

PAUL BOON

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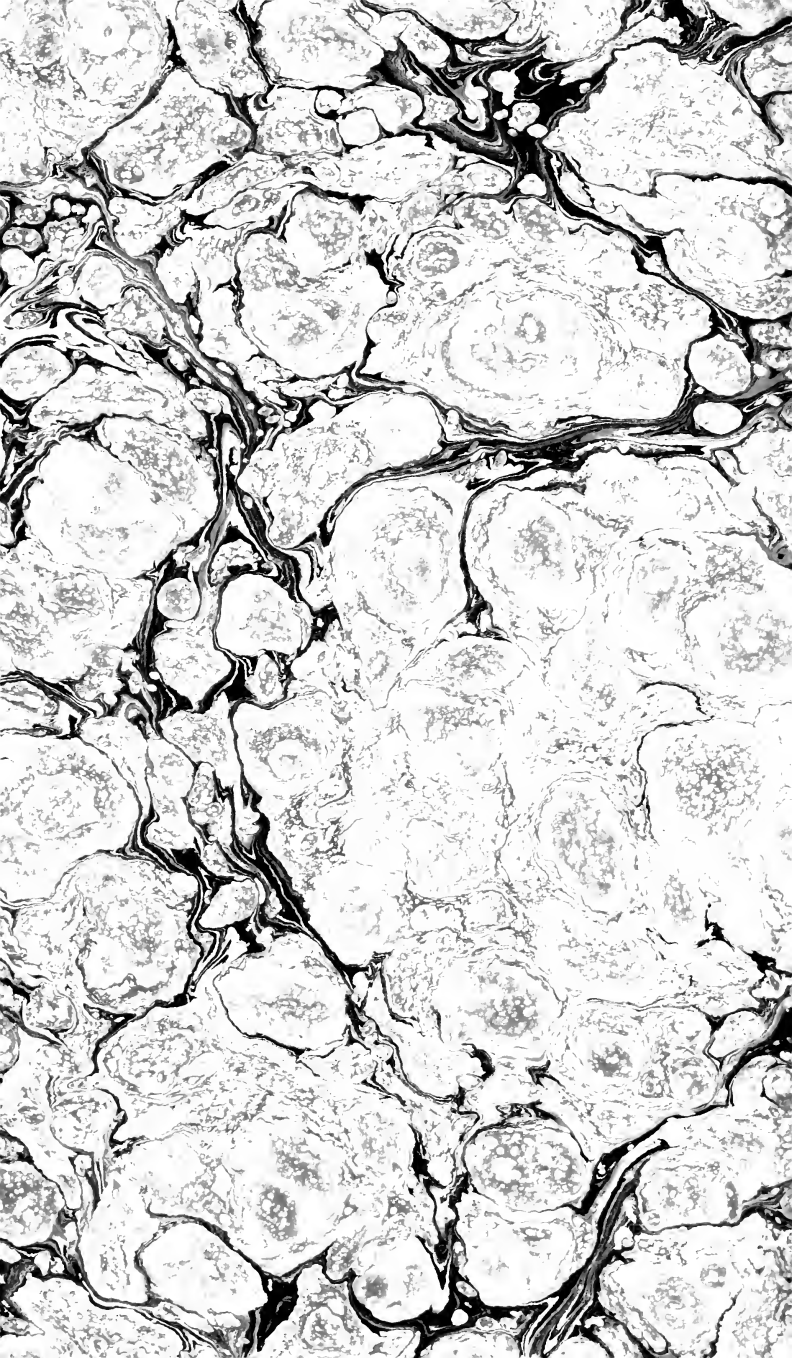
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A N

O R A T I O N,

I N M E M O R Y O F

G E N E R A L M O N T G O M E R Y,

A N D O F T H E

O F F I C E R S A N D S O L D I E R S,

W H O F E L L W I T H H I M, D E C E M B E R 31, 1775,

B E F O R E

Q U E B E C;

Drawn up (and delivered February 19th, 1776,)

A T T H E D E S I R E O F T H E

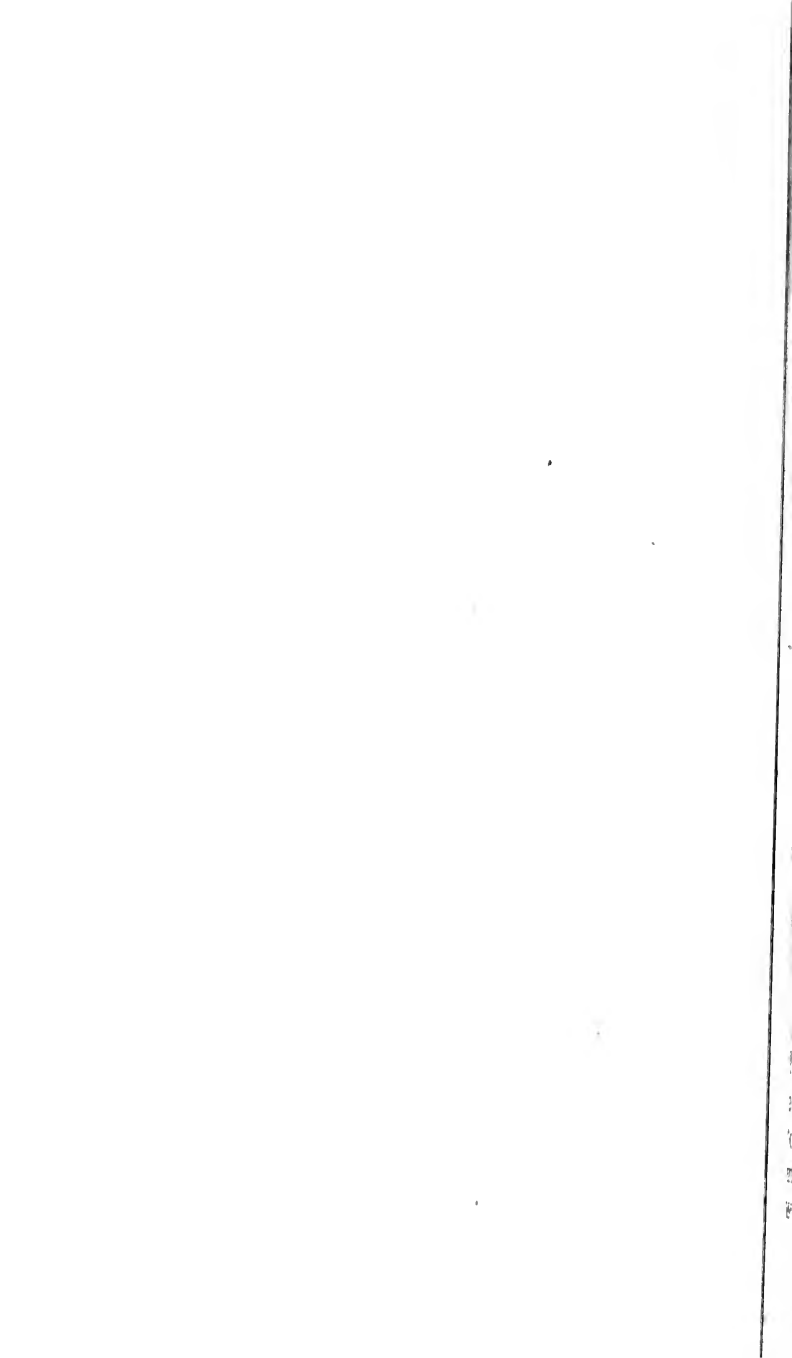
H O N O R A B L E C O N T I N E N T A L C O N G R E S S,

B Y W I L L I A M S M I T H, D. D.
P r o v o s t o f t h e C O L L E G E a n d A C A D E M Y
O F P H I L A D E L P H I A.

O thou, who bad'st them fall with honor crown'd,
Soon make the bloody pride of war to cease!
May these the only sacrifice be found
To public freedom, and their country's peace.

P H I L A D E L P H I A P r i n t e d :
N E W - Y O R K : R e p r i n t e d b y J O H N A N D E R S O N, t h e
C o r n e r o f B E E K M A N ' s - S L I P,

M, D C C, L X X V I.





A N

ORATION &c.

Fathers, Brethren, and Countrymen!

AN occasion truly solemn has assembled us this day; and, that your attention may be alike solemn and serious, hear, in the first place, the voice of eternal truth. "It is better to go to the House of Mourning than to the House of Feasting;" for---"None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself;"

But there are some men, illuminated with a purer ray of divinity; Patriots of the first magnitude, who, in a peculiar sense, may be said to live and die, not to themselves, but to others; and consequently to him who is the author of all goodness, Endowed with that superior excellence which does honour to our whole species, the virtuous of every nation claim kindred with them; and the general interests of humanity are concerned in their character.

In veneration of such men, to exchange the accustomed walks of pleasure for the House of Mourning; to bedew its sacred recesses with tears of gratitude to their memory; to strive, if possible, to catch some portion of their eternal spirit, as it mounts from this earthly sphere, into perfect union with congenial spirits above, is a laudable custom,
coeval

œval with society, and sanctified to us by the example of the wisest nations.

It was the manner of the Egyptians, the fathers of arts and science, not only to celebrate the names, but to embalm the bodies, of their deceased heroes, that they might be long preserved in public view, as examples of virtue; and, although "dead, yet speaking."

But this honour was not easily to be obtained; nor was it bestowed indiscriminately upon the vulgar Great. It was decreed only by the public voice, a venerable assembly of Judges, before whom the body of the deceased was brought for trial, and solemnly acquitted or condemned upon the evidence of the people.

Even Kings themselves, however much spared when alive, for the sake of public tranquility, had still this more than fiery Ordeal before their eyes; and, by the example of some of their number, who had been refused sepulture in those very tombs which their pride had prepared to their own memory, were taught both to venerate and to dread a law, which extended its punishments beyond the usual times of oblivion.

The moral of this institution was truly sublime, constantly inculcating a most important lesson--
 "That whatever distinctions our wants and vices may render necessary, in this short and imperfect period of our being, they are all cancelled by the hand of death; and, through the endless untried periods which succeed, virtue and beneficence will make the true distinctions, and be the only foundations of happiness and renown!"

If from the Egyptians, we pass to the Greeks, particularly the enlightened Athenians, we shall find that they had an express law, appointing Oration, and public Funerals, in honour of those who gloriously sacrificed their lives to their country. And this solemn office was performed before the great assemblies of the people; sometimes for one, and sometimes for bands of heroes together.

Thucydides, has recorded a celebrated Oration of this last kind, delivered by Pericles. The illustrious speaker, after a most animating description of the *Amor Patriæ*, the love of our country--- which he exalts above all human virtues, turns to the deceased.

“ Having bestowed their lives to the public,
 “ every one of them, says he, hath received a
 “ praise that will never decay; a sepulchre that
 “ will always be most illustrious; not that in which
 “ their bones lie mouldering, but that in which
 “ their fame is preserved. This whole earth is the
 “ sepulchre of illustrious citizens”---and their inscription is written upon the hearts of all good men.

“ As for you, the survivors, from this very moment, emulating their virtues, place your sole happiness in liberty, and be prepared to follow its call through every danger.” Then, addressing himself, with exquisite tenderness, to the relicts and children of the deceased, he suggests to them, that the common wealth was their husband, their father, and brother.

“ From this day forward, to the age of maturity, shall the Orphans be educated at the public expence

“ expence of the state. For this benevolent meed
 “ have the laws appointed to all future relicts of
 “ those who may fall in the public contests.”

Nor were the Romans less careful in this matter. Considering men in general as brave, more by art than nature; and that honour is a more powerful incentive than fear; they made frugality, temperance, patience, and labor, manly exercise, and love of their country, the main principles of education. Cowardice and neglect of duty in the field, were seldom punished with death or corporal inflictions; but by what was accounted worse, a life decreed to ignominious expulsion, and degradation from Roman privileges.

On the contrary, deeds of public virtue were rewarded, according to their magnitude, with statues, triumphs of various kinds, peculiar badges of dress at public solemnities, and songs of praise to the living as well as the dead.

Next to the hymns composed in honor of the Gods; Poetry derived its origin from the songs of triumph to heroes, who tamed the rude manners of mankind, founded cities, repelled the incursions of enemies, and gave peace to their country. And this custom began when Rome contained only a few shepherds, gathering strength by an alluvion of the outcasts of neighbouring nations.

Those first efforts of poetic eulogy, whether in prose or verse (like those of a similar origin, which nature, always the same, teaches our savage neighbours) although often sublime in substance, were yet so rude in structure, that Livy forbears quoting them, as having become intolerable to the more refined

refined taste of their posterity ; however suitable they might have been to the aera of their production.

What a multitude of compositions of this kind must have existed between the barbarous songs of the military upon the triumph of Cofius, and the celebrated panegyric of Pliny upon Trajan ! They are said to have been swelled into two thousand volumes, even in the time of Augustus. In short, the praise of public virtue was wrought into the whole texture of Roman polity ; and Virgil, calling Religion to his aid, gave it the highest finish.

He divides his Hades, or place of Ghosts, into different regions ; and to the gulph of deepest perdition, consigns those monsters of iniquity who delighted in the destruction of mankind, betrayed their country, or violated its religion and laws. There he excruciates them, in company with

“ Gorgons and Hydras and Chimeras dire---”
 Vultures prey upon their vitals, or they are whirled eternally round with Ixion upon his wheel, or bound down with Tantalus, whose burning lips hang quivering over the elusive waters it cannot touch ; or the Fury Tisyphone, her hair entwin'd with serpents, her garments red with human gore, urges on their tortures with unrelenting hand !

The Poet having thus exhausted imagination as well as mythology, in the description of punishments for the disturbers of mankind and foes to their country, raises his conclusion to a height of horror beyond the reach of expression---

“ Had I a hundred mouths, a hundred tongues,

“ A voice of brass, and adamantine lungs ;

“ Not half the mighty scene could I disclose ;

“ Repeat their dreadful woes.”

Nor has Virgil strayed any farther through the fields of fancy or fable in this place, than to borrow strength of colouring for the garb of truth ; and I suspect, that he drank from a purer fountain than that of Helicon, when he peopled his Tartarus with the ancient scourges of the human race. An authority sacred among christians has indeed given us a most awful confirmation of his doctrine.

A Prophet and Poet indeed, whose inspiration was truly from Heaven, the incomparably sublime ISAIAH, foretelling the fall of Babylon, has an Ode of triumph, wherein he exults over its haughty Monarch in strains of wonderful irony and reproach. He reprobates him as a destroyer of mankind ; who had “ made the world a wilderness.” He represents the whole earth as delivered from a curse by his fall ! The trees of the forest rejoice, because he is laid low ! The very grave refuses a covering to his execrable corse ! he is consigned to the depths of misery ; while the infernal mansions themselves are moved at his approach, and the ghosts of departed tyrants rise up, in horrid array and mockery of triumph, to bid him welcome to his final abode !

The astonishing grandeur and spirit of this passage, and indeed of the whole Ode, are unrivalled by any Poet of Greek or Roman name.

“ How hath the oppressor ceased ! The Lord
 “ hath broken the staff of the wicked ! He that
 “ smote the people in wrath--that ruled the nations
 “ in anger---is persecuted and none hindereth ! The
 “ whole earth is at rest---they break forth into
 “ singing ; yea the fit-trees rejoice at thee, and the
 “ cedars

“ cedars of Lebanon, saying, since thou art laid
 “ down no feller is come up against us.

“ Hell from beneath is moved for thee, to meet
 “ thee at thy coming. It stirreth up the dead for
 “ thee---even the chiefs of the nations! They say
 “ unto thee, art thou also become weak as we?
 “ Thy pomp is brought down to the grave---How
 “ art thou fallen. O Lucifer, that didst weaken the
 “ nations? All kings, (meaning just and merciful
 “ kings) even all of them lie in glory, every one in
 “ his own house (or sepulchre;) but thou art cast
 “ out of thy grave like an abominable branch,” &c.

But although the reward of heroes, in the christian's heaven, be our proper theme on this solemn day; yet the passing view which we have taken of the perdition decreed to the traitors of their country, in the Poet's hell, confirmed also by the voice of scripture, is not foreign to our main purpose.

I know your bosoms glow with so strong an aversion to all the foes of liberty in this life, that you will surely avoid every thought and action, which might doom you to their company in the life to come; and therefore, bidding adieu---and may it be an eternal adieu--to those dreary regions and their miserable inhabitants, let us now exalt our joyous view to those celestial mansions, where the benefactors of mankind reap immortal triumphs!

“ Lo! the blest train advance along the meads,
 “ And snowy wreaths adorn their glorious heads
 “ Patriots who perish'd for their country's right,
 “ Or nobly triumph'd in the field of fight,
 “ Worthies, who life by useful arts refin'd,
 “ With those who leave a deathless name behind

“ Friends of the world, and patrons of mankind,
 “ Some on the verdant plains are stretch’d along,
 “ Sweet to the ear, their tuneful Paeans rung.

But here, ye Pagan poets, and thou Prince of their choir, we leave you far behind ; for your sublimest flights are now infinitely short of the theme ! Your gloomy Theology gave you tolerable aid in forming a Hell, but the utmost efforts of natural genius could not make a heaven worthy of a rational and immortal soul ! The glory of giving some animating description of that bliss “ which eye hath not seen, nor ear before heard, nor could “ the unenlightened heart of man otherwise conceive,” was left for a more divine teacher. From him we learn, that a heart pure and detached from sordid pleasures, a soul panting after perfection, striving to imitate the goodness of heaven, anticipating its approving sentence, and devoted to the service of mankind, shall at last rise and mix in eternal fellowship with the beatified family of God.

Having now, my respected countrymen---and I hope I do not weary you---laid a wide foundation upon the practice of the wisest nations---in support of the present solemnity ; I shall add but little more concerning the public utility of the thing itself.

Circumstanced as we now are, perhaps shall long be, in building up a fabric for future ages, it would be a wise institution, if in imitation of the Genoese ‘ feast of union,’ we should make at least an annual pause, for a review of past incidents, and of the characters of those who have borne an illustrious share in them ; thereby animating our virtue,
and

and uniting ourselves more closely in the bonds of mutual friendship.

The world, in general, is more willing to imitate, than to be taught; and examples of eminent characters have a stronger influence than written precepts. Men's actions are a more faithful mirror of their lives than their words. The former seldom deceive; but the latter often. The deeds of old, contract a venerable authority over us, when sanctified by the voice of applauding ages; and, even in our own day, our hearts take an immediate part with those who have nobly triumphed, or greatly suffered in our behalf.

But the more useful the display of such characters may be to the world, the more difficult is the work. And I am not to learn, that of all kinds of writing, panegyric requires the most delicate hand. Men seldom endure the praise of any actions, but those which their self-love represents as possible to themselves. Whatever is held up as an example, if placed beyond the reach of humanity duly exalted by public spirit, will excite no emulation; and whatever is placed within the vulgar walks of life, will attract no attention.

There is a further difficulty, peculiar to certain times; particularly those of civil dissension, when the minds of men are worked into a ferment. Whence it happens, that they who have been the subjects of obliquity in one age, have become the theme of praise in another. Such was Hampden--- in the days of passive obedience, branded as a seditious disturber of his country's peace; and at the blessed æra of the revolution, exalted into the first rank.

rank of patriots. Such was Sidney, condemned to a scaffold in the former period; and, in the latter, immortalized by the delegated voice of the nation!

What judgment posterity will form of the present mighty contest, in which these united colonies are engaged, I am at no loss to determine in my own heart. But, while the same actions are, by one part of a great empire, pronounced the most criminal resistance, and by another, the most laudable efforts of self-preservation; no public character can be drawn alike acceptable to all. Nevertheless, as the faithful historian is the best panegyrist of true merit, he will not fashion himself to times and seasons, but exalt himself above them; and, conscious of his dignity, as responsible to succeeding ages, will take eternal truth as his support, which can alone bear the impartial test of future examination. He knows that the divine colors of virtue, although they may give a temporary glare, will not blend or mellow into a ground-work of vice.

Whatever events, disastrous or happy, may lie before us; yet some degree of applause, even from an enemy, is certainly due to those illustrious men, who, led by conscience and a clear persuasion of duty, sacrifice their ease, their lives and fortunes to the public; and from their friends and country, they are entitled to a deathless renown.

Perish that narrow pride, which will suffer men to acknowledge no virtue, but among their own party. In this direful contest, the chief concern of a liberal mind, will be, that so much personal

virtue as may be found on both sides, instead of being united in some great national point for the common good, should be dreadfully employed to the purpose of mutual destruction. And a man can as soon divest himself of his humanity, as refuse the tribute of veneration, due to actions truly magnanimous.

When once it becomes criminal to plead the cause of a suffering people; when their virtues can no longer be safely recorded, then tyranny has put the last hand to her barbarous work. All the valuable purposes of society are frustrated; and whatever other human fate remains will be wholly indifferent to the wise and good.

There are also many whose minds are so little, that they can conceive nothing great, which does not court the eye in all the trappings of dress, titles, and external splendor. An *American-Patriot!* a *Blanket-Hero!* a *General* from the *plough!* All these are terms of ridicule and reproach among many. Yet such was *Cincinnatus*, in the best days of Roman virtue; and a British poet, already quoted, hath boldly taught his countrymen this noble lesson:

“ *Some, with whom compar’d, your insect-tribes*
 “ *Are but the beings of a summer’s day,*
 “ *Have held the scale of empire, rul’d the storm*
 “ *Of mighty war; then, with unweary’d hand,*
 “ *Disdaining little delicacies, seiz’d*
 “ *The plough, and greatly independant liv’d.*”

THOMPSON.

The same noble lesson is also taught, by the well known story of the two Spanish grandees, who were

were sent ambaffadors to the Hague. Notwithstanding all the pride of their nation, they did not despise the Dutch deputies, when they met them in a plain habit, and saw them on a journey fit down upon the grass, to a frugal repast of bread and cheefe, out of their knapsacks. On the contrary, they cried out, “ We shall never be able to conquer these people ; we must even make peace with them.”

Should ambaffadors honor us with a visit, upon a like occasion ; let us be prepared to meet them in the same majestic simplicity of dress and manners. Let us convince them that public virtue is confined to no class of men ; and that although it sometimes basks in the sunshine of courts, it frequently lies hid in the shades of obscurity, like the latent fire in flint, till called forth by the collusive hand of oppression.

Adversity is the season which shews the spirit of a man in its full vigor ; and times of civil calamity never fail to strike forth lights, sometimes single, and sometimes whole constellations, mingling their kindred rays to warm and to illuminate the genius of their country.

The sacred flame thus enkindled, is not fed by the fuel of faction or party ; but by pure benevolence and love of the public. It therefore, soon rises above the selfish principles, refines and brightens as it rises, and expands itself into heavenly dimensions. Being inextinguishable in its own nature, the blood of thousands on the scaffold or in the field, is but as oil poured into a conflagration, encreasing its vehemence, till it consumes all before

fore it; burning still clearer and stronger, unto the full day of peace and civil happiness.

Those who enjoy a true portion of this divine flame, duly called forth into exercise, stand in no need of further titles or distinctions, either by birth or grant. For what can the world present greater to the sight of mortals, or even immortals, than a man who knows and courts the blessings of peace, who wishes to breathe out his last in its arms; and, keeping it still as his object, is nevertheless roused by the first pang of his suffering country; gives his whole illustrious spirit to her relief; rises above all human allurements; never remits his zeal; fears nothing; regards nothing, but the sentiments which virtue and magnanimity inspire? What higher qualities can be required to entitle a man to the veneration and eulogies of his country? And these too will be his most durable monument.

The magnificent structures raised by the gratitude of mankind to their benefactors of old, had but a local and temporary use. They were beheld only by one people, and for a few ages.

“ The Heaven aspiring pyramid, the proud
 “ Triumphal arch, and all that e'er upheld
 “ The worshipp'd name of hoar antiquity
 “ Are mouldering into dust.”

In vain does the way-faring man investigate the tottering ruins for the divinity once enshrined there! A scanty receptacle, about six feet in length, and half the breadth, informs him, that it once contained some human dust, long since mingled with the common mass. In vain does the

prying antiquary dwell upon the sculpture, or strive to collect and spell the scattered fragments of letters. The inscription is gone--long since gone, effaced, obliterated! And fruitless were the search, through the whole world, for the Hero's name, if it were not recorded in the Orator's page, and proclaimed by the faithful voice of history.

There it shall live, while the smallest vestiges of literature remain upon earth, yea, till the final dissolution of things human; nor shall it perish then; but, being the immediate care of Heaven, the great Archangel, when he sweeps suns and systems from their place, and kindles up their last fires, stretching forth his mighty arm, shall pluck the deathless scroll from the devouring conflagration, and give it a place among the archives of eternity!

But whither am I borne? to what heights have I ascended? I look down with astonishment and tremble at my situation! O! Let your friendly arms be extended to save me as I fall. For in the idea I have of my subject, I have undertaken to guide the chariot of the sun; and how shall I steer through the exalted tract that lies before me?--Considering myself as honored with this day's office, by the delegated voice of some millions of people through a vast continent, upon an occasion, wherein their gratitude, their dignity, their love of liberty, are all in some degree concerned; what language shall I use, or how shall I accommodate myself to every circumstance, in the arduous work?

Truth alone must guide the hand that delineates a character. Should I affect to soar aloft and dip my pencil in the colours of the sky, I should but

endanger my own wings, melt their wax, and be precipitated headlong. Nor is the danger less in the other extreme.

Oh! then, for some better Phœbus, some presiding Genius, to guide me through my remaining way; to point out the middle path, and teach me to unite dignity with ease, strength with perspicuity; and truth with the unaffected graces of elocution. Or rather, you shall be my Phoebus, my inspiring as well as presiding genius, ye delegated fathers of your country! So far will I strive to imitate him, who always animated himself with his subject, by thus accosting himself before he went forth to speak.

“Remember, thou art this day going to address men born in the arms of liberty, Grecians, Athenians!”---Let no thought enter thy heart---let no word fall from thy tongue, unworthy of such an audience!

As to that hero, whose memory you celebrate as a *Proto-Martyr* to your rights, for through whatever fields I have strayed, he has never escaped my view, as to him I say, if any thing human could now reach his ear, nothing but the great concerns of virtue, liberty, truth and justice would be tolerable to him; for to these was his life devoted, from his early years.

He had received a liberal education in Ireland, his native country, before he went into the army; and was indeed endued with talents which would have led him to eminence in any profession. His own he studied with a felicity which soon distinguished his military abilities; but war and conquest

having no other charms to him than as the necessary means of peace and happiness, to mankind; he still found leisure, in the midst of camps, to cultivate an excellent taste for philosophy, and polite literature. To these he added a careful study of the arts of government, and the rights of mankind, looking forward to that time, when he might descend into the *still scenes* of private life; and give a full flow to the native and acquired virtues of a heart rich in moral excellence.

Above eighteen years ago he had attained the rank of Captain in the 17th regiment, under General Monckton, and stood full in the way of higher preferment; having borne a share in all the labors of our American wars, and the reduction of Canada. Ill-fated region! short-sighted mortals! Little did he foresee the scenes which that land had still in reserve for him! Little did those generous Americans, who then stood by his side, think that they were assisting to subdue a country, which would one day be held up over us, as a greater scourge in the hands of friends, than ever it was in the hands of enemies!

Had such a thought then entered our hearts, we should have started with indignation from the deed of horror. Our heroism would have appeared madness and parricide! The lifted steel would have dropped from the warrior's arm! The axe and the hoe from the laborer's grasp! America would have weeped through all her forests; and her well-cultivated fields refused to yield farther sustenance to her infatuated sons!

But far different were our thoughts at that time.

We

We considered ourselves as co-operating with our brethren, for the glory of the empire ; to enable them to secure our common peace and liberty ; to humanize, adorn, and dignify, with British privileges, a vast continent ; to become strong in our strength, happy in our happiness ; and to derive that from our affection, which no force can extort from a free people ; and which the miserable and oppressed cannot give !

And these, too, were the sentiments of our lamented Hero ; for he had formed an early attachment, amounting even to an enthusiastic love for this country ! The woodland and the plain ; the face of nature, grand, venerable, and yet rejoicing in her prime ; our mighty rivers, descending in vast cataracts through wild and shaggy mountains, or gliding in silent majesty through fertile vales ; their numerous branches and tributary springs ; our romantic scenes of rural quiet ; our simplicity of manners, yet uncorrupted by luxury or flagrant vice ; our love of knowledge and ardor of liberty, all these served to convey the idea of primæval felicity to a heart which he had taught to beat unison with the harmony of Heaven !

He therefore chose America, as the field of his future usefulness ; and as soon as the blessings of peace were restored to his country, and duty to his sovereign would permit, he took his leave of the army, and having soon connected himself, by marriage, with an ancient and honorable family, in the province of New-York, he chose a delightful retirement upon the banks of Hudson's river, at a distance from the noise of the busy world !---

Having a heart distended with benevolence, and panting to do good, he soon acquired, without courting it from his neighbours, that authority, which an opinion of superior talents, and inflexible integrity, never fail to create.

In this most eligible of all situations, the life of a country gentleman, deriving its most exquisite relish from reflection upon past dangers, and past services, he gave full scope to his philosophic spirit, and taste for rural elegance. Self-satisfied and raised above vulgar ambition, he devoted his time to sweet domestic intercourse with the amiable partner of his heart, friendly converse with men of worth, the study of useful books, and the improvement of his favoured villa. Nor from that happy spot did he wish to stray, until he should receive his last summons to happiness, more than terrestrial.

But when the hand of power was stretched forth against the land of his residence, he had a heart too noble not to sympathize in its distress. From that fatal day---and Oh! that it had never found a place in the volumes of Time; from that fatal day, in which the first American blood was spilt by the hostile hands of British brethren, and the better genius of the empire, veiling her face in anguish, turned abhorrent from the strife of death among her children; I say, from that fatal day, he chose his part.

Although his liberal spirit placed him above local prejudices, and he considered himself as a member of the empire at large; yet America, struggling in the cause of liberty, henceforth be-
came

came his peculiar country; and that country took full possession of his soul; lifting him above this earthly dross, and every private affection! Worth like his, could be no longer hid in the shades of obscurity; nor permit him to be placed in that inferior station with which a mind, great in humility and self denial, would have been contented. It was wisely considered, that he, who had so well learned to obey, was fittest to command; and therefore, being well assured of his own heart, he resigned himself to the public voice, nor hesitated a moment longer to accept the important commission freely offered to him, and, with the firmness of another Regulus, to bid farewell to his peaceful retirement, and domestic endearments.

Here followed a scene of undissembled tenderness and distress, which all who hear me may, in some degree, conceive; but all cannot truly feel. You only who are husbands, whose hearts have been intimately blended with the partners of your bliss, and have known the pangs of separation, when launching into dangers, uncertain of your fate. You only, would I now more directly address. Give a moment's pause for reflection! Recall your own former feelings, your inward struggles, your virtuous tears! Here bid them again freely flow, while you listen to our hero's parting words,---

Ye scenes where home-felt pleasures dwell,
And thou, my dearer self, farewell!

“ Perhaps the Cypress, only tree

“ Of all these groves, shall follow me;”

But still, to Triumph or a Tomb,

Where virtue calls, I come, I come!

“ I

“ I COME, I come ! ” Nor were these the words of disappointed ambition ; nor dictated by any sudden start of party zeal. He had weighed the contest well, was intimately acquainted with the unalienable rights of freemen, and ready to support them at every peril ! He had long foreseen and lamented the fatal issue to which things were hastening. He knew that the sword of civil destruction, once drawn, is not easily sheathed ; that men having their minds inflamed and the weapons of defence in their hands, seldom know the just point where to stop, even when they have it in their power ; and often proceed to actions, the bare contemplation of which would at first have astonished them.

It was therefore his desire rather to soften than enflame violent humors, wishing that America, in all her actions, might stand justified in the sight of God, and the world. He foresaw the horrid train of evils which would be let loose by the stroke which should sever the ancient bond of union between Great-Britain and us. It was therefore his wish, that such a stroke should never proceed first from the hand of America. Nor did it so proceed.

The resistance made at Lexington, was not the traitorous act of men conspiring against the supreme powers ; nor directed by the councils of any public body in America ; but rose immediately out of the case, and was dictated by self-preservation, the first great law of nature as well as society. If there was any premeditated scheme here, it was premeditated by those who created the dreadful necessity,

either of resistance of ruin. For could it be expected, that any people, possessing the least remains of virtue and liberty, would tamely submit to destruction and ravage; to be disarmed as slaves; stripped of their property, and left a naked prey even to the insults of surrounding savages?

Was this an experiment worthy of Great-Britain? Where was the wisdom of her counsellors? Had their justice, their moderation quite forsaken them? Could they possibly expect obedience in such a case as this? Would they themselves, in a similar case, even under a competent legislative authority, submit to laws which would destroy the great end of all laws, Self-Preservation? Human nature says, No; The Genius of the English constitution says, No. The nation itself hath heretofore said, No; and a great oracle (*Blackstone*) of its laws has given his sanction to the verdict---“ In cases of national oppression, says he, the nation hath very justifiably risen as one man, to vindicate the original contract, subsisting between King and people.” “ And---“ If the sovereign power threatens desolation to a state, mankind will not be reasoned out, of the feelings of humanity, nor sacrifice liberty “ to a scrupulous adherence to political maxims.”

If the case of America does not come within the above description, there seems to be no equity left upon earth; and whatever is exacted by force, must be yielded through fear. But if justice be any thing more than a name, it is surely a solecism in politics to say, that one part of a free country has a right to command that which the other “ cannot obey without being slaves, nor resist with-
“ out

“ out being rebels.” Yet to such a sad dilemma does the parliamentary claim of a right to bind us “ in all cases whatsoever,” reduce America; involving it in a total surrender of our liberties; superseding the use of our own legislatures; marking us with such a badge of servitude as no freemen can consent to wear; and subjecting us to burdens laid by those who are not only unacquainted with our circumstances, and bear no part of the weight, but ease themselves in proportion as they load us. If this be law, if it be equity, it has no example among any other people, possessing the least glimmerings of virtue or native freedom.

But although this claim be so repugnant to every idea of natural as well as legal justice, that the guilt of blood which it may occasion can be chargeable only on those who attempt to enforce it; yet I am well assured that when compelled at last by hard necessity, either to avert the dagger pointed at our breast or crouch to unconditional servitude, our hero's heart bled for the dreadful alternative.

His principles of loyalty to his sovereign [whom he had long served, and whose true glory consists in healing those streaming wounds] remained firm and unshaken. Love to our brethren whom we must oppose; the interchange of good offices, which had so intimately knit the bonds of friendship between them and us; the memory of those better days, in which we fought and triumphed together; the vast fabric of mutual happiness raised by our union, and ready to be dissolved by our dissensions; the annihilation of those numerous plans of improvement in which we were engaged

for

for the glory of the empire ; all these considerations conspired to render this contest peculiarly abhorrent to him, and every virtuous American, and could have been outweighed by nothing earthly, but the unquenchable love of liberty, and that sacred duty which we owe to ourselves and our posterity.

Hence, as appears from his papers, even in the full triumph of success, he most ardently joined his worthy friend, General Schuyler, in praying that “ Heaven may speedily re-unite us in every bond of affection and interest ; and that the British empire may again become the envy and admiration of the universe, and flourish” till the consummation of earthly things.

This part of his character, I dwell upon with particular satisfaction ; and indeed had he evidenced a contrary sentiment, or gone forth in the rage of conquest instead of the spirit of reconciliation ; not all his other virtues, nor yet the respect which I owe to the appointment wherewith I am now honored, could have induced me to appear in this place, on this occasion.

God forbid that any of the profession to which I belong, should ever forget their peculiar character, exercise a turbulent spirit, or prostitute their voice to enslave men’s minds to the purposes of wild ambition, or mutual destruction. I am happy in knowing that nothing of this kind is wished from me ; nay, that the delegated voice of the continent, as well as of this particular province, supports me in praying for a restoration “ of the former harmony between Great-Britain, and
D “ these

“ these colonies upon so firm a basis as to perpetuate its blessings, uninterrupted by any future dissensions, to succeeding generations in both countries.”

Indeed this matter rests in safe hands, and is clear in itself. If redress of grievances, essential liberty, and security against future oppression can be obtained, agreeable to our own desires; then, neither consistency, dignity, or a regard to our illustrious British friends, who have defended our cause, pledged themselves for our sincerity, and hope by our aid to restore and perpetuate the glory of the whole empire, can suffer us to hesitate. To say, let them look to their own safety, and we will look to ours, would be unworthy of the liberal soul of any American, truly animated in our present cause, and with the love of universal liberty.

But suppose these terms cannot be obtained?— Why then, there will be no need of further arguments, much less of aggravations. Timid as my heart, perhaps is, and ill-tuned as my ear may be to the din of arms, and the clangor of the trumpet; yet, in that case, sounds which are a thousand times more harsh; “ even the croaking of frogs in the uncultivated fen,” or the howling of wild beasts on the mountain top, where liberty dwells, would be “ preferable to the Nightingale’s song,” in vales of slavery, or the melting notes of Corelli, in cities clanking their chains!

If this be a digression, pardon it as the last, and due to my own principles and consistency. I now hasten to attend our hero through the remainder
of

his career---short indeed! but crowded with scenes of virtuous activity, which would have dignified the longest life.

The Canada expedition is one of those measures, which the enemies of American peace having first rendered necessary, will now strive to misconstrue into hostility and offence. But when authentic proofs were obtained that a people professing a religion, and subjected to laws, different from ours, together with numerous tribes of savages were instigated and preparing to deluge our frontiers in blood, let God and the world judge whether it was an act of offence; or rather, whether it was not mercy to them, to ourselves, to the whole British empire, to use the means in our power for frustrating the barbarous attempt.

Indeed there was benevolence in the whole plan of his expedition. It was to be executed not so much by force as by persuasion; and appearing in the country with such a respectable strength, as might protect the inhabitants from the insults and vengeance of those, who were striving to make them lift up their reluctant arm to the shedding fraternal blood. It was further wished to kindle up the expiring lamp of liberty among them; to open their eyes to its divine effulgence; and enable them to raise their drooping head, and claim its blessing as their own.

This was a work, in all its parts, suited to the genius of a Montgomery. He had a head and heart which equally pointed him out as a fit guide in such an undertaking. He understood and could well explain the blessings of a free government.

Perseverance

Persuasion dwelt upon his tongue. He had a soul, great, disinterested, affectionate, delighting to alleviate distress, and to diffuse happiness. He had an industry not to be wearied out; a vigilance not to be imposed upon; and a courage, when necessary, equal to his other abilities.

But still, with a few new-raised men, of different colonies, and perhaps different tempers; ill supplied with arms and ammunition; worse disciplined; unaccustomed to look cannon in the face; to make or to mount a breach---in such circumstances, I say, and in the short space of an autumnal and winter campaign, in rigorous northern climes, to achieve a work which cost Great-Britain and the colonies the labor of several campaigns, and what was a sacrifice of infinitely more value---the life of the immortal WOLFE---this certainly required a degree of magnanimity beyond the ordinary reach, and the exertion of the highest abilities of every kind.

The command and conduct of an army, were but small parts of this undertaking. The Indians were to be treated with, restrained and kept in temper. The Canadians were likewise to be managed, protected and supported: And even his own army in some degree to be formed, disciplined, animated, accustomed to marches, incampments, dangers, fatigues and the frequent want of necessaries.

Camps, of all wordly scenes, often exhibit the greatest pictures of distress. The sick and the wounded---the dying and the dead--as well as the wants and sufferings of the living---all these call forth the most tender feelings, and require of a General that, to the courage of a soldier, he should unite the utmost benevolence of a man! Our

Our General possessed these united qualities in their highest lustre ; of which there are numerous testimonies not only from his own army, but from the prisoners, English as well as Canadians, now amongst us.

When his men laboured under fatigue, wanted bread and other necessaries, had their beds to make in snow or deep morasses, they were ashamed to complain, finding that he was willing to share in the execution of whatever he commanded. And the example which he thus set to others, did more to inspire patience, obedience, love of order and discipline, than the most rigid exercise of power could have done. The influence of this example was still stronger, as it did not appear to be the effect of constraint or political necessity ; but the amiable expression of a sympathizing soul ; leading him to condescend to all capacities ; exact in his own duties, and great even in common things. His letters, confidential and official, are a full proof of this.

“ Our incampment is so swampy, I feel, says he
 “ exceedingly for the troops ; and provisions so
 “ scarce, it will require not only dispatch, but good
 “ fortune, to keep us from distress. Should things
 “ not go well, I tremble for the fate of the poor
 “ Canadians, who have ventured so much. What
 “ shall I do with them, should I be obliged to
 “ evacuate this country ? I have assured them that
 “ the United Colonies will as soon give up Massa-
 “ chusetts to resentment as them.”

These sentiments were worthy of a heroic soul, and of the faith he had pledged to those people.

Nor

Nor is he less to be venerated for his tender regard towards his own army. Instead of making a merit of his difficulties (which were indeed more than ought to be mentioned in this place) he often seeks to conceal them ; ascribing any little faults or tardiness, in his young troops, to their want of experience in forming ; to their hard duty, the constant succession of bad weather and the like--still encouraging them to nobler efforts in future. And if any impatience of discipline appeared, he nobly attributed it to " that spirit of freedom, which men accustomed to think for themselves, will even bring into camps with them."

His own superior military knowledge he has been known to sacrifice to the general voice, rather than interrupt that union on which success depended ; and when a measure was once resolved upon by the majority, however much contrary to his own advice and judgment, he magnanimously supported it with his utmost vigor ; disdaining that work of low ambition, which will strive to defeat in the execution what it could not direct in planing.

His perseverance and conduct in gaining possession of St. John's and Montreal, have already been the theme of every tongue, and need not be mentioned in this place. His abilities in negotiation ; the precision with which the various articles of treaties and capitulations are expressed ; the generous applause he gives, not only to every worthy effort of his own officers, but to the Commanding Officer and garrison of St. John's ; his noble declaration to the inhabitants of Montreal, " that the Continental Armies despise every act of oppression"

“ sion and violence, being come for the express purpose of giving liberty and security”---all these I say, did honor to himself, and to that delegated body, under whose authority he acted.

Leaving him, therefore for a while---alas too short a while---to enjoy the noblest of all triumphs, the applause of his country, and the conscious testimony of his own heart, let us enquire after another band of brave and hardy men who are stemming rapid rivers, ascending pathless mountains ; traversing unpeopled deserts ; and hastening through deep morasses and gloomy woods to meet him in scenes of another issue---

---Deserts in vain

*Oppos'd their course, and deep rapacious floods,
And mountains in whose jaws destruction grin'd,
Hunger and toil--Armenian snows and storms ;
Greece in their view and glory yet untouch'd,
They held their fearless way---O ! strength of mind
Almost almighty in severe extremes !*

This praise was paid to ten thousand heroes, sustaining every danger, in a retreat to their own country, and is certainly due, so far as heroism is concerned, to less than a tenth part of the number, marching through equal difficulties against the capital of a hostile country.

Even the march of Hannibal over the Alps, so much celebrated in history, allowing for the disparity of numbers, has nothing in it of superior merit, to the march of Arnold ; and in many circumstances there is a most striking similitude.

The former had to encounter the rapid Kennebeck, thro' an immense length of country. The former

former when he came to quit the river, found his further passage barr'd by mountains, rearing their snowy crests to the sky, rugged, wild, uncultivated. This was also the case with the latter, whose troops, carrying their boats and baggage, were obliged to cross and recross the same mountains sundry times. At the foot of the mountains, the former was deserted by three thousand of his army, desponding at the length of the way, and terrified at the hideous view of those stupendous heights, which they considered as impassable---In like circumstances, about a third part of the army of the latter, deserted shall I say, or use the more courteous language "returned home." The march of the former was about twelve hundred miles in five months. The Virginia and Pennsylvania rifle-companies, belonging to the latter, including their first march from their own habitations to Cambridge, and thence to Quebec, marched near the same distance in about three months.

Besides these rifle companies, Arnold's corps consisted of about 500 New England troops, who sustained all the fatigues of the worst part of the march by land and water, with the utmost fortitude. And General Montgomery, ever ready to do justice to merit, having joined them before Quebec, gives their commander and them this character.

"They are an exceeding fine body of men, inured to fatigue, with a style of discipline among them much superior to what I have been used to see this campaign. He himself is active, intelligent, and enterprising,

Having approached those plains which the blood of

WOLFE

WOLFE bath consecrated to deathless fame, our hero seemed emulous of his glory, and animated with a kindred spirit. The situation of his army pressed dispatch! snows and frosts only quickened his motions. He hoped by one successful stroke, before the arrival of succours to the garrison, to compleat his plan, and save the future effusion of much blood. He further flattered himself, that his success, if speedy, might have some influence upon Parliament, in hastening a reconciliation. He understood that maxim of Polard---“No obstacle should break our resolution, when there is but a moment between a bad situation and a worse”---This sentiment he expresses in his last letter, with a spirit of modesty, and a sense of duty, as well as the danger attending it, which ought to be forever recorded to his glory. “I shall be sorry to be reduced to this mode of attack; because I know the melancholy consequences. But the approaching severity of the season, the weakness of the garrison, together with the nature of the works, point it out too strong to be passed by. Fortune often baffles the most sanguine expectations of poor mortals--I am not intoxicated with the favours I have received at her hands. But I think there is a fair prospect of success.”

Poor mortals indeed, if nothing was to remain of them after death; for while he was courting this success, and gloriously leading on his troops in the front of danger, he received the fatal stroke, which in an instant released his great spirit, to follow and join the immortal spirit of WOLFE!

O thou swift winged messenger of destruction, how didst thou triumph in that moment! the stroke that sever'd Montgomery from his army, deprived them of

more than a member. It reached the vitals, and struck the whole body with a temporary death. As when the forked lightning, darting thro' the forrest, amid the black tempests of night, rends some towering oak, and lays its honours in the dust, the inferior trees which it had long sheltered from the storm, stand mournful around, so stood the astonished band over their fallen Chief! nor over him alone; but over others, in their prime of glory, prostrate by his side!

Here, ye Pennsylvanian youths, second to none in virtue, let a portion of your tears be sacred to the manes of Macpherson! You remember his generous spirit in his early years, for he drank of the same springs of science with many of you now before me; and we who reached the cup to your lip, rejoice that it contributed to invigorate both him and you into wisdom and public spirit. Having finished his scholastic education, he studied the laws of his country, under a lawyer and a patriot of distinguished name; and animated by his example, as well as precepts, had become eminent in his profession, at an age when some have scarce begun to think of business. The love of liberty being his ruling passion, he thought it his duty in the present struggle, to offer himself to the service of his country, and he had soon an opportunity of attaining that military pre-eminence, of which he was laudably ambitious.

Enjoying a hereditary bravery, joined to a well cultivated understanding, and an active spirit, he soon became the bosom friend of General Montgomery, was his Aid de camp, was entrusted with a share in the management of his most important ne-

gociations, stood by his side in the attack upon Quebec, and being, as it were, animated by one common soul, and dear to each other in life---in death, they were not a moment divided !

Here likewise fell Captain Cheesman, of the New-York forces, covered with honor, and lamented by all who knew him, as an active and gallant officer. His particular merits, as well as the merits of some others, who shared his fate, ought to be more fully commemorated on this occasion, if proper accounts of them could be collected.

I must not, however, omit the name of the brave Captain Hendricks, who commanded one of the Pennsylvania rifle companies, and was known to me from his infancy. He was indeed prodigal of his life, and courted danger out of his tour of duty. The command of the guard belonged to him, on the morning of the attack ; but he solicited and obtained leave to take a more conspicuous post ; and having led his men through the barrier, where his commanding officer, General Arnold, was wounded, he long sustained the fire of the garrison with unshaken firmness, till at last, receiving a shot in his breast, he immediately expired.

Such examples of magnanimity, filled even adversaries with veneration and esteem. Forgetting the foes in the heroes, they gathered up their breathless remains, and committed them to kindred dust, with pious hands, " and funeral honors meet." So may your own remains, and particularly thine, O Carleton, be honored, should it ever be your fate to fall in hostile fields ! Or if amid the various chances of war, your lot should be among the prisoners

soners and the wounded, may you be distinguished with an ample return of that benevolence which you have shewn to others. Such offices of humanity, softening the savage scenes of war, will entitle you to an honor which all the pride of conquest cannot bestow, much less a conquest over fellow subjects, contending for the common rights of freemen.

Having now paid the honours due to the memories of our departed friends, what need I add more? Illustrious, although short, was their race! "But old age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor is measured by number of years---wisdom is the grey hair to man, and an unspotted life is old age."

To such men, Rome in all her glory would have decreed honors; and the resolve of Congress, to transmit the memory of their virtues, is worthy of that magnanimity which ought to characterize public bodies. Jealous and arbitrary rulers are sparing of honors to those who serve them, lest their own should be thus eclipsed. But your lustre, gentlemen, can suffer no diminution this way; and the glory you justly bestow upon others, will only be reflected to encrease your own!

F I N I S.



