

Speech delivered at the State House in Philadelphia, Aug. 1, 1776.

COUNTRYMEN AND BRETHREN: I would gladly have declined an honor, to which I find myself unequal. I have not the calmness and impartiality which the infinite importance of this occasion demands. I will not deny the charge of my enemies, that resentment for the accumulated injuries of our country, and an ardor for her glory, rising to enthusiasm, may deprive me of that accuracy of judgment and expression which men of cooler passions may possess. Let me beseech you, then, to hear me with caution, to examine without prejudice, and to correct the mistakes into which I may be hurried by my zeal.

Truth loves an appeal to the common-sense of mankind. Your unperverted understandings can best determine on subjects of a practical nature. The positions and plans which are said to be above the comprehension of the multitude may be always suspected to be visionary and fruitless. He who made all men hath made the truths necessary to human happiness obvious to all.

Our forefathers threw off the yoke of popery in religion; for you is reserved the honor of levelling the popery of politics. They opened the Bible to all, and maintained the capacity of every man to judge for himself in religion. Are we sufficient for the comprehension of the sublimest spiritual truths, and unequal to material and temporal ones? Heaven hath trusted us with the management of things for eternity, and man denies us ability to judge of the present, or to know from our feelings the experience that will make us happy. "You can discern," say they, "objects distant and remote, but cannot perceive those within your grasp. Let us have the distribution of present goods, and cut out and manage as you please the interests of futurity. "This day, I trust the reign of political protestantism will commence. We have explored the temple of royalty, and found that the idol we have bowed down to, has eyes which see not, ears that hear not our prayers, and a heart like the nether millstone. We have this day restored the Sovereign, to whom alone men ought to be obedient. He reigns in Heaven, and with a propitious eye beholds his subjects assuming that freedom of thought, and dignity of self-direction which He bestowed on them. From the rising to the setting sun, may His kingdom come.

Having been a slave to the influence of opinions early acquired, and distinctions generally received, I am ever inclined not to despise but pity those who are yet in darkness. But to the eye of reason what can be more clear, than that all men have an equal right to happiness? Nature made no other distinction than that of higher or lower degrees of power of mind and body. But what mysterious distribution of character has

the craft of statesmen, more fatal than priestcraft, introduced?

According to their doctrine, the offspring of perhaps the lewd embraces of a successful invader, shall, from generation to generation, arrogate the right of lavishing on their pleasures a proportion of the fruits of the earth, more than sufficient to supply the wants of thousands of their fellow-creatures; claim authority to manage them like beasts of burden, and without superior industry, capacity, or virtue, nay, though disgraceful to humanity by their ignorance, intemperance, and brutality, shall be deemed best calculated to frame laws, and to consult for the welfare of society.

Were the talents and virtues, which Heaven has bestowed on men, given merely to make them more obedient drudges, to be sacrificed to the follies and ambition of a few? or, were not the noble gifts so equally dispensed with a divine purpose and law, that they should as nearly as possible be equally exerted, and the blessings of Providence be equally enjoyed by all? Away then, with those absurd systems, which, to gratify the pride of a few, debase the greatest part of our species below the order of men. What an affront to the King of the universe, to maintain that the happiness of a monster, sunk in debauchery and spreading desolation and murder among men, of a Caligula, a Nero, or a Charles, is more precious in his sight than that of millions of his suppliant creatures, who do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with their God! No! in the judgment of Heaven there is no other superiority among men, than a superiority in wisdom and virtue. And can we have a safer model in forming ours? The Deity then has not given any order or family of men authority over others, and if any men have given it, they only could give it for themselves. Our forefathers, 'tis said, consented to be subject to the laws of Great Britain. I will not, at present, dispute it, nor mark out the limits and conditions of their submission; but will it be denied that they contracted to pay obedience, and to be under the control of Great Britain, because it appeared to them most beneficial in their then present circumstances and situations? We, my countrymen, have the same right to consult and provide for our happiness, which they had to promote theirs. If they had a view to posterity in their contracts, it must have been to advance the felicity of their descendants. If they erred in their expectations and prospects, we can never be condemned for a conduct which they would have recommended had they foreseen our present condition.

Ye darkeners of counsel, who would make the property, lives, and religion of millions, depend on the evasive interpretations of musty parchments; who would send us to antiquated charters, of uncertain and contradictory meaning, to prove that the present generation are not bound to be victims to cruel and unforgiving despotism, tell

us whether our pious and generous ancestors bequeathed to us the miserable privilege of having the rewards of our honest industry, the fruits of those fields which they purchased and bled for, wrested from us at the will of men over whom we have no check? Did they contract for us that, with folded arms, we should expect that justice and mercy from brutal and inflamed invaders which have been denied to our supplications at the foot of the throne? Were we to hear our character as a people ridiculed with indifference? Did they promise for us that our meekness and patience should be insulted; our coasts harassed; our towns demolished and plundered, and our wives and offspring exposed to nakedness, hunger and death, without our feeling the resentment of men, and exerting those powers of self-preservation which God has given us? No man had once a greater veneration for Englishmen than I entertained. They were dear to me as branches of the same parental trunk, and partakers of the same religion and laws; I still view with respect the remains of the constitution as I would a lifeless body which had once been animated by a great and heroic soul. But when I am roused by the din of arms; when I behold legions of foreign assassins, paid by Englishmen to imbrue their hands in our blood; when I tread over the uncoffined bones of my countrymen, neighbors and friends; when I see the locks of a venerable father torn by savage hands, and a feeble mother, clasping her infants to her bosom, and on her knees imploring their lives from her own slaves, whom Englishmen have allured to treachery and murder; when I behold my country, once the seat of industry, peace, and plenty, changed by Englishmen to a theatre of blood and misery, Heaven forgive me, if I cannot root out those passions which it has implanted in my bosom, and detest submission to a people who have either ceased to be human, or have not virtue enough to feel their own wretchedness and servitude.

Men who content themselves with the semblance of truth, and a display of words, talk much of our obligations to Great Britain for protection! Had she a single eye to our advantage? A nation of shopkeepers are very seldom so disinterested. Let us not be so amused with words; the extension of her commerce was her object. When she defended our coasts, she fought for her customers, and convoyed our ships loaded with wealth, which we had acquired for her by our industry. She has treated us as beasts of burden, whom the lordly masters cherish that they may carry a greater load. Let us inquire also against whom she has protected us? Against her own enemies with whom we had no quarrel, or only on her account, and against' whom we always readily exerted our wealth and strength when they were required. Were these colonies backward in giving assistance to Great Britain, when they were called upon in 1739, to aid the ex-

pedition against Carthage? They at that time sent three thousand men to join the British army, although the war commenced without their consent. But the last war, 'tis said, was purely American. This is a vulgar error, which, like many others, has gained credit by being confidently repeated. The dispute between the Courts of Great Britain and France related to the limits of Canada and Nova Scotia. The controverted territory was not claimed by any in the colonies, but by the Crown of Great Britain. It was therefore their own quarrel. The infringement of a right which England had, by the treaty of Utrecht, of trading in the Indian country of Ohio, was another cause of the war. The French seized large quantities of British manufactures, and took possession of a fort which a company of British merchants and factors had erected for the security of their commerce. The war was therefore waged in defence of lands claimed by the Crown, and for the protection of British property. The French at that time had no quarrel with America; and, as appears by letters sent from their commander-in-chief, to some of the colonies, wished to remain in peace with us. The part therefore which we then took, and the miseries to which we exposed ourselves, ought to be charged to our affection for Britain. These colonies granted more than their proportion to the support of the war. They raised, clothed, and maintained, nearly twenty-five thousand men, and so sensible were the people of England of our great exertions, that a message was annually sent to the House of Commons purporting: "That His Majesty, being highly satisfied of the zeal and vigor with which his faithful subjects in North America had exerted themselves in defence of His Majesty's just rights and possessions, recommended it to the House, to take the same into consideration, and enable him to give them a proper compensation."

But what purpose can arguments of this kind answer? Did the protection we received annul our rights as men, and lay us under an obligation of being miserable?

Who among you, my countrymen, that is a father, would claim authority to make your child a slave because you had nourished him in his infancy?

It is a strange species of generosity which requires a return infinitely more valuable than anything it could have bestowed; that demands as a reward for a defence of our property, a surrender of those inestimable privileges, to the arbitrary will of vindictive tyrants, which alone give value to that very property.

Political right and public happiness are different words for the same idea. They who wander into metaphysical labyrinths, or have recourse to original contracts, to determine the rights of men, either impose on themselves or mean to delude others.

Public utility is the only certain criterion. It is a test which brings disputes to a

speedy decision, and makes it appeal to the feelings of mankind. The force of truth has obliged men to use arguments drawn from this principle who were combating it, in practice and speculation. The advocates for a despotic government, and non-resistance to the magistrate, employ reasons in favor of their systems drawn from a consideration of their tendency to promote public happiness.

The Author of Nature directs all his operations to the production of the greatest good, and has made human virtue to consist in a disposition and conduct which tend to the common felicity of his creatures. An abridgement of the natural freedom of man, by the institution of political societies, is vindicable only on this foot. How absurd, then, is it to draw arguments from the nature of civil society for the annihilation of those very ends which society was intended to procure. Men associate for their mutual advantage. Hence the good and happiness of the members, that is, the majority of the members of any state, is the great standard by which everything relating to that state must finally be determined; and though it may be supposed that a body of people may be bound by a voluntary resignation (which they have been so infatuated as to make) of all their interests to a single person, or to a few, it can never be conceived that the resignation is obligatory to their posterity; because it is manifestly contrary to the good of the whole that it should be so.

These are the sentiments of the wisest and most virtuous champions of freedom. Attend to a portion on this subject from a book in our defence, written, I had almost said by the pen of inspiration. "I lay no stress," says he, "on charters—they derive their rights from a higher source. It is inconsistent with common-sense to imagine that any people would ever think of settling in a distant country, on any such condition, or that the people from whom they withdrew should forever be masters of their property, and have power to subject them to any modes of government they pleased. And had there been express stipulations to this purpose in all the charters of the colonies, they would, in my opinion, be no more bound by them than if it had been stipulated with them that they should go naked, or expose themselves to the incursions of wolves and tigers."

Such are the opinions of every virtuous and enlightened patriot in Great Britain. Their petition to Heaven is—"That there may be one free country left upon earth, to which they may fly, when venality, luxury, and vice, shall have completed the ruin of liberty there."

Courage, then, my countrymen! our contest is not only whether we ourselves shall be free, but whether there shall be left to mankind an asylum on earth, for civil and religious liberty? Dismissing therefore the justice of our cause,

as incontestable, the only question is, What is best for us to pursue in our present circumstances?

The doctrine of dependence on Great Britain is, I believe, generally exploded; but as I would attend to the honest weakness of the simplest of men, you will pardon me if I offer a few words on that subject.

We are now on this continent, to the astonishment of the world, three millions of souls united in one common cause. We have large armies, well disciplined and appointed, with commanders inferior to none in military skill, and superior in activity and zeal. We are furnished with arsenals and stores beyond our most sanguine expectations, and foreign nations are waiting to crown our success by their alliances. There are instances of, I would say, an almost astonishing Providence in our favor; our success has staggered our enemies, and almost given faith to infidels; so that we may truly say it is not our own arm which has saved us.

The hand of heaven appears to have led us on to be, perhaps, humble instruments and means in the great providential dispensation which is completing. We have fled from the political Sodom; let us not look back, lest we perish and become a monument of infamy and derision to the world! For can we ever expect more unanimity and a better preparation for defence; more infatuation of counsel among our enemies, and more valor and zeal among ourselves? The same force and resistance which are sufficient to procure us our liberties will secure us a glorious independence and support us in the dignity of free, imperial States. We cannot suppose that our opposition has made a corrupt and dissipated nation more friendly to America, or created in them a greater respect for the rights of mankind. We can therefore expect a restoration and establishment of our privileges, and a compensation for the injuries we have received from their want of power, from their fears, and not from their virtues. The unanimity and valor, which will effect an honorable peace, can render a future contest for our liberties unnecessary. He who has strength to chain down the wolf is a madman if he lets him loose without drawing his teeth and paring his nails.

From the day on which an accommodation takes place between England and America, on any other terms than as independent States, I shall date the ruin of this country. A politic minister will study to lull us into security, by granting us the full extent of our petitions. The warm sunshine of influence would melt down the virtue, which the violence of the storm rendered more firm and unyielding. In a state of tranquillity, wealth and luxury, our descendants would forget the arts of war, and the noble activity and zeal which made their ancestors invincible. Every art of corruption would be em-

ployed to loosen the bond of union which renders our assistance formidable. When the spirit of liberty which now animates our hearts and gives success to our arms is extinct, our numbers will accelerate our ruin, and render us easier victims to tyranny. Ye abandoned minions of an infatuated ministry, if peradventure any should yet remain among us!—remember that a Warren and Montgomery are numbered among the dead. Contemplate the mangled bodies of our countrymen, and then say, What should be the reward of such sacrifices? Bid us and our posterity bow the knee, supplicate the friendship, and plough, and sow, and reap, to glut the avarice of the men who have let loose on us the dogs of war to riot in our blood, and hunt us from the face of the earth? **If ye love wealth better than liberty, the tranquillity of servitude, than the animating contest of freedom—go from us in peace. We ask not your counsels or arms. Crouch down and lick the hands which feed you. May your chains set lightly upon you, and may posterity forget that ye were our countrymen.**

To unite the supremacy of Great Britain and the liberty of America, is utterly impossible. So vast a continent and of such a distance from the seat of empire will every day grow more unmanageable. The motion of so unwieldy a body cannot be directed with any despatch and uniformity, without committing to the Parliament of Great Britain powers inconsistent with our freedom. The authority and force which would be absolutely necessary for the preservation of the peace and good order of this continent, would put all our valuable rights within the reach of that nation.

As the administration of government requires firmer and more numerous supports in proportion to its extent, the burdens imposed on us would be excessive, and we should have the melancholy prospect of their increasing on our posterity. The scale of officers, from the rapacious and needy commissioner, to the haughty governor, and from the governor with his hungry train, to perhaps a licentious and prodigal viceroy, must be upheld by you and your children. The fleets and armies which will be employed to silence your murmurs and complaints must be supported by the fruits of your industry.

And yet, with all this enlargement of the expense and powers of government, the administration of it at such a distance, and over so extensive a territory, must necessarily fail of putting the laws into vigorous execution, removing private oppressions, and forming plans for the advancement of agriculture and commerce, and preserving the vast empire in any tolerable peace and security. If our posterity retain any spark of patriotism, they can never tamely submit to such burdens. This country will be made the field of bloody contention till it gains that independence for which nature formed it. It

is therefore injustice and cruelty to our offspring, and would stamp us with the character of baseness and cowardice, to leave the salvation of this country to be worked out by them with accumulated difficulty and danger.

Prejudice, I confess, may warp our judgments. Let us hear the decision of .Englishmen on this subject, who cannot be suspected of partiality: “The Americans,” say they, “are but little short of half our number. To this number they have grown from a small body of original settlers by a very rapid increase. The probability is that they will go on to increase, and that in fifty or sixty years they will be double our number; and form a mighty empire, consisting of a variety of States, all equal or superior to ourselves in all the arts and accomplishments which give dignity and happiness to human life. In that period will they be still bound to acknowledge that supremacy over them which we now claim? Can there be any person who will assert this, or whose mind does not revolt at the idea of a vast continent, holding all that is valuable to it, at the discretion of a handful of people on the other side the Atlantic? But if at that period this would be unreasonable, what makes it otherwise now? Draw the line if you can. But there is still a greater difficulty. Britain is now, I will suppose, the seat of liberty and virtue, and its legislature consists of a body of able and independent men, who govern with wisdom and justice. The time may come when all will be reversed; when its excellent constitution of government will be subverted; when pressed by debts and taxes, it will be greedy to draw to itself an increase of revenue from every distant province, in order to ease its own burdens; when the influence of the Crown, strengthened by luxury and an universal profligacy of manners, will have tainted every heart, broken down every fence of liberty, and rendered us a nation of tame and contented vassals; when a general election will be nothing but a general auction of boroughs, and when the Parliament, the grand council of the nation, and once the faithful guardian of the state, and a terror to evil ministers, will be degenerated into a body of sycophants, dependent and venal, always ready to confirm any measures, and little more than a public court for registering royal edicts. Such, it is possible, may, some time or other, be the state of Great Britain. What will at that period be the duty of the colonies? Will they be still bound to unconditional submission? Must they always continue an appendage to our Government, and follow it implicitly through every change that can happen to it? Wretched condition indeed, of millions of freemen as good as ourselves! Will you say that we now govern equitably, and that there is no danger of such revolution? Would to God that this were true. But will you not always say the same? Who shall judge whether we govern equitably or not? Can you give the colonies any security that such a period will never come?” No! The

period, countrymen, is already come. The calamities were at our door. The rod of oppression was raised over us. We were roused from our slumbers, and may we never sink into repose until we can convey a clear and undisputed inheritance to our posterity. This day we are called upon to give a glorious example of what the wisest and best of men were rejoiced to view, only in speculation. This day presents the world with the most august spectacle that its annals ever unfolded. Millions of freemen, deliberately and voluntarily forming themselves into a society for their common defence and common happiness. Immortal spirits of Hampden, Locke, and Sidney! will it not add to your benevolent joys to behold your posterity rising to the dignity of men, and evincing to the world the reality and expediency of your systems, and in the actual enjoyments of that equal liberty, which you were happy, when on earth, in delineating and recommending to mankind!

Other nations have received their laws from conquerors; some are indebted for a constitution to the sufferings of their ancestors through revolving centuries. The people of this country, alone, have formally and deliberately chosen a Government for themselves, and with open and uninfluenced consent, bound themselves into a social compact. Here, no man proclaims his birth or wealth as a title to honorable distinction, or to sanctify ignorance and vice with the name of hereditary authority. He who has most zeal and ability to promote public felicity, let him be the servant of the public. This is the only line of distinction drawn by nature. Leave the bird of night to the obscurity for which nature intended him, and expect only from the eagle to brush the clouds with his wings, and look boldly in the face of the sun.

Some who would persuade us that they have tender feelings for future generations, while they are insensible to the happiness of the present, are perpetually foreboding a train of dissensions under our popular system. Such men's reasoning amounts to this—give up all that is valuable to Great Britain, and then you will have no inducements to quarrel among yourselves ; or suffer yourselves to be chained down by your enemies, that you may not be able to fight with your friends.

This is an insult on your virtue as well as your commonsense. Your unanimity this day and through the course of the war, is a decisive refutation of such invidious predictions. Our enemies have already had evidence that our present constitution contains in it the justice and ardor of freedom, and the wisdom and vigor of the most absolute system. When the law is the will of the people, it will be uniform and coherent; but fluctuation, contradiction, and inconsistency of councils must be expected under those governments where every revolution in the ministry of a court produces one in

the state. Such being the folly and pride of all ministers, that they ever pursue measures directly opposite to those of their predecessors.

We shall neither be exposed to the necessary convulsions of elective monarchies, nor to the want of wisdom, fortitude, and virtue, to which hereditary succession is liable. In your hands it will be to perpetuate a prudent, active and just legislature, and which will never expire until you yourselves lose the virtues which give it existence.

And, brethren and fellow-countrymen, if it was ever granted to mortals to trace the designs of Providence, and interpret its manifestations in favor of their cause, we may, with humility of soul, cry out, Not unto us, not unto us, but to thy name be the praise. The confusion of the devices among our enemies, and the rage of the elements against them, have done almost as much towards our success as either our councils or our arms.

The time at which this attempt on our liberties was made, when we were ripened into maturity, had acquired a knowledge of war, and were free from the incursions of enemies in this country, the gradual advances of our oppressors enabling us to prepare for our defence, the unusual fertility of our lands and clemency of the seasons, the success which at first attended our feeble arms, producing unanimity among our friends and reducing our internal foes to acquiescence—these are all strong and palpable marks and assurances, that Providence is yet gracious unto Zion, that it will turn away the captivity of Jacob.

Our glorious reformers when they broke through the fetters of superstition, effected more than could be expected from an age so darkened. But they left much to be done by their posterity. They lopped off, indeed, some of the branches of popery, but they left the root and stock when they left us under the domination of human systems and decisions, usurping the infallibility which can be attributed to Revelation alone. They dethroned one usurper only to raise up another; they refused allegiance to the Pope, only to place the civil magistrate in the throne of Christ, vested with authority to enact laws, and inflict penalties in his kingdom. And if we now cast our eyes over the nations of the earth we shall find, that instead of possessing the pure religion of the gospel, they may be divided either into infidels who deny the truth, or politicians who make religion a stalking horse for their ambition, or professors, who walk in the trammels of orthodoxy, and are more attentive to traditions and ordinances of men than to the oracles of truth.

The civil magistrate has everywhere contaminated religion by making it an engine of policy; and freedom of thought and the right of private judgment, in matters of conscience, driven from every other corner of the earth, direct their course to this happy

country as their last asylum. Let us cherish the noble guests, and shelter them under the wings of an universal toleration. Be this the seat of unbounded religious freedom. She will bring with her in her train, industry, wisdom, and commerce. She thrives most when left to shoot forth in her natural luxuriance, and asks from human policy, only not to be checked in her growth by artificial encouragements.

Thus by the beneficence of Providence, we shall behold our empire arising, founded on justice and the voluntary consent of the people, and giving full scope to the exercise of those faculties and rights which most ennoble our species. Besides the advantages of liberty and the most equal constitution, heaven has given us a country with every variety of climate and soil, pouring forth in abundance whatever is necessary for the support, comfort, and strength of a nation. Within our own borders we possess all the means of sustenance, defence, and commerce; at the same time, these advantages are so distributed among the different States of this continent, as if nature had in view to proclaim to us—Be united among yourselves, and you will want nothing from the rest of the world.

The more northern States most amply supply us with every necessary, and many of the luxuries of life—with iron, timber, and masts for ships of commerce or of war; with flax for the manufacture of linen, and seed either for oil or exportation.

So abundant are our harvests, that almost every part raises more than double the quantity of grain requisite for the support of the inhabitants. From Georgia and the Carolinas, we have, as well for our own wants as for the purpose of supplying the wants of other powers, indigo, rice, hemp, naval stores, and lumber.

Virginia and Maryland teem with wheat, Indian corn, and tobacco. Every nation whose harvest is precarious, or whose lands yield not those commodities, which we cultivate, will gladly exchange their superfluities and manufactures for ours.

We have already received many and large cargoes of clothing, military stores, etc., from our commerce with foreign powers, and in spite of the efforts of the boasted navy of England, we shall continue to profit by this connection.

The want of our naval stores has already increased the price of these articles to a great height, especially in Britain. Without our lumber, it will be impossible for those haughty islanders to convey the products of the West Indies to their own ports—for a while they may with difficulty effect it, but without our assistance, their resources soon must fail. Indeed, the West India Islands appear as the necessary appendages to this our empire. They must owe their support to it, and ere long, I doubt not, some of them will from necessity wish to enjoy the benefit of our protection.

These natural advantages will enable us to remain independent of the world, or make it the interest of European powers to court our alliance, and aid in protecting us against the invasions of others. What argument therefore do we want, to show the equity of our conduct; or motive of interest to recommend it to our prudence? Nature points out the path, and our enemies have obliged us to pursue it.

If there is any man so base or so weak as to prefer a dependence on Great Britain to the dignity and happiness of living a member of a free and independent nation—let me tell him that necessity now demands what the generous principle of patriotism should have dictated.

We have now no other alternative than independence, or the most ignominious and galling servitude. The legions of our enemies thicken on our plains; desolation and death mark their bloody career; whilst the mangled corpses of our countrymen seem to cry out to us as a voice from heaven—“Will you permit our posterity to groan under the galling chains of our murderers? Has our blood been expended in vain? Is the only reward which our constancy, till death, has obtained for our country, that it should be sunk into a deeper and more ignominious vassalage? Recollect who are the men that demand your submission; to whose decrees you are invited to pay obedience! Men who, unmindful of their relation to you as brethren, of your long implicit submission to their laws; of the sacrifice which you and your forefathers made of your natural advantages for commerce to their avarice—formed a deliberate plan to wrest from you the small pittance of property which they had permitted you to acquire. Remember that the men who wish to rule over you, are they who, in pursuit of this plan of despotism, annulled the sacred contracts which had been made with your ancestors; conveyed into your cities a mercenary soldiery to compel you to submission by insult and murder—who called your patience, cowardice; your piety, hypocrisy.”

Countrymen! the men who now invite you to surrender your rights into their hands, are the men who have let loose the merciless savages to riot in the blood of their brethren—who have dared to establish popery triumphant in our land—who have taught treachery to your slaves, and courted them to assassinate your wives and children.

These are the men to whom we are exhorted to sacrifice the blessings which Providence holds out to us—the happiness, the dignity of uncontrolled freedom and independence.

Let not your generous indignation be directed against any among us, who may advise so absurd and maddening a measure. Their number is but few and daily decreases; and the spirit which can render them patient of slavery will render them contemptible

enemies.

Our Union is now complete; our constitution composed, established, and approved. You are now the guardians of your own liberties. We may justly address you, as the Decemviri did the Romans, and say—“Nothing that we propose can pass into a law without your consent. Be yourselves, O Americans, the authors of those laws on which your happiness depends.”

You have now in the field armies sufficient to repel the whole force of your enemies, and their base and mercenary auxiliaries. The hearts of your soldiers beat high with the spirit of freedom—they are animated with the justice of their cause, and while they grasp their swords, can look up to heaven for assistance. Your adversaries are composed of wretches who laugh at the rights of humanity, who turn religion into derision, and would, for higher wages, direct their swords against their leaders or their country. Go on, then, in your generous enterprise, with gratitude to heaven, for past success, and confidence of it in the future. For my own part, I ask no greater blessing than to share with you the common danger and common glory. If I have a wish dearer to my soul, than that my ashes may be mingled with those of a Warren and Montgomery—it is—that these American States may never cease to be free and independent!

Saml Adams