beam with unusual fire, on reading or listening to, the stories of the tented field; and still is he reported to have set apart a portion of his time for the study of treatises on the art of war. In this also may we trace the finger of Providence, pointing to the future emancipation of his country. For it was by steps like these that the martial fire of his soul was fostered, and his mind brought to a state of complete preparation to conduct the armies of Freedom to victory and glory, through the sanguinary struggle which secured our independence. To the part he bore in that memorable contest, I must now beg leave to direct your attention.

The particular causes that led to our revolutionary war it would be superfluous to lay before you. They already live in the memory of every tyro in the history of his country. Long had the most daring and iniqui-

tous measures been pursued by the British cabinet, to subvert the liberties of a brave, a generous, and a high-minded people. And long had these measures been regarded with sentiments of indignation becoming freemen, yet borne with a patience beyond example—a patience protracted from hour to hour by hopes of redress. But even patience has its limits as well as hope. An excess of the one is dulness and insensibility; of the other, weakness mingled with credulity.

The period at length arrived when no choice was left, no alternative remained, but resistance or slavery. In such a crisis it did not belong to Americans to pause. Instantly, as if by an impulse of inspiration from on High, did a sentiment of resistance nerve the heart, and a spirit of defiance ennoble the brow, of every patriot from Maine to Georgia, and from the Atlantic to the western extreme of our population.

No sooner had congress determined on an appeal to the sword against the tyrannic encroachments of the British government, than Washington was unanimously chosen Commander in Chief of the armies of his country. When the choice was announced to him in the council-chamber of the nation, his conduct on the occasion was characterized by an unassuming modesty, a magnanimity, and a disinterested patriotism, to which no parallel can be found in the pages of Grecian or Roman story. The facts to which I allude are on record.

They adorn history while they render it instructive, and will long remain the boast of Americans and the admiration of the world. The appointment was hailed with a peal of acclamation, swelled by the voice of approving millions. For already had every eye been fixed on Washington, already had every patriot heart, prepared to bleed for freedom, elected him for its leader. So imposing was his character, so conspicuous his talents and attainments in war, and so unrivalled his standing in the confidence of his country.

From the era of his investiture with supreme command, commences the most brilliant as well as the most important period of his life. To attempt at present to trace, and in adequate colours portray, the various achievements of his dazzling career from this date till the close of the revolution, would be vain and presumptuous—It would be to follow the eagle soaring to the heavens. Could I even form my pencil of sunbeams, or draw my colours from the rainbow's tints, I would not still embark in the enterprize.

It is indeed true, that during our struggle for freedom, Washington achieved no such stupendous feats of arms, as those which have lately deluged with the blood of whole armies the plains of Austerlitz, of Eylau, of Aspern, and of Wagram. But the reason is to be looked for in the feebleness of his means, not in any lack of personal resources either of mind or of heart. I dare defy refutation in asserting, that in proportion to

the resources with which he was furnished, he achieved more, much more, than has ever been done by any other leader either ancient or modern. At times his only resource appeared to be in himself, and in that unshaken trust, which it was his glory to repose in the God of armies. In the severest of trials—when pressed on every side by a numerous and powerful enemy, proud in discipline and flushed with victory—when his few but gallant followers were unpaid, unclothed, unfed, and many of them unarmed—When the murmur of discontent was loud in his ranks, and the voice of mutiny was ready to be raised—When the general spirit of his country had ebbed almost into despair, and even the hearts of the bravest were meditating submission—Under all these disasters, the brow of Washington was alone unclouded, his eye alone spoke the language of defiance, his firmness alone remained unmoved—In these worst of times, when the fair form of Freedom seemed already bleeding in the lion's angry grasp, the vigour of his arm rescued her from fate, and the lightning of his sword became a rampart around her. Nor was this all. The buoyancy of his genius even reared him above misfortune, and its immense resources enabled him to turn on his adversary the tide of conquest—To the gentlemen of the Cincinnati, the companions of Washington—who shared in his counsels, his dangers and his glory, and witnessed his toils and achievements in war

—to that gallant, that patriotic, that venerable band, grown gray in the ways of truth and of honour, I appeal for the correctness of what I here advance—Where, then —I feel the pride of an American in asking the question —Where is the captain, either ancient or modern, who, amidst such an overwhelming tempest of evils, ever converted misfortune into triumph, and forced his way to victory, with such a penury of means? I challenge a reply from the proudest page in the annals of war. Other leaders have, indeed, marched to splendid conquests at the head of numerous, well disciplined and well provided armies; but to effect such conquests, in despite of the want of all these auxiliaries, is a glory peculiar to Washington alone.

It has been sometimes asserted that the hero of our revolution was totally destitute of all the higher attributes of genius—that he was deficient in that energy, decision, and enterprize, which mark the character of a great captain—that a well directed caution was his cardinal excellence, and that it was the bent of his disposition, and the highest effort of his conduct and policy, to receive battle with coolness and fortitude, rather than to offer it with boldness and vigor. It has been by others declared, that, though he oftentimes manifested judgment in availing himself of opportunities favourable for action when they offered, yet his genius never rose to such an ascendency, never as-

sumed such a commanding attitude, as to create opportunities, to control circumstances, and rule the current of events to his purposes.

Were these charges true, they would certainly detract from the brilliancy of his renown. For mere judgment, prudence, courage, and firmness, though highly valuable, and indispensably necessary, are but secondary attributes in the character and conduct of a military chief. But to such as have attentively and impartially studied the actions, and much more to those who were admitted to the counsels of Washington, the injustice of the charges must be glaring as the sun. The soul of that chieftian was energy itself, and, when the crisis demanded it, his decisions were rapid as the movements of thought. But his energy was never suffered to degenerate into rashness, and he preferred, of choice, deliberation to haste. His mind was capable of conceiving, and oftentimes did conceive and project, against the enemies of his country, enterprizes of great compass and of the most daring character; but too seldom were his resources equal to their accomplishment. Oftentimes did his mind experience the most painful conflict between the boldness of his designs and the feebleness of his means. His wish was often to strike a brilliant, if possible, a conclusive blow, but his ardour was restrained, once, at least, by the counsels of his officers, but most fre-

quently by the inefficient condition of his troops. Had his country furnished him with an army equal in numbers and discipline to that of his enemy, the revolutionary conflict would have been of short duration. From its commencement till its close, it would have exhibited an uninterrupted blaze of enterprize and attack. The war would have been carried into every fortress, and into the centre of every camp the enemy might have occupied. Perhaps, from the first, the foes to liberty might have been confined to their ships, and never suffered to pollute with their footsteps the sanctuaries of Freedom.

Proof—incontestible proof, of the truth of these assertions we have in what Washington meditated against the enemy at Boston, at Brandywine, and at Germantown, and in what he actually achieved at Trenton, at Princeton, at Monmouth, and at York.—Were these the projects—these the acts of a mind characterized only by that cool, calculating, cautionary thing, denominated prudence? of a mind whose leading attribute was a heavy and slowly deliberating judgment? No! they were not! They were the exploits of a mind nerved by energy, and rich in expedients—of a mind bold to conceive, enlightened to direct, and impetuous to execute, the most daring enterprizes. They were, in fact, the utmost that mortal man could do, and more than mortals had a right to expect,

under circumstances so disastrous, and with means so incompetent.

But Washington's predominant character in war is yet to be mentioned. And it is the brightest attribute, the consummation of excellence, in a leader of armies. It was the extreme facility, the wonderful capacity, he possessed, of adapting his measures and his movements, on every occasion, precisely to the nature of the circumstances in which he was placed.—His capacity of promptly varying his projects and actions so as to meet the full force and character of the existing crisis, however shifting and numerous the aspects it might assume. In this perfect adaptation of his conduct to the nature and vicissitudes of the current of events, he may be boldly pronounced to be without a parallel in the history of the world. And in this consisted the perfection of his genius for war. It implied intuitive discernment, prompt decision, a plenitude of expedient, profound judgment, a selfpossession which nothing could disconcert, a selfcommand which nothing could destroy. Though the natural bent of his mind was to enterprize and action, yet could he with equal ease play the Fabius or the Cesar, according as the safety of his army and the success of his cause depended on caution or on gallant exploit. A perfect Proteus in his military character, he was capable of rendering himself all things to all emergencies. And it is to this

accommodating power of his genius, next to the smiles of a protecting Providence, that we must attribute the successful issue of our revolutionary war. Though the caution he observed in retreating before armies greatly superior to his own in numbers and in discipline oftentimes exposed him to the reproaches of the unthinking, yet it was his glory to merit and ultimately to receive the highest applause, by coolly disregarding the most unfounded censure.

But from the hero of our revolution, triumphant in battle, and surrounded with the trophies and the honours of war, let us turn our attention to the venerable Chief Magistrate, entrusted by his country with the sceptre of State. In the former character we have had a transient view of the great founder of our national independence, in the latter we are to behold the principal author and establisher of those civil institutions and arrangements, without which even independence itself might cease to be a blessing.

Having contributed more than any other mortal could contribute, to the formation and adoption of the federal constitution, Washington was unanimously elected to the first presidency. This was a master stroke of national policy;—a stroke essential, if not to the peace, at least to the prosperity and happiness of the country. The weight of his character was deservedly transcendant; and that weight was indispensably

necessary to mature and consolidate the new and important arrangements that were now contemplated. There was wanting some general repository of trust—some powerful centre of attraction, to draw the affections and the confidence of the several states to a single point. And that repository—that centre, was found in Washington. No shadow of doubt was entertained either of his wisdom and discernment to discover, or of his patriotic and paternal solicitude to provide for, the vital interests of every section of that country in peace, for which he had hazarded his life and his fortune in war.

The present crisis was all important to the character of our illustrious countryman. His reputation was now brilliant and spotless as the sun. Envy itself did not dare to sully it, nor did a rivalship of it enter even into the wildest dreams of ambition. He stood now on the very pinnacle of fame, with the brightest rays of human glory playing around him, and exhibiting him in majesty to an admiring world. Nothing more was wanting to complete his greatness—nothing more to fill up the measure of his earthly wishes. To a future world alone could he look for a superior standing in glory, for earth had nothing superior to offer. In this state of things, had he consulted prudence alone—that cool, calculating power, which had been falsely asserted to be the highest attribute of his mind—had he, I

say, consulted this, or had he, for a moment, admitted *self* to the counsels of his bosom, he would have remained what he then was, and never have trusted himself again to the caprice of fortune. In particular, he would never have put at hazard, on the dubious ocean of public opinion, the reputation he had gained by the labours of his sword. But he felt only for his country—he was a stranger to self. That country had again reared her sacred voice, claiming his services in a moment of difficulty, and his patriotism forbad him to disregard the summons. Private interest and private inclination were merged in a regard for the public weal. He accordingly left once more the shades of his beloved retirement, to embark in the untried vessel of state, and steer her through the tempestuous sea of liberty.

A new government was now to be organized, its thousand wheels were to be set in motion, and the outlines of an administration were to be sketched, which, by embracing, and providing for, the conflicting interests of a wide-spreading country, might conciliate and rivet the affections of a powerful, a jealous, and a highminded people. To common minds, and even to minds of an exalted order, a task like this would have presented difficulties insurmountable and appalling. But to the mind of Washington, which smiled at difficulty as it set danger at defiance, which looked through the whole fabric of civil society with

intuitive perception, and anticipated the current of coming events with a discernment bordering on prophecy itself—to a mind like this, the task, though gigantic, was altogether practicable.

Of the wisdom and talents displayed throughout the whole administration of Washington, its own immediate effects in promoting the prosperity, the happiness, and the elevation of our country furnished the most conclusive evidence. It was an administration of settled precedents, and great practical maxims in political science, not an administration of visionary projects, and abortive experiments—It was an administration of silent courage, unbending dignity, and persevering firmness, not an administration of empty bravado, time-serving timidity, and ever-changing expedients —It was an administration expanded and ennobled in every stage of its resplendent course with motives of a public and national tendency, not narrowed and embittered by acts and ebullitions of personal resentment, nor degraded by doing homage to the dictates of party —It was an administration whose spotless cabinet the spirit of faction never dared to sully by her unhallowed touch—It was an administration which from the very verge of national bankruptcy, restored public credit to an honourable standing—which conciliated the esteem and commanded the respect of foreign nations—which, by making the best practicable pre-

parations for war, offered the best possible security for the preservation of peace—which gave to Americans just and ample ground to glory in their birthright, their country, and their name—which, from comparative poverty and weakness, raised our nation to a proud pinnacle of opulence and strength—and which, by providing alike for the interests of all, led, as by enchantment, the affections of all to rally by one mighty impulse around our constitution, our government and our laws—It was not, I say, an administration turning on a contracted spirit of faction, as on its central pivot —an administration which from superlative opulence, hurried the nation to the very brink of insolvency—which by pusillanimity, complaint, and indecision, brought a lasting reproach on the American character —which endangered our peace, by neglecting or demolishing our preparations for war—which, by implanting dissensions and fostering animosities between the different sections of our country, facilitated and even invited the dismemberment of the union—which found the nation rich, flourishing, and prosperous, beyond example and almost beyond expression, and reduced it by mismanagement to the verge of ruin—It was not—trust me, my fellow citizens, it was not such an administration as this—These are tendencies, these are evils from which the administration of our Washington was exempt; and suffer me to add, these

are evils which to us would have been known only in theory and by name, had the principles and policy of that administration continued to prevail in the councils of the nation.

But what are the principles, and what the policy of that administration, which raised our country to such a pinnacle of glory, and which are still cherished with a noble pride, and with the fondest devotion, by so many of the best and wisest of our citizens? Time will not allow me even briefly to mention those principles, much less to lay them before you in ample detail. But I can refer you to a most precious relict where many of them are preserved. It is the farewel address of Washington to the people of the United States, on his retiring from the presidency, and bidding adieu to public life. In that brief, but immortal work—a work which should form the political creed of every American, and which future ages will venerate as a monument of the purest patriotism and the soundest wisdom—In that work, are delineated with accuracy and great strength of colouring, some of the cardinal points of the Washington policy.

We are there warned of the supreme importance of our national union, and solemnly cautioned against every man, every measure and every innuendo, that might tend to weaken or to dissolve it. But, while seated in the chair of state, the preservation of that

union was an object most sacred in the sight of Washington. It was regarded, in some measure as the cynosure of his political course. His administration was peculiarly calculated to foster and strengthen it, by dispensing with an impartial and a paternal hand, the blessings of government to every part and section of our country,—By watching with equal care over the welfare of the northern and southern, and of the eastern and western, extremes of the states,—By protecting alike the interests of the farmer, the merchant, and the manufacturer, treating them like members of the same family, and thus strengthening the ties which bind them together.

We are there cautioned against the restless intrigues and daring machinations of party spirit, with all the dangers and all the evils that follow in their train. But the administration of Washington is known to have been as well calculated as is consistent with the principles of a free government, to keep in check the spirit of faction, to mitigate its inexorable rage, to render abortive its thousand projects, and prevent it from gaining an ascendency in the state. Washington was himself above party. His noble mind held it in abhorrence, and his great example threw it into disrepute. Party could not live in his presence. It shrunk from his frown, it withered at his foot, blasted by the awful lightning of his eye. He never rewarded the

schemes and exertions of party spirit with an office or a smile. Even to have solicited him for an office on account of mere party services, would have been deemed an insult—It would have incurred a forfeiture of his esteem and his friendship for ever. The officers of his appointment, the characters who shared his counsels and his confidence, were men of exalted abilities, of well tried patriotism, and distinguished worth. They were not the crude and noisy nurselings of the day. They were selected from among the best blood, the master spirits of the nation, on account of the services they had rendered their country in the gloomiest of times, not for their successful intrigues in behalf of a faction. Had not this course of things been changed—had not these principles been abandoned, party spirit would never have become the stepping-stone to a seat in the capitol, nor a passport to a place in the cabinet of the executive. Washington was, indeed, in the true meaning of the title, President of the United States—His successors have been nothing but presidents of a faction.

Another page in the farewel address of our political father, relates to the preservation of the constitutional balance between the several branches of the government. On this point he raises his voice with the most impressive solemnity, and the sentiments he utters are

all but prophetic. The encroachment of one branch of the government on the prerogatives of another, he denounces as an evil of a most threatening aspect. He viewed it as a daring and licentious attack on the vitals of the constitution, which ought to be resisted by every expedient, and at every hazard. Looking with more than mortal foresight along the current of future events, he saw that such attacks would be made, and warned his fellow citizens to be prepared for the crisis.

During the administration of Washington, no lawless invasions of prerogative, no tyrannic usurpations of power, were ever attempted. His own personal dignity, his own august character, were a wall around the privileges of the executive department. He wished not the powers and the influence of that department to be extended, and he would have frowned with indignation on any attempts to violate the rights of the other two branches.

But, alas! Washington has passed away, and with him the wisdom, the virtue, and the glory of his administration! *He* has ascended to his reward, leaving behind him no portion of his spirit—no fragment of his sacred mantle, as a legacy to his successors! If we take a retrospect of the policy pursued for the last eight years, we will discover not a vestige of his scrupulous, his holy regard for the preservation of the constitutional balance of our government. On sundry occasions, and

in various ways, have attempts the most flagrant been made to prostrate the Judiciary at the feet of the legislative and executive departments. This truth, which was once only foresight and painful anticipation, is history now. The Judiciary, like a sunbright island in a stormy main, or a speck of azure in a clouded sky, exhibited the only remaining fragment of the Washington appointments, the only relict of the Washington administration. Already had the besom of faction, like the wide-wasting Goths and Vandals of old, swept from the nation, as far as possible, every other trace of the wisdom and patriotism of our political father. From the east to the west, and from the north to the south, an indiscriminate revolution had been effected in offices and appointments. But still the Judiciary stood, a fair though solitary monument of better times. For awhile it was unmolested, or attacked only at a distance, through the medium of the press. For, as yet, the spirit of party, appalled by its firmness, and overawed by the majesty of its virtue, did not dare to assail it by open violence. At length, however, the mask was dropt, all disguise was thrown aside, and the deadliest efforts were made to subvert the independence of that important branch of the government—that last and best asylum of the rights of freemen. Hitherto these efforts have proved abortive; but a portentous futurity is still before us.

But the most daring project meditated against the constitutional balance of our government remains to be mentioned. Though this project has, as yet, appeared only in the column of a newspaper, yet the *time*, the *place*, and the *manner* of its disclosure, render it in the highest degree suspicious and alarming. It is of an aspect so lowering, and of a character so dark, nefarious, and treasonable, that I will not offend the ear of a polite audience, by attaching to it the epithets which alone it deserves. It is fit only to be proposed and heard in the council chamber of those *rebellious spirits*, those *apostate angels*, who plotted usurpation against the throne of the MOST HIGH. It is, *to destroy our elective franchise and render the office of President hereditary!* In other words, it is to give us for our ruler, a *hereditary Monarch!* for let the principle of hereditary rule be once carried into effect—a principal so detestable to the followers of Washington—Let this principle be once adopted, and the title of *President* will be too humble for him who will be exalted to the direction of our destinies. It will be exchanged first, for that of *King*—and, next, for that of *Emperor*, of America! each of the states being converted into a petty sovereignty, to reward the services of a favourite leader, or to satisfy the cupidity of a rapacious courtier. Look at the gradual, the insidious ascent of the great Autocrat of modern Europe, and there be-

hold the prototype of what is meditated, and is even now maturing in the very bosom of our own country—*Chief Consul*, first—next, *Consul for life*—then, *Consul, with a power of nominating his successor*—the greatest is to come—*King* of Italy—*Emperor* of France—of Germany—of Europe!—Such is to be the gradual ascent to power in the United States, and such the meditated subversion of the liberties of our country. If prospects like these will not awaken Americans to a sense of their danger—If they will not stir the spirit of freemen within them, and urge them on to deeds of patriotism, and exertions of self-preservation, then are they, in the most disgraceful sense of the terms, degenerate sons of noble sires, fit only to bow the neck to bold usurpation, and tamely submit to the tyrant's yoke—Then are they, like Rome in the days of Cesar, prepared for a master; and though one usurper *may* fall in the attempt, another, more fortunate, *will* succeed, and seat himself securely on the throne of empire.

In the same work to which I have already referred, Washington, with all the solicitude of a father, and all the wisdom of the first of sages, warns us against the influence of foreign nations in our public councils. As the first step towards this hydra of evils, this rottenness of the state, he cautions us to beware of fostering either undue national attachments, or national resent-

ments. For he declares, and trust me the experience of ages sanctions the declaration, that attachments and resentments of this description, are open floodgates for the admission of the most destructive influence from abroad.

On this wise and salutary advice, his own administration was the ablest comment. During that bright and auspicious era of our government—that golden age of American glory, foreign nations of every description were treated as enemies in war, in peace as friends. It was then that neither foreign intrigue nor foreign insolence dared to sully the purity or insult the spirit of the American cabinet. Or, if such insolence did *once* intrude, it was indignantly spurned from the presence of the hero—If the serpent of intrigue did *once* rear his head, it was instantly crushed by the heel of the patriot—It was then that the neutrality of our country was impartial and complete—That the course of her policy with regard to the great belligerents of Europe was fair and open as the day, and steady as the unbending mind of him who directed it. It was then that the thunders of our resentment were ready to be levelled at any nation, that might dare to offer us premeditated wrong. It was then, that, unless averted by prompt and ample reparation, the sword of vengeance would have been boldly unsheathed, in cases where of late we have seen

nothing but cowardly proclamations, sullen non-intercourse laws and ruinous embargoes.

At tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis.

But the times are changed, and the manly spirit of the nation is evaporated. The train of martial and of civic virtues that shed such a radiance over the administration of Washington, now sleep in marble by the side of their favourite.

But, here, my fellow citizens, it becomes us to pause, for our footsteps are bordering on sacred ground. We are approaching the tomb of our beloved Washington, the most hallowed spot in the world's wide round. It is the centre of the affections of confederated millions. It is an object for nations to gaze at, and for patriots to adore. Already is its fame coextensive with the range of civilization and knowledge, and its glory shall be lasting as the records of freedom. It holds in its bosom the ashes of the first of heroes, the most virtuous of rulers, *the father of his country.*

But where is the monument—where the mausoleum, to point us to the spot—those towering symbols of a nation's love? Alas! and is it true, that they are no where to be found?—That nought but a few fragments of rudely sculptured marble meet and offend the disappointed eye?—Are then the remains of Washington suffered to repose in a dwelling so humble? and is it

thus—thus that his services are requited by his country? Where, then, is the love, where the gratitude, where the munificence, where is even the justice of the nation, when the rank weeds of the earth are permitted to usurp the place, where the statue should breathe, or the sepulchral monument swell to the heavens? When the green and lowly sod of the valley is suffered to rest on the bosom of him, who was bravest where all were brave, wisest in the midst of assembled sages, and whose patriotism palsied competition and rivalship.

But notwithstanding this cold—this unnatural neglect of his country and its government, the fame of the hero, the patriot, the statesman and the sage, shall be more lasting than marble, bronze, or adamant. It is consigned to immortality by the wisdom of his counsels and the splendour of his achievements. The page of the historian has already received it, and will transmit from age to age with ever-brightening lustre, till history shall be cancelled, and time itself become extinct.

Thus far, fellow citizens, have I spoken of Washington in the relation he bears to our country and to the world. A few observations in regard to his more immediate relationship to ourselves, shall close this feeble attempt to do honour to his memory. In common with all other citizens of the United States, formed to be grateful, patriotic and just, we revere

his virtues, we admire his greatness, and do homage to his worth. We cherish in our bosoms the fondest remembrance of him, entwined with the evergreen affections of our hearts, which nothing but the touch of death can wither. But we do not stop here. We have expressly adopted him as our political father. As such we are bound to hold in treble veneration his counsels and advice, and to cling to the principles of his administration as our last and only hope—our sheet anchor of safety from political perdition. We have associated ourselves under the title of "The American Republican Society." In doing this our motives are pure, our intentions are honourable. As such we proclaim them to the world, and boldly challenge contradiction. We labour for the promotion of salutary measures, not for the elevation of favourite characters. We have no self-interested views as to distinguished posts or lucrative places in the government of the nation; for we are actuated neither by high-minded ambition nor by groveling cupidity. Our only object is our country's good, our means, the principles of the departed Washington. For the cultivation of these principles, and, if possible, for their restoration to our national councils, we have pledged to each other our honour and our faith. To redeem this pledge, and to accomplish the exalted and of our association, it becomes us to avail ourselves

of every mean and every expedient that policy may dictate, and conscience approve. *Without* energy, enterprize, and concert in measures, the best of causes must frequently be lost—*with* them, we have too often witnessed the triumph of the worst. Let us, then, while health and power of action remain, exert the highest faculties of our nature for our country's welfare. And let not even the termination of *health* and *strength* be the limit of our efforts in a cause so dear to our hearts—so momentous in its consequences. When *both of these blessings* shall have for ever forsaken us—when our frames shall be shattered by the hand of disease, and our pulse be fast ebbing to the stilness of the grave—when our eyes themselves shall be waxing dim with the film of dissolution, and every organ of life shall be failing in its functions—even then, in that extremity of time, when about to shake off for ever these shackles of mortality, let our prayers for our beloved country ascend to the footstool of the God of nations.

> In that dread moment, as in all the past,
> O! save our country, Heaven! should be our last!