

Here is a lesson for the ambitious—here the patriot delights to learn. It teaches the wide difference between the glory & happiness of generations of freemen and that of mere personal and momentary aggrandizement. It shows that the honest applause of free citizens is the soul ennobling object, and sure reward, of virtuous ambition. While the reward, if not the object of the other, can only manifest, like the ruins of Carthage—disgraceful, or fallen splendour. Many warriors, like Cæsar and Pompey on the bloody plains of Pharsalia, competing for the mastery of the world—or like Buonaparte, fighting for the mastery of Europe, become renowned only for conquering each other, or subjugating nations. During a few splendid years such men may awe every nation on earth—but in the end, they often become friendless—stript of imperial power, and cut off from all the endearing sympathies of our nature, they are sometimes burned alive, or exiled to a rock; die, and are only remembered for the ruin they engendered—“like trees on fire by lightning—with ethereal flame, kindled they are—& blasted.” This often is and always ought to be, the fate of sinister ambition. While the course pursued by Washington, has secured to his memory the love and admiration of mankind—given to it fame eternal as creation, and it is to be hoped, provided for his everlasting abode, a residence in the highest mansion of the heavens.

After resigning his command, and stripping himself of the almost unlimited power with which he was invested, Washington returned a private citizen to Mount Vernon, where he had been but twice during the war—once on his passage to the siege of York, and again on his return from the capture of Cornwallis. He immediately resumed his long suspended occupations, repaired the ravages committed during his long absence, and his extensive possessions were soon restored to order. But in private concerns his soul was not absorbed—he did not forget our country in his retirement. He soon saw with grief, that many of the states were neglecting their federal duties—making conflicting regulations—generating distrust—and almost prostrating the rights of property. He also saw the faith of the nation violated to the patriotic army whose murmurings he had appeased. The good & the wise throughout all the states, feared the consequences of this state of things—and Washington joined them in strongly urging a convention from the several states, to correct these accumulating evils. Fortunately for our country, their recommendation was adopted. The august assemblage of statesmen met in convention—Washington presided—and from their wisdom emanated the unequalled constitution which now rules these United States. But vain was the adoption of a constitution unless the nation by a wise and firm administration, derived relief from the evils by which they were divided. Where was to be found that weight of character, that love of country, that purity, that solid wisdom, taught in the schools of trial and adversity, sufficient to control conflicting passions which threatened to annihilate social order? Where but in the firm, the pious, spotless Washington? We therefore find him again called to public life by the unanimous voice of his country, to fill the station of first chief magistrate of the regenerated republic. He obeyed the call, and assisted by the courage and the wisdom of the nation in congress, his administration soon revived the drooping spirits of the states, and restored harmony, confidence, and prosperity.

Foreign nations beheld with astonishment a change so sudden, and so grand, and their respect was manifested. At home there was not a corner of the union so remote, to which the happy effects of the government did not extend. When his first presidential term expired, Washington was re-elected, and at length, his second term about to end—seeing the nation safe by the firm establishment of a free, wise and energetic government—at peace with all nations, prosperous and respected, he rejoiced that it was in his power, consistent with those ties “which bind every good citizen to his native or adopted country,” to seek again the peaceful abode of private life. He accordingly declared this determination in a solemn address to his fellow citizens—and after another eight years laborious servitude, he was accompanied to his home by the gratitude of his country, and the plaudits of an admiring world. His farewell address should be in the heart, and hand of every citizen. It contains the wisest and most emphatic mentions for the conduct of our affairs—particularly pressing the importance of union, religion, and the education of youth, as essential props to sustain our happiness. That his advice has been influential, the

present situation of our country exemplifies. But to enable us to judge and appreciate the blessings we enjoy—and still more correctly to appreciate the services of Washington, let us pause, and take a cursory view of other countries and people compared with our own.

Look through the immense continents of Asia and Africa, and where is learning, or liberty to be found? Some missionary schools at Bengal & Sierra Leone, are all we know of the former—of the latter, alas, we can find nothing. Egypt, the fountain head of letters and of genius, is now ruled by fanaticism, and overspread by the darkest ignorance. The sable descendants of Ham, under little more controul than the sand on their deserts before the hurricane, breathe under the vile despotism of nominal chieftains—and are sold and sent to every clime—the wall that defied Persian valor has mouldered into dust—and even the city of Babylon has disappeared. We find Europe divided into many states and governments, whose interest and language are dissimilar, and prognosticate a melancholy destiny. In her political horizon, there is not one azure spot to cheer the patriot. The land of our forefathers, in which some of us were born—the country of Hampden and Sydney, persecutes liberty abroad—while her subjects at home boast of their own, although oppressed by debt and corruption. France, exhausted by false ambition, and wild intemperance, is now in leading strings, dreaming of the imaginary splendour of times past. Spain is improving; but Poland is a dead martyr Italy, the home of the Cæsars, is overcome by despotism, and manifests a disregard for correct principles of morals or government. The Ottoman slave is now murdering the superstitious Greek, and the field of Marathon, and the strait of Thermopylae, are commanded by an iron sceptre.

‘Tis true those nations had originally, to contend with many calamities from which the U. States were exempt. The god of nature peopled America with white men, in an age of civilization when she had a choice of her habits, and laws from the best examples. But to what an extent has this “land of Washington, & sky of Franklin” improved upon them? contrast our situation at this moment, with theirs. Here, we are free, our rights both civil and religious, guarded by a code of just and impartial laws—we afford a home to the homeless, and a refuge to the oppressed—a field for honest enterprise, both mental and bodily, with honor and encouragement to the meritorious—equal rights sit enthroned upon the altar of justice, and no titled or fictitious greatness can overcome the authority of the public voice.

Thus situated, progressively improving in all the means of moral and political excellence, our country moves as Washington desired it should—on an elevated orb, giving life, vigor, and happiness, to every sphere of human industry. The contrast in prospective is still greater, for if we continue to practice on the principles of Washington, and be guided by his advice, who can set bounds to the prosperity to which our country is ascending?

Her reputation like his own, is not confined to the negative praise of being free from stain, it is brilliant with glory—like him she not only respects the rights of others, but causes others to respect her own.—Only a few years since she emerged from a second contest with Britain, in which the splendor of her arms, and the thunder of her ships, have extended her name, and that of her Pike, and Lawrence, and Jackson, and Harrison, and Decatur, and many others, to meet that of Washington in the remotest corners of the world.

Our national happiness and renown, are not however built upon the decline, or downfall, of other nations—as philanthropists we pray for their happiness, at the same time will continue sedulously watchful to preserve our own. Washington whose fame like eternity, has no limits, in his farewell address, distinctly points out many of the evils we should guard against. Indeed the whole production affords beacons to guide us in safety, and buoys warning us to shun the quicksands of error. “The common & continual mischiefs of party spirit” he observes—are sufficient to make it the interest and duty of a wise people, to discourage & restrain it”—again he says, “citizens by birth or choice of a common country, that country, has a right to concentrate your affections. The name of American, which belongs to you all in a national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of patriotism, more than any appellation derived from local discriminations.” He well knew that party names, and party influence, have ever been the bane of free governments—that sanctioned by such

names and influence individual and public rights have been often disregarded. Yet since his day there have been men, who professed but did not practice republicanism, to inculcate a different doctrine. They contended before the present happy era, I mean before the two leading parties of “democrat” and “federalist” become amalgamated in the present administration, that party spirit was necessary—that it imparted watchfulness to public officers—that it served to promote enquiry—and that it prevented the political pond from becoming stagnant and corrupt. But our own experience, and the examples of other nations, have proved too plainly by the desolating ravages committed under its banners, that it inevitably leads to intolerable evils, more than sufficient to counterbalance all such arguments. Many of my auditors may be able to call to mind the feuds, and agitations which have been nurtured and matured by the demon of party—at one period in some of the states, the name of “democrat,” or “federalist,” would incapacitate the most honest & capable in the eyes of the opposite party—and some amongst us may have witnessed how feeling and friendship are annihilated, and honest men hurried away by its pernicious and delusive influence. President Jefferson appeared disposed to quench the flame, when in accordance with the mandates of Washington, he declared “we are all federalists—we are all republicans”—but it burned too fierce at that day to be extinguished. The glory of accomplishing its extirpation is due to the present administration of the general government and the good sense of the people at large. President Monroe was elevated to that station when the storm of party rage had abated—when the nation had enjoyed a fair opportunity of duly appreciating party professions, and had become almost sick of party turmoil. A soldier of the revolution, his politics had been formed in the school of experience—and his first act conciliated the adverse partisans. He made a tour of the country along the seaboard, and through the interior—visited and was received by both parties—and invariably declared himself free of party prejudices and predilections. His public and private acts since, have demonstrated the sincerity of the declaration—and a bright page in the history of his administration, will record the glorious consequences.

In that inestimable farewell address Washington tells us also, “to avoid the necessity of overgrown military establishments”—He goes on to say that “our union ought to be the main prop of our liberty”—and that “the love of the one ought to endure to us the preservation of the other.” We all know that the general government have acted most rigidly upon this wise injunction—the military establishment has been reduced to a mere skeleton of its former bulk and is now barely sufficient for garrison duty.—But how has this injunction of our immortal chief been acted on by the brave citizen soldiers, on whom our protection must devolve, in case of war or invasion? Are they in a state of preparation?—are they equipped for the field, and trained to perform duty?

It is proved by all facts and known by all experience, that courage and good will alone, do not suffice in war. These qualities were not sufficient during our revolutionary struggle until our patriots were inured to discipline—and without that we have reason to fear they would be less effectual now. Men and things have changed as relates to war, since that period—our last war proved this, for it no more resembled the revolutionary war, than those wars themselves resembled the wars of Attila.—When deserts served our brave forefathers as ramparts with Washington to direct their movements, and a Warren, and a Green and a Lincoln, and a Hamilton, to teach discipline, the enemy could do but little harm. Now our deserts have almost disappeared our cities have increased, our coasts and our country are covered with habitations, and consequently more difficult to protect. The enemy would now suffer less in his marches, because he could command refreshment every where—whilst we in an unprepared state have not augmented the obstacles to his approach. His first engagement would inform him of the state of our tactics and equipment and he would avail of our cherished “security”—which in what regards war Washington has said “can never be productive but of the greatest evils.” As freemen will never take up arms to infringe upon the rights of others, it is clear that Washington expected, every citizen would acquire the knowledge of a soldier, to defend his own. With time there is no doubt we should learn our duty, but this time after the commencement of hostilities, may not be allowed to us.—Undisciplined as many of us are at

present—with peace and plenty, and content smiling around us, in a country where “we call no man master upon earth,” it requires an effort of patriotism to submit to be instructed—but our citizens recalling to mind the heroism displayed at Tippicanoe, will seek to learn, and sustain the gallant character so nobly acquired. At this moment the duration of peace is uncertain—although the comedy now playing by the monarchs of Europe is much more pleasing to philanthropy than former scenes of carnage. We have too much reason to think that the mutual fears, which led to the mutual declarations, of the nick named “Holy alliance” will not lead to the universal peace dreamt of by the good Abbe St. Pierre, but die with Buonaparte who excited them—if so, the present comedy will serve only as a prelude to new tragedies, which may produce changes materially affecting ourselves. What then should be our duty as citizen soldiers?—universal history can answer the question.—It furnishes us so few examples of governments founded on the reasonable wishes and proposing the real happiness of mankind, that we cannot be too solicitous for the safety of ours. On this point you will pardon my candor—remembering that the example of Washington points to the course I have recommended, and will serve you for instructions in every situation of life—’tis an example that shews, the uniform sacrifice of every selfish passion, to patriotism, and to duty. But to dwell more particularly on his sentiments the present occasion will not permit. Soon after his retirement from the presidential chair, a difference of a serious nature took place with the rulers of France, under the presidency of Adams. This caused a small navy to be equipped immediately, which soon afforded safety to our commerce, and glory to our flag, and laid the foundation of our present navy, which has caused liberty to “walk like a god on the waves.”—France having menaced us, preparation become policy, and the voice of the nation again summoned Washington to lead our armies. Ever obedient to his country’s commands we find his aged frame again clothed in the habiliments of war—& as if destiny had decreed that his public services should only terminate with his existence, he soon afterwards departed this life in the fulness of years and of glory. The spirit of this illustrious emanation of the Deity, returned to heaven, on the 14th December, 1799.

His monument is in the heart of his countrymen, & his unequalled merit has been acknowledged by a “mourning world.” His fame, deathless as eternity, will continue the subject of just eulogium until time shall be no more. The theme is inexhaustible; but cannot be pursued further, without trespassing on this occasion—indeed the powers of man are inadequate in an address of this nature, to do justice to his memory—and I cannot presumptuously hope to be an exception.—What I have uttered is but the faint echo of the voice of millions. It would not be more difficult “to gild refined gold—to paint the lily—to throw a perfume on the violet—or with taper light to garnish the beauteous eye of Heaven,” than it would be to add one good, or noble quality, to those of the godlike Washington.

Citizen soldiers, each in his sphere, can admire and imitate—with all the reverence of the Peruvians who worship the glorious Sun—the king of day, and view the changes of the atmosphere as a manifestation of the predominating feeling of their Deity, but without their blind superstition—you should view the public acts of your public servants, and note the least deviation from the track pointed out by Washington. Obey, but scrutinize—place yourselves in that attitude of defence necessary to perpetuate the freedom and happiness of our country. Remember that the eyes of the lovely comforters which beamed with delight at the dawn of continental freedom, have been transmitted in all their potent splendour, to the ladies of our day—that those eyes and features which communicated their animation to the founders of the republic, yet shine upon you—that the recording angel has added to the long register of virtuous and patriotic deeds performed by them, the transaction of this morning, when the glorious star spangled banner, now floating on my left, was presented by female hands—and if you require to be inspirited to do

*Miss. Sarah Johnston, supported by many other ladies, had this morning presented, in a very handsome and becoming manner, a stand of colours to capt James Smith, who received them in behalf of his company with appropriate gallantry.—See the address in to day’s paper, with some account of the proceedings of the day. Editor.