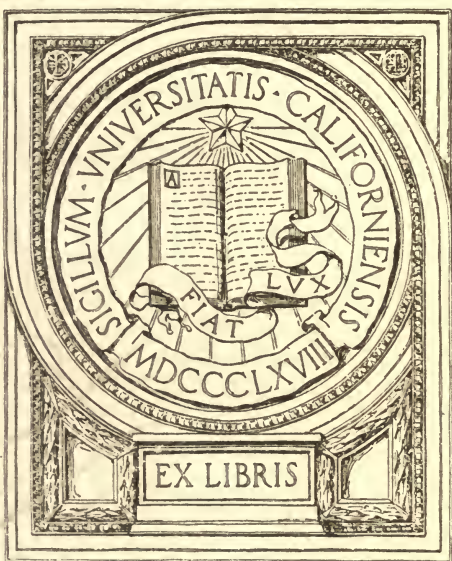


GIFT OF
EVGENE MEYER, JR.



EX LIBRIS

AN

EULOGY:

ON THE

LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF

JAMES MONROE,

FIFTH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

DELIVERED AT THE REQUEST OF THE

CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF BOSTON,

ON THE

25th of August, 1831.

BY JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

Ut vultus hominum, ita simulacra vultûs imbecilla ac mortalia sunt. Forma mentis æterna, quam tenere et exprimere non per alienam materiam et artem, sed tuis ipse moribus possis. *Tacitus Agricola Vita.*



BOSTON:

J. H. EASTBURN...CITY PRINTER.

1831.

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John H. Eastburn

TO THE
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CONGRESS

CITY OF BOSTON.

In the Board of Aldermen, Aug. 25, 1831.

Resolved, That the thanks of the City Council be presented to the Hon. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, for the eloquent Eulogy delivered by him, this day, at the Old South Church, by their request, in memory of the late venerable JAMES MONROE, and that a copy be requested for the press.

Resolved. That Aldermen Oliver, Russell, Binney and Harris, with such as the Common Council may join, be a Committee to carry the foregoing resolve into effect.

Sent down for concurrence,

HENRY J. OLIVER, *Chairman pro tem.*

In Common Council, Aug. 25, 1831.

Read and Concurred, and Messrs. Stevens, Bigelow, James, Rayner and Wetmore are joined.

B. T. PICKMAN, *President.*

A TRUE COPY—ATTEST,

S. F. M'CLEARY, *City Clerk.*

HENRY J. OLIVER, Esq., *Chairman of the Board* }
of Aldermen of the City of Boston. }

QUINCY, AUG. 26, 1831.

SIR—I have received your letter of this day's date, enclosing the Joint Resolutions of the Boards of Aldermen and Common Council of the City, requesting a copy of the Eulogy delivered yesterday by me, for the press.

An affectionate regard for the memory of Mr. Monroe, induced me in preparing the Discourse, which the City Council had done me the honour of inviting me to deliver, to take a review of the principal incidents of his life, more extensive than it was practicable to deliver within the compass of time usually allotted to such occasions. I place at the disposal of the City Council, with my respectful thanks to them for the opportunity afforded me by their appointment, of manifesting my deep sense of the virtues and public services of Mr. Monroe, a copy of the Eulogy as it was prepared, considerable portions of which it was found necessary to omit, in the delivery.

I am with much respect, Sir, your very obedient servant,

A.

J. Q. ADAMS.

E U L O G Y .

AMONG the peculiarities affecting the condition of human existence, in a community formed within the period allotted to the life of man, is the state of being exclusively belonging to the individuals who assisted in the formation of that community. Three thousand years have elapsed since the Monarch of Israel, who, from that time, has borne the reputation of the wisest of men, declared that there was no *new* thing under the sun. And then, as now, the assertion, confined to the operations of nature, to the instincts of animal life, to the primary purposes, and innate passions of human kind, was, and is, strictly true. Of all the illustrations of the sentiment given by him, the course is now as it was then. One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh. To the superficial observation of the human eye, the Sun still ariseth and goeth down; the wind whirlleth about continually; all rivers run into the sea, which yet is not full; and all things are full of labour, which man cannot utter: yet, although the thing that hath been is that which shall be, and that which *is* done is that which *shall be* done,—still the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled

with hearing : and this affords the solution to all the rest. The aspirations of man to a better condition than that which he enjoys, are at once the pledges of his immortality, and the privileges of his existence upon earth ; they combine for his enjoyment the still freshening charms of novelty with the immutable laws of creation, and intertwine the ever-varying felicities of his condition with the unchangeable monotony of nature.

Thus, a thousand years after Solomon had ceased to exist upon earth, when his kingdom had been extinguished, and his nation carried into captivity, there arose among his own descendants, a Redeemer of the human race from the thralldom of sin ; the Mediator of a new covenant between God and man. From that time, though all remained unchanged in the phenomena of creation, all was new in the condition of human life. In the rise and fall of successive empires, other novelties succeed each other from age to age. New planets are discovered in the heavens, and new continents are revealed upon earth. New pursuits are opened to industry ; new comforts to enjoyment ; new prospects to hope. The secrets of the physical and intellectual world are gradually disclosed ; the powers of man are from time to time enlarged :—but the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. The tendency of the magnet to the Pole, and its application to the purposes of navigation ; the composition of gunpowder, and its application to the purposes of war ; the invention of printing, and its application to all the purposes of man, in peace and war,—to the wants of the body, and the expansion of the mind,—the gift

as it were, of a new earth to replenish and subdue, by the disclosure of a new hemisphere, to the enterprise and capacities of man; all these things are new in the records of the human species. Each of these things diverted into a new channel the current of human affairs, and furnished for the lord of the creation a new system of occupations in his progress from the cradle to the grave.

But of all the changes effected, and all the novelties introduced into the condition of human beings, since the promulgation of the gospel of Christ, none has been more considerable than that, the development of which began with the severance of the British colonies in North America, from the parent-stock. The immediate collisions of rights, interests, and passions, which produced the conflict between the parties, and ended in sundering the two portions of the empire engaged, occupied and absorbed the agency and the powers of the actors on that memorable theatre. An English poet has declared it praise enough to fill the ambition of a common man, that he was the countryman of Wolfe, and spoke the language of Chatham. The colonists, who achieved the independence of North America, were the countrymen of Wolfe, and Chatham's language was their mother-tongue. But of what avail for praise would this have been to them, had they not possessed souls, inspired with the same principles, and hearts endowed with higher energies than those which conducted those illustrious names to the pinnacle of glory. Never would the object of the North American Revolution have been accomplished but by men, in whose bosoms the love of liberty had been im-

planted from their birth, and imbibed from the maternal breast.

Considered in itself, the independence of our country was only the splitting up of one civilized nation into two—caused by usurpation; consummated by war. As such, it constituted one great element in the history of civilized man during its continuance; but that was short and transient. From the Stamp Act to the definitive Treaty of Peace, concluded at Paris, on the third of September, 1783, a term of less than twenty years intervened,—a term scarcely sufficient for the action of one of the dramas of Shakspeare. It was not even equal to the duration of one age of man. We have already lived since the close of that momentous struggle nearly thrice the extent of time, in which it passed through all its stages, and there are yet among the living those whose birth preceded even that of the questions upon which hinged our independent existence as a nation.

Among these was the distinguished person, whose earthly career terminated on the fifty-fifth Anniversary of our National Independence.

JAMES MONROE was born in September, 1759, in the County of Westmoreland, in the then Colony of Virginia; and at the time of the Declaration of Independence, was in the process of completing his education at the college of William and Mary. He was then seventeen years of age, and at the first formation of the American army entered it as a cadet. Had he been born ten years before, it can scarcely be doubted that he would have been one of the members of the first Congress, and that his name would have gone down to posterity among those of

the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Among the blessings conferred by a beneficent Providence upon this country in the series of events which composed that Revolution, was its influence in the formation of individual and of national character. The controversy which preceded the Revolutionary war, necessarily formed by a practical education the race of statesmen, by whom it was conducted to its close. The nature of the controversy itself, turning upon the elementary principles of civil society, upon the natural rights of man, and the foundations of government, pointed the attention of men to the investigation of those principles; exercised all the intellectual faculties of the most ardent and meditative souls, and led to discoveries in the theory of government which have changed the face of the world.

The conflict of mind preceded that of matter. The question at issue, between Great Britain and her colonies, was purely a question of right. On one side, a pretension to authority, on the other a claim of freedom. It was a lawsuit between the British king and Parliament of the one part, and the people of the colonies, of the other, pleaded before the tribunal of the human race. It was an advantage to the cause of the colonies in that contest, that it reposed exclusively upon the basis of *right*. "Authority," says a keen observer of human nature,

" Authority, though it err like others,

" Hath yet a kind of medicine *in itself*

" That skins the vice on the top."

In the precluding struggle, to the war of Independence, British authority was constantly administering this self-healing medicine to her own wrongs. The

first assertion of her right, was an act of Parliament to levy a tax. When she found its execution impracticable, she repealed the tax, but declared the right of Parliament to make laws for the colonies, in all cases whatsoever. To this mere declaration, the colonies could make no resistance. It skinned the vice on the top. With the next act of taxation, she sent fleets and armies for the healing medicine to her errors. She dissolved the colonial Assemblies, revoked the colonial charters, sealed up the port of Boston, annihilated the colonial fisheries, and proclaimed the province of Massachusetts bay in rebellion. These were the healing medicines of British authority ; while the only pretence of right that she could allege for all these acts, was the *sovereignty* of the British Parliament.

To contend against this array of power, the only defence of the colonies at the outset was the *right* and *justice* of their cause. From the first promulgation of the Stamp-Act, the spirit of resistance with the speed of a sunbeam, flashed instantaneous through all the colonies ; kindled every heart and raised every arm. But this spirit of resistance, and this unanimity, would have been transitory and evanescent, had it not been sustained, invigorated, and made invincible, by the basis of eternal and immutable *justice* in the cause. It engrossed, it absorbed all the faculties of the soul. It inspired the eloquence which poured itself forth in the colonial Assemblies, in the instructions from the inhabitants of many of the towns to their Representatives, and even in newspaper essays, and occasional pamphlets by individuals. The general contest gave rise to

frequent incidental controversies between the royal Governors, and the colonial Legislatures, in which the collision of principles, stimulated the energies, directed the researches, and expanded the faculties of those who maintained the rights of their country. The profoundest philosophical statesman of the British empire, at that period, noticed the operation of these causes, in one of his admirable speeches to the House of Commons. He remarked the natural tendency and effect of the study and practice of the law, to quicken the intellect, and to sharpen the reasoning powers of men. He observed the preponderant portion of lawyers in the colonial Legislatures, and in the continental Congress, and the influence of their oratory and their argument upon the understanding and the will of their countrymen. Yet that same clear sighted and penetrating statesman, long after the Declaration of Independence, penned with his own hand an address to the people of the United States, urging them to return to their British allegiance, and assuring them that their struggle against the colossal power of Great Britain, must be fruitless and vain. Chatham himself, the most eloquent orator of England—whose language it is the boast of honest pride to speak—Chatham, a peer of the British realm, in the sanctuary of her legislation, declared his approbation of the American cause, his disclaimer of all right in Parliament to tax the colonies, and his joy, that the people of the colonies, had resisted the pretension. Yet that same Chatham, not only after the declaration, but after the conclusion of solemn treaties of alliance between the United States and France, sacrificed the remnant of his

days, and wasted his expiring breath, in feeble and fruitless protestations against the irrevocable sentence to which his country was doomed—the acknowledgement of American Independence. It has been said, that men's judgments are a parcel of their fortunes; and they who believe in a superintending Providence have constant occasion to remark the wisdom from above, which unfolds the purposes of signal improvement in the condition of man, by preparing, and maturing in advance, the instruments by which they are ultimately to be accomplished. The intellectual conflict, which, for a term of twelve years, had preceded the Declaration of Independence, had formed *a race of men*, of whom the signers of that instrument were the selected and faithful representatives. Their constituents were like themselves. Life, fortune, and sacred honour, were staked upon the maintenance of that declaration. Not alone the life, fortune, and sacred honour of the individuals who signed their names, but with little exception, of the people whom they represented. One spirit animated the mass, and that spirit was *invincible*. It is a striking circumstance to remark, that in the island of Great Britain, *not a single mind existed* capable of comprehending this spirit and its power. Deeper and more capacious minds, bolder and more ardent hearts, than Burke and Chatham, have seldom, in any age of the world, and in any region of the earth, appeared upon the stage of action. Yet we have here unquestionable demonstration that neither of them had formed a conception of the power, physical, moral, and intellectual, of that unextinguishable flame which pervaded every particle

of the man, soul and body, of the self declared independent American. It is an easy resource of vulgar controversy to transfer the stress of her argument from the cause, to the motive of her adversary, and the rottenness of any cause, will generally be found proportioned to the propensity manifested by its supporters to resort to this expedient. On the question which *bred* the revolution of independence, the taxation of the colonies by Parliament, all the great and leading minds of the British islands, all who have left a name on which the memory of posterity will repose, Mansfield and Johnson excepted, were on the American side. Burke, Chatham, Camden, Fox, Sheridan, Rockingham, Dunning, Barré, Lansdown, all recorded their constant, deep, and solemn protestations, against the system of measures which forced upon the colonies the blessing of Independence. But when Chatham and Camden raised in vain their voices to arrest the uplifted arm of oppression, George Grenville and his abettors knew, or deemed so little of the spirit and argument of the Americans, that they affirmed it was all furnished for them by Chatham and Camden, and that *their* only motive was to supplant the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Adam Smith, the penetrating searcher into the causes of the wealth of nations, whose book was published about a year after the Declaration of Independence, without deigning to spend a word upon the *cause* of America, with deep sagacity of face and gravity of muscle, assures his readers, that they are very weak, who imagine that the Americans will easily be conquered—for that the continental Congress consists of men, who from shopkeepers, trades-

men and attornies, are become statesmen and legislators. That they are employed in contriving a new form of government, for an extensive empire, which they justly flatter themselves will become one of the greatest and most formidable that ever was in the world. That if the Americans should be subdued, *all these men would lose their importance*—and the remedy that he proposes is, to start a new object for their ambition, by forming a union of the colonies with Great Britain, and admitting some of the leading Americans into Parliament. Yet this man was the author of a Theory of Moral Sentiments in which he resolved all moral principle into sympathy.

True it was, that the shopkeepers, tradesmen and attornies, were occupied in contriving a new form of government, for an extensive empire, which they might reasonably flatter themselves would become the greatest and most glorious that the world has ever seen. They were at the same time employed in raising, organizing, training, and disciplining fleets and armies to maintain the cause of freedom, and of their country, against all Britannia's thunders. And they were employed in maintaining by reason and argument before the tribunal of mankind, and in the face of heaven, the eternal justice of their cause. Thus they were employed. Thus had been employed the members of the continental Congress and thousands of their constituents, from the time when the princes and nobles of Britain had imposed these employments upon them, by the visitation of the Stamp-act. And now is it not matter of curious speculation, does it not open new views of human nature, to observe, that while the shopkeepers,

tradesmen and attornies of British North America were thus employed, Adam Smith, the profound theorist of moral sentiment, the illustrious discoverer of the sources of the wealth of nations, could in the depth and compass of his mighty mind, imagine no operative impulse to the conduct of men thus employed, but a paltry gratification of vanity, in their individual importance, from which they might easily be weaned, by the superior and irresistible allurements of a seat in the British House of Commons?

More than half a century has now passed away; the fruits of the employment of these shopkeepers, tradesmen, and attornies, transformed into statesmen and legislators, now form the most instructive, as well as the most splendid chapter in the history of mankind. They *did* contrive a new form of government for an extensive empire, which nothing under the canopy of heaven, but the basest degeneracy of their posterity can prevent from becoming the greatest and the most formidable that the world ever saw. They *did* maintain before earth and heaven, the justice of their cause. They *did* defend their country against all the thunders of Britain, and compelled her monarch, her nobles, and her people, to acknowledge the Independence which they had declared, and to receive their confederated republic among the sovereign potentates of the world. Of the shopkeepers, tradesmen and attornies who composed the Congress of Independence, the career on earth has closed. They sleep with their fathers. Have they lost their individual importance? Say, ye who venerate as an angel upon earth, the solitary remnant of that assembly, yet lingering upon the verge of eternity. Give

me the rule of proportion, between a seat, from old Sarum, in the House of Commons, and the name of CHARLES CARROLL, of Carrollton, at the foot of the Declaration of Independence? Was honest fame, one of the motives to action in the human heart, excluded from the philosophical estimate of Adam Smith? Did he suppose patriotism, the love of liberty, benevolence, and ardour for the welfare and improvement of human kind, inaccessible to the bosoms of the shopkeeper statesman, and attorney legislators? I forbear to pursue the inquiry further, though more ample illustration might easily be adduced to confirm the position which I would submit to your meditations: that the conflict for our national Independence, and the controversy of twelve years which preceded it, did, in the natural course of events, and by the ordinary dispensations of Providence, produce and form a race of men, of moral and intellectual power, adapted to the times and circumstances in which they lived, and with characters and motives to action, not only differing from those which predominate in other ages and climes, but of which men accustomed only to the common place impulses of human nature, are no more able to form a conception, than blindness, of the colours of the rainbow.

Of this race of men, JAMES MONROE was one—not of those who did, or could take a part in the preliminary controversy, or in the Declaration of Independence. He may be said almost to have been born with the question, for at the date of the Stamp-Act, he was in the fifth year of his age; but he was bred in the school of the prophets, and nurtured in the detestation of tyranny. His patriotism outstripped

the lingering march of time, and at the dawn of manhood, he joined the standard of his country. It was at the very period of the Declaration of Independence, issued as you know at the hour of severest trial to our country; when every aspect of her cause was unpropitious and gloomy. Mr. MONROE commenced his military career, as his country did that of her Independence, with adversity. He joined her standard when others were deserting it. He repaired to the head quarters of Washington at New-York, precisely at the time when Britain was pouring her thousands of native and foreign mercenaries, upon our shores; when in proportion as the battalions of invading armies thickened and multiplied, those of the heroic chieftain of our defence were dwindling to the verge of dissolution. When the disastrous days of Flat Bush, Hærlém Heights, and White Plains, were followed by the successive evacuation of Long Island, and New-York, the surrender of Fort Washington, and the retreat through the Jersies; till on the day devoted to celebrate the birth of the Saviour of mankind, of the same year on which Independence was proclaimed, Washington with the houseless heads, and unshod feet, of three thousand new and undisciplined levies, stood on the western bank of the Delaware, to contend in arms with the British Lion, and to baffle the skill and energy of the chosen champions of Britain, with ten times the number of his shivering and emaciate host; the stream of the Delaware, forming the only barrier between the proud array of thirty thousand veteran Britons, and the scanty remnant of his dissolving bands. Then it was that the glorious leader of our

forces struck the blow, which decided the issue of the war. Then it was that the myriads of Britain's warriors were arrested in their career of victory, by the hundreds of our gallant defenders, as the sling of the shepherd of Israel, prostrated the Philistine, who defied the armies of the living God. And in this career both of adverse and of prosperous fortune, JAMES MONROE was one of that little Spartan band, scarcely more numerous, though in the event more prosperous, than they who fell at Thermopylæ. At the Heights of Haerlem, at the White Plains, at Trenton he was present, and in leading the vanguard at Trenton, received a ball, which sealed his patriotic devotion to his country's freedom with his blood.—The superintending Providence which had decreed that on that, and a swiftly succeeding day, Mercer, and Haselet, and Porter, and Neal, and Fleming, and Shippen, should join the roll of warlike dead, martyrs to the cause of liberty, reserved MONROE for higher services, and for a long and illustrious career, in war and in peace.

Recovered from his wound, and promoted in rank, as a reward for his gallantry and suffering in the field, he soon returned to the Army, and served in the character of Aid-de-Camp to Lord Sterling, through the campaigns of 1777 and 1778: during which, he was present and distinguished in the actions of Brandywine, Germantown, and Monmouth. But, having by this been superseded of his lineal rank in the Army, he withdrew from it, and failing, from the exhausted state of the country, in the effort to raise a regiment, for which, at the recommendation of Washington, he had been authorized by the Legis-

lature of Virginia, he resumed the study of the law, under the friendly direction of the illustrious Jefferson, then Governor of that Commonwealth. In the succeeding years, he served occasionally as a volunteer, in defence of the State, against the distressing invasions with which it was visited, and once, after the fall of Charleston, South-Carolina, 1780, at the request of Governor Jefferson, repaired, as a military commissioner, to collect and report information with regard to the condition and prospects of the southern Army and States; a trust, which he discharged to the entire satisfaction of the Governor and Executive, by whom it had been committed to him.

In 1782, he was elected a member of the Legislature of Virginia, and, by them, a member of the Executive Council. On the ninth of June, 1783, he was chosen a member of the Congress of the United States; and, on the thirteenth of December, of the same year, took his seat in that body, at Annapolis, where his first act was, to sit as one of those representatives of the nation into whose hands the victorious leader of the American Armies surrendered his commission. Mr. MONROE was now twenty-four years of age, and had already performed that, in the service of his country, which would have sufficed for the illustration of an ordinary life.

The first fruits of his youth had been given to her defence in war: the rigour and maturity of his manhood was now to be devoted to her welfare in council. The War of Independence closed as it had begun, by a transaction new under the sun. The fourth of July, 1776, had witnessed the social compact of a self-constituted nation, formed by Peace and Union,

in the midst of a calamitous and desolating war. To carry that nation through this war, the sole object of which, thenceforward, was the perpetual establishment of that self-proclaimed Independence, a Standing-Army became indispensable. Temporary levies of undisciplined militia, and enlistments for a few weeks, or months, were soon found inadequate for defence against the veteran legions of the invader. Enlistments for three years, were finally succeeded by permanent engagements of service during the war. These forces were disbanded at the peace. Successive bands of warriors had maintained a conflict of seven years' duration, but Washington had been the commander of them all. His commission, issued twelve months before the Declaration of Independence, had been commensurate with the war. He was the great military leader of the cause; and so emphatically did he exemplify the position I have assumed, that Providence prepares the characters of men, adapted to the emergencies in which they are to be placed, that, were it possible for the creative power of imagination to concentrate in one human individual person, the cause of American Independence, in all its moral grandeur and sublimity, that person would be no other than WASHINGTON. His career of public service was now at an end. The military leaders of other ages had not so terminated their public lives. Gustavus Vasa, William of Orange, the Duke of Braganza, from chieftains of popular revolt, had settled into hereditary rulers over those whom they had contributed to emancipate. The habit of command takes root so deep in the human heart, that WASHINGTON is perhaps the only

example in human annals of one in which it was wholly extirpated. In all other records of humanity, the heroes of patriotism have sunk into hereditary Princes. Glorious achievements have always claimed magnificent rewards. WASHINGTON, receiving from his country the mandate to fight the battles of her freedom, assumes the task at once with deep humility, and undaunted confidence, disclaiming in advance all reward of profit, which it might be in her power to bestow. After eight years of unexampled perils, labors, and achievements, the warfare is accomplished; the cause in which he had drawn his sword, is triumphant; the independence of his country is established; her union cemented by a bond of confederation, the imperfection of which had not yet been disclosed; he comes to the source whence he first derived his authority, and, in the face of mankind, surrenders the truncheon of command, restores the commission, the object of which had been so gloriously accomplished, and returns to mingle with the mass of his fellow-citizens, in the retirement of private life, and the bosom of domestic felicity.

Three years, from 1783 to 1786, Mr. MONROE continued a member of the Confederate Congress, and had continual opportunity of observing the utter inefficiency of that Compact for the preservation and welfare of the Union.

The union of the North American Colonies, may be aptly compared to the poetical creation of the world:

From HARMONY—from heavenly Harmony

This universal frame began;

When Nature, underneath an heap

Of jarring atoms lay,
 And could not heave her head—
 The tuneful voice was heard from high
 Arise, ye more than dead,
 Then cold and hot, and moist and dry,
 In order to their stations leap,
 And Music's power obey.

Such, with more than poetical truth, was the creation of the American Union.

When, on the fifth of September, 1774, a number of the delegates chosen and appointed by the several colonies and provinces in North America, to meet and hold a Congress at Philadelphia, assembled at the Carpenters' Hall,—on that same day, a new nation was created: then, indeed, it was but in embryo. Neither Independence, nor self-government, nor permanent confederation, were of the purposes for which that Congress was convened. It was to draw up and exhibit statements of the common grievances: to consult and confer upon the common violated rights; to address their fellow-subjects of Great Britain, and of the colonies, with complaint of wrongs endured, and humbly to petition his most excellent majesty, their most gracious sovereign, for redress. These purposes were performed, and totally failed of success; but the Union was formed; the seed of Independence was sown; and the Congress, after a session of seven weeks, on the twenty-sixth of October, dissolved.

When the second Congress met, on the tenth of May, 1775, the war had already commenced: blood had flowed in streams at Concord and Lexington; and scarcely had they been a month in session, when the fires of Charlestown ascended to an avenging

heaven; and Warren fell a martyr to the cause of the Union before that of Independence was even born. Still, the powers and instructions of the delegates extended only to concert, agree upon, direct, and order such further measures as should, to them, appear to be best calculated for the recovery and establishments of American rights and liberties, and for restoring harmony between Great Britain and the colonies.

These objects were pursued with steadiness, perseverance, and sincerity, till the people, whom they represented, sickened at the humiliations to which they submitted; till insult heaped upon injury, and injury superadded to insult, aggravated the burden to a point beyond endurance: the decree of the people went forth: the whole people of the United Colonies declared them Independent States: the nation was born; like the first of the human race, issuing, full grown and perfect, from the hands of his Maker.

But while this Independence, thus declared, was to be maintained by a war,—of the successful issue to which, all spirit, but that of heroic martyrdom, might well despair,—all the institutions of organized authority were to be created. By an act of primitive sovereignty, the people of the colonies annihilated all the civil authorities by which they had been governed: as *one corporate body*, they declared themselves a member of the community of civilized, but independent, nations,—acknowledging the Christian Code of natural and conventional laws,—united, already, by solemn compact, but without organized government, either for the Union, or for the separate

members ; also, corporate and associated bodies, of which it was composed.

The position of the people of these colonies on that day, was indeed a new thing under the sun.— The nature and character of the war, was totally changed. Their relations individual and collective, towards one another, towards the government and people of Great Britain, towards all the rest of mankind, were changed ; they were men in society, and yet had reverted to the state of nature ; they had no government, no fundamental laws. Inhabiting a territory more extensive than all Europe, previously divided into thirteen communities, little sympathizing with one another, and actuated by principles more of mutual repulsion, than attraction, with elements for legislation, not only various, but hostile to each other ; they were called at one and the same time to wage a war of unparalleled difficulty and danger.— To transfer their duties of allegiance, and their rights of protection from the Sovereign of their birth to the new republic of their own creation ; and to rebuild the superstructure of civil society, by a complicated government, adequate to their wants ; a firm, compact and energetic whole, composed of thirteen entire independent parts. The first and most urgent of their duties, because in its nature it admitted of no delay, was to provide for the maintenance and conduct of the war ; but with all its difficulties, that was the least arduous of their duties. To organize the government of a mighty empire, was a task, which had never before been performed by man.— The undertaking formed an æra, in the annals of the human race ; an æra far surpassing in impor-

tance all others since the appearance of the Saviour upon earth.

There were fortunately a few fundamental principles upon which there was among the proclaimers of Independence, a perfect unanimity of opinion. The first, of these was that the Union already formed between the Colonies should be permanent—perpetual—indissoluble. The second, that it should be a confederated Union, of which each Colony should be an independent State. Self-governed by its own municipal Code—but of which each citizen, should be also a citizen of the whole. The third, that the whole confederation, and each of its members, should be republican; without hereditary monarch, without privileged orders. On the tenth of May, preceding the Declaration of Independence, Congress had passed a resolution, recommending to the several Colonies to adopt such Government as should, in the opinion of the Representatives of the people, best conduce to the happiness and safety of their constituents in particular, and America in general; and in the preamble to this Resolution, adopted five days later, they assigned as the reason for it the necessity that the exercise of every kind of authority under the crown of Great Britain, should be totally suppressed, and *all the powers of Government exercised under the authority of THE PEOPLE of the colonies.*

And on the eleventh of June, 1776, the same day upon which the Committee was appointed to report the Declaration of Independence, it was resolved to appoint another Committee to prepare and digest the form of a confederation to be entered into between

the colonies, and a third committee to prepare a plan of treaties to be proposed to foreign powers.

Thus far, there had been no diversity of opinion among those, whose minds were made up for the Declaration of Independence. The people of each colony were to construct their own form of Government: a form of Confederation was to be prepared for the whole. The history of mankind, ancient and modern, presented several examples of confederated *States*, not one of a confederated *Government*: and even of former confederations there was not one which extended over a territory equal to that of one member of the American Union. For a confederated *Government*, the people of the colonies were utterly unprepared. The constitutions of the States were formed without much difficulty, and, after more than half a century, although we have witnessed frequent and numerous changes in their organization, there have been scarcely any of important principle. The great features of the political system upon which American Independence was declared, remain unchanged—bright in immortal youth. For Union, for Independence, for self-government, the elements were all at hand, and they were homogeneous. There was no seed of discord and of strife among them. For the structure of the confederacy it was not so. There was first a general spirit of distrust and jealousy against the investment of the federal head with power. There were then local and sectional prejudices, interests and passions, tending to reciprocal discontents and enmities. There were diversities in the tenure and character of property in the different States, not altogether harmoniz-

ing with the cause of Independence itself. There were controversies of boundaries between many of the contiguous colonies, and questions of deeper vitality, to whom the extra-territorial lands, without the bounds of the colonial charters, but within the compass of the federative domain, would belong? So powerfully did these causes of discord operate, even in the midst of the struggle for Independence, that nearly five years elapsed after the Declaration, before the consent of the States could be obtained to the Articles of Confederation.

This experiment, as is well known, proved a total failure. The Articles of Confederation were ratified by ten of the States as early as July, 1778. Maryland withheld her assent to them, until March, 1781, when it first went into operation; and even then, one of its principal defects was so generally perceived and foreseen, that, on the preceding third of February, Congress had adopted a Resolution, declaring it indispensably necessary that they should be vested with a power to levy an impost duty of five per cent. to pay the public debt. Even this power, some of the States refused to grant.

In December 1783, when Mr. MONROE took his seat in Congress, the first act of that body should have been to ratify the definitive treaty of peace with Great Britain, which had been signed at Paris on the preceding third of September. That treaty was the transaction, which closed the revolutionary war, and settled forever the question of American Independence. It was stipulated, that its ratifications should be exchanged within six months from the day of its signature; and we can now scarcely believe it possible, that but for a mere accident, the faith of

the nation would have been violated, and the treaty itself cancelled, for want of a power in Congress, to pass it through the mere formalities of ratification. By the articles of confederation, no treaty could be concluded, without the assent of nine states.—Against the Ratification, there was not a voice throughout the union; but only seven states were assembled in Congress. Then came a captious debate, whether the act of ratification was a mere formality for which seven States were as competent as nine, or whether it was the very medullary substance of a Treaty, which, unless assented to by nine States, would be null and void—a monstrous and tyrannical usurpation.

All the powers of government, in free countries, emanate from the people: all organized and operative power exists by delegation from the people. Upon these two pillars is erected the whole fabric of our freedom. That all exercise of organized power should be for the benefit of the people, is the first maxim of government; and, in the delegation of power to the government, the problem to be solved is, the most extensive possible grant of power to be exercised for the common good; with the most effective possible guard against its abuse to the injury of any one. Our fathers, who formed the confederation, witnesses to the recent abuse of organized power, and sufferers by it, mistook the terms of the problem before them, and thought that the only security against the abuse of power, was stinginess of grant in its organization: not duly considering that power, not delegated, cannot be exercised for the common good, and that the denial of it, to their government, is equivalent to the abdication

of it by themselves. All impotence of the government, therefore, thus becomes the impotence of the people, who formed it; and, in its result, places the nation itself on a footing of inferiority, compared with others in the community of independent nations. Nor did they sufficiently foresee that this excessive caution to withhold beneficent power, in the organic frame of government, necessarily and unavoidably leads to usurpation of it. The Ordinance for the Government of the north-western Territory, was a signal example of this course of things, under the Articles of Confederation. A perusal of the journals of Congress, public and secret, from the year 1778, when the Articles of Confederation were completed, and partially adopted, till 1789, when they were superseded by the present Constitution of the United States, will give the liveliest and most perfect idea of the character of the Confederation, and of the condition of the Union under it. Among the mischievous consequences of the inability of Congress to administer the affairs of the Union, was the waste of time and talents, of the most eminent patriots of the country, in captious, irritating, and fruitless, debates. The commerce, the public debt, the fiscal concerns, the foreign relations, the public lands, the obligations to the revolutionary veterans, the intercourse of war and peace with the Indian tribes, were all subjects upon which the beneficent action of Congress was necessary; while, at every step, and upon every subject, they were met by the same insurmountable barrier of interdicted or undelegated power. These observations may be deemed not inappropriate to the apology for Mr. MONROE, and for all

the distinguished patriots associated with him, during his three years of service in the Congress of the Confederation, in contemplating the slender results of benefit to the public in all the service, which it was possible for them, thus cramped and crippled, to render.

Within the appropriate sphere of action, however, to which the powers of Congress were competent, Mr. MONROE took a distinguished part. That body often resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole, to deliberate upon an empty Treasury, upon accumulating debts, and clamorous creditors; upon urgent recommendations to the State Legislatures, which some of them would adopt, simply, and some, conditionally; others, indefinitely postpone; some, leave without answer; and others, sturdily reject. This Committee of the Whole referred every knotty subject to a Select Committee, from whom they would, in due time, receive an able, and thoroughly reasoned, Report, which they would debate by paragraphs, and finally reject for some other debatable substitute, or adopt with numerous amendments, and after many a weary record of yeas and nays.

On the eighteenth of April, 1783, the Resolution of Congress had passed, declaring it absolutely necessary that they should be vested with a power to levy an impost of five per cent. On the thirtieth of April, 1784, another Resolution was adopted, recommending to the Legislatures of the States to grant to Congress the power of regulating commerce. And on the thirteenth of July, 1785, Congress debated the Report of a Committee, of which Mr. MONROE was the Chairman, combining the objects of both those

prior Resolutions, and proposing such alteration of the Articles of the Confederation, as was necessary to vest Congress with the power; both to regulate commerce, and to levy an impost duty. These measures were not abortive, inasmuch as they were progressive steps in the march towards better things. They led first to the partial convention of delegates, from five States, at Annapolis, in September, 1786; and then to the general convention, at Philadelphia, in 1787, which prepared and proposed the Constitution of the United States. Whoever contributed to that event, is justly entitled to the gratitude of the present age, as a public benefactor; and among them, the name of MONROE should be conspicuously enrolled.

Among the very few powers, which, by the Articles of Confederation, had been vested in Congress, was that of constituting a Court of Commissioners, selected from its own body, to decide upon any disputed question of boundary, jurisdiction, or any other cause whatever, between any two States in the Union. These Commissioners were, in the first instance, to be chosen, with mutual consent, by the agents of the two States, parties to the controversy; the final determination of which, was submitted to them.

Such a controversy had taken place between the States of Massachusetts and New-York, the agents of which, attending in Congress in December, 1784, agreed upon nine persons, to constitute the federal court, to decide the question between the parties. Of these nine persons, JAMES MONROE was one: a distinction, in the twenty-sixth year of his age, indi-

cating the high estimation in which he was already held throughout the Union. The subsequent history of this controversy, to its final and friendly settlement, affords an illustration coinciding with numberless others of the imbecility of the confederacy. On the twenty-first of March, 1785, Congress were informed, by a letter from Mr. MONROE, that he accepted the appointment of one of the judges of the federal Court, to decide the controversy. On the ninth of June following, the agents, from the contending States reported to Congress, that they had agreed upon three persons, whom they named, as judges of the federal Court, instead of three of those who had been appointed, the preceding December, but had declined accepting their appointment: and the agents requested that a commission might be issued to the Court, as finally constituted, to meet at Williamsburg, in Virginia, on the third Tuesday of November, then next, to hear and determine the controversy.

On the second of November, of the same year, a representation was made by the agents of the two States, to Congress, that such had been the difficulties and delays, in obtaining answers from several of the judges, that the parties were left in suspense, even to that hour; a hearing had thus been prevented, and further procrastination was unavoidable. They petitioned, therefore, that the hearing should be remitted to such a day as the parties should agree upon, and thereafter certify to Congress—and a Resolution passed accordingly.

On the fifteenth of May, 1786, a letter was received by Congress, from Mr. MONROE, informing

them that some circumstances would put it out of his power to act as a Judge for the decision of this controversy, and resigning his commission.

On the twenty-seventh of September following, Congress were informed by the agents of the parties, that they had agreed upon a person to be a judge, in the place of Mr. MONROE, and they requested that a new commission might be issued to the Court.—The Court never met, for on the sixteenth of December, 1786, the litigating parties, by their respective agents, at Hartford, in Connecticut, settled the controversy, by agreement, between themselves, and to their mutual satisfaction. Of this, the agents gave notice to Congress, on the eighth of October, 1787, and they moved, that the attested copy of the agreement, between the two States, which they laid before Congress, should be filed in the Secretary's office—which was refused: that body declining even to keep upon their files the evidence of an accord, between two members of the Union, concluded otherwise than as the Articles of Confederation had prescribed.

Mr. MONROE did not assign, in his letter to Congress, his reasons for resigning the trust which he had previously consented to assume. They were, probably, motives of delicacy, highly creditable to his character: motives, flowing from a source

“ Beyond the fix'd and settled rules

“ Of vice and virtue in the schools :”

motives, emanating from a deep and conscientious morality, of which men of coarser minds are denied the perception, and which, while exerting unresisted

sway over the conduct actuated by them, retire into the self-conviction of their own purity. Between the period, when Mr. MONROE had accepted, and that when he withdrew from the office of a judge between the States of Massachusetts and New-York, discussions had arisen, in Congress, relating to a negotiation with Spain, in the progress of which, varying views of public policy were sharpened and stimulated, by varying sectional interests, to a point of painful collision.

After the conclusion of the general peace at Paris, in 1783, Spain, then a feeble and superannuated monarchy, governed by corrupt, profligate, and perfidious councils, possessed with other colonies of stupendous territorial extent, the mouths of the Mississippi, and both the shores of that father of the floods, from his first entrance into this continent, to a considerable extent inland. Above the thirty-first degree of latitude, the territorial settlements of the United States were spreading in their incipient but gigantic infancy, along his eastern banks and on both shores of the mighty rivers, which contribute to his stream. Spain, by virtue of a conventional, long settled, but abusive principle, of international law, disavowed by the law of nature, interdicted the downward navigation of the Mississippi to the borderers upon the shores, above her line; on the bare plea that both sides of the river were within her domain at the mouth. And well knowing that the navigation was equivalent almost to a necessary of life to the American settlers above, she formed the project at once of dallying negotiation with the new American Republic, to purchase by some commercial

privilege, her assent to a temporary exclusion from the navigation of the Mississippi, and of tampering with the same American settlers, to seduce them from their allegiance to their own country, by the prospect of enjoying under her dominion as Spanish subjects, the navigation of the river, from which they were excluded as citizens of the United States.

In the collision between the claim of the United States of right to navigate the Mississippi, by the laws of nature, and the treaty of peace with Great Britain, and the actual interdiction of that navigation by Spain, founded upon the usages of nations, hostilities between the two nations had already taken place. A citizen of the United States, descending the Mississippi, had been seized, and imprisoned at Natchez; and a retaliatory seizure of the Spanish post at Vincennes had been effected by citizens of the United States. According to all appearances, an immediate war with Spain, for the navigation of the Mississippi, or a compromise of the question by negotiation, was the only alternative, which Congress had before them, and here again appeared a melancholy manifestation of the imbecility of the Union under the Articles of Confederation.

A diplomatic agent of the lowest order, under the title of *Encargado de Negocios*, had been appointed by the king of Spain to reside in the United States, and had been with much formality received by Congress, in July, 1785. Though possessed of full powers to conclude a treaty, he had not the rank of a Minister Plenipotentiary, and his title, otherwise unexampled in European diplomacy, was significant of the estimation in which his Catholic Majesty held

the new American Republic. Immediately after his reception, the Secretary of Congress for Foreign Affairs, John Jay, of New York, was commissioned to negotiate with the Spanish *Encargado*; but instructed, previously to his making propositions to the Spaniard, or agreeing with him on any article, compact, or convention, to communicate the same to Congress. On the 25th of August ensuing, this instruction was repealed, and another substituted in its place, directing him, in his plan of treaty, particularly to stipulate the right of the United States to their territorial bounds and the free navigation of the Mississippi, from the source to the ocean, as established in their treaties with Great Britain; and to conclude no treaty, compact, or convention with Mr. Gardoqui, without previously communicating it to Congress, and receiving their approbation.

The navigation of the Mississippi soon proved an insurmountable bar, to the progress of the negotiation. It was, *de facto*, interdicted by Spain. The right to it could be enforced only by war, and violence on both sides had already taken place. Spain denied the right of the people of the United States to navigate the Mississippi, as pertinaciously, and in as lofty a tone as Great Britain, denies to us, on the same pretence, to this day, the right of navigating the St. Lawrence. After many ineffectual conferences with the Spanish negociator, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs requested further instructions from Congress, and in a personal address to that body, recommended to them a compromise with Spain, by the proposal of a commercial treaty, in which, for an adequate equivalent of commercial advantages to the

United States, they, without renouncing the right to the navigation of the Mississippi, should stipulate a forbearance of the exercise of that right for a term of twenty-five or thirty years, to which the duration of the treaty should be limited.

This proposal excited the most acrimonious and irritated struggle between the delegations from the northern and southern divisions of the Union, which had ever occurred. The representation from the seven northern states, unanimously agreeing to authorize the stipulation recommended by the Secretary, and the five southern states, with the exception of one member, being equally earnest for rejecting it. The state of Delaware was not then represented. In the animated and passionate debates, on a series of questions originating in this inauspicious controversy, the delegates from Massachusetts, and among them especially Rufus King, took a warm and distinguished part in favour of the proposition of the Secretary, while the opposition to it, was maintained with an earnestness equally intense, and with ability not less powerful, by the delegation from Virginia, and among them, pre-eminently, by Mr. MONROE. In reviewing, at this distance of time, the whole subject, a candid and impartial observer cannot fail to perceive that much of the bitterness which mingled itself unavoidably in the contest, arose from the nature of the confederacy, and the predominant obligation under which each delegate felt himself to maintain the interests of his own state and section of the Union. The adverse interests and opposite views of policy brought into conflict by these transactions, produced a coldness and mutual alienation between the

northern and southern divisions of the Union which is not extinguished to this day. It gave rise to rankling jealousies and festering prejudices, not only of the north and south against each other, but of each section against the ablest and most virtuous patriots of the other. As by the articles of confederation, no treaty could be concluded but with the concurrence of nine states, the authority to make the proposal recommended by the Secretary was not given. The negotiation with Spain was transferred to the government of the United States, as organized by the present National Constitution. The right of navigating the Mississippi from its source to the ocean, with a deposit at New Orleans, was within seven years thereafter, conceded to the United States by Spain, in a solemn treaty, and within twenty years from the negotiation with the *Encargado*, the Mississippi himself with all his waters and all his shores, had passed from the dominion of Spain, and become part of the United States.

In all the proceedings, relating to the navigation of the Mississippi, from the reception of Mr. Gardoqui, till the acquisition of Louisiana and its annexation to the United States, the agency of Mr. MONROE was conspicuous above all others. He took the lead in the opposition to the recommendation of Mr. Jay. He signed, in conjunction, with another eminent citizen of the State of New-York, Robert R. Livingston, the Treaty which gave us Louisiana: and, during his administration, as President of the United States, the cession of the Floridas was consummated. His system of policy, relating to this great interest, was ultimately crowned with complete success. That

which he opposed, might have severed or dismembered the Union. Far be it from me ; far, I know, would it be from the heart of Mr. MONROE himself, to speak it, in censure of those illustrious statesmen, who, in the infancy of the nation, and in the helplessness of the Confederation, preferred a temporary forbearance of a merely potential and interdicted right, to the apparent and imminent prospect of unavoidable war. Let those who would censure them look to the circumstances of the times, and to the honest partialities of their own bosoms, and then extend to the memory of those deceased benefactors of their country that candour, in the construction of conduct and imputation of motives, which they will hereafter assuredly need, themselves.

It was in the heat of the temper, kindled by this cause of discord, in the federal councils, that Mr. MONROE resigned his commission, as a judge between the states of Massachusetts and New-York. The opinions of both those states, indeed coincided together, in variance from that which he entertained upon the absorbing interest of the right to navigate the Mississippi. But he beheld their countenance—"that it was not toward him as before." He felt there was no longer the same confidence in the dispositions of north and south to each other, which had existed when the selection of him had been made ; and he withdrew from the invidious duty of deciding between parties, with either of whom he no longer enjoyed the satisfaction of a cordial harmony.

By the Articles of Confederation, no delegate in Congress, was eligible to serve more than three years in six. Toward the close of 1786, the term of

Mr. MONROE'S service, in that capacity, expired. During that term, and while Congress were in session at New York, he formed a matrimonial connexion with Miss Kortright, daughter of Mr. L. Kortright, of an ancient and respectable family of that state. This lady, of whose personal attractions and accomplishments, it were impossible to speak in terms of exaggeration, was, for a period little short of half a century, the cherished and affectionate partner of his life and fortunes. She accompanied him in all his journeyings through this world of care, from which, by the dispensation of Providence, she had been removed only a few months before himself. The companion of his youth was the solace of his declining years, and to the close of life enjoyed the testimonial of his affection, that with the external beauty and elegance of deportment, conspicuous to all who were honoured with her acquaintance, she united the more precious and endearing qualities which mark the fulfilment of all the social duties, and adorn with grace, and fill with enjoyment, the tender relations of domestic life.

After his retirement from service in the Confederation Congress, assuming, with a view to practice at the bar, a temporary residence at Fredericksburg, he was almost immediately elected to a seat in the Legislature of Virginia; and the ensuing year, to the Convention, summoned, in that Commonwealth, to discuss and decide upon the Constitution of the United States.

Mr. MONROE was deeply penetrated with the conviction that a great and radical change, in the Articles of Confederation, was indispensable, even for the

preservation of the Union. But, in common with Patrick Henry, George Mason, and many other patriarchs of the Revolution, his mind was not altogether prepared for that which was, in truth, a revolution, far greater than the severance of the United American Colonies from Great Britain: a revolution accomplishing that which the Declaration of Independence had only conceived and proclaimed: substituting a Constitution of Government for a people, instead of a mere Confederation of States. So great and momentous was this change, so powerful the mass of patriotism and wisdom, as well as of interest, prejudice, and passion, arrayed against it, that we should hazard little, in considering the final adoption and establishment of the Constitution, as the greatest triumph of pure and peaceful intellect, recorded in the annals of the human race. By the Declaration of Independence, the people of the United States had assumed and announced to the world their united personality as a Nation, consisting of thirteen Independent States. They had thereby assumed the exercise of primitive sovereign power: that is to say, the sovereignty of the people. The administrative power of such a people, could, however, be exercised only by delegation. Their first attempt was to exercise it by confining the powers of *government*, to the separate members of the Union, and delegating only the powers of a *confederacy* to the collective body. This experiment was deliberately and thoroughly made and totally failed. In other ages and other climes the consequences of that failure would have been anarchy: complicated and long continued wars: perhaps, ultimately, one consolidated military monarchy—elective or hereditary:

perhaps two or three confederacies—always militant ; with border wars, occasionally intermitted, with barrier treaties, impregnable fortresses, rivers hermetically sealed, and the close sea of a Pacific Ocean. One Standing Army would have bred its antagonist, and between them they would have engendered a third, to sit like chaos at the gates of Hell,

“ Umpire of the strife,
And, by decision, more embroil the fray.”

Not so, did the people of the North American Union. They adhered to their first experiment of Confederacy, till it was falling to pieces, in its immedicable weakness. After frequent, long and patient ineffectual struggles, to sustain, and strengthen it, a small and select body of them, by authority of a few of the State Legislatures, convened together to confer upon the evils, which the country was suffering, and to consult upon the remedy to be proposed. This body advised the Assembly of a Convention, in which all the States should be represented. Eleven of them did so assemble, with Washington at their head ; with Franklin, Madison, Hamilton, King, Langdon, Sherman, John Rutledge, and compeers of fame, scarcely less resplendent, for members. They immediately perceived that the Union, and a mere Confederacy, were incompatible things. They proposed, prepared, and presented, for acceptance, a Constitution of Government for the whole people : a plan, retaining so much of the federative character, as to preserve, unimpaired, the independent and wholesome action of the separate State Governments ; and infusing into the whole body the vital energy necessary for free and efficient action upon

all subjects of common interest and national concernment. This plan was then submitted to the examination, scrutiny, and final judgment, of the people, assembled by Representative Conventions, in every State of the Confederacy. To the small portion of my auditory, whose memory can retrace the path of time back to that eventful period, I appeal for the firm belief that, when that plan was first exhibited to the solemn consideration of the people, though presented by a body of men, enjoying a mass of public confidence, far greater than any other, of equal numbers, then living, could have possessed, it was yet, by a considerable, not to say a large numerical, majority, of the whole people, sincerely, honestly, and heartily, disapproved. It was disapproved, not only by all those who perseveringly adhered to the rejection of it, but by great numbers of those who reluctantly voted for accepting it; considering it then as the only alternative to a dissolution of the Union: and, of those who voted for it, of its most ardent and anxious supporters, it may, with equal confidence, be affirmed, that no one ever permitted his imagination to anticipate, or his hopes to conceive the extent of the contrast in the condition of the North American people, under that new social compact, with what it had been under the Confederation which it was to supersede.

It was, doubtless, among the dispensations of a wise and beneficent Providence, that the severe and pertinacious investigation of this Constitution, as a whole, and in all its minutest parts, by the Conventions of all the States, and in the admirable papers of the Federalist, should precede its adoption and es-

tablishment. It may be truly said to have passed through an ordeal of more than burning ploughshares. Never, in the action of a whole people, was obtained so signal a triumph of cool and deliberate judgment, over ardent feeling, and honest prejudices: and never was a people more signally rewarded for so splendid an example of popular self-controul.

That Mr. MONROE, then, was one of those enlightened, faithful, and virtuous patriots, who opposed the adoption of the Constitution, can no more detract from the eminence of his talents, or the soundness of his principles, than the project for the temporary abandonment of the right to navigate the Mississippi, can impair those of the eminent citizens of New-York and Massachusetts, by whom that measure was proposed. During a Statesman's life, an estimate of his motives will necessarily mingle itself with every judgment upon his conduct, and that judgment will often be swayed more by the concurring or adverse passions of the observer, than by reason, or even by the merits of the cause. Candour, in the estimate of motives, is rarely the virtue of an adversary; but it is an indispensable duty before the definitive tribunal of posthumous renown.

When in the legislature of Virginia, the question was discussed upon calling a State Convention to decide upon the Constitution of the United States, Mr. MONROE took no part in the debate. He then doubted of the course which it would be most advisable to pursue. Whether to adopt the Constitution in the hope that certain amendments which he deemed necessary, would afterwards be obtained, or to suspend the decision upon the Constitution itself, un-

til those amendments should have been secured. When elected to the Convention, he expressed those doubts to his constituents assembled at the polls; but his opinion, having afterwards and before the meeting of the Convention, settled into a conviction, that the amendments should precede the acceptance of the Constitution, he addressed to his constituents a letter, stating his objections to that instrument, which letter was imperfectly printed, and copies of it were sent by him to several distinguished characters, among whom were Gen. Washington, Mr. Jefferson, and Mr. Madison, who viewed it with liberality and candour.

In the Convention, Mr. MONROE took part in the debate, and in one of his speeches entered fully into the merits of the subject. He was decidedly for a change, and a very important one, in the then existing system; but the Constitution reported, had in his opinion defects requiring amendment, which should be made before its adoption.

The Convention, however, by a majority of less than ten votes of one hundred and seventy, resolved to adopt the Constitution, with a proposal of amendments to be engrafted upon it. Such too, was the definitive conclusion in all the other states, although two of them lingered one or two years after it was in full operation by authority of all the rest, before their acquiescence in the decision.

By the course which Mr. MONROE had pursued on this great occasion, although it left him for a short time in the minority, yet he lost not the confidence either of the people, or of the Legislature of Virginia. At the organization of the government of the United

States, the first senators from that state, were Richard Henry Lee, and William Grayson. The decease of the latter in December 1789, made a vacancy which was immediately supplied by the election of Mr. MONROE; and in that capacity he served until May, 1794, when he was appointed, at the nomination of President Washington, Minister Plenipotentiary to the Republic of France.

The two great parties which so long divided the feelings and the councils of our common country, under the denominations of Federal and Anti-federal, originated with the Union. The Union itself had been formed by the impulse of an attraction irresistible as the adamant of the magnet and scarcely less mystical. It was an union however of subject colonies, then making no claim or pretension to sovereign power. But from the hour of the Declaration of Independence, it became necessary to provide for the perpetuity of the Union and to organize the administration of its affairs. The extent of power to be conferred on the representative body of the Union, became from that instant an object of primary magnitude, dividing opinions and feelings. Union was desired by all—but many were averse even to a confederacy. They would have had a league or alliance, offensive and defensive, but not even a permanent confederacy or Congress. It was the party which anxiously urged the adoption of the Articles of *Confederation*, who thereby acquired the appellation of Federalists, as their adversaries were known by the name of Anti-federalists. To shew the influence of names over things, we may remark that when the Constitution of the United States was debated, it

formed the first great and direct issue between the parties, which retained their names, but had in reality completely changed sides. The Federalists of the Confederacy had abandoned that sinking ship. They might then with much more propriety have been called Nationalists. The real Federalists were the opposers of the Constitution ; for they adhered to the principle, and most of them would have been willing to amend the Articles of Confederation. This incongruity of name shortly afterwards became so glaring, that the Anti-federalists laid theirs aside, and assumed the name sometimes of Republicans and sometimes of Democrats. The name of *Republicans* is not a suitable denomination of a party of the United States, because it implies an offensive and unjust imputation upon their opponents, as if they were not also Republicans. The truth is, as it was declared by Thomas Jefferson, all are, and all from the Declaration of Independence have been, Republicans. Speculative opinions in favour of a more energetic government on one side, and of a broader range of Democratic rule on the other, have doubtless been entertained by individuals, but both parties have been disposed to exercise the full measure of their authority when in power, and both have been equally refractory to the mandates of authority when out. In the primitive principles of the parties, the Federalists were disposed to consider the first principle of Society to be the preservation of order ; while their opponents viewed the benefit above all others in the enjoyment of liberty. The first explosion of the French Revolution, was cotemporaneous with the first organization of the government of the United

States ; and France and Great Britain were shortly afterwards involved in a war of unparalleled violence and fury. It was a war of opinions ; in which France assumed the attitude of champion for freedom, and Britain that of social order throughout the civilized world. While under these pretences, all sense of justice was banished from the councils and conduct of both ; and both gave loose to the frenzy of boundless ambition, rapacity, and national hatred and revenge. The foundations of the great deep were broken up. The two elementary principles of human society were arrayed in conflict with each other, and not yet, not at this hour is that warfare accomplished. Freedom and order were also the elementary principles of the two parties in the American Union, and as they respectively predominated, each party sympathized with one or the other of the great European combatants. And thus the party movements in our own country became complicated with the sweeping hurricane of European politics and wars. The division was deeply seated in the cabinet of Washington. It separated his two principal advisers, and he endeavoured without success, to hold an even balance between them. It pervaded the councils of the Union, the two Houses of Congress, the Legislatures of the States, and the people throughout the land. The first partialities of the nation were in favour of France ; prompted both by the remembrances of the recent war for American Independence, and by the impression then almost universal, that her cause was identified with that which had so lately been our own. But when Revolutionary France became one great army ; when the first commentary upon her procla-

mations of freedom, and her disclaimer of conquest, was the annexation of Belgium to her territories; when the blood of her fallen monarch was but a drop of the fountains that spouted from her scaffolds, when the goddess of liberty, in her solemn processions, was a prostitute; when open atheism was avowed and argued in her hall of legislation, and the existence of an Omnipotent God, was among the DECREES of her National Convention, then horror and disgust took the place of admiration and hope in the minds of the American Federalists. Then France became to them an object of terror and dismay, and Britain, as her great and stedfast antagonist, the solitary anchor of their hope—the venerated bulwark of their religion.

At the threshold of the war, Washington, not without a sharp and portentous struggle in his cabinet, followed by sympathetic and convulsive throes, throughout the Union, issued a Proclamation of Neutrality. Neutrality was the policy of his administration, but neutrality was not in the heart of any portion of the American people. They had taken their sides, and the Republicans and the Federalists had now become, each at least in the view of the other, a French and a British faction.

Nor was the neutrality of Washington more respected by the combatants in Europe, than it was congenial to the feelings of his countrymen. The champion of *freedom* and the champion of *order* were alike regardless of the rights of others. They trampled upon all neutrality from the outset. The press-gang, the rule of the war of 1756, and the order in council, combined to sweep all neutral com-

merce from the ocean. The requisition, the embargo, and the maximum left scarcely a tatter of un-plundered neutral property in France. Britain, without a blush, interdicted all neutral commerce with her enemy. France, under the dove-like banners of fraternity sent an Envoy to Washington, with the fraternal kiss upon his lips, and the piratical commission in his sleeve; with the pectoral of righteousness on his breast, and the trumpet of sedition in his mouth. Within one year from the breaking out of hostilities between Britain and France, the outrages of both parties upon the peaceful citizens of this Union, were such as would have amply justified war against either, and left to the government of Washington no alternative, but that of war or reparation. At the commencement of the war, the United States were represented in France and England by two of their most distinguished citizens, both, though in different shades, of the Federal school; by Thomas Pinckney at London, and by Gouverneur Morris in France. The remonstrances of Mr. Pinckney against the frantic and reckless injustice of the British government, were faithful, earnest and indefatigable; but they were totally disregarded. Mr. Morris had given irremissible offence to all the revolutionary parties in France, and his recall had been formally demanded. From a variety of causes, the popular resentments in America ran with a much stronger current against Britain than against France, and movements tending directly to war, were in quick succession, following each other in Congress. Washington arrested them by the institution of a special mission to Great Britain. To give it at

once a conciliatory character, and to impress upon the British government a due sense of its importance, the person selected for this mission was John Jay, then Chief Justice of the United States.

JAMES MONROE, was shortly afterwards appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to the Republic of France. In the selection of him, the same principle of conciliation to the government near which he was accredited, had been observed. But Washington was actuated also by a further motive of holding the balance between the parties at home by this appointment. Mr. Jay was of the Federal party, with a bias of inclination favourable to Britain; Mr. MONROE, of the party which then began to call itself the Republican party, inclining to favour the cause of Republican France. This party was then in ardent opposition to the general course of Washington's administration—and that of Mr. MONROE in the Senate had not been inactive. To conciliate that party too, was an object of Washington's most earnest solicitude. From among them he determined that the successor of Mr. Morris, in France, should be chosen, and the members of the Senate of that party were by him informally consulted to designate who of their number would, by receiving the appointment, secure for it their most cordial satisfaction. Their first indication was of another person. Him, Washington, from a distrust of individual character, declined to appoint. But he nominated Mr. MONROE, and the concurrence of the senate in his appointment was unanimous. This incident, hitherto unknown to the public, has been followed by many consequences, some of them perhaps little

suspected, in our history. The discrimination of character in the judgment of the first President of the United States, is alike creditable to him and Mr. MONROE. It was not without hesitation that he availed himself of the preference in his favour, nor without the entire approbation of the party with whom he had acted, including even the individual who had been rejected by the prophetic prepossession of Washington.

The cotemporaneous missions of Mr. Jay to Great Britain, and of Mr. MONROE to France, are among the most memorable events in the history of this Union. There are in the annals of all nations occasions, when wisdom and patriotism, and the brightest candour and the profoundest sagacity, are alike unavailing for success. There are sometimes elements of discord, in the social relations of men, which no human virtue or skill can reconcile. Mr. Jay and Mr. MONROE, each within his own sphere of action, executed with equal faithfulness, perhaps with equal ability, the trust committed to him, in the spirit of his appointment and of his instructions. But neutrality was the duty and inclination of the American administration, and neutrality was what neither of the great European combatants might endure. In the long history of national animosities and hatreds between the French and British nations, there never was a period when they were tinged with deeper infusions of the wormwood and the gall, than at that precise point of time.

Each of the parties, believed herself contending for her national existence ; each proclaimed, perhaps believed, herself the last and only barrier, Britain

against the subversion of social order, France against the subversion of freedom throughout the world.

Mr. Jay, in the fulfilment of his commission, concluded a Treaty with Great Britain, which established, on immovable foundations, the neutrality proclaimed by Washington: it reserved the faithful performance of all the previous engagements of the United States with France; some of which were, in their operation at that time, not consonant with entire neutrality: but, in return for great concessions, on the British side, it yielded some points, also, which bore as little the aspect of neutrality in their operation upon France. Mr. MONROE, himself, favored the cause of France. Both Houses of Congress had passed Resolutions, scarcely consistent, at least, with impartiality, and Washington, under advice, perhaps overruled by the current of popular feeling, afterwards answered an address of the Minister of France, in words of like sympathy with her cause. Arriving in France, at the precise moment when the excesses of the revolutionary parties were on the turning spring tide of their highest flood, Mr. MONROE was received, with splendid formality, in the bosom of the National Convention, when not another civilized nation upon earth, had a recognized representative in France. He there declared, in perfect consistency with his instructions, the fraternal friendship of his country and her government, for the French people, and their devoted attachment to her cause, as the cause of Freedom. The President of the Convention answered him in language of equal kindness and cordiality; though even then so little of real benevolence towards the United States,

was there in the Committee of Public Safety, then the executive power of France, that it was to cut short their protracted deliberations, whether Mr. MONROE should be received at all, that he had addressed himself, in the face of the world, for an answer to that inquiry to the National Convention itself. Strong expressions of kindness are the ordinary common-places of the diplomatic intercourse between nations: and, like the customary civilities of epistolary correspondence between individuals, they are never understood according to the full import of their meaning; but extreme jealousy and suspicion at that time pervaded all the public councils of France.

She professed to be willing that the United States should preserve their neutrality, but she neither respected it herself nor acquiesced in the measures which it dictated. They were no sooner informed that Mr. Jay had signed a Treaty with Lord Grenville, than they began to press Mr. MONROE with importunities to be informed, even before it had been submitted to the American Government, of all its contents.

There is, perhaps, no position more awkward and distressing, than that of being compelled to reject an unreasonable request from those whose friendship it is important to retain; for unreasonable requests are precisely those which will be urged with the greatest pertinacity. To enable Mr. MONROE to decline indulging the Committee with a copy of the Treaty, before it was ratified, he was under the necessity of declining to receive a confidential communication of its contents from Mr. Jay. The difficulties of his

situation became much greater after the Treaty had been ratified, and was made public. The people of the United States were so equally divided, with regard to the merits of the Treaty, that it became the principal object of contention between the parties, and they were bitterly exasperated against each other. The French Government, which, during the progress of these events, had passed from a frantic Committee of Public Safety, to a profligate Executive Directory, took advantage of these dissensions in the American Union. They suspended the operation of the Treaties existing between the United States and France; they issued orders for capturing all American vessels, bound to British Ports, or having property of their enemies on board; their diplomatic correspondence exhibited a series of measures, alike injurious and insulting to the American Government; and they recalled their Minister from the United States, without appointing a successor. It was, perhaps, rather the misfortune of all, than the fault of any one, that the views of Mr. MONROE, with regard to the policy of the American Administration, did not accord with those of President Washington. He thought that France had just cause of complaint; and, called to the painful and invidious task of defending and justifying that which he personally disapproved, although he never, for a moment, forgot the duties of his station, it was, perhaps, not possible that he should perform them entirely to the satisfaction of his Government. He was recalled, towards the close of Washington's administration, and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney was appointed in his place.

To the history of our subsequent controversies with France, until the Peace of Amiens, it will not be necessary for me to advert. Upon Mr. MONROE'S return to the United States, the administration had passed from the hands of President Washington, into those of his successor. In vindication of his own character, Mr. MONROE felt himself obliged to go before the tribunal of the public, and published his "View of the conduct of the Executive in the foreign affairs of the United States, connected with the mission to the French Republic, during the years 1794, '95, and '96.

Upon the propriety of this step, as well as with regard to the execution of the work, opinions were, at the time, and have continued, various. The policy of WASHINGTON, in that portentous crisis in human affairs, is, in the main, now placed beyond the reach of criticism. It is sanctioned by the nearly unanimous voice of posterity. It will abide, in unfading lustre, the test of after ages. Nor will the well-earned fame of Mr. MONROE, for distinguished ability, or pure integrity, suffer from the part which he acted in these transactions. In the fervour of political contentions, personal animosities, belong more to the infirmities of man's nature, than to individual wrong, and they are unhappily sharpened in proportion to the sincerity with which conflicting opinions are avowed. It is the property of wise and honorable minds, to lay aside these resentments, and the prejudices flowing from them, when the conflicts, which gave rise to them, have passed away. Thus it was that the great orator, statesman, and moralist, of antiquity, when reproached for re-

conciliation with a bitter antagonist, declared that he wished his enmities to be transient, and his friendships immortal. Thus it was, that the congenial mind of JAMES MONROE, at the zenith of his public honours, and in the retirement of his latest days, cast off, like the suppuration of a wound, all the feelings of unkindness, and all the severities of judgment, which might have intruded upon his better nature, in the ardour of civil dissension. In veneration for the character of Washington, he harmonized with the now unanimous voice of his country; and he has left recorded, with his own hand, a warm and unqualified testimonial to the pure patriotism, the pre-eminent ability and the spotless integrity of John Jay.

That neither the recall of Mr. MONROE, from his mission to France, nor the publication of his volume, had any effect to weaken the confidence reposed in him by his fellow-citizens, was manifested by his immediate election to the Legislature, and soon afterwards to the office of Governor of Virginia, in which he served for the term, limited by the Constitution, of three years. In the mean time, the Directory of France, with its Council of five hundred, and its Council of Elders, had been made to vanish from the scene, by the magic talisman of a soldier's sword. The Government of France, in point of form, was administered by a Triad of Consuls: in point of fact, by a successful warrior, then Consul for ten years—soon to be Consul for life: hereditary Emperor and King of Italy; with a forehead, burning for a diadem; a soul, inflated by victory; and an imagination, fired with visions of crowns and sceptres,

in prospect before him. He had extorted, from the prostrate imbecility of Spain, the province of Louisiana, and compelled her, before the delivery of the territory to him, to revoke the solemnly stipulated privilege, to the citizens of the United States, of a deposit at New-Orleans. A military colony was to be settled in Louisiana, and the materials, for an early rupture with the United States, were industriously collected. The triumph of the republican party, here, had been marked by the election of Thomas Jefferson to the Presidency: just before which, our previous controversies with France had been adjusted by a Treaty of Amity and Commerce, and shortly after which, a suspension of arms, between France and Britain, had been concluded, under the fallacious name of a Peace at Amiens. The restless spirit of Napoleon, inflamed, at the age of most active energy in human life, by the gain of fifty battles, dazzling with a splendour, then unrivalled but by the renown of Cæsar, breathing, for a moment, in the midway path of his career, the conqueror of Egypt, the victor of Lodi, and of Marengo, the trampler upon the neck of his country, her people, her legislators, and her constitution, was about to bring his veteran legions, in formidable proximity, to this Union. The transfer of Louisiana to France, the projected military colony, and the occlusion, at that precise moment, of the port of New-Orleans, operated like an electric shock, in this country. The pulse of the West, beat, instaneously, for war: and the antagonists of Mr. Jefferson, in Congress, sounded the trumpet of vindication to the rights of the nation; and, as they perhaps flattered themselves, of downfall to his administration. In this

crisis, Mr. Jefferson, following the example of his first predecessor, on a similar occasion, instituted a special and extraordinary mission to France; for which, in the name of his country, and of the highest of human duties, he commanded, rather, than invited, the services and self-devotion of Mr. MONROE. Nor did he hesitate to accept the perilous, and, at that time, most unpromising charge. He was joined, in the Commission Extraordinary, with Robert R. Livingston, then Resident Minister Plenipotentiary, from the United States, in France, well known as one of the most eminent leaders of our Revolution. Mr. MONROE'S appointment was made on the eleventh of January, 1803; and, as Louisiana was still in the possession of Spain, he was appointed, also, jointly with Charles Pinckney, then Minister Plenipotentiary, of the United States at Madrid, to an Extraordinary Mission to negotiate, if necessary, concerning the same interest there. The intended object of these negotiations was to acquire, by purchase, the island of New-Orleans, and the Spanish territory, east of the Mississippi. Mr. Livingston had, many months before, presented to the French Government a very able memorial, shewing, by conclusive arguments, that the cession of the Province to the United States, would be a measure of wise and sound policy, conducive not less to the true interests of France than to those of the Federal Union. At that time, however, the memoir was too widely variant from the wild and gigantic projects of Napoleon.

How often are we called, in this world of vicissitudes, to testify that

“ There ’s a Divinity, who shapes our ends,
Rough hew them how we will.”

When Mr. MONROE arrived in France, all was changed in the Councils of the Tuileries. The volcanic crater was re-blazing to the skies. The war between France and Britain was rekindling, and the article of most immediate urgency to the necessities of the first consul was money. The military colony of twenty thousand veterans already assembled at Helovet-Sluis to embark for Louisiana, received another destination. The continent of America was relieved from the imminent prospect of a conflict with the modern Alexander, and Mr. Monroe had scarcely reached Paris, when he and his colleague were informed that the French government had resolved for an adequate compensation in money, to cede to the United States, the whole of Louisiana. The acquisition, and the sum demanded for it, transcended the powers of the American Plenipotentiaries, and the amount of the funds at their disposal; but they hesitated not to accept the offer. The negotiation was concluded in a fortnight. The ratifications of the treaty, with those of a convention appropriating part of the funds created by it to the adjustment of certain claims of citizens of the United States upon France, were within six months exchanged at Washington, and the majestic valley of the Mississippi, and the rocky mountains, and the shores of the Pacific Ocean became integral parts of the North American Union.

From France, immediately after the conclusion of the treaties, Mr. MONROE proceeded to England where he was commissioned as the successor of Rufus King

in the character of Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States. Mr. King was, at his own request, returning to his own country, after a mission of seven years, in which he had enjoyed the rare advantage of giving satisfaction alike to his own government, and to that to which he was accredited. Mr. MONROE carried with him the same dispositions, and had the temper of the British government continued to be marked with the same good humour and moderation which had prevailed during the mission of Mr. King, that of Mr. MONROE would have been equally successful. But with the renewal of the war revived the injustice of belligerent pretensions, followed by the violence of belligerent outrages upon neutrality. After the conclusion of the treaty with Mr. Jay, and especially towards the close of the preceding war, the British government had gradually abstained from the exercise of those outrages which had brought them to the verge of a war with the United States, and at the issue of a correspondence with Mr. King, had disclaimed the right of interference with the trade between neutral ports and the colonies of her enemies. Just before the departure of Mr. King, a convention had been proposed by him in which Britain abandoned the pretension of right to impress seamen, which failed only by a captious exception for the narrow seas, suggested by a naval officer, then at the head of the admiralty. But after the war recommenced, the odious pretensions and oppressive practices of unlicensed rapine returned in its train. In the midst of his discussions with the British government on these topics, Mr. MONROE was called away to the discharge of his extraordinary mission to Spain.

In the retrocession of Louisiana, by France to Spain, no limits of the province had been defined. It was retroceded with a reference to its original boundaries as possessed by France, but those boundaries had been a subject of altercation between France and Spain, from the time when Louis the 14th had made a grant of Louisiana to Crozat. Napoleon took this retrocession of the province, well aware of the gordian knot with which it was bound, and fully determined to sever it with his accustomed solvent the sword. His own cession of the province to the United States, however, relieved him from the necessity of resorting to this expedient, and proportionably contracted in his mind the dimensions of the province. He ceded Louisiana to the United States without waiting for the delivery of possession to himself, and used with regard to the boundary in his grant, the very words of the conveyance to him by Spain. The Spanish government solemnly protested against the cession of Louisiana to the United States, alledging that in the very treaty by which France had reacquired the province she had stipulated, never to cede it away from herself. Soon admonished, however, of her own helpless condition, and encouraged to transfer her objections from the cession to the boundary, she withdrew her protest against the whole transaction, and took ground, upon the disputed extent of the province. The original claim of France had been from the Perdido East to the Rio Bravo West of the Mississippi. Mobile had been originally a French settlement, and all West Florida, was as distinctly within the claim of France, as the Mouth of the Mississippi first discovered by

La Salle. Such was the understanding of the American Plenipotentiaries, and of Congress who accordingly authorised President Jefferson to establish a collection district on the shores, waters and inlets of the bay and river Mobile, and of rivers both East and West of the same. But Spain on her part reduced the province of Louisiana to little more than the Island of New-Orleans. She assumed an attitude menacing immediate war; refused to ratify a convention made under the eye of her own government at Madrid, for indemnifying citizens of the United States, plundered under her authority during the preceding war. Harrassed and ransomed the citizens of the Union and their property on the waters of Mobile; and marched military forces to the borders of the Sabine, where they were met by troops of the United States, with whom a conflict was spared only by a temporary military convention between the respective commanders. It was at this emergency that Mr. MONROE proceeded from London to Madrid to negotiate together with Mr. Pinckney, upon this boundary, and for the purchase of the remnant of Spain's title to the territory of Florida. He passed through Paris on his way, precisely at the time to witness the venerable Pontiff of the Roman Church invest the brows of Napoleon with the hereditary imperial Crown of France, in the Cathedral of Nôtre Dame. While in Paris, Mr. MONROE addressed to the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Talleyrand, a letter reminding him of a promise somewhat indefinite, at the time of the cession of Louisiana, that the good offices of France, in aid of a negotiation with Spain for the acquisition of Florida should be

yielded: stating that he was on his way to Madrid to enter upon that negotiation, and claiming the fulfilment of that promise of France. He also presented the view taken by the government of the United States, that the limits of Louisiana as ceded by France to them extended from the Perdido to the Rio Bravo. This letter was promptly answered by the Minister Talleyrand, with an earnest argument in behalf of the *Spanish* claim of boundary Eastward of the Mississippi, but expressing no opinion with regard to her pretensions Westward of that river. His Imperial Majesty had discovered, not only that West Florida formed no part of the Territory of Louisiana; but that he never had entertained such an idea, nor imagined that a retrocession of the province as it had been possessed by France, could include the District of Mobile. This argument was pressed with so much apparent candour and sincerity, that it may give interest to the anecdote which I am about to relate as a commentary upon it. It happened that a member of the Senate of the United States was at New Orleans, when the Commissioner of Napoleon authorized to receive possession of the province arrived there, and before the cession to the United States. This commissioner in conversation with the American senator, told him that the military colony from France might be soon expected. That there was perhaps some difference of opinion between the French and Spanish governments as to the boundary; but that when the colony arrived, his orders were quietly to take possession to the Perdido and leave the diversities of opinion to be afterwards discussed in the Cabinet. This anecdote was related on the

floor of the Senate of the United States, by the member of that body, who had been a party to the conversation.

But with this forgetful change of opinion in the new crowned head of the Imperial Republic, there was little prospect of success for the mission of Mr. MONROE at Madrid; to which place he proceeded. There in the space of five months, together with his colleague Charles Pinckney, he unfolded the principles, and discussed the justice of his country's claims, in correspondence and conferences with the Prince of the Peace, and Don Pedro Cevallos with great ability, but without immediate effect. The questions which Napoleon would have settled by the march of a detachment from his military colony, were to abide their issue by the more lingering, and more deliberate march of time. The state papers which passed at that stage of the great controversy with Spain, remained many years buried in the archives of the governments respectively parties to it. They have since been published at Washington; but so little of attraction have diplomatic documents of antiquated date, even to the wakeful lovers of reading, that in this enlightened auditory how many—might I not with more propriety inquire how few there are, by whom they have ever been perused? It is nevertheless due to the memory of Mr. MONROE and of his colleague to say that among the creditable state papers of this nation they will rank in the highest order:—that they deserve the close and scrutinizing attention of every American statesman, and will remain solid, however unornamented, monuments of intellectual power

applied to national claims of right, in the land of our fathers and the age which has now passed away.

In June 1805, Mr. MONROE returned to his post at London, where new and yet more arduous labours awaited him. A new ministry, at the head of which Mr. Pitt returned to power, had succeeded the mild but feeble administration of Mr. Addington, and Lord Mulgrave as Minister for Foreign Affairs, had taken the place of the Earl of Harrowby. The war between French and British ambition was spreading over Europe, and Napoleon, by threats and preparations, and demonstrations of a purposed invasion of Great Britain, had aroused the spirit of that island to the highest pitch of exasperation. Conscious of their inability to contend with him upon the continent of Europe, confident in their unquestionable but not then unquestioned supremacy over him upon the ocean, the British government saw with an evil eye, the advantages which the neutral nations were deriving from their commercial intercourse with France and her allies. Little observant of any principle but that of her own interest, British policy then conceived the project of substituting a forced commerce between her own subjects and their enemies, by annihilating the same commerce enjoyed by her enemies through the privileged medium of the neutral flag. In her purposes of manifesting for her own benefit the superiority of her power upon the seas, British policy, has, as her occasions serve, a choice of expedients. In the present instance, for the space of two full years, she had suffered neutral navigation to enjoy the benefit of principles in the law of nations, formerly recognized by herself, in the correspondence between Mr. King and

Lord Hawkesbury, shortly before the close of the preceding war. In the confidence of this recognition, the commerce and navigation of the United States had grown and flourished beyond all former example, and the ocean whitened with their canvass. Suddenly, as if by a concerted signal throughout the world of waters which encompass the globe, our hardy and peaceful, though intrepid mariners, found themselves arrested in their career of industry and skill; seized by the British cruizers; their vessels and cargoes conducted into British ports, and by the spontaneous and sympathetic illumination of British Courts of Vice Admiralty, adjudicated to the captors, because they were engaged in a trade with the enemies of Britain, to which they had not usually been admitted in time of peace. Mr. MONROE had scarcely reached London, when he received a report from the Consul of the United States at that place, announcing that about twenty of their vessels, had, within a few weeks been brought into the British ports on the Channel, and that by the condemnation of more than one of them, the Admiralty Court had settled *the principle*.

And thus was revived the stubborn contest between neutral rights and belligerent pretensions, which had sown, for so many years, thickets of thorns in the path of the preceding administrations; which Washington had with infinite difficulty avoided, and which his successor had scarcely been fortunate enough to avoid. And from that day to the peace of Ghent, the biography of JAMES MONROE is the history of that struggle, and in a great degree the history of this nation—an eventful period in the

annals of mankind ; a deeply momentous crisis in the affairs of our Union. A rapid sketch of the agency of Mr. MONROE in several successive and important stations, through this series of vicissitudes, is all that the occasion will permit, and more, I fear, than the time accorded by the indulgence of my auditory will allow. The controversy was opened by a note of mild, but indignant remonstrance from Mr. MONROE to the Earl of Mulgrave, answered by that nobleman verbally, with excuse, apology, qualified avowal, equivocation, and a promise of written discussion, which never came. Mr. Pitt died ; his ministry was dissolved, and he was succeeded as the head of the administration, by the great rival and competitor of his fame, Charles Fox. In the mean time the navies of France and Spain had been annihilated at Trafalgar, and the imperial crowns of Muscovy and of Austria, had cowered under the blossoming sceptre of the soldier of fortune at Austerlitz. Mr. Fox, liberal in his principles but trammelled by the passions, prejudices, and terrors of his countrymen and his colleagues, disavowed the new practice of capturing neutrals, and the new principles in the Admiralty Courts which had so simultaneously made their appearance : but Mr. Fox issued a paper blockade of the whole coast, from the Elbe to Brest. He revoked the orders under which the British cruizers had swept the seas, and released the vessels already captured, upon which the sentence of the Admiralty had not been passed, but he demurred to the claim of indemnity for adjudications already consummated. Of the excitement and agitation, raised in our country by this inroad upon the

laws of nations and upon neutral commerce, an adequate idea can now scarcely be conceived. The complaints, the remonstrances, the appeals for protection to Congress, from the plundered merchants, rung throughout the Union. A fire spreading from Portland to New Orleans, would have scarcely been more destructive. Memorial upon memorial, from all the cities of the land, loaded the tables of the Legislative Halls, with the cry of distress and the call upon the national arm for defence, restitution and indemnity. Mr. Jefferson instituted again a special and extraordinary mission to London, in which William Pinkney, perhaps the most eloquent of our citizens then living, was united with Mr. MONROE. Had Mr. Fox lived, their negotiation might have been ultimately successful. While he lived, the cruizers upon the seas and the Admiralty Courts upon the shores, suspended their concert of depredation upon the American commerce, and a treaty was concluded between the Ministers of our country, and Plenipotentiaries selected by Mr. Fox, which, with subsequent modifications, just and reasonable, suggested on our part, might have restored peace and harmony, so far as it can subsist, between emulous and rival nations. As transmitted to this country, however, the treaty was deemed by Mr. Jefferson, not to have sufficiently provided against the odious impressment of our seamen, and it was clogged with a declaration of the British Plenipotentiaries, delivered after the signature of the treaty, suspending the obligation upon an extraneous and inadmissible condition. Mr. Jefferson sent back the treaty for revisal, but the mature and conciliatory

spirit of Fox, was no longer to be found in the councils of Britain. It had been succeeded by the dashing and flashy spirit of George Canning. He refused to resume the negotiation. Under the auspices, not of positive orders, but of the well known *temper* of his administration, Berkley committed the unparalleled outrage upon the Chesapeake—disavowed, but never punished. Then came the orders in council of November 1807; the proclamation to sanction man-stealing from American merchantmen by royal authority; and the mockery of an olive branch in the hands of George Rose—our embargo; the liberal and healing arrangement of David Erskine, disavowed by his government as soon as known—but not unpunished; a minister fresh from Copenhagen, sent to administer the healing medicine for Erskine's error, in the shape of insolence and defiance. Insult and injury followed each other in foul succession, till the smiling visage of Peace herself, flushed with resentment, and the Representatives of the nation responded to the loud and indignant call of their country for *war*. When the British government refused to resume the negotiation of the treaty, the Extraordinary Mission in which MONROE and Pinckney had been joined, was at an end. Mr. MONROE, even before the commencement of that negotiation, had solicited and obtained permission to return home—a determination, the execution of which had by that special joint mission been postponed. He suffered a further short detention, in consequence of the exploit of Admiral Berkley upon the Chesapeake, and returned to the United States at the

close of the year 1807. After a short interval passed in the retirement of private life, he was again elected Governor of Virginia, and upon the resignation of Robert Smith, was in the spring of 1811, appointed by President Madison, Secretary of State. This office he continued to hold during the remainder of the double Presidential term of Mr. Madison, with the exception of about six months at the close of the late war with Great Britain, when he discharged the then still more arduous duties of the War Department. On the return of peace he was restored to the Department of State; and on the retirement of Mr. Madison in 1817, he was elected President of the United States—re-elected without opposition in 1821. On the third of March, 1825, he retired to his residence in Loudon county, Virginia. Subsequent to that period, he discharged the ordinary judicial functions of a magistrate of the county, and of curator of the University of Virginia. In the winter of 1829 and '30, he served as a member of the Convention called to revise the Constitution of that Commonwealth; and took an active part in their deliberations; over which he was unanimously chosen to preside. From this station, he was, however, compelled, before the close of the labours of the Convention, by severe illness, to retire. The succeeding summer, he was, in the short compass of a week, visited by the bereavement of the beloved partner of his life, and of another near, affectionate, and respected relative. Soon after these deep and trying afflictions, he removed his residence to the city of New-York; where, surrounded by filial solicitude and tender-

ness, the flickering lamp of life held its lingering flame, as if to await the day of the nation's birth and glory; when the soldier of the Revolution, the statesman of the Confederacy, the chosen chieftain of the constituted nation, sunk into the arms of slumber, to awake no more upon earth, and yielded his pure and gallant spirit to receive the sentence of his Maker.

Of the twenty years, which intervened between his first appointment, as Secretary of State, and his decease, to give even a summary, would be to encroach beyond endurance upon your time: He came to the Department of State at a time, when war, between the United States and Great Britain, was impending and unavoidable. It was a crisis in the affairs of this Union full of difficulty and danger. The Constitution had never before been subjected to the trial of a formidable foreign war; and one of the greatest misfortunes, which attended it, was the want of unanimity in the country for its support. This is not the occasion to revive the dissensions which then agitated the public mind. It may suffice to say that, until the war broke out, and during its continuance, the duties of the offices held by Mr. MONROE, at the head, successively, of the Departments of State and War, were performed with untiring assiduity, with universally acknowledged ability, and, with a zeal of patriotism, which counted health, fortune, and life itself, for nothing, in the ardour of self-devotion to the cause of his country. It is a tribute of justice to his memory to say, that he was invariably the adviser of energetic councils; nor is the conjecture hazardous, that, had his ap-

pointment to the Department of War, preceded, by six months, its actual date, the heaviest disaster of the war, heaviest, because its remembrance must be coupled with the blush of shame, would have been spared as a blotted page in the annals of our Union. It should have been remembered, that, in war, heedless security, on one side, stimulates desperate expedients on the other; and that the enterprise, surely fatal to the undertaker, when encountered by precaution, becomes successful achievement over the helplessness of neglected preparation. Such had been the uniform lesson of experience in former ages; such had it, emphatically, been in our own Revolutionary War. Strange, indeed, would it appear, had it been forgotten by one who had so gloriously and so dearly purchased it at Trenton. By him it was not forgotten: nor had it escaped the calm and deliberate foresight of the venerable patriot, who then presided in the executive chair; and, at this casual and unpremeditated remembrance of him, bear with me, my fellow-citizens, if, pausing for a moment from the contemplation of the kindred virtues of his successor, co-patriot, and friend, I indulge the effusion of gratitude, and of public veneration, to share in your gladness, that he yet lives—lives to impart to you, and to your children, the priceless jewel of his instruction: lives in the hour of darkness, and of danger, gathering over you, as if from the portals of eternity, to enlighten, and to guide.

Among the severest trials of the war, was the deficiency of adequate funds to sustain it, and the progressive degradation of the national credit. By an

unpropitious combination of rival interests, and of political prejudices, the first Bank of the United States, at the very outset of the war, had been denied the renewal of its charter: a heavier blow of illusive and contracted policy, could scarcely have befallen the Union. The polar-star of public credit, and of commercial confidence, was abstracted from the firmament, and the needle of the compass wandered at random to the four quarters of the heavens. From the root of the fallen trunk, sprang up a thicket of perishable suckers—never destined to bear fruit: the offspring of summer vegetation, withering at the touch of the first winter's frost. Yet, upon them was our country doomed to rely: it was her only substitute for the shade and shelter of the parent tree. The currency soon fell into frightful disorder: Banks, with fictitious capital, swarmed throughout the land, and sponged the purse of the people, often for the use of their own money, with more than usurious extortion. The solid Banks, even of this metropolis, were enabled to maintain their integrity, only by contracting their operations to an extent ruinous to their debtors, and to themselves. A balance of trade, operating like universal fraud, vitiated the channels of intercourse between North and South: and the Treasury of the Union was replenished only with countless millions of silken tatters, and unavailable funds: chartered corporations, bankrupt, under the gentle name of suspended specie payments, and without a dollar of capital to pay their debts, sold, at enormous discounts, the very evidence of those debts; and passed off, upon the Government of their country, at par, their rags—

purchasable, in open market, at depreciations of thirty and forty per cent. In the meantime, so degraded was the credit of the nation, and so empty their Treasury, that Mr. MONROE, to raise the funds indispensable for the defence of New-Orleans, could obtain them only by pledging his private individual credit, as subsidiary to that of the nation. This he did without an instant of hesitation, nor was he less ready to sacrifice the prospects of laudable ambition, than the objects of personal interest, to the suffering cause of his country.

Mr. MONROE was appointed to the Department of War, towards the close of the campaign of 1814. Among the first of his duties, was that of preparing a general plan of military operations for the succeeding year: a task rendered doubly arduous by the peculiar circumstances of the time. When the war, between the United States and Britain, had first kindled into flame, Britain, herself, was in the convulsive pangs of a struggle, which had often threatened her existence, as an independent nation—in the twentieth year of a war, waged with agonizing exertions, which had strained, to the vital point of endurance, all the sinews of her power, and absorbed the resources, not only of her people then on the theatre of life, but of their posterity, for long after-ages. In the short interval of two years, from the commencement of her war with America, in a series of those vicissitudes by which a mysterious Providence rescues its impenetrable decrees from the presumptuous foresight of man, Britain had transformed the mightiest monarchies of Europe, from inveterate enemies into devoted allies; and,

in the metropolis of her most dreaded, and most detested foe, was dictating to him terms of humiliation, and lessons of political morality. The war had terminated in her complete and unqualified triumph; her numerous victorious veteran legions, flushed with the glory, and stung with the ambition of long-contested, and heard-earned, success, were turned back upon her hands, without occupation for their enterprise, eager for new fields of battle, and new rewards of achievement. Ten thousand of these selected warriors had already been detached from her multitudes in arms, commanded by a favorite lieutenant, and relative of Wellington, to share the beauty and booty of New-Orleans, and to acquire, for a time which her after-consideration and interest were to determine, the mastery of the Mississippi, his waters, and his shores. The fate of this gallant host, sealed in the decrees of heaven, had not then been consummated upon earth. They had not matched their forces with the planters and ploughmen of the western wilds—nor learnt the difference between a struggle with the servile and mercenary squadrons of a military conqueror, and a conflict with the free-born defenders of their firesides, their children, and their wives. Besides that number of ten thousand, she had myriads more at her disposal—burdens at once upon her gratitude and her revenues, and to whom she could furnish employment and support, only by transporting them to gather new laurels, and rise to more exalted renown upon the ruins of our Union.

Such was the state of affairs, and such the prospects of the coming year when immediately after

the successful enterprise of the enemy upon our metropolis, Congress was convened upon the smoking ruins of the Capitol, and Mr. MONROE was called, without retiring from the duties of the Department of State, to assume in addition to them those of presiding over the Department of War. Such was the emergency for which it became his duty to prepare and mature plans of military operations. It is obvious that they must be far beyond the range of the ordinary means and resources on which the government of the Union had been accustomed to rely. They were such as to call forth not only the voluntary but the unwilling and reluctant hand of the citizen to defend his country. They summoned the Legislative voice of the Union to *command* the service of her sons. The army, already authorized by Acts of Congress had risen in numbers to upwards of sixty thousand men: Mr. MONROE proposed to increase it to one hundred thousand, besides auxiliary military force; and, in addition to all the usual allurements to enlistment, to levy all deficiencies of effective numbers, by drafts upon the whole body of the people. This resort, though familiar to the usages of our own revolutionary war, was now in the clamours of political opposition, assimilated to the conscriptions of revolutionary France and of Napoleon. It was obnoxious not only to the censure of all those who disapproved the war, but to the indolent, the lukewarm and the weak. It sent the recruiting officer to ruffle the repose of domestic retirement. It authorized him alike to unfold the gates to the magnificent mansion of the wealthy and to lift the latch

of the cottage upon the mountains. It sounded the trumpet in the nursery. It rang "to arms" in the bed-chamber. Mr. MONROE was perfectly aware that the recommendation to Congress of such a plan, must at least for a time deeply affect the personal popularity of the proposer. He believed it to be necessary, and indispensable to the triumph of the cause. The time for the people to prepare their minds for fixing the succession to the presidential chair was approaching. Mr. MONROE was already prominent among the names upon which the public sentiment was now concentrating itself as a suitable candidate for the trust. It was foreseen by him, that the purpose of defeating the plan, would connect itself with the prospects of the ensuing presidential election, and that the friends of rival candidates, otherwise devoted to the most energetic prosecution of the war, might take a direction adverse to the adoption of the plan, not from the intrinsic objections against it, but from the popular disfavour which it might shed upon its author. After consultation with some of his confidential friends, he resolved in the event of the continuance of the war, to withdraw his name at once from the complicated conflicts of the canvass, by publicly declining to stand a candidate for election to the presidency. He had already authorized one or more persons distinguished in the councils of the Union, to announce this as his intention, which would have been carried into execution, but that the motives by which it was dictated, were suspended by the conclusion of the peace.

That event was the æra of a new system of pol-

icy, and new divisions of parties in our federal Union. It relieved us from many of the most inflammatory symptoms of our political disease. It disengaged us from all sympathies with foreigners predominating over those due to our own country. We have now, neither in the hearts of personal rivals, nor upon the lips of political adversaries the reproach of devotion to a French or a British faction. If we rejoice in the triumph of European arms, it is in the victories of the cross over the crescent. If we gladden with the native countrymen of LaFayette or sadden with those of Pulaski and Kosciusko, it is the gratulation of freedom rescued from oppression, and the mourning of kindred spirits over the martyrs to their country's independence. We have no sympathies but with the joys and sorrows of patriotism; no attachments but to the cause of liberty and of man.

The first great object of national policy, upon the return of peace was the redemption of the Union from fiscal ruin. This was in substance accomplished during the remnant of Madison's administration, principally by the reestablishment of a National Bank, with enlarged capacities and capital: enacted by Congress under the recommendation of the Executive, not through the Department, but with the concurrence of Mr. MONROE. He upon the cessation of the war, had retired from the easy though laborious duties of its department, and devoted all his faculties to the political intercourse of the nation with all others. There was a remnant of war with the pirates of Algiers, to which the gallant and lamented Decatur carried peace and

freedom from tribute forever, at the mouth of the cannon of a single frigate. There were grave and momentous negotiations of commerce, of fisheries, of boundary, of trade with either India, of extinction to the slave trade, of South American freedom, of indemnity for enticed and depredated slaves, with Great Britain; others on various topics scarcely less momentous with France, with Spain, with Sweden; and with almost every nation of Europe there were claims unadjusted for outrages and property plundered *upon the seas*, or, with more shameless destitution of any just or lawful pretext, in their own ports. There was a system of policy to be pursued with regard to the embryo states of Southern America, combining the fulfilment of the duties of neutrality, with the rightful furtherance of their emancipation.

Turning from the foreign to the domestic interests of the united republic, there were objects rising to contemplation not less in grandeur of design; not less arduous in preparation for the effective agency of the national councils.

The most painful, perhaps the most profitable lesson of the war was the primary duty of the nation to place itself in a state of permanent preparation for self-defence. This had been the doctrine and the creed of Washington, from the first organization of the government. It had been encountered by opposition so determined and persevering, sustained by prejudices so akin to reason and by sensibilities so natural to freemen, that all the influence of that great and good man, aided by the foresight, and argument and earnest solicitude of

his friends to carry it into effect had proved abortive. An extensive and expensive system of fortification upon our shores; an imposing and well constituted naval establishment upon the seas, had been urged in all the ardour and sincerity of conviction by the federalists of the Washington school, not only without producing upon the majority of the nation the same conviction, but with the mortification of having their honest zeal for the public welfare turned as an engine of personal warfare upon themselves. By the result of this course of popular feelings, it happened that when the war in all its terrors and all its dangers came, it was to be managed and supported by those who to the last moment preceding it, had resisted, if not all, at least all burdensome and effective preparation for meeting it. A solemn and awful responsibility was it, that they incurred; and with brave and gallant bearing did they pass through the ordeal which they had defied. Well was it for them that a superintending Providence shaped the ends, rough-hewn by them: but it produced conviction upon their minds; and it overcame the repugnances of the people. A combined system of efficient fortification arming the shores and encircling the soil of the republic, and the gradual establishment of a powerful navy, were from the restoration of the peace unto his latest hour, among the paramount and favorite principles in the political system of Mr. MONROE for the government of the Union. In these objects, he had the good fortune to be supported as well by the opinions of his immediate predecessor, as by the predominant sentiments of the

people. The system in both its branches was commenced in the administration and with the full concurrence of Mr. Madison. It has continued without vital modification to this day. May it live and flourish through all the political conflicts, to which you may be destined hereafter, and survive your children's children, till augury becomes presumption.

There was yet another object of great and national interest, brought conspicuously into view by the war, which pressed its unwieldy weight upon the Councils of the Union, from the conclusion of the peace. It was the adaptation of the just and impartial action of the federal government to the various interests of which the Union is composed, with regard to revenue, to the payment of the public debt, to the industrious pursuits of the farmer and planter, of the pioneers of the wilderness, of the merchant and navigator, of the manufacturer and mechanic, and of the intellectual labourer of the mind, including all the learned professions and teachers of literature, religion and morals. To all this, a system of legitimate and equal governmental action was to be adapted; and vast and comprehensive as the bare statement of it will present itself to your minds, it was rendered still more complicated by the necessity of accommodating it, to the adverse operation upon the same interests of foreign and rival legislation through the medium of commercial intercourse with our country. At the very moment of the peace, the occasion was seized of tendering to *all* the commercial nations of Europe a system of intercourse founded upon entire reciprocity, and a liberal and perfect equalization of impost and tonnage duties. This offer was very partially accepted,

but has gradually extended itself to several of the European nations, and to all those of Southern America. It is yet incomplete, and its destiny hereafter is uncertain. It must perhaps ever so remain, as it must forever depend upon the enduring and concurrent will of other independent nations. The fair, the free, the fraternal system is that of entire reciprocity; and as the principles flowing from these impulses speed their progress in the civilization of man, there are grounds for hope that they may in process of time, universally prevail.

But there were other interests of high import calling for the legislative action to support them. The war had cut off the supply to a great extent of many articles of foreign manufacture, of universal consumption, and necessary for the enjoyment of the comforts of life. This had necessarily introduced large manufacturing establishments, to which the application of heavy masses of capital had been made. The competition of foreign manufactures of the same articles, aided by bounties and other encouragements from their own governments, would have crushed in their infancy all such establishments here, had they not been supported by some benefaction from the authority of the Union. The adventurer in the Western territories, needed the assistance of the national arm to his exertions for converting the wilderness into a garden. Secure from the assaults of foreign hostility, the whole people had leisure to turn their attention to the improvement of their own condition. And hence the protection of domestic industry and the improvement of the internal communications between the portions of the Union re-

mote from each other, formed an associated system of policy, embraced by many of our most distinguished citizens, and pursued with sincere and ardent patriotism. This system, however, was destined to encounter two obstacles of the gravest and most formidable character. The first, a question how far the people of the Union had delegated to their general government the *power* of providing for *their* welfare, of promoting their happiness, of improving *their* condition? The second, whether domestic industry and internal improvement, limited by localities less extensive than the whole Union can be protected and promoted without sacrifice of the interests of one portion of the Union for the benefit of another. The divisions of opinion and the collisions of sentiment upon these points have been festering since the first advances of the system, till they have formed an imposthume in the body politic threatening its total dissolution. (Mr. MONROE's opinion was, that the power of establishing a general system of internal improvement, had not been delegated to Congress; but that the power of levying and appropriating money for purposes of national importance, military or commercial, or for transportation of the mail was among their delegated trusts. These subjects have been discussed under various forms in the deliberations of Congress from that period to the present day, and they are yet far from being exhausted. An appropriation of ten millions of dollars annually to the discharge of the principal and interest of the public debt, was one of the earliest measures of Mr. Madison's administration after the peace, and that purpose steadily pursued has reduced that national bur-

den to so small an amount, that the total extinction of the debt can scarcely be protracted beyond a term of two or three years from this time.

On the retirement of Mr. Madison from the office of chief magistrate in 1817, Mr. MONROE was elected by a considerable majority of the suffrages in the electoral colleges as his successor. This election took place at a period of tranquillity in the public mind, of which there had been no previous example since the second election of Washington. To this tranquillity, many concurring causes, such as are never likely to meet again, contributed, and among them, of no inferior order was the existing state of the foreign, and especially the European world. It continued through the four years of his first Presidential term, at the close of which he was re-elected without a show of opposition, and by the voice little less than unanimous of the whole people. These halcyon days were not destined to endure. The seeds of new political parties were latent in the withering cores of the old. New personal rivalries were shooting up from the roots of those which had been levelled with the earth. New ambitions were kindling from beneath the embers that had ceased to smoke. No new system of policy, had marked the administration of Mr. MONROE. The acquisition of the Floridas had completed that series of negotiations (perhaps it were no exaggeration to say, of Revolutions) which had commenced under the confederation with the Encargado de Negocios of Spain. Viewed as a whole, throughout its extent, can there be a doubt in considering it as the most magnificent supplement to our national Independence presented

by our history, and will there arise an historian of this Republican empire, who shall fail to perceive or hesitate to acknowledge, that throughout the long series of these transactions, which more than doubled the territories of the North-American Confederation, the leading mind of that great movement in the annals of the world, and thus far in the march of human improvement upon earth, was the mind of JAMES MONROE?

In his Inaugural Address, delivered according to a prevailing usage, upon his induction to office, he took a general view of the existing condition and general interests of the nation, and marked out for himself a path of policy, which he faithfully pursued. The first of the objects to which he declared that his purposes would be directed, was the preparation of the country for future defensive war. Fortification of the coast and inland frontiers—peace establishments of the army and navy, with an improved system of regulation and discipline for the militia, were the means by which this was to be effected, and to which his indefatigable labours were devoted. The internal improvement of the country, by roads and canals; the protection and encouragement of domestic manufactures; the cultivation of peace and friendship with the Indian tribes—tendering to them, always, the hand of cordiality, and alluring them by good faith, kindness, and beneficent instruction, to share and to covet the blessings of civilization; a prudent, judicious, and economical, administration of the Treasury; with the profitable, and, at the same time liberal, management of the public lands, then first beginning to disclose their active and appreciat-

ing value, as national property : all these were announced as the interests of the great community, which he surveyed as committed to his charge, and to the faithful custody and advancement of which, his unremitting exertions should be directed : and never was pledge with more entire self-devotion redeemed.

At the first Session of Congress, after his election to the Presidency, Mr. MONROE deemed it his duty, in his annual message to that body, to declare to them his opinion, that the power to establish a system of Internal Improvement by the construction of roads and canals, was not possessed by Congress. But, being also opinion, that no country of such vast extent ever offered equal inducements to improvements of this kind, and that, never were consequences, of such magnitude, involved in them, he earnestly recommended to Congress, to urge upon the States the adoption of an amendment which should confer the right upon them ; and with it, the right of instituting seminaries of learning, for the all-important purpose of diffusing knowledge among our fellow-citizens throughout the United States. Of the adoption of such an amendment, if proposed at that time, he scarcely entertained a doubt ; but a majority of both Houses of the National Legislature, were firmly of opinion that this power had already been granted : nor has the majority of any Congress, since that time, been enabled to conciliate the conclusions that a power, competent to the annexation of Louisiana to this Union, was incompetent to the construction of a post-road, to the opening of a canal, or to the diffusion of the light of Heaven upon the mind of after-ages, by the institution of seminaries of learning.

Notwithstanding the manifestation of these opinions of Mr. MONROE, a subsequent Congress did pass an act for the maintenance and reparation of the Cumberland Road, and for the erecting of toll-gates upon it. Firm and consistent in the constitutional views which he had taken, he deemed it his duty to apply to this act his presidential arresting power; and, in returning the Bill to the House where it originated, justified his exercise of prerogative in an able and elaborate exposition of the reasons of his opinions. This work, probably, contains whatever of argument the intellectual power of man can eviscerate from reason, against the exercise, by Congress, of the contested power. It arrested, to a considerable extent, the progress of Internal Improvement; and, succeeded by similar scruples in the mind of one of his successors, has held them in abeyance to this day.

The opinions of JAMES MONROE upon doubtful or controverted points of Constitutional Law, can never cease to be deserving of profound respect. They were never lightly entertained. They were always deliberate, always disinterested, always sincere. At a subsequent period of his administration, as it drew towards its close, a modification suggested itself to his mind, warranting a compromise between the doctrines of those who invoked the beneficent action of Congress for national improvement, and of those who denied to the Supreme Councils of the nation the right of conferring blessings upon the people. In his annual Message to Congress on the 2d of December 1823, he announced his belief that Congress did possess the power of *appropriating money* for the construction of a Canal to connect together the waters of the Chesapeake and the Ohio (the juris-

diction remaining to the States through which the Canal would pass.) This of course included the concession of the same right of appropriating money for all other like objects of national interest, and it was accompanied with a recommendation to Congress to consider the expediency of authorizing by an adequate appropriation the employment of a suitable number of the Officers of the Corps of Engineers, to examine the unexplored ground during the ensuing season, and to report their opinion thereon; extending also their examination to the several routes through which the waters of the Ohio, might be connected, by Canals, with those of Lake Erie. Under this recommendation, an Act of Congress was passed, and on the 30th of April, 1824, received the signature of Mr. MONROE, appropriating the sum of thirty thousand dollars; authorizing and enabling the President of the United States, to cause the necessary surveys, plans and estimates to be made of the routes of such Roads and Canals as he might deem of national importance, in a commercial or military point of view, or necessary for the transportation of the public mail; designating in the case of each Canal, what parts might be made capable of sloop navigation. The results of the surveys to be laid before Congress. And the President was authorized to employ Civil Engineers, with such officers of the several military corps in the public service as he might detail for that service, to accomplish the purposes of the Act.

“ Sink down, ye mountains! and ye vallies—rise !”

Rise! Rise, before your forefathers, here assembled, ye unborn ages of after-time. Rise! and bid the feeble and perishing voice, which now addresses

them, proclaim your gratitude to your and their Creator, for having disposed the hearts of that portion of their Representatives, who then composed their Supreme National Council, to the passage of that Act. Exult and shout for joy! Rejoice! that, if for you, there are neither Rocky Mountains, nor Oasis of the Desert, from the rivers of the Southern Ocean to the shores of the Atlantic Sea: Rejoice! that, if for you, the waters of the Columbia mingle in union with the streams of the Delaware, the lakes of the St. Lawrence, and the floods of the Mississippi: Rejoice! that, if for you, every valley has been exalted, and every mountain and hill has been made low, the crooked straight, and the rough places plain: Rejoice! that, if for you, Time has been divested of his delays, and Space disburthened of his obstructions: Rejoice! that, if for you, the distant have been drawn near, and the repulsive allured to mutual attraction: That, if for you, the North American Continent swarms with unnumbered multitudes; of hearts, beating as if from one bosom; of voices, speaking but with one tongue; of freemen, constituting one confederated and united Republic; of brethren, never to rise, nation against nation, in hostile arms; of brethren, to fulfil the blessed prophecy of ancient times, that war shall be no more: to the power of applying the superfluous revenues of these, your fore-fathers, by their representatives in the Congress of this Union, to the improvement of *your* condition, you are, under God, indebted for the enjoyment of all these unspeakable blessings.

The system of Internal Improvement, then, though severely checked, by the opinion that the people of this Union have practically denied to themselves the

power of bettering their own condition, by restraining their Government from the exercise of the faculties, by which alone it can be made effective, was commenced under the administration of JAMES MONROE : commenced with his sanction : commenced at his earnest recommendation. And if, in after-ages, every leaf, in the chaplet of his renown, shall be examined by the scrutinizing eye of grateful memory, to find, in the perennial green of all, one of more unfading verdure than the rest, that leaf shall unfold itself from the stem of Internal Improvement.

It is not within the scope of your intention, nor is it the purpose of this discourse, to review the numerous and important Acts of Mr. MONROE'S administration. In the multitude of a great nation's public affairs, there is no official act of their Chief Magistrate, however momentous, or however minute, but should be traceable to a dictate of duty, pointing to the welfare of the people. Such was the cardinal principle of Mr. MONROE. In his first address, upon his election to the Presidency, he had exposed the general principles by which his conduct, in the discharge of his great trust, would be regulated. In his second Inaugural Address, he succinctly reviewed that portion of the career through which he had passed, fortunately sanctioned by public approbation ; and promised perseverance in it, to the close of his public service. And, in his last annual Message to Congress, on the seventh of December, 1824, announcing his retirement from public life, after the close of that session of the Legislature, he reviewed the whole course of his administration, comparing it with the pledges which he had given at its commencement, and at its middle term, appealing to the

judgment and consciousness of those whom he addressed, for its unity of principle as one consistent whole, not exempt indeed, from the errors and infirmities incident to all human action, but characteristic of purposes always honest and sincere, of intentions always pure, of labours outlasting the daily circuit of the sun, and outwatching the vigils of the night—and what *he* said not, but a faithful witness is bound to record; of a mind anxious and unwearied in the pursuit of truth and right; patient of inquiry; patient of contradiction; courteous, even in the collision of sentiment; sound in its ultimate judgments; and firm in its final conclusions.

Such my fellow citizens was JAMES MONROE. Such was the man, who presents the only example of one whose public life, commenced with the War of Independence, and is identified with all the important events of your history from that day forth for a full half century. And now, what is the purpose for which we have here assembled to do honour to his memory? Is it to scatter perishable flowers upon the yet unsodded grave of a public benefactor? Is it to mingle tears of sympathy and of consolation, with those of mourning and bereaved children? Is it to do honour to ourselves, by manifesting a becoming sensibility, at the departure of one, who by a long career of honour and of usefulness has been to us all as a friend and brother? Or is it not rather to mark the memorable incidents of a life signalized by all the properties which embody the precepts of virtue and the principles of wisdom? Is it not to pause for a moment from the passions of our own bosoms, and the agitations of our own interests, to survey in its whole extent the long and little-beaten path of

the great and the good : to fix with intense inspection our own vision, and to point the ardent but unsettled gaze of our children upon that resplendent row of cresset lamps, fed with the purest vital air, which illuminate the path of the hero, the statesman and the sage. Have you a son of ardent feelings and ingenuous mind, docile to instruction, and panting for honorable distinction ? point him to the pallid cheek and agonizing form of JAMES MONROE, at the opening blossom of life, weltering in his blood on the field of Trenton, for the cause of his country. Then turn his eye to the same form, seven years later, in health and vigour, still in the bloom of youth, but seated among the Conscript Fathers of the land to receive entwined with all its laurels the sheathed and triumphant sword of Washington. Guide his eye along to the same object, investigating by the midnight lamp, the laws of nature and nations, and unfolding them, at once with all the convictions of reason and all the persuasions of eloquence to demonstrate the rights of his countrymen to the contested Navigation of the Mississippi, in the Hall of Congress. Follow him with this trace in his hand, through a long series of years, by laborious travels and intricate Negotiations, at Imperial Courts, and in the Palaces of Kings, winding his way amidst the ferocious and party coloured Revolutions of France, and the life-guard favourites and Camarillas of Spain. Then look at the Map of United North America, as it was at the definitive peace of 1783. Compare it with the map of that same Empire as it is now ; limited by the Sabine and the Pacific Ocean, and say, the change, more than of any other man, living or dead, was the work of JAMES MONROE. See him

pass successively from the Hall of the Confederation Congress to the Legislative Assembly of his native Commonwealth; to their Convention which ratified the Constitution of the North American people; to the Senate of the Union; to the Chair of Diplomatic Intercourse with ultra Revolutionary France; back to the Executive honours of his native state; again to embassies of transcendant magnitude, to France, to Spain, to Britain; restored once more to retirement and his country; elevated again to the highest trust of his State; transferred successively to the two preeminent Departments of Peace and War, in the National Government; and at the most momentous crisis burthened with the duties of both—and finally raised, first by the suffrages of a majority, and at last by the unanimous call of his countrymen to the Chief Magistracy of the Union. There behold him for a term of eight years, strengthening his country for defence by a system of combined fortifications, military and naval, sustaining her rights, her dignity and honour abroad; soothing her dissensions, and conciliating her acerbities at home; controuling by a firm though peaceful policy the hostile spirit of the European Alliance against Republican Southern America; extorting by the mild compulsion of reason, the shores of the Pacific from the stipulated acknowledgment of Spain; and leading back the imperial autocrat of the North, to his lawful boundaries, from his hastily asserted dominion over the Southern Ocean. Thus strengthening and consolidating the federative edifice of his country's Union, till he was entitled to say like Augustus Cæsar of his imperial city, that he had found her built of brick and left her constructed of marble.

In concluding this discourse, permit me, fellow citizens to revert to the sentiment with which it commenced ; and if it be true that a superintending Providence, adapts the talents and energies of men to the trials by which they are to be tested, it is fitting for us to be admonished that the trial may also be adapted to the talents destined to meet it. Our country by the bountiful dispensations of gracious Heaven, is, and for a series of years has been blessed with profound peace ; but when the first father of our race had exhibited before him by the Archangel sent to announce his doom and to console him in his fall, the fortunes, and the misfortunes of his descendants, he saw that the deepest of their miseries would befall them, while favoured with all the blessings of peace, and in the bitterness of his anguish he exclaimed

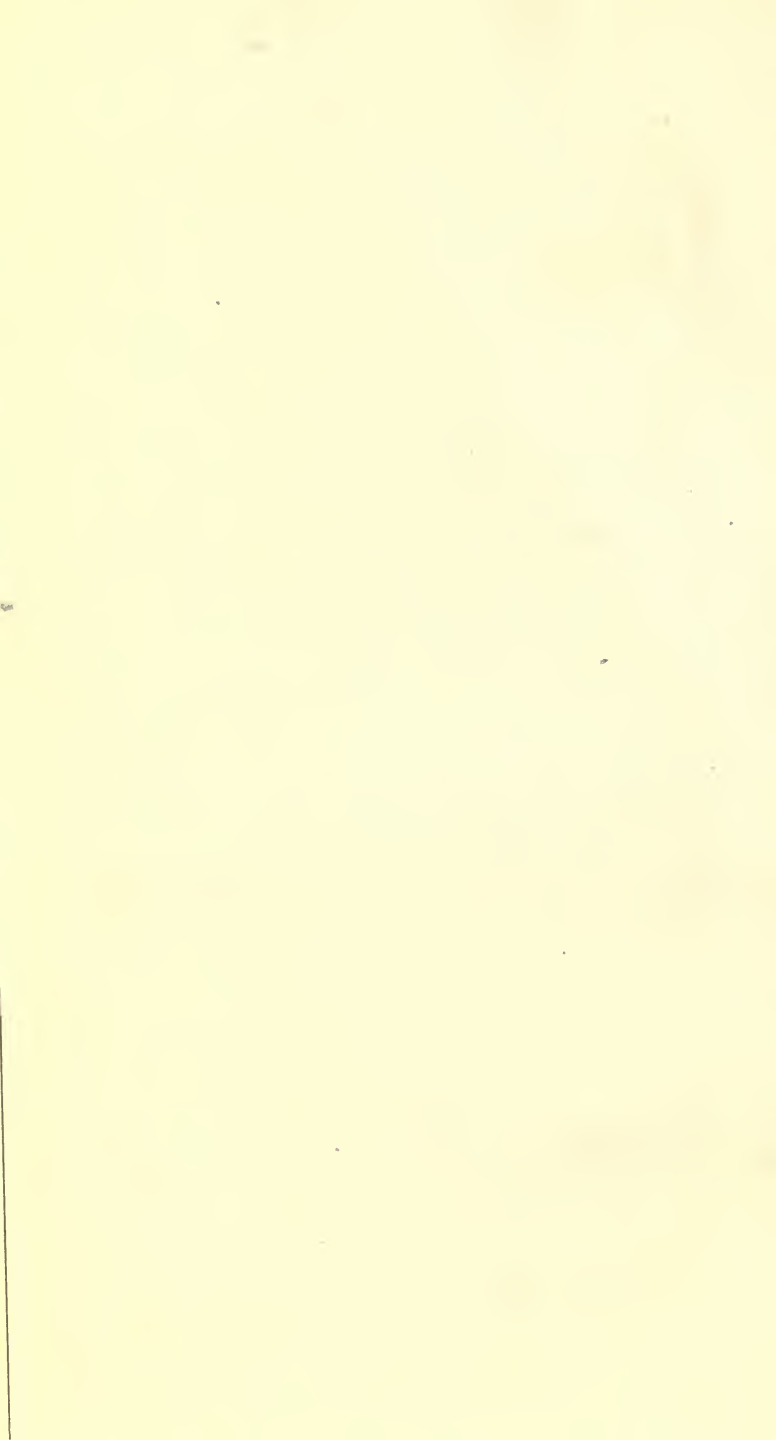
“ Now I see
Peace to corrupt, no less than war to waste.”

It is the very fervour of the noon-day sun, in the cloudless atmosphere of a summer sky, which breeds

“ the sweeping whirlwind’s sway,
That, hush’d in grim repose, expects his evening prey.”

You have insured the gallant ship, which ploughs the waves, freighted with your lives and your children’s fortunes, from the fury of the tempest above, and from the treachery of the wave beneath. Beware of the danger against which you can alone insure yourselves—the latent defect of the gallant ship herself. Pass but a few short days, and forty years will have elapsed since the voice of him, who addresses you, speaking to your fathers, from this hallowed spot, gave for you, in the face of Heaven, the solemn pledge, that if, in the course of your career

upon earth, emergencies should arise, calling for the exercise of those energies and virtues which, in times of tranquillity and peace, remain, by the will of Heaven, dormant in the human bosom, you would prove yourselves not unworthy of the sires who had toiled and fought and bled, for the independence of their country. Nor has that pledge been unredeemed. You have maintained, through times of trial and of danger, the inheritance of freedom, of union, of independence, bequeathed you by your forefathers. It remains for you only to transmit the same peerless legacy, unimpaired, to your children of the next succeeding age. To this end, let us join in humble supplication, to the Founder of empires and the Creator of all worlds, that he would continue to your posterity, the smiles which his favour has bestowed upon you: and since "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," that he would enlighten and lead the advancing generation in the way they should go. That in all the perils and all the mischances which may threaten or befall our United Republic, in after times, he would raise up from among your sons, deliverers to enlighten her Councils, to defend her freedom, and if need be to lead her armies to victory. And should the gloom of the year of Independence ever again overspread the sky, or the metropolis of your empire be once more destined to smart under the scourge of an invader's hand, that there never may be found wanting among the children of your country a warrior to bleed, a statesman to counsel, a chief to direct and govern, inspired with all the virtues, and endowed with all the faculties, which have been so signally displayed in the life of JAMES MONROE.



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