

FAST DISCOURSE.

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MY FATHERS AND BRETHREN,

NEVER did we assemble in this house on an occasion like the present. Though we have annually observed a day of solemn fasting and prayer, yet on these days we have found ourselves, and our country, in circumstances of peace and prosperity. We have beheld the judgments of Heaven only afar off. For twenty years, we have gazed with astonishment upon the scenes of desolation in Europe. We have seen her governments overturned, her cities plundered and burnt, her rights and liberties trampled under foot, her citizens dragged into war, and her fields covered with blood. But in contemplating these scenes of horror, a conviction that we were secure from those judgments with which God, in his anger, was visiting the Eastern World, was sometimes alleviated to our minds. This conviction arose partly from our removal from the theatre of war, and partly from a belief, that neither our interest, inclination or honor would require us to engage in a contest, which has spread distress and ruin over so large a portion of the world. But alas! how have we been disappointed! Our rulers have plunged us into war; the country is called to arms, and we are now a party in that contest, which has convulsed the world, demolished thrones, and marked its progress with misery and blood.

Though a war may sometimes be necessary, to defend the lives and liberties of a people, none, but