

Pathology Photography Fiction Fishing
Christianity Art Cooking Essays
Buddhism Freemasonry Medicine Biology
Music Ancient Egypt Evolution
Carpentry Physics Dance Geology
Mysticism Fitness Shakespeare
Science Yoga Marketing Confidence
Immortality Biographies Poetry
Psychology Witchcraft Electronics
Chemistry History Law Accounting
Philosophy Anthropology Alchemy Drama
Quantum Mechanics Atheism Sexuality
Mental Health Ancient History Criminal
Entomology Shipwrecks Sports
Paleontology New Year's Resolutions
Metaphysics Investment Archaeology

Forgotten Books

— www.forgottenbooks.com —

Copyright © 2016 FB &c Ltd.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law.

VINDICATION
OF
GENERAL WASHINGTON
FROM THE STIGMA OF ADHERENCE TO
SECRET SOCIETIES.

BY
JOSEPH RITNER,

GOVERNOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,
COMMUNICATED

BY
REQUEST OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, TO THAT BODY,
ON THE 8TH OF MARCH, 1837,

WITH
THE PROCEEDINGS WHICH TOOK PLACE
ON ITS RECEPTION.

HARRISBURG:

PRINTED BY THEO. FENN.

1837.



UNIVERSITY
OF PITTSBURGH
LIBRARY



Dar. Rm.
E312.17
R611

THIS BOOK PRESENTED BY

Buhl Foundation

LATE C

It was
County,
of the U
ject of I

which follows, accompanying it, in his letter to the applicant,
with these very appropriate remarks.

October 21st, 1840.

DEAR SIR,

Annexed is a copy of Judge Marshall's letter to Mr. Edward
Everett, while, if my memory serves me, Governor of this
Commonwealth, the date of it, however, will show. The
judge, although pointedly averse to having his letter appear or
even to be alluded to in the papers, yet he indirectly counsels
Mr. Everett as a public man, to an expression of his opinion in

OPINIONS OF THE
LATE CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE UNITED STATES,
JOHN MARSHALL,
CONCERNING
FREEMASONRY.

It was accidentally discovered that a gentleman in Norfolk County, Mass., had a copy of a letter from the late Chief Justice of the United States to the Hon. Edward Everett, on the subject of Freemasonry. Being requested he furnished the one which follows, accompanying it, in his letter to the applicant, with these very appropriate remarks.

October 21st, 1840.

DEAR SIR,

Annexed is a copy of Judge Marshall's letter to Mr. Edward Everett, while, if my memory serves me, Governor of this Commonwealth, the date of it, however, will show. The judge, although pointedly averse to having his letter appear or even to be alluded to in the papers, yet he indirectly counsels

a decent, manly, frank and firm manner ; from which the judge seems fully apprized of the malignant character of the institution towards its backsliding members. Judge Marshall urges his advanced age and his wish for repose, as reasons why he would not engage in “any tempestuous sea-;” but his age and also his respectability seem to be substantial reasons, why they should be made use of to destroy an institution pregnant with so much evil as to commit murder, and so much strength as to conceal and protect the murderer! But the Judge has now obtained the repose of the grave, and though dead, may his letter speak, may it be printed, and speak to generations yet unborn, should hereafter an effort be made to revive the base, the murderous and detestable institution.

Yours, &c.

THE LETTER.

Richmond, July 22d, 1833.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have received your favor of the 16th, enclosing a printed copy of your letter respecting Masonry to Mr. Atwell, accompanied by printed copies of letters from Gen. Washington and Mr. Madison on the same subject.

Soon after entering the army, I was made a Mason. In addition to the motives, which usually actuate young men, I was induced to become a candidate for admission into the society, by the assurance that the brotherly love, which pervaded it and the duties imposed on its members, might be of great service to me in the vicissitudes of fortune to which a soldier was exposed. After the army was disbanded, I found the order in high estimation, and every gentleman I saw in this part of Virginia was a member. I followed the crowd for a time

without attaching any importance to its object, or giving myself the trouble to inquire why others did. It soon lost its attraction, and though there are several Lodges in the city of Richmond, I have not been in one of them for more than forty years, except once, on an invitation to accompany General La Fayette, nor have I been a member of one of them for more than thirty. It was impossible not to perceive the useless pagantry of the whole exhibition. My friend, Mr. Story, has communicated my opinions to you truly. I thought it, however, a harmless plaything, which would live its hour and pass away, until the murder or abstraction of Morgan was brought before the public ;—that atrocious crime, and I had almost said, the still more atrocious suppression of the testimony concerning it, demonstrated the abuse, of which the oaths prescribed by the order were susceptible, and convinced me that the institution ought to be abandoned, as one capable of producing much evil, and incapable of producing any good, which might not be effected by safe and open means. I give you my sentiments without reserve, but in confidence. I have attained an age when repose becomes a primary wish. I am unwilling to embark on any tempestuous sea or to engage as a volunteer in any controversy, which may tend to excite the angry passions. I am unwilling to appear in the papers on any question, especially if it may produce excitement.

The Antimasonic controversy has not crossed the Potomac. With you it has become a party question, which a public man cannot escape, and on which a decent, manly opinion must be firmly and frankly expressed. But I am not a public man ; and if I were, many and extravagant are the tests by which we try the fitness of agents for the service of our country. This has not as yet become one of them. Several of my personal friends are Masons ; some few of them more zealous

than myself. You will therefore pardon the unwillingness I express, that any allusion to this letter should be made in the papers. Receive the assurances of the great and respectful esteem, with which I remain,

Your obedient,

J. MARSHALL.

*I rec'd the above Dec.
5. 1840 by mail - the
person who sent is unknown
to me. A.C.*

VINDICATION OF GENERAL WASHINGTON.

Extract from the Journal of the House of Representatives—vol. 1, page 276,

JANUARY, 20, 1837.

“ The Speaker laid before the House a memorial from sundry
“ citizens of Union county, complaining of certain inferences in
“ relation to the masonic and other secret societies, drawn by the
“ Governor in his annual message to the Legislature, from the
“ writings of Washington, and praying for the appointment of a
“ committee to wait upon the Governor, for the purpose of ascer-
“ taining and reporting how far General Washington’s Farewell
“ address, and other writings, sustained the said inferences.”

Which was read, as follows :

To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives in
General Assembly met, we, the undersigned, citizens of Penn-
sylvania, beg leave most respectfully to represent :—

That the Governor of Pennsylvania, in his annual message to
both branches of the Legislature, hath been wont to say on the
subject of Freemasonry, it was a spirit of lawless combination,
unknown to our open and equal institutions and opposed to the
genius of republicanism, *against which the Father of his country*
sent forth his last and most solemn warning. The Governor here
has reference to General Washington’s Farewell Address, when
he is made to say, “ *Beware of Secret Societies.*” The foregoing
inference is slandering the ashes of the patriotic and forever be-
loved dead—it is defamatory to the lips of that chaste and holy
man, whose whole life, with a single eye, was devoted to his coun-
try’s good. Well may we say, he was a compound of righteous-
ness, fitted by God as the special organ of liberty, and patron of
virtue, and his name now fills the whole space in the hearts of
American gratitude, and bound are we by every tie of honor to
preserve unsullied the name of that apostle of Liberty. His Fare-
well Address to the American people, contains not a single word
from which even an inference of the kind can be drawn, nor, can
from any of his political writings. In his letter to W. Jay, he
speaks against the democratic societies then forming in our coun-
try, in behalf of the Revolutionists of France, in which Washing-
ton refused to take a part, until they had established their inde-

pendence. He expressly says, "democratic societies then forming, which have for their object the control of government." Who will now presume to say that Freemasonry then was known by the name of democratic societies, and they were the object of Washington's last and solemn warning. It is well remembered by thousands yet alive, in Pennsylvania, that Liberty Poles were raised in almost every village in our state, with the motto of Liberty floating high in the air, under which was incised, "France aided us with money and her bravest men—we will stand by her—Jay's treaty with England shall not be ratified—Washington is in error—down with the excise and stamp acts." These are the societies to which Washington had reference, and of which he expressed his fears.

Whereas, General Washington's acts; to this day, are regarded as authority, both in religion and politics, and ought calculated to detract from the just merits of this great and good man, should not be permitted to remain in doubt, by friends to our republic; more especially so, as his opinions have always had a moral influence over our elections, consequently, should alone be founded in what he actually said, word for word. As the Governor has again brought this question before the Legislature, and its importance can be by none doubted, we pray the Legislature to appoint a committee to wait on His Excellency the Governor of Pennsylvania, and solicit from him the source of information from which he derived his authority, as quoted in his late message to this House, as to the Father of our Country's last and solemn warning against that "spirit of lawless combination unknown in our open and equal institutions, and opposed to the genius of republicanism," and report the same, with such references to General Washington's Farewell Address, and other writings, as may place his words or allusions to Freemasonry beyond the reach of doubt or cavil; and your petitioners will, as in duty bound, pray.

C. M. STRAUB,
JOHN SNYDER,
H. C. EYER.

When a motion was made by Mr. FORD,

That the said memorial be referred to a select committee.

Which was agreed to.

Whereupon,

Messrs. Ford, Dimmick of Pike, Stark, Garretson and English, were appointed the committee.

A motion was then made by Mr. SPACKMAN,

That the said committee be discharged from the further consideration of the subject.

The motion being under consideration,

A motion was made by Mr. REED, of Philadelphia,

To postpone the further consideration of the same for the present.

Which was agreed to.

MONDAY, MARCH 13, 1837.

Mr. FORD, from the committee to whom was referred a memorial from citizens of Union county, complaining of certain inferences in relation to the masonic and other secret societies, drawn by the Governor in his annual message, from the writings of Washington, made a report, No. 219,

Which was laid on the table.

Mr. CURTIS called for the reading of the said report ;

When a motion was made by Mr. HOPKINS,

That the reading of the report be postponed until this afternoon.

Which was agreed to.

SAME DAY.

Agreeably to order,

The report in relation to inferences drawn by the Governor, in his late message, from the writings of General Washington, was read.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE.

The committee appointed on the part of the House of Representatives, in conformity with the prayer of sundry citizens of Pennsylvania, complaining of certain inferences in relation to the Masonic and other Secret Societies, drawn by the Governor in his annual message to the Legislature, from the writings of Washington, and praying for the appointment of a committee to wait upon His Excellency, for the purpose of ascertaining and reporting how far General Washington's Farewell Address, and other writings, sustain the same references, REPORT :

That on the day succeeding their appointment, they addressed a letter to His Excellency the Governor, a copy of which is herewith subjoined, marked A., to which the answer, marked B., which is also subjoined, was shortly after returned. "In conformity with the intimation therein contained, "that he would embrace the earliest occasion of leisure from other duties, to place the subject before them in the light which its importance seemed to him to demand." the Governor, a few days since, transmitted to your committee the evidences of his authority in using the language complained of in his late message, in the communication marked C., hereunto annexed, which, together with this report, is respectfully submitted to the consideration of the House, without further comment.

A.

REPRESENTATIVE CHAMBER,
Harrisburg, January 21, 1837. }

DEAR SIR :

Yesterday morning the Speaker presented a memorial to the House of Representatives, signed by a few citizens of Pennsylvania, praying for the appointment of a committee on the part of that body, "to wait on His Excellency the Governor of Pennsylvania, and solicit from him the source of information from which he derived his authority, as quoted in his late message to the House, as to the Father of his Country's last and solemn warning against 'that spirit of lawless combination unknown to our open and equal institutions, and opposed to the genius of republicanism,' and report the same, with such references to General Washington's Farewell Address, and other writings, as may place his words or allusions to Freemasonry beyond the reach of doubt or cavil."

In compliance with the prayer of the petitioners, the undersigned were appointed a committee for the purpose expressed in the said memorial, and in the performance of the duty thus assigned them, they herewith submit to your Excellency the above extract from the same, as presented to the House. In it you will find embodied all that for which the memorialists most earnestly pray, and which we most respectfully submit to your Excellency's consideration, for such action as you may think proper to take upon the subject.

With the highest respect, we are, Sir,

Your most ob't servants,

GEORGE FORD, Jr.

WILLIAM ENGLISH,

WILLIAM GARRETSON.

HENRY STARK,

O. S. DIMMICK.

His Excellency JOSEPH RITNER,
 Governor of Pennsylvania.

B.

EXECUTIVE CHAMBER,
Harrisburg, January 23, 1837. }

GENTLEMEN :

'I this day' received your letter of the 21st instant, informing me that you have been appointed a committee on behalf of the House of Representatives, to obtain from me the authority on which, in my annual message to the Legislature, I asserted that General Washington had sent forth his last and most solemn warning against "that spirit of lawless combination unknown to our open and equal institutions, and opposed to the genius of republicanism," which has acquired such influence in our days,

It will afford me much pleasure to comply with the request of the House of Representatives, thus made, through their committee. I shall embrace the earliest occasion of leisure from other duties to place the subject before them in the light which its importance seems to me to demand.

I am, Gentlemen,

Very respectfully,

Your fellow-citizen,

Messrs. GEORGE FORD, JR.

JOS. RITNER.

WILLIAM ENGLISH,

WILLIAM GARRETSON,

HENRY STARK,

O. S. DIMMICK.

C.

EXECUTIVE CHAMBER,
Harrisburg, March 8th, 1837. }

GENTLEMEN:

The annual Message to the Legislature, of December 6th, 1836, declares:—

That the chief evil of the times is “that spirit of lawless combination unknown to our open and equal institutions, and opposed to the genius of Republicanism, against which the Father of his Country sent forth his last and most solemn warning.”

That “what was comparatively restricted and harmless in his day, has since assumed the dangerous character of regularly organized, oath bound, secret working, wide spread and powerful societies.”

And that “of these, some bearing more and some less of the features just enumerated, the Society of Freemasonry is the fruitful mother.”

These opinions and statements of the message, have occasioned your appointment as a Committee by the House of Representatives, “to wait on the Governor of Pennsylvania, to solicit from him the source of information from which he derived his authority as quoted in his last message to the House, as to the Father of our Country’s last and solemn warning against ‘that spirit of lawless combination, unknown to our open and equal institutions, and opposed to the genius of republicanism,’—and report the same, with such references to General Washington’s Farewell Address and other writings, as may place his words or allusions to Freemasonry beyond the reach of doubt or cavil.”

No occurrence of my life ever afforded me greater pleasure than that of being called upon officially, to vindicate the memory of Washington from the stigma of adherence to secret combinations.

His name is so deservedly dear, and his example so powerful among the people of this nation, that the wide trumpeted misfortune of his unthinking youth, in becoming a Freemason, has tended more to fasten upon us the evils of that society than all the jealous spirit of equality—the aroused power of the press—or the cry from the ground of spilled blood, has hitherto been sufficient to overcome. Even the practical renunciation of the last thirty-one years of his life, and his latest and most solemn precepts on the subject of lawless combinations, have failed to atone for his early indiscretion, or to remove the danger; and with Franklin, Lafayette and many others, he, the chosen one of freedom—the foe of Kings and the leader of the armies of Independence, is claimed to have passed down to the grave, the obedient servant of a skulking monarchy, and the sworn thrall of principles at war with the open practices of his whole glorious life.

If it be true as the lamented Colden, (himself one of the initiated,) declared, that *many a mason became a great man, but no great man ever became a mason*, how nearly does it concern the youth of our country, from among whom their own merits must elect her future great men, to pause and reflect before they commit their present standing and future reputation, to the keeping of a society, which, for its own cold hearted and selfish purposes could immolate even the fame of Washington at the shrine of its abominations. From the same flowers that bestow honey on the bee, and shed fragrance on the air, it is said the wasp extracts poison. Thus the name of Washington, which has become the watchword of liberty and of national independence over the world, is degraded into the office of a masonic gull-trap at home.

Each votary of the order, when pressed by the weight of reason, so easily brought to bear against him by the weakest advocate of democratic equality, answers every objection, by repeating the name of “GRAND MASTER WASHINGTON.”

Newspaper editors seem to have in stereotype, as a standing answer to all arguments, and a spell to charm down all charges against the craft, the names of *Washington, Franklin and Lafayette*.

Masonic orators, from the declaimer of a bar room meeting, to

the masonic occupant of the sacred desk, and the legislative seat, alike conclude their discourses with the names of *Washington*, and the other heroes and sages of the Revolution.

Not only do masons thus in general terms, claim the authority of his name, but they even designate with particularity, the masonic offices he held—the lodges over which he presided, and the continuance and degree of his devotion to the order; nay, some of them go so far as to shew the very “attire which he often wore as a mason,” and the *mallet* which he used as Master.

The Hon. Timothy Bigelow of Massachusetts, in an oration delivered at the funeral obsequies solemnized in honor of General Washington’s memory, by the Grand Lodge of that State, on the 11th of February, 1800, made use of the following language:—
 “He (Washington) cultivated our art with *sedulous attention*, and
 “never lost an opportunity of advancing the interests or promoting the honor of the craft.”—“The information received from
 “our brethren who had the happiness of being members of *the*
 “*lodge over which he presided many years*, and of which *he died*
 “*the Master*, furnish abundant proof of his *persevering zeal* for the
 “prosperity of the institution. Constant and punctual in his attendance, scrupulous in his observance of the regulations of the
 “Lodge, and solicitous at all times to communicate light and instruction, he discharged the duties of the chair with uncommon
 “dignity and intelligence in all the mysteries of our art. We
 “see before us the *very attire which he often wore as a mason*.”

The American edition of Preston’s *Masonry*, asserts that “the
 “society of Freemasons, in America, continued to flourish under
 “the auspices of General Washington, who continued his patronage
 “to the Lodges *until his death*.”

Masonry has published a letter from him to King David’s Lodge of Newport, R. I., without date, but said to be written in August, 1790, in which he is made to say, “I shall always be happy to
 “advance the interests of the society, and to be considered by
 “them as a deserving brother.”

Four other letters, purporting to be from him, have also been published by masons, all without dates; one to the Grand Lodge of Charlestown, two to the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, and one to the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, all lauding the institution.

Andrew Jackson, late President of the United States, when invited in March 1830, by a body of masons, to join in a masonic

pilgrimage to the tomb of the Father of his country, thus replied:
 “ The memory of that *illustrious Grand Master*, [Washington,]
 “ cannot receive a more appropriate honor than that which religion
 “ and masonry pay it, when they send their votaries to his tomb,
 “ fresh from the performance of acts which **THEY** consecrate.”

General Tallmadge, of New York, asserted in a letter published in the winter of 1831-2, “ that Washington had often presided in
 “ Poughkeepsie Lodge.”

Having thus stated both the general and particular claims of masonry upon the name and fame of Washington, I shall proceed to disprove them.

As to Washington's early masonry, the following incident will be sufficient :

In 1830, the Rev. Ezra Styles Ely, D. D. editor of a religious newspaper, called the *Philadelphian*, was charged in some of the prints of the day, with being a mason. In an editorial article on the subject, contained in the number of that paper, dated July 23, 1830, he relates the following important anecdote:

“ In reply to all this, I would assert, that I never was a mason,
 “ and never expect to be. Hitherto I have neither advocated nor
 “ opposed masonry, unless it be in the relation of a conversation
 “ which passed between General Washington and Governor Jonathan Trumbull, the second, which the latter more than once repeated to my father. The latter, when aid-de-camp to the former, asked him if he would advise him to become a mason.”—
 General Washington replied, “ that masonry was a benevolent
 “ institution, which might be employed for the *best or worst* of
 “ purposes ; but that for the most part it was merely *child's play*,
 “ and he could *not give him any advice on the subject.*”

On the question of his having been the Master or Grand Master of a Lodge, the following proofs will not be disputed. The first document is an extract from the records of King David's Lodge, in Newport, R. I. the authenticity of which has been thus established:

An action of trover was brought by the officers of St. John's Lodge, the successor of King David's Lodge, to recover those records from Dr. Benjamin Case, who claimed to be Master of the Lodge, in the progress of which they were proved to be the original records, and Dr. Case was ordered to restore them to St. John's Lodge, or pay \$300 damages. The money was paid, and the records retained for the good of the country. This is the extract:



THIS PAGE IS LOCKED TO FREE MEMBERS

Purchase full membership to immediately unlock this page

DELVE INTO FANTASY, MAGIC, MYTHOLOGY & FOLKLORE

Forgotten Books'
Full Membership gives
access to 797,885 ancient
and modern, fiction and
non-fiction books.

Continue

*Fair usage policy applies

left, after a severe fever had been removed, and which allows me to add little more now than thanks for your kind wishes and favorable sentiments, except *to correct an error you have run into, of my presiding over the English Lodges in this country. The fact is I preside over none, nor have I been in one more than once or twice within the last thirty years.* I believe, notwithstanding, that none of the Lodges in this country are contaminated with the principles ascribed to the society of the Illuminati.

“ With respect, I am, Sir,

“ Your ob’t humble servant,

“ GEO. WASHINGTON.”

On the 17th of October, in the same year, Mr. Snyder wrote a second letter to Washington, and received a reply, dated October 24th, pretty much in the same terms.

The authenticity of the correspondence is thus proved:

“ BOSTON, November 22, 1832.

“ I hereby certify, that I have compared a letter from the Rev. G. W. Snyder to General Washington, dated August 22d, 1798, and two letters from General Washington to Mr Snyder, dated September 25th, and October 24th, of the same year, as printed in the “ Proceedings of the third Antimasonic State Convention,” with the recorded copies in General Washington’s Letter Books, obtained by me at Mount Vernon, and I find them printed exactly as there recorded, except Mr. Snyder’s letter, in which the word “ secret” is omitted in one place, and the words “ on this terrene spot” in another. General Washington’s letters to Mr. Snyder are exactly printed throughout.

“ JARED SPARKS.”

With respect to the letter said to have been written by him to King David’s Lodge in 1798, and to the four others, the Grand Lodges of Charlestown, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania, and which are relied on to establish his devotion to masonry till his death, it may be remarked :

1st. That three of them, viz : that to King David’s Lodge, and the two to the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, are without date ; a circumstance wholly unprecedented in the whole correspondence of the writer, who above all other men, was noted for attention to method and form in his writings.

2d. That though General Washington caused to be carefully copied in books kept for that purpose, all his letters on every subject, no trace whatever of any of the five letters under consideration, nor any letters to any other Lodge or Masonic body whatever, are to be found among the records of his correspondence.

3d. That the originals of none of them have been seen out of the Lodge in open day, though the officers of at least the Grand Lodge

of Massachusetts, have been publicly called on to produce and submit them to the examination of Jared Sparks, Esq. who, from his connexion with the Washington correspondence, is supposed to be best qualified to ascertain their authenticity.

The following letter from Mr. Sparks to the chairman of the committee of citizens of Massachusetts, who had called on the Grand Lodge to submit the letters to his inspection, is decisive on the two last of these points.

“ BOSTON, February 18, 1833.

“ Sir,—I received this morning your letter of the 15th instant, in which you inquire:

“ *Whether I have yet seen or had in my possession any original letter or letters, in the hand writing of General Washington, addressed to any body of men denominating themselves Freemasons.*

“ In reply, I can only state that I have seen no letters from General Washington of the kind described in yours, nor received any communication on the subject, either verbal or written.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Very respectfully,

“ Your ob't servant,

“ JARED SPARKS.”

If corroboration were required, it is furnished by the following letter from Chief Justice Marshall, in reply to one from citizens of Massachusetts, inquiring of him, whether as biographer of Washington, he knew of the existence of any authentic originals or copies of letters addressed by Washington to masonic bodies. The same persons also inquired whether the Chief Justice had declared the institution of masonry to be “a jewel of the utmost value,” &c. &c.

“ RICHMOND, October 18, 1833.

“ Sir,—Your letter of the 11th, transmitting a resolution of the Antimasonic Convention of the State of Massachusetts, passed the 13th of last September, has just reached me. The flattering terms in which that resolution is expressed, claim and receive my grateful acknowledgments.

“ The circumstances represented as attending the case of Morgan were heard with universal detestation, but produced no other excitement in this part of the United States, than is created by crimes of uncommon atrocity. Their operation on masonry, whatever it might be, was silent, rather arresting its progress and directing attention from the society, than inducing any open, direct attack upon it. The agitations which convulse the North, did not pass the Potomac. Consequently, an individual so much withdrawn from the world as myself, entering so little into the party conflicts of the day, could feel no motive, certainly I felt no inclination, to volunteer in a distant con-

dict, in which the wounds that might be received, would not be soothed by the consoling reflection that he suffered in the performance of a necessary duty. I never did utter the words ascribed to me, nor any other words importing the sentiment they convey. I never did say "*Freemasonry is a jewel of the utmost value, that the pure in heart and life can only appreciate it fully, and that in a free government it must, it will be sustained and protected.*" The fact mentioned in the resolution, that I have been in a Lodge *but once*, so far as I can recollect, *for nearly forty years*, is evidence that I have no disposition to volunteer in this controversy, as the zealous partizan, which this language would indicate. In fact I have sought to abstain from it. - Although I attach no importance to the opinions I may entertain respecting masonry, yet I ought not to refuse on application, to disavow any expressions which may be ascribed to me, that I never used. I have said that I always understood the oaths taken by a mason, as being subordinate to his obligations as a citizen to the laws, but have never affirmed that there was any positive good or ill in the institution itself.

"The resolution also inquires, "whether, as the friend and biographer of Washington, I have in my possession or recollection, any knowledge of any acts of General Washington, or any documents written by him to masonic bodies, approving of masonry."

"The papers of General Washington were returned many years past, to my lamented friend his nephew, and are now, I believe, in the possession of Mr. Sparks. *I do not recollect ever to have heard him utter a syllable on the subject.* Such a document, however, not being of a character to make any impression at the time, may have passed my memory.

"With great respect,

"I am, Sir,

"Your ob't servant,

"J. MARSHALL."

TO JOHN BAILEY, Esq.

These are the proofs of Washington's views in relation to masonry, which can be judicially established, if the House of Representatives raise a committee authorized and disposed to make the investigation; if the committee be vested with power to send for persons and papers; and if they be sustained by the House in the exercise of the legitimate authorities requisite to a legislative investigation. The conclusion to which these proofs lead are :-

1. That in 1768, General Washington had ceased regular attendance at the Lodge. This is proved by his letter to Mr. Snyder.

2. That so far back as about the year 1780, he had become convinced, at least of the inutility of Freemasonry, and called it "child's play." This is established by his reply to Governor Trumbull.

3. That on the 25th of September, 1798, (one year and four months before his death,) his opinions on the subject of Freemasonry remained unchanged from what they were thirty years before when he was only thirty-six years old. This is established by his letter to Mr. Snyder.

4. That up to February, 1781, as appears by the records of King David's Lodge, and up to the 25th September, 1798, as appears by his letter to Mr. Snyder, he had not been "Grand Master of North America, nor even Master of any particular Lodge."

5. That in 1781, as appears by the same record of King David's Lodge, it was not agreeable to him to be addressed *even as a private mason*.

6. That all the letters said to be written by Washington to Lodges are spurious. This is rendered nearly certain : *First*, by the non-production of the originals : *Second*, by the absence of copies among the records of his letters : *Third*, by their want of dates : *Fourth*, by the fact that his intimate friend and biographer, Chief Justice Marshall, (himself a mason in his youth,) says in his letter just given, that *he never heard Washington utter a syllable on the subject*—a matter nearly impossible, if Washington had for years been engaged in writing laudatory letters to the Grand Lodges of South Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts.

But placing all these proofs out of view, and trying the claims of masonry upon him, merely by his general conduct and character, can it be imagined that the *republican* Washington, while engaged in the perilous contest of seven years, to establish in America a republican government, and secure the equal rights of the people against the nobility and monarchy of Great Britain, could favor a body of sworn devotees of aristocracy, whose leaders assumed to themselves and promulged their right to the titles of "EXCELLENT GRAND KING—MOST EXCELLENT GENERAL GRAND HIGH PRIEST—KNIGHT OF REDEMPTION—KNIGHT OF CHRIST—KNIGHT OF THE MOTHER OF CHRIST—KNIGHT OF THE HOLY GHOST—KING OF HEAVEN—*Most powerful Sovereign Grand Commander and Sovereign Grand Imperator General* of the thirty-third degree!" and the like profane, pompous and ridiculous titles, at the mention of which the imperial titles assumed by Napoleon and Iturbide, sink into insignificance ?

Can it be imagined that the *virtuous* Washington, could cherish a society whose members, in some of its degrees, take oaths to keep each others secrets, "*murder and treason not excepted*;" and bind

themselves by horrid imprecations, to extricate each other from difficulties, “whether they be *right or wrong?*”

Can it be imagined that the *patriotic* Washington, could countenance a combination, whose book of constitutions lays down the maxim, that although a brother, (one of the band,) be a *rebel* against the State, yet “if convicted of *no other crime*, this cannot expel him from the Lodge, and his relation to it remains *indefeasible?*”

Can it be imagined that the *religious* Washington, could foster an order of men who, at their midnight initiation of members of the *arch* Royal Degree, personate the Great Jehovah in the awful scene of the Burning Bush; and who, in another degree, mock the most sacred rite of christianity, by drinking wine from a human skull?

Would the belief that the *republican, virtuous, patriotic and religious* Washington, could cultivate or cherish such a society, be less sacriligious to his memory, than it would be shocking to the world, to inflict at this time on his sacred remains, some of the penalties of masonry, on those who renounce the order—to tear his revered body from Mount Vernon, “to become a prey to wild beasts of the field, and vultures of the air, or bury it in the rough sands of the sea, a cable-tow’s length from the shore, at low water mark, where the tide ebbs and flows twice in twenty-four hours”—or lock it up for seven days in an American fortress, under the American flag, and then plunge it at midnight into the torrent of the Niagara?

When Washington was a boy and a young man, he acted as youths usually do; fond of novelty and induced by curiosity.—But to suppose that in his maturer years, his feelings or his judgment were tickled and caught by the baby clothes of Masonry, its childish mummeries, and harlequin exhibitions, would be any thing else than a manifestation of respect and reverence for his character and memory.

He became a mason when young, and was ignorant of the nature and tendency of the order till after he had taken the oath to secrecy and fidelity forever. At a later period of life, when engaged in the arduous struggle for American liberty, experience, reflection and observation, manifested to him the full character of Masonry. But if he had then rashly and publicly renounced and denounced a society with whom defamation is a system, and vengeance is a sworn duty, his reputation, and perhaps his life, would have been the forfeit. That single event might have caused the thirteenth

American provinces to remain bound for years at the footstool of the monarch of Britain.

Having thus shown from Masonic records ; from his own writings ; from the recollections of his contemporaries ; from the knowledge of his biographers ; and from his whole life and character, the nature of his feelings towards Freemasonry, and also the probable reason why he did not, at an early day, *denounce* the society, as well as withdraw from it, the question may fairly be asked: Did he take no means to guard his country from the evils of such combinations? He did. He who never shrunk from danger, when its encounter could serve his fellow citizens, took the most effectual means, and embraced the most solemn occasion, to place his testimony against them on lasting record. In his Farewell Address of September, 1796, we find these warnings, which cannot be mistaken.

“ All obstructions to the execution of the laws, all combinations
 “ and associations, under whatever plausible character, with the
 “ real design to direct, control, counteract, or awe, the regular de-
 “ liberations and actions of the constituted authorities, are destruc-
 “ tive of this fundamental principle, and of fatal tendency. They
 “ serve to organize faction; to give it an artificial and extraordi-
 “ nary force; to put in the place of the delegated will of the
 “ nation, the will of the party, often a small but artful and enter-
 “ prizing minority of the community; and, according to the alter-
 “ nate triumphs of different parties, to make the public adminis-
 “ tration the mirror of the ill-concerted and incongruous projects of
 “ faction rather than the organ of consistent and wholesome
 “ plans, digested by common councils, and modified by mutual
 “ interests.”

“ However combinations or associations of the above description
 “ may now and then answer popular ends, they are likely in the
 “ course of time and things to become potent engines, by which
 “ cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men, will be enabled to
 “ subvert the power of the people, and to usurp for themselves the
 “ reins of government; destroying afterwards the very engines
 “ which have lifted them to unjust dominion.”

It will be perceived that Washington here makes no express mention of Freemasonry. It would have been undignified in him to have alluded by name to any particular society; especially to one whose bloated existence was even then marked with its own

destruction, although it could count back to a bar-room birth in an obscure tavern of London, in the year 1717, and whose only chance of immortality would be such a mention by him, as loathsome insects are sometimes found preserved in the purest amber. No. His last testament to his country, which will endure as long as liberty shall be cherished among men, was not to be marked with the ephemeral name of a society which forms only one of the temporary excrescences of the time. Neither his address to America was to be thus disgraced, nor masonry thus honored. In that address his object was to deal with general and immutable truths, and the fundamental principles of our government. His remarks on the subject of combinations and associations, are therefore applicable to every description of them, past, present and to come, whether they be sworn or unsworn, foreign or domestic, secret or open.

Upon a deliberate consideration of all the facts and circumstances which have been detailed and referred to, I believe that no impartial and unprejudiced mind will doubt but that FREEMASONRY, with all other combinations calculated to "control, counteract or awe, the regular deliberations of the constituted authorities," was denounced, and was intended to be denounced by Washington in his Farewell Address to the people of the United States.

Masonry, with the hope of sheltering itself from exposure, and averting the certain destruction that awaits it from the righteous sentence of the American people, points unceasingly to the name of the illustrious men who may once have belonged to the order, and for ten years has been ringing the change on the names of Washington, Franklin, and Lafayette. The views of Washington can be judged by his actions and language just exhibited. Franklin and Lafayette have left behind them scarcely less clear and unequivocal evidence of their disapprobation of masonry.

When a number of masons and others, soon after the revolutionary war, endeavored to establish an order of nobility in this country, under the name of the Cincinnati, with the specious guise of preserving the memory of the deeds of heroism to which that glorious time gave birth, the project was crushed almost in its origin, and the whole scheme rendered supremely ridiculous, in the eyes of American people, by the wit, the ridicule, and the argument of Franklin and Jefferson—those apostles of liberty and democracy. And when Franklin was consulted by a relation



THIS PAGE IS LOCKED TO FREE MEMBERS

Purchase full membership to immediately unlock this page

SAVE \$3,999,994

Did you know we sell
paperback books too?

To buy our entire catalog
in paperback would cost
over \$4,000,000

Access it all now for
\$8.99/month

*Fair usage policy applies

Continue

The proneness of masons to appropriate to their association the character and names of great men, is strikingly exemplified in the fact that some of them have not hesitated, publicly to charge the illustrious founders of democracy, Jefferson and Madison, with having been masons. Moses Richardson, the Grand Treasurer of the Grand Encampment of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, at the investigation of masonry held in Rhode Island in December 1831 and January 1832, testified, *that all the Presidents of the United States except two (the two Adams's) were masons.* And the Reverend Bernard Whitney, the orator at the dedication of what is called a masonic temple at Boston, in June 1832, made the same assertion on his individual authority.

The whole of Jefferson's life, devoted to the cause of liberty and the equal rights of man, and his zealous and powerful exposure in all his writings of all aristocratic combinations and associations, are quite sufficient to free his name and character from the imputation of being a mason. He thus writes on privileged societies, in a letter dated April 16, 1784, to General Washington, who had requested his opinion on the subject:-

“The objections of those who are opposed to the institution
 “(Cincinnati) shall be briefly sketched. You will readily fill
 “them up. They urge that they are against the confederation—
 “against the letter of some of our constitutions—against the spirit
 “of all of them:—that the foundation on which all of these are
 “built, is the natural equality of man, the denial of every pre-
 “eminence but that annexed to legal office, and particularly the
 “denial of a pre-eminence by birth. That however, in their
 “present dispositions, citizens might decline accepting honorary
 “instalments into the order, a time may come when a change of
 “dispositions would render these flattering, when a well directed
 “distribution of them might draw into the order all the men
 “of talents, of office and of wealth, and in this case, would pro-
 “bably procure an engraftment into the government; that in this
 “they will probably be supported by their foreign members, and
 “the wishes and influence of foreign courts; that experience has
 “shewn that the hereditary branches of modern governments, are
 “the patrons of privilege and prerogative, and not of the natural
 “rights of the people, whose oppressors they generally are: that
 “besides these evils, which are remote, others may take place
 “more immediately; that a distinction is kept up between the

“ civil and military, which it is for the happiness of both to oblit-
 “ erate ; *that when the members assemble they will be proposing to*
 “ *do something, and what that something may be, will depend on*
 “ *actual circumstances ; that being an organized body, under*
 “ *habits of subordination, the first obstruction to enterprize will be*
 “ *already surmounted ;* that the moderation and virtue of a single
 “ character, have probably prevented this revolution from being
 “ closed as most others have been, by a subversion of that liberty
 “ it was intended to establish ; that he is not immortal, and his
 “ successor, or some of his successors, may be led by false calcu-
 “ lations into a less certain road of glory.”

As to Madison, he fortunately lived long enough to learn the enormities of masonry, and its aptitude at enrolling among its worshippers, the names of eminent men who were all their lives entire strangers to its *principles, its rites, and its fruits.*

He thus replied to a friend who informed him of some of the doings of the fraternity, and who inquired whether he was or ever had been a mason:

“ MONTPELIER, January 24, 1832.

“ *Dear Sir,—*I received long ago your interesting favor of the 31st October, with the pamphlet referred to, and I owe an apology for not sooner acknowledging it. I hope it will be a satisfactory one, that the state of my health, crippled by a severe rheumatism, restricted my attention to what seemed to have immediate claims upon it ; and in that light I did not view the subject of your communication ; ignorant as *I was* of the true character of masonry, and little informed as I was of the grounds on which its extermination was contended for ; and incapable as I was and am in my situation of investigating the controversy.

“ *I never was a mason, and no one perhaps could be more a stranger to the principles, rites, and fruits of the Institution. I had never regarded it as dangerous or noxious ; nor, on the other hand, as deriving importance from any thing publicly known of it. From the number and character of those who now support the charges against masonry, I cannot doubt that it is at least susceptible of abuses, outweighing any advantages promised by its patrons. With this apologetic explanation, I tender you sir, my respectful and cordial salutations.*

JAMES MADISON.”

If masons could thus, in defiance of truth and justice, force to the aid of sinking masonry, the popular democratic names of Jefferson and Madison, who never belonged to the order, need we wonder that they should use the reputation of Washington with equal injustice, for the same purpose, merely because he had in his youth been a mason ?

And, now

When a man of distinguished merit dies, if at any time he had been a mason, although he may have abandoned the Lodge the greater part of his life, masons immediately seize his name to add to the list of great men that belonged to the society, and ever after use it to allure new dupes to the fraternity.

The late Chief Justice Marshall, William Wirt, and Cadwallader D. Colden, (the friend and biographer of Fulton,) had all been masons in their youth. If they had died before the masonic murder of Morgan aroused the attention of the people to the tendency and the acts of masonry, they would have been enrolled by masons among the great men of the order, and the public ear would have been deafened with the chime of Marshall, Wirt, and Colden, as it was with the changes rung on the names of Washington, Franklin and Lafayette.

But fortunately for truth and liberty, they survived that crisis in the progress of our free institutions. Yet attempts to appropriate some of them *masonically* have not been wanting. In August 1833, an eastern paper stated that Judge Marshall said "that Freemasonry was a jewel of the utmost value; that the pure in heart and life could only appreciate it fully—and that in a free government it must, it will be sustained and protected." This publication was made in Massachusetts, upwards of five hundred miles from Richmond, where the Judge resided, and he was at that time about 78 years of age. If he had never heard the assertion, or if hearing of it he had deemed it too absurd to merit notice, then at his death (which in the course of nature could not be remote,) the publication would have been assumed as true, by every Lodge, Chapter and Encampment throughout the United States. They would have alleged triumphantly that the story was published in the life time of the Chief Justice, and that he never denied its correctness.

But happily, as is seen from his letter of October 18, 1833, before referred to, the publication was seen by him, and most explicitly denied, and the important facts added, that he had not been in a Lodge but *once for forty years*, and that he never "affirmed that there was any positive good or ill in the institution itself."

In September 1831, the illustrious and pious Wirt published to the world that he had not been in a Lodge for more than thirty years, and that he considered masonry "at war with the fundamental principles of the social compact, *treason against society*, and a wicked conspiracy against the laws of God and men, *which ought to be put down.*"

In May 1829, Colden addressed to a meeting in New York, a long, most valuable, and interesting letter on the subject of masonry; in which he says, “It is true that I have been a mason a great number of years, and that I held very high masonic offices and honors. It is equally true that I have for a long time ceased to have any connexion with the institution, because, I have believed, and do now believe, it is productive of much more *evil* than *good*. It is also true that I have on no fit occasion hesitated to express this sentiment. I have long entertained my present opinion, that a man who would eschew all evil should not be a Freemason—*Indeed I have never known a great mason who was not a great fool.*”

Since the publication of these letters, the sentiments of masonry towards Marshall, Wirt and Colden appear to have been not a little changed. No aproned or mitred processions accompanied their bodies to the grave: No mallets, crowns, compasses and acacia, were displayed at their funerals: No masonic orations commemorated the fact that they had ever belonged to the order. Their mortal remains were consigned to the earth with the dignified simplicity of plain republicans.

No one can doubt that if Washington had lived within the last few years, his public relation to masonry would not have been different from that of Marshall, Colden and Wirt.

And even before 1799, the period of his decease, if masonry had ventured to hold him up before the American people as a supporter of their order, they would have been spurned with indignation. For even so far back as 1780, he called masonry “child’s play,” as has been already shown; he subsequently announced to the committee of right worshipfuls of King David’s Lodge, that *it was not agreeable to him to be addressed as a mason*: And in 1798, he was prompt and most decisive in correcting the erroneous supposition of the Reverend Mr. Snyder, that he presided over the Lodges of this country: and added, that he presided over no Lodge, and had not been in one more than once or twice for thirty years. It was not till after death had silenced the lips of Washington, that masons dared to trumpet him to the world as a devotee of masonry, and to exhibit the masonic attire and mallets, and cable-tows, which they pretended he had had in frequent use, and held in awful veneration.

I have thus complied with the request of the House, more at length than was at first intended, but not more fully than the exceed-

ing great importance of the subject seemed to demand. I cannot however, dismiss it, without calling on the Legislature to adopt the proper measures for removing the abomination of Freemasonry from the land.

Putting aside all other objections, the desecration and invalidation of oaths which it inevitably produces, should cause a moral and religious people to banish it forever. In the words of Washington, to be found in another part of the Farewell Address, *“Let it simply be asked, where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in the courts of justice.”*

To this may be added the opinion of our own Snyder, contained in his annual message of December 5, 1816. *“The frequency of oaths, and the levity with which they are commonly administered, on occasions trifling and unnecessary, beget indifference and irreverence for the most awful appeal which the creature can make to his Creator. This has not only a most pernicious influence upon the morals and the order of society generally, but it causes the commission of numerous injuries by perjury. This abomination in our land, it is feared, will increase while oaths are uselessly multiplied, and so long as the distinction between merely moral and constructively legal perjuries, shield the perjured against prosecution and deserved punishment.”*

If such were the opinions of Washington and Snyder on the irreverent and unnecessary administration of oaths, at the time when the masonic penalties attached to them were either unknown to the people, or believed not to be intended for actual execution, what would they not now say, when the judicial proceedings of the country bear ample record, both of the correct revelation of the oaths, and of their literal construction in practice, and of the actual infliction of the penalty for violation? Disregard of the obligation to *“always hail, ever conceal and never reveal,”* any of the mysteries of Freemasonry, produced the murderous infliction of the proper masonic penalty, viz: the destruction of life, (most probably in literal accordance with the oath,) and the committal of the body to a watery grave. This inhuman outrage in its turn brought into action the oath of a higher degree, which binds masons to assist each other *“whether they be right or wrong,”* under dread, no doubt, of the more fearful penalty annexed. And this again accomplished that concealment of *“murder”* by witnesses and that perpetration of *“treason”* to law and justice by

peace officers, jurors and judges, which seem to be the very perfection of masonry in the arch Royal Degree, the conception of whose enormous penalty is disgraceful and horrible to humanity. Nothing but the absolute fear of the infliction of such penalties, could for a moment reduce an honest mind even to silent acquiescence in the binding force of such unlawful and immoral oaths. These things are not mere surmise.

Whatever may be the proceedings of the Legislature now or hereafter, on the subject of extra-judicial oaths and secret societies, I hope, with the blessings of Providence on my exertions, to be able when resigning my charge, to join in the honest boast of the Democratic Findlay in his last Executive Message of December 7, 1820, to the Legislature.

“My public life,” said he, “has no doubt been clouded by many errors of the judgment, but in reviewing the numerous intrinsic difficulties which pertain to the exercise of an extensive patronage, and especially when an inordinate avidity for power and emolument was so prevalent, I shall always regard it as a source of high satisfaction, that every attempt on the part of ambitious individuals, or SECRET ASSOCIATIONS, to exercise an unconstitutional control over the executive authority of the Commonwealth, has been successfully resisted during the period those functions have been entrusted to my care.”

I am, Gentlemen,

Very respectfully,

Your fellow-citizen,

JOS. RITNER.

To Messrs. FORD,	} Committee.
ENGLISH,	
GARRETSON,	
STARK,	
DIMMICK,	

After the reading of the report, a motion was made by Mr. WATTS,

That 5000 copies in the English language, and 3000 copies in the German language, of the said report, be printed for distribution.

The motion being under consideration,

A motion was made by Mr. GARRETSON,

To amend the same, by striking therefrom "5000," and inserting in lieu thereof "3000," and by striking therefrom "3000," and inserting in lieu thereof "2000."

When a motion was made by Mr. DARSIE,

To amend the amendment, by striking therefrom "3000 copies in the English language, and 2000 copies in the German language," and inserting in lieu thereof "the usual number of copies."

And on the question, will the House agree so to amend the amendment? The yeas and nays were required by Mr. WATTS and Mr. M'ILVAINE of Philadelphia, and are as follows:

YEAS—Messrs. Alricks, Beatty of Crawford, Boyer, Brawley, Cooley, Coplan, Crawford, Curtis, Darsie, Dimock of Susquehanna, English, Erdman, Espy, Gilmore, Harman, Hasson, Hill, Hinkson, Hopkins, Hughes, James, Johnston, Leech, Lewellen, Longaker, M'Clelland, M'Curdy, Rambo, Reed of Bedford, Reed of Philadelphia, Reynolds of Luzerne, Reynolds of Westmoreland, Rheiner, Shearer, Sheetz, Shortz, Stark, Sturgeon, Taylor of Lycoming, Thompson, Woodburn, Yearick, Yost, Dewart, Speaker—45.

NAYS—Messrs. Beale, Beatty of Mercer, Brooks, Carnahan, Chamberlain, Collins, Cunningham, Diller, Duncan, Etter, Fegely, Ferguson, Flanagan, Fling, Ford, Frederick, Fries, Garretson, Gorgas, Hammer, Harshe, Jackson of Berks, A. Kauffman, A. I. Kauffman, Lehman, M'Ilvain of Chester, M'Ilvaine of the city, Miller, Morton, Mowry, Oliver, Park, Parker, Picking, Richardson, Sebring, Smith, Snyder of Philadelphia, Spackman, Stevenson, Taylor of Indiana, Trego, Tyson, Watts, Weidman—44.

So the question was decided in the affirmative.

And the amendment as amended was agreed to.

And on the question, will the House agree to the motion as amended? The yeas and nays were required by Mr. REED of Philadelphia, and Mr. RHEINER, and are as follows—yeas 62, nays 18.

So the question was decided in the affirmative.