

FOR THE MINERVA.

MR. BOYLAN,

By inserting the following valedictory address delivered at the Sugar Creek academy, on the 1st of June, 1809, you will oblige at least one of your readers. M.

The business of this day draws to a close; the curtain drops; the actors on the present stage retire, to be succeeded on another occasion by others; may they act more worthy your approbation, & impress sentiments more dignified & more influential in your walk thro' life.

You have this day appropriated with polite attention our stage of youth, of amusement, of education, the variety of character, the discordance of principle, of passion, of pursuits though very imperfectly exhibited, are miniatures of human nature, are emblematical of the actors on the great stage of human life. The same motives, the same principles, the same springs to action which have passed in review before you, influence and direct the exertions of all mankind.

You now tread the stage of life; its various avocations fill the measure of your time; some are fascinated with imaginary pleasure which vanishes on fruition, some grasp at enjoyments heedless of the sting they leave behind—some give loose to ambition, and strain every nerve in the acquisition of wealth or popularity, while others, though few, bend their course to mental improvement and enjoy the refined pleasures arising from a virtuous life.

You will with us soon retire from this stage; soon leave this assembly, it is feared too little edified by our efforts; the precepts and sentiments inculcated, disesteemed or forgotten, the variety of character exhibited influential or deemed irrelative to your situation, habits or pursuits. Thus our minds become intangible to experience, derived from others, and we tread the stage of life incautious and secure, until the character we fill has run its round of years. We step off this stage of life; pass the bourne from which no traveller returns; leave this rough stage of mortal existence, and retire to the smooth scenes of immortal life. This is our character on, and this our exit from the stage of private life.

But when we view the great foreign theatre of public life, and contemplate the motives and characters of those who now act there the horrid tragedy of death, humanity shudders at the sight, virtue sickens at the scene. A deformed and criminal novelty stamps its own impress on every occurrence in Europe, and that career of misery, confusion and degradation which appeared near its close, seems as only commencing. The exorbitancy of power, the enormity of ambition, now tread the stage alone; they sweep before them the liberties, the happiness of man. They have down the scythe of despotism through every region. They have stalked forward in footsteps of blood, heaving their way through infancy and age, urging forward to the slaughter of unoffending millions, and erecting their bloody standard of triumph on the mouldering ruin of cities, on the final subversion of empires.

A revolution commenced there in favour of civil liberty; triumphant every where abroad ended in the most abject slavery at home. Wars made for an avowed purpose are waged with increased fury after the ostensible cause is attained. The ally of this year is the adversary of the next. An ally in the bond of friendship, in the sacred league of union, is sacrificed as a measure of precaution. An allied empire is stripped of its national character, robbed of its imperial family, to raise it to its pristine eminence. The destruction of states; the pillage of churches, are the acknowledged instruments of modern policy, of national justice. What examples have any history to produce, like the events of the present day? What light can past times reflect on the formidable transactions of the present? Where does the lamp of experience burn? Where does the sun of political justice, of national honor unfold his rays? They are no where to be found! Every thing has verged eccentric. Darkness and misery, calamity and death, rest upon the scene, and shrouded in their sable mantle, entomb the last glimmerings of national virtue. Here the link that associates the great society of man in all regions, however remote, is burst a sunder; is irretrievably lost in this chaos of wrongs and crimes, of detronements and usurpations. Is this wreck of human felicity; in this sea of misery; whose storms are the conflict of despotic fury; whose waves are waves of blood, and whose shores are strewn with the bones of murdered millions.

This tragedy of ambition is not to make its final exit from the stage of Europe, until every empire bows to the military despotism of him who now holds the destiny of 75 millions of the human race. It will then be transferred to the confines of India, there to rage with increased ferocity.

And shall the universe tumble to ruin around us, and we stand unhurt amidst this crush of empires? Shall all the governments on earth melt before universal domination, to be moulded anew by insatiable ambition, and end we stand a miraculous monument of divine interposition? Shall usurpation burst the barriers of national justice, and in progressive increase sweep from the earth, virtue and humanity, yet we meet a just retribution of reward, an honorable consummation of our desires? Falacious hope, vain anticipation. As soon will Satan ascend to heaven and there shine in primeval rectitude.

Yet we as Americans, stand secure, recline

on the couch of indifference; rest our safety, our salvation, on the justice of our conduct, and on that political virtue as influential on foreign nations. *National Justice!* a shadow without a reality; a band of snow; a rope of sand. Although we are now on the verge of ruin, on the confines of being thro' into that vortex which has engulfed the liberties, the felicities of Europe. Yet like children we are tranquilized with the feather of *national justice*. We are fascinated to apathy with the necessary, though gilded toy of those deprivations, our retiring within ourselves may produce on the poor and indigent, the widow and orphan of other countries. We build our highest hopes, our strongest protection on the effects of this increase of human misery; on foreign discontent, revolt and civil war; while we evidence manly dignity and national energy in the rubbish of epithets; in the fift of rancor; in the blaze of parties among ourselves. Expressions and sentiments which ought to be revolting to every American bosom. Americans are more at enmity among themselves, than with those foreign powers who are equally plotting their destruction; equally inflicting on us injustice, dishonor and degradation; because the principles of our government are equally inimical and unsafe to the existence of theirs.

Here we may look back with pleasure on the past felicities of our country: when unanimity and undesigning patriotism prevailed; when the love of country was interwoven with every ligament of our hearts and concentrated every affection: when the tree of liberty which was here planted by the purest patriotism, was nourished by virtue: Its fruit was the happiness of millions; and its shade defended them from the malignant rays of despotic fury—flourishing with immortal youth and blooming with unfading verdure, its fruit would have increased with the lapse of time, and its branches extended to the confines of the universe; but the deadly nightshade of party spirit, springing from the hot bed of the French revolution, nourished to luxuriance by British predilection, is now fast twining round its trunk and sapping its foundation.

But my fellow-citizens, to compress our view, let us limit our retrospect to the bounds of our own county. If with propriety, Boston has been designated the cradle of American Independence, Mecklenburg can boast the energies of manhood, the maturity of riper years; and the town of Charlotte must ever with pre eminent merit bear the palm of making the first effectual effort in wresting from the British crown her fairest diamond, which now shines with resplendent lustre in the sacred wreath which entwines the brow of the Goddess of American Independence.

On the 19th of May 1776, a day sacredly exulting to every Mecklenburg bosom, two delegates duly authorised from every militia company in this county* met in Charlotte. — After a cool and deliberate investigation of the causes and extent of our differences with G. Britain, and taking a view of the probable result; pledging their all in support of their rights and liberties; they solemnly entered into and published a full and determined declaration of Independence, renouncing forever

all allegiance, dependence on or connection with Great Britain; dissolved all judicial and military establishments emanating from the British crown; established others on principles correspondent with their declaration, which went into immediate operation: All which were transmitted to Congress by express, and probably expedited the general declaration of Independence. May we ever act worthy of such predecessors.

But when we look forward, our future prospects darken into gloom. Party spirit, civil discord, has immolated every Republic that ever existed. On this rock the dreadful shipwreck has ever been completed—and wrecked on *this alone* will our Independence go to the bottom to rise no more. I tax history, I challenge the Universe to produce the destruction of a Republic where this was not a primary cause. Stamped then with eternal infamy be the man who blows with the designing breath of faction the flame of discord.

But O my country! when will the cessation of party spirit, of illiberal censure, of base invective render thy existence secure, thy government energetic, thy felicities permanent. A violent partizan is a foe to his country—is not the friend of man. When party spirit usurps the throne of the mind and assumes the dominion of reason; when prejudice obtains a surrender of the faculties—what absurdities are not believed, what evident truths denied, what violations of propriety and of principle committed. Borne on the wings of passion and party, he is precipitated into rashness of action—into injustice of decision. Let *design* under this garb of patriotism, be expunged from every American bosom. The true federalist, the true republican are equal patriots. Away with the disorganizing spirit of jealousy and division; away with this vassalage of party;—names without reality; principles without discrimination; the direful stratagems of characters sunk in profligacy; tired of the dull pursuits of civil life; big with complicated intentions, before which, common immorality whitens into virtue; whose hearts evidence what the subtlest understanding cannot disguise; intentions of which the demoralization of our citizens is the mildest feature. Never then permit the man polluted with the flame of party to rest in the sanctuary of your confidence: allow him no influence over your principles—though in other respects the darling of your choice, from *this* he may become your country's deadliest foe.

But may we not anticipate the pleasurable scene as fast approaching; may we not realize the period as not far distant, when ONE not schooled in the conflicting courts of Europe, where partialities and prejudices are necessarily imbibed and insensibly influential; when proud of a native American who has never touched the polluted shores of Europe shall guide our political Bark through this ocean of difficulties that now break over us, into the peaceful haven of honorable adjustment and national prosperity: May we not hail a MADISON as the second political saviour of his country, as the second American WASHINGTON?

Let us, my fellow citizens, stand united as Americans alone in supporting our liberty and independence—let us guard with sacred attention our Constitution, the repository of American happiness—and let us evidence our love of country, our patriotism, by promoting her interest, by venerating her laws, and by honoring her administration.

And may the gathering storm which now blackens our horizon be dispelled—and may the dissipating cloud neither soil the honor, nor tarnish the sacred wreath of American Independence.

Fellow Citizens—On retiring from this stage accept from me in behalf of my worthy President and fellow students, our warmest assurances of respect and consideration for your polite attendance.—As the war worn patriot on returning to the bosom of his country, receives with rapture and high felicity the grateful approbation of his fellow citizens—so does the bosom of youthful sensibility glow with the ardor of maturer years under the approbatory smile of so respectable, so polite an audience.

May the felicities of domestic enjoyment fill your cup of life, and your conduct merit its perpetuity and increase with the lapse of time.

* The present county of Cabarrus was then included in Mecklenburg.

N. B. This not being at first intended for publication, extracts were not noted