

commencement of the French revolution are no longer a subject of controversy. The principles professed by the first leaders of that revolution were so congenial to those of the American people; their pretences of aiming merely at the reformation of abuses were so plausible; the spectacle of a great people struggling to recover their "long-lost liberties" was so imposing and august; while that of a combination of tyrants to conquer and subjugate was so revolting; the services, received from one of the belligerent powers, and the injuries inflicted by the other, were so recent in our minds,—that the sensibility of the nation was excited to the most exquisite pitch.

To this disposition, so favorable to the wishes of France, every appeal was made which intrigue, corruption, flattery, and threats could dictate. At this dangerous and dazzling crisis there were but few men entirely exempt from the general delirium.

Among that few was Hamilton. His penetrating eye discerned, and his prophetic voice foretold, the tendency and consequence of the first revolutionary movements. He was assured that every people which should espouse the cause of France would pass under her yoke, and that the people of France, like every nation which surrenders its reason to the mercy of demagogues, would be driven by the storms of anarchy upon the shores of despotism. All this he knew was conformable to the invariable law of nature and experience of mankind. From the reach of this desolation he was anxious to save his country, and in the pursuit of his purpose he breasted the assaults of calumny and prejudice. "The torrent roared, and he did buffet it."

Appreciating the advantages of a neutral position, he co-operated with Washington, Adams, and the other patriots of that day in the means best adapted to maintain it. The

rights and duties of neutrality, proclaimed by the President, were explained and enforced by Hamilton in the character of Pacificus. The attempts to corrupt and intimidate were resisted. The British treaty was justified and defended as an honorable compact with our natural friends, and pregnant with advantages which have since been realized and acknowledged by its opponents.

By this pacific and vigorous policy, in the whole course of which the genius and activity of Hamilton were conspicuous, time and information were afforded to the American nation, and correct views were acquired of our situation and interests. We beheld the republics of Europe march in procession to the funeral of their own liberties by the lurid light of the revolutionary torch. The tumult of the passions subsided, the wisdom of the administration was perceived, and America now remains a solitary monument in the desolated plains of liberty.

Having remained at the head of the treasury several years and filled its coffers, having developed the sources of an ample revenue and tested the advantages of his own system by his own experience, and having expended his private fortune, he found it necessary to retire from public employment and to devote his attention to the claims of a large and dear family. What brighter instance of disinterested honor has ever been exhibited to an admiring world!

That a man upon whom devolved the task of originating a system of revenue for a nation; of devising the checks in his own department; of providing for the collection of sums the amount of which was conjectural; that a man who anticipated the effects of a funding system yet a secret in his own bosom, and who was thus enabled to have secured a princely fortune consistently with principles esteemed fair by the world; that such a man, by no means addicted to an expensive or extrava-

gant style of living, should have retired from office destitute of means adequate to the wants of mediocrity, and have resorted to professional labor for the means of decent support, are facts which must instruct and astonish those who, in countries habituated to corruption and venality, are more attentive to the gains than to the duties of official station. Yet Hamilton was that man. It was a fact, always known to his friends, and it is now evident from his testament, made under a deep presentiment of his approaching fate. Blush, then, ministers and warriors of imperial France, who have deluded your nation by pretensions to a disinterested regard for its liberties and rights! Disgorge the riches extorted from your fellow citizens and the spoils amassed from confiscation and blood! Restore to impoverished nations the price paid by them for the privilege of slavery and now appropriated to the refinements of luxury and corruption! Approach the tomb of Hamilton and compare the insignificance of your gorgeous palaces with the awful majesty of this tenement of clay!

We again accompany our friend in the walks of private life and in the assiduous pursuit of his profession until the aggressions of France compelled the nation to assume the attitude of defence. He was now invited by the great and enlightened statesman who had succeeded to the Presidency, and at the express request of the commander-in-chief, to accept of the second rank in the army. Though no man had manifested a greater desire to avoid war, yet it is freely confessed that when war appeared to be inevitable his heart exulted in "the tented field" and he loved the life and occupation of a soldier. His early habits were formed amid the fascinations of the camp. And though the pacific policy of Adams once more rescued us from war and shortened the existence of the army establishment, yet its duration was sufficient to secure to him the love

and confidence of officers and men, to enable him to display the talents and qualities of a great general, and to justify the most favorable prognostics of his prowess in the field.

Once more this excellent man unloosed the helmet from his brow and returned to the duties of the forum. From this time he persisted in a firm resolution to decline all civil honors and promotion and to live a private citizen unless again summoned to the defence of his country. He became more than ever assiduous in his practice at the bar, and intent upon his plans of domestic happiness, until a nice and mistaken estimate of the claims of honor impelled him to the fatal act which terminated his life.

While it is far from my intention to draw a veil over this last great error, or in the least measure to justify a practice which threatens in its progress to destroy the liberty of speech and of opinion, it is but justice to the deceased to state the circumstances which should palliate the resentment that may be excited in some good minds toward his memory. From the last sad memorial which we possess from his hand, and in which, if our tears permit, we may trace the sad presage of the impending catastrophe, it appears that his religious principles were at variance with the practice of duelling, and that he could not reconcile his benevolent heart to shed the blood of an adversary in private combat, even in his own defence. It was, then, from public motives that he committed this great mistake. It was for the benefit of his country that he erroneously conceived himself obliged to make the painful sacrifice of his principles and to expose his life. The sober judgment of the man was confounded and misdirected by the jealous honor of the soldier; and he evidently adverted to the possibility of events that might render indispensable the esteem and confidence of soldiers as well as of citizens.

But while religion mourns for this aberration of the judgment of a great man, she derives some consolation from his testimony in her favor. If she rejects the apology, she admits the repentance; and if the good example be not an atonement, it may be an antidote for the bad. Let us, then, in an age of infidelity, join, in imagination, the desolate group of wife and children and friends who surrounded the dying bed of the inquisitive, the luminous, the scientific Hamilton, and witness his attestation to the truth and comforts of our holy religion. Let us behold the lofty warrior bow his head before the cross of the meek and lowly Jesus; and he who had so lately graced the sumptuous tables and society of the luxurious and rich, now, regardless of these meaner pleasures, aspiring to be admitted to a sublime enjoyment with which no worldly joys can compare,—to a devout and humble participation of the Bread of Life. The religious fervor of his last moments was not an impulse of decaying nature yielding to its fears, but the result of a firm conviction of the truths of the gospel. I am well informed that in early life the evidences of the Christian religion had attracted his serious examination and obtained his deliberate assent to their truth, and that he daily, upon his knees, devoted a portion of time to a compliance with one of its most important injunctions: and that, however these edifying propensities might have yielded occasionally to the business and temptations of life, they always resumed their influence and would probably have prompted him to a public profession of his faith in his Redeemer.

Such was the untimely fate of Alexander Hamilton, whose character warrants the apprehension that, "take him for all in all, we ne'er shall look upon his like again."

Nature, even in the partial distribution of her favors, generally limits the attainments of great men within distinct and

particular spheres of eminence. But he was the darling of nature and privileged beyond the rest of her favorites. His mind caught at a glance that perfect comprehension of a subject for which others are indebted to patient labor and investigation. In whatever department he was called to act he discovered an intuitive knowledge of its duties which gave him an immediate ascendancy over those who had made them the study of their lives; so that, after running through the circle of office as a soldier, statesman, and financier, no question remained for which he had been qualified, but only in which he had evinced the most superlative merit. He did not dissemble his attachment to a military life, nor his consciousness of possessing talents for command; yet no man more strenuously advocated the rights of the civil over the military power, nor more cheerfully abdicated command and returned to the rank of the citizen when his country could dispense with the necessity of an army.

In his private profession, at a bar abounding with men of learning and experience, he was without a rival. He arranged, with the happiest facility, the materials collected in the vast storehouse of his memory, surveyed his subject under all its aspects, and enforced his arguments with such powers of reasoning that nothing was wanting to produce conviction and generally to ensure success. His eloquence combined the nervousness and copious elegance of the Greek and Roman schools and gave him the choice of his clients and his business. These wonderful powers were accompanied by a natural politeness and winning condescension which forestalled the envy of his brethren. Their hearts were gained before their pride was alarmed; and they united in their approbation of a pre-eminence which reflected honor on their fraternity.

From such talents, adorned by incorruptible honesty and

boundless generosity, an immense personal influence over his political and private friends was inseparable; and by those who did not know him, and who saw the use to which ambition might apply it, he was sometimes suspected of views unpropitious to the nature of our government. The charge was inconsistent with the exertions he had made to render that government, in its present form, worthy of the attachment and support of the people, and his voluntary relinquishment of the means of ambition, the purse-strings of the nation. He was, indeed, ambitious, but not of power; he was ambitious only to convince the world of the spotless integrity of his administration and character. This was the key to the finest sensibilities of his heart. He shrunk from the imputation of misconduct in public life: and if his judgment ever misled him, it was only when warped by an excessive eagerness to vindicate himself at the expense of his discretion. To calumny in every other shape he opposed the defence of dignified silence and contempt.

Had such a character been exempt from foibles and frailties it would not have been human. Yet so small was the catalogue of these that they would have escaped observation but for the unparalleled frankness of his nature, which prompted him to confess them to the world. He did not consider greatness as an authority for habitual vice; and he repented with such contrition of casual error that none remained offended but those who never had a right to complain. The virtues of his private and domestic character comprised whatever conciliates affection and begets respect. To envy he was a stranger, and of merit and talents the unaffected eulogist and admirer. The charms of his conversation, the brilliance of his wit, his regard to decorum, his ineffable good humor, which led him down from the highest range of intellect to the level

of colloquial pleasantry, will never be forgotten, perhaps never equalled.

To observe that such a man was dear to his family would be superfluous. To describe how dear, impossible. Of this we might obtain some adequate conception could we look into the retreat which he had chosen for the solace of his future years; which, enlivened by his presence, was so lately the mansion of cheerfulness and content; but now, alas! of lamentation and woe!

"For him no more the blazing hearth shall burn,  
Or tender consort wait with anxious care;  
No children run to kiss their sire's return,  
Or climb his knees, the envied kiss to share."

With his eye upon the eternal world, this dying hero had been careful to prepare a testament almost for the sole purpose of bequeathing to his orphans the rich legacy of his principles; and having exhibited, in his last hours, to this little band the manner in which a Christian should die, he drops, in his flight to heaven, a summary of the principles by which a man of honor should live.

The universal sorrow manifested in every part of the Union upon the melancholy exit of this great man is an unequivocal testimonial of the public opinion of his worth. The place of his residence is overspread with a gloom which bespeaks the presence of a public calamity, and the prejudices of party are absorbed in the overflowing tide of national grief.

It is indeed a subject of consolation that diversity of political opinions has not yet extinguished the sentiment of public gratitude. There is yet a hope that events like these, which bring home to our bosoms the sensation of a common loss, may yet remind us of our common interest and of the times when with one accord we joined in the homage of respect to our living as well as to our deceased worthies.

Should those days once more return, when the people of America, united as they once were united, shall make merit the measure of their approbation and confidence, we may hope for a constant succession of patriots and heroes. But should our country be rent by factions, and the merit of the man be estimated by the zeal of the partizan, irreparable will be the loss of those few men who, having once been esteemed by all, might again have acquired the confidence of all and saved their country in an hour of peril by their talents and virtues.

"So stream the sorrows that embalm the brave;  
The tears which virtue sheds on glory's grave."

## SIR JAMES MACKINTOSH



SIR JAMES MACKINTOSH, Scottish philosopher, statesman, historian, and publicist, was born at Aldourie, near Inverness, Scotland, Oct. 24, 1765, and died at London, May 30, 1832. After graduating at King's College, Aberdeen, he studied both medicine and law at Edinburgh, and for a time practiced the latter, gaining a high reputation at the London Bar for his eloquent defence of the French refugee, Peltier, who, at the instance of the French government, was in 1803 tried for libelling the First Consul (see appended Speech). In the following year he was knighted and given the post of recorder at Bombay, with a judgeship in the vice-admiralty court in India, returning to England in 1812. He then entered Parliament, in the interest of the Whig party, but while there did not add greatly to his reputation, and in 1818 he became professor of law and general politics in the East India Company's College at Haileybury. Here he interested himself as an historian of the Revolution in England, and as a writer on the "Progress of Ethical Philosophy." He also wrote a work designed as a reply to Burke's condemnation of the French Revolution, entitled "Vindiciæ Gallicæ," one of the three works of his which may be said to have permanent value. He was lacking in genius, though cultured and dispassionate as a writer, while as an orator his eloquence is diffuse rather than brilliant. In 1830, he was appointed commissioner for the affairs of India under the Whig administration of that era, but died two years later.

### ON THE TRIAL OF JEAN PELTIER

[In 1802 Mr. Peltier founded a French newspaper in London, called "L'Ambigu," and put on the frontispiece the figure of a sphinx (emblematic of mystery), with a head which strikingly resembled that of Bonaparte, wearing a crown. Its pages were filled with instances of the despotism of the First Consul, some violent and some ridiculous, and it was characterized, on the whole, by great bitterness, while one of the numbers directly hinted at the assassination of Bonaparte.

These things gave so much annoyance to Bonaparte that he actually demanded that the English government send Peltier out of the kingdom; and when this was refused he insisted, as France was then at peace with England, that Mr. Peltier should be prosecuted by the English attorney-general for "a libel on a friendly government!" upon which subject the laws of England were strict even to severity.]