

*M. Frederick Bensch from his
friend & the son* *Samuel Smith*

AN

ORATION,

UPON

THE DEATH

OF

GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON,

DELIVERED IN

THE STATE-HOUSE AT TRENTON,

ON THE 14TH OF JANUARY, 1800,

By THE REV. SAMUEL STANHOPE SMITH, D. D.

PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE OF NEW-JERSEY:

AND PUBLISHED AT THE DESIRE OF THE COMMITTEE OF
THE CITIZENS, &c. OF TRENTON, AT WHOSE
REQUEST IT WAS PRONOUNCED.

TRENTON:

PRINTED BY G. CRAFT.

MDCCC.

ORATION, &c.

GREAT GOD! we adore thy Sovereign Providence, which hath smitten the father of his country, and left a nation in tears!

My fellow-citizens! your griefs are manly—they are approved of Heaven—you mourn a father. All America mingles her sighs with yours—foreign nations, admiring his achievements and his virtues, will think that liberty has lost a protector among them—and even that great people from whom he wrested our freedom and independence, forgetting that they have lost an empire by his wisdom and valour, will honor him with their griefs, and their praises.

His country is erecting monuments and statues to his memory. Brass and marble shall express his glory—But brass and marble will decay, and the glory that is committed to them alone will perish. Eloquence and history shall rear to him more durable trophies. Historians shall immortalize their

page with the name of WASHINGTON; and future orators shall quote it with the names of Epaminondas, of Aristides, and of Cato, to illuminate their discourse, and to enforce, by great examples, the virtues of a disinterested and heroic patriotism. But his most lasting, and most noble monument shall be the affections of his countrymen; who will transmit their admiration of him as an increasing inheritance to their latest posterity. To testify their esteem, and to announce to the world the profound regrets, of a grateful country, poets, and orators, and the ministers of religion, have come forth to pronounce and re-echo his praises throughout all America. How sublime, and how singular the glory! thus to receive the voluntary homage of a free, and a great people—the homage of equals paid, not to pre-eminence of rank, but of virtue—not extorted by the command of power, but the unconstrained effusion of the heart! I also, at your invitation, appear among them, with a zeal disproportioned to my strength, to pay my feeble tribute to the memory of a man deservedly so dear to every worthy and honest American—But, ah! I feel, in the beginning, that my words are unable to reach the conceptions of my own mind, and that they must fall far below the ideas and emotions which already occupy yours. One advantage, indeed, I may derive

~~From~~ hence, the only one that inability can yield, which is, that, when I have bestowed on this illustrious citizen the highest praises, I shall have the testimony of your hearts that I have said even less than the truth—I shall have no need to have recourse to the base arts of flattery to praise the most modest of men, who spurned from him, while living, all insincerity and adulation.—Oh! if the occasion, and the presence of this numerous and enlightened assembly, could light up within me a spark of that eloquence which they are so well fitted to enkindle, and could raise above itself a genius so far inferior to the subject, and the demands of public expectation, with what noble ideas should I fill your minds! what a warm impression would the recital of achievements, and the display of talents and virtues like his, make upon your hearts! Certainly no hero, modern, or ancient, has ever offered to the orator a more illustrious or fertile subject of that eloquence that is calculated to touch the heart, or to raise men to the heights of virtue by great examples.

IN whom have ever shone with more splendor the talents of war, in creating an army; in successfully maintaining himself in the face of a superior enemy; in inspiring with courage raw troops; in attaching soldiers to order and their country in the midst of extreme hardships, and the injustice of

their country itself; in seizing victories by an enterprising bravery, when enterprize was safe for the republic, or in conducting retreats that gained him no less glory than victories; in vanquishing his enemies by a firm undaunted courage, or consuming and wasting them away by a wise and noble patience? Where can we find a conqueror so humble, so disinterested, so devoted solely to his country—so serene, so sublime in adversity—so modest in the midst of triumphs—in danger so intrepid and calm—and possessing such controul over events by his prudence and perseverance?

OTHER nations begin their eulogiums of great men, by tracing their birth to some royal house, or some noble family.—This is the praise of slaves. Virtue, talents, services, are our nobility. What glory could he have derived from a noble parentage, whose virtues would have added their chief splendor to thrones? Such adventitious and accidental distinctions might have lessened, but could not have augmented, that high and solid fame which he now possesses. The name of WASHINGTON is surrounded with a lustre that eclipses that of kings: And not his smallest praise is, that it is all his own—it is derived from the intrinsic worth and merit of the man—not a ray of it is borrowed—his father was a plain but virtuous citizen.

SOCRATES believed that he was attended by a Genius which often gave him counsel and instruction, and watched over his safety—The Genius of Brutus abandoned him at the plains of Philippi; but the guardian Genius of *our* hero, which never forsook him, was that Divine Providence, which he always devoutly acknowledged, and which seemed to preside over him with a peculiar predilection from his birth, giving his mind that happy impulse and direction, and combining those fortunate coincidences of events, which we have seen leading to success and fame in all the important scenes of his life.

His first education was directed only to solid and useful attainments. Mathematical science, which contributes, perhaps, more than any other to strengthen the mind, and which is so intimately connected with the military art, was his earliest, and his favorite study. His exercises were manly and vigorous; his constitution was active and strong; his port noble and commanding; his person graceful and majestic; his countenance expressive of that benignity, that honor, that grandeur of sentiment, that profound reflection, for which he was distinguished. But these are vulgar praises. He had a mind capable of combining all the interests of his country; a discernment capable of penetrating and defeating all the designs of its ene-

mies; a heart capable of daring every danger in its defence.

His dawn of life gave some auspicious pre-
 sages of the splendor of its meridian. Scarcely
 had he attained his twentieth year, when he was
 employed by the government of Virginia, his na-
 tive state, in an enterprize as hazardous, as it was
 honorable, which required all the prudence of age
 united with all the vigor and fire of youth. The
 armies of France threatened to environ these states,
 then colonies of Great Britain, and to inclose them
 in a chain of fortifications from the lakes to New-
 Orleans; and they were artfully attaching to their
 own interests, and exciting against us, the fury of
 the savage nations. Young Washington was charg-
 ed to remonstrate with their commander, to pene-
 trate their designs, to estimate their force, to ob-
 serve their works, and to conciliate, if possible, the
 affections of the native tribes. In the discharge
 of this trust, you see him, at an inclement season
 of the year, traverse the immense forest alone.
 Amidst incessant rains and snows, and over vast ri-
 vers, rendered almost impassable by ice, and sur-
 rounded with lurking parties of hostile savages, he
 pursues his course. When his horses are exhausted,
 he continues on foot his difficult and dangerous
 route; he observes every thing with the eye of a

warrior; he marks out sites for fortresses; he measures the fortresses of the enemy; he displays a firmness of mind in the greatest dangers, a patience of fatigue in the greatest difficulties, and a consummate address in the conduct of the whole, that would have been worthy the reputation of the oldest commanders; and finally, executes an arduous commission in a manner that deserved and obtained universal applause. At an age when other youth are pursuing only pleasures, and softening their minds and bodies by indulgence, he is already hardening himself for the toils and dangers of war—he is practically studying mankind—and applying the science of Euclid and of Vauban to the defence of his country.

THE WAR, which then menaced these infant settlements, soon began to rage. The brave but impetuous Braddock was commissioned to defend, in America, the honor, and the interests, of Britain. In all the pride of European discipline, and British valour, he despised an enemy who fought by stealth, and scorned the admonitions of Washington, who was only a youth, but who was a warrior by intuition, and who perceived, in a moment, every change which that formidable art ought to assume from new circumstances. Surrounded in the forest by an enemy invisible, but dreadful, his ranks cur-

down by a hidden fire, his principal officers slain, and himself mortally wounded, amidst carnage and death, where valour was useless, and discipline only offered surer marks to the destructive aim of the foe, terror and despair overwhelmed every heart. Then our hero, all calm and intrepid, and now left to pursue his own ideas, was seen, on the spot, to change the whole order of battle. With his brave Virginians he protected the astonished battalions of Britain, covered them under the buckler of America, and, in the name of his country, saved those armies, whom, in her defence, he was one day to conquer. They shouted him their deliverer; and the shores of Europe and America re-echoed the applauses of the camp.

BUT it was, when America called him to the head of her armies, in the long and bloody war which she was obliged to maintain, in defence of her rights, and her existence, against that nation, become haughty and unjust, that he displayed the full extent, and variety, of his genius. Britain had cherished her colonies in the new world merely as instruments of commerce, till their growing prosperity rendered them at length an object both of avarice, and of ambition. Flushed with her triumphs under the auspices of the great Chatham, and rejecting, after profiting by, the counsels of that sublime statesman, she had already, in imagination, swallowed

our treasures—divided our provinces among her princes—our cities and fields among her nobles—and destined our husbandmen to be tenants and labourers for her. America, roused to defend rights that were dearer to her than her existence, but unprepared to meet an attack which she had not expected from a parent nation, had nothing to oppose to this formidable invasion but her unconquerable love of liberty, her virtue, and Washington.

How unequal was the conflict between a young country, in the very infancy of her improvements—possessing, as yet, only a few husbandmen scattered over an unwieldy territory—nursed in habits of veneration and obedience to her invader—without an organized government to conduct the necessary operations of her defence—destitute of clothing, of ammunition, and almost of arms, for her few soldiers—and rendered still more impotent by an injudicious system of finance bottomed upon no funds—and, on the other hand, a mighty nation in the summit of her glory—grown old in victories—whose numerous and veteran armies had just humbled the first power in Europe—whose fleets covered and ruled the ocean—and who commanded, by her commerce, half the wealth of the world! If we counted only the resources of America, and the number of her troops, would we not pronounce

that she was already vanquished? But the talents of her leader were in the room of armies, and of treasures; and his success undeniably ranks him among the greatest generals in the universe. He had to compensate, by address, the defect of energy in the government—to make personal influence supply the want of money, and of almost every necessary for a camp—to manage with skill the caprices of liberty itself, which are so often ruinous to its own interests—to conciliate to the service men irritated by disappointment, and the injustice, though, perhaps, the necessary injustice, of their country—and to raise the courage of those who were already subdued by want. You see him, at one time, patiently preparing the train of events for some great effect—at another, anticipating them by a bold and decisive stroke. Sometimes he stoops upon victory like an eagle—and sometimes he renders it sure by a prudent delay. He always rises from defeat like a conqueror, and, in the end, obliges the enemy to abandon the post which they had seized.—In all changes of fortune, he is serene, collected, and sublime. Success cannot elate him. No reverse can sink his courage, or shake his firmness. And you behold him with equal admiration, when compelled to retire, with the broken remains of his army across the Jerseys, as when he entered in triumph over the de-

molished fortifications of York, and, by one splendid action, put a period to the war.

THE details of his exploits I leave to the historian: They will instruct the remotest ages. They are still recent in your memory. The children of America repeat them with enthusiasm. His first act was to expel the enemy from Boston, and to restore to the nation that important capital. Afterwards, when in the face of a thousand ships, and an immense army, he was obliged to retire before superior numbers from the open and defenceless city of New-York, if, for a moment, ignorance and impatience impeached his courage, or his skill, the returning reflection of his fellow-citizens approved his prudence, and applauded his firmness. Conscious of doing what a patriotic general ought to do, he felt all the humiliation of unfounded censure; but he was willing to bear the folly, and the injustice, of his countrymen for the salvation of his country. He was not among those frantic heroes, who, to gain the vain reputation of a thoughtless bravery, will hazard the safety of their country itself. Tho' he loved glory, the interests of America were dearer to him than his own fame. Her circumstances, at that moment, imperiously forbid him to risk the existence of his small army. His lofty soul was incapable of fear: He even seemed

to acquire new energies at the approach of danger; but a cool and comprehensive wisdom tempered the ardent impulses of his courage; and he now resolved, like a great general, to expose nothing to hazard which he could defend by prudence, and not to force fortune where he was sure of gaining her by a wise delay. He retired before the enemy, always commanding their respect by his well chosen positions, till, having gained the farther shore of the Delaware, he there arrested their progress, and there triumphantly turned the tide of the war. The place on which I stand is consecrated by his triumphs—your streets have flowed with hostile blood—here victory first returned to his standard, which for a moment, she had abandoned. Trenton! and Princeton! names rendered dear to your country by exploits that will be forever combined with them in history, on your plains hope was first rekindled in the bosom of America.

DESPONDENCY had begun to seize the public mind. It was necessary to restore its vigor by some brilliant action; and Washington who, at one time, so prudently retired from danger, was now determined to put all to hazard—he had been willing to survive misfortune only to retrieve it—he was now prepared to die, or resolved to conquer.—I see him, in the depth of winter, with an army scarce.

ly half clothed, and small in number, his mind labouring with some vast and almost desperate purpose, struggling with the ice, and with the torrent, forcing his way across the Delaware. Supported by a few militia, brave but undisciplined, his circumstances were infinitely critical. An impassable river was now behind him, a superior enemy in front, separated from him only by a small ravine. The evening closed under a tremendous cannonade. Both armies, lighting their fires, and setting their guards, were waiting, in anxious suspense, the approach of the morning. The fate of America seemed to be staked on the event of one great and decisive battle. Then the military talents of the American hero shone forth with new splendor, and revived, and fixed, the wavering confidence of his country. By one of those happy strokes of genius that distinguish only great generals, he broke all the plans of his foes, and rolled the waves of misfortune back upon themselves. In the night he passed unperceived the army in his front, attacked an important post in their rear, carried it sword in hand, and awakened them to a sense of all their danger, and their shame, by the sounds of victory from Princeton. Princeton ! thy fields, rendered sacred by the blood of Mercer, and illustrious by the actions of Wash-

ington, shall be forever connected in history with his glory—thy sons shall hereafter vie with one another in eloquence and song to celebrate his fame, and, pointing to the spot where Washington triumphed, shall perceive their genius kindled with new fires, and from him derive, while they confer, immortality,

THE plan of the general was to hasten to Brunswick, and seize the enemy's arsenal, stores, and military chest, deposited there ; but his troops, harrassed and exhausted with incessant labours, marches, and conflicts, were unable to accomplish the grandeur of his views. The British commander, in the utmost consternation, flew to their protection. The American, with a wisdom worthy the celebrated dictator who saved Rome, immediately occupied the hills that overlooked the strong position of the enemy, on the summits of which he hung like some dark and terrible cloud impregnated with thunder, and continually threatening to burst upon them.* He straitens their quarters—he drives in their posts—he cuts off their parties—he reanimates the courage of the militia of New-Jersey ; and, by practising them in daily combats, renders them at length, under the conduct of a few gallant officers, worthy to fight by the side of

* The image which Hannibal applied to Fabius,

veterans—He expels the enemy from a state which they had so cruelly ravaged.

By the aid of their navy they were enabled rapidly to transport themselves to the greatest distances; and the American general was obliged to be ready to meet them at every point. He met them on the Brandywine, where the timidity, or the treachery of the men employed to bring him intelligence of their movements, defeated one of the wisest and most brilliant plans of the war; which would probably have put in his possession their artillery, their baggage, and their whole camp.* But Heaven had resolved to protract their fate; and they entered the capital of Pennsylvania.

WHILE encamped at the Valley Forge under every disadvantage to which a commander could be subject, and suffering the most cruel neglect, not to say injustice of his country, he surprised a divi-

* The intention of the general was, to permit the enemy to cross the Brandywine above him, and, while they imagined they were taking him in flank, to push forward his main body, and surprise their camp on the other side of the river, which would have cut off their retreat, and been probably followed by their total ruin. His runners, whether intimidated, or corrupted, persisted to assure him, in the most solemn manner, that the British forces had not crossed in the places where he certainly expected them, and deceived him with regard to their real movements, till it was too late to execute his design. He was compelled to retreat. And, a few days afterwards, when he offered them battle again in the Great-Valley the elements fought against him.

sion of their army on the heights of Germantown, and in the moment that victory was declaring for his arms, and their routed legions were fleeing in every direction, a voice, a whisper, one of those invisible and unaccountable accidents which so frequently decide the fate of battles, wrested the prize out of his hands. But his unconquerable energy, his infinite resources in misfortune, robbed them of all the fruits of their success. They dared no longer venture out of their entrenchments, and he held them enchained in Philadelphia.

THE generals of Britain, contending in vain against the indefatigable courage, and the inexhaustible resources of the American hero, who, tho' at the head of a feeble and ill-appointed army, was often victorious, and who reaped even from defeat the fruits of victory, resolved to abandon to him Pennsylvania, as they had before yielded New-Jersey.

THEN you saw him on the burning plains of Monmouth, rallying his broken van, and leading it on to a new charge; exposing himself like a common soldier, present in every place at the same moment; and while men were fainting, and dying in their ranks with fatigue, and heat, and thirst, refusing to rest, or to taste refreshment, till victory gave him a right to repose. With pleasure I see in

this assembly your EXCELLENCY,* and so many other brave officers, who were there witnesses of his glory, and who bore no small share in the dangers, and the honors of that memorable day.

THE twenty-ninth June gave rest to the northern states; and Britain, despairing to be able to contend with Washington, determined to bend all her force against the South. But there she met the wife and gallant Greene, who was worthy to be the brother of Washington. Greene was cutting off her garrisons, and her armies in detail. But, her main army, under the conduct of the bravest and most enterprising of her generals, was still reserved to adorn the triumphs of the first hero of America.

HISTORIANS will relate with what admirable combination he formed the plan, and concerted its execution, with an ally separated from him by more than a thousand leagues, for surprizing and entangling in his toils his active foe—with what address he diverted the attention of the British commanders—and how, after a march of four hundred miles, he had so amused and blinded them, that he still found his enemy in the place where he had determined to seize him.—America will forever record that happy day in which her victorious

* Governor HOWELL, who followed the bier as chief mourner.

chief saw Britain laying her last standards at his feet. I seem to participate with him that generous exultation, that noble triumph of soul, which, in this moment, he felt. Not that he was capable, with unmanly insolence, of exulting over a prostrate enemy, but he saw, in their fall, the salvation of his country. On the ruins of York he laid the immortal base of the republic. How delicious! How sublime was the moment! Britain was humbled*—America was delivered and avenged.

THE war terminated, PEACE restored, and the liberties of the new world established on the firmest foundations, the concluding scene was the most august and interesting that the history of nations has, perhaps, ever presented.—Other conquerors have considered victory as the mean of grasping unlawful power.—The soul of Washington was more sublime.—He regarded in his victories only the peace and happiness of a great nation. A fine morality tempered and reigned in the midst of his heroic qualities. The character of a patriot he considered as superior to that of a hero; and to be a renowned warrior was less in

* Such expressions as this cannot reasonably be supposed to be intended to cherish national prejudices, or to inflame national antipathies. They are used by the writers of every country in celebrating their eminent statesmen, and their heroes. They indicate sensations that were natural and lawful on the occasion, but are afterwards forgotten in the relations of amity, and commercial intercourse.

his esteem, than to be a good man. He hastens, therefore, to the seat of Congress to resign into the hands of the fathers of his country the powers with which they had invested him, and which he had so nobly employed in its defence.—August spectacle! Illustrious chief! He was so far elevated above the rest of mankind that no way was left for him to become greater but by humbling himself. ~~The house~~ ^{he entered the hall.} Surrounded with ~~his~~ his virtues, his services, and his glories, of which no one but himself seemed to be unconscious. This awful assembly received him as the founder, and the guardian, of the republic. Every heart was big with emotion. Silently they retraced the scenes of affliction and danger thro' which they had passed together—They recalled to mind the peace and freedom purchased by his arm—They regarded with veneration that great man, who appeared more great and worthy of esteem in resigning ^{his power,} than he had done in ^{the midst of his victories,} ~~gloriously~~ ^{divested himself} ~~his power.~~ In an impressive speech he ~~took~~ ^{his great co-patriots & friends in} all his public employments, and took of ~~the~~ affectionate leave. At the contemplation of such rare virtue, and moved at the recollection of so many interesting scenes, tears of admiration and gratitude burst from ~~every eye.~~ ^{the whole assembly} The hero, touched with the general emotion, wet his cheek with a

manly tear; while he deposited his sword under the laws, which he had covered with his shield.

THE last act of a spectacle so affecting was an act of religion. Great example for legislators, rulers, warriors—for all who either possess elevated stations, or ~~wish~~ aim at high and solid fame! In that august presence, he worships the Ruler of the Universe—he commends the interests of his dearest country to the protection of Almighty God—and there, in the temple of the laws, he offers to Heaven the incense of a nation from the altar of his own pure and noble heart.—This done, he retires amidst the vows, and prayers, and blessings, of a grateful and admiring country, to the peaceful shade of Vernon.—Not like those heroes who build their glory on the misery of the human race, and whose restless souls are forever tossed in the tempests of ambition, he sought only peace by war, and returned from its cruel and bloody fields with delight to the first innocent employments of human nature.

LET us contemplate him, a moment, in this RETIREMENT, which he always chose with such predilection when the service of his country would permit him to enjoy it.

IN PRIVATE LIFE he was as amiable, as vir-

tuous, and as great, as he appeared sublime on the public theatre of the world. How many conquerors, renowned in history, have been great only while they acted a conspicuous part under the observation of mankind ! The soul, in such a situation, perceives an artificial elevation—it assumes the sentiments of virtue corresponding to the grandeur of the objects that surround it. In private, it subsides into itself ; and, in the ordinary details of life and conduct, the men, who seemed to be raised above others by the splendor of some rare occasions, now sink below them—they are degraded by their passions—those who were able to command armies, have lost the power of self-command—and, when they are not *heroes*, they are nothing. Washington was always equal to *himself*. There was a dignity in the manner in which he performed the smallest things. A majesty surrounded him that seemed to humble those who approached him, at the same time that there was a benignity in his manners that invited their confidence and esteem. His virtues, always elevated and splendid, shone only with a milder light by being placed in the vale of retirement. He was sincere, modest, upright, humane ; a friend of religion ; the idol of his neighbours as well as of his country ; magnificent in his hospitality, but plain in his manners, and simple in

his equipage. And the motives of these virtues we are not to seek in a vain affectation of popularity, which has often enabled the cunning and the artful to make great sacrifices to public opinion, but in the native impulse and goodness of his heart.—His emotions, naturally strong and ardent, as they are, perhaps, in all great men, he had completely subjected to the control of reason, and placed under the guard of such a vigilant prudence, that he never suffered himself to be surprized by them. Philosophy and religion in his breast had obtained a noble triumph : And his first title to command over others was his perfect command of himself. Such a sublime idea had he formed of man that in him you never detected any of the littlenesses of the passions.—His consummate prudence, which was one of his most characteristic qualities, and which never forsook him for a moment, contributed to fix the affections and the confidence of his fellow-citizens, which he had acquired by his talents.—Eminently distinguished for his conjugal and domestic virtues, the perfect purity of his private morals added not a little to that dignity of character in which he was superior to all men. There is a majesty in virtue which commands the respect even of those who do not love it, and which gives to great talents their highest lustre.—Ah !

if the ambitious knew, or were willing to estimate its influence on reputation, and its powerful command over the minds of men, they would study to be virtuous from self-interest.

NEED I tell you, who know the terms on which he performed the greatest services that were ever rendered to a nation, how disinterested and noble was his nature? How dear would not a mercenary man have sold *his* toils, *his* dangers, and, above all, *his* successes? What schemes of grandeur, and of power, would not an ambitious man have built upon the affections of the people, and the army? The only wealth which HE sought to draw from them was the riches of his country—the only reward, the love of his fellow-citizens, and the consciousness of his own heart.

His whole character was consistent. Equally industrious with his plough as with his sword, he esteemed idleness and inutility the greatest disgrace of man, whose powers attain perfection only by constant and vigorous action, and who is placed by providence in so many social relations, only to do good.—Every thing round him was marked by a dignified simplicity. While so many affect fastidiously to *display* their wealth in sumptuous edifices, and splendid equipages, and incur infinitely more expense to be envied and hated, than would be suf-

sufficient to make themselves adored, his mansion was as modest as his heart. Strangers from all nations who visited it, went, not to admire a magnificent pile, but to gratify a noble curiosity in seeing the first man in the world. Palaces, and columns, and porticos, would have shrunk beside him, and scarcely have been seen. Like the imperial palace of Marcus Aurelius at Rome, the plain and modest walls resembled some august temple, which has no ornament but the Deity that inhabits it.* You approached it with reverence as the retreat of a HERO, the venerable abode of all the VIRTUES. He had no need to seek a false glory by any exterior display of magnificence, who possessed such intrinsic worth and grandeur of soul. Every where he goes without any attendants but his virtues—he travels without pomp ; but every one surrounds him, in imagination, with his victories, his triumphs, his glorious toils, his public services. How sublime is this simplicity ! How superior to all the fastuous magnificence of luxury ! Thus he lived, discharging, without ostentation, all the civil, social, and domestic, offices of life—temperate in his desires—faithful to his duties—retiring from fame, which every where pursued him—living like

* A speech put by Mr. Thomas into the mouth of Apollonius a philosopher, and the friend of Marcus.

a beneficent deity in the bosom of his family, its delight, and its glory.

Amiable woman! sole partner of his dearest pleasures, who enjoyed most intimately, and who best knew, his worth, your overwhelming griefs, the desolation of your heart, under this stroke, testify the preciousness of what you have lost. In the full tide of happiness, in a moment, in one terrible instant, more than empires has been ravished from your embrace. Oh! if a nation's tears can yield you any consolation, the tears of a nation are mingled with yours. But, alas! while they console, they remind you, by a new proof, of the value of what Heaven has taken—has taken, perhaps in mercy, that, when your Saviour shall call also for you, earth may not have a rival to him in your heart.

But, my fellow-citizens, among the noblest ornaments of this extraordinary man, was his humility, and his respect for religion. Humility was the veil thro' which his virtues shone with a more amiable, because less dazzling, lustre. Never, in conversation, did you hear him mention those illustrious achievements, which had rendered his name so famous throughout the world. In reading his official letters, in which he is obliged by his duty to announce his successes, you would hardly suppose

that any part of them was to be ascribed to his valour, or his skill. You are even in doubt if fame herself has not mistaken in attributing to him such great actions.*

WHAT a spirit of piety, what a constant acknowledgement of the agency and goodness of Divine Providence, breathes thro' all his public addresses to his army, to his fellow-citizens, to Congress!—Ah! how difficult is it to receive the applause of nations with humility! to be exalted almost to Heaven on the voice of fame, and not to feel that elation of mind, which raises a mortal above the lowly place which every creature ought to hold in the presence of Almighty God! Something there is in the command of armies, where one man wields the force of thousands, in the tumult of battles, in the splendor of triumphs, that is apt to intoxicate the heart, and to elevate it beyond itself. But this great general, after his victories, was always found modest and humble before the throne of the Eternal. Like Moses, in the presence of God, he alone seemed not to be conscious of the splendor that surrounded himself.† The same veneration for religion, and the same profound respect for its institutions, marked all his

* This was said also of the Marshal Turenne.

† Ab. Flech. orais. funeb. Mar. Tur.

private department : And we have seen with what a serene and steady lustre his hopes from it shone in the concluding scene of life.

THE talents of this great citizen we have now to exhibit in a new light—as a LEGISLATOR—and the CIVIL CHIEF of the American confederacy.—If it affords a subject less brilliant to the orator than his military career, it is not less instructive to mankind.

SCARCELY had he begun to enjoy his beloved repose when the imbecility of that system, under which the states had originally confederated, discovered itself by so many pernicious consequences, destructive of national honor and prosperity, and dangerous to national existence, that it became necessary to frame a government invested with greater energy, more justly balanced, and able to act more directly upon all parts of the Union. This necessity his penetrating judgment had long foreseen, while he was yet commander of the army, and the wisdom of giving a new form to the confederacy he had frequently urged. America, always enlightened, and wise, even in the midst of her errors, resolved, at length, to pursue this sage policy : And Washington, whose prowess in the field had so conspicuously contributed to establish her liberty, was the first among that band of patriots

who met to render it secure by placing it under the protection of the most admirable laws. Here he displayed the talents of a great legislator, and proved himself to be as wise in council, as he had been glorious in arms. The excellence of that constitution which was the illustrious fruit of their labours, and which republican France, in repeated efforts, has, hitherto, vainly attempted to imitate, has now been confirmed by the happy experience of ten years. Public credit has been restored—industry has received a new spring—commercial enterprise is extended to every spot upon the globe—agriculture flourishes—towns and cities are daily founded, extended, and beautified—population and riches increase—and even the debts of the revolutionary war are converted into a species of wealth.

BUT, antecedently to that experience which now justifies its wisdom, the name of WASHINGTON was necessary to give it authority, and to recommend it to the confidence of the American people. By their unanimous voice, throughout a region of fifteen hundred miles in extent, he was called to hold the first magistracy in the confederated republic.—Merciful God! what a felicity to my country, that this revered and beloved citizen was yet preserved to assume, with his firm and resolute hand, the helm of government in such a perilous and

doubtful season! Inestimable patriot! who wast willing to put to risk a reputation which it was believed, already above all addition, could only be diminished by any change. Ah! thy fellow-citizens were ignorant of the full extent of those talents which they have since beheld, with astonishment, as great in peace, as in war, in deliberation, as in execution—One of the noblest acts, in a life full of illustrious actions, was the resolution to stake his unexampled fame, and to emp'oy the whole force of his unbounded popularity, to rescue his country from the degraded and imbecile state into which it had fallen under the old system, and to give an operation, and efficiency that would overcome all opposition, to a government which he regarded as essentially connected with its prosperity and glory.

ON this high and untried office he entered with that modesty which is one criterion of great minds, and which marked his whole character through life—he executed it with that unshaken firmness which is the result of conscious rectitude, of ripe and wise deliberation, and of the imperious sentiment of duty in a virtuous heart. Less splendor and eclat, indeed, attend the retired labours of the cabinet, than the march of armies, the capture of towns, and the triumph of victories; but often

they require talents of a superior kind, and often possess an influence more extensive on the felicity of nations.

UNDER his administration, the United States enjoyed prosperity and happiness at home, and, by the energy of the government, regained, in the old world, that importance and reputation which, by its weakness, they had lost.—Arduous was his task—innumerable were the difficulties he had to encounter, from the passions, the conflicting interests, the ambition, and the disappointments of men. His own virtue, and the confidence of the nation, supported him. And, amidst all the clamours which the violence of faction, or individual chagrin, have raised against the general administration, none have ever dared to impeach the purity of *his* patriotism, or *his* incorruptible integrity.

His retreats at Mount-Vernon, grown so dear to him by inclination, by habit, and by that love of repose natural to advancing years, he had forsaken only to serve the republic, and to give, to a new and untried government, a firm tone, and a steady operation. At the expiration of the first period of his magistracy, therefore, he was desirous of returning to that private life which was dearer to him than all things else, except America. Ambition had no charms for him. His felicity was to see

his country happy ; and his modesty led him to hope that her happiness might now be equally secure in other hands. All true Americans, at this moment, resisted his inclinations with the most affectionate importunity ; and he was persuaded to resume the arduous cares of the state.

THE crisis was important. An universal war raged in Europe, and was carried on with the most rancorous and exterminating passions. The hostile nations, inflamed against each other with a fury beyond all former example, for they fought for their existence, would scarcely endure a neutral. America was, every moment, threatened, by force, or by intrigue, to be drawn into the vortex. Strong parties in her own bosom rendered the danger more imminent ; and it required a government firm, temperate, but inflexible, to prevent the evil. This great and heroic magistrate, charged with all her foreign relations, was not to be moved from her true interests. His object was America. And her interest, in the midst of this terrible conflict of nations, was to remain in peace. Faction at home, and intrigue and menace from abroad, endeavour to shake him—In vain—He remains serene and immoveable in the storm that surrounds him. Foreign intrigue he defeats—foreign insolence he represses—domestic faction, dashing against him,

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breaks itself to pieces. He meets the injustice, indeed, both of Britain and of France, by negotiation, rather than by a precipitate declaration of war; but maintains towards them that firm and commanding attitude which becomes the head of a free and great republic. He obliges them to respect him; and preserves the tranquillity of his country. As an American, he knows no nation but as friends in peace, in war as enemies. Towards one he forgets ancient animosities when it is useless to remember them. Towards another he renounces a chimerical gratitude when it is claimed only to involve us in fruitless calamities; perhaps, to put into their hands a dangerous empire over our own, and over other nations.

AND now, my countrymen, behold, in the prosperity that surrounds you, the happy effects of this wise policy. See the desolated regions of Europe—compare their endless revolutions, their ferocious tyrannies, their murders, their massacres, their brutal violations of virgin honor, and conjugal fidelity, their wasted plains, their plundered cities, with our peaceful and flourishing state; and bless the memory of Washington, to whose prudence and magnanimity, shall I not say in spite of *yourselves*? you owe it. Had not his firm patriotism, and his sage counsels prevailed, what might not

have been our present condition ? I tremble to imagine it. We might, by the audacity of foreigners, have been stripped of the power of self-government—we might have looked only on pillaged towns, and a desolate shore—we might have seen the sacred asylum of our families polluted with lust and murder—we might have been the prey of civil discord—we might, like the wretched inhabitants of Saint-Domingo, have been the dreadful victims of domestic treason.—Unhappy the nation who permits a more powerful foreigner to obtain an ascendant in her councils !

LET me not forget that, amidst his cares for our foreign relations, he chastised and repressed the inroads of the savage tribes upon our frontiers, by the arms of the gallant Wayne. And, when rebellion dared to raise an impious front against the laws, he infused new energy into the government, by the promptitude and decision with which he crushed it.

To recapitulate, in one word, the events of an administration as wise as it has been successful—public credit has been restored—public peace has been preserved notwithstanding the most powerful efforts to disturb it—domestic faction has been kept under control—foreign intrigue and insolence have been

defeated and repressed—foreign nations have been compelled to respect the republic—its power has been increased—its resources have been multiplied—a savage war has been terminated—rebellion has been punished—the laws have been strengthened—and energy and stability have been infused into the government.

WITH this wise statesman it was an invariable principle of policy, that we can never be secure against the injustice of foreign nations while we do not possess the power of commanding respect, and punishing aggression. Weak intreaties, pusillanimous concessions, only invite indignity: For, unfortunately, *power is right* in the morality of republics as well as of kings. The defence of our commerce, therefore, the fortification of our ports, and the effectual organization of our military force, were objects towards which he ever directed a solicitous attention.

BEHOLD, then, this illustrious man, no less sublime as a statesman, than as a warrior! His character is a constellation of all the greatest qualities that dignify or adorn human nature. The virtues and the talents which, in other instances, are divided among many, are combined in him.

HAVING rendered such invaluable services to the

state, and accomplished every object for which he had re-entered into public life, his desire to return to privacy and retirement could no longer be resisted. A second time he gave the world the great and rare example of voluntarily descending from the first station in the universe, the head of a free people, placed there by their unanimous suffrage, and continued there with a zeal only not idolatrous, to the rank of a plain and simple citizen, obedient to those laws which ambition would have placed its glory in controlling. The pride of reigning he despised. Its labours he endured only for his country. And, when he could, he cast it from him as a bauble to which his soul was superior.

ON Mount-Vernon he enjoyed his family and his virtue ; but still prepared to sacrifice all his dearest predilections whenever his beloved country should demand his aid. Unfortunately, it was too soon required. The injustice of a foreign nation had compelled her to arm ; and he was coming forth to defend her under the shade of those laurels which he had gathered in her service.—But the Ruler of the Universe, the God of Armies, had otherwise determined.—Ah ! in what an eventful crisis of the world—in what a dubious and alarming moment for America, hath she lost her hero !—Great God ! thy councils are inscrutable !

He died as he had lived, with that serenity of mind, and that composed fortitude, which had ever distinguished his character. Death has no terrors to a pure soul which already derives its supreme pleasures from virtue. There are ardent and impetuous spirits who can affront death in the field, who are not able to regard it with a calm and steady eye in the thoughtful scenes of retirement, and under the pressure of disease. The fire and tumult of battle transport them beyond themselves—honor impels them—and the observation of thousands imparts to the mind an artificial force. But, in the silent chamber, where no foreign impulse supports the heart, and it is not sustained by a consoling retrospect on life, they often shrink from the idea of dissolution, and of the destinies of eternity; and those who seemed to be more than men in the terrible hour of conflict, have been seen to be less than men upon the bed of death. Our hero was the same in that moment as in all the past—magnanimous, firm, confiding in the mercy, resigned to the will, of Heaven. Ah! with what beauty does religion shine in the concluding scene of such a life! How precious the hope of immortality in such a moment!—Rising on his own faith, and on the prayers of millions, to the throne of the Eternal, he receives in Heaven the reward of those illustrious

services to his country, and to human nature, which could never be paid him upon earth.*

SUCH in peace and in war, in private and in public life, was that illustrious man whom all America this day mourns, whom foreign nations lament, and whom the most distant time shall crown with continually new praises. If I have not been able to rise to the dignity of my subject, I have, at least, endeavoured to discharge the office of a good citizen, in paying my homage to the departed father of his country. Other orators will rise to do him justice—history will preserve the remembrance of his great qualities to the remotest ages—his memory will forever be his highest eulogy.

THE praise that is now paid to such distinguished merit can no longer be suspected of adulation. The universal impulse of the nation dictates it—the first magistrate of America, the friend of Washington, in a style worthy himself, and worthy his great copatriot, has given the example of it†—the supreme Legislature of the Union have decreed him the noblest honors—communities and individuals vie with one another in the testimonies of their respect

* Answer of Congress to his speech on resigning his office of commander in chief.

† See the President's answer to the address of condolence presented by the Senate.

and veneration. It is a great republican duty to crown with honors and with eulogies pre-eminent merit, and public services. Glory is the only reward which is worthy free states to bestow, or patriots to receive. All others, seizing on the principles of avarice, vanity, or pleasure, render the love of country only a secondary passion. The rewards of glory, to which sublime souls have always been devoted, still leave our country to be the first object in the heart. They are the *homage* which nations pay to superior virtue. Egypt, by her funeral panegyrics, first taught the world the influence of posthumous glory to create wise magistrates, illustrious heroes, and virtuous citizens. Greece, by the aid of her laurel and her ivy, of her statuaries and her painters, and above all, of her historians and her orators, rendered her citizens the admiration and the envy of the universe. Letters are more durable than marble. Long since, the monuments of Trajan and Agricola have perished; but the glory of the one, and the virtues of the other, shall exist forever, embalmed by the genius of Pliny and of Tacitus. Yet, brass and marble shall not be wanting to record his fame. A monument, worthy a great nation, shall rise to him in the new capitol, that, like the capitol of Rome, shall be the centre of a universe of its own. Yield, excellent Lady!

who hast already known how to make so many sacrifices to thy country, yield to her solicitations his precious remains, that, laid at the foundation of those walls whence issue our laws, he may still seem to be the support of the republic.*

Oh! could I make my voice resound throughout the earth—could I support, by my genius, the grandeur of the subject, I would hold him out as a model to lawgivers, and to princes. Heroes who place a false glory in overturning the peace and liberties of the world, should learn from him wherein true glory consists, and restrain their intemperate ambition. His actions should instruct the universe.

Rulers of the new world! imbibe his spirit! govern by his example! It is then only that our tears for Washington can be dried up when we see his image revived in you. The grief that overwhelms us shall give place to the delicious tears of joy, when we see, springing from his ashes, so many illustrious and virtuous citizens, the ornaments and defenders of their country. It is by imitating only, that you can truly honor him, and perpetuate the image of his virtues. Let statues and paintings exhibit his noble port, express his manly countenance, and

* Since the delivery of this discourse we have been assured that Mrs. Washington has complied with the request of Congress. See her admirable letter to the President of the United States.

convey to posterity the features of the man so honored, so beloved by his cotemporaries, and who, by future ages, will forever be ranked among the greatest benefactors of mankind. But, it is not by a lifeless mould, or the chisels of art—it is not by the products of the quarry or the mine, that the soul of a patriot can be represented, but by his spirit, and his actions, transmitted to posterity thro' a succession of wise, brave, and virtuous, legislators, and heroes.

I cannot forbear to remark the singular felicity of that excellent citizen whose memory we honor by the obsequies of this day. The malignant attacks of envy, which elevation and merit only provoke, he has almost wholly escaped. If faction has sometimes ventured to rear her head, and shoot out her sting against him, abashed by his virtue, she has instantly shrunk back, and retired into her own coil.—He has read his fame in the histories of his own, and of other nations—He has enjoyed the suffrage of posterity—He has seen himself in that light in which he shall be contemplated by the remotest periods of the world—He has possessed ages of honor before his death.—Dying, his felicity has still followed him. Has the history of nations ever exhibited such a scene of voluntary honors, of universal affliction, of un-

ere and mournful homage?—Illustrious hero! deign also to accept the unfeigned homage of our grief!—Friends of humanity and of liberty throughout the world! It is for you to weep. Tho' America was the favoured land which gave him birth, and is therefore entitled to be the first in grief, yet he was born for the human race.

WHILE Washington lived, the people believed that their Guardian Angel was still among them. By the mysterious and holy decree of Heaven he is taken from their vows and hopes in a moment when the tempest, that has so long beat upon the old world, threatens more and more to extend its fury to the new. Almighty God! all events, and the hearts of all men, are in thy hands—save us ~~from the submission of laws~~ and from the cruel designs of hostile nations, who may now gather presumption from the death of him who was accustomed to humble them! Save us from the curse of divided councils, which his influence tended to unite! Save us from the blind and intemperate rage of factious passions, which his presence has so often overawed! Confirm among the people that union of sentiment, and that submission to the laws, which have been so long aided by the commanding ascendant of his genius!—Our prayers are heard. Divine Providence which prepares those

great souls who are the defenders and saviours of nations, will continue the succession of them, while those nations continue to respect religion and virtue—and, tho' Moses be removed, Joshua shall be left.

FINALLY, every thing serves to remind us of our departed and beloved chief, and to renew continually in our breasts the most ~~valuable~~^{precious}, along with the most ~~grateful~~^{afflictions}, recollections. If the husbandman tills his lands, and calls them his own, have they not been gained by his wisdom and valour? Do we enjoy our hearths, and our altars, in peace? Have they not been purchased by his toils, and his dangers? There is not a village, not a field, not a stream which he has not stained with the blood of our enemies; ~~nor where he has~~ not inscribed on the earth with his sword the characters of American liberty.—Ah! by how many dear and tender ties does he hold possession of our hearts! Wives and mothers think they have lost him who preserved to them their husbands and their infants—the young think they have lost in him a father—fathers that *they* have lost more than their children—the republic that she has lost her founder, and her saviour—every citizen fears left

* This is almost literally true of all the middle counties of New-Jersey.

the peace, the union, the glory of America, is entombed with him.—No my fellow-citizens ! This fear shall not be realized. Washington, tho' dead, is not lost. His ashes shall defend the republic that contains them—the capitol, that rests upon his remains, shall be immortal—his example shall live to instruct posterity—his virtues shall descend as a precious inheritance to future ages—the future lawgivers and rulers of America shall come to his tomb to reanimate their own virtues. And, if it be true that the wise and good, amidst the supreme felicities of their celestial existence, are still occupied with the cares, and sometimes made the guardians, of that which was the dearest to them upon earth, O spirit of Washington ! will not thy beloved country still be thy care ?

Note.—Some readers may be inclined to think that the eulogies bestowed in this discourse, are too *exclusive*. I am, certainly, not disposed to deny, but, rather, acknowledge with pride, that America possesses many *great men*, who co-operated with General Washington in establishing the liberties of their country : But panegyric does not charge itself with apportioning the merit of others when celebrating an individual character. It is the province of history to compare, and definitely to mark the limits, of each one's virtues and services. There are living characters who will be entitled to the highest praise, when death shall have placed them beyond the reach of flattery, and exempted us from the imputation of it.

DISTRICT of NEW-JERSEY, *to wit:*

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the fourth day of February, in the twenty-fourth year of the independence of the United States of America, *Gershom Craft*, Esq. of the said district, hath deposited in this office, the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in the words following, to wit: "AN ORATION, upon the DEATH of General GEORGE WASHINGTON, delivered in the State-house at *Trenton*, on the 14th of January, 1800, by the Reverend SAMUEL STANHOPE SMITH, D. D. President of the College of New-Jersey; and published at the desire of the committee of the citizens, &c. of *Trenton*, at whose request it was pronounced:" In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, 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."

ROBERT BOGGS,

Clerk of the District of New-Jersey.