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**MR. QUINCY'S ORATION,**  
delivered before the Washington Benevolent Society of Massachusetts, on the anniversary of the first inauguration of President Washington. Assembled in the name of Washington, we inquire of his spirit concerning our duties. In his life and writings, by precept and example, a spirit responds. "Sons of Washington! Be faithful to your country!" But in times like ours, what is fidelity to our country? His spirit, living in the records of his virtues, replies.—"Sons of Washington! Speak and speak what is true and what is useful."

We yield to the venerated influence and devote this hour, to what is true and what is useful to be known, concerning the condition and prospects of our country. Over these heavy clouds hang. It is a solemn scene; and no time to collect flowers of fancy, or to indulge in sports of the intellect. May the spirit of Washington, rest upon us! May it purify our thought; chasten and rectify every patriotic purpose; elevate our minds, above the poor prospect of present relief, to the general search after future security;—teach us to be as true to our posterity as our fathers were to us; and be to his country.

The circumstances and prospects of our times are best viewed by the light of Washington. What is false or counterfeit, will easily be detected when tried by the standard of his character, conduct and principles. Viewed by his light, what is true of our national rulers, and their principles; and that of our condition. Our rulers,—who are they, and what is true of them? Mr. Madison, President. Mr. Monroe, Secretary of State. Mr. Gallatin, Secretary of the Treasury. Mr. Armstrong, Secretary of War. Every man of them, in Washington's day, the enemies of his policy. All of them laid the foundations of their present elevation, on the ruin of his influence and that of his selected friends. The President is that individual who, for almost eight years, was one of the leaders in the House of Representatives of an opposition to him and his measures, equally bitter and determined. The Secretary of State that individual, who, during the same period, publicly & laboriously, belittled his administration, as wasteful, coward, and (a) "contrary to the public feeling and judgment." Need I tell you of the clerk of the Pittsburgh insurgents, when they "voted unanimously,"—(b) "To withhold all the comforts of life," from officers, acting under his authority? Or, need I name the author, now not denied, of the anonymous letters to the revolutionary army, towards whom, Washington intimated that army (c) "to express their utmost horror and detestation."

condition. For the particular, in which this difference consists, is, in fact, the corner stone of the republican system of government. The theory of which rests upon this basis, that, in its result, the virtue and talents of a country shall preside over its destinies. Whenever this fails; and attachment to a party, or fidelity to a chief, or subservency to a cabal; whenever, as was distinctly avowed, in the outset of the power of these men, other considerations than (d) "honesty, capacity, and fidelity to the constitution," become the criterions of office and appointment, the moral basis of the republic is gone. Its form may, indeed, remain. But its vital spirit has fled. The stream of corruption which once it begins to flow, in a free country, never retreats to its fountain; nor does the spring which feeds it, ever become dry. At first, it winds its way, in secrecy and silence, attracting to its current, only what is light, and hollow, and rotten and feculent; but, soon, gathering boldness, in its course, it advances with an irresistible torrent, and sweeps away every honor of the field and every mound of safety.

Whenever the rulers of a nation become the mere heads of a party, the last and least consideration, with them, is the good of the people.—How to secure their power; how to manage the elections; who is the fittest tool; who will run the fastest, go the farthest, and hold out the longest, for the least wages of corruption, are the only inquiries. To give muscle and durability to their influence is the single end of their political system. For this British antipathies are stimulated. For this British injuries are magnified. For this French affections are cultivated and French insults and injuries palliated, or concealed. For this we had restriction. For this, embargo. For this, we have war.—For this, war shall be continued.—And if peace come, for this peace shall be concluded. For unprincipled ambition, in power, effects not, even public good, except from corrupt motives.

Need I farther illustrate the difference of principle, which distinguishes the present times from those of Washington? Then the spirit of patriotism predominated. Now the spirit of cabal. Then virtue was in high places. Now, there is intrigue. Then we had wisdom for our guide. Now, cunning. Then debate in either house of Congress, had an influence upon public measures. Now, what is to be done, is settled before debate, or without it. A cabinet, or a "caucus," brooding in darkness decides the fate of the country, and a Congress, calling itself free, registers its decree. We have, indeed all the forms of freedom, but, constitutionally speaking, and as far as the measures of the national government have effect, we wear as galling and soul depressing a chain as ever afflicted a people. All this is natural. All is characteristic. All is necessary. The spirit of cabal put down the spirit of Washington, by appealing to base passions and exciting corrupt hopes. A cabal, in power, must maintain its ascendancy by the means through which it was obtained. Base passions must be fostered. Corrupt hopes must be gratified. Power, which lives by corruption, must find or will make, the aliment necessary for its support. It hastens to glut its ravening appetite on our morals, that it may devour our liberties at its leisure.

Such are our rulers and their principles, when viewed by the light and tried by the standard of Washington.

In treating of our condition, I shall not waste the hour in idle regrets or vain criminations. The hand of ruin is upon us and upon our cities.—The deep, and ancient root of the prosperity of Massachusetts is withering. Our commerce, navigation and fisheries are gone. A whirlwind from the west, is passing over those massy pillars of our greatness, and they are, already, prostrate. Lamentation and despair suit not the condition of freemen. Least of all of the freemen of Massachusetts.—To them it belongs to be mindful of the character of their ancestors; men, keen to discern and resolute to

perform their duties; generous spirits, whom power could not tempt, nor fraud ensnare, nor force subdue. The descendants of such men ought to blush, at being satisfied with shuffling along from one mode of oppression to another; & from one stage of corruption to another; each individual happy, if his head escapes the bolt intended for the general ruin; content with life and precarious enjoyment to-day and to-morrow; careless of the long extent of time, which is to come afterward. The grave will soon close upon us and our vain joys and vainer anticipations. You are fathers.—What political inheritance do you leave to your children? Where lie the sources of the evils which we suffer? What are the remedies? What are our duties?

The sources of a people's sufferings, for the most part, lie hidden from casual observation and superficial research. It often requires firmness and fidelity, as well as labor, to penetrate their natures and explore oppression to its fountains. There is, also, a self deception, which, from indolence, or apathy, the love of ease, or of business, mankind, even the best, are perpetually inclined to practice, and which for the most part, makes such inquiries abortive. They mistake effects for causes. Escape from present suffering, for relief from the disease. When, perhaps, it is only that morbid torpor, which precedes ideocy, or madness; that state of nervous imbecility, into which nature sinks, while she prepares fuel for new flames; and collects stimulants, for farther sufferings, and stronger convulsions.

Who, that understands the real condition of our country, can refrain from such reflections, when he hears the greetings, in our places of public resort and the dreams of our newspapers? "What think you? Is not peace coming? The Russian mediation,—will not that be successful? Can loans be obtained? Without loans can the war be protracted?" As if, in this war, was included the sum of our evils! As if this was the cause of our calamities or was any thing else than the symptom of our disease!

Suppose peace. What then? Is confidence restored? Is the anti-commercial spirit of your rulers subdued? Will the double duties be repealed? Can commercial prosperity revive under these impositions? Or, if it revive, for a moment, is there any reason to hope, that the machinations against its vital principles which have now become systematized and already reduced it to the verge of annihilation, will not be repeated; and in other modes, and under more favourable auspices, made successful?

Alas! people of Massachusetts! I cannot conceal the deep conviction of my soul, that peace, itself, desirable as it is and anxiously as every lover of his country ought to pant for it, will be, in truth, only an alleviation from present ills, and will be very far from restoring to your prosperity that solid basis, which a wise people ought to seek, and a powerful people, in the exercise of constitutional rights, to demand.

The sources of our sufferings lie deeper than embargo, or war; great as are both these evils. Washington foresaw and foretold, that these men "would be satisfied with nothing short of a change in our political system." But Washington himself did not foresee, nor could any human eye have foreseen, the change which, in so short a space of time, has been made in the internal relations of this country; much less could he have foreseen the change, which artful construction and interested usurpation have made in the principles of our constitution.

These changes make little noise, and excite less sensation. They are treated as topics of mere curiosity; yet it is the condition of things, which these changes indicate and make permanent, that encourages the spirit and emboldens the policy of the ruling cabal; that makes intrigue and corruption the necessary instruments of power; and renders commercial embarrassments, modified indeed, by occasional circumstan-

ces, inevitably perpetual, as an essential means of success in the projects of its ambition.

I speak under the sanction of the spirit of Washington. He has told us that "experience is the surest standard by which to test the real tendency of the existing constitution of a country." He taught us "to resist with care the spirit of innovation upon its principles." He instructed us that "the spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to treat, whatever the form of government, a real despotism." And his paternal voice now warns us, as from the grave, against "change by usurpation, as the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed."

I shall speak concerning the changes, which time and usurpation have produced in our political condition; I shall explain their effect upon our present and future prosperity; and inquire concerning the remedies, for the evils, which we suffer.

It is a notorious fact, that, partly by the operation of the slave ratio in the constitution, and partly by the unexampled emigrations, into the west, the proportions of political power, among the states of this country, have changed, since the adoption of the Federal constitution. In a degree, as unanticipated, as the result is eventful and ominous.—On the proportion of its political power, in an association like ours, does the safety of every state, which is a member of it, depend.—And reason teaches, and safety requires, that this proportion should have some reference to the nature and greatness of its interests. I shall have occasion to illustrate these principles, hereafter. I refer to them, at present, only as the basis of this position, that, inasmuch as the safety of every state depends upon its proportion of political power, in an association, it is both the right & the duty of every state to inquire into that matter. A free people have a right, and it is their duty, to inquire into the securities they possess for their liberties and properties; and to see, whether they be such as ought to give content to wise and virtuous minds.—There is nothing mysterious in the fabric of our freedom. There is no divine right of Kings, or Presidents, or Congresses, in the whole compound. By the constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, it is made our duty frequently to resort to first principles. We have not only the right to examine the top and the shaft of the column of our liberties, but, if it appear out of plumb, or out of level, it is made our duty to look at the corner stones and if they are not falling away. I know that when these topics are touched, all the craftsmen, those who make profit by the shrines, and are growing fat on the offal of the sacrifices, are in an uproar; and run about crying, "the constitution is in danger. These things lead to a dissolution of the union. Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" What? Are we not freemen? If, to any individual, the result of our political institutions appear incompatible with general, or particular safety, shall he not speak? How, then, can the evils, which we feel, or fear, be remedied, or prevented? How else can we bring our existing constitution to that test of experience, "which Washington has told us is the surest standard of its real tendency?" In my judgment, concealment, in such case is not so much an error, as a crime. For a crime it is, for a citizen, in a free country to see, or believe that he sees, distinct dangers surrounding the Commonwealth, and be silent concerning them, either through fear or personal responsibility, or in subservency to the apathy, or the prejudices of the times.

Nor is it true that such inquiries tend to the dissolution of the union. On the contrary their natural tendency is to strengthen it. For, if such inquiry result, in the conviction that the rational security, we ought to seek, exists, then surely there is content; and thence strength and thence continuance. But, if the result of the inquiry be that rational security exists no longer, then indeed, this conviction has a tendency to produce a consentaneousness of sentiment and action in the oppressed members of the association; which in its result, we have reason to hope, cannot fail to bring, in a constitutional way, oppressors to a sense of their duty and their interests. If this should not be the case still our duty remains. The duty of freemen, is, frequently, to examine into the basis of their liberties.—Unless indeed, it be asserted which, at this day, and in this country, I think it will hardly be, that a free people are necessarily of that tribe of Issachar, which must crouch under all the burdens imposed upon it; and not open its mouth, whatever be its sufferings, provided its sides are be-laboured, with sticks of a legal size; and with cuts and flourishes practised, according to the forms of a written manual.

The degree, in which the proportions of political power, among the states of this union, have been changed, by time and usurpation, since the adoption of the constitution, admits of a very varied and extensive illustration. I shall confine myself to the statement of one or two facts, rather by way of indicating the state of things than describing it. This cannot be done, in all its relations, within the limits of the present occasion. To show the progress of political power to the south and the west, I state this fact. At the time of the adoption of the federal constitution, the three states, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio, did not exist. Their territories contained somewhat more than one hundred thousand souls; and had no perceptible weight in the national scale. They, now, together, contain a white population, somewhat exceeding that of Massachusetts, O commerce and navigation, they have none; at least none worth the estimate. The revenue of customs, which they have paid since the adoption of the constitution is, scarcely, an item in the books of the treasury. Yet these states, on every question touching the interest of that commerce and navigation, so vital to the prosperity of Massachusetts, have twenty-two votes in the House of Representatives, while she has twenty; and while Massachusetts has two votes in the senate, they have six!

Without reference to other considerations and viewed only in relation to the most familiar notions of equity and equality, is it not monstrous that a mass of population, scarcely more than equal to that of Massachusetts, recent, of twenty years collection, for the most part emigrants from Europe, or the elder states located a thousand miles from the seaboard, knowing nothing of its interests, caring nothing about them, in fact having a direct interest in embarrassing them, should have one tenth more weight in the House of Representatives and three times more, in the Senate, than the ancient, rich, intelligent, powerful population of Massachusetts?—A people, whose institutions, habits, manners, industry, interests and principles, have been nearly two centuries consolidating. A people, who have arts and arms and virtues. A state, which alone possesses nearly half a million of tons of shipping; and all the capital and cultivated intelligence necessary for its employ?

Take another fact. The states of Virginia and Georgia, together, possess a white population but a little exceeding that of Massachusetts. Yet through the effect of the slave ratio, and the principles of the constitution, while Massachusetts possesses, in the Senate and in the House of Representatives, twenty-two votes, they possess thirty-three! All these states, which I have named, Virginia, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee and Ohio, have paid into the Treasury of the U. S. on customs, scarcely more than fifteen millions of dollars, since the adoption of the constitution. (c) The single state of Massachusetts has paid more than forty-two millions net revenue. Yet, upon every question touching the life-blood of our commerce, while Massachusetts, in both branches of the Legislature, has but

(See last page.)

Richard H. Harwood  
DISSOLUTION OF PARTNERSHIP  
The partnership heretofore existing between John Childs and George Shaw, and conducted under the firm of Childs & Shaw, was dissolved by mutual consent on the first day of April. All persons having claims against them, are requested to present them, and those indebted to make immediate payment to the subscriber who is authorized to settle the business of the firm.  
JOHN CHILDS.  
The business will in future be conducted by the subscriber, at the stand occupied by Childs and Shaw, and he hopes by his assiduity in business and attention to please, to merit and receive that patronage which he has heretofore enjoyed.  
JOHN CHILDS.  
May 6.

\* Marshall's life of Washington, 5th vol. p. 34, of the notes.

\* Washington's valedictory address to the people of the United States.