



# MARYLAND GAZETTE.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 1800.

## A FUNERAL ORATION,

### In honour of the memory of GEORGE WASHINGTON,

Late general of the armies of the United States; Prepared and delivered at the request of congress, at the German Lutheran church, on Thursday, the 26th of December, by—

MAJOR-GENERAL HENRY LEE,

One of the representatives from the state of Virginia. IN obedience to your will, I rise your humble organ, with the hope of executing a part of the system of public mourning which you have been pleased to adopt, commemorative of the death, of the most illustrious and most beloved personage this country has ever produced; and which, while it transmits to posterity your sense of the awful event, feintly represents your knowledge of the consummate excellence you so cordially honour.

Desperate indeed is any attempt on earth to meet correspondently this dispensation of Heaven: for, while with pious resignation we submit to the will of an all-gracious Providence, we can never cease lamenting in our finite view of omnipotent wisdom, the heart rending privation for which our nation weeps. When the civilized world shakes to its centre: when every moment gives birth to strange and momentous changes; when our peaceful quarter of the globe, except as it happily has been from any share in the slaughter of the human race, may yet be compelled to abandon her pacific policy, and to risk the doleful casualties of war: What limit is there to the extent of our loss? none within the reach of my words to express; none which your feelings will not discover.

The founder of our federate republic—our bulwark in war, our guide in peace, is no more. Oh that this was but questionable! hope, the comforter of the wretched, would pour into our agonized hearts its balmy dew. But, alas! there is no hope for us: our Washington is removed for ever. Possessing the stoutest frame, and purest mind, he had passed nearly to his sixty-eighth year, in the enjoyment of high health, when habituated by his care of us to neglect himself, a slight cold, disregarded, became inconvenient on Friday, oppressive on Saturday, and defying every medical interposition, before the morning of Sunday, put an end to the best of men. An end did I say—his fame survives! bounded only by the limits of the earth, and by the extent of the human mind. He survives in our hearts, in the growing knowledge of our children, in the affections of the good throughout the world; and when our monuments shall be done away; when nations now existing shall be no more: when even our young and far spreading empire shall have perished, still will our Washington's glory unfaded shine, and die not, until love of virtue cease on earth, or earth itself sink into chaos.

How, my fellow-citizens, shall I single to your grateful hearts his pre-eminent worth! where shall I begin in opening to your view a character throughout sublime. Shall I speak of his warlike achievements, all springing from obedience to his country's will—all directed to his country's good?

Will you go with me to the banks of the Monongahela, to see your youthful Washington, supporting in the dismal hour of Indian victory, the ill-fated Braddock, and saving, by his judgment and by his valour, the remains of a defeated army, pressed by the conquering savage foe? Or, when oppressed America, nobly resolving to risk her all in defence of her violated rights, he was elevated by the unanimous voice of congress to the command of her armies: Will you follow him to the high grounds of Boston, where to an undisciplined, courageous and virtuous yeomanry, his presence gave the stability of system, and infused the elasticity of love of country? Or shall I carry you to the painful scenes of Long Island, York Island and New Jersey, when combating superior and gallant armies, aided by powerful fleets, and led by chiefs high in the roll of fame, he stood the bulwark of our safety; undismayed by disaster, unchanged by change of fortune. Or will you view him in the precarious fields of Trenton, where deep gloom unnerving every one, reigned triumphant through our thinned, worn and unaided ranks: himself unmoved—Disadvantaged on the night, it was about this time of winter—the snow lay deep—The Delaware rolling furiously with beating ice forbade the approach of man: Washington, left unprotected, viewed the tremendous scene—his country collected, unsmothered by throbbing dangers; he fired the white shock—he fought—he conquered. The morning sun shined on the American world. Our country rose on the event, and her daughter chief, amidst his blow, completed in the jaws of Phineas, what his valiant soul had conceived on the shores of Delaware. Thence to the strong grounds of Morris town, he led his small but gallant band through an eventful day, and the two houses of congress.

ful winter, by the high efforts of his genius whose matchless force was measurable only by the growth of difficulties, he held in check formidable hostile legions, conducted by a chief experienced in the art of war, and famed for his valour on the ever memorable heights of Abraham, where fell Wolf, Montcalm, and since our much lamented Montgomery; all covered with glory. In this fortunate interval, produced by his masterly conduct, our fathers, ourselves, animated by his restless example, rallied around our country's standard, and continued to follow our beloved chief, through the various and trying scenes to which the destinies of our union led.

Who is there that has forgotten the vales of Brandywine—the fields of German-town, or the plains of Monmouth; every where present, want of every kind obstructing, numerous and valiant armies, encountering, himself a host, he assuaged our sufferings, limited our privations, and upheld our tottering republic. Shall I display to you the spread of the hie of his soul, by rehearsing the praises of the hero of Saratoga, and his much lov'd compeer of the Carolina's? No; our Washington wears not borrowed glory: To Gates—to Green, he gave without reserve the applause due to their eminent merit; and long may the chiefs of Saratoga, and of Rutaws, receive the grateful respect of a grateful people.

Moving in his own orbit, he imparted heat and light to his most distant satellites; and combining the physical and moral force of all within his sphere, with irresistible weight he took his course, commiserating folly, disdaining vice, dismaying treason and invigorating despondency, until the auspicious hour arrived, when, united with the intrepid forces of a potent and magnanimous ally, he brought to submission the sice conqueror of India: thus finishing his long career of military glory with a lustre corresponding to his great name, and in this his last act of war affixing the seal of fate to our nation's birth.

To the horrid din of battle sweet peace succeeded and our virtuous chief, mindful only of the common good, in a moment tempting personal aggrandizement, hushed the discontents of growing sedition, and surrendering his power into the hands from which he had received it, converted his sword into a ploughshare, teaching an admiring world that to be truly great, you must be truly good.

Was I to stop here, the picture would be incomplete, and the tale imposed unfinished—Great as was our Washington in war, and much as did that greatness contribute to produce the American republic, it is not in war alone his pre-eminence stands conspicuous: his various talents combining all the capacities of a statesman with those of a soldier, fitted him alike to guide the councils and the armies of our nation. Scarcely had he rested from his martial toils, while his invaluable parental advice was still founding in our ears, when he who had been our shield and our sword, was called forth to act a less splendid but a more important part.

Possessing a clear and penetrating mind, a strong and a sound judgment, calmness and temper for deliberation, with invincible firmness and perseverance in resolutions maturely formed, drawing information from all, acting from himself, with incorruptible integrity and unvarying patriotism: his own superiority and the public confidence alike, called him as the man designed by Heaven to lead in the great political as well as military events which have distinguished the era of his life.

The anger of an over-ruling Providence, pointing at Washington, was neither mistaken nor unobserved when to realize the vast hopes to which our revolution had given birth, a change of political system became indispensable.

How novel, how grand the spectacle; independent states stretched over an immense territory, and known only by common difficulty, clinging to their union as the rock of their safety, deciding by frank comparison of their relative condition, to rest on that rock, under the guidance of reason, a common government through whose commanding protection, liberty and order, with their long train of blessings should be safe to themselves; and the sure inheritance of their posterity.

This arduous task devolved on citizens selected by the people, from knowledge of their wisdom and confidence in their virtues. In this august assembly of sages and of patriots, Washington of course was found—and, as if acknowledged to be most wise, where all were wise, with one voice he was declared their chief. How well he merited this rare distinction, how faithful were the labours of himself and his compatriots, the work of their hands and our union, strength and prosperity, the fruits of their work, best attest.

But to have essentially aided in presenting to his country this consummation of her hopes, neither satisfied the claims of his fellow-citizens on his talents, nor those duties which the possession of those talents imposed. Heaven had not infused into his mind such an uncommon share of its ethereal spirit, to remain unemployed, nor bestowed on him his genius

unaccompanied with the corresponding duty of devoting it to the common good. To have framed a constitution, was shewing only, without realizing the general happiness. This great work remained to be done, and America, steadfast in her preference with one voice summoned her beloved Washington, unpractised as he was in the duties of civil administration; to execute this last act in the completion of the national felicity. Obedient to her call, he assumed the high office with that self-distrust peculiar to his innate modesty; the constant attendant of pre-eminent virtue. What was the burst of joy through our anxious land on this exhilarating event is known to us all. The aged, the young, the brave, the fair rivalled each other in demonstrations of their gratitude; and this high wrought delightful scene was heightened in its effect, by the singular contest between the zeal of the bestowers and the avoidance of the receiver of the honours bestowed. Commencing his administration, what heart is not charmed with the recollection of the pure and wise principles announced by himself, as the basis of his political life. He best understood the indissoluble union between virtue and happiness, between duty and advantage between the genuine maxims of an honest and magnanimous policy, and the solid rewards of public prosperity and individual felicity: watching with an equal and comprehensive eye over this great assemblage of communities and interests, he laid the foundations of our national policy in the unerring immutable principles of morality, based on religion, exemplifying the pre-eminence of free government, by all the attributes which win the affections of its citizens or command the respect of the world.

“O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint!”

Leading through the complicated difficulties produced by previous obligations and conflicting interests, seconded by succeeding houses of congress, enlightened and patriotic, he surmounted all original obstructions, and brightened the path of our national felicity.

The presidential term expiring, his solicitude to exchange, exaltation for humility returned, with a force increased with increase of age, and he had prepared his farewell address to his countrymen, proclaiming his intention, when the united interposition of all-around him, enforced by the eventual prospects of the epoch, produced a further sacrifice of inclination to duty. The election of president followed, and Washington by the unanimous vote of the nation, was called to resume the chief magistracy: what a wonderful figure of confidence! which attracts most our admiration, a people so correct, or a citizen combining an assemblage of talents forbidding rivalry, and stifling even envy itself? Such a nation ought to be happy, such a chief must be for ever revered.

War, long menaced by the Indian tribes, now broke out; and the terrible conflict deluging Europe with blood, began to shed its baneful influence over our happy land. To the first, outstretching his invincible arm, under the orders of the gallant Wayne, the American eagle soared triumphant through distant forests. Peace followed victory, and the melioration of the condition of the enemy followed peace. Godlike virtue which uplifts even the subdued savage.

To the second he opposed himself. New and delicate was the conjuncture, and great was the stake. Soon did his penetrating mind discern and seize the only course, continuing to us all, the felicity enjoyed. He issued his proclamation of neutrality. This index to him whose subsequent conduct was sanctioned by the approbation of both houses of congress, and by the approving voice of the people.

To this sublime policy he inviolably adhered, unmoved by foreign intrusion, unshaken by domestic turbulence.

“Iustum et tenacem propositi virum”

“Non civium ardor prava jubentium,”

“Non vultus instantia tyranni”

“Mente quatit solida”

Maintaining his pacific system at the expense of no duty, America, faithful to herself and unshaken in her honour, continued to enjoy the delights of peace, while afflicted Europe moans in every quarter, under the accumulated miseries of an unexampled war; miseries in which our happy country must have shared, had not our pre-eminent Washington been so firm in council as he was brave in the field.

Pursuing steadfastly his course, he held safe the public happiness, preventing foreign war, and quelling internal discord, till the revolving period of a third election approached, when he executed his interrupted but inextinguishable desire of returning to the humble walks of private life.

The promulgation of his fixed resolution stopped the anxious wishes of an affectionate people from adding a third unanimous testimonial of their unabated confidence in the man so long enshrined in their hearts. When before was a section like this exhibited on earth? Turn over the records of ancient Greece—Review the annals of mighty Rome—examine the volumes of modern Europe—yet search in vain.