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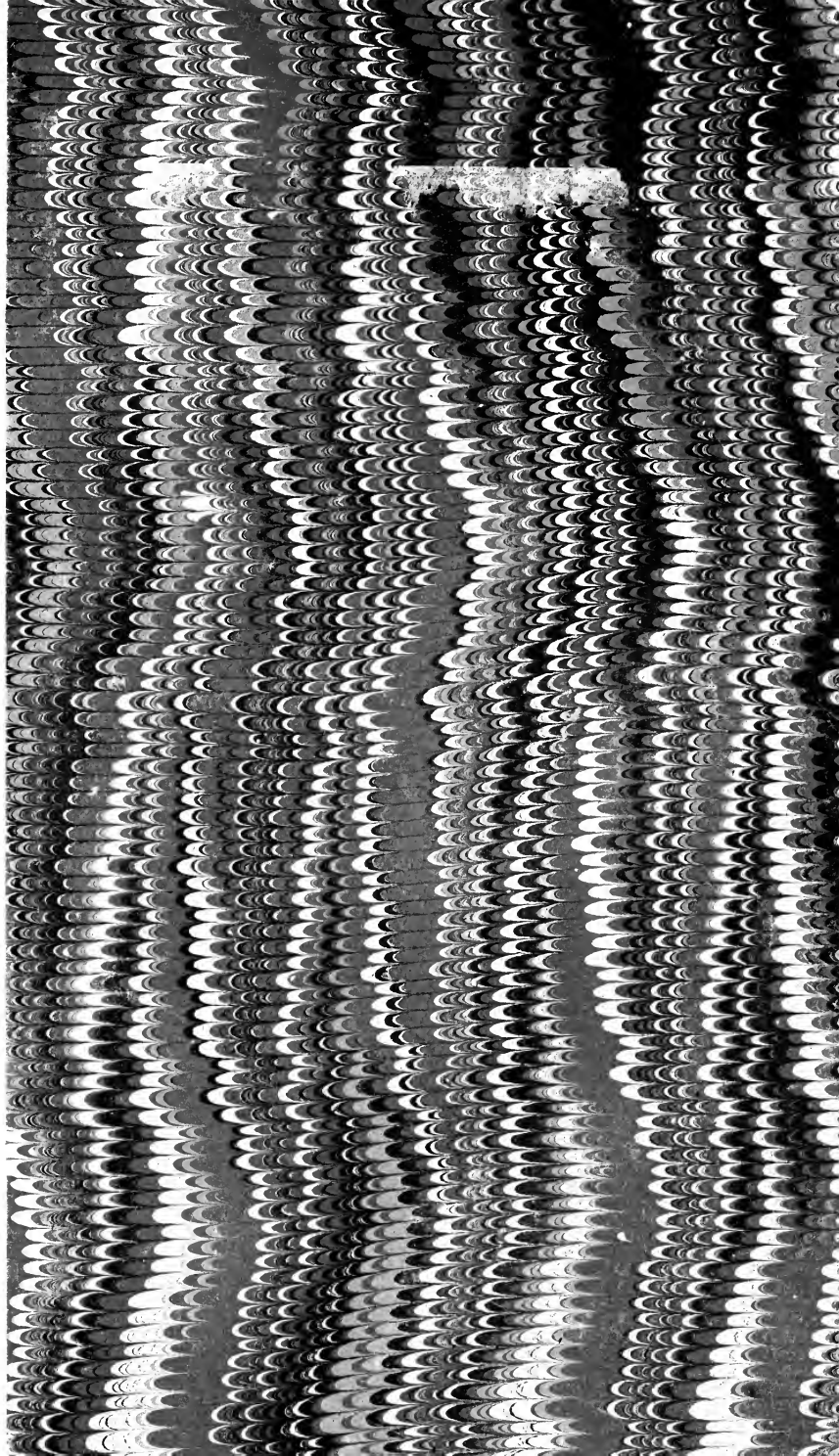
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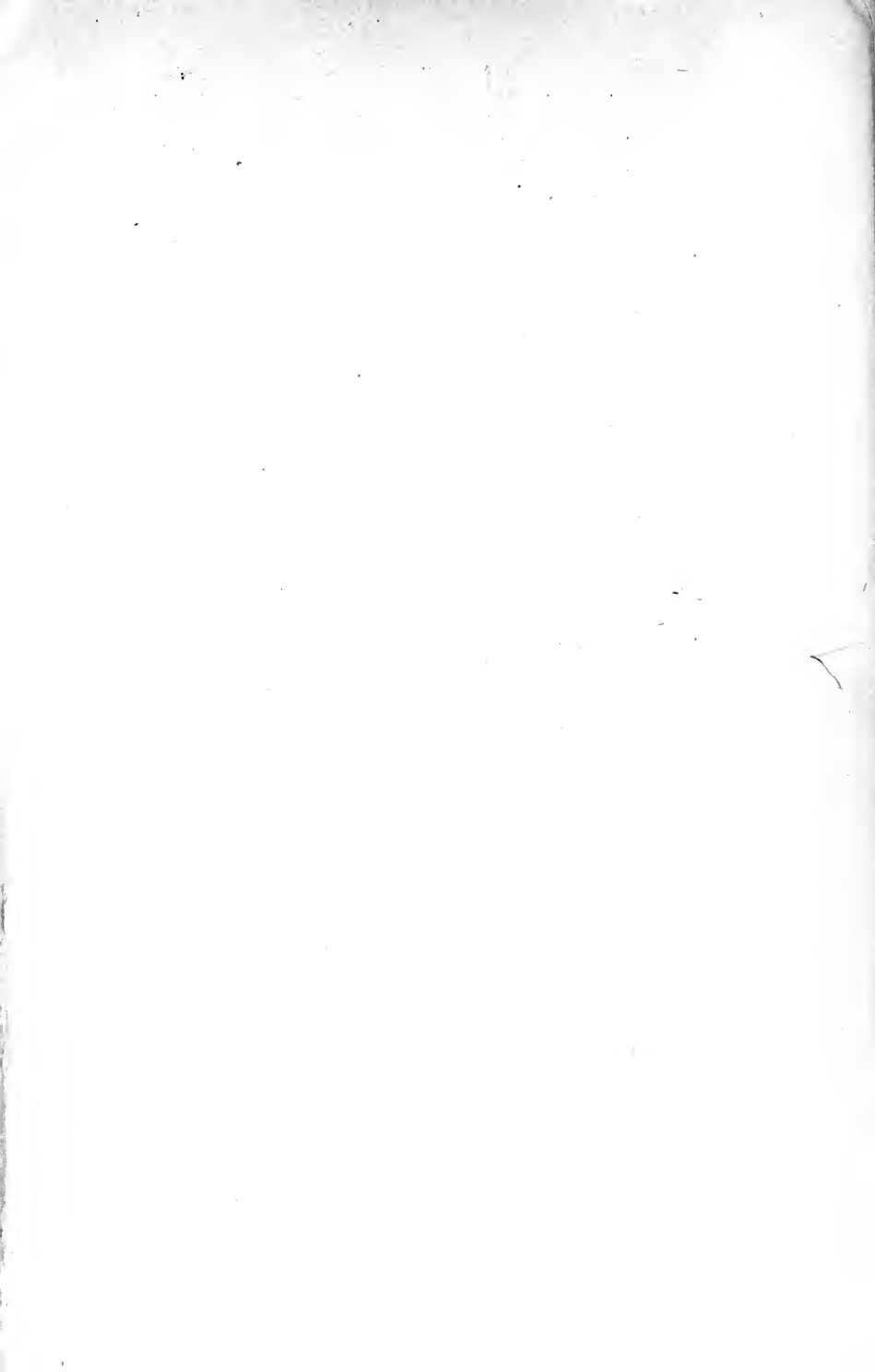
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HIS EXCELLENCY *Samuel Adams* Esq. L.L.D. & A.A.S.

GOVERNOR and COMMANDER IN CHIEF in and over the *COMMONWEALTH* of MASSACHUSETTS.



THE

LIFE AND PUBLIC SERVICES

OF

SAMUEL ADAMS,

BEING

A NARRATIVE OF HIS ACTS AND OPINIONS, AND OF HIS AGENCY  
IN PRODUCING AND FORWARDING THE

AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

WITH

EXTRACTS FROM HIS CORRESPONDENCE, STATE PAPERS,  
AND POLITICAL ESSAYS.

BY

WILLIAM V. WELLS.

VOL. III.

BOSTON:  
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY.

1865.

2821

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# CHRONOLOGY

OF THE

## LIFE OF SAMUEL ADAMS.

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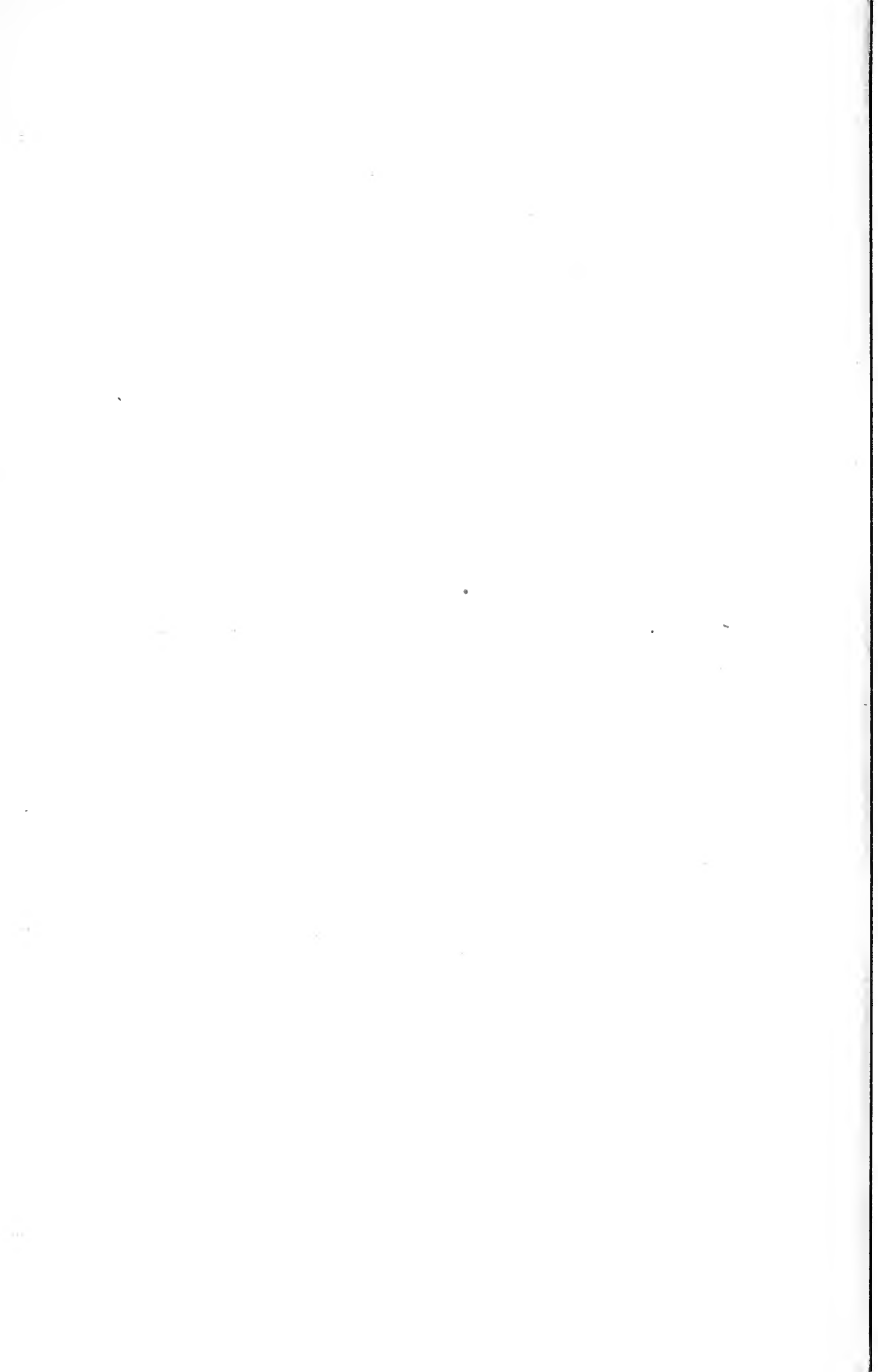
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# L I F E

OF

# S A M U E L A D A M S .

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## CHAPTER XLVII.

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At the election in December, 1777, Samuel and John Adams, Hancock, Paine, Gerry, Dana, and Lovell were chosen Congressional delegates. Hancock went to Yorktown in June, where he remained but three weeks, when he returned to Massachusetts.

During the previous summer a constitution of government had been contemplated in Massachusetts, and, in the winter before, the General Court had recommended the people to choose their representatives with that view. A committee of the Legislature, appointed during the present session, reported in January, 1778, a constitution, which was submitted to the people, and rejected by a great majority on the ground that it should have emanated from delegates elected for that specific purpose rather than from the Legislature. It was also preceded by no bill of rights, and the executive power was not satisfactorily adjusted. Although the two Adamases were in Massachusetts when this instru-

ment passed the Legislature, it is probable that neither of them had any hand in framing it; though, a few years later, when they were deputed to draft the present Constitution, they seem to have adopted the outlines of this earlier form. Henry Marchant, one of the Rhode Island delegates, who had left Congress for home about the same time, writes soon after to Samuel Adams:—

“I give you joy of your safe return to your family and friends. May that usefulness, so conspicuous hitherto, be continued to a proper adjustment of a just and permanent system of government for your own State and to the support of the general cause. I could wish your real merit had its proper influence, and that the eyes of the people were not to be blinded. I want a few hours of close conversation with you and your brother John Adams, as he is often called, and perhaps properly so. But the little part I am called to take in public affairs, now I am returned, and some little attention necessary to be paid to my own, I am afraid will prevent my visiting you this winter.”<sup>1</sup>

This implies that Marchant had entertained the idea of Adams's intending to engage in the subject on his arrival home; but there is no evidence that such was the case. The extract, however, reveals a knowledge of the machinations already commenced in Boston against his friend.

In December, the ship bearing Baron Steuben reached Portsmouth, and, on the 14th, the distinguished soldier who was to establish a new system of tactics and infuse fresh life into the army arrived at Boston on his way to Congress. Here he remained about five weeks, awaiting an answer to his letter to Washington, announcing his arrival.<sup>2</sup> He brought letters of introduction to Samuel Adams from Franklin, whose encomiums were likely to enhance the favorable idea which a few interviews with the Baron fully warranted. Adams had long seen the want of such a disciplinarian, whose experience in the best European schools

<sup>1</sup> Henry Marchant to Samuel Adams, Providence, Dec. 22, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> Kapp's *Life of Steuben*, p. 97.

might improve the awkward and untutored movements of the Continental troops. He gave him letters of introduction to his friends in Congress, upon whom he urged the expediency of speedily promoting their distinguished visitor to a position where his great acquirements might be made available. One of his letters on this subject says : —

“I have written to Mr. Gerry by the Baron Steuben, whom I strongly recommended to my worthy colleagues and others. Mr. Gerry will show you my letters, which makes it needless for me to add further than that. From the recommendatory letters of Dr. Franklin and other papers which I have seen, and the conversations I have had with the bearer, I really esteem him a most candid and sensible gentleman. The Doctor says he is spoken highly of to him by two of the best judges of military merit in France, though he is not himself a Frenchman, but a Prussian.”<sup>1</sup>

The letters here referred to must have been influential in obtaining for the Baron the objects of his visit. A resolution was passed by Congress, that, in consideration of the disinterested and heroic tender of his services as a volunteer, the thanks of that body be presented to him by the President in behalf of the United States. On the 5th of May he was appointed to the office of Inspector-General, with the rank and pay of Major-General ; his pay to commence from the time he joined the army and entered the service of the United States.<sup>2</sup> On the return of Adams to Congress, Steuben hastened to acknowledge the eminent services he had rendered him in promoting his interests.

HONORABLE SIR : —

I am very happy to learn of your arrival in Congress, as it affords me an opportunity of returning you my sincere thanks for the kindness you have shown me since I have had the pleasure of your acquaintance. I should be extremely happy in paying my respects in Philadelphia, would circumstances permit it, or in Yorktown, where I should certainly go, did the situation of affairs permit, were

<sup>1</sup> S. Adams to —, Boston, Jan. 10, 1778.

<sup>2</sup> Journals of Congress, IV. 261.

it but to repeat the sentiments of gratitude and esteem I have towards you.

Mr. Ternant will have the pleasure of delivering you this letter. He goes to Yorktown to transact some business with the Board of War, and I am happy in the opportunity of introducing him to your acquaintance.

I have the honor to be, honorable sir,

Your most obedient and very humble servant,

STEUBEN. .

CAMP VALLEY FORGE, 28th May, 1778.

HONORABLE SAMUEL ADAMS.

General Burgoyne and his captured army had been sent to Boston to be embarked thence for England on parole. The comparatively easy terms of the capitulation, which Burgoyne had hesitated to ratify upon hearing, after his agreement to surrender, that Clinton was advancing to his aid, had been dictated by Gates the more readily from his knowledge of the success of the enemy in the Highlands, which might have afforded relief to Burgoyne. After the first burst of enthusiasm at the victory had subsided, Congress began to grow dissatisfied with the terms, which, by transporting several thousand troops to England, would enable the enemy to send an equal number to America. Some disputes having arisen in relation to the surrender of cartouch-boxes, Burgoyne complained that the convention had been broken on the part of the Americans. The correspondence on this subject was several times under discussion in committee of the whole in December and January, when, instead of granting Burgoyne's request to march his troops for embarkation to a port in Rhode Island more accessible to transports, it was resolved to suspend the embarkation until the Court of Great Britain should notify Congress that the convention of Saratoga had been ratified.<sup>1</sup> Congress chose to consider Burgoyne's letter a repudiation of the treaty, inasmuch as in his letter of the 14th of November

<sup>1</sup> Journals of Congress, Jan. 2 and 3, 1778.

to General Gates, he had unjustly charged the United States with a breach of faith ; affording strong grounds to fear that he would avail himself of such pretended breach of the convention to disengage himself and his army from their obligations. The vote, which was nearly unanimous, implied a distrust of the British General, but the right of Congress to thus exert its power on so slight a pretext was, to say the least, questionable. The transports which arrived at Boston to remove the troops were ordered away ; and the captive army was sent to Virginia in the following year. A statement of the circumstances was sent to Adams at Boston, by Roberdeau, who favored the motion, as did his fellow-members, on the ground of expediency and a well-founded suspicion of a wily and perfidious enemy. Before replying, Mr. Adams received a letter from Burgoyne, who was at Cambridge, asking for half an hour's interview, upon a matter on which he thought the general cause of humanity, and, possibly, the essential interests of both countries, were concerned. Mr. Adams availed himself of the illness under which he was then suffering to decline the meeting, and whatever proposition the General had to offer was not advanced. Soon after, Adams replied to the letter of Mr. Roberdeau : —

“Your resolution,” he says, “respecting Burgoyne, I think must have nettled him. I have long, with pain, suspected a perfidious design. This resolution must have crossed it. It will cause much speculation in Europe. No matter. The powers there seemed more inclined to speculate than to espouse the rights of men. Let them speculate. Our business is to secure America against the arts and the arms of a treacherous enemy. The former we have more to apprehend from than the latter.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Adams to General Roberdeau, Boston, Feb. 9, 1778. The illness is referred to in the same letter. He says : “I have not been unmindful of the favor you did me in writing to me some time ago. My not having returned an answer has been owing, I do assure you, to many avocations, and at last to a bodily disorder by which I have been confined to my house, a great part of the time upon my bed, near a fortnight. I am now about my room, and

The unfitness of Silas Deane for his responsible position, as one of the Commissioners to France, shown by his injudicious and unauthorized contracts, had induced Congress to recall him in November, 1777; and in less than three weeks after the departure of the Adamses from Congress, John Adams was chosen to fill the vacancy. He had declined the position when strongly urged, on a previous occasion, by Samuel Adams, Lee, and Gerry to accept it. Finding himself again called, and now probably persuaded as before by his kinsman, whose estimate of his shining abilities was only exceeded by an affectionate interest in his advancement on every possible occasion, he yielded; and nobly resolving to devote his life and his family to the cause, renounced the practice of the legal profession, which he had resumed on his return to Massachusetts, and prepared for the voyage. The passage was fraught with perils from the British cruisers, ever on the alert for vessels crossing the Atlantic, and capture involved the risk of imprisonment, if not a still gloomier fate. The parting of the two friends, now separating for the first time, must have awakened many interesting thoughts of the past and anxious hopes for the future. The one was about to enter the untried field of diplomacy, as a prelude to the more conspicuous part he was subsequently to enact. The other, unambitious of any distinction, and only anxious to devote all his energies to the welfare of his country, was soon to resume his laborious station in Congress, and amidst the harassing routine of committee service, and at times annoyed by the attacks of secret enemies, continue cheerfully and hopefully to perform the duties devolving upon him. John Adams sailed for France in February, and, landing safely at Bordeaux, arrived at Paris in April. During his absence, a correspondence was maintained on public affairs between the kinsmen, some portions of which have been preserved. Samuel Adams, remaining

gladly take the opportunity to drop from my pen an expression of the honest friendship I feel for yourself and your agreeable connections."

temporarily in Boston, continued his duties as Secretary of State. Massachusetts, though a member of the "United States," was a distinct sovereignty, of which the President of the Council was to some extent the executive head, and the Secretary the acting premier. The recent refusal of the people to accept the hastily prepared State constitution, threw the republic back upon the crude form of government adopted on renouncing the royal authority, from which it arose with new life in the next year, on the basis of the present system. One of the public papers in the hand writing of Samuel Adams, while occupying this office, shows the relative positions of the States. The neighboring republic of Connecticut had been two years under the Constitution adopted in 1776, at the recommendation of Congress. Governor Trumbull wrote to Massachusetts, as did also the Governor of New York, for aid in fortifying and defending the Highlands on Hudson River. Massachusetts was at that time maintaining, besides its troops in the field, a considerable force to guard Burgoyne's captive army, then in the vicinity of Boston. The following is the reply to Trumbull: —

STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS BAY,  
BOSTON, March 19, 1778.

SIR: —

I am to acquaint your Excellency, in the name and by order of the Council of this State, that your letter of the 16th instant, and directed to the President, relative to the defence of Hudson's River, has been received and read at that Board. The General Assembly is now under a short adjournment; and the Council are not authorized in their executive capacity, and separate from the House of Representatives, to order any part of the militia of this State beyond its limits. The Assembly will meet on the first day of next month. Your Excellency's letter, together with another received this day from Governor Clinton upon the same subject, will then be laid before that body. And although the government of this State is now under the necessity of keeping up more than fifteen hundred of the militia to guard the troops of convention, and for other ex-

traordinary service in and about the town of Boston, yet there can be no doubt that a due attention will be given to so interesting and important a concern as the defence of Hudson's River.

I have the honor to be, with the most cordial esteem,

Your Excellency's most humble servant,

SAM. ADAMS.

His Excellency GOVERNOR TRUMBULL,  
Governor of Connecticut.

Before John Adams reached Europe the alliance with France had been effected, and, by the vessel which brought the treaty, Franklin and Lee wrote to Samuel Adams.

"By this conveyance," said Franklin, "the treaties we have concluded here go over to Congress. I flatter myself they will meet with approbation. If there should be any particulars which the Congress would like to be changed or added, there is at present an exceeding good disposition in this Court to oblige, and no proposition, tolerably reasonable, will meet with difficulty. But the way will be to ratify these treaties, and then propose separate, additional, or explanatory articles.

"I send you enclosed some notes just received from a member of P——, in which you will see something of the present Court views; but we have fuller advice in one particular, viz. that their great hope is to divide by means of their Commissioners. They say that they have certain advices that they have a large party in Congress, almost a majority, who are for returning to the dependency. In the enclosed copy of a letter to Mr. Hartley, you will see my sentiments of their two bills, as well as in our general letter. I have but little time. Dr. Cooper will show you what I have written to him. America at present stands in the highest light of esteem and respect throughout Europe. A return to dependence upon England would sink her into eternal contempt. I am, with true esteem and respect, dear sir," &c.<sup>1</sup>

It was the unaccountably erroneous estimate of the general feeling in America, alluded to in this letter, which suggested the sending of the Commissioners with conciliatory

<sup>1</sup> Franklin to S. Adams, Passy near Paris, March 2, 1778.



propositions, whose efforts the next summer so signally failed. The confident assertions of the members of Parliament, and the long intervals between the arrivals of despatches from America, whence the latest intelligence had been of successive disasters, seem to have created temporary doubts even in the mind of Franklin as to the fortitude of his countrymen to sustain their independence under the recent reverses. Lee's letter was characteristic of his enthusiastic and hopeful temperament.

“Let me embrace you, my dear friend, on the accomplishment of the end of all our labors, by the treaties which will accompany this, in which the liberty, sovereignty, and independence of the United States are secured. I thought it absolutely necessary that we should urge the insertion of sovereignty, that there might not hereafter be any question on that head, as there long was in the case of the United Provinces and the Swiss Cantons. You may be assured that war is resolved on here; and from the situation of things, it cannot be long avoided.

“In England, the opposition against the American war grows stronger every day. The minority for recalling the troops the other day was one hundred and sixty-six. But the best of kings and the wisest ministers are determined to push things to every extremity rather than recede. By most certain accounts I know that their preparations have more of ostentation than reality in them; and that they cannot possibly muster such a force for the ensuing campaign as they had for the last. It is most certain that the power of Great Britain is passing away, and that she has lost her pre-eminence among the nations of the earth. The Ministry and the opposition are, however, agitating a very important question, which is, into which of *their hands* you will resign your independency? The minority contend you will never do it until they are brought into place; and the Ministry are of opinion that you will do it as readily to them as to their opponents; in which I conceive they are not very far from the truth.”<sup>1</sup>

Arthur Lee was correctly informed of the position of parties in England. The conciliatory propositions already

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Lee to Samuel Adams, Paris, Feb. 17, 1778.

mentioned were proposed by Lord North to the House of Commons simultaneously with the writing of the above letter to Adams. The effect of Burgoyne's defeat had been to depress both parties in Parliament. Shame and dismay at first sealed the lips of the promoters of the war, and for a while silenced the opposition. But it was the silence which precedes the storm. The torrent of reproach poured out against the administration has rarely been equalled in Parliamentary annals for sarcasm, invective, eloquence, and solemn and impressive warning. The minister, in now offering his plan for negotiation, was too late with a project which, two years earlier, would have been eagerly accepted by the great majority of Congress; but then respectful petitions and remonstrances had been haughtily rejected, and unconditional coercion was the choice of the Cabinet. The contest was humiliating to Englishmen, who had seen Britain at the zenith of her glory and renown under the guiding genius of Pitt, and now saw her reduced to the humble attitude of a solicitor of peace from her former subjects. The observation of Lee, that the power and pre-eminence of England was passing away, was not altogether an unwarranted enthusiasm. A week later the address of Lord North reached him in Paris, and again he wrote:—

“ Lord North's speech will show you how much they are reduced, and the bills brought in, his insolence, folly, and infatuation. That of the public is not less; for they regard this compound of impudence and absurdity as something calculated to relieve their distresses and prevent the evils they apprehend.

“ The King of Prussia threatens to excite a war in Germany, which, if he does, will not, I think, make any material diversion in favor of our enemies. I believe the principal object of his Court at present is to secure Holland, which it seems to me probable he will effect. When that is done, a single year in conjunction with the House of Bourbon will enable us to drive the enemy entirely out of America. Looking forward to the future peace of America, it appears to me a necessary piece of policy to confederate Canada, that it may be a check upon New England, which may otherwise

combine in time to subjugate the rest of America. There is some such language held already by some of that country. It was with this view that I substituted in the fifth article of the defensive treaty *confederated* with, instead of *subject to*; and the *reduction of the English power* for the *conquest*, &c. Because, if Canada be annexed as a conquest, it will add strength to New England; if as a confederated state, it will always be a check."

The intelligence of the treaty with France reached the coast of New England in April. Adams wrote by the bearer of despatches as he passed through Boston:—

"I most heartily congratulate you on the happy and important news from Europe, which will be conveyed to Congress by Mr. Deane, the brother of our late Commissioner, who will be so kind as to deliver you this letter. France has acted with magnanimity, while Britain continues to discover that meanness and poverty of spirit which renders her still more than ever contemptible in the eyes of all sensible people. The moderation of France is such as becomes a great and powerful nation. Britain, forgetful of her former character, sinks into baseness in the extreme. The one is generously holding out the arm of protection to a people most cruelly oppressed, while the other is practising the arts of treachery and deceit to subjugate and enslave them. This is a contrast which an ancient Briton would have blushed to have predicted to him; it is a true contrast, and we will blush for them."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S. Adams to R. H. Lee, Boston, April 20, 1778.

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

Adams resumes his Seat in Congress. — Chairman of the Marine Committee. — Duties of the Board. — Progress of the War. — Hostilities declared between France and England. — The British appoint Conciliatory Commissioners for America. — Adams warns his Countrymen against the Snare. — Arrival of the Commission at Philadelphia. — Their Letter to Congress. — Congress, by the Pen of Adams, refuses all Terms but the Peaceful Recognition of American Independence. — He exposes the Designs of England in a Public Address directed to the Commissioners. — Arrival of D'Estaing's Fleet. — Reception of the French Ambassador. — Adams and Lee introduce the Ambassador to Congress. — Novel Diplomatic Ceremonies.

HAVING exerted himself during the session of the Legislature in concerting measures for supplying Washington with the Massachusetts quota of troops, as the spring advanced and his health improved so that he could travel, Mr. Adams again left home, and resumed his seat in Congress, at Yorktown, on the 21st of May.<sup>1</sup> He soon after received a letter from Arthur Lee, expressing his impatience for news from England of the passage of the Conciliation Act. Lee found, in a conversation with Gerard at Paris, that the French Court, having heard of the introduction of Lord North's bill, was under strong impressions that the attempt would meet with favor in America, and he was urgent for an open acknowledgment by France of the independence of the States. The treaty having been communicated in March to the British Court, the ambassador was recalled, which was considered as equivalent to a declaration of war. The bill for conciliation had, in fact, increased the disposition of France to treat,—the object of Vergennes being to effect the separation.

“If,” said Dr. Lee, “we are to judge of the acts from the bills,

<sup>1</sup> Journals of Congress, IV. 299.

they will be an everlasting proof of the feebleness and folly of our enemies. I trust these commissioners will return as they came, unless they have the power, and do acknowledge clearly and fully the sovereignty and independence of America as an indispensable preliminary. . . . Mr. Gerard assured me that the English gave out that they had sent half a million of guineas to soften obdurate hearts in America. This, too, gave them some apprehension, for they know the force of guineas in Europe.”<sup>1</sup>

The declaration of war with France, and the sailing of D’Estaing’s fleet for America, was the next important step towards achieving American independence, which Adams now regarded as near at hand.

Upon his arrival in Congress he was added to the Marine Committee, of which important Board he was made chairman, and continued to direct its duties for the next two years. In this arduous position, judging from the great number of reports and the multiplicity of business submitted to it, Adams might fairly have claimed exemption from all other employments. The Marine Board had in its charge the entire supervision of the growing navy of the United States, and most of the commanders of the Congressional war ships were appointed at its recommendation. Peter Landais was nominated to the new frigate Alliance in June of this year by Adams and Lee, and, after the Revolution, when Landais had been dismissed from the service, Mr. Adams exerted himself to procure a settlement of that officer’s accounts with the Federal Congress.<sup>2</sup> Two assistant Marine Boards had been established in the previous year, subject to the control of the parent Board in Congress,—one

<sup>1</sup> A. Lee to S. Adams, Paris, March 1, 1778.

<sup>2</sup> “I feel myself constrained to mention to you the present situation of Captain Landais, though not at his request or the smallest intimation from him. He resides in this town, and sometimes calls to see me. As he appears to be an injured man, I wish that justice may be done to him; and I am the more solicitous about it, as I was, with your worthy brother, Mr. R. H., instrumental in his first appointment in the American navy.” (Samuel Adams to Arthur Lee, Feb. 10, 1783.)

for the Eastern and the other for the Middle States,— whose operations were regularly reported to the governing power at Philadelphia. Though this branch of warfare did not succeed in all respects, owing to the scarcity and high prices of naval stores and mechanical labor, still the committee and its dependencies exerted themselves to facilitate the construction of a navy as far as the Continental resources would permit. But the privateer service, particularly that of New England, was most successful, capturing in the first year three hundred and fifty British vessels.

The letters of several eminent men of the Revolution indicate considerable uneasiness respecting the result of Lord North's commission to America. It was perceived that the olive-branch thus insidiously held out, conceding all that the Colonists had originally contended for, would deceive multitudes of sincere friends of America, and be eagerly seized upon by the Tories as the means of destroying unanimity among the patriot party. Samuel Adams had seen the danger on the first intimation of the scheme. When the conciliatory bills arrived, and were busily circulated by the disaffected, he penetrated the design, and wrote on the subject to his friends in Congress, and hastened his preparations to join that body at Yorktown. Referring to Britain and her emissaries, he says :—

“ This is what we had reason to expect ; her only design is to amuse us, and thereby to retard our operations, till she can land the utmost force in America. We see plainly what part we are to take to be beforehand of her, and, by an early stroke, to give her a mortal wound. If we delay our vigorous exertions till the Commissioners arrive, the people abroad may, many of them will, be amused with the flattering prospect of peace, and will think it strange if we do not consent to a cessation of arms till propositions can be made and digested. This carries with it an air of plausibility ; but, from the moment we are brought into the snare, we may tremble for the consequence.

“ As there are everywhere artful Tories enough to distract the minds of the people, would it not be wise for Congress, by a publi-

cation of their own, to set this important intelligence in a clear light before them, and fix in their minds the first impression in favor of truth? For I do assure you, it begins to be whispered by the Tories, and as soon as they dare do it they will speak aloud, that this is but a French  *finesse*, and that Britain is the only real friend of America. Should not the people be informed with the authority of Congress that Britain persists in claiming a right to tax them? and that the new or intended act of Parliament expressly declares her intention to be only a suspension of the exercise of that right till she shall please again to exercise it, that is, till she shall have lulled them into a state of security, — that her commissioners are not to be vested with full powers to finish any treaties, nor even to promise a ratification of them. This will be left in great uncertainty till it shall be considered in Parliament. They are allowed, as one of our friends expresses it, to proclaim a cessation of hostilities, and revoke their proclamation as soon as, in confidence of it, our militia are allowed to go home. They may suspend the operation of prohibitory acts of trade, and take off that suspension when our merchants, in consequence of it, shall have been induced to send their ships to sea. In short, they may do everything that may tend to distract and divide us, but nothing that can afford us security. The British Court have nothing in view but to divide by means of their Commissioners. Of this they entertain sanguine expectations; for I am well assured that they say they have *certain advice* that they have a large party in the Congress, *almost a majority*, who are for returning to their dependency! This cannot be true. Dr. Franklin, in a letter of the 2d of March, informs me that America at present stands in the highest light of esteem throughout Europe; and, he adds, a return to dependence on England would sink her into eternal contempt. Be pleased to present my due regards to all friends. . . . I intend to set out on my journey to Yorktown next week, where I hope for the pleasure of seeing you.”<sup>1</sup>

The policy here recommended had already been adopted by Congress. Upon the receipt of a letter from Washington, enclosing the conciliatory bill which had been circulated through the country, the report of a committee, critically

<sup>1</sup> S. Adams to R. H. Lee, April 20, 1778.

exposing the insidious character of the scheme, and written by Morris, was ordered to be published. The Commissioners having arrived at Philadelphia, provided with unlimited gold and with powers to treat with Congress, Sir Henry Clinton wrote to Washington, desiring a passport for their secretary, Dr. Ferguson, to proceed to Yorktown with their despatches. Washington, refusing the request, forwarded to Congress this and a letter from Lord Howe to that body, enclosing the bills. Drayton, Lee, Morris, Witherspoon, and Adams were appointed a committee to prepare an answer, and, retiring into the next room for the purpose, soon reported the reply. They assured his Lordship that, when the King of Great Britain should be seriously disposed to put an end to the cruel and unjust war, Congress would readily attend to such terms of peace as might consist with the honor of independent nations, the interest of their constituents, and the sacred regard they meant to pay to treaties. A similar letter was ordered to be sent in reply to Sir Henry Clinton.<sup>1</sup>

The Commissioners, unwilling to await the delays of an ordinary course, forwarded their papers direct to Congress, where they arrived on the 13th, while Clinton's request for a passport for Ferguson was under discussion. As the President was reading their address to Congress, he was interrupted at the words, "insidious interposition of a power

<sup>1</sup> Journals of Congress, June 6, 1778. Sullivan, in his biographical sketch of Samuel Adams, in 1803, refers to instructions of Congress against entertaining any proposition which did not acknowledge the absolute independence of the American nation, which he says "were issued on the motion of Samuel Adams, as the members there have asserted." He has evidently confounded the conference with Howe, Carlisle, and Eden in 1776, to which he has reference, with some other occasion, as Samuel Adams was absent from Congress at that time. Adams, being on this committee, whose report was to the same effect, it is not improbable that the present is the time intended by the writer. In his *New American Biographical Dictionary* (4th ed., pp. 55, 56), Rogers, who lived during the Revolution, indicates this as the time, and quotes the above reply to Lord Howe as having been suggested and written by Samuel Adams.



which has from the first settlement of the Colonies been actuated with enmity to us both," and a motion was made to proceed no farther, "because of its offensive language to his most Christian Majesty." It would be worth while to know who was the mover, but neither the journals nor the letter of President Laurens on the subject mention him. Debates ensued, and the subject was postponed from Saturday to Monday, when, after further consideration, the motion was amended to read that Congress could not hear any language reflecting upon the honor of his most Christian Majesty, the good and powerful ally of the United States. The letter and accompanying papers were then referred to Lee, Adams, Drayton, Morris, and Witherspoon, whose reply to the Commissioners contained the repeated declaration, that peace could only follow an explicit acknowledgment of the independence of the States or the withdrawal of the British fleets and armies.<sup>1</sup> The Commissioners remained until October, using every exertion, open and concealed, to create loyal sentiment, but without success. Their manifestoes were publicly burned under the gallows, and their messengers arrested. Bribery was equally ineffectual, and an attempt of that kind upon the patriotic Joseph Reed of New Jersey elicited the celebrated exclamation: "I am not worth purchasing; but, such as I am, the King of Great Britain is not rich enough to do it."

Shortly after the arrival of the letter to Henry Laurens, and during the public excitement which it caused, Adams published a characteristic address to the Commissioners, grasping the salient points of the contest, and prepared with his strongest powers of sarcasm. It was widely circulated, and produced among the people all the effect intended by its author.

<sup>1</sup> Not long after, the following vote was passed in Congress: "That Mr. S. Adams be added to the committee appointed to superintend the publication relative to disputes, petitions, and negotiations to and with the Court of Great Britain, and that the committee be empowered to proceed in the publication as they judge proper." (Journals of Congress, Nov. 13, 1778.)

“TO THE EARL OF CARLISLE, LORD VISCOUNT HOWE, SIR WILLIAM HOWE (*or, in his absence, SIR HENRY CLINTON*), WILLIAM EDEN, and GEORGE JOHNSTONE.

“Trusty and well-beloved servants of your sacred master, in whom he is well pleased.

“As you are sent to America for the express purpose of treating with anybody and anything, you will pardon an address from one who disdains to flatter those whom he loves. Should you therefore deign to read this address, your chaste ears will not be offended with the language of adulation, — a language you despise.

“I have seen your most elegant and most excellent letter ‘to his Excellency, Henry Laurens, the President, and other members of the Congress.’ As that body have thought your propositions unworthy their particular regard, it may be some satisfaction to your curiosity, and tend to appease the offended spirit of negotiation, if one out of the many individuals on this great continent should speak to you the sentiments of America, — sentiments which your own good sense hath doubtless suggested, and which are repeated only to convince you that, notwithstanding the narrow ground of private information on which we stand in this distant region, still a knowledge of our own rights, and attention to our own interests, and a sacred respect for the dignity of human nature, have given us to understand the true principles which ought, and which therefore shall, sway our conduct.

“You begin with the amiable expressions of humanity, the earnest desire of tranquillity and peace. A better introduction to Americans could not be devised. For the sake of the latter, we once laid our liberties at the feet of your Prince, and even your armies have not eradicated the former from our bosoms.

“You tell us you have powers unprecedented in the annals of your history. And England, unhappy England, will remember with deep contrition that these powers have been rendered of no avail by a conduct unprecedented in the annals of mankind. Had your royal master condescended to listen to the prayer of millions, he had not thus have sent you. Had moderation swayed what we were proud to call ‘*mother country*,’ her full-blown *dignity* would not have broken down under her.

“You tell us that all ‘parties may draw some degree of consolation, and even auspicious hope, from recollection.’ We wish this most

sincerely for the sake of *all parties*. America, in the moment of subjugation, would have been consoled by conscious virtue, and her hope was, and is, in the justice of her cause and the justice of the Almighty. These are sources of hope and of consolation which neither time nor chance can alter or take away.

“You mention ‘the mutual benefits and consideration of evils that may naturally contribute to determine our resolutions.’ As to the former, you know too well that we could derive no benefit from a union with you, nor will I, by deducing the reasons to evince this, put an insult upon your understandings. As to the latter, it were to be wished you had preserved a line of conduct equal to the delicacy of your feelings. You could not but know that men who sincerely love freedom disdain the consideration of all evils necessary to attain it. Had not your own hearts borne testimony to this truth, you might have learned it from the *annals of your own history*; for in those annals instances of this kind at least are not *unprecedented*. But should those instances be insufficient, we pray you to read the unconquered mind of America.

“That the acts of Parliament you transmitted were passed *with singular unanimity*, we pretend not to doubt. You will pardon me, gentlemen, for observing that the reasons of that unanimity are strongly marked in the report of a committee of Congress agreed to on the 22d of April last, and referred to in a late letter from Congress to Lord Viscount Howe and Sir Henry Clinton.

“You tell us you are willing ‘to consent to a cessation of hostilities both by sea and land.’ It is difficult for rude Americans to determine whether you are serious in this proposition or whether you mean to jest with their simplicity. Upon a supposition, however, that you have too much magnanimity to divert yourselves on an occasion of so much importance to America, and, perhaps, not very trivial in the eyes of those who sent you, permit me to assure you, on the sacred word of a gentleman, that if you shall transport your troops to England, where before long your Prince will certainly want their assistance, we shall never follow them thither. We are not so romantically fond of fighting, neither have we such regard for the city of London, as to commence a crusade for the possession of that holy land. Thus you may be certain hostilities will cease by land. It would be doing singular injustice to your national character to suppose you are desirous of a like cessation by sea.

The course of the war, and the very flourishing state of your commerce, notwithstanding our weak efforts to interrupt it, daily show that you can exclude us from the sea, — *the sea, your kingdom!*

“You offer ‘to restore free intercourse, to revive mutual affection, and renew the common benefits of naturalization.’ Whenever your countrymen shall be taught wisdom by experience, and learn from past misfortunes to pursue their true interests in future, we shall readily admit every intercourse which is necessary for the purposes of commerce and usual between different nations. To revive *mutual* affection is utterly impossible. We freely forgive you, but it is not in nature that you should forgive us. You have injured us too much. We might, on this occasion, give you some instances of singular barbarity committed, as well by the forces of his Britannic Majesty as by those of his generous and faithful allies, the Senecas, Onondagas, and Tuscaroras. But we will not offend a courtly ear by the recital of those disgusting scenes. Besides this, it might give pain to that humanity which hath, as you observe, prompted your overtures, to dwell upon the splendid victories obtained by a licentious soldiery over unarmed men in defenceless villages, their wanton devastations, their deliberate murders, or to inspect those scenes of carnage painted by the wild excesses of savage rage. These amiable traits of national conduct cannot but revive in our bosoms that partial affection we once felt for everything which bore the name of Englishman. As to the common benefits of naturalization, it is a matter we conceive to be of the most sovereign indifference. A few of our wealthy citizens may hereafter visit England and Rome to see the ruins of those august temples in which the goddess of Liberty was once adored. These will hardly claim naturalization in either of those places as a *benefit*. On the other hand, such of your subjects as shall be driven by the iron hand of Oppression to seek for refuge among those whom they now persecute will certainly be admitted to *the benefits of naturalization*. We labor to rear an asylum for mankind, and regret that circumstances will not permit you, gentlemen, to contribute to a design so very agreeable to your several tempers and dispositions.

“But further, your Excellencies say, ‘We will concur to extend every freedom to trade that our respective interests can require.’ Unfortunately, there is a little difference in these interests which you might not have found it very easy to reconcile, had the Con-

gress been disposed to risk their heads by listening to terms which I have the honor to assure you are treated with ineffable contempt by every honest Whig in America. The difference I allude to is, that it is your interest to monopolize our commerce, and it is our interest to trade with all the world. There is, indeed, a method of cutting this Gordian knot which, perhaps, no statesman is acute enough to untie. By reserving to the Parliament of Great Britain the right of determining what our respective interests require, they might extend the freedom of trade, or circumscribe it at their pleasure, for what they might call our *respective interests*. But I trust it would not be for our *mutual satisfaction*. Your 'earnest desire to stop the effusion of blood and the calamities of war' will therefore lead you, on maturer reflection, to reprobate a plan teeming with discord, and which, in the space of twenty years, would produce another wild expedition across the Atlantic, and in a few years more some such commission as that 'with which his Majesty hath been pleased to honor you.'

"We cannot but admire the generosity of soul which prompts you 'to agree that no military force shall be kept up in the different States of North America without the consent of the General Congress or particular Assemblies.' The only grateful return we can make for this exemplary condescension is, to assure your Excellencies, and, on behalf of my countrymen, I do most solemnly promise and assure you, that no military force shall be kept up in the different States of North America without the consent of the General Congress and that of the Legislatures of those States. You will, therefore, cause the forces of your royal master to be removed; for I can venture to assure you that the Congress have not consented, and probably will not consent, that they be kept up.

"You have also made the unsolicited offer of concurring 'in measures calculated to discharge the debts of America, and to raise the credit and value of the paper circulation.' If your Excellencies mean by this to apply for offices in the department of our finance, I am to assure you (which I do with 'perfect respect') that it will be necessary to procure very ample recommendations. For, as the English have not yet pursued measures to discharge their own debt and raise the credit and value of their own paper circulation, but, on the contrary, are in a fair way to increase the one and absolutely destroy the other, you will instantly perceive that financiers from

that nation would present themselves with the most awkward grace imaginable.

“You propose to us a device to ‘perpetuate our union.’ It might not be amiss previously to establish this union, which may be done by your acceptance of the treaty of peace and commerce tendered to you by Congress. And such treaty I can venture to say would continue as long as your ministers could prevail upon themselves not to violate the faith of nations.

“You offer, to use your language, the inaccuracy of which, considering the importance of the subject, is not to be wondered at, or at least may be excused, ‘in short, to establish the powers of the respective Legislatures in each particular State, to settle its revenue, its civil and military establishment, and to exercise a perfect freedom of legislation and internal government, so that the British States throughout North America, acting with us in peace and war, under one common sovereign, may have the irrevocable enjoyment of every privilege that is short of a total separation of interests, or consistent with that total union of force on which the safety of our common religion and liberty depends.’ Let me assure you, gentlemen, that the power of the respective Legislatures in each particular State is most fully established, and on the most solid foundations. It is established on the perfect freedom of legislation and a vigorous administration of internal government. As to the settlement of the revenue and the civil and military establishment, these are the work of the day, for which the several Legislatures are fully competent. I have also the pleasure to congratulate your Excellencies that the country for the settlement of whose government, revenue, administration, and the like, you have exposed yourselves to the fatigues and hazards of a disagreeable voyage and more disagreeable negotiation, hath abundant resources wherewith to defend her liberties now, and pour forth the rich stream of revenue hereafter. As the States of North America mean to possess the *irrevocable* enjoyment of their privileges, it is absolutely necessary for them to decline all connection with a Parliament who, even in the laws under which you act, reserve in express terms the power of *revoking* every proposition which you may agree to. We have a due sense of the kind offer you make to grant us a share in your sovereign; but really, gentlemen, we have not the least inclination to accept of it. He may suit you extremely well, but he is not to our

taste. You are solicitous to prevent a total separation of interests ; and this, after all, seems to be the gist of the business. To make you as easy as possible on this subject, I have to observe, that it may, and probably will, in some instances, be our interest to assist you, and then we certainly shall. Where this is not the case, your Excellencies have doubtless too much good sense as well as good nature to require it. We cannot perceive that our liberty does in the least depend upon any union of force with you ; for we find that after you have exercised your force against us for upwards of three years, we are now upon the point of establishing our liberties in direct opposition to it. Neither can we conceive that, after the experiment you have made, any nation in Europe will embark in so unpromising a scheme as the subjugation of America. It is not necessary that everybody should play the Quixote. One is enough to entertain a generation at least. Your Excellencies will, I hope, excuse me when I differ from you as to our having a religion in common with you ; the religion of America is the religion of all mankind. Any person may worship in the manner he thinks most agreeable to the Deity ; and if he behaves as a good citizen, no one concerns himself as to his faith or adorations, neither have we the least solicitude to exalt any one sect or profession above another.

“I am extremely sorry to find in your letter some sentences which reflect upon the character of his most Christian Majesty. It certainly is not kind, or consistent with the principles of philanthropy you profess, to traduce a gentleman’s character, without affording him an opportunity of defending himself ; and that, too, a near neighbor, and not long since an intimate brother, who besides hath lately given you the most solid additional proofs of his pacific disposition, and with an unparalleled sincerity which would do honor to other princes, declared to your Court, unasked, the nature and effect of a treaty he had just entered into with these States. Neither is it quite according to the rules of politeness to use such terms in addressing yourselves to Congress, when you well knew that he was their good and faithful ally. It is indeed true, as you justly observe, that he hath at times been at enmity with his Britannic Majesty, by which we suffered some inconveniences ; but these flowed rather from our connection with you than any ill-will towards us ; at the same time it is a solemn truth, worthy of your serious attention, that you did not commence the present war, — a war in which

we have suffered infinitely more than by any former contest, a fierce, a bloody, I am sorry to add, an unprovoked and cruel war, — that you did not commence this, I say, because of any connection between us and our present ally; but, on the contrary, as soon as you perceived that the treaty was in agitation, proposed terms of peace to us in consequence of what you have been pleased to denominate an insidious interposition. How, then, does the account stand between us? America, being at peace with the world, was formerly drawn into a war with France in consequence of her union with Great Britain. At present, America being engaged in a war with Great Britain, will probably obtain the most honorable terms of peace in consequence of her friendly connection with France. For the truth of these positions, I appeal, gentlemen, to your own knowledge. I know it is very hard for you to part with what you have accustomed yourselves from your earliest infancy to call your Colonies. I pity your situation, and therefore I excuse the little aberrations from truth which your letter contains. At the same time it is possible that you may have been misinformed. For I will not suppose that your letter was intended to delude the people of these States. Such unmanly, disingenuous artifices have of late been exerted with so little effect, that prudence, if not probity, would prevent a repetition. To undeceive you, therefore, I take the liberty of assuring your Excellencies, from the very best intelligence, that what you call ‘the present form of the French offers to America,’ in other words, the treaties of alliance and commerce between his most Christian Majesty and these States, were not made in consequence of any plans of accommodation concerted in Great Britain, nor with a view to prolong this destructive war. If you consider that these treaties were actually concluded before the draft of the bills under which you act was sent to America, and that much time must necessarily have been consumed in adjusting compacts of such intricacy and importance, and further, if you consider the early notification of this treaty by the Court of France, and the assurance given that America had reserved a right of admitting even you to a similar treaty, you must be convinced of the truth of my assertions. The fact is, that when the British minister perceived that we were treating with the greatest prince in Europe, he applied himself immediately to counteract the effect of these negotiations. And this leads me, with infinite regret, to make some



observations which may possibly be by you considered in an offensive point of view.

“ It seems to me, gentlemen, there is something (excuse the word) *disingenuous* in your procedure. I put the supposition that Congress had acceded to your propositions, and then I ask two questions :— Had you full power from your commission to make these propositions? Possibly you did not think it worth your while to consider your commission, but we Americans are apt to compare things together and to reason. The second question I ask is, What security could you give that the British Parliament would ratify your compacts? You can give no such security; and therefore we should, after forfeiting our reputation as a people, after you had filched from us our good name, and persuaded us to give to the common enemy of man the precious jewel of our liberties,—after all this, I say, we should have been at the mercy of a Parliament which, to say no more of it, has not treated us with too great tenderness. It is quite needless to add that, even if that Parliament had ratified the conditions you proposed, still poor America was to lie at the mercy of any future Parliament, or to appeal to the sword, which certainly is not the most pleasant business men can be engaged in.

“ For your use I subjoin the following creed of every good American :— I believe that in every kingdom, state, or empire there must be, from the necessity of the thing, one supreme legislative power, with authority to bind every part in all cases the proper object of human laws. I believe that to be bound by laws to which he does not consent by himself, or by his representative, is the direct definition of a slave. I do therefore believe that a dependence on Great Britain, however the same may be limited or qualified, is utterly inconsistent with every idea of liberty, for the defence of which I have solemnly pledged my life and fortune to my countrymen; and this engagement I will sacredly adhere to so long as I shall live. Amen.

“ Now, if you will take the poor advice of one who is really a friend to England and Englishmen, and who hath even some Scotch blood in his veins, — away with your fleets and your armies, acknowledge the independence of America; and as ambassadors, and not commissioners, solicit a treaty of peace, amity, commerce, and alliance with the rising States of this Western world. Your nation totters

on the brink of a stupendous precipice, and even delay will ruin her.

“ You have told Congress, ‘ if, after the time that may be necessary to consider this communication and transmit your answer, the horrors and devastations of war should continue, we call God and the world to witness that the evils which must follow are not to be imputed to Great Britain.’ I wish you had spared your protestation. Matters of this kind may appear to you in a trivial light, as mere ornamental flowers of rhetoric, but they are serious things, registered in the high chancery of Heaven. Remember the awful abuse of words like those by General Burgoyne, and remember his fate. There is One above us who will take exemplary vengeance for every insult upon His majesty. You know that the cause of America is just. You know that she contends for that freedom to which all men are entitled,—that she contends against oppression, rapine, and more than savage barbarity. The blood of the innocent is upon your hands, and all the waters of the ocean will not wash it away. We again make our solemn appeal to the God of heaven to decide between you and us. And we pray that, in the doubtful scale of battle, we may be successful as we have justice on our side, and that the merciful Saviour of the world may forgive our oppressors.

“ I am, my Lords and Gentlemen, the friend of human nature, and one who glories in the title of

“ AN AMERICAN.”

With all the folly of the British administration, it had doubts of the success of the embassy to America. The results justified the predictions of the opposition, and the plan of a campaign which had been formed, contingent upon the issue of the conciliatory propositions, was now put in practice. Aware of the departure from Toulon of a large French squadron, which might block up the inferior fleet of Lord Howe in the Delaware, the Ministry determined upon the evacuation of Philadelphia, as too far from the sea for an embarking point, when troops were to be removed from one field of operations to another. On the 18th of June, therefore, Sir Henry Clinton crossed the Delaware, and commenced to march his army through the Jerseys, and the

battle of Monmouth occurred on the 28th. Washington informed Congress of the evacuation, and that body met at Philadelphia on the twenty-second day of July.

The retreat of the British and departure of Lord Howe's fleet was hardly accomplished when the French squadron, under D'Estaing, arrived off the coast. It consisted of twelve ships of the line and four frigates, and brought four thousand French troops. M. Gerard, the French Ambassador to the United States, came in the flag-ship, and now, also, returned Silas Deane, late Commissioner to France. The arrival of the French was hailed with joy throughout America. It was the first tangible evidence that a great power had now become the ally of the United States, and was to stand faithfully by them to the end.

An hereditary prejudice had always existed in the Colonies against France, nourished by the remembrance of hard-fought fields, in which the New England men especially had carried the royal arms triumphantly through Canada, and added new territory to the King's dominions. Samuel Adams, from the time he renounced the idea of petitioning and remonstrating, and was convinced of the relentless wrong-headed policy of the Ministry, had looked to France as the friend of America in the approaching struggle; and one of his first steps, after promoting a concert of action among the Colonies, had been by secret agents to sound the sentiments of the French Canadians. His anxiety to establish diplomatic relations with France appears in his correspondence long prior to the Declaration; and he had calculated the advantages and the likelihood of such an event before many members of Congress had seriously contemplated a separation from the mother country as probable or possible. It must then have been with inexpressible pleasure that he witnessed the approach of their ally, and prepared for the formal reception of the French Minister. John Adams, writing to him from Europe at this time, says:—

“It is an observation that I have often heard you make, that

‘France is the natural ally of the United States.’ This observation is, in my opinion, both just and important. The reasons are obvious. As long as Great Britain shall have Canada, Nova Scotia, and the Floridas, or any of them, so long will Great Britain be the enemy of the United States, let her disguise it as much as she will.

“It is not so much to the honor of human nature, but the fact is certain that neighboring nations are never friends in reality. In the times of the most perfect peace between them, their hearts and their passions are hostile; and this will certainly be the case forever between the thirteen United States and the English Colonies. France and England, as neighbors and rivals, have never been, and never will be, friends. The hatred and jealousy between the nations are eternal and ineradicable. As we, therefore, on the one hand have the surest ground to expect the jealousy and hatred of Great Britain, so on the other we have the strongest reasons to depend upon the friendship and alliance of France, and no one reason in the world to expect her enmity or her jealousy, as she has given up every pretension to any spot of ground on the continent. The United States, therefore, will be for ages the bulwark of France against the hostile designs of England against her; and France is the natural defence of the United States against the capricious spirit of Britain against them. France is a nation so vastly eminent, having been for many centuries what they call the dominant power of Europe, being incomparably the most powerful by land, that, united in a close alliance with our States, and enjoying the benefit of our trade, there is not the smallest reason to doubt that both will be a sufficient curb upon the naval power of Great Britain.”<sup>1</sup>

These views fully represent the opinions of Samuel Adams, but probably expressed his hostility to Britain with more moderation than he was used to utter it. To his old age he could never conquer his extreme aversion to England and its institutions. He had accustomed himself to draw comparisons between the two countries highly favorable to the virtue, manliness, and national honor of his native land,—comparisons based on continuous acts of tyranny before the Revolution, and of perfidy and barbarity

<sup>1</sup> John to Samuel Adams, July 28, 1778.

during the war, on the part of the enemy, and he could never be brought to place faith in the professions of that power. He was jealously careful, throughout the struggle, to guard against any possible event that might change the friendly relations between France and America. This partiality for France was of much longer standing with him than with most other American statesmen, and had far deeper root than the ebullition of feeling which sprung up at the time of the alliance. It was with a thorough understanding of this intense dislike of British aristocratic institutions that John Adams wrote, in one of his letters to Elbridge Gerry describing a proposition which had been made to Franklin, Lee, and himself by the British Ministry. He says: —

“We had an example here last week. A long letter, containing a project for an agreement with America, was thrown into one of our grates. There are reasons to believe that it came with the privity of the King. You may possibly see it some time. Full of flattery, and proposing that America should be governed by a Congress of American peers, to be created and appointed by the King; and of bribery, proposing that a number, not exceeding two hundred American peers should be made, and that such as had stood foremost, and suffered most, and made most enemies in the contest, as Franklin, Washington, Adams, and Hancock, by name, should be of the number. Ask our friend if he should like to be a peer?”<sup>1</sup>

Gerry and Samuel Adams must have had a hearty laugh over the idea. But, absurd as the project seemed to them and the writer, it was doubtless gravely entertained by the British administration. There is nothing more remarkable throughout the war of the Revolution than the total misapprehension of American sentiment by the Ministry. Judging the Colonists by their own standard, they had coolly attempted bribery even before the war, at least upon Samuel Adams, and perhaps upon others, though his straitened circumstances and powerful influence made him a more

<sup>1</sup> John to Samuel Adams, Passy, July 9, 1778.

prominent object than others. Three years after the commencement of the war, they essayed a general system of bribery, and were probably as much astonished as disappointed at the failure. Political corruption at home, at least in the Rockingham administration, had become almost second nature, and that the same methods would not succeed among American statesmen was a matter of surprise; for many yet persisted in believing that most of the leaders were unscrupulous demagogues and desperate adventurers, pushing an ignorant, semi-barbarous people to rebellion for their aggrandizement, and that, were their ambition or avarice once satisfied, the opposition to government would be at an end. The determined disbelief in American integrity was equalled by the general ignorance in Parliament of the popular feeling and resources of America. They could not comprehend how such masses of people could be imbued with one sentiment, and that the exasperation against Britain, instead of being overawed by accumulated forces, was only the more inflamed by every battle. The success of the attempt at conciliation had evidently at first been counted upon by a large party with considerable confidence; but the measure was soon generally regarded with astonishment and ridicule. The unfortunate Commissioners were a subject of amusement and unsparing sarcasm among the more intelligent in America, after the first importance of their mission had worn away. A party in Parliament, wiser than the majority, saw the hopelessness of the contest, especially since the French alliance. They advocated making peace at once, and, by a timely treaty of commerce, regaining the trade of the Colonies upon a new basis. They had seen the impossibility of conquering a determined people of equal courage and intelligence with themselves, living in a distant part of the world and supported by the consciousness of a just cause. An English preacher, referring to the American character at this time, says: "There is a distant country, once united to this, where every inhabitant has in

his house, as a part of his furniture, a book on law and government to enable him to understand his Colonial rights, a musket to enable him to defend those rights, and a Bible to understand and practise religion. What can hurt such a country? Is it any wonder we have not succeeded? How secure must it be while it preserves its virtue against all attacks."<sup>1</sup> But the counsels of the temperate and far-seeing could not prevail. America was not yet known to the British rulers. Their information had come from disaffected or Tory sources, or from the reports of their officers; nor could they realize the preponderance of the patriot over the opposite party. A wiser policy would have been either to pursue coercive measures with more vigor or to acknowledge the independence of the States. By adopting the middle course they strengthened the American cause and exposed their own weakness.

The reception of the Sieur Gerard at Philadelphia, on the 5th of August, was an occasion of state ceremony never before witnessed in America, where court etiquette had been known only by report. Mr. Adams had charge of the arrangements for the presentation. On the previous day it was ordered that the door of the Congress Chamber be open during the audience, and that the authorities of Pennsylvania be informed when it was to take place. Each member of Congress was entitled to admit two persons, all others being excluded excepting those provided with tickets signed by the committee.<sup>2</sup> The presentation is thus described by Lyman:—

“In pursuance of the ceremonial established by Congress, the Honorable Richard Henry Lee, Esq., one of the delegates from Virginia, and the Honorable Samuel Adams, Esq., one of the delegates from Massachusetts Bay, in a coach and six provided by Congress, waited upon the Minister at his house. In a few minutes

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Richard Price's Fast Sermon, Feb. 10 (quoted in Curwen's Journal, June 1, 1778).

<sup>2</sup> Journals of Congress, Aug. 5, 1778.

the Minister and the two delegates entered the coach, Mr. Lee placing himself at the left hand on the back seat, Mr. Adams occupying the front seat. The Minister's chariot being behind, received his secretary. The carriages being arrived at the State-House in this city, the two members of Congress, placing themselves at the Minister's left hand, a little before one o'clock, introduced him to his chair in the Congress chamber, the President and Congress sitting. The Minister being seated, he gave his credentials into the hands of his secretary, who advanced and delivered them to the President. The Secretary of Congress then read and translated them; which being done, Mr. Lee announced the Minister to the President and Congress. At this time the President, the Congress, and the Minister rose together; he bowed to the President and the Congress, they bowed to him; whereupon the whole seated themselves. In a moment the Minister rose, and made a speech to Congress, they sitting. The speech being finished, the Minister sat down, and giving a copy of his speech to the secretary, he presented it to the President. The President and the Congress then rose, and the President pronounced their answer to the speech, the Minister standing. The answer being ended, the whole were again seated, and the President giving a copy of the answer to the Secretary of Congress, he presented it to the Minister. The President, the Congress, and the Minister then again rose together; the Minister bowed to the President, who returned the salute, and then to the Congress, who also bowed in return; and the Minister having bowed to the President, and received his bow, he withdrew and was attended home in the same manner in which he had been conducted to the audience. Within the bar of the House, the Congress formed a semicircle on each side of the President and the Minister, the President sitting at one extremity of the circle, at a table upon a platform elevated two steps,—the Minister sitting at the opposite extremity of the circle in an arm-chair upon the same level as the Congress. The door of the Congress chamber being thrown open below the bar, about two hundred gentlemen were admitted to the audience, among whom were the Vice-President of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania, the Supreme Executive Council, the Speaker and members of the House of Assembly, several foreigners of distinction, and officers of the army. The audience being over, the Congress and the Minister at a proper hour repaired



to an entertainment given by the Congress to the Minister, at which were present, by invitation, several foreigners of distinction and gentlemen of public character. The entertainment was conducted with a decorum suited to the occasion, and gave perfect satisfaction to the whole company.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lyman's *Diplomacy of the United States*, I. 57 (quoted in *Lossing's Field-Book*, II. 650).

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After the correspondence in this, and the narration in the preceding chapter, showing the continuance of that affectionate friendship which had existed so many years between the Adamses, it is somewhat difficult to reconcile with that intimacy the following curious anecdote found in *Kapp's Life of Steuben*, pp. 97, 98, quoted from *Duponceau's MS. letters* : —

“Once at a dinner given by Governor Hancock to General Steuben [in December, 1777, or January, 1778], I sat next to Samuel Adams, and happened by mistake to call him Mr. John Adams. ‘Sir,’ said he, looking sternly at me, ‘I would have you know that there is a great difference between Mr. Samuel Adams’ (striking his breast and laying a strong emphasis on the word *Samuel*) ‘and Mr. John Adams.’ This remark let me into the little jealousies that then existed between some of the great men of the day, and I was afterward on my guard against addressing people by their Christian names.”

Samuel and John Adams left Congress and travelled together to Boston in November, 1777; and the dinner alluded to must have taken place that winter, during Steuben's five weeks' sojourn in Boston. It is not stated whether John Adams was present or not. He was certainly in Massachusetts; for, having been appointed one of the Commissioners to France (see p. 6), he did not sail for Europe until February. The probability is, that Duponceau, even if he understood English perfectly, which is doubtful, misinterpreted a reply, in which Mr. Adams, with characteristic generosity, paid a tribute to the great abilities of his kinsman, whose welfare and advancement, as we have seen, had been near to his heart from the earliest days of the Revolution. Such a remark, made in such a spirit, cannot be consistently coupled with the cordial relationship shown in the correspondence of the Adamses for five years from the time they parted in Boston this winter. See pp. 62, 63, 103, 109, 141, 155, 176, 183, and 220 of this volume.

## CHAPTER XLIX.

Politics in Massachusetts. — Hancock elected Speaker of the Assembly. — James Warren. — Adams appeals to Massachusetts for her Quota of Troops for the Relief of Rhode Island. — Failure of the combined American and French Expedition. — Popular Outcry against D'Estaing. — Adams endeavors to silence the Clamor and preserve Harmony with the French Allies. — Honors to La Fayette. — Plan for the Reduction of Canada presented to Adams and Lee by Arnold. — Quarrel among the American Ministers in Paris. — Threatening Manifesto by the British Commissioners. — Adams prepares a counter Manifesto, which is published by Congress. — He opposes the return of the Refugees, and advocates the Confiscation of their Estates.

WHILE Samuel Adams was representing his State in Congress, a party which included most of the Tories still remaining in Boston, and was swelled by those who sided with Hancock in the enmity between himself and Adams, had been gradually gaining the ascendancy, and had carried the May elections. Until then the indefatigable James Warren, the firm friend, as we have seen, of the Adamases, had occupied the most prominent positions in the State, serving successively as Speaker of the House, on the Northern Navy Board, and in other responsible capacities. From the commencement of the Revolution he had ranked among the most zealous and consistent men of Massachusetts, and it has been said that he had more of the characteristics of Samuel Adams than any other of the Boston patriots. On the return of Hancock from Congress, knowing Warren's friendship for Adams, he had included him in the determined onset upon all who counted themselves in the Adams interest. These were a small number indeed; but, like those whom Eliot describes as forming that party in 1771, during the cabal against Adams, "they were the sternest republicans," and only offended in adhering too firmly to

the first principles of the Revolution. Hancock was now elected Speaker of the House in the place of Warren, and the influence of his party was powerful and far-reaching enough to extend even to distant parts of the State; and a man to whose abilities, wisdom, and industry his contemporaries bear unanimous testimony retired to make room for the popular idol and his followers.

“Your curiosity,” says Warren, in one of his letters at this time, “will lead you to inquire how my town came to leave me out [from the General Court], and how the interest I used to have in the House vanished and sunk on this occasion. It may not satisfy you to carry it to the account only of the versatility and caprice of mankind. They have had their effects, but they would not do alone. Envy and the ambition of some people have aided them, and the policy, or rather what you will call the cunning of a party here, who have set up an idol whom they are determined to worship, with or without reason, has had the greatest. They have even made use of the Tories to prevent my being chosen by my town, who made their appearance on this occasion for the first time for seven years. The partiality of you and the rest of my friends has made me an object of great importance with this party, and everything is done to get me out of sight. In short, the plan is, to sacrifice you and me to the shrine of the idol. I hope, for the sake of the character and interest of our country, they won’t succeed against you. For myself, I am content to be as private a man as they can make me. I have a good conscience; that is all I want, and of that they cannot deprive me.”

And again in the following month:—

“My letter per Mr. Collins, which I presume has reached you before now, will inform you that I did not leave my station in the political ship before the gale was over, or fly from those colors I helped you and some few other good patriots to hoist. You know I have been on deck for twelve years; and I believe you will not be able, with all your discernment and watchfulness, to recollect an instance of my flinching. I was left out by my town without an ostensible reason to give.

“I was not noticed by the two Houses for reasons best known to

themselves. The mutability of mankind, the enmity of the Tories, united with the intrigues of a party you are acquainted with, must account for it. I will only inform you that the Boston seat had a large share in this matter, and some of them that you would hardly suspect. This may be adding ingratitude to witchcraft, as my whole conduct has been uniformly favorable to your town; and if you will not construe it into vanity, I will tell you I have sometimes thought I did them as much service as any Representative they have had, since you left the House. You and I have been companions the whole voyage. I have now the honor to be the object of the same rancor, and the victim of the same intrigue and policy as against you. However, I am content with regard to myself, if your interest is secured.”<sup>1</sup>

Samuel A. Otis, in a letter to John Lowell, then in Congress, thus refers to the late political changes:—

“My respectful compliments to Mr. Adams and Mr. Gerry, and inform them, their old friend and the unshaken friend of his country and mankind, General Warren (except his seat at the Navy Board) is become the private citizen; upon which [I] shall make no other comment than that these are times of peculiar rotation.”<sup>2</sup>

For nearly two years, the British had held possession of Newport, where General Pigot maintained an army of six thousand men. The failure of General Spencer, in the previous year, to dispossess the enemy had been made a subject of inquiry by Congress. It was now deemed expedient to repeat the attempt. Washington had foreseen this, and aware of the eagerness of the New England people to engage in such an enterprise, had directed five thousand troops to be raised in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut for the purpose. In June, Congress passed a resolution requesting the New England delegates to urge their respective States to raise the quotas agreed upon. The appeal to Massachusetts was made by Adams. After referring to the repeated depredations of the enemy in Rhode Island, and the object

<sup>1</sup> James Warren to Samuel Adams, May 31 and June 17, 1778.

<sup>2</sup> Historical Magazine, September, 1857; I. 268.

of the enclosed resolutions, he concludes: "But such has been the attention of the Massachusetts Bay to the safety of all these United States, it renders it needless for us to enlarge upon the necessity of their turning an immediate attention to the relief of one in their own neighborhood, which now bears a very large share in the calamities of war."<sup>1</sup> The State thus applied to responded as usual with alacrity, and, amid the greatest enthusiasm, the expedition was organized. The Massachusetts quota was commanded by Hancock, who was appointed Major-General of the militia of that State,—the whole expedition, continentals and militia from all sources, numbering some eight or ten thousand men, under Sullivan, La Fayette, and Greene. It was a part of the plan that the French forces should assist in the expedition, but D'Estaing, anxious to encounter the enemy, put to sea, carrying his four thousand troops with him; and the fleets, when about engaging, were separated by a severe gale and disabled. Expecting the speedy return of D'Estaing, the Americans commenced their cannonade against the British works. The French squadron soon after appeared off Newport considerably damaged by the storm and the enemy, and, much to the chagrin of the Americans, immediately sailed for Boston to repair. Hancock thereupon returned home in his carriage,<sup>2</sup> and Sullivan, finding that the fleet could not be brought back, and his men were constantly deserting, retired from his position, pursued by the enemy from Newport. A battle ensued, in which Sullivan maintained his ground with the loss of about two hundred men, the British losing a still larger number, and in a few days he effected his retreat to the mainland, just in time to avoid the British reinforcements from New York.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The manuscript, dated June 13, in Mr. Adams's handwriting, is signed by Samuel Adams, E. Gerry, T. M. Dana, and James Lovell.

<sup>2</sup> Writings of Laco as published in the Massachusetts Sentinel, February and March, 1789, Boston, 1789, 8°, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Lossing's Field-Book of the Revolution, I. 652. Bradford's History of Massachusetts from 1775 to 1789, pp. 163, 164.

The militia for this expedition were mainly raised and paid by Massachusetts, and the expense falling heavily upon that State, great dissatisfaction arose. Sullivan did not conceal his anger at the unsuccessful issue, which he attributed to the sudden desertion of the French fleet. His complaints were echoed throughout New England, and a dangerous feud sprang up between the French and the many who had imputed the misfortune to them. A serious riot occurred in Boston<sup>1</sup> between the American and French sailors. The old antipathy to the French was revived. Washington and others used every effort to restore harmony; and Congress, in October, to that end passed a resolution complimenting D'Estaing and his command for their bravery, zeal, and attachment to the American cause.<sup>2</sup> A complimentary letter was reported by a committee consisting of Lee, Adams, Morris, and Lovell, to whom D'Estaing's letter had been referred. On the day of this reference a series of resolutions were passed, approving of Sullivan's retreat as prudent, timely, and well conducted. The thanks of Congress were also presented to La Fayette and others. At the same time, Lee, Drayton, Adams, Duer, and Morris were chosen to confer with the French Ambassador as to the future operations of the fleet. The indications of great anxiety in Congress, respecting the attempts of a large party in New England to cast odium upon D'Estaing, are very apparent, not alone in the proceedings of that body, but in the letters of Samuel Adams and the policy of Washington. The movement of the French Admiral, who was much chagrined at these imputations, appears to have been dictated by imperative necessity, and as it proved, in his dismantled condition, he would have been unable to avoid Howe's fleet, which pursued him to his anchorage at Boston. The Tories witnessed these growing hostilities with pleasure, and eagerly catching at the opportunity, fanned the flame with well-timed industry as an auxiliary to the efforts of the British Commis-

<sup>1</sup> Hildreth, III. 255.

<sup>2</sup> Journals of Congress, IV. 525, 604.

sioners, who had not yet departed, and were busily at work in the Southern and Middle States disseminating documents and employing active emissaries. Adams saw the danger, and exerted himself particularly to stay the imprudent conduct of the discontented in Massachusetts. Describing the condition of affairs at this time, he writes:—

“General Sullivan behaved as usual with bravery; but some will have it that there is a mixture of imprudence in everything he does. He promises himself to share with Gates in the glory of victory, and, as an officer of spirit, no doubt he felt vexed with the disappointment; but he was too sanguine in my opinion, when he expected that Count D’Estaing would remain there in the circumstances which he was thrown into by a violent storm, which he met with when in pursuit of Lord Howe. This unforeseen and unavoidable accident left him too much inferior to the British squadron to run the risk with any degree of prudence. It was a misfortune which we all regret, but must bear. Knowing the high temper of the people of my native town, I immediately, upon hearing it, wrote to some of the principal men to prevent blame being cast upon the Count for leaving Rhode Island.”<sup>1</sup>

Some of these letters have been found. In one of them he writes:—

“The Rhode Island expedition is at length finished. Our cause is not dishonored, though we did not succeed to our wishes. Congress has approved the retreat, thanked General Sullivan and his brave troops, and applauded the patriotic exertions of New England. Major-General Hancock was unluckily at Boston, and missed the laurel. In my opinion, it is in a great degree impolitic at this juncture to suffer an odium to be cast on the Count D’Estaing. If there should be a disposition to do it, I am persuaded men of distinction and influence will check it. The Tories will try their utmost to discredit our alliance. And he who not long ago expressed his opinion that ‘a connection with France will ruin America,’ will not fail to promote a jealousy if he can thereby establish his popularity. Such a man should be critically watched on this occasion.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Samuel to John Adams, Philadelphia, Oct. 25, 1778.

<sup>2</sup> S. Adams to J. Warren, Philadelphia, Sept. 12, 1778.

And again to another friend in Boston : —

“ I am sorry to hear there is such a disposition in some persons in Boston to cast an odium on the French Admiral for his leaving Rhode Island. In my opinion, it is at this juncture impolitic in the extreme. Even if his conduct was thought to be blameworthy, prudence, I think, would dictate silence to us. Men of distinction and influence will surely, by all means, check such a disposition. The Tories will try their utmost to discredit our new alliance. You know how much depends upon our cultivating mutual confidence. It is not in the power of undisguised Tories to hurt our cause. Injudicious, though honest Whigs, may, and too often do, injure it. Those whose chief aim is to establish a popularity, in order to obtain the emolument of places or the breath of applause, will think they may serve *themselves* by declaiming on this subject, though they essentially wound their country. If there be any of my virtuous and public-spirited fellow-citizens who pay the least heed to my opinions, I wish they would patiently regard what I say on this occasion.”<sup>1</sup>

Immediately after the reception of the French Ambassador, Franklin, who was now at Paris in the capacity of a commissioner, was accredited Minister Plenipotentiary to the French Court, and Samuel Adams was one of the committee appointed to prepare a draft of instructions. The same committee reported a series of resolutions, which were adopted by Congress, thanking La Fayette for the disinterested zeal which had led him to America, and for his courage and abilities in the service of the United States; and Franklin was directed to cause an elegant sword, with the proper devices, to be made and presented to him in the name of the United States. They also reported a letter to the King of France, relative to his distinguished services. The instructions to Franklin were sent by La Fayette, who carried also a plan for the reduction of Canada, which had been submitted to Congress by Arnold, and subsequently underwent several weeks' discussion. Arnold's letter to

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Adams to Samuel Phillips Savage, Philadelphia, Sept. 14, 1778.



Congress on this subject stated that he had taken the liberty of laying the plan before two gentlemen of the Marine Committee, Colonel Lee and Mr. Samuel Adams, who, said he, "have done me the honor to agree with me in sentiment respecting the practicability, propriety, and usefulness of it." Approved by Congress, the plan was embodied in the instructions to Franklin, who was to consult La Fayette on any difficulties that might arise.<sup>1</sup> It was transmitted by order of Congress to Washington, with a request that he should make such observations thereon as appeared to him proper; the members were placed under an injunction of secrecy as to the plan, and the committee was directed to communicate it to the French Minister. Washington, after mature deliberation, disapproved of the project, and the committee subsequently reported against attempting it at present, owing to the obstacles to be surmounted in acquiring a naval superiority and the hostility of many of the Northern Indian tribes.<sup>2</sup> It was consequently deferred until circumstances should render the co-operation of the States more certain, practicable, and effectual; and the altered views of Congress were sent to La Fayette. The plan, which was very minutely and elaborately drawn up, became known in England, where Samuel Adams was supposed to be its author. A portrait of him, published in an historical work<sup>3</sup> the following

<sup>1</sup> Secret Journals of Congress, II. 117.

<sup>2</sup> It was in December of this year that a number of letters, received by Congress from Washington on this subject, were referred to a committee of which Mr. Adams was a member, and, on their recommendation, the General-in-Chief, after putting the army in winter quarters, attended Congress, where he verbally explained his objections to the expedition.

<sup>3</sup> "An Impartial History of the War in America between Great Britain and her Colonies from its Commencement to the End of the Year 1779," p. 209. The volume is anonymous, but there is reason to believe that it was partly the work of Edmund Burke, whose writings on the American war, published in the Annual Register during the Revolution, were transcribed into "A Concise History of the Late War in America," published in the Columbian Magazine in 1789, and reprinted in the following year with plates. Soon after, a lampooning poem by "Camillo Querno, Poet Laureate to the

year in London, represents him consulting the map of Canada, and holding in his hand the "Plan for the Reduction of Canada." The impression, however, originated in the desire of Adams for its acquisition, which was well known in England. The portrait, which bears a slight resemblance to him, was probably drawn from a personal description, given by some of the Boston refugees then residing in London, — perhaps Hutchinson himself. The conquest of Canada, as has been shown in the earlier years of the Revolution, was always an object of primary importance with Adams, involving as it did the fisheries and other great advantages. These, and particularly the permanent tranquillity of the Northern and Western frontiers, he thought could never be secured until Canada was made a part of the Confederacy.

"We must," said he, about this time, "have a respectable army in the spring to put a good face on our negotiations, or to fight. I hope we shall secure to the United States Canada, Nova Scotia, and *the fisheries*, by our arms or by treaty. We shall never be on a solid footing till Great Britain cedes to us what Nature designs we should have, or wrest it from her."<sup>1</sup>

The appointment of Franklin as envoy terminated the quarrel which had been going on at Paris for some time between Franklin and Deane on the one side and Arthur Lee on the other. The recall of Deane left the others equally at enmity and at variance as to several matters of diplomatic policy. John Adams, on his arrival, had avoided engaging in the difference, though he was inclined to agree with Lee. Samuel Adams had written to them, being

Congress," was published in London, delineating the character of the American leaders. Samuel Adams was particularly the object of attack. It has been thought that the lampoons were based upon the engravings appearing in the History above mentioned

<sup>1</sup> Letter of S. Adams, Nov. 3, 1778. See, also, several letters written during the next seven years.

the intimate friend of both, urging a mutual confidence between them, and perhaps his letter had some good effect. He was always for harmonizing; and in the present case the abilities of the disputants rendered a unison of sentiment necessary to the public interests. John Adams, on his arrival, saw that three Commissioners were too many for the proper transaction of business, and sent a letter to Samuel Adams on the subject, enumerating the disadvantages of the existing system, and concluding: "The inconveniences arising from the multiplicity of ministers and the complication of business are infinite."<sup>1</sup> Arthur Lee, on the other hand, had written to Samuel Adams: "If it should be a question in Congress about my destination, I shall be much obliged to you for remembering that I should prefer being at the Court of France."<sup>2</sup> But, after the arrival of John Adams, his views changed: "I formerly desired you to support my destination to this department; but, as I believe it is an object of desire to others, I do not wish to be a competitor with any one, and shall be content wherever I can best serve the great cause in peace with all men."<sup>3</sup> La Fayette arrived in Paris in February, 1779, and delivered the letters and instructions already alluded to. John Adams returned to America. The correspondence all through this period discloses plainly the great influence attributed by the gentlemen at Paris to Samuel Adams as the principal adviser in Congress. Their wishes, hopes, fears, personal desires, and aspirations are confided to him in a manner showing their confidence in his power to carry measures in that body. From the commencement of the Revolution he had, to some extent, filled the part of a republican Warwick, watchfully eyeing the abilities of each promising genius, and quietly clearing the path before him to preferment. The same observant, self-abnegating principle which had

<sup>1</sup> John to Samuel Adams, Passy, May 21, 1778 (*J. Adams's Works*, III. 159, 160).

<sup>2</sup> A. Lee to S. Adams, Paris, Oct. 4, 1777.

<sup>3</sup> A. Lee to S. Adams, Paris, Sept. 12, 1778.

originally brought into notice nearly every young man who afterwards reached political eminence in Massachusetts was now exhibited in a wider field: he sought nothing for himself, but cheerfully directed others to the brilliant positions merited by their talents and patriotism. After the change in the mission to France had been decided upon, he said, in one of his letters to John Adams:—

“I suppose you have been fully and officially informed of the state of our military affairs since the enemy evacuated this city and met with a drubbing at Monmouth; and as public letters will doubtless be forwarded by this conveyance, it is needless for me to give you a particular detail of what has happened since. By those letters you will be informed that Dr. Franklin is appointed Minister Plenipotentiary at Versailles. It is not yet determined how you will be disposed of; but, as Congress entertain great expectations of your services, you may depend upon employment being allotted for you somewhere. The critical situation of the powers of Europe in general renders it somewhat difficult for us to determine to which of them to make our addresses at present. Every cabinet, I suppose, is busily engaged in making the necessary arrangements and preparing for the opening a campaign, if war should take place. In this case, I should think France must be our pole-star while it continues, and our connections must be formed with her. In the mean time, however, Holland, whose policy is always to be at peace, may be open for a negotiation; and, in my opinion, we ought to take the earliest opportunity to tempt her.”<sup>1</sup>

Seeing the utter hopelessness of effecting a reconciliation, the British Commissioners, who had persistently continued their exertions, now issued a manifesto which, as sanctioned by a Ministry and Parliament professing to represent humanity and civilization, was such as to lower them in the estimation of the world, and to increase the hatred felt towards their nation throughout America. This paper, after reminding the people that the grievances against which they had appealed to Heaven had been amply and fully re-

<sup>1</sup> Samuel to John Adams, Philadelphia, Oct. 25, 1778.

dressed in the peaceable propositions of Britain, deliberately threatened that, if submission was not tendered within forty days, the war would thenceforth be waged with all the vengeance and cruelty which savages could inflict, and that desolation should be its leading object. The resolves of Congress and writings of Samuel Adams and Drayton, who had been particularly active in refuting the previously published arguments of the Commissioners,<sup>1</sup> had already explained the fallacies of the Ministry, and the insidious designs hidden beneath the specious garb of conciliation. There was danger and hate in those propositions, which the sagacity of Congress penetrated and clearly exposed. The time for conciliation had passed, and American independence was inevitable; yet the Ministry, blind to the decrees of fate and of nature, were determined to rule or ruin. Enlightened Englishmen condemned these atrocious threats as unjust, unchristian, and inhuman. "A war of revenge," said one, "is threatened such as Moloch in Pandemonium advised, which will fix an inveterate hatred in the people of America against the very name of Englishman, and which will remain to the latest posterity." "Against whom," asked Burke, "are these dreadful menaces pronounced but against those who are conscious of rectitude, who are acting in a righteous cause, and contending for freedom and their country?"

America read the infamous paper, which was added to the already fearful account against the mother country. Samuel Adams, glowing with indignation at the perfidious power which had driven his country into the smoke and blood of war, penned a counter manifesto, which was adopted as the sense of Congress, and published throughout the United States.

<sup>1</sup> "Those who principally distinguished themselves in the composition of them were Mr. Samuel Adams of Boston and Mr. Drayton of South Carolina (both members of Congress), and the author of *Common Sense*." (J. Andrews's *History of the War in America*, etc., London, 1786, III. 110.)

“BY THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

“*A Manifesto.*”

“The United States having been driven to hostilities by the oppressive and tyrannous measures of Great Britain, having been compelled to commit the essential rights of men to the decision of arms, and having been at length forced to shake off a yoke which had grown too burdensome to bear, they declared themselves free and independent.

“Confiding in the justice of their cause; confiding in Him who disposes of human events; although weak and unprovided, they set the power of their enemies at defiance.

“In this confidence they have continued through the various fortunes of three bloody campaigns, unawed by the power, unsubdued by the barbarity of their foes. Their virtuous citizens have borne without repining the loss of many things which make life desirable. Their brave troops have patiently endured the hardships and dangers of a situation fruitful in both beyond former example.

“The Congress, considering themselves bound to love their enemies as children of that Being who is equally the Father of all, and desirous, since they could not prevent, at least to alleviate the calamities of war, have studied to spare those who were in arms against them, and to lighten the chains of captivity.

“The conduct of those serving under the King of Great Britain hath, with some few exceptions, been diametrically opposite. They have laid waste the open country, burned the defenceless villages, and butchered the citizens of America.

“Their prisons have been the slaughter-houses of her soldiers, their ships of her seamen, and the severest injuries have been aggravated by the grossest insults.

“Foiled in their vain attempts to subjugate the unconquerable spirit of freedom, they have meanly assailed the representatives of America with bribes, with deceit, and the servility of adulation. They have made a mock of religion by impious appeals to God, whilst in the violation of His sacred command. They have made a mock even of reason itself, by endeavoring to prove that the liberty and happiness of America could safely be intrusted to those who have sold their own, unawed by the sense of virtue or of shame.

“Treated with the contempt which such conduct deserved, they have applied to individuals. They have solicited them to break the bonds of allegiance and imbue their souls with the blackest crimes. But fearing that none could be found through these United States equal to the wickedness of their purpose, to influence weak minds they have threatened more wide devastation.

“While the shadow of hope remained that our enemies could be taught by our example to respect those laws which are held sacred among civilized nations, and to comply with the dictates of a religion which they pretend, in common with us, to believe and revere, they have been left to the influence of that religion and that example. But since their incorrigible dispositions cannot be touched by kindness and compassion, it becomes our duty by other means to vindicate the rights of humanity.

“We, therefore, the Congress of the United States of America, do solemnly declare and proclaim that if our enemies presume to execute their threats, or persist in their present career of barbarity, we will take such exemplary vengeance as shall deter others from a like conduct. We appeal to the God who searcheth the hearts of men for the rectitude of our intentions; and in his holy presence declare that, as we are not moved by any light or hasty suggestions of anger or revenge, so through every possible change of fortune we will adhere to this our determination.

“Done in Congress by unanimous consent, the thirtieth day of October, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-eight.

“Attest, C. T., Secretary.

“H. L., President.”

This was no idle threat. It was penned in all the resolute character of its author and of the determined body who issued it to the world. Curwen says:—

“A passenger lately fled from America, on the score of sufferings there, declares the late menace in the Commissioners’ proclamation will assuredly effect what neither persuasions nor threats have yet had force enough to bring about,—a solid and firm union of all ranks and classes, for want of which alone, in the Middle Colonies, he says, the British army has not, long since, been driven into the sea. The manifesto, which I presume you have seen, issued by the Congress in consequence of that proclamation, renders it more than

probable that, should the dreadful expedient threatened take place, history will hardly furnish a parallel to the cruelty and carnage of the following campaign, which God in his infinite mercy prevent.”<sup>1</sup>

During this summer, the Loyalists, of whom Warren wrote to Samuel Adams that, at the last May elections in Boston, they had made their appearance in politics for the first time in seven years, had felt sufficiently encouraged to assist the refugees in an effort for the restoration of their forfeited privileges of citizenship. Some who had fled to Halifax at the time of the evacuation now applied for admission. Many who, prior to the war, had bitterly and insultingly opposed the measures of the patriots, were left entirely destitute by their sudden departure; and most of them, expecting that each successive campaign would be the last, and that the royal authority would be restored, had waited with impatience for the favorable change which should invite their return. But the last hope vanished with the resolute reply of Congress to the Commissioners, and the succeeding publications, which even more particularly displayed the hopelessness of any attempt at reconciliation. The penalties enacted in the several States, during the war, against the adherents of the Crown, embraced in one instance death, and in others banishment and confiscation of property. Massachusetts, whose people had particularly suffered by the Tory interest up to the winter of 1776, was inexorable; and Samuel Adams, for all his humane disposition, was relentless in his advocacy of rigid measures against them. He drew the strictest lines of demarcation between patriotism and treachery, and recognized no mitigating circumstances for the desertion of the cause of Liberty in her hour of greatest need. He had reason to know the spirit in which much of that sentiment of loyalty had been nourished; he fully appreciated the extent of venality and corruption among the place-hunters in the royal interest, before the Revolution had witnessed the malignity of the governors

<sup>1</sup> Curwen's Journal, pp. 209, 210; 4th ed., p. 230.



and the petty hostility of the lesser members of the party, and with his friends knew full well the dreadful penalty which awaited the principal supporters of the patriot cause, had its enemies triumphed. Among other considerations, weighing heavily with him in this matter, was the laxity of manners which a revival of the old Tory element would introduce anew into his native town, and which was already becoming prevalent even with those who remained and preserved a discreet silence in political affairs. It was his wish that Boston might become a "Christian Sparta"; and basing the happiness of a people upon their virtue, and the absence of certain extravagances which he believed tended to demoralize all communities, he saw with dislike the possible renewal of habits which history taught him were fatal to public liberty. He knew that these people were anxiously awaiting in Nova Scotia the desired turn in events which would enable them to hasten back and fatten upon the ruin of freedom. It was in all respects unreasonable and unjust to permit them peaceably to resume their residence in the scene of their recent treachery. He never hesitated to announce this hostility to their return, and thus acquired many powerful enemies, especially among the resident Tories, whose animosity followed him to the grave, and was bitterly expressed long after his death. On some public occasion, briefly alluded to in the following letter, perhaps in the Legislature during his visit to Boston in the last winter, he appears to have spoken on the subject. Writing from Philadelphia, in reply to a letter from Warren relating to the motion for the admission of the refugees, Gardner, Harrison, Gray, and Anderson, he says: —

"It is the opinion of the people in this country,<sup>1</sup> that a Galloway could not atone for his public crimes with the sacrifice of a hundred lives. A Galloway? a Gray! a Gardner! Examine them, and say which is the greatest criminal. Confiscation, you tell me, labors;

<sup>1</sup> That is, in Pennsylvania. During the Revolution, and until the adoption of the Constitution, the word "country" was often used to designate the different States.

‘it labors very hard.’ I have heard objections made to it, not in this country, but in my own. But I thought those objections were made by interested men. Shall those traitors who first conspired the ruin of our liberties; those who basely forsook their country in her distress, and sought protection from the enemy, when they thought them in the plenitude of power, who have been ever since stimulating and doing all in their power to aid and comfort them, while they have been doing their utmost to enslave and ruin us,—shall these wretches have their estates reserved for them and restored at the conclusion of this glorious struggle, in which some of the richest blood of America has been spilled, for the sake of a few who may have money in England, and for this reason have maintained a dastardly and criminal neutrality? It cannot be. I ventured to speak my mind in a place where I could claim no right to speak. I spoke with leave, which I should have disdained to do, had I not felt the importance of the subject to our country. I will tell you my opinion. If you do not act a decisive part, if you suffer those traitors to return and enjoy their estates, the world will say you have no sense of public injury and have lost your understanding.”<sup>1</sup>

The article in the treaty with England, after the war, relating to the refugees, was not satisfactory to Mr. Adams for the same reasons, and he was always uncompromising in his hostility to the return, at least of the principal characters among them. In Massachusetts, until the treaty, the law, which Adams probably aided to prepare, provided for the arrest and banishment of Tories, unless swearing fealty to the United States. Persons thus accused, on conviction by a jury, could be sent into the enemy’s jurisdiction. Upwards of three hundred were designated by name, who, having fled, were liable, should they return, to apprehension, imprisonment, and transportation to a place possessed by the British; and for a second voluntary return, death without benefit of clergy. A year later, while in Boston, Mr. Adams was equally determined against receiving those who had fled even to adjoining States, and he employed his pen and personal influence against their return.

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Adams to James Warren, Philadelphia, October, 1778.

## CHAPTER L.

Depreciation of Paper Currency. — Straited Circumstances of Adams. — His Family at Boston. — The Legislature grant him the Use of a Confiscated House and some Furniture. — His Home and Domestic Relations. — Letters to his Wife and Daughter. — The Quarrel with Hancock. — Its Cause unknown. — Efforts at a Reconciliation. — Magnanimous Expressions of Adams. — He is assailed by his Enemies in Massachusetts. — Re-elected to Congress. — Declines, and desires to retire to his Family. — Affairs of Silas Deane and the American Embassies to European Courts.

THROUGH the several Congressional terms of Samuel Adams, making an aggregate service of some six years in that body, his family in Massachusetts lived in an humble, quiet manner, with barely the means of maintenance. The paper currency had depreciated so as to be almost worthless; and though the grants of salaries to the public officers seem to have been made with tolerable regularity, the delegates in Congress were often put to the closest straits to make even a respectable appearance. Samuel Adams with one of his colleagues, about this time, occupied the commonest lodgings in Philadelphia, and lived in the most frugal style. The value of the Continental money may be inferred from a letter to Mr. Adams early in 1779, which says: "I was asked four hundred dollars for a hat, three hundred for a pair of leather breeches, one hundred and twenty-five for a pair of shoes, and a suit of clothes sixteen hundred."<sup>1</sup> Another writes to Elbridge Gerry: "I now owe one hundred and forty-seven dollars for board, and some little borrowed of my landlady, besides twenty-six borrowed for every-day expenses, and perhaps sixteen more to tailors and shoemakers. How under Heaven am I to get this with Provincial paper, which does not pass here for anything at all, and is next to nothing where it was issued?"<sup>2</sup> Without the strict-

<sup>1</sup> Letter from a Member of Congress, dated Jan. 21, 1779.

<sup>2</sup> Austin's Life of Gerry, I. 332.

est economy he could neither support his family in Boston nor meet his own expenses in Philadelphia. Not long after the evacuation of Boston by the British, and the confiscation of the Tory property, the house of Robert Hallowell, formerly comptroller under the crown,<sup>1</sup> had been rented to him by the Legislature. Subsequently his right of occupancy was continued to him for a limited period, as his own house had been partially destroyed by the British. The resolve of the Assembly on this subject reads : —

“That the Honorable Samuel Adams, Esq., Secretary of State, be permitted to continue to occupy the house where he now dwells, belonging to Robert Hallowell, Esq., an absentee, for one year from and after the first day of April next; he to allow such rent for the same as the General Assembly shall hereafter order; and the agent of the said Hallowell’s estate is hereby directed to conform himself accordingly, any law or resolve to the contrary notwithstanding.”<sup>2</sup>

The Legislature also sold to Mr. Adams a quantity of furniture out of the estates of absentees; his unpaid salary for services before the war being allowed in the account. The estimate now made (ninety pounds and seventeen shillings) was somewhat less than the amount charged by the Committee of Sequestration in the following year.<sup>3</sup>

Some of the letters of Samuel Adams from Philadelphia, towards the close of 1778, especially the familiar ones to his family, illustrate the character of the man better than the most elaborate descriptions. They lift the veil and give an insight into the undisguised sentiments of his heart, as he might unbosom them in the confidence of his home. Those to his wife and daughter are full of affectionate solicitude for their happiness, and show that the name of tender father and husband, which his daughter delighted to use when describing him to her children, was well merited. His wife he usually addressed as “my dear Betty,” and to her he

<sup>1</sup> Sabine’s American Loyalists, p. 344.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 136.

<sup>2</sup> Journals of the House, Dec. 4, 1779.

often confided the more particular matters relating to his political associations, relying on her discreet good sense to communicate with his intimate friends who might visit the house. His social relationship with his daughter, whose education he had personally conducted, and whose devoted love never failed him to his dying day, appears in some of these letters.

PHILADELPHIA, Sept. 8th, 1778.

MY DEAR DAUGHTER, —

Your very dutiful and obliging letter of the 28th of August came to my hand yesterday, and brought me the afflicting news of your mother's illness. When you tell me 'the doctor thinks she is on the mending hand,' and 'he hopes she will be cleverly in a day or two,' I am apt to conclude her disorder had not much abated when you wrote. I know 'she is exceedingly loath to give me the least pain,' and therefore I suspect that she has dictated to you to make the best of it to me. 'She begs me not to make myself very anxious for her.' This is a request which it is impossible for me to comply with. I shall be very uneasy till I hear again from you. I pray God she may recover her health, and long continue a rich blessing to you and me. I am satisfied 'you do all in your power for so excellent a mother.' You are under great obligations to her, and I am sure you are of a grateful disposition. I hope her life will be spared, and that you will have the opportunity of presenting to her my warmest respects. I rejoice to hear that your late disorder was so gentle, and that you have got over it. I commend you, my dear, to the care and protection of the Almighty. That he may reward your filial piety is the ardent prayer of your

Very affectionate father,

S. ADAMS.

In his last year in Congress, he wrote to his daughter : —

PHILADELPHIA, Aug. 17th, 1780.

MY DEAR HANNAH, —

Nothing, I assure you, but the want of leisure has prevented my acknowledging the receipt of your very obliging letter of the 12th of July. You cannot imagine with how much pleasure I received it. I have no reason to doubt your sincerity, when you express the warm-

est affection for your mother and me, because I have had the most convincing proof of it in the whole course of your life. Be equally attentive to every relation into which an all-wise Providence may lead you, and I will venture to predict for my dear daughter an unfailing source of happiness in the reflections of her own mind. If you carefully fulfil the various duties of life from a principle of obedience to your Heavenly Father, you shall enjoy that peace which the world cannot give nor take away. In steadily pursuing the path of wisdom and virtue I am sometimes inclined to think you have been influenced with a view of pleasing me. This is indeed something, and I owe you the debt of gratitude. But the blessing of an earthly parent, I am persuaded, has not been your principal motive to be religious. If this has been any influence on your mind, you know you cannot gratify me so much as by seeking most earnestly the favor of Him who made and supported you, who will supply you with whatever His infinite wisdom sees best for you in this world, and, above all, who has given us his Son to purchase for us the reward of eternal life. Adieu, and believe that I have all the feelings of a father.

S. ADAMS.

In one of the letters to his wife, he has occasion to refer to the machinations of a political party in Boston against him.

“My Boston friends tell me, with great solicitude, that I have enemies there. I thank them for their concern for me, and tell them that I knew it before. The man who acts an honest part in public life must often counteract the passions, inclinations, or humors of wicked men, and this must create him enemies. I am, therefore, not disappointed or mortified. I flatter myself that no virtuous man who knows me will, or can be, my enemy, because I think he can have no suspicion of my integrity. But they say my enemies ‘are plotting against me.’ Neither does that discompose me; for what else can I expect from such kind of men? If they mean to make me uneasy, they miss their aim, for I am happy, and it is not in *their* power to disturb my peace. They add, the design is to get me recalled from this service. I am in no pain about such an event, for I know there are many who can serve their country here with greater capacity, though none more honestly. The sooner, there-

fore, another is elected in my room the better. I shall the sooner retire to the sweet enjoyment of domestic life. This, you can witness, I have often wished for; and I trust that all-gracious Providence has spared your precious life through a dangerous illness to heighten the pleasures of my retirement. If my enemies are governed by malice or envy, I could not wish them a severer punishment than their own feelings. But, my dear, I thank God I have many friends. *You* know them. Remember me to them all as you have opportunity. I could say many more things to you, but I am called off.”<sup>1</sup>

The enmity alluded to in this letter seems to have been deep seated. Its working has been already described in the extracts from James Warren’s letters to his friend. Among the papers of Mr. Adams are letters signed S. P. S., from some prominent man in Boston, probably Samuel Phillips Savage. He was evidently a friend both of Adams and Hancock. This person essayed to effect a reconciliation between them, though he must have seen that, while Adams steadily pursued his duties in Philadelphia, regardless of enemies at home, Hancock and his followers in Boston were industriously assailing his motives, secure from contradiction by him, and even from his resentment. In one of these letters his friend urges his desire of pacification. He says:—

“What follows is between thee and me, and friendship must apologize for what is imprudent or what is otherwise amiss. I most sincerely value you as my friend; but much as I value you, my country lies nearer my heart, and I greatly fear the difference now subsisting between you and your once worthy friend, Mr. H——, may greatly hurt her interest. The effects are already visible. The enemies of America triumph in the strife, and are taking every measure to increase the flame. The friends of their country cannot stand by idle spectators; they see the increasing contest with weeping eyes and aching hearts, and wish a reconciliation. Permit me, my friend, to attempt (however inadequate to the task) a restoration

<sup>1</sup> To Mrs. Adams, Philadelphia, Oct. 20, 1778.

of friendship between two who once were dear to each other, and who now, perhaps from mistakes and misapprehensions, seem too distant.”<sup>1</sup>

The reply of Adams is the best commentary upon the difference which, originating in some occurrence in Philadelphia just previous to the Declaration of Independence, had gradually assumed in Boston the proportions of a political faction. A quarrel or feud requires two parties. The continued absence of Adams in Congress prevented his actively opposing his detractors, if he had wished to do so, and he had taken no other notice of Hancock's conduct than the quiet expressions of contempt in the private letters already quoted. Let us see, then, how he responds to his friend's letter.

PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 1, 1778.

MY DEAR SIR, —

I duly received your favor of October by the last post, and should have immediately answered it, had I not been that day exceedingly engaged. I do not keep copies of all my letters,— they are trifles. You were mistaken in supposing that I ascribed the independence of America to New England *only*. I never was so assuming as to think so. My words are, that America is obliged to New England, and this is an acknowledged truth. It is the opinion of others, as well as myself, that the principles and manners of New England, from time to time, led to that great event. I pray God she may ever maintain those principles which, in my opinion, are essentially necessary to support and perpetuate her liberty. You may see my sentiments of the patriotism of other States in a letter I lately wrote to Mrs. Adams (if it is in being), in which I relate a conversation which passed between Monsieur — and myself. But enough of this. I love my country. My fears concerning her are that she will ruin herself by *idolatry*.

A part of your letter, you tell me, is confidential. I always keep the secrets of my friends when I can do it honestly, though I confess I do not like to be encumbered with them. In this instance I

<sup>1</sup> S. P. S. to Samuel Adams, Boston, October, 1778.



will be your confidant. But let me ask you, can a difference between Mr. — and me, either real or imaginary, be of any consequence to the world? I think not. Tories, you say, triumph. They may make sport of it; but indeed, my friend, it is too unimportant a matter for a sensible Whig to weep and break his heart about. I am desirous of making you easy; and I do assure you that, so far from brooding in my heart an unfriendly disposition towards that man, I seldom think of him, unless I happen to take up a Boston newspaper or hear his name mentioned in chit-chat conversation. You call upon me by all that is sacred to forgive him. Do you think *he* has injured *me*? If he has, should he not ask for forgiveness? No man ever found me inexorable. I do not wish him to ask me to forgive him; this would be too humiliating. If he is conscious of having done or designed me an injury, let him do so no more, and I will promise to forgive and forget him too; or, I would add, to do him all the service in my power. But this is needless; it is not in my power to serve him. *He* is above it.

If you wish to know the foundation of this wonderful collision, ask my friend J. W., or another, whom you properly call my closest friend. To them I have related the trifling tale, and they can repeat it to you.

The precepts and examples you refer me to I shall always reverence most highly.

I am, with unfeigned sincerity,

Your obliged and affectionate friend,

SAMUEL ADAMS.

S. P. S.

On the subject of this political attack upon him, he says to Mrs. Adams, who, with anxious solicitude, continued to notify him of the cabal: —

“It is diverting enough to hear the different language held forth concerning me by a kind of men whom I despise beyond expression. In New England they say I am averse to an accommodation with Great Britain, and make that an exception against me. In Philadelphia I am charged indirectly, at least, with a frequent interchange of visits with a companion of Berkenhout, Lord Lindsay, Governor Johnstone, and the son of Lord Bute, with a view of

secretly bringing about an accommodation with that King and nation which I have solemnly abjured. What is there which malice joined with a small share of wit will not suggest? I am not apt to conceal my sentiments. They are far from being problematical. They are well known here and at Boston; and I can trust my consistency in the judgment of every honest and sensible man that is acquainted with me. The censure of fools or knaves is applause.”<sup>1</sup>

Towards the close of the year, for reasons which these extracts may have sufficiently explained, together with a desire to return to his family, Mr. Adams notified the President of the Massachusetts Council of his wish to be recalled from Congress, to which he had been re-elected by the Assembly.

“I am informed that the General Assembly have been pleased to appoint me one of their delegates in Congress for the year 1779. This repeated mark of confidence in me is indeed flattering. The duties of the department are arduous and pressing. I will never decline the service of my country; but my health requires relaxation, and at this period of my life my inclination would lead me to wish to be employed in a more limited sphere. I will, nevertheless, continue to act in Congress to the utmost of my ability, in pursuance of the powers and instructions with which I am honored, in hopes that, as the month of April next will complete another full year of my residence here, I shall then be relieved by one of my absent colleagues, or some other gentleman, and be permitted to retire to my family.”<sup>2</sup>

The service, however, was so urgently pressed upon him, that he yielded his own inclinations, and continued at his post. His position on working committees, especially as chairman of the Marine Board, entailed onerous duties upon him, as appears by the archives of the several States, and particularly those of Massachusetts, where his name occurs in letters on public affairs, which are usually in his handwriting. The journals for this and the following year at-

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Adams to his wife, Philadelphia, Dec. 13, 1778.

<sup>2</sup> S. Adams to Jeremiah Powell, Philadelphia, Dec. 1, 1778.

test to the number and variety of subjects submitted to that Board, which, after that of the Treasury with Gerry at its head, was the most constantly employed in Congress. It consisted of one member from each State, and, like those of War and the Treasury, had its separate offices apart from the Congress. It often happens in the records of votes in the journals that, for one or two days at a time, the name of Samuel Adams is omitted, which is probably to be accounted for by his absence on committee occupations. One of the many papers will illustrate the method of transacting business. Gerard, the French Minister had asked the opinion of Congress respecting his offering a premium to the owners of privateers that should intercept masts and spars belonging to the enemy coming from Halifax. The Marine Committee, to whom it was referred, reported favorably, and their chairman thus enclosed to the New England States the offer of the French envoy : —

MARINE COMMITTEE, PHILADELPHIA,

December 15, 1778.

SIR, —

Pursuant to the direction of Congress and the request of the Minister Plenipotentiary of France, I have the honor of transmitting to the Council of Massachusetts Bay a declaration under the hand and seal of that Minister, promising a reward to every vessel that shall take or destroy a vessel of the enemy loaded with masts or spars, and destined to the ports of Halifax, Newport, or New York. It is the particular desire of the Minister that this declaration may be addressed to that Honorable Board, to the end that the same may be made known in such a manner as their wisdom shall direct.

I am, sir, your most obedient and very humble servant,

SAM. ADAMS, *Chairman.*

THE HONORABLE THE PRESIDENT OF MASSACHUSETTS BAY.

Early in 1779, the charges which had been made against the integrity of Silas Deane, late Commissioner to France, were taken up in Congress, and a committee was appointed to examine into foreign affairs and the conduct of the late

and present Commissioners to the courts of Europe. The subject thus made special became a prominent matter of dispute, and two parties were at last formed, headed on the one side by Robert Morris, and by Richard Henry Lee on the other. Deane was charged with having appropriated to his own use portions of the public moneys passing through his hands, and was not able to vindicate himself, owing to the extremely loose manner in which his accounts had been kept. Arthur Lee had written to Adams from Paris, sending evidences of the proceedings of Deane,<sup>1</sup> who now retorted, in Philadelphia, with an Address to the People of the United States, in which the conduct of the Lees in Europe was assailed with much bitterness. Paine, the author of "Common Sense," engaged in the controversy, and disclosed some state secrets intrusted to him as Secretary to the Committee of Foreign Affairs, which greatly irritated the French Minister, and caused Paine's dismissal from his position. The accusations against Deane do not appear to have been proved, though the suspicions were never entirely cleared away. During the investigation in Congress, Samuel Adams, who was not of the committee, was too deeply engaged in other occupations to be more than a spectator of the contest; but, with that faithfulness and trust which characterized his friendships through life, he had the fullest confidence in the correctness of the views of Arthur Lee, and he defended him on all proper occasions from attack. Writing to Lee on this subject, some time afterwards, he says:—

"I resent the treatment you have met with in America with all the feelings of friendship. Among your enemies, you may depend upon it, there are some of the worst kind of men. I cannot help entertaining a suspicion that they are the enemies of their country. I am sure they cannot, at present, do a more vital injury to the cause of America than by raising the popular jealousy and clamor against its earliest, ablest, and most persevering friends. This they are endeavoring to do, not only with you, but others; and they are

<sup>1</sup> A. Lee to S. Adams, Paris, Sept. 12, 1778.

masters of so much sophistry as to deceive some who, I think, are not so suspicious of them as they ought to be. Mr. —, in the opinion of some of his own party, was injudicious in his publication of the 5th of December last. They are at least constrained to say it, whether they think so or not. It is the opinion of the best men, I know, that he has done more mischief than it will ever be in his power to atone for. I never had but one opinion of this man since 1774, when I first knew him, and that is, that he is commercial and interested. I believe he has, for a twelvemonth past, thought it his interest to throw us into divisions and parties, and that he has been as influential in effecting it as any man in America. Interested men, who are united in politics and commercial combinations, are, and must be, his advocates. *Perhaps the persons whose names you mention in the first part of your letter may be his secret and powerful supporters:* I do not pretend to affirm it. These men most certainly should preserve their minds free from prejudice in disputes of this kind. *They* should stand totally unconnected with any party, as they would avoid doing injustice to the joint cause of France and America, and lessening that strong attachment and mutual confidence between the two nations which every true friend and subject of both wishes may long subsist.

“Your letter to the editor of the Leyden Gazette, written upon your seeing Mr. —’s first publication, fell into my hands about a fortnight ago. I published it with a few loose observations in one of our newspapers. I have since had the pleasure of being informed that you have sent to Congress a reply to Deane’s accusations, which has given great satisfaction to impartial men. I foresaw, soon after his arrival, that your lot would be to suffer persecution for a while. This is frequently the portion of good men, but they are never substantially injured by it. My friend and your late colleague,<sup>1</sup> in his letter to me, has mentioned you in the most honorable as well as the most friendly terms. I should have written to him by this opportunity, but I am led by yours to believe that my letter would not reach him. But if he should be in France when you receive this letter, pray mention my friendly regards to him, and let him know that his lady and family are in health.

“The young gentleman who carries this letter is Mr. William

<sup>1</sup> John Adams.

Knox, brother of the General, and has the reputation of an honest friend to the liberties of his country; your kind notice of him as such will oblige me.”<sup>1</sup>

The report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs was made in Congress, after the subject had been under their consideration three months, with all the light which the evidence at hand could throw upon it. They were of opinion that all ministers to European courts should be recalled, save those to Versailles and Madrid; that suspicions and animosities had arisen among the several Commissioners, which might be highly prejudicial to the honor and interest of the United States, and that the appointments of the said Commissioners be vacated, and new ones made. A debate ensued on the motion to insert the names of each of the Commissioners, which was carried. John Adams, however, was excepted from the implied censure, owing to his having arrived at Paris subsequently to the outbreak of the feud. Franklin, though he had lately been appointed Minister Plenipotentiary, was included; and, on the following day, a motion was made for his recall from that service,—the entire delegations of Virginia and North Carolina voting in the affirmative, as did Gerry, Morris, and Paca; but there was a decided majority, including Samuel Adams, against it. The evidence submitted by the committee, justifying such strong language as “prejudicial to the honor and interest of the United States,” which, after lengthy debate, was adopted with great unanimity, indicates the violent nature of the “animosity and suspicions” among the gentlemen in Paris. The letters of John Adams to his kinsman, however, hint at the feeling existing, and show the wisdom of continuing Franklin at that Court. It is difficult to see in whom the advocates of his removal could have placed a greater degree of confidence. John Adams says:—

“I think him [Arthur Lee] a faithful man and able. Yet what the determination will be upon the complaint of Mr. Deane, I can-

<sup>1</sup> S. Adams to A. Lee, Boston, August 1, 1779.

not say. This is a subject which I cannot write or talk about; I would not feel such another sensation to be made a prince. I confess, I expected the most dismal consequences from it, because I thought it would render business and confidence between us three totally impracticable; that it would destroy all confidence between this Court and us, and that it would startle Spain; that it would alienate many in Holland from us; and that it would encourage the Ministry in England, and disconcert opposition so much, that they would even make another vigorous campaign, besides all the evils it would produce among you. But the arrival of Dr. Franklin's commission has relieved me of all these fears. This Court have confidence in him alone; but I think they were cautious even of him, when he had two colleagues to whom he was obliged to communicate everything, one of whom was upon as bad terms with him as with Mr. Deane. I have had a kind of task here, as Mr. Lovell expresses himself; determined to be the partisan of neither, yet to be the friend of both, as far as the service would admit. I am fixed in these two opinions, — that leaving the Doctor here alone is right, and that Mr. Lee is a very honest and faithful man.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John to Samuel Adams, Passy, Feb. 14, 1779.

## CHAPTER LI.

**Progress of the War.** — Indications of an Approaching Accommodation. — Adams considers the Wrestring of Nova Scotia and Canada from the Enemy and the Right to the Fisheries as necessary to a Permanent Peace. — He determines to attend the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention lately called. — He arrives at Boston. — Malignant Attacks of his Enemies. — Condition of the Town during the War. — Invasion of Connecticut. — Adams urges forward Troops in Aid of Rhode Island and Connecticut. — Expedition to the Penobscot. — Adams visits Providence and obtains additional Troops. — Failure of the Expedition. — Individual Sovereignty of each State at this Epoch. — Adams elected to the Assembly and Council. — Continues to act as Secretary of State.

DURING the winter and spring the seat of war was removed to the Southern States, in accordance with the plan of the British Ministry, who believed that a stronger sentiment of loyalty could be found there than existed in the North. Georgia was resolved upon as the point for a descent; and before summer the successes of the British, aided by a loyal population, justified their expectations, but were offset in the North by the brilliant capture of Stony Point by Wayne in July. During this time Congress was urged by the French Ambassador to fix upon some terms of accommodation with Great Britain; and the policy of France appeared in the desire, among other points, to induce America not to insist too strongly upon the right to the Newfoundland fisheries or to the acquisition of Canada or Nova Scotia, — France, herself, probably having an eye to those advantages for herself in the final settlement. Massachusetts was particularly set upon the right to the fisheries, — a point upon which every one of her statesmen was equally solicitous, and which it was supposed could not be overvalued. Adams, among others, was especially determined on this subject. In April he wrote, referring to the terms



which should be demanded of Britain, in case of any treaty being attempted: —

“Should not the people, then, speak the language which becomes them, and assure her that, after so virtuous and successful a struggle, they are determined to demand enough for the purpose of securing their own internal and external happiness? This is the aim of the Revolution, and the extent of the wishes of our great and good ally, who, I dare affirm, is invariably determined not to separate his interest from that of America, and to support the cause of the United States as his own. Our happiness depends upon independence. To be prosperous, we must have an extensive trade. This will require a respectable navy. Our ships must be manned, and the source of seamen is the fishery. Among those who ought to see the importance of the fishery, I am afraid there are some who think that in insisting upon that, we should insist upon too much. Nova Scotia and Canada would be a great and permanent protection to the fishery. But these, say some, are not parts of the United States, and what right should *we* have to claim them? The cession of these territories would prevent any views of Britain to disturb our peace in future, and cut off a source of corrupt British influence, which, issuing from them, might diffuse mischief and poison through the States. Will not, then, the possession of Nova Scotia and Canada be necessary, if we mean to make peace on *pacifc* principles? If we are to have no overtures this year, and Providence blesses us with the spirit of enterprise, would it not be better for us, provided it be practicable, to wrest these places from the hands of the enemy than to trust to the uncertainty of treaty? I confess we have a choice of difficulties. Pray God we may surmount them all. None, however, reach the pinnacle of eminence and glory but the virtuous and brave.”<sup>1</sup>

This subject of the fisheries grew into the first magnitude not long after, and was a closely contested point in subsequent treaties. With it was associated the conquest of Canada, which had been a prime object with the American government from the commencement of hostilities with the mother country. During the seven years' war England had

<sup>1</sup> S. Adams to S. Cooper, Philadelphia, April 29, 1779.

taken that country from the French, and principally with New England troops. Its importance, in connection with the fishery interests, had been long understood. Samuel Adams always considered its acquisition as necessary to the future prosperity and peace of the United States. Although the attempts of the Provincials, in 1775, proved unsuccessful, Mr. Adams did not resign the idea, but, until the close of the war, urged the necessity of wresting that province from the British. Peace with England terminated the project. In the war of 1812, the first aggressive thought of the United States was for the capture of Canada; but the disgraceful result of the expedition under Hull put an end to attempts at conquest in that quarter.

Receiving no response to his application for a recall, his health failing, wearied with the long absence from his family, and doubtless reflecting upon the rather thankless nature of the service he was performing, Mr. Adams addressed his friend Warren again on the subject: —

“I do sincerely hope the General Assembly will appoint another person to take my place here. I wrote a letter to them last December, requesting that I might be relieved by one of my absent colleagues or some other gentleman, and permitted to return to my family in the spring. I find my health declining, and the air of this country is unfriendly to it. I am, therefore, steadfastly determined to get myself excused in April or May at farthest. In doing this, I shall immediately make room for an abler man. Such may easily be found, and, I hope, prevailed upon to come. I should also gratify those whose hearts are bent upon my removal, and shall save them the abundance of pains in making their interest to effect it. These men agree with me, if in nothing else, in wishing most cordially for my retirement from public business. Perhaps they would choose to have me recalled with disgrace. I hope this is not in their power; though I think I could bear even that with becoming fortitude, for I am conscious that I do not deserve to be disgraced by my country, and can be happy in the reflections of my own mind.

“The arts they make use of are contemptible. Last year, as you

observe, I was an enemy to Washington. This was said to render me odious to the people. The man who fabricated the charge did not believe it himself. When he endeavored to make others believe it, he attempted to injure me by imposing upon them. His own heart must, therefore, reproach him with complicated acts of injustice, and if he has any feeling he must despise himself. If I indulged the spirit of revenge, could I wish for more? Now, you tell me, their art is to prejudice the people against the Lees, and propagate that I am a friend to them. How trifling is this! am I accountable to the people for my opinions of men? If I have found, from long and intimate acquaintance with those gentlemen, that they are, and have been from the beginning of this contest, among the most able and zealous defenders of the rights of America and mankind, shall I not be their friend? I will avow my friendship to them in the face of the world. As an inhabitant of Massachusetts Bay I should think myself ungrateful not to esteem Arthur Lee most highly for his voluntary services to that State in times of her greatest necessity, to the injury of his private interest and at the risk of his life.”<sup>1</sup>

The rejection of the State Constitution, in the previous summer, by Massachusetts, threw the community back upon the original form; and owing to the Rhode Island expedition and other hinderances, the subject was not revived until February of this year, when, in pursuance of a resolve of the General Court, a vote was taken throughout the State, resulting in favor of a convention for framing a new form of government. In June, the Legislature provided for the assembling of this body in September at Cambridge. Adams found this an additional incentive for returning to Boston,—the forming of a new constitution of government being a subject in which he was too deeply interested to be absent. His friends, too, were doubtless desirous of his wisdom and experience in the matter. His health continued in the same precarious state, and he was determined to breathe some Northern air during the summer. As the Legislature seemed determined not to accept his resignation, he left

<sup>1</sup> S. Adams to J. Warren, Philadelphia, March 23, 1779.

Philadelphia about the 20th of June, and arrived at Boston early in July. Gerry, Lovell, and Hilton were left to represent the State in Congress; and although he remained in Massachusetts nearly a year, no person was appointed to succeed him, and he eventually returned and served another twelvemonth. On reaching home, Samuel Adams did not find in every respect that republics are ungrateful. He was warmly greeted by many friends, who keenly resented the obloquy to which his name and motives had been subjected in the town whose inhabitants had ever been so dear to him, and to whose fame as the fortress of American liberty from the commencement of the Revolution he, above all others, had contributed with the utmost sacrifices of himself and family.

Adams was as regardless of the cabal against him now as he had been in Philadelphia; and applying himself to gathering about him what trifling remnant of worldly goods his frugal and practical wife had been able to rescue from the desolation caused by the British soldiery during their occupation of the town, he resolved to enjoy that domestic happiness which his letters to Mrs. Adams had so longingly mentioned. No man loved the pleasures of his home more devotedly than Samuel Adams, and few were better fitted to make a home happy. His amiable and endearing disposition was remembered in his family long after his death. His wife could do more with the slender means at her command than most matrons, even in thrifty New England, to surround the family with comforts; and at last the pleasant social hours which had characterized their circle before the Revolution seemed about to be renewed. But from that circle some were missing who would never return. Otis, Thacher, Joseph Warren, Quincy, Molineux, — the pioneers of liberty, the dear and trusted companions of Adams, — had departed from the scene. Hancock, whom he had reared and schooled in the line of political life, was his rancorous enemy. Gerry and John Adams were away. A few,

such as James Warren, Cooper, Winthrop, Bowdoin, Sullivan, Morton, and Jarvis, remained among his intimate friends, but the difference could already be discerned between Boston now and the Boston of 1774. Great numbers of those who had formerly made up the assemblages at the Old South and at Faneuil Hall, and had stood out under his leadership against the plans of the Tories, were gone, — some dead, and others away in the war, either in the army or in the extensive privateer service of New England. The glory of Boston as a commercial mart and a great ship-building depot had necessarily declined beneath the calamities it had undergone; and though it was still a centre of wealth and population, the attempts of some of the leading families at extravagance and display were but sad commentaries on its departed prosperity. Distress among the poor was apparent on every hand, and already the influence of the Tories and their sympathizers had begun to be felt in public life. But the town continued through the Revolution to put forth its strength, and freely gave its wealth and blood to the cause which had there first sprung into life.

The position of Secretary of State seems to have been assigned by common consent to Samuel Adams. The office had been created by the Council in September, 1775, while the Legislature was at Watertown, immediately upon his return from Congress, and thenceforth he continued to discharge its duties whenever he visited Massachusetts, — the deputy serving during his absence. When at home, he also acted as a member of the State Board of War.

About the time of his arrival in Boston, the British had made a landing in Connecticut, and early in July letters were received from the governments of Rhode Island and Connecticut, urging Massachusetts to forward assistance speedily. This was promptly considered, for the danger was common to all New England. The expedition, which was fitted out at New York by Sir Henry Clinton, was com-

manded by the infamous Governor Tryon. Landing in large force, the enemy captured New Haven, burned Fairfield, and marked their course with a wanton destruction of property and savage cruelty to defenceless people, scarcely exceeded by the atrocities committed two years later by Arnold and his Hessians. The correspondence with the respective sovereign States on this subject was conducted by Mr. Adams, and he devoted, as usual, all his energies to the emergency. In reply to Governor Trumbull's appeal for aid, he says, at the close of a resolute and cheering letter : —

“ Orders are issued to the Brigadiers of the counties of Hampshire and Berkshire to detach and forward under proper officers, with all possible despatch, a number consisting of one fifth part of their militia to such place in Connecticut as your Excellency shall appoint, and to continue in service for the defence of the State of Connecticut during the space of one month after their arrival at the place designated, unless they shall be sooner discharged. It is presumed that the aid of one thousand men at least will be afforded by means of this order. The Council very sensibly feel the distress which the State of Connecticut has already suffered by the incursions and depredations of a desperate and malicious enemy, and trust in God that the people of New England will always be spirited to exert themselves upon every pressing occasion for the common safety, and that these exertions will be attended with the Divine blessing.”<sup>1</sup>

Letters of a like tenor were sent to Lieutenant-Governor Bowen of Rhode Island, to General Gates, then in command of the military in that department, and to Meshech Weare, President of the Council of the State of New Hampshire. To General Gates he says, referring to the troops about leaving for the defence of Rhode Island : —

“ The progress of the enemy into the State of Connecticut, and the devastation they have already made in some of the towns there, require our most vigorous exertions. Orders have been given to forward the troops destined for the defence of Rhode Island with all

<sup>1</sup> July 13, 1779.

possible despatch; and the commanding officers of the counties of Hampshire and Berkshire are also directed to detach a number from their militia and march them forthwith for the relief of Connecticut to such place as Governor Trumbull shall appoint; of which due notice is forwarded to the Governor. Should the enemy direct their force to Connecticut, or any part of New England, and attempt to make that the seat of war this summer, nothing shall be wanting on the part of this Board to defeat their designs.”<sup>1</sup>

The aid from Massachusetts was not required, as the enemy, having sated their appetite for devastation, and harassed by the rapidly gathering militia, returned to New York. Massachusetts seemed never weary of furnishing troops for the war. Indeed, the record of that devoted State may be proudly viewed by the present generation as the most glorious of the original thirteen; for out of about two hundred and thirty-one thousand soldiers raised for the armies of the Revolution, Massachusetts supplied nearly sixty-eight thousand, or more than one fourth of the entire Continental forces. The drafts upon her resources were continual, but she never faltered in the great duty she had assumed. Besides the Penobscot and other expeditions which this year added to her burdens, two special drafts were made upon calls from the Federal government. One of these was by Washington. The following, in the handwriting of Samuel Adams, though not signed by him, is evidently the rough draft of his official answer.

STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS BAY,  
IN COUNCIL, NOV. 12, 1779.

SIR, —

Your Excellency's letter of the 4th of October to the Council of this State was duly received and immediately laid before the General Assembly, which fortunately happened to be then sitting. The Assembly have cheerfully complied with your requisition, and accordingly ordered two thousand men to be raised with all possible despatch for the purposes mentioned. The Council have appointed

<sup>1</sup> July 14, 1779.

Brigadier-General Fellows to take the command. Enclosed is a copy of the resolution of the General Assembly. Wishing that success may ever attend the arms of the United States and our ally, I am, in the name and behalf of the Council,

Your Excellency's most obedient and humble servant.

HIS EXCELLENCY GENERAL WASHINGTON.

The required force was at once raised, both by volunteering and drafting, printed notifications having been as usual served upon the citizens.

An expedition was set on foot this summer to dislodge the British forces from a post on the east side of the Penobscot River, where they had recently penetrated from Nova Scotia, and could at their pleasure harass the fishing and coasting vessels and attack the inhabitants of the seaboard. About forty vessels, transports and fighting ships, were fitted out at the expense of Massachusetts. The military force to be thus conveyed consisted of about fifteen hundred men. The enterprise, like that to Rhode Island in the previous year, was very popular, and the resources of the State were freely devoted to it. Samuel Adams exerted himself with his usual energy to forward the expedition, which, under the joint command of Captain Saltonstall, who had charge of the fleet, and Generals Lovell and Wadsworth, who headed the troops, sailed in the middle of July. Owing to a disagreement between the commanders of the fleet and of the army, the efficiency of the whole was much weakened. On arriving at Penobscot, the works were assaulted with great bravery, but the marine force not coming to the support of the attacking party, they were repulsed with the loss of a hundred men. Finding the post so formidable, Lovell sent back for reinforcements of Continental troops. Three thousand men were now at Providence under Gates. Upon the arrival of this requisition, Adams repaired thither to obtain the desired assistance. While there he wrote back to the President of the Council : —



PROVIDENCE, August 10, 1779.

SIR, —

I have the honor to acquaint the Honorable the Council Board, that I arrived here last evening, and, upon communicating their request to Major-General Gates, I found him ready as usual to afford every assistance in his power for the service of the great cause. He has ordered Colonel Jackson, with a detachment from his regiment, consisting of four hundred men, to join General Lovell at Penobscot. This corps I have reason to believe, both officers and privates, will do honor to themselves and their country when an opportunity shall present. I had the satisfaction of seeing them on their march this morning at sunrise, and the Council may expect them in the neighborhood of Boston to-morrow evening. In the mean time, I hope that transports and every accommodation will be prepared for them, that their passage to the place of their destination may not be delayed. I shall immediately forward to Brigadier-General Godfrey the order of the Honorable Board, for the detaching four hundred militia to serve in Providence in the room of these troops, and remain with all regard,

Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

SAMUEL ADAMS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF MASSACHUSETTS BAY.

On the following day, he again addressed the President.

PROVIDENCE, August 11, 1779.

SIR, —

General Gates writes to the Council, by this express, that Colonel Jackson's regiment will have arrived at Boston before this letter reaches you. I presume they will sail under the strongest convoy that can be made up. Should they meet with a superior force of the enemy at sea, I conceive it ought to be a point settled and indispensable, that the commanders of the armed vessels run the utmost risk to give the troops an opportunity of making their escape. I wrote yesterday to Brigadier-General Godfrey, and this morning received his answer, with assurance of punctual obedience to the orders of Council.

Your most obedient servant,

SAMUEL ADAMS.

TO THE HONORABLE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF MASSACHUSETTS BAY.

These reinforcements did not reach their destination in time to effect the intended service. A formidable British fleet was sent from New York, to escape which the Americans were forced to destroy a number of their vessels, the remainder falling into the hands of the enemy. The General Court of Massachusetts instituted an inquiry into the causes of the failure, which resulted in the cashiering of Saltonstall for his dilatoriness, while Lovell and Wadsworth were highly commended for their bravery and good conduct.

The Massachusetts Legislature was in session nearly the whole of this year. Its efforts were directed towards a regulation of the State finances, and energetic, though almost hopeless, exertions to alleviate the general financial distress. Most of these plans proved ineffectual, especially that to regulate the price of articles of living, for which purpose county conventions were also held. The continued depreciation of the paper currency augmented the difficulty, and compelled a resort to additional taxes to meet the State and Continental needs. Many who had ranked as prosperous merchants, mechanics, and farmers, before the Revolution, were now reduced to absolute want, while others had arisen from humble circumstances to affluence. A letter on this subject by Curwen, a refugee from Massachusetts, then living in England, will best illustrate the social and financial condition of the State. An old acquaintance had just arrived from Boston, and he writes : —

“ From him and young Gardner, only son of Jonathan Gardner, Jr., I have obtained the annexed list of prices, which, instead of a score of arguments, may prove the low condition of Congressional credit, and show the exorbitant rate of the useful articles of life and perhaps their scarcity. It is a melancholy truth, that, whilst some are wallowing in undeserved wealth that plunder and rapine have thrown into their hands, the wisest, most peaceable, and most deserving, such as you and I know, are now suffering want, accompanied by many indignities that a licentious, lawless people can pour forth upon them.

“Those who, five years ago, were the ‘*meaner people*’ are now, by a strange revolution, become almost the only men of power, riches, and influence; those who, on the contrary, were leaders and in the highest line of life are glad at this time to be unknown and unnoticed to escape insult and plunder,—the wretched condition of all who are not violent and adopters of republican principles. The Cabots of Beverly, who, you know, had but five years ago a very moderate share of property, are now said to be by far the most wealthy in New England. Hasket Derby claims the second place in the list, and \* \* \* \* \* puts in for a place among the first three. Mr. Goodale, by agency concerns in privateers and buying shares, counts almost as many pounds as most of his neighbors. The following are persons of the most eminence for business in Salem, as far as my memory serves, viz. Hasket Derby, William Pickman, George Crowinshield, William Vans, Captain Harraden (a brave and noticeable privateer captain), Joseph Henfield, Captain Silsbee, Samuel Gardner, Joseph and Joshua Grafton’s sons, Francis Clarke, Captain George Dodge’s youngest sons, Jos. Orne. E. H. Derby’s Province tax is eleven thousand pounds, and his neighbors complain he is not half taxed. The immensely large nominal sums which some are said to be worth shrink into diminutive bulk when measured by the European standard of gold and silver. In New England, a dollar bill is worth only two and two thirds of an English halfpenny. Pins at one shilling apiece, needles at two shillings, beef two shillings sixpence, veal two shillings, mutton and lamb one shilling sixpence, butter six shillings per pound, rum eight dollars per gallon, molasses two dollars, brown sugar ten shillings per pound, loaf sugar fifteen shillings, Bohea tea seven dollars per pound, coffee five dollars, Irish pork sixty dollars per barrel, lemons three shillings apiece, wood twenty dollars a cord, ordinary French cloth twenty-two dollars a yard, hose nine dollars a pair. A suit of clothes which cost five guineas here would cost five hundred dollars in Boston.”<sup>1</sup>

Besides these enormous prices, so crushing to the poor, the paralysis of trade rendered them the more unwilling and unable to meet the taxation. Rumors of an intended British descent kept the sea-coasts in a continual alarm, and

<sup>1</sup> Curwen’s Journal, Feb. 10, 1780.

called for increased defences in Boston Harbor. A portion of the troops from the Penobscot expedition were stationed at Castle Island, and an additional militia force was ordered out to man the other fortifications. The taxes for this year amounted to about two hundred thousand dollars in real value; a sum insignificant at the present day, but at that time of formidable dimensions, and represented in the depreciated paper by two millions of dollars.<sup>1</sup> The most pinching misery was experienced in some parts of the State, thousands lacking the common necessaries of life. Early in the year, the Legislature had directed the State Board of War to purchase flour and grain for the use of the inhabitants, and authorized Cumberland Dugan, in Philadelphia, to make these purchases on the account of Massachusetts. Such, however, was the depreciation of the individual State paper that the agent was unable to pass it, except at a serious discount. The Massachusetts delegation, before Adams left Philadelphia, had procured the passage of a resolve in Congress,<sup>2</sup> recommending the grain-producing States to permit the exportation of flour and grain from their sea-coasts under the direction of the Massachusetts Board of War.

These proceedings illustrate more forcibly than any extended disquisition on the subject the entire sovereignty of each State prior to the adoption of the Federal Constitution in 1788. Each of the original thirteen Colonies considered itself a distinct republic, exercising its own prerogatives, making war, as we have seen in the case of Massachusetts, on its own responsibility, raising troops, fitting out fleets against the enemy, and negotiating with other States as friendly allies in a common cause. This is also shown by a correspondence which took place this summer between Samuel Adams and Meshech Weare, who occupied a corresponding position in New Hampshire, relative to an act of piracy said to have been committed on the high seas, by "the American

<sup>1</sup> Bradford's Massachusetts, from 1775 to 1789, p. 182.

<sup>2</sup> Journals of Congress, V. 147.

prize vessel Adventure" upon a French ship, of which the French Ambassador had complained to Congress. The entire adjustment of the affair was between the two States as independent sovereignties. Some letters written within a few years of the adoption of the Constitution refer to Massachusetts as "our republic"; and in 1784 the Legislature, for a while assuming to be a sovereign State, forbade the residence of aliens within her borders, in opposition to the treaty with Britain, which had been ratified for the United States by their deputies in Congress assembled. The mission of the Congressional delegates, prior to the date of the Constitution, partook somewhat of a diplomatic character. The same may be said of the powers of the French consuls residing at the seaports of the several States. In January of this year, the commission of Valnais, as Consul to Boston and other ports in Massachusetts, had been referred by Congress to the Marine Committee,<sup>1</sup> and Samuel Adams notified the President of the Massachusetts Council of the appointment. The Council immediately applied to the Congress to know the powers of such an officer. The subject being again submitted to the Marine Committee, Adams reported a plan of adjustment of such powers, to be agreed upon between a committee of Congress and the French Minister. Every act shows the tenderness of the States respecting their particular sovereignty, and their unwillingness to surrender to the Federal power more than was barely sufficient to conduct the war. Under such a wide-extended assertion of State rights, it is rather surprising that the whole were induced to accept the Articles of Confederation, than that the instrument did not concede more central power to Congress.

The negotiation for breadstuffs, on the part of the Massachusetts agent, would probably have failed but for an arrangement made by the delegation in Congress with Hillegas,<sup>2</sup> Continental Treasurer, by which an exchange of Con-

<sup>1</sup> Journals of Congress, V. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Hillegas was nominated by Mr. Adams in November of the previous year, on the remodelling of the Treasury Board.

tinental and State paper was effected for sixty thousand dollars. The correspondence on this subject with the several financial parties, with the Massachusetts government, and with the Governors of the States whence the supplies were to be obtained, was all conducted by Mr. Adams. The Schooner "Banner" had lately arrived from Baltimore, loaded with grain, under the sanction of Governor Johnston of that State, to whom Adams had written from Philadelphia, desiring him to facilitate her loading.

Besides the distresses resulting from taxation and the reimbursement of losses from the unfortunate expeditions to Rhode Island and Penobscot, the subject of enlistment was a source of much anxiety to the State government. The term of those now in service would expire with the year. With a view of inducing a re-enlistment of men already in camp, a committee of the Legislature visited the army, being authorized to give a bounty of three hundred dollars to those who enlisted for the war, for which purpose an appropriation was voted of seven hundred thousand dollars. Advances were made to the officers, and the Massachusetts towns were required by special enactment to furnish clothing for those who should re-enlist. At the call of Washington upon Congress for militia, Massachusetts sent two thousand men, and at that time appropriated additional money for bounties and contingent expenses; and, on the adjournment of the Legislature in October, the Council was authorized to call out four thousand men if required; and that they would be needed seemed not improbable from the aspect of the large British force at New York. Massachusetts remained resolute and determined to the last in support of American liberty, and cheerfully devoted her substance and energies to the war, which in the end was found to have drained her resources in men and means to an extent appalling to contemplate. The successive issues of paper by Congress, amounting, at the time Adams left Philadelphia this year, to above one hundred and fifty millions,

had depreciated its value to about twenty for one, and the demands upon the States continued. Speculation and fraud, then as since, took advantage of the public calamities.<sup>1</sup> Rogues and Tories, it was observed, grew rich, while the honest and patriotic were impoverished, and Washington made it the subject of repeated letters. Confidence in the Continental paper was lessened by the great quantities of counterfeit money of that kind, struck off in New York by the British, and scattered broadcast over the land, and so faithfully executed as in most cases to defy detection. The constant efforts of Washington to recruit and supply his army met with a generous response from Massachusetts; and Samuel Adams, both in his official positions there and in Congress, though his enemies circulated reports to the contrary, was an unfailing advocate of all measures calculated to give a permanent character to the army, by promoting enlistments for the war, and to supply means for its support.

Aware of his intended return to Massachusetts, the town had chosen him to the Assembly in the last May election. In September, after his arrival, he became a member of the Council, and the town refused by vote to fill the vacancy thus created in the House.<sup>2</sup> He still continued to act as Secretary of State until the elections under the new Constitution, in the following year, effected a change of government. Twelve delegates from Boston (of whom Adams had the largest number of votes and stood first on the list) were elected in August to represent the town in the approaching Convention, to prepare a State Constitution.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hildreth, III. 272.

<sup>2</sup> Boston Town Records, May 5, Sept. 9, 1779.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Adams was thus, by appointment and election, encumbered with the six important public trusts of delegate to the Continental Congress, Secretary of State of the "Republic of Massachusetts Bay," member of the Massachusetts Council, and of the House of Representatives, delegate to the Constitutional Convention, and member of the Massachusetts Board of War.

## CHAPTER LII.

The Massachusetts Constitutional Convention. — Adams a Delegate from Boston. — Eminent Members. — Adams chosen to the Drafting Committee from the Convention at large. — Is selected with John Adams and Bowdoin to prepare the Instrument. — Probability of his having aided in the Work. — Evidences of his Authorship of the Declaration of Rights. — He drafts the Address of the Convention to the People.

ON the 1st of September, the delegates to the Constitutional Convention assembled at Cambridge.<sup>1</sup> The principal

<sup>1</sup> The important part taken by Samuel Adams in preparing this form of government was often spoken of by members of the Convention who were surviving within the memory of persons yet living, and the contemporary records of his agency in the work are not a few. Time has so buried in oblivion the name and deeds of the subject of these memoirs, that even under the hands of the restorer the picture shows but faint traces of the original. Adams's entire indifference as to those memorials, which have gone so far to embellish the names of others less careless of future fame, leaves the inquirer nearly in the dark as to details. Among the several great minds in that body John and Samuel Adams stood particularly prominent. The superior legal abilities and knowledge of the forms of government possessed by the one were not more necessary to the work than the great wisdom and experience, the methodical habit of thought, and the sound judgment, of the other. To John Adams has been accorded the entire honor of producing the imperishable structure, including even the Declaration of Rights, unaided by the pen and judgment of the elder Adams or Bowdoin, who, with him, were deputed to draft it; and a traditional speech of his has been cited in evidence of his overshadowing influence in the Convention.

It is believed that an irresistible array of contemporary evidence has been gathered to show that Samuel Adams was the author of the famous state paper of the House of Representatives in the winter of 1773 (see II. 31–42), during the great controversy with the royal Governor on the supremacy of Parliament. Facts which have come to light place the question beyond a doubt. Yet, alluding to this paper near half a century afterwards, John Adams, through an error of memory, claimed it for himself. The mistake which he made in regard to the state paper of 1773 he may have repeated in regard to the Constitution of 1779.

The speeches of Samuel Adams explaining his own ideas of government



points which had caused the rejection of the Constitution of 1778 were:—that it came direct from the General Court instead of a Convention of special delegates; the short notice at which it had been prepared by the legislative commit-

were remembered by several of the delegates, one of whom, Judge Robbins of Dedham, said to the late Samuel Adams Wells, that they were remarkable features in the proceedings, and powerful agents in shaping the ultimate decisions. One address he particularly alluded to for its ability and length. Mr. Thaxter, another member, used to say of John and Samuel Adams, that while the former had the best understanding of the law of any man in Massachusetts, the latter was better versed in the rights of the people, and that, without the distinguishing qualities of each, the Constitution could not have proved the excellent model of government it was. By this he evidently meant that instrument as matured by the committee who drafted it. How materially the Adamses differed in their ideas of government is shown in their published correspondence ten years later. The Marquis de Chastellux, in his work on America, describes an interview with Samuel Adams at Philadelphia, when the subject of the Massachusetts Constitution, then just gone into operation, was raised. After the conversation, in which Adams with considerable minuteness had expressed his theories of the American State governments, and especially of the Constitution of Massachusetts, the writer enters in his Diary: "Such was the idea Mr. Adams gave me of his own work, for it is he who had the greatest part in the formation of the new laws." (De Chastellux's Travels, I. 271.) The translator, in a note, says he has some reason to think they were rather the work of John Adams. The two opinions may offset one another, but that of Chastellux was evidently received from persons about him, who were aware of Samuel Adams's agency, or else from the tenor of Mr. Adams's remarks. And as further indicating the general belief at the time the new Constitution went into effect, that Samuel Adams was in part its author, see the letter of M. Marbois, the French Secretary of Legation to the United States in 1782, who states it with confidence in a government despatch, that the Massachusetts Constitution was in a great measure the work of Samuel Adams. Marbois was no friend of Adams, and in the same breath misrepresents his motives relative to the Newfoundland fisheries, and his opposition to government, even to this form, which the writer says was in part his. Had it not been at that time generally understood that Samuel Adams was instrumental in producing the Constitution, the fact would scarcely have been so positively alluded to by both De Chastellux and M. Marbois. Joseph Allen, a member from Worcester, a nephew of Samuel Adams, and during part of the time Secretary of the Convention, was well aware that his uncle was actively engaged in preparing parts of the Constitution. He had for some years enjoyed the confidence of Mr. Adams, and being intimate with the family always interested himself in the public acts of his revered relative. This testimony is supported by the Rev. John Eliot in

tee, the absence of a bill of rights, reserving and expressing the natural and inalienable privileges of the people, and the unsatisfactory adjustment of the executive powers. The first men of Massachusetts had been now deputed for a

his *Biographical Dictionary*, published shortly after the death of Adams, when his public services were fresh in memory. Dr. Eliot had resided all his life in Boston, and the first historians have not hesitated to quote from him as an impartial writer. In this memoir he states that Samuel Adams was not only a leader in the debates, but was eminently useful from his knowledge and experience in the committee which made the first draft, as well as in the great body which shaped it in its present form. This is contemporary evidence of the most trustworthy character. Many members were living when this was penned, and the writer, who knew Samuel Adams all his life, repeatedly officiated as chaplain of this Convention. The records sufficiently show the part which Mr. Adams took in the labors of that body. His advice seems to have been continually sought, and some of the suggestions from the numerous committees on which he served (and of several of which he was chairman) are thought to have been the result of his most mature deliberation upon the original instrument, while listening to the opinions of other members. Judge Sullivan, who was one of the committee of thirty who selected Bowdoin and the two Adamsses to prepare the original form, refers in his memoir of Adams to his partiality to this frame of government, and records it as a fact personally known to him that Samuel Adams had assisted to digest and compile it. Another contemporary, Bradford the historian, having witnessed the whole career of Samuel Adams through the Revolution and until his death, states unqualifiedly that he was one of the framers of the Constitution of Massachusetts, and had a principal share in preparing the Bill of Rights. His agency in producing that instrument seems, in the last century and early in this, to have been generally understood and conceded.

But the production of so important a document was not intrusted to a single pen. The three principal statesmen of the Convention had been chosen to consult together and prepare the plan. The very selection imposed a duty upon each to bring to the task all his knowledge and abilities. Can it be supposed that Samuel Adams and Bowdoin remained idle? Was their experience of no value in matters certainly doubtful in the new field they were exploring? One of the objects which had brought Samuel Adams home from Congress at this time was to take part in forming the government of a people to whose happiness he had for years devoted himself. Holten and Hawley both wrote to him expressing their views, one from Philadelphia and the other from his retirement at Northampton, showing that they considered him as the best person to address when desirous of advancing their own ideas of government. He had long pondered over, and was full of the subject. That he should not have assisted in digesting the model, when designated by the Convention for that special purpose, seems incredible.

work which was to lay the foundation for the government of future generations, and which, from the critical and inquisitive character of the New England people, would require mature wisdom to digest, and able argument to

Whenever the Constitution is mentioned by the Adamses in their correspondence, after John Adams had sailed again for Europe, it is in a manner indicating their joint deliberations. "I assure you," writes the younger Adams from Paris, in February, 1780, "it is more comfortable making Constitutions in the dead of winter at Cambridge or Boston than sailing in a leaky ship, or climbing on foot or upon mules over the mountains of Galicia or the Pyrenees." He seems to remind his friend of work on which, but a few months before, they had been engaged together. The reply of Samuel Adams in March, after the Convention had amended the original form, leads to the same inference. "The Convention," he says, "is adjourned till the first Wednesday next. The fabric is not materially injured. It is proposed that the people should state their objections, if they have any, and that the Convention should adapt it to the general sentiment, and give it their sanction. A new Convention is to be called, if two thirds of the people shall think it expedient, in the year 1795, to make alterations as experience may dictate."

It is probable that rough sketches of the several great features were prepared by each of the committee of three, during the time allowed them by the Convention for that purpose, and that John Adams, to whose legal knowledge the others were quite ready to defer, finally embodied in his draft the results of their joint conclusions. No trace, however, of any such paper in his handwriting has been discovered. The report was submitted to the Convention by Bowdoin, the chairman, in the name of the general committee. So exactly did this form of government represent the known theories of Samuel Adams, that for a long time in Boston he was reputed to have been its originator, though afterwards, in public estimation the authorship was divided between the two kinsmen. Hildreth appears to have satisfied himself of the associated labors of the three composing the special sub-committee. He says: "The Adamses and Bowdoin, acting as a sub-committee, reported at an adjourned session the draft of a Constitution, which, being modified and adopted by the Convention, and approved by the people, went into operation the same year." (*History of the United States*, III. 375.) Bowdoin's agency does not seem to have been hinted at by any member of the Convention; but his good judgment, matured in his long leadership of the Council under the royal government, must have been felt in the deliberations of the committee. John Adams, too, questioned in his subsequent writings the beneficial tendencies of frequent elections of governors and senators, under the American constitutions. As such annual elections formed the basis of the Massachusetts system, which was opposed to the avowed hereditary anti-democratic principles of John Adams, there is an evident inconsistency in his claiming, as he did in after years, the entire instrument as his composition.

support. The Convention consisted of the same number of Representatives as the Legislature. Among the Boston members were Bowdoin, Samuel Adams, Hancock, Lovell, and Jarvis. Braintree sent John Adams, who had lately re-

A great characteristic of Samuel Adams was his perfect consistency. His tenacity of opinion on most subjects was remarkable, and gave a tone to the politics of America for many years. After he had retired from national position to his native State, this trait was still more observable. His views being founded in preconceived ideas of justice and expediency, adopted before the Revolution, he never swerved from them to the end of his days; and this is particularly applicable to his theories of government. He always thought that the Massachusetts system was as near perfection as it was possible to arrive with the lights then existing. This opinion appears in his letters and speeches and all his public conduct. He regarded that work with the partiality of one who had assisted in its creation, not as one who had been suddenly converted to a plan proposed by another. But John Adams in after years, briefly enumerating the variety of ideas in the Convention, named his kinsman among those who advocated a single Assembly, — a Legislature with but one branch (Works, IX. 618). This is totally inconsistent with the political ideas of Samuel Adams. The statement having been brought to the notice of ex-Governor Strong, who was one of the four balloted for by the Convention at large, he replied (May 31, 1819): "I have no recollection that Mr. Adams opposed any material part of the present Constitution. If he had, I think I should certainly remember it. I know that he strongly advocated some parts of its important clauses, and I have no doubt he approved of, and voted for, the whole as a system of government for this State." After naming the principal members of the Convention, including the two Adamses, Bowdoin, Paine, Cushing, Pickering, and Parsons, he continues: "These generally agreed in the principles of the Constitution, but they were often opposed by divers members of the Convention, who wished for what was termed a more popular government." Mr. Strong also indorsed emphatically the statement of Eliot as to Samuel Adams's watchfulness, knowledge, and experience in that Convention. This is the testimony of an eyewitness, and one of the most distinguished of the Assembly. Again, the assent of Samuel Adams to the Constitution was indispensable for its adoption. No man in that body, as appears by the recorded votes, wielded so powerful an influence; and had he ever been in favor of a Legislature with but a single branch, he would assuredly have made his ideas known to the Convention; but among all the subjects discussed, as shown by the minutes, this essential question was not even raised.

Writing to John Adams a few years earlier on the subject of a Constitution proposed for Massachusetts, Samuel Adams, then on a visit to Boston, says: "Our Assembly have appointed a committee to prepare a form of government; they have not yet reported; I believe they will agree in the two legislative

turned from Europe, and Paine, Parsons, Strong, Sullivan, Cushing, and Pickering were counted among the distinguished lights of the body. After the organization, the earliest attention was given to that essential feature which had

branches. Their great difficulty seems to be to determine upon a free and adequate representation. They are at present an unwieldy body." No opposition to two branches is here implied, but the reader would rather infer from this fragment a degree of satisfaction at the reduction of the unwieldy representative body, and the probable agreement upon a Senate and House. It is, in fact, simply impossible that Samuel Adams should have favored an idea so obviously at variance with his avowed opinions as a legislator and the ideas he subsequently expressed. In the conversation with Chastellux, even as imperfectly reported by that writer, he explains the relative powers of the Senate and House, and points with approbation to the moderating power of one upon the other. The checks and balances necessary to a sound government were frequently alluded to in his writings. The passage of a bill through the second House he called "its second digestion." When this Constitution was put to the first practical test a few years later, in Shays's rebellion, Mr. Adams, who was a leading member of the Senate, was prompt in opposing the unreasonable demands of the insurgents, one of which was the abolition of the Senate as an expensive and needless branch of the government; and the upper House was a continual offset to the Representatives, many of whom were too ready to compromise with the rebels. His whole subsequent course shows a thorough appreciation of, and partiality for, the Senate, as an indispensable portion of the government. In a correspondence between the two Adamses, when one was Vice-President of the United States, and the other Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts, in which their respective ideas of government are given, Samuel Adams describes the several functions of Governor, Senate, and House, under the Massachusetts Constitution, and argues in defence of their efficiency and wholesome balance upon each other. He was also the author of the Address of the Convention to the people, lucidly explaining the instrument to the commonest capacity. The drafting of that paper would scarcely have been intrusted to one whose views were opposed to so great a principle of the Constitution. But the Address dwells particularly upon the two departments of Senate and House as necessary for the full and free exercise of the powers of government, — the one representing the property, and the other the persons of the Commonwealth. It cannot be supposed that the author of that Address wrote in direct opposition to his own ideas.

The form itself is, in many respects, an elaboration of the original, rejected Constitution of 1778. A comparison of these papers leaves no room for question that the committee of three had the prior instrument before them, and incorporated portions into their work, — transposing, rearranging, and adopting them, with sometimes but trifling changes of phraseology. The points of resemblance are apparent upon a cursory examination. A Legislature with two

been omitted in the rejected Constitution of the previous year. This was the all-important subject of a declaration of rights. Long and very general debates, of which no records are known to exist, attended this question; but the vote was unanimous that the government to be formed should be a free republic, and that "the essence of a free republic consists in a people being governed by fixed laws of their own making." A committee of twenty-six members, proportioned among the several counties, and four chosen at large by ballot from the Convention, — thirty in all, — was then appointed to prepare the Declaration of Rights and Constitution of Government. Of the four, Samuel Adams received the greatest number of votes, — two hundred and nine out of two hundred and thirty-seven. Then came a free and general conversation upon the principles of government, which

branches; the powers of Senate and House separated and defined; the manner and time of holding elections; the property qualifications of State officers; the numerical basis of popular representation; the number of senators; the manner of electing members of Congress; the disqualifications of the judges from holding a seat in the Legislature; the command of the military and naval forces by the governor; and other minor points are nearly the same in each. The two forms differ particularly in those features for which the people had rejected the earlier one. Taking the rejected constitution for their basis, the committee built from its materials the more perfect structure which was submitted to the Convention. This fact seems to have been in the memory of Judge Sullivan, in associating Samuel Adams with the "compiling and digesting" of it.

That Samuel Adams was the principal agent in preparing the Declaration of Rights has been often conceded. His first object was always to prepare a foundation of theory. This is shown, among other instances, in his Massachusetts Resolves in 1765, which served as the basis of the Colonial policy during the eventful nine years of controversy preceding the first Congress, and in the first act of the Committee of Correspondence in 1772. According to Gordon, he had been suspected, in 1776, of opposing the proprietary interest in Pennsylvania, and of favoring a democratic form of government in that State, by "concerning himself unduly in the business," so much that his life was threatened. The narration is substantiated by a letter written while the vote for a Constitutional Convention was pending in the present year in Massachusetts. "I was mortified," says the writer, "a few days ago, to read the following paragraph in a letter wrote by a gentleman of your country, who certainly has a very good heart, and once idolized Mr. Adams. After giving his

apparently lasted for the greater part of one day, when, on the 7th of September, having been in session a week, they adjourned for six weeks. The committee of thirty, to whom the subject was intrusted, deputed a sub-committee, consisting of Bowdoin and the two Adamses, to draft the instrument, which was submitted to the Convention at the reassembling, on the 28th of October. Before that time, however, John Adams had been appointed by Congress Minister to treat with Great Britain for peace and commerce, and he was thus unable to take any part in the discussions of the amendments proposed during a part of October and November. The account of the proceedings given by Governor Strong, in a letter on the subject, bears close comparison with the published proceedings of the Convention, and attest to his brightness of memory, since the journal was not published until long after his death. "The

opinion freely of the Pennsylvania Constitution, he says : ' Mr. Samuel Adams of your State is generally suspected among the gentlemen of that State to have laid the foundation of that government, and if the gentlemen have their proper weight, I would not answer for his safety.' " If Mr. Adams had any share in that work, which is very probable, it was clearly in the Declaration of Rights, which was completed two weeks before he left Philadelphia in 1776, while the form of government was not prepared until after his departure. The "foundation" here evidently implies the Declaration of Rights, which, in the Massachusetts as in the Pennsylvania Convention, was the step taken towards establishing the form of government. The great primal truths of the rights of man contained in these Declarations were first announced as the basis of republican government in the Virginia Convention in May, 1776. But those principles had again and again been enunciated by Samuel Adams in his state papers from 1765 to 1772 as the foundation of the rights for which the Colonists were contending. They were adopted with slight verbal alterations by the original States, and each new member of the Union has found little to discard or change. The Declaration of Rights, prefacing the Massachusetts Constitution, embodies the substance of the instrument adopted by Virginia ; but it is far more lengthy and detailed, containing many specifications which experience and local circumstances seemed to demand. Bradford says that Samuel Adams had the principal hand in preparing it ; and its spirit and phraseology are in perfect keeping with his lifelong theories and writings. His partiality for its provisions led him to offer several of the articles as amendments to the Federal Constitution in the Massachusetts Convention in 1788.

Convention," he says, "met at the time and place fixed by the adjournment; the committee finished their business on the morning of the meeting, and presented their report to that body. The third article in the Declaration of Rights soon engrossed their attention. Part of the members thought it highly important to authorize future members of the Legislature to require the separate towns to support ministers, and the people to attend their public services; while others strenuously contended that no such authority should be given. After the subject had been discussed for several days, with much zeal, and without any prospect of agreement, the Convention voted to choose a committee to reconcile, if possible, the opposing parties. Four of the committee, of whom Mr. Adams was one, were in favor of giving the authority in question, and three were against it. The committee met several times, and during their absence from the Convention the debates were suspended. At length, the committee agreed to report the third article as it now stands in the Declaration of Rights,—all the members engaging to support it, except Mr. Sandford, a clergyman and delegate from some town in the present county of Norfolk. He observed that the article was as unexceptionable as anything that could be said on the subject, but declared that he would never agree that any authority should be given to the Legislature to make laws concerning public worship or the appointment of public teachers; however, he promised not to oppose the acceptance of the report. When the report was made to the Convention, there was little or no debate, and it was adopted by an almost unanimous vote."<sup>1</sup> Several times during the session, the proceedings were delayed by the absence of many of the members; on one occasion there were but ninety-three present, and two hundred and seven absent. On the 12th of November, they adjourned to meet at the Representative Chamber at Boston in January. The Pres-

<sup>1</sup> Caleb Strong to Samuel Adams Wells, Northampton, May 31, 1819.



ident, by order of the Convention, published an appeal to the members, enjoining a constant and general attendance for the proper consideration of business. From this it would appear that at this time a large number did not feel a befitting interest in the task intrusted to them. When they met again, on the 6th of January, the attendance was too small for business, and adjournments were had from day to day, until the 27th, when, there being but sixty present, the proceedings were recommenced, and continued until March 2d. The Convention having adopted the form of government, it again adjourned to the first Wednesday in June, — the Constitution to be meanwhile laid before the people by their respective delegates. If two thirds of the voting inhabitants approved, it was to become the government for Massachusetts. Towards the close of the session in February, a committee was appointed to prepare an address to the people upon the Constitution about to be submitted to their judgment. This paper, which was under careful consideration by the Convention parts of two days, being read by paragraphs and repeatedly amended, is said by Dr. Eliot to have been composed by Samuel Adams “and another gentleman, who has since filled several offices of honor and trust in the Commonwealth.”<sup>1</sup> The unmistakable style of the paper sufficiently indicates the authorship; but fragments of the Address in the handwriting of Samuel Adams leave no room for doubt. It is probable that the amendments which the original draft underwent, at the hands of a committee to whom it was afterwards submitted, were made by Sullivan. The paper is a compendium of the opinions of Samuel Adams on government; and whoever studies it in connection with his general writings on that subject will have a correct view of the principle upon which were founded all his ideas of political society. It not only coin-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Adams undoubtedly submitted his draft to the correct judgment of his friend, James Sullivan, who was also of the committee. The other members were Lowell, Gray, West, Thomson, and Parsons.

cides with his writings previously published, beginning with his earliest essays, but it will bear the closest comparison with all his subsequent opinions as they appear in his private letters and his speeches while Governor of Massachusetts. He was added to the committee for supervising the printing and distributing the eighteen hundred copies of the Constitution and Address ordered by the Convention, and he sent one to John Adams by a son of Dr. Warren, who was then setting out for Europe, with the good wishes of his late father's truest and most beloved friend. John Adams wrote to one of his correspondents how much the Address was admired there for its "noble simplicity." It exactly accomplished its objects in Massachusetts, where, circulated among the towns, it tended, by its wise reasoning and judicious statement of the Constitution, to harmonize the conflicting views of government consequent upon the breaking up of the old established forms, and very materially aided in securing the popular assent to the work of the Convention.

"AN ADDRESS OF THE CONVENTION FOR FRAMING A NEW  
CONSTITUTION OF GOVERNMENT FOR THE STATE OF  
MASSACHUSETTS BAY TO THEIR CONSTITUENTS.

"FRIENDS AND COUNTRYMEN,—

"Having had your appointment and instruction, we have undertaken the arduous task of preparing a civil Constitution for the people of Massachusetts Bay, and we now submit it to your candid consideration. It is your *interest* to revise it with the greatest care and circumspection; and it is your undoubted *right*, either to propose such alterations and amendments as you shall judge proper, or to give it your own sanction in its present form, or totally to reject it.

"In framing a Constitution to be adapted as far as possible to the circumstances of posterity yet unborn, you will conceive it to be exceedingly difficult, if not impracticable, to succeed in every part of it to the full satisfaction of all. Could the *whole body* of the people have convened for the same purpose, there might have been equal reason to conclude that a perfect unanimity of sentiments would have been an object not to be obtained. In a business so

universally interesting, we have endeavored to act as became the representatives of a wise, understanding, and free people. And, as we have reason to believe you would yourselves have done, we have opened our sentiments to each other with candor, and made such mutual concessions as we could consistently, and without marring the only plan which, in our most mature judgment, we can at present offer to you.

“The interest of the society is common to all its members. The great inquiry is, wherein this common interest consists. In determining this question, an advantage may arise from a variety of sentiments offered to public examination concerning it. But wise men are not apt to be obstinately tenacious of their own opinions. They will always pay a due regard to those of other men, and keep their minds open to conviction. We conceive that in the present instance, by accommodating ourselves to each other, and individually yielding particular and even favorite opinions of smaller moment to essential principles and considerations of general utility, the public opinion of the plan now before you may be consolidated; but without such mutual condescension in unimportant matters, we may almost venture to predict that we shall not soon, if ever, be blessed with such a Constitution as those are entitled to who have struggled hard for freedom and independence. You will permit us, on this occasion, just to hint to you our own apprehension that there may be amongst us some persons disaffected to that great cause for which we are contending, who may be secretly instructed by our common enemy to divide and distract us, in hopes of preventing our union in any form of government whatever, and, by this means, of depriving us of the most honorable testimony as well as the greatest security of our freedom and independence. If there be such men, it is our wisdom to mark them, and guard ourselves against their designs.

“We may not expect to agree in a perfect system of government. This is not the lot of mankind. The great end of government is to promote the supreme good of human society. Every social affection should therefore be interested in the forming of a government, and in judging of one when it is formed. Would it not be prudent for individuals to cast out of the scale smaller considerations, and fall in with an evident majority, unless in matters in which their consciences shall constrain them to determine otherwise? Such a sacrifice, made for the sake of union, would afford a strong evidence

of public affection ; and union, strengthened by the social feeling, would promise a greater stability to any constitution, and in its operation a greater degree of happiness to the society. It is here to be remembered that, on the expiration of fifteen years, a new convention may be held, in order that such amendments may be made in the plan you may now agree to as experience, that best instructor, shall then point out to be expedient or necessary.

“A government without power to exert itself is at best but a useless piece of machinery. It is probable that, for want of energy, it would speedily lose even the appearance of government, and sink into anarchy. Unless a due proportion of weight is given to each of the powers of government, there will soon be a confusion of the whole. An overbearing of any one of its parts on the rest would destroy the balance, and accelerate its dissolution and ruin ; and a power without *any* restraint is tyranny. The powers of government must then be balanced. To do this accurately requires the highest skill in political architecture. Those who are to be invested with the administration should have such powers given to them as are requisite to render them useful in their respective places ; and such *checks* should be added to every branch of power as may be sufficient to prevent its becoming formidable and injurious to the commonwealth. If we have been so fortunate as to succeed in this point of the greatest importance, our happiness will be complete in the prospect of having laid a good foundation for many generations. *You* are the judges how far we have succeeded, and whether we have raised our superstructure, agreeably to our professed design, upon the principles of a *free commonwealth*.

“In order to assist your judgments, we have thought it necessary briefly to explain to you the grounds and reasons upon which we have formed our plan. In the third article of the Declaration of Rights we have, with as much precision as we were capable of, provided for the free exercise of *the rights of conscience*. We are very sensible that our constituents hold those rights infinitely more valuable than all others ; and we flatter ourselves that, while we have considered morality and the public worship of GOD as important to the happiness of society, we have sufficiently guarded the rights of conscience from every possible infringement. This article underwent long debates, and took time in proportion to its importance ; and we feel ourselves peculiarly happy in being able to in-

form you that, though the debates were managed by persons of various denominations, it was finally agreed upon with much more unanimity than usually takes place in disquisitions of this nature. We wish you to consider the subject with candor and attention. Surely it would be an affront to the people of Massachusetts Bay to labor to convince them that the honor and happiness of a people depend upon morality, and that the public worship of GOD has a tendency to inculcate the principles thereof, as well as to preserve a people from forsaking civilization, and falling into a state of savage barbarity.

“In the form now presented to you, there are no more departments of government than are absolutely necessary for the free and full exercise of the powers thereof. The House of Representatives is intended as the representative of the persons, and the Senate of the property, of the Commonwealth. These are to be annually chosen, and to sit in separate bodies, each having a negative upon the acts of the other. This power of a negative in each must ever be necessary; for all bodies of men assembled on the same occasion, and united by one common interest of rank, honor, or estate, are liable, like an individual, to mistake, bias, and prejudice. These two Houses are vested with the powers of legislation, and are to be chosen by the male inhabitants who are twenty-one years of age and have a freehold of the small annual income of three pounds, or sixty pounds in any estate. Your delegates considered that persons who are twenty-one years of age and have no property are either those who live upon a part of a paternal estate, expecting the fee thereof, who are but just entering into business, or those whose idleness of life and profligacy of manners will forever bar them from acquiring and possessing property. And we will submit it to the former class, whether they would not think it safer for them to have their right of voting for a representative suspended for [a] small space of time than forever hereafter to have their privileges liable to the control of men who will pay less regard to the rights of property because they have nothing to lose.

“The power of revising and stating objections to any bill or resolve that shall be passed by the two Houses we were of opinion ought to be lodged in the hands of some *one* person; not only to preserve the laws from being unsystematical and inaccurate, but that a due balance may be preserved in the three capital powers of government. The legislative, the judicial, and executive powers natu-

rally exist in every government ; and the history of the rise and fall of the empires of the world affords us ample proof that, when the same man or body of men enact, interpret, and execute the laws, property becomes too precarious to be valuable, and a people are finally borne down with the force of corruption resulting from the union of those powers. The Governor is emphatically the representative of the whole people, being chosen, not by one town or county, but by the people at large. We have, therefore, thought it safest to rest this power in his hands, and, as the safety of the Commonwealth requires that there should be one Commander-in-Chief over the militia, we have given the Governor that command, for the same reason that we thought him the only proper person that could be trusted with the power of revising the bills and resolves of the General Assembly ; but the people may, if they please, choose their own officers.

“ You will observe that we have resolved that representation ought to be founded on the principle of equality, but it cannot be understood thereby that each town in the Commonwealth shall have a weight and importance in a just proportion to its numbers and property. An exact representation would be impracticable, even in a system of government arising from the state of nature, and much more so in a state already divided into nearly three hundred corporations. But we have agreed that each town having one hundred and fifty ratable polls shall be entitled to send one member ; and, to prevent an advantage arising to the greater towns by their numbers, have agreed that no town shall send two, unless it hath three hundred and seventy-five ratable polls ; and then the still larger towns are to send one member for every two hundred and twenty-five ratable polls over and above three hundred and seventy-five. This method of calculation will give a more exact representation when applied to all the towns in the State than any that we could fix upon.

“ We have, however, digressed from this rule in admitting the small towns now incorporated to send members. There are but a few of them which will not, from their continual increase, be able to send one upon the above plan in a very little time. And the few who will never probably have that number have been heretofore in the exercise of this privilege, and will now be very unwilling to relinquish it.

“To prevent the Governor from abusing the power which is necessary to be put into his hands, we have provided that he shall have a Council to advise him at all times and upon all important occasions, and he, with the advice of his Council, is to have the appointment of civil officers. This was very readily agreed to by your delegates, and will undoubtedly be agreeable to their constituents ; for if those officers who are to interpret and execute the laws are to be dependent upon the election of the people, it must forever keep them under the control of ambitious, artful, and interested men who can obtain most votes for them. If they were to be appointed by the two Houses, or either of them, the persons appointing them would be too numerous to be accountable for putting weak or wicked men into office. Besides, the House is designed as the grand inquest of the Commonwealth, and are to impeach officers for maleconduct ; the Senate are to try the merits of such impeachments ; it would be therefore unfit that they should have the creation of those officers which the one may impeach and the other remove ; but we conceive there is the greatest propriety in vesting the Governor with this power, he being, as we have before observed, the complete representative of all the people, and at all times liable to be impeached by the House before the Senate for maleadministration. And we would here observe, that all the powers which we have given the Governor are necessary to be lodged in the hands of one man as the general of the army and first magistrate, and none can be entitled to it but he who has the annual and united suffrages of the whole Commonwealth.

“You will readily conceive it to be necessary for your own safety that your own judges should hold their offices during good behavior ; for men who hold their places upon so precarious a tenure as annual or other frequent appointments, will never so assiduously apply themselves to study as will be necessary to the filling their places with dignity. Judges should at all times feel themselves independent and free.

“Your delegates have further provided that the supreme judicial department, by fixed and ample salaries, may be enabled to devote themselves wholly to the duties of their important office ; and for this reason, as well as to keep this department separate from others in government, have excluded them from a seat in the Legislature ; and when our constituents consider that the final decision of their

lives and property must be had in this court, we conceive they will universally approve the measure. The judges of probate, and those other officers whose presence is always necessary in their respective counties, are also excluded.

“We have attended to the inconveniences suggested to have arisen from having but one judge of probate in each county; but the creating and altering courts of justice being a mere matter of legislation, we have left it with your future Legislature to make such alterations as the circumstances of the several counties may require.

“Your delegates did not conceive themselves to be vested with power to set up one denomination of Christians above another, for religion must at all times be a matter between GOD and individuals; but we have nevertheless found ourselves obliged, by a solemn test, to provide for the exclusion of those from offices who will not disclaim those principles of spiritual jurisdiction which Roman Catholics *in some countries* have held, and which are subversive of a free government established by the people. We find it necessary to continue the former laws and modes of proceeding in courts of justice until a future Legislature shall alter them: for, unless this is done, the title to estates will become precarious, lawsuits will be multiplied, and universal confusion must take place. And lest the Commonwealth, for want of a due administration of civil justice, should be involved in anarchy, we have proposed to continue the present magistrates and officers until new appointments shall take place.

“Thus we have with plainness and sincerity given you the reasons upon which we founded the principal parts of the system laid before you, which appeared to us as most necessary to be explained. And we do most humbly beseech the great Disposer of all events, that we and our posterity may be established in, and long enjoy, the blessings of a well-ordered and free government. In the name and pursuant to a resolution of the Convention.

“JAMES BOWDOIN, *President.*

“Attest: SAMUEL BARRETT, *Secretary.*”

Mr. Adams remained in Boston until the summer of this year, and attended the Convention at its meeting in June, when, by the returns from the towns, it was found that the Constitution had been accepted with some proposed amend-



ments. By the town records he appears to have presided at most of the public meetings during his stay in Boston, and in Faneuil Hall he read to the inhabitants the form of government and the Address to the people.<sup>1</sup> This was about the time that the instrument was submitted to the popular vote ; and it is probable that, at the same time he was called upon verbally to explain portions of the Constitution which the Address had not made sufficiently clear to the minds of particular inquirers.

<sup>1</sup> Boston Town Records, May 3, 1780.

## CHAPTER LIII.

Adams opposes the Return of the Refugees. — His Memorial to the Connecticut Assembly. — He is one of the Incorporators of the Academy of Arts and Sciences. — He sets out again for Congress. — Reinforcements for the Highlands. — He favors Enlistments for a Permanent Army. — He opposes granting Half-pay for Life to the Officers. — Suffering Condition of Washington's Army. — Adams urges forward Supplies. — First Election in Massachusetts under the new Constitution. — Hancock elected Governor. — Generous Sentiments of Adams on the occasion. — His Republican Simplicity of Life as described by the Marquis de Chastellux. — Ungrateful Neglect of Adams by his Native State. — He is defeated as a Candidate for State Secretary. — Indignation of James Warren. — Stoical Philosophy of Adams.

THE opposition of Mr. Adams to the return of the refugees has been already referred to. In a letter written in October, 1778, he forcibly states his objections to receiving them, and as his opinions, always founded in reason and carefully considered, were seldom changed in any essential particular, he was most uncompromising in his determination against the proposed reinstating of this dangerous element in American society. For some time efforts had been made to procure the admission of Tories in some of the adjacent States. Adams exerted himself to procure a formal remonstrance against it in the Massachusetts Legislature, and, in his capacity of Secretary of State, addressed the following letter to the Governor of Rhode Island.

STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS BAY,  
January 5, 1780.

SIR, —

The General Assembly of this State, conceiving that great evil may arise to the United States from permitting persons inimical to our common cause to reside within them, and having reason to apprehend that certain persons of such character, who by an act of government are excluded from this State, are meditating a design to obtain a residence within the State of Rhode Island, have thought

it necessary to address you on the subject, and request that you would be pleased to communicate their sentiments to your General Assembly.

It is, in the opinion of this Assembly, highly criminal for a citizen to be an indifferent spectator of the miseries of his country, much more to desert her while struggling for liberty, and still more to seek refuge in the very time of her conflict in the arms of her cruel and inveterate enemies. It cannot, then, be thought strange that those who love and revere their country feel an indignation against the men who have held her safety, her liberty, and her honor at so cheap a rate.

The injury which this State unavoidably sustains from the arts of so many internal enemies hath been a sufficient caution against receiving into her bosom those who have withdrawn their persons and their aid in the time of her distress; and there is less reason for others to expect favor and forgiveness, who, having basely betrayed a diffidence in the wisdom and fortitude of this country and the righteous cause she was contending for, have imagined themselves more secure under the power of its invaders, and fled to them for protection.

It is, indeed, much to be regretted that the greatest vigilance is insufficient to detect the most virulent enemies of the public liberty and bring them to condign punishment. This government, however, hath taken every measure which prudence dictated to effect so necessary a purpose. Notorious offenders have been proscribed by the laws, and forbidden to return from their voluntary and shameful exile. Mutual interest and mutual friendship most strongly remonstrate against such persons being permitted to reside within any of the sister States. While we are embarked in the same cause, while we are actuated by the same principles and views, while we partake of the same public feeling, and are confederated for the same great purpose of mutual safety and defence, honor and justice forbid us to entertain a suspicion that the State of Rhode Island would afford shelter and protection to those who have forfeited the rights of citizens in the United States.

In the name and behalf of the General Assembly, I am, &c.

Having attended the Constitution with watchful eye in its several stages of progress towards acceptance, and being

satisfied of its success, Mr. Adams, after about a year's stay in Boston, prepared to resume his place in Congress, which, during his long absence, had never been filled by a legislative appointment. Until his departure, he spared no effort to procure from Massachusetts her quota of money and men for the war, and restrain the wide-spreading complaints among the people at the extraordinary burdens thus unavoidably imposed. His letters at this time speak encouragingly of the prospect, and reflect the same cheerful, hopeful spirit which, in the darkest hours, had given courage to his countrymen. The depreciation of the currency had become such as to excite just apprehensions in the firmest minds. Massachusetts paper money was worth one fortieth of its apparent value. The debt of the Commonwealth was rapidly accumulating. In the spring session the Legislature levied a tax of nearly a million of dollars, to be paid in specie, and voted to raise two hundred and forty thousand dollars annually for seven years to enable the State to meet its engagements. In the general distress, the five Eastern States held a convention at Hartford in 1779, and proposed a new regulation of prices on the basis of twenty for one, and they suggested a convention to meet in Pennsylvania at the commencement of the new year. Massachusetts chose Gerry and Osgood as delegates; and Adams wrote to Gerry, notifying him of his appointment, and explaining its object. The wretched condition of the country baffled the ablest financiers. The expedients and discussions in the Massachusetts Legislature, during the winter and spring of 1780, have but slight importance in history; but, burdened with debt and distress, the State still supplied money and men. Though the people groaned under the constant requisitions, Massachusetts never failed the common cause; and four thousand seven hundred men responded to the call of Washington at the close of the present year.

A short time before the departure of Mr. Adams for Congress, he joined a number of gentlemen of philosophical

pursuits in an application to the Legislature for an act of incorporation of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. His tastes, however, did not incline to subjects of a scientific character, though he was deeply impressed with the importance of such associations, and always favored their encouragement by legislative enactment. His thoughts were almost continually devoted to the great moving events of the times and the political condition of the people. As he never gave close attention to such matters, he made no professions of scientific attainments; and no account exists of any conversations, speeches, or writings upon any but political, religious, or social subjects: his time was all taken up with public affairs. Colleges, seminaries of learning of every kind, but especially common schools for youth, he always deemed of the highest importance; and he thought he could never do enough to advance their interests. One of his first public positions in his native town, before the Revolution, had been that of a school-examiner; and, in his advanced age, we find him serving on committees to devise means for the improvement of the common-school system. His son, Dr. Adams, was a contributor to the literature of the Academy of Arts and Sciences, and one of his papers is extant. Mr. Adams was elected a member of the Governor's Council in May, but he declined the honor.<sup>1</sup>

Towards the middle of June, Gerry, who was temporarily in Boston, and Adams set out together for Philadelphia. They arrived at Hartford, and visited Governor Trumbull, just as he had received a letter from Washington, apprising him of the approach of a heavy British armament by sea to attack the Highlands. Adams and Gerry immediately wrote to General Fellows, then commanding a considerable force in Berkshire County, near the New York line, informing him of the threatened danger, and urging that a supply of men and provisions should be instantly prepared for the

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Dorr to Samuel Adams, Mendon, June 5, 1780, acknowledging Mr. Adams's letter of June 1.

reinforcement of General Richard Howe, who held the post at the Highlands. This was sent by express, which also took a letter to Howe, enclosing a copy of the message to General Fellows. A messenger was likewise sent to Boston with the following letter: —

HARTFORD, June 20, 1780.

SIR, —

We have the honor of transmitting to you the copy of a letter from General Washington to Governor Trumbull. The contents are of such pressing importance that we thought it our indispensable duty to forward an express to Brigadier-General Fellows of the county of Berkshire with the letter, a copy of which we also enclose; and to inform Major-General Howe, who commands at that point, of the measures we have taken.

Although we have acted on this urgent occasion *without authority*, yet we flatter ourselves that, in consideration of the very critical situation of the army, our proceeding thus far will meet with the approbation of the General Assembly.

We are, with the greatest respect and esteem, sir,

Your most obedient and very humble servants,

SAMUEL ADAMS,

E. GERRY.

HON. JAMES BOWDOIN, ESQ., *President of the Council of Massachusetts Bay.*

The General Court, on the receipt of this, unanimously approved of the action of their delegates, and passed a resolution placing General Fellows under marching orders. On the 21st, news having arrived at Hartford that the British fleet was within twenty miles of the Highland fortifications, Adams and Gerry again wrote to Fellows to march forthwith to the relief of the American garrison; and a few days later Howe wrote to thank them for their timely exertions, "which," said he, "you have made in support of a post deservedly the object of capital consideration. Indeed, its importance is above description." The letter informed them that Sir Henry Clinton did arrive with a heavy force, seventy-two sail of transports, battering cannon, mortars, framed platforms, pickaxes, tools of every sort, and every detail for

offensive operations. The fortifications on the Highlands had been coveted by the enemy, and perhaps even now Arnold meditated the treason which he committed a few months later. The possession by the enemy of the Highland posts would give them the entire command of the Hudson, and effect what had been aimed at in the summer of 1777 by the capture of Ticonderoga.

Adams and Gerry reached Philadelphia in the last week in June.<sup>1</sup> Soon after their arrival, Adams addressed his kinsman in Europe.

“I wrote you several times when I was at Boston, and received your favor by the Marquis de La Fayette. Another, to which you referred me, has not yet come to hand. This letter will be delivered to you by Mr. Searl, a member of Congress from the State of Pennsylvania. He will be better able to inform you of the state of things here than I can, who, after twelve months’ absence from this city, returned but a few days ago. The people of Massachusetts have at length agreed to the form of a civil Constitution, in nothing varying from a copy which I sent you by a son of our friend General Warren. This great business was carried through with much good humor by the people, even in Berkshire, where some persons led us to expect it would meet with many obstructions. Never was a good constitution more needed than at this juncture. Among other more lasting advantages, I hope that, in consequence of it, the part which that State must take in the war will be conducted with greater attention and better effect. Who is to be the first man will be determined in September, when, if our newspapers rightly inform us, the new government is to take place. The burden will fall on the shoulders of one of two gentlemen whom you know. May Heaven lead the people to the wisest choice. The first chosen Governor may probably have it in his power to do more good or more hurt than any of his successors. The French fleet is not yet arrived. Perhaps their long passage may turn out for the best. An earlier arrival might have found us not altogether prepared to co-operate with them to the best advantage. I now think we shall

<sup>1</sup> Journals of Congress, June 29, 1780. “Mr. Samuel Adams, a delegate of Massachusetts Bay, attended and took his seat in Congress.”

be ready to join them. One would think the exertion which America might make with such aid would rid us of British barbarians. I hope this will be a vigorous and effective campaign. I left Massachusetts exceedingly active in filling up their battalions by drafts, besides raising four thousand militia for the service.

“Mr. Laurens arrived here a few days past. He will speedily embark for Holland, to prosecute a business which you are not unacquainted with.”<sup>1</sup>

The French fleet, with the army under Rochambeau, arrived at Newport on the day this letter was written. Laurens sailed soon after for Holland, charged with the negotiation of a treaty with that power. His capture by a British frigate, and the recovery of his despatches, which he had thrown overboard, led to a declaration of war by Great Britain against Holland, and the precedent has since been of weight in the defining of international rights on the high seas.

The journals of Congress for this year contain no records of votes, and little can be gleaned from them of the particular employment of Mr. Adams. The attention of that body was principally directed to the public finances, the downward tendency of which it was powerless to prevent. The various propositions for raising and supplying the army met with but partial success, and the approval by Congress of the plan of the Convention of States did very little to quiet the general apprehension. Two hundred millions of dollars in paper money had been emitted, and the depreciation was steadily increasing. Congress gave its assent to a plan for the reorganization of the army, which Washington had assisted to prepare, by which all the new regiments were to be enlisted for the war, thus giving stability to the Continental forces. One of the many false statements set on foot in Boston by the political enemies of Adams was that he was opposed to permanent enlistments.

“Your virtue and firmness,” writes Warren, “have and will con-

<sup>1</sup> Samuel to John Adams, Philadelphia, July 10, 1780.



tinue to expose you to persecution. The tongue of malice has always been improved against you, and things old and new are mustered to render you obnoxious. It is now reported that you are against filling up the battalions for the war, and are in favor of drafts of the militia from time to time. I venture to contradict many things, and this among the rest; but there is no end to calumny."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Adams soon after alluded to this subject in one of his letters.

"The report," he says, "which you mention as propagated by me is groundless. Would any man in his senses, who wishes the war carried on with vigor, prefer the temporary and expensive drafts of militia to a permanent and well-appointed army? But envy has no other business than to calumniate."<sup>2</sup>

But though earnest in his efforts to make the army permanent and efficient as an indispensable means of achieving success, Mr. Adams was opposed to the plan of granting half-pay for life to the officers who should serve till the end of the war, for reasons which he afterwards wrote to Noah Webster "were satisfactory to himself," and were explained in a letter to which he alluded, but which has not been found. The measure, however, at the repeated solicitations of Washington, was adopted by Congress. No member of that body was more zealous than Adams in providing means for the support of the army; and though he could not indorse Washington's plan of half-pay for life, he displays an urgent desire to aid the Commander-in-Chief in his appeals to the State for supplies. Small as the force was in the spring, it was with the greatest difficulty that the General could feed his men. At times the soldiers resorted to plunder to appease the cravings of hunger, and once Washington sent Heath to the Eastern States to solicit subsistence for his army. Adams, in his correspondence, sometimes expresses his impatience at the interposition in Congress of

<sup>1</sup> J. Warren to S. Adams, Sept. 17, 1780.

<sup>2</sup> S. Adams to J. Warren, Philadelphia, Nov. 20, 1780.

any affairs of lesser importance, while those of the army were so pressing. A characteristic letter to a friend in Boston on this subject has recently come to light.

“On Tuesday last,” he says, “Congress took up the disputes relating to the New Hampshire grants, agreeably to an order which passed the 9th of June, and for want of nine States, exclusive of the three interested ones, the matter was put off until yesterday. The delegates from New Hampshire and New York were prepared with instructions from their respective States. A letter from Mr. Chittenden and others, styling themselves “The Executive Council of Vermont,” was sent in by their agents, now in this city, claiming the rights of sovereignty of an independent State, and refusing to submit the question of their independence to Congress, as being incompetent to judge and determine thereon. As there was no question proposed, a conversation, rather than a debate, ensued, which ended with a call for adjournment at the usual hour. This day a letter was sent in to the President from agents in Vermont, praying that, in case any question should be agitated concerning the rights and independence of their State, they might be permitted to be present and hear the debates. Another convention was begun, which was very soon interrupted by a call of the attention of the House to the present state and circumstances of the army. I am of opinion that Congress will not easily agree in the question proper to be first put, however obvious it may seem to be. This is among a thousand other affairs with which it is the fate of Congress to be plagued, to the exclusion of considerations of infinitely greater consequence, and which require immediate attention. As an individual, I wish most heartily that it could subside, as things of much greater moment most generally do, till ‘a more convenient season.’ But New York presses hard for a decision; and I submit to your judgment, whether it would not be prudent that the claims of Massachusetts to the lands in question should be here in readiness, lest a construction should be put on a further delay, that a consciousness in the Assembly of the State having no right in them is the *real* occasion of it. I mention this to you in particular, because I recollect how far you had gone in investigating the title. If you can be spared from the Assembly, I hope you will be appointed to vindicate the claim.

“I just now told you that the attention of Congress was called to the army. General Washington has written several letters, acquainting Congress of the distressed circumstances of the army for want of provisions, and particularly meat. They have several times lately been without provisions for three or four days. They have even plundered the neighboring villages; and what will be the consequence of such a spirit in our army, if it should prevail, may be easily conceived. You are sensible that the dependence is chiefly on the Eastern States for that kind of supply. Massachusetts has indeed been more punctual than the rest. The Commissary-General has told me that the very existence of the army has been in a great measure owing to the industry and care of our committee at Springfield. Yet even our supplies have not been equal to expectation. 597 head of cattle have been sent from Massachusetts to the army from the 1st of July to the 7th of September, about 200 to the posts at the Northward, and about 200 to the French army, which last are not included in the supply required as our quota. Congress have pressingly called New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut for 1,000 head weekly, less than which will not be more than sufficient for the immediate demands of the army. Our quota is 285, as you will see by a resolution forwarded by this express. Beside which magazines must be laid up this winter for the army the next year. Indeed, my friend, we must make the utmost exertion in the great cause. It is now twelve o'clock, and the express will set off very early in the morning.

“I suppose our countrymen have by this time made choice of their senators and magistrates. I hope Heaven has directed them to a choice that will do them honor. I cannot help feeling anxious to know whether they have united in a man for Governor endowed with those virtues which should be characteristic of the First Magistrate. Be pleased to let my much esteemed friend, Dr. Cooper, know that if he has written, I have not received a line from him since I left Boston. We suffer for want of such favors.”<sup>1</sup>

While Mr. Adams was at Philadelphia, the treason of Arnold occurred. By what signs Adams had been led to

<sup>1</sup> S. Adams to John Lowell, Sept. 15, 1780 (Historical Magazine, September, 1857; I. 260).

suspect that officer of disloyalty to the cause does not appear ; but, in a letter to Mrs. Adams soon after, he says :—

“By the enclosed papers you will observe that the late General Arnold, after having committed the blackest treason against his country, has thrown himself into the arms of her enemies. The particulars you will see in the paper. You know that I have had my suspicions of this traitor, and therefore it is not wonderful that I am not astonished as if some other officer had been detected of the treason. He has been gibbeted in the streets by the populace, anathematized by some of the clergy in the pulpit, and his name has, with indignation, been struck out of the list of officers by order of Congress.”<sup>1</sup>

While the British were meeting with uninterrupted success in the Southern States, offset by scarcely an instance of defeat in the North, the Ministry indulged hopes of bringing the war to a speedy close, encouraged by the North Carolina Tories, and the subjugation of Georgia and a part of South Carolina. The struggle, however, was assuming proportions in Europe little anticipated by the English at the outbreak of hostilities. Out of the insane attempt to establish a profitless tyranny in their peaceful and loyal Colonies had already grown disgraceful reverses to their arms, a rapidly accumulating public debt, destructive inroads upon commerce, and war with their ancient enemies, France and Spain. It was found necessary to enroll eighty thousand volunteers in Ireland to guard against the threatened French invasion, and the first use of the arms placed in such hands was to attempt the independence of the Irish Parliament,—a peril contemplated with openly expressed dread by British statesmen. At the same time the opportunity was taken to attempt Parliamentary reform in England. The religious agitation, leading to formidable riots in London, gave the Americans hope of a civil war, which might lead to the speedier establishment of American independence.

A part of the political machinery set in motion in Eng-

<sup>1</sup> To Mrs. Adams, Oct. 3, 1780.

land and Ireland at this time was the Committee of Correspondence, which the leaders there knew had produced that union in America which formed the basis of the Revolutionary power. John Adams and Francis Dana, in France, both noticed the adoption of this great engine of resistance, and wrote home of its wonderful effects. Each, as he described its working, renewed the fame of Samuel Adams, its inventor, and one pointed out the want of his "sage counsel," in conducting the system.<sup>1</sup> That other powerful agency of non-importation and non-consumption, equally the result of Samuel Adams's genius, was also adopted in Ireland as a means of counteracting the oppressive measures enacted against the commerce and general rights of the Irish. It must have been with peculiar pleasure that Adams witnessed the revival of these means of opposition in the very heart of the nation against whose tyranny he had originally employed them. They were now apparently to subserve a double purpose in the liberation of that country and his own.

The complications with the other courts of Europe at this time resulted in the "Armed Neutrality" manifesto, issued in February of this year by the Empress Catherine of Russia, denying the belligerent right of placing restrictions on the trade of neutral nations. Under this doctrine, a port could no longer be considered as blockaded by mere proclamation, but the blockade must be maintained by a sufficient force. Nearly every power acquiesced in this doctrine, which was especially acceptable to the Baltic States, whose trade in timber and naval stores was obstructed by the policy of England. This blow at the maritime pretensions of Great Britain, which at one time seemed likely to embroil her in a general continental war, was cordially indorsed by Congress, through a resolution offered by Samuel Adams.

"Her Imperial Majesty of all the Russias, attentive to the free-

<sup>1</sup> John to Samuel Adams, Paris, Feb. 23, 1780 (Sparks's American Diplomatic Correspondence, III. 383). Francis Dana to Elbridge Gerry, Paris, Feb. 26, 1780 (Austin's Life of Gerry, I. 300).

dom of commerce and the rights of nations, in her declaration to the belligerent and neutral powers, having proposed regulations founded upon principles of justice, equity, and moderation, of which their most Christian and Catholic Majesties and most of the neutral maritime powers of Europe have declared their approbation ;

“ Congress, willing to testify their regard to the rights of commerce, and their respect for the Sovereign who hath proposed and the powers who have approved the said regulations, *Resolve* :

“ That the Board of Admiralty prepare and report instructions for the commanders of armed vessels commissioned by the United States, conformable to the principles contained in the declaration of the Empress of all the Russias on the rights of neutral vessels ;

“ That the Ministers Plenipotentiary from the United States, if invited thereto, be, and hereby are, respectively empowered to accede to such regulations, conformable to the spirit of the said declaration, as may be agreed upon by the Congress expected to assemble in pursuance of the invitation of her Imperial Majesty.

“ *Ordered*, That copies of the above resolution be transmitted to the respective Ministers of the United States at foreign ports, and to the Honorable the Minister Plenipotentiary at France.”<sup>1</sup>

At the commencement of the new year, the authority to sign the “ Armed Neutrality ” was sent to John Adams at Amsterdam ; but the alliance produced none of the expected results.

Meantime, the elections under the new Constitution had taken place in Massachusetts, and Hancock was elevated to the chief-magistracy of the Commonwealth by an overwhelming majority. Devoted to his Congressional duties, Adams knew little of what was secretly done at home ; and only when his wife or intimate friends advised him, after the election, was he made fully acquainted with the aspersions which had been circulated to render him obnoxious to the people. All his inestimable services, his self-denials, and the space occupied in the eyes of Europe and America by his great character, seem to have passed from memory with his absence. His friends and admirers, who had counted

<sup>1</sup> Journals of Congress, Oct. 5, 1780. Lossing's Field-Book, II. 468.

with certainty upon his election, witnessed with mortification the first instance of that extraordinary neglect which continued, to a greater or less extent, until old age had exhausted his strength and brought him to the verge of the tomb. Such, however, though in a less remarkable degree, was the fate of many another public servant, and Adams appears to have disregarded what was viewed with deep emotion by others. The man whom, to use the words of James Warren, he had "formed and fashioned," whom he had led by the hand through the early days of the Revolution, directing his steps with wise counsel and friendly forbearance, had now by his wealth and political address secured to himself the only substantial recognition of great services which the people could bestow. Most other leading characters of the Revolution had already reached the eminences coveted by worldly ambition; and some owed their elevation, more than history and biography can ever recount, to the generous support of Samuel Adams. He alone, as usual, asked nothing for himself, and, modestly retiring from the field, was content to see whomever the popular voice demanded raised to official station, provided that its high duties were properly appreciated, and the occupant capable of meeting its responsibilities. His noble simplicity of character and manner of living is thus described by the Marquis de Chastellux, who passed an evening with him, by appointment, at his humble lodgings in Philadelphia. After attending a dinner at which some of Rochambeau's officers and several members of Congress were present, he says, in his diary:—

"Mr. Samuel Adams, deputy for Massachusetts Bay, was not at this dinner, but on rising from table I went to see him. When I entered the room, I found him *tête-à-tête* with a young girl of fifteen, who was preparing his tea; but we shall not be scandalized at this, on considering that he is at least sixty. Everybody in Europe knows he was one of the prime movers of the present Revolution. I experienced in his company the satisfaction one rarely has in the

world, nay, even on the theatre, of finding the person of the actor corresponding with the character he performs. In him I saw a man wrapt up in his object, who never spoke but to give a good opinion of his cause and a high idea of his country. His simple and frugal exterior seemed intended as a contrast with the energy and extent of his ideas, which were wholly turned towards the Republic, and lost nothing of their warmth by being expressed with method and precision; as an army marching towards the enemy has not a less determined air for observing the laws of tactics.

“Amongst many facts he cited in honor of his country, I shall relate one which merits to be transmitted to posterity. Two young soldiers had deserted from the army, and returned to their father’s house. Their father, incensed at this action, loaded them with irons, and conducted them himself to their General, Lord Stirling. He did what every other officer would have done, he pardoned them. The father, as patriotic, but less austere than a Roman, was happy to preserve his children; nevertheless, he seemed astonished, and approaching the General, ‘My Lord,’ says he, with tears in his eyes, ‘*t is more than I hoped for.*’”<sup>1</sup>

Instances of Roman-like firmness, such as this, Samuel Adams loved to recount. True magnanimity of character, virtue, and republican simplicity he hoped might yet form the basis of his country’s prosperity; and as he was himself a striking example of the principles he desired to inculcate, he had the utmost aversion for everything approaching cant, meanness, or servility. It has been said that whoever enters the presence of a great man is disappointed at finding the reality fall below the conception. Samuel Adams was an exception to this rule. Accounts agree in describing “the majesty of a countenance never debased by a grovelling idea,” the dignified serenity of manner, the simple yet elevated train of thought and language, all blended with an unaffected, polite gravity, which made a lasting impression upon strangers, and was in keeping with the idea his friends had conceived of him abroad. Titles, honors, and public applause, in the estimation of such a character, were unim-

<sup>1</sup> De Chastellux’s Travels in America, I. 220, 221.



portant trifles, compared to the grand principles of human liberty which his countrymen were now asserting for all time; and his sole anxiety in contemplating the condition of his native Province was that a republican severity of manners, upon which he believed public virtue and freedom were founded, might be maintained under competent rulers. In reply to a letter from his wife, lamenting the ingratitude of his country, he writes:—

“You were mistaken when you supposed that I had heard who were chosen into the highest places under our Constitution. I had reason to believe that Mr. Hancock would be Governor. I am disposed to think that my fellow-citizens have upright views in giving him their suffrages. Many circumstances have combined to make this election appear to be politically necessary; and if the people who are now blessed with so great a privilege will exercise the watchfulness over men whom they exalt to places of power which their duty and interest should lead them to do, I flatter myself that this will prove a happy choice. You may wonder at my saying so, but I think I am not misguided in my judgment in this instance. If they have now chosen a wise and virtuous Governor, a few only will be disappointed; if not, many will see their error, and will be induced to greater vigilance for the future. I am far from being an enemy to that gentleman, though he has been prevailed upon to mark me as such. I have so much friendship for him as to wish with all my heart that, in the most critical circumstances, he may distinguish between his real friends and his flattering enemies; or, rather, between the real friends of the country and those who will be ready to offer the essence of flattery to him who is the first man in it. This will require an accurate knowledge of men. I therefore again wish that he may have the most faithful counsellors to assist him in the administration of affairs. Can I say more? If, with the best advice, he is able to hold the reins of government with dignity, I wish him a continuance of the honor. If he renders our country secure in a flourishing condition, I will never be so partial and unjust as to withhold my tribute of applause.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> To Mrs. Adams, Philadelphia, Oct. 17 and Nov. 11, 1780.

And in another letter to his wife, he says : —

“But why do I trouble you with a subject of this nature? Let me ask you, before I finish this letter, are you in health? Have you a sufficiency of fire-wood and other necessaries for the approaching cold season? Are your family cares alleviated with the visits and cheerful conversation of your friends and mine? You must answer these questions, for I am greatly interested in them.”

Later in the year, when he received intelligence of the round of balls and glittering entertainments with which the new government was inaugurated in Boston, he was alarmed at these infringements upon those sterling principles which he conceived to underlie the whole structure of liberty. He saw with dislike any departure from the frugality and economy becoming a people just emerging from a long struggle for life and freedom, and reduced to the last resource for the means of meeting the public liabilities. With financial ruin impending, he could not conceal his displeasure at the pernicious example set by the rulers of the infant republic, — an example which, at length, helped to produce a formidable rebellion against its very existence. He says in a letter to a friend on this subject : —

“Our government, I perceive, is organized on the basis of the new Constitution. I am afraid there is more pomp and parade than is consistent with the sober republican principle with which the framers of it thought they had founded it. Why should this new era be introduced with entertainments expensive, and tending to dissipate the minds of the people? Does it become us to lead the people to such public diversions as promote superfluity of dress and ornament, when it is as much as they can bear to support the expense of clothing a naked army? Will vanity and levity ever be the stability of government either in states or in cities, or, what let me hint to you is of the last importance, in families? Of what kind are those manners by which we are truly informed in a late speech, ‘not only the freedom, but the very existence of republics is greatly affected’? How fruitless is it to recommend ‘the adapting the laws in the most perfect manner possible to the suppression of idleness, dissipation, and extravagancy,’ if such recommendations

are counteracted by the example of men of religious influence and public station? I meant to consider the subject in the view of the mere citizen. But I have mentioned the sacred name of *religion*. I confess I am surprised to hear that some particular persons have been so unguarded as to give their countenance to such kind of amusements. I wish Mr. — would recollect his former ideas. When his friend Whitefield thundered in the pulpit, he disclaimed diversions, in some instances, which to me have always appeared innocent. Has he changed his opinions, or has the tendency of things altered? Do certain amusements tend to quench the spirit of religion at one time, and are they harmless at another? Are morals so vague as to be sanctified or dispensed with by the authority of different men? He does not believe this. But I will not be severe, for I love my friend. Religion out of the question for the present.”<sup>1</sup>

Had Samuel Adams been desirous to present a dignified attitude in history, he could not have chosen a more auspicious time for retiring than the present, when he could leave public life with the reputation of having been the principal leader in the Revolution and chief promoter of independence; and at a moment when the new form of government for his native State, in which he had been so deeply interested, had gone into operation. To look no farther back than the year of the Stamp Act, he had thenceforth guided his native Province through the turbulent scenes of the Revolution; and to be the foremost man in Massachusetts, was to be the leader of the spirit of American liberty. With the Declaration of Independence the grand mission of Samuel Adams was fulfilled. He could reach no eminence more exposed to the malignant hate of his enemies, none which could increase the admiration of those who wrought with him and followed his counsels. The statesman thenceforth, to a great extent, gave place to the warrior, and Adams might have withdrawn to the shades of private life with the consciousness of having filled his allotted sphere, and earned a place in that Pantheon which posterity erects to heroic

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Adams to John Scollay, Dec. 30, 1780.

names. From his retreat he might have contemplated the wonderful events which he, more than any other man living, had aided to produce, and perhaps have devoted his declining days to recounting how those events had been brought about, had he felt any desire for such a work. But poverty forbade him the pleasures of retirement.

The Convention had resolved that the Constitution should go into effect in October of this year, when the Representatives should be chosen throughout the State. By this election, James Warren was returned to the Assembly from Plymouth, and Samuel Adams, who had been named by his few friends in the Legislature as a candidate for Secretary of the Commonwealth, was beaten by Mr. John Avery, formerly Deputy Secretary, who was put forward by the opposite party. This crowning act of ingratitude was surveyed with blank astonishment by the intimate friends of Mr. Adams, whose name had been used without his knowledge. His faithful colaborer in the darkest scenes of the Revolution now wrote to him:—

“This day has completed all our elections, except for a Lieutenant-Governor in the room of Mr. Bowdoin, who refused; to-morrow that is to be done, and I suppose will be in the same style. It is impossible to describe to you, in its fullest sense, the prevalence of a certain influence here. The papers will at least show you that it exceeds anything that ever took place in any country; and if it be as lasting as it is violent and expensive, it will be a singular phenomenon indeed. I had no hand in the matter, having gone to — the evening before, and not knowing till I got home that I was a Representative. When I returned I found things as they were. But in the whole system (for a system it is) nothing excited my resentment so much as the neglect you are treated with. Neither your *beloved town*, the country, the State, nor the two Houses have shown any gratitude for your many and great services; and the man who had the greatest hand in the greatest Revolution in the world, in the choice of Secretary, could not be supported in competition with Mr. A. I have feelings on this occasion which I shall not attempt to describe in a letter. Everything past is for-

gotten ; everybody that will not worship the great image is to be treated in that way ; and the man that formed and fashioned it, not for the purposes of idolatry, but public good, has not escaped.”<sup>1</sup>

For a long series of years Mr. Adams remained in comparatively subordinate positions, and contentedly pursued his public duties in an honorable poverty. Replying to his friend, he writes : —

“In your letter of the 17th of September, which is still before me, you say that the ‘tongue of malice has always been employed against me’; and in mentioning it, you discover the feelings of a friend. It may, perhaps, in some measure relieve those feelings, if I tell you that it serves to make me more watchful over myself, lest by any misconduct I might afford occasion to the malicious man to say things of me which would give me just cause to be ashamed. It is said to be a misfortune to a man when all speak well of him. Is it, then, an advantage to a man to have enemies? It may be so, if he has wisdom to make good use of them. We are apt to be partial in our judgment of ourselves. Our friends are either blind to our faults, or not faithful enough to tell us of them. The malicious man will speak all manner of evil against us, and contrive means to send it post haste to our ears ; and if among much slander they say some truths, what are we to do but to correct past errors and guard against future ones?”<sup>2</sup>

Enough has been taken from his correspondence on this subject to display the entire devotion of this remarkable man to his country under every circumstance, and his equanimity when experiencing keenly “the ingratitude of republics.” An extract from a letter to Mrs. Adams, in reply to one in which the fond wife could not repress her chagrin at the ill requital his fellow-countrymen had rendered for his unceasing labors in their behalf, will illustrate the tenderness of his domestic relations as well.

“Yesterday,” he says, “I wrote to Mr. Wells in haste, because I was informed that Dr. Cragie was then instantly setting off for

<sup>1</sup> James Warren to S. Adams, Boston, Nov. 2, 1780.

<sup>2</sup> To James Warren, Philadelphia, Nov. 20, 1780.

Boston. As he has waited another day, I have the opportunity of acknowledging the receipt of your letters of the 25th of October and the 8th of November, which were brought to me by the post. You seem, my dear, to express more concern than I think you ought at certain events that have of late taken place in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Do you not consider that, in a free republic, the people have an uncontrollable right of choosing whom they please to take their posts in the administration of public affairs? No man has a claim on his country for having rendered public service. It is the duty of every one to use his utmost exertions in promoting the cause of liberty and virtue; and having so done, if his country thinks proper to call others to the arduous task, he ought cheerfully to acquiesce, and console himself with the contemplations of an honest man in private life. You know how ardently I have wished for the sweets of retirement. I am like to have my wish.

“You are witness that I have not raised a fortune in the service of my country. I glory in being what the world calls a poor man. If my mind has ever been tinctured with envy, the rich and the great have not been its objects. If I have been vain, popularity, though I had as much of it as any man ought to have, is not the phantom I have pursued. He who gains the approbation of the virtuous citizens, I will own, may feel himself happy; but he is in reality much more so who *knows he deserves it*. Such a man, if he cannot retreat with splendor, he may with dignity. I will trust in the all-gracious Being, who in his own good way has provided us with food and raiment; and having spent the greatest part of my life in public cares, like the weary traveller, fatigued with the journey of the day, I can rest with you in a cottage. If I live till the spring, I will take my final leave of Congress and return to Boston. I have reason to be fixed in this determination, which I will then explain to you. I grow more domestic as I increase in years.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> To Mrs. Adams, Philadelphia, Nov. 24, 1780.

## CHAPTER LIV.

Adams as a Friend. — His Intimate Friendships Few, but Faithful. — British Successes in the South. — Prostration of the Public Credit. — Decreasing Power of Congress. — Negotiations for Peace. — Desponding Sentiments. — Adams reports a Plan for reorganizing the Army. — He opposes the Creation of Secretaries of War, Finance, and Foreign Relations with Separate Departments. — Correspondence with Richard Henry Lee. — Articles of Confederation ratified. — Adams signs them on the Eve of his Departure for Home. — He takes final Leave of Congress. — Arrival at Boston. — His honorable Poverty. — Marriage of his Daughter. — “The Last of the Puritans.”

ONE of the most admirable traits in the character of Samuel Adams was the faithful nature of his friendship, which no turn in the tide of popular favor or altered circumstances or the most plausible misrepresentations could change. There never was an instance of a more devoted and disinterested friendship than that which existed between the Lees of Virginia and Samuel Adams. Commencing, as we have seen, before the Revolution, it had been maintained for several years by means of correspondence. In 1774 Adams and Richard Henry Lee saw each other for the first time at Philadelphia, and thenceforth they were for several years delegates together in Congress. It was not until the present year that he met with Arthur Lee, — one of the most able and accomplished men of the Southern States. For nearly fifteen years he had resided in Europe, exerting his graceful pen and nervous eloquence in the cause of America until the Declaration of Independence, and from that time serving his country as Minister to the Courts of France and Spain with all the zeal of an upright, courageous gentleman. The letters of Mr. Adams to Arthur Lee express the warmth of his feeling for him. At the close of one, he says, “Be assured that I am, in a style too much out of fashion, your

friend"; and in another, "Be assured that as I am a friend to every one possessed of public virtue, with affection, I must be constantly yours." How highly Mr. Adams esteemed his abilities has been already seen in his letters, in his probable agency in securing him his appointment in Europe, and particularly in his indignant avowal of his friendship for the Lees, "in the face of the world," when an attempt was made in Boston to prejudice the people against him for that friendship. For some time Mr. Lee had been desirous of returning to America, with the intention of practising law in some principal city. His brother then wrote him:—

"Philadelphia and Boston seem to me to be the only theatres for great actors to play upon. Our most worthy and wise friend, Samuel Adams, Esq., can advise you respecting the latter, and intelligence of the former may be well obtained from Chief Justice McKean, the Attorney-General, Mr. Sergeant, and President Read. The first of these gentlemen is one of those few whom I have known in Congress since 1774, and whom I have found uniformly sensible, firm, and attached to the cause of America, upon the best principles. I recommend that gentleman to your particular attention.

"With respect to your obtaining full justification from Congress, although it is justly your due, and so necessary to be obtained, you know that men are such things as renders it wise to take measures even for coming at justice. You are too well acquainted with human nature not fully to feel the wisdom of Polonius's advice to his son, 'Give every man your ear, but few your voice.' I would not seem to know who were my enemies in Congress, but you will know your friends; the latter will have your voice, while the former will have only your ear. Mr. Samuel Adams may be 'grappled to your soul with hooks of steel'; his friendship for you, his knowledge of men, and his wise penetration can, and will, wonderfully assist you with regard to men and measures."<sup>1</sup>

Arthur Lee reached Boston in September, and while there the Legislature granted him six thousand acres of land in payment for his services as agent of the Colony of Massachu-

<sup>1</sup> R. H. to Arthur Lee, Chantilly, Aug. 31, 1780.



setts Bay before the Revolution. He left for Philadelphia in September, bearing letters to Samuel Adams from his friends, — among others from Dr. Cooper. Here the two friends grasped hands for the first time ; and, as they gazed with curious interest upon each other, the meeting must have been a memorable epoch in their lives. Adams wrote back soon after to Dr. Cooper : —

“ Your favor of the 21st of September was delivered to me by my ever worthy friend, Mr. Arthur Lee, who came to this city about a fortnight ago. The respect which you say was paid to him by the principal gentlemen in Boston is exceedingly pleasing to me, because, from an intimate and confidential correspondence with him for ten years, I am convinced that he was among the most early and consistent of the American patriots. His inflexible virtue in the first stages of our contest rendered him obnoxious to the great and powerful in England, and equally, of late, to interested persons in France and their connections in America. My friendship for him is not private ; it is grounded altogether on public principles. You tell me his short residence in the State of Massachusetts has been very far from diminishing that estimation in which the people held him there. I should have been indeed sorry if it had been otherwise ; for his great services to *them* in particular had justly merited their esteem. I rejoice that *my own* countrymen are not ungrateful. I hope they will always be too just either to pay servile homage to the weak and wicked, or to withhold the marks of their approbation due to the wise and good.”<sup>1</sup>

On the subject of the claims of Arthur Lee upon the country for his long services in Europe, Adams wrote to Richard Henry Lee : —

“ The whispers of envy and malice have sometimes influence enough to prevent the justice due to the virtuous citizen. When this is the case, it affords a symptom of the decay of public spirit more threatening to the liberties of a commonwealth than hosts of foreign enemies. Monarchs have their favorites, who serve as pimps on their honest subjects ; but republics should examine the

<sup>1</sup> To Rev. Samuel Cooper, Nov. 7, 1780.

conduct of their servants with an impartial eye. And it discovers the want of public virtue as much to withhold their smiles from the wise and good as to bestow them on the wicked and unfaithful. Mr. Lee, as yet, has neither smiles nor frowns. I am still in hopes he will meet with the rewards which I am sure he would have received, if he had returned a few years ago. He will have them when the trustees of the public shall have fortitude enough to be uninfluenced by great names and characters given to men of base and depraved minds. You will ask, When will that be? Perhaps not in this age; but the historian will, in some future time, draw forth the proofs of his patriotism, and unprejudiced posterity will acknowledge that Arthur Lee has borne a great share in defending and establishing the liberties of America. I say posterity, for I believe a wiser generation will enjoy the fruits of the toil of patriots and heroes in the present day.”<sup>1</sup>

A few years later, when Mr. Adams had retired from Congress, and was President of the Massachusetts Senate, he introduced a bill to facilitate the surveying of the lands which had been granted to Arthur Lee. The intimate friendships of Samuel Adams were few, but founded upon a rock. Some of those of the earlier days of the Revolution were severed by natural causes; and towards the close of the century opposite political views produced an estrangement from John Adams, who for some cause, never fully explained, was led to believe that Samuel Adams was his enemy and wished to injure him; but there were never any good grounds for such a supposition, which perhaps grew out of the virulent party sentiments of that time, when John Adams's Presidential administration was bitterly assailed. The friendship of Gerry, Dr. Jarvis, Governor Strong, Dr. Cooper, Judge Sullivan, James Warren, and others, who knew and revered his character, was retained to the last. The dearest friend he ever had was Dr. Warren, and the void created in his heart by the death of that brilliant young patriot was probably at no time completely filled. Though he never spoke of him in his letters, he did not forget the very great services rendered

<sup>1</sup> To R. H. Lee, Philadelphia, Jan. 15, 1781.

by this partner and special confidant in all his plans prior to 1775; and, in his reminiscences of the Revolution in his old age, he recurred oftenest and the most affectionately to the name of Joseph Warren.

The intimacy ever existing between Samuel Adams and Elbridge Gerry has been already described. The two men thoroughly understood each other, and never for a moment wavered in their friendship. Years after the death of the venerable Adams, Gerry, who became at length Vice-President of the United States, used to hold up the example of the departed statesman as one of the most perfect presented in history, ancient or modern. His partiality for Adams, his deep veneration for his disinterested patriotism, and his appreciation of those virtues and abilities which a near acquaintance had enabled him to contemplate for successive years, under the most extraordinary circumstances, was such that he often designated that character to young men about entering public life as a model for close study, and worthy of imitation for its purity and republican simplicity and dignity. The conversations of Gerry on this subject, had they been preserved, would have shed a flood of light on the deeds and words of Adams. He was full of anecdotes concerning him and the great events which he helped to bring about. One of the letters of Adams, written towards the close of this year, when Gerry had become a member of the Massachusetts Legislature, shows how greatly he prized this friendship, and at the same time serves to establish his perfect consistency. His opinions were not written in sand; they were lifelong, — the same before the Revolution and to his latest days.

“Let me entreat you,” he writes, “my dear sir, not to think me unmindful of the several favors I have received from you since I arrived in this city. I hate protestations among friends; and the making apologies is so formal a business, that I know not in what manner to begin it. Yet it seems necessary that I should say something in excuse for my not having written to you. Shall I tell you

of my trembling hand, and how unfit an instrument it is to guide a pen? I do assure you that writing is on that account become painful to me. I am persuaded you never doubted of the reality of my friendship for you, and I solemnly affirm it has not abated a single iota. Let this suffice on the score of apology, and permit me to hope that I shall receive your letters frequently while I remain here, which, however, will be only until next spring. I shall then take my final leave of Congress, and seek that retirement from public cares which my country seems to point out for me, and to which my own inclination leads me.

“I perceive it has been in your option to take a seat in either House of the General Assembly, or to return to Congress. I cannot say in which of these departments you will have it in your power to render the most substantial service to the public. We feel the want of you here, and yet I think you have wisely chosen a seat for the present in the House of Representatives. Many virtuous men there may want the information which you may be able to give them. Possibly you may have much of the old ground to go over again. More, in my opinion, is to be done than conquering our British enemies, in order to establish the liberties of our country on a solid basis. Human nature, I am afraid, is too much debased to relish the republican principles in which the new government of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts appears to be founded. Mankind are prone enough to political idolatry; and may it not be added, that the former government, I mean the last charter, being calculated to make servile men rather than free citizens, the minds of many of our countrymen have been inured to a cringing obsequiousness too deeply wrought into habit to be easily eradicated? Such a temper is widely different from that just reverence which every virtuous citizen will show to the upright magistrate. If my fears on this head are ill grounded, I hope I shall be excused. They proceed from a cordial affection for that country to the service of which I have devoted the greatest part of my life.

“May Heaven inspire the present rulers with wisdom and sound understanding! In all probability they will stamp the character of the people. It is natural for a sensible observer to form an estimate of the people from an opinion of the men whom they set up for their legislators and magistrates. And, besides, if we look into the history of governors, we shall find that their principles and man-

ners have always had a mighty influence on the people. Should vanity and foppery ever be the ruling taste among the great, the body of the people would be in danger of catching the distemper, and the ridiculous maxims of the one would become fashionable among the other. I pray God we may never be addicted to levity and the folly of parade. Pomp and show serve very well to promote the purposes of European and Asiatic grandeur in countries where the mystery of iniquity is carried to the highest pitch, and millions are tame enough to believe that they are born only to be subservient to the capricious will of a single man or a few! It requires counsel and sound judgment to render our country secure in a flourishing condition. If men of wisdom and knowledge, of moderation and temperance, of patience, fortitude, and perseverance, of sobriety and true republican simplicity of manners, of zeal for the honor of the Supreme Being and the welfare of the Commonwealth,—if men possessed of these and other excellent qualities are chosen to fill the seats of government, we may expect that our affairs will rest on a solid and permanent foundation. I thank you, my dear sir, for mentioning my family so affectionately in one of your letters. Oblige them with your visits as often as you can.”<sup>1</sup>

The winter and spring of 1781 was a period of deep depression. The success of the enemy in the South, the destructive raid of the traitor Arnold in Virginia, the utter prostration of the public credit and the difficulty of raising money, the revolts of bodies of the soldiery at the insufferable neglect of their wants, the murmurs of property holders at the onerous but unavoidable taxations, were all calculated to produce the gloomiest apprehensions. After the reverses in the South, efforts were made to reorganize the Southern forces, Steuben and Nelson being actively engaged in Virginia in collecting recruits for the army under General Greene. Clothing, ammunition, and supplies of all kinds were needed; some of the troops being without shoes, hats, or tents. The route of the main army in Virginia was sometimes traced by its bloody footprints. To urge upon Congress its utmost efforts for the supply of the army which

<sup>1</sup> S. Adams to E. Gerry, Philadelphia, Nov. 27, 1780.

was soon to cope with Cornwallis and his well-appointed veterans, Colonel B. Harrison of the artillery was despatched to Philadelphia, and, as chairman of a committee to confer with that officer, Mr. Adams soon after reported a series of resolutions, which were adopted and, as far as practicable, carried into execution. To meet the exigency of the case, all the regular troops from Pennsylvania to Georgia, excepting Moylan's dragoons, were constituted the Southern army, which the troops of the Pennsylvania line were ordered to join. Arrangements were made for filling the quota of troops from that State, and for procuring supplies regularly and speedily from States farther south, where the Tory interest had been opposed to furnishing its quota. Ten thousand suits of clothes complete, four hundred wagons, eight hundred and sixty tents, five thousand muskets, eight thousand knapsacks, and a proportionate supply of haversacks, canteens, blankets, powder, and lead, were ordered from the Board of War, for which they were authorized to contract to pay in specie, payable in six months, with interest secured by bills of exchange on the Minister at the Court of Versailles.<sup>1</sup> Arrangements were also made with the States of Delaware, Virginia, and North Carolina for supplies. Congress in these efforts, feeble at best, to restore confidence and improve the condition of the army, exerted its power to the utmost limit in aid of Steuben and Greene; but it exhibited little more than the shadow of authority. It could only appeal to the several States, each of which considered itself especially unable to respond. The supplies of clothing and cash which arrived from France with Laurens, and the presence of the French troops soon after, gave new hopes for the cause. Adams, during this period of depression, devoted his energies in Congress to the consideration of the weighty subjects of finance and the alleviation of the distresses of the army. He was for allowing no lesser matters to occupy attention. All his letters treat of the topic nearest his heart.

<sup>1</sup> Journals of Congress, Feb. 20, 1781.

“My friend,” he writes, “we must not suffer anything to discourage us in this great conflict. Let us recur to first principles without delay. It is our duty to make every proper exertion in our respective States to revive the old patriotic feelings among the people at large, and to get the public departments, especially the most important of them, filled with men of understanding and inflexible virtue. It would indeed be alarming if the United States should intrust the ship in which our all is at stake with inexperienced or unprincipled pilots. Our cause is surely too interesting to mankind to be put under the direction of men vain, avaricious, or concealed under the hypocritical guise of patriotism, without a spark of public or private virtue. We may possibly be more in danger of this than many of our honest citizens may imagine. Is there not reason to apprehend that even those who are inimical to our cause may steal into places of the highest trust? I need not remind *you* that men of this character have had seats in Congress from the beginning. Where is Galloway, Low, Allen, and Alexander? If it was so in those times of vigilance and zeal, how much more is it to be expected when the love of many is waxen cold, and their minds are distracted with the pursuit of pleasure and exorbitant riches. We cannot be persuaded to believe that bad men have been sent by their States with a view of giving a fatal stab to our cause in its infancy; but is it unreasonable to suppose that their elections were secretly influenced by artful men with that design? Our most dangerous enemies may be in our bosoms.”<sup>1</sup>

Who were the members of Congress thus confidentially referred to is left to conjecture. That body certainly was not now composed of the talent and ability of the celebrated convention who voted the Declaration of Independence. It had in fact dwindled down into a small and not widely influential assemblage, offering no field for oratorical or statesmanlike abilities for the ambitious; a thankless arena for the exertions of the industrious, and constantly decreasing in public estimation. An effort was made this winter by a party in Congress to dispense with the existing method of transacting foreign business by committees, and to create a

<sup>1</sup> S. Adams to R. H. Lee, Philadelphia, Jan. 15, 1781.

department with a secretary, who should correspond with foreign ambassadors and United States ministers abroad. In fact, there was to be a "foreign office" similar to those of European courts.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Adams is represented in the correspondence of the day as being opposed to this change. By his influence, the subject of a Secretary of War was also postponed, nor was any appointed until after his departure from Congress. As we have seen, he was by no means satisfied with the aspect of affairs in that body. His letter just quoted recommends a "return to first principles without delay"; and he undoubtedly had grave reasons for advocating a continuance of the committee system. Luzerne, the French Minister, wrote to his government:—

"Divisions prevail in Congress about the new mode of transacting business by secretaries of different departments. Samuel Adams, whose obstinate, resolute character was so useful to the Revolution in its origin, but who shows himself so ill suited to the conduct of affairs in an organized government, has placed himself at the head of the advocates of the old system of committees of Congress, instead of relying on ministers or secretaries under the new arrangement."<sup>2</sup>

The French Court entertained such designs relative to the fisheries and other matters, as was subsequently discovered, that it may be this "obstinate and resolute character" was now particularly called for. The penetration of Adams doubtless discerned what his great caution forbade him to consign to written correspondence, though he significantly hints at it. He had seen good reason for many years to be watchful. At this distance, however, it is impossible to bring to light all the grounds of his present course.

The sturdy persistency of purpose with which the Colonies—at least the New England ones—commenced the Revolutionary contest had not burned so brightly of late. Pressing financial difficulties, added to the military disasters

<sup>1</sup> Journals of Congress, Jan. 17, 1781.

<sup>2</sup> M. de La Luzerne to Vergennes, March 25, 1781.



in the South, seem to have increased the desire for peace, even on terms less rigid than those with which the war commenced. Not long after the departure of Samuel Adams from Congress, the French Ambassador communicated to that body the proposals of Russia and Germany to act as mediators, and bring about a peace; and a majority was found, despite the opposition of the New England members, ready to accept of terms, even if the independence of the United States was not expressly acknowledged, though it was to be substantially understood,<sup>1</sup> thus impliedly renouncing, under the pressure of accumulated calamities, the great object of the Revolution. Southern members were particularly the advocates of such a cessation of hostilities, for their territory was at this time suffering the terrors of British invasion; but they seemed to forget the fortitude of Boston in its early Revolutionary trials. The measure was carried, and separate commissioners were appointed to represent the several sections of the Union, — a precedent which would certainly have found a determined opponent in Samuel Adams, had it been broached while he was in Congress. The scheme fortunately proved a failure. England peremptorily refused to make any admission of American independence. The negotiations were broken off; and a few months afterwards, the capture of Cornwallis having decided the contest, the express acknowledgment of independence was obtained from the mother country without any modification of the absolute terms announced by Congress in 1778, through the pen of Adams.

However Mr. Adams's opposition to the establishment of a foreign office may have been connected with the premonition of these events, that question seems to have occupied Congress for several days, and was only defeated after a hard struggle, and evidently by his personal influence. General John Sullivan, whose indiscreet conduct after the failure of the Rhode Island expedition in 1778 had raised

<sup>1</sup> Hildreth, III. 413.

doubts in the minds of many as to his prudence, was supposed to be a candidate for Secretary of the War Department; and, in a letter soon after, he considers Mr. Adams's opposition as having been founded upon a fear that he (General Sullivan) would be elected.<sup>1</sup> It must be supposed, however, that these objections sprung from a much deeper policy than is thus indicated. Mr. Adams was about quitting Congress; and now, as always, he based his conduct upon what he conceived to be the public good. He was equally jealous at this time of the creation of a superintendent of finance, and his reasons for opposing that measure are given in a letter to Elbridge Gerry, written in Boston, after the proclamation of peace.

“Were our financier, I was going to say, even an angel from heaven, I hope he will never have so much influence as to gain the ascendancy over Congress which the first Lord of the Treasury has long had over the Parliament of Britain, — long enough to effect the ruin of that nation. These are the fears which I expressed in Congress when the department was first instituted. I was told that the breath of Congress could annihilate the financier; but I replied that the time might come, and, if they were not careful, it certainly would, when even Congress would not dare to blow that breath.”<sup>2</sup>

Robert Morris was appointed, who did inestimable service in evolving some order out of the financial chaos in which the country was plunged, and gave no delegate who voted for him any cause to regret the extraordinary powers conferred upon the office. Mr. Adams was never insensible to the absolute necessity of giving to Congress the exclusive management of foreign, financial, and military affairs. With all his dislike of delegated power, he recognized the efficacy of a central government vested with the power to act for the States in a national capacity. But he considered it the safest way, at least for the present, that the general duties should be performed by the old and tried system of standing com-

<sup>1</sup> General Sullivan to Washington, March 6, 1781.

<sup>2</sup> S. Adams to E. Gerry, Boston, Sept. 9, 1783.

mittees, — a system which thus far had been found to work harmoniously, and, as it gave opportunity for the joint deliberation of several members upon any subject, was more in consonance with his conceptions of democracy than government by the separate acts of special departments having a single head. A jealousy of delegated power in any form was a characteristic of Samuel Adams, and certainly his experience taught him that such jealousy was a political virtue. It is unquestionable that his opposition to the foreign office was founded upon a course of reasoning equally satisfactory to his own mind.

Mr. Lee, replying to his friend's letter of January 15th, acknowledges the truth of his remarks, and discloses a degree of anxiety as to the designs of certain members, and the fate of the Articles of Confederation, now about to be decided, which would imply a strong influence in Congress itself against the final adoption of that instrument; and from his seat at Chantilly he invokes the aid of his friend to save it from serious interested combinations, with which it was menaced. We have seen the Articles discussed in the fall of 1777, finally accepted by Congress, and submitted to the several States for their ratification. After three years of delay, caused by the not unreasonable jealousy of the larger States by the small landless ones, the vexed question was at last reaching a conclusion. The invasion of Virginia by Arnold, and the evident necessity of reviving the union spirit, caused the Virginia Assembly to renounce its claim to the territory northwest of the Ohio; and when New York followed in the same disinterested spirit, Maryland gave in its assent, completing the thirteen. The territory ceded by Virginia was to be accepted by Congress; and the following letter was written in order to overcome the opposition to this act as well as to forward the plan of confederation, the delay in which had to some extent damaged the cause. The Articles of Confederation had passed through the hands of Lee and Adams, when they came from the committee of

which they were members, and from that time they had shown a constant anxiety for the success of this first attempt to establish a form of Federal government. Lee now writes:—

“At present my design is to be confined chiefly to the consideration of the cession made to the United States by this Commonwealth, at our last session of Assembly, of all the country northwest of the river Ohio which is contained within the charter limits of this country. The country thus yielded is greater in extent than that which remains to us between the ocean and the Ohio, and in point of climate and soil is far preferable. The terms of cession, so far as I can judge, are perfectly reasonable. Notwithstanding this, there are powerful reasons which I can clearly see will obstruct, if not defeat, the acceptance of this cession by Congress. It will be a means of perfecting our union by closing the confederation, and thus our independency will be secured in a greater measure. It will bar the hopes of some powerful confederated land-jobbers, who have long had in contemplation immense possessions in this ceded country, under pretence of Indian purchases and other plausible but not solid titles. It is plain, therefore, that personal interest and political views, Toryism, British interest, and land-jobbing views, combine numbers without and within doors to reject this proffered cession. The modes and methods which these artists pursue are well understood by the judicious, attentive friends to the independence of these States. They pretend great friendship and concern for the independency, the union, and confederation of America, but by circuitous means attack and destroy the things that are indispensable to those ends. Hitherto, the avarice and ambition of Virginia has prevented confederation. Now, when Virginia has yielded half and more than half of her charter claim, the argument will be applied to the terms as improper, and for certain purposes perhaps it may be said that the quantity ceded is not enough; in short, anything that can operate the delay and defeat of a measure calculated to sever us completely from Great Britain, and to preclude the avaricious views of land-mongers, will be industriously pressed.

“But, my dear friend, cannot virtue for once be as ‘active as vice’? can we not by effectual industry contrive to have a plan

adopted by which our great bond of union may be secured? Let me observe here, that our Assembly is luckily called again to meet before our annual dissolution; and if that great business can be considered and determined on by Congress in season for us, so that we may know the result before the next meeting of the Assembly passes away, I think it will greatly conduce to the general good and happiness of the United States. After that which the uniform friends of American liberty have already done, if they can be happy enough to complete this great bond of union, strength, confidence, and credit, the confederation, they may reasonably be contented with the fair prospect that will open upon them for future happiness and security. Our Assembly is called by the Governor to meet on the 1st of next month, and the session will not be long.”<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Adams had just been appointed one of a committee of seven to whom were referred the acts and resolutions of Virginia, New York, and Connecticut, respecting the relinquishment of the Western territory.<sup>2</sup> Congress, however, was unable to agree upon the terms of settlement; and the cession of those vast tracts now comprising the States of Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin was not accomplished until March, 1784. On the 12th of February, 1781, the Maryland delegates having laid before Congress a certified copy of the acceptance by that State of the Articles of Confederation, the final ratification was announced to the public on the 24th; and it was voted that the “important event” should be communicated to the executives of the several States and to the American ministers in Europe, who were ordered to notify the respective courts where they resided. Special information was also transmitted to Washington, who was directed to announce it to the army. Thus the “bond of union,” the primary frame of government, which brought the original thirteen States out of their condition of distinct republics into as perfect a confederation as the crude ideas of a nationality would admit, became operative four years and a half after the instrument had been re-

<sup>1</sup> R. H. Lee to S. Adams, Chantilly, Feb. 5, 1781.

<sup>2</sup> Journals of Congress, Jan. 31, 1781.

ported. In that time every argument had been exhausted in Congress as well as in the State governments. Every species of sectional jealousy had interposed to prevent its success, and even speculative interests had not been wanting as agents for its defeat. Under all the circumstances, it is remarkable that it was adopted at all, limited as were the powers which it conceded to the central government. Mr. Adams had the satisfaction of affixing his signature on the eve of his final departure from Congress, — appropriately terminating his career in that body by an act for that national union of American interests, which seventeen years before he had been the first to recommend, when his native town through him directed her representatives to urge a united application by all the Colonies for a redress of grievances. Some of his friends in Massachusetts still entertained hopes of placing him at the head of the State government this year; and among these, Caleb Davis, one of the Boston delegation in the last Assembly, had written to him with that view. In reply he says: —

“You mention a certain juncture when you wish me to return. I think I can discover your motive and your old partiality for me. I do assure you I am not at all solicitous about anything of the kind which your letter seems to indicate. I have always endeavored to confine my desires in this life within moderate bounds, and it is time for me to reduce them to a narrower compass. You speak of ‘neglect,’ ‘ingratitude,’ &c. But let us entertain just sentiments. A citizen owes everything to the commonwealth; and after he has made his utmost exertions for its prosperity, has he done more than his duty? When time enfeebles his powers, and renders him unfit for further service, his country, to preserve its own vigor, will wisely call upon others; and if he decently retreats to make room for them, he will show that he has not totally lost his understanding. Besides, there is a period in life when a man should covet the exalted pleasures of reflection in retirement.”<sup>1</sup>

Already, in conformity with the determination expressed

<sup>1</sup> S. Adams to Caleb Davis, April 3, 1781.

during the past year, he had addressed to the Massachusetts Legislature his desire to be recalled. The following is the letter: —

SIR, —

PHILADELPHIA, 13th March, 1781.

I beg the favor of you to communicate to the General Assembly my wish to return home as early as may be; and to request that I may be relieved by one of my colleagues, or in such manner as shall be thought most proper.

I flatter myself I shall be excused in making this request, from a consideration of the length of time since I last left Massachusetts, and that I am apprehensive my health will not admit of my spending another summer in this city.

I am, with every sentiment of duty and respect to the Assembly, sir, your most obedient and very humble servant,

SAMUEL ADAMS.

HONORABLE THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

On the 12th of April he announced his intention of finally quitting Congress, and, having obtained leave of absence from that body, took his departure in the following week, and reached Boston towards the close of the month. He had left Massachusetts, for the first time, in 1774, to attend Congress, and after his Congressional career, he never again was absent from his native State; his political course being confined to Massachusetts, though the weight of his character and opinions continued to be felt in all national questions. After devoting the best part of his life to his country, he returned to his family to find himself poor and homeless. The commercial successes of Gerry and Bowdoin, the wealth of Hancock, the thrift of John Adams, the profits accruing to professional pursuits, more or less enjoyed by most of his coworkers in the Revolution, were unknown to Samuel Adams. He had not even the shelter of a roof he could call his own, though for a nominal rent he was still permitted by act of Legislature to occupy the confiscated residence of Robert Hallowell; and certain articles of furniture

out of the estates of Tories, "with the use of which he had been indulged," he was allowed to purchase for "ninety-two pounds and seven shillings," money due him for his services as Clerk of the House of Representatives during the year 1774,—services which had gone thus far unremunerated. To such pecuniary straits was the "Father of the Revolution" reduced, when America was about issuing from the great struggle, with the prize of independence almost won. The following is copied from his original manuscript petition:—

TO THE HONORABLE COUNCIL AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, IN GENERAL COURT ASSEMBLED.

March 9, 1780.

The petition of Samuel Adams of Boston humbly shows:—

That when the British troops were in possession of the town of Boston, in 1775, he suffered the loss of the greatest and most valuable part of his household furniture, and has since been indulged with the use of sundry articles belonging to certain absentees until the General Assembly should be pleased to otherwise order them to be disposed of.

Your petitioner prays the Honorable Court that he may be permitted to avail himself of the purchase of the said furniture at the prices that may be set upon them by good and discreet men.

And as in duty bound, he shall pray, &c.

SAMUEL ADAMS.

Mr. Everett, who seems in early life to have informed himself about Samuel Adams from contemporary sources, said, in 1825, of his straitened circumstances:—

"Samuel Adams was the counterpart of his distinguished associate in proscription. Hancock served the cause with his liberal opulence, Adams with his incorruptible poverty. His family, at times, suffered almost for the comforts of life, when he might have sold his influence over the counsels of America for uncounted gold, when he might have emptied the royal treasury if he would have betrayed his country. Samuel Adams was the last of the Puritans,—a class of men to whom the cause of civil and religious liberty on both sides



of the Atlantic is mainly indebted for the great progress which it has made for the last two hundred years ; and when the Declaration of Independence was signed, that dispensation might be considered as brought to a close.”<sup>1</sup>

The Rev. Mr. Thacher, whose discourse at the death of Adams has been occasionally quoted in these pages, says that the virtue of his venerable friend had been “repeatedly tried in the crucible of poverty and necessity.”

“While he was occupied abroad,” continues Mr. Thacher, “in the most important and responsible public duties, the amiable partner of his cares supported the family at home by manual industry ; and notwithstanding his whole resources were so small that there are few among my hearers who would not have deemed it a very imperfect support, yet, such was the union of dignity with economy, that, to the foreigner or the native casually visiting the family nothing of degradation or debasement appeared, but every circumstance of propriety necessary to the honorable grade which his country had assigned him. In this situation did his country permit this illustrious character to remain ; and while inferior merit and circumstantial claims, oftentimes trivial, entitled their owners to large donations from the public, he knew by very painful experience the ingratitude and baseness of mankind.”<sup>2</sup>

This is no overdrawn picture. Thacher was not only a witness of its truth in common with the whole community, but it is the concurrent testimony of numbers of his family and friends who survived to within a few years of this writing. Wise in the management of everything but what concerned his own benefit, he never knew the value of money ; yet he was not improvident in the use of his humble means, and the economy of his energetic and careful wife to some extent made amends for his deficiency in thrift. Before the Revolution he had dearly enjoyed the pleasures of his home ; and now, contented with his condition, and heedful only for the public welfare, he could look without envy upon the affluence of others, and turned with true zest to the scanty

<sup>1</sup> Everett's Orations, I. 545.

<sup>2</sup> Thacher's Discourse, pp. 20, 21.

comforts of his little family circle. His daughter, shortly after his arrival, was married to a younger brother of Mrs. Adams, and it was with the deepest satisfaction that he saw his child mated with a gentleman who could at least raise her above the poverty to which she had so often been subjected.

At the May elections before his return, his intended retirement from Congress being known, Mr. Adams was elected to the Senate of Massachusetts, and at the opening of the session he took his seat as President of that body. In this position he continued his exertions for the supplying of troops and provisions, and endeavored to suppress the murmurs which were now growing louder and more general at the repeated calls upon the public resources. Massachusetts had in reality been more prompt and liberal than any other State in this respect, but the burden was becoming insupportable.

Though absent from Congress, he continued to take the deepest interest in the proceedings of that body, and fragments existing among his papers make it probable that he gave the hint for some of its important proceedings. In July of this year, the South Carolina and Georgia delegates applied to Congress to recommend a special loan from the several States in aid of numbers of distressed inhabitants of the two first-named States, who had lately arrived at Philadelphia from Charleston in cartels. These unfortunates were in a most destitute condition, having suffered cruelly at the hands of the enemy. The motion, as offered by Mr. Bland of Virginia, did not prevail, but Congress passed one subsequently, authorizing the opening of a subscription of thirty thousand dollars in the several States not in the possession of the enemy; South Carolina and Georgia pledging their faith for the repayment, with interest, as soon as they should be in a condition to do so.<sup>1</sup> Massachusetts, being the wealthiest and most populous of the States beyond British power, was expected to meet a large portion of this

<sup>1</sup> Journals of Congress, July 23, 1781.

loan. How deeply Mr. Adams sympathized with these sufferers (among whom, it is believed, was the family of his wife's brother, Andrew Elton Wells) is shown by the following reply, which he sent to his friend, John Lowell, then a member of the Massachusetts delegation in Congress. "If the following is agreeable," he writes, "you will please get it transcribed; if otherwise, alter it to your liking. My trembling hand will not admit of my making a fair copy.

"GENTLEMEN, —

"A few days ago we had the pleasure of receiving your letter of the 31st of July, enclosing a copy of a resolution of Congress in favor of our brethren of South Carolina and Georgia who have partook so largely in that cruelty which has marked the character of our British enemies. Humanity should induce us, with the utmost cheerfulness, to take a part with you in procuring relief for those oppressed men. But when we consider them as having endured so severe a conflict with patience and fortitude as patriots, and in support of the common cause of our country, we feel the additional obligation of fellow-citizens. Indeed, the people of this Commonwealth have been, and are still, called upon for extraordinary advances of money and for various purposes; but we are fully persuaded that this application will have its due weight, more especially as we think it cannot but instantly awaken a recollection that those very gentlemen who are now drinking so deeply of the cup of affliction were among the earliest to administer comfort to the inhabitants of this metropolis when they were suffering for the same glorious cause, under the cruel oppression of the memorable Port Bill. We shall write to you as occasion shall require, and are with sincerity,

"Your affectionate fellow-citizens."<sup>1</sup>

The extent to which Massachusetts, embarrassed as she then was, contributed to this laudable object is not known, but it is presumable that the generosity of South Carolina and Georgia to Boston, in the hour of her distress, was not forgotten.

<sup>1</sup> Historical Magazine, September, 1857; I. 261.

## CHAPTER LV.

**Adams** President of the State Senate. — The disputed Vermont Territory. — Effect in England of the Surrender of Cornwallis. — Approach of Peace with Great Britain. — The Right to the Newfoundland Fisheries. — Adams urges the Building of a Powerful Navy. — Intercepted Letter of Marbois to the French Government. — Adams arouses New England on the Fishery Question. — Declines a Seat in Congress. — His Dignified Appearance when presiding over the State Senate. — Extravagance and Dissipation in Boston. — Adams and his Friends attempt to counteract the Evil. — Distress among the People. — Riots in the Interior headed by Ely. — Adams visits Hampshire County and restores Order. — The Continental Tax. — Adams and Gorham deputed to facilitate its Collection in Massachusetts. — Letters of the Commissioners. — Bankrupt Condition of the Country.

RESIDING again in Boston, Mr. Adams now enjoyed the long-coveted leisure to attend to the local circumstances of "his beloved town," in whose moral as well as substantial improvement he was ever interested. An effort was made about this time by James Sullivan, and perhaps by others, to effect a reconciliation between Adams and Hancock, and at one time was supposed to have been successful; but the causes of disagreement still existed, and the breach was not to be healed for years, though Mr. Adams did not allow these differences to interfere with his public duties, whenever those duties brought him necessarily in contact with his former associate. During his last visit from Congress, he had been one of a committee, including Dr. Cooper and several other ministers appointed by the town, "to adopt measures for the promotion of virtue and good order," evidently having reference to the laxity of manners already observable, and so repugnant to the spirit and demeanor which Adams considered as indispensable to the achievement of national liberty. Some articles in the public papers at this time have been attributed to him, on the ground of

their hostility to Hancock's style of living and public example ; but it is believed that he wrote little for the press after quitting Congress. The following letter to John Adams alluded to one of the town meetings, when probably the subject under discussion was the illicit trade then commencing to injure the public cause. Of most of these town meetings Mr. Adams was moderator, and it is not improbable that he had much to do with having them called. The letter is without date, but was evidently written in September or October of 1781, as about that time La Fayette sailed from Boston on his return to France.

“The Marquis de La Fayette is so obliging as to take the care of this letter, which for the sake of him, the Count de Noailles, and others our French friends who take refuge with him in the alliance, I hope will arrive safely. In the same conveyance there is a packet intended for you from Congress, by which you will doubtless be informed of what has been doing there. It is six months since I left Philadelphia ; you cannot therefore expect that I should give you any of the intelligence of that city. I presume Mr. L. makes known to you everything that is interesting. I wrote to you frequently while I was there, and suppose all my letters have miscarried as well as yours, if you have written to me, for I have not received one for many months, except a line by the Sieur de L'Etombe, to whom I pay great attention, both on account of your recommendation and his merit. I give you credit for a packet of Gazettes lately received, because I knew the direction on the cover was your handwriting.

“Matters go on here just as you would expect, from your knowledge of the people ; zealous in the great cause, they hesitate at no labor or expense for its support. Anxious to have a code of laws for the internal government adapted to the spirit of their own Constitution, the General Court have appointed the supreme judges with Mr. Bowdoin, who is *at present* perfectly at leisure, to revise the laws and report proper and necessary amendments. The two great vacancies in the offices of President and Professor of Mathematics, &c., in our university, are filled with gentlemen of learning and excellent character, the Reverend Mr. Willard of Beverly, and the Reverend Mr. Williams of ——. The Academy of Arts and

Sciences is in a flourishing way. A new society is incorporated by the name of the Medical Society; and this metropolis has lately appointed a committee to consider the present management of the schools, and report what further improvements may be made, in which the better education of female children is designed to be comprehended. All these things, I hope, are pleasing to *you*. Our people treat foreigners of merit who come among them with good humor and civility, being desirous of adopting the virtuous manners of others and engrafting them into our stock. Laudable examples on their side and ours will be productive of mutual benefit. Indeed, men of influence must form the manners of the people. They can operate more towards cultivating the principles and fixing the habits of virtue than all the force of laws. This I think is verified by the experience of the world, and should induce the people who exercise the right of electing their own rulers to be circumspect in making their choice. *You* are well enough acquainted with the character of our first magistrate, to judge what effect his influence may have upon manners.

“Enclosed are some of the proceedings of a late town meeting, which I send to you as a private citizen for your mere information. The meeting was called in consequence of a letter received by our Selectmen from Marblehead, in which it was proposed that the subject should be considered in a committee of the maritime towns. But this town judged it more proper to lay the matter before the General Court, and have accordingly instructed their Representatives, and recommended it to the others to take the same method. They could not think it becoming in them to write to *you*, through a fellow-citizen, on a subject which concerns the American republic, although they have an entire confidence in your attachment to the interest of the United States and of this Commonwealth, which is an essential part of them.

“Please to pay my due regards to Mr. Dana, Mr. Thaxter, &c. I rejoice to hear of the welfare of one of your sons, whom I had almost given up as lost. The Count de Noailles tells me he has a letter for you from your lady. Mrs. Adams sends compliments. Miss has changed her name, and left her father’s house.”<sup>1</sup>

In October, the decisive victory at Yorktown sent a gleam

<sup>1</sup> Samuel to John Adams, Boston, 1781.

of joy and exultation through the country, and gave the assurance of a speedy termination of the war. With the first prospect of peace, and indeed long before it was made probable by the surrender of Cornwallis, a participation in the Newfoundland fisheries became a primary object with the people of Massachusetts, and their delegates in Congress were instructed warmly to support this point in any negotiations. John Adams, who was still in Europe, and was authorized to treat with Great Britain whenever she should be so disposed, well understood the importance of the demand, and was faithful in urging it. Samuel Adams dearly estimated this right, especially as a means of encouraging native industry. This is shown in much of his correspondence, in which he continually alludes to it. To the President of Congress he writes : —

“ Are we soon to have peace? However desirable this may be, we must not wish for it on any terms but such as shall be honorable and safe to our country. Let us not disgrace ourselves by giving just occasion for it to be said hereafter, that we finished our great contest with an inglorious accommodation. Things are whispered here which, if true, will cause much discontent. The citizens of this part of America will say and judge, my dear sir, if it will not be just, that the fishing-banks are at least as important as tobacco-yards or rice-swamps or the flourishing wheat-fields of Pennsylvania. The name only of independence is not worth the blood of a single citizen. We have not been so long contending for trifles. A navy must support our independence; and Britain will tell you the fishery is *her* grand nursery of seamen.”

And again to the same person : —

“ I take it for granted, that a very great majority of the people in each of the United States are determined to support this righteous and necessary war till they shall obtain their grand object, — an undisputed sovereignty. This must hereafter be maintained, under God, by the wisdom and vigor of their own counsels and their own strength. Their policy will lead them, if they mean to form any connection with Europe, to make themselves respectable in the eyes of the

nations, by holding up to them the benefits of their trade. Trade must be so free to all as to make it the interest of each to protect it, till they are able to protect it themselves. This the United States must do by a navy. Till they shall have erected a powerful navy, they will be liable to insults which may injure and depreciate their character as a sovereign and independent state; and while they may be incapable of resisting it themselves, no friendly power may venture to or can resent it on their behalf. The United States must, then, build a navy. They have, or may have, all the materials in plenty. But what will ships of war avail without seamen? and where will they find a nursery for seamen but in the fishery?"<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Adams had good reasons to apprehend that, in the approaching negotiations, the all-important right to the fisheries would not have its proper weight; and his exertions to maintain the ruling importance of this branch of industry in Massachusetts will presently appear. Members of Congress from the Southern and Middle States took but little interest in the subject; and the instructions given to the envoys did not make it indispensable to insist upon the point.

The correspondence of Mr. Adams makes occasional reference to the claims of New York, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire to the territory of Vermont, which in 1777 had declared itself an independent State, and in the following year elected Thomas Chittenden Governor. As the Green Mountain Boys were determined to support their right, and the growing importance of the dispute had given the common enemy encouragement to open negotiations with Vermont, Congress, in well-grounded alarm, had essayed to effect an arrangement between the several claimants to the lands in question. A civil war seemed at one time to be impending. Mr. Adams, it was thought, had, from the first, been favorable to the independence of Vermont, and in 1776 was reported to have advised Colonel Warner to that effect. Massachusetts was now anxious that the new State should be formed, but refused to come into the proposed Congres-

<sup>1</sup> S. Adams to Thomas McKean, Boston, September, 1781.



sional conference on the subject. fearing some ulterior designs of New York and New Hampshire on the disputed territory. Governor Chittenden, a man of great ability, and universally respected in Vermont, addressed a letter to Samuel Adams, desiring to have the position of Massachusetts defined on the subject of her particular claim to any portion of Vermont. The following draft of a reply is in the handwriting of Mr. Adams: —

SIR, —

Your letter dated Manchester, the 28th of October, and directed to the President of the Council of this State, has been laid before the General Assembly, according to your request, and duly considered. Two questions of importance are therein proposed, viz. “Over what part of this State (by which we suppose is to be understood Vermont) we mean to extend our claim?” and “How far we mean to carry such pretensions into execution, in the trial at Congress on the first day of February next?”

This State hath an ancient and just claim to all the territory referred to in your letter lying between the rivers Connecticut and Hudson, bounded as follows; viz. easterly by Connecticut River; westerly by the eastern line of New York; northerly by the northern boundary of Massachusetts Bay; and southerly by the northern limits of the Massachusetts jurisdiction as it was settled by the King of Great Britain in the year 1739.

This we take to be a full answer to your first question, according to its true intent, because we suppose a part of the district of country which has been commonly called the New Hampshire grants, and is contained within the bounds above described, is a part of that territory which you call the State of Vermont. Over this tract of country we mean to extend our claim, notwithstanding the decision of the King of Great Britain aforesaid in favor of the Province of New Hampshire, in 1739, which we have ever considered to be unjust. And as the General Assembly hath no authority to divest the State of any of its constitutional rights, we mean to continue, assert, and maintain the said claim, before anybody competent to try and determine the same, against the pretensions of any people whomsoever.

However necessary you, sir, may judge it that an explicit ac-

knowledge of the independence of the State of Vermont should be made, in order to bring about an equitable accommodation of the difficulties subsisting between the States mentioned in your letter, this State cannot come into such an acknowledgment consistently with its connection with the United States of America and the engagements it has solemnly entered into with them. We have, therefore, reason to expect that such formality of state in this address to you as would be correspondent with that which is adopted in your letter will be candidly dispensed with at this time.

In the name and by the order of the General Assembly,

I am with due respect, sir,

Your most obedient and very humble servant,

SAMUEL ADAMS.

THOMAS CHITTENDEN, Esq., at Manchester.

The letter is without date, but was written not long after that of Chittenden, of which the original is missing. It is a plain exponent of the position of Massachusetts in this interesting question, and a fair instance of the direct, comprehensive, and yet perfectly simple style of Samuel Adams's writings on all subjects. The letter of Chittenden was evidently penned with a careful observance of state formality; addressing Mr. Adams as President of the Senate, with the expectation that, in returning the courtesy, he would unguardedly acknowledge him as Governor of the State of Vermont. The habitual caution of Adams is shown in the reply, which recognizes Mr. Chittenden only as a private citizen. In February of the previous year, while Mr. Adams was Secretary of State, he received a letter from the Secretary of New York, asking for copies of papers relative to this subject. His answer is as follows:—

BOSTON, February 17, 1780.

SIR,—

Your letter of the 19th of January did not reach my hand till yesterday. I am sorry to acquaint you that the affairs of this government, immediately previous to the enemy's taking possession of this town in 1775, being under the direction of persons inimical to us, the papers in the files of the Secretary of the Province were

deranged and thrown into such disorder as to render it impracticable for me immediately to comply with your request to send you authenticated copies of the papers you have mentioned. I can conceive of no reason why you should not be served with the copies as you desire. The Council have ordered the papers to be looked up for the use of a committee appointed to state our claim. This will be done with the greatest despatch, and will enable me to convince you of the readiness with which I am disposed to gratify you in all cases consistent with the duties of my office.

In the mean time, I am, with the greatest esteem, &c.,

SAMUEL ADAMS.

HON. JOHN MORIN SCOTT, Esq.

The matter was repeatedly before Congress, and in August of this year that body offered to recognize the independence of Vermont, and admit her into the Union upon the indispensable condition that she would relinquish her encroachment upon the lands of New Hampshire and New York, several townships from both of which States had been absorbed. New York protested against this, but the Massachusetts delegation in Congress, doubtless by instruction, voted in the affirmative. The desire of Massachusetts, in asserting its claim, probably was to secure the independence of Vermont, and prevent its partition between New York and New Hampshire. After the resolution of Congress, New York determined to prosecute her claim, prepared to assert it by force, and marched troops for the purpose; and New Hampshire threatened a similar course. A timely letter from Washington to Chittenden induced the Legislature of Vermont to establish the western bank of the Connecticut River on the one part, and a line drawn from the northwest corner of Massachusetts northward to Lake Champlain on the other, as the eastern and western boundaries of the State, relinquishing all claim of jurisdiction without those limits; and the impending danger of a civil war was thus averted.

Britain's hope of subjugating America terminated with the

tidings of the capture of Cornwallis, — bitter tidings indeed to the nobleman who had vowed never to cease his measures of unjust coercion until “ America was prostrate at his feet.”

“ On Sunday the 25th [of November, 1781,] about noon, official intelligence of the surrender of the British forces at Yorktown arrived from Falmouth at Lord Germain’s house in Pall Mall. Lord Walsingham, who, previous to his father Sir William de Grey’s elevation to the peerage, had been Under-Secretary of State in that department, and who was selected to second the address in the House of Peers on the subsequent Tuesday, happened to be there when the messenger brought the news. Without communicating it to any other person, Lord George, for the purpose of despatch, immediately got with him into a hackney-coach, and drove to Lord Stormont’s residence in Portland Place. Having imparted to him the disastrous information, and taken him into the carriage, they instantly proceeded to the Chancellor’s house in Great Russel Street, Bloomsbury, whom they found at home; when, after a short consultation, they determined to lay it themselves, in person, before Lord North. He had not received any intimation of the event when they arrived at his door in Downing Street, between one and two o’clock. The First Minister’s firmness, and even his presence of mind, gave way for a short time under this awful disaster. I asked Lord George afterwards how he took the communication when made to him? ‘ As he would have taken a ball in his breast,’ replied Lord George. For he opened his arms, exclaiming wildly, as he paced up and down the apartment during a few minutes, ‘ O God! it is all over!’ — words which he repeated many times under emotions of the deepest agitation and distress.”<sup>1</sup>

Sensible of the irretrievable loss of “ the brightest jewel in the crown,” brought about by the folly of past and present administrations, the Ministry now prepared to treat for peace. Lord North, yielding to the opposition and the pressure of public opinion, resigned; and overtures, under the new order of affairs, were speedily commenced. An accommodation not involving entire independence was at first proposed; but the American Commissioners at Paris, in

<sup>1</sup> Wraxall’s Historical Memoirs, November, 1781.

accordance with the spirit of their country, insisted upon absolute independence as the only basis of negotiation. France, anxious for peace with Great Britain, was equally desirous of a cessation of the American war, from her participation in which she had no hope of attaining her long-cherished idea of commercial supremacy, but saw herself loaded with debt by reason of the enormous expense at which it had been conducted on her part. The American ministers at the several European courts were nearly unanimous in their suspicions that France would attempt to effect such arrangements as would give her the control of the foreign relations of the United States. The plan for the reduction of Canada, offered by Arnold in 1778, had been regarded as an intrigue of France to gain possession of the Newfoundland fisheries, and it was not long before the design of excluding the Americans from these and the Western territories became apparent.

A participation in the fisheries became the ruling topic in Massachusetts, and an intense excitement was created there, on the suspicion that the right was possibly to be renounced. The French Minister, in his desire for peace, proposed that the Grand Bank fisheries should be yielded to Great Britain, and the disposition of the Western lands left mainly to future treaties. Pending the negotiations in Paris, Oswald, the British Commissioner, willing to create a jealousy of France, sent to Franklin and Jay (John Adams not having yet returned from Holland) a copy of a letter from Marbois, the French Secretary of Legation, which had been intercepted in its passage from America, in which the supposed policy of the French Court was disclosed, and the character of Samuel Adams curiously depicted. The letter had the effect of precipitating the treaty at Paris, and left the Commissioners in no doubt as to the intentions of France. If there was really anything in these French intrigues, the evil designs were so unmasked in the letter that less danger was to be apprehended. As to the renunciation of the fisheries,

which the French Legation in America had probably been instructed to promote, Marbois writes to his government: —

“ But Mr. Samuel Adams is using all his endeavors to raise in the State of Massachusetts a strong opposition to peace, if the Eastern States are not thereby admitted to the fisheries, and in particular to that of Newfoundland. Mr. Adams delights in trouble and difficulty, and prides himself in forming an opposition against the government whereof he is himself President.<sup>1</sup> His aims and intentions are to render the minority of consequence; and at this very moment he is attacking the Constitution of Massachusetts, although it be in a great measure his own work. But he has disliked it, since the people have shown their uniform attachment to it. It may be expected that, with this disposition, no measure can meet the approbation of Mr. Samuel Adams; and if the States should agree relative to the fisheries, and be certain of partaking of them, all his measures and intrigues would be directed towards the conquest of Canada and Nova Scotia; but he could not have used a fitter engine than the fisheries for stirring up the passions of the Eastern people, by renewing this question which had lain dormant during his two years' absence from Boston. He has raised the expectations of the people to an extravagant pitch. The public prints hold forth the importance of the fisheries. The reigning toast in the East is, ‘ May the United States ever maintain their rights to the fisheries.’ It has often been repeated in the deliberations of the General Court, ‘ No peace without the fisheries.’ However clear the principle may be in this matter, it would be useless, and even dangerous, to attempt informing the people through the public papers. But it appears to me possible to use all means for preventing the consequences of success to Mr. Samuel Adams and his party; and I take the liberty of submitting them to your discernment and indulgence.”<sup>2</sup>

Few as are the memorials of Samuel Adams's personal actions, especially after he finally left Congress, this letter, intended to convey to the French Court the feelings of America on an all-absorbing question, is particularly interesting. John

<sup>1</sup> He was President of the Senate.

<sup>2</sup> M. Marbois to the Count de Vergennes, Philadelphia, March 13, 1782.

Adams, writing on this subject thirty years afterwards, with the printed letter probably at hand, says: "I cannot dismiss this letter of M. Marbois without observing that his philippic against Mr. Samuel Adams is a jewel in the crown of that patriot and hero, almost as brilliant as his exception from pardon in General Gage's proclamation."<sup>1</sup> So much importance did Samuel Adams attach to the fisheries, that he would rather have no peace with Britain than that she should be permitted to dictate terms respecting the mutual right to them. In his funeral discourse Thacher says of his independence and decision of character: "It was from this manly, open principle, at the close of the war, he opposed a peace with Britain, unless the Northern States retained their full privilege in the fishery, though it is credibly reported such a peace was then patronized by the French Ministry." The value of the fisheries was estimated at the close of the Revolution even higher than in after times. Massachusetts was then in her industrial interests the most considerable of the States; and her fisheries, until the war, had given employment to a far greater proportion of her population than at present. The solicitude for their preservation was greatly enhanced by the supposed inattention of the Southern members of Congress to a matter which was undervalued out of New England, and lost weight in comparison with other interests claiming national attention. After the letter of Marbois had been published in America, Mr. Adams thus referred to it while writing to a friend at Philadelphia: —

"I am indebted to you for several letters which I have not acknowledged. The anecdote you gave me in one of them, relating to Mr. M. Mercer and Colonel Griffin in Virginia, was very diverting to me. The people in this part of the continent would never have fixed upon the names of L. L. or A. to hold up to a public assembly as the heads of the British interest in America. It would not have been sooner believed here than another story I have heard, that a certain French politician of consideration in America had

<sup>1</sup> John Adams's Works, I. 673.

expressed his high displeasure with Mr. S. A. for stirring up his countrymen to attend to the importance of our retaining a common right in the Newfoundland fishery. Many wonderful tales are, and will be told, some of which a sight of the secret journals of Congress would unravel. I think the sooner those journals are published the better. The people at large ought to know what that illustrious body has been doing for them, and the part each member has acted."<sup>1</sup>

Fortunately, John Adams was at Paris, the only one of the Commissioners thoroughly alive to the vital necessity of the fisheries to Massachusetts, where most of his life had been passed, and the desires and welfare of whose people were always near to his heart. Besides the cod and other coast fisheries, the whaling business, though much impaired by the war, was still of importance; and New England had, not long before, surpassed all the rest of the world in the courage and adventurous spirit of her seamen and the extent of her enterprise. A number of the inhabitants of Nantucket applied to Samuel Adams to procure some indulgence from Congress, owing to the distresses caused by the war. Concluding a letter on this subject to Arthur Lee, he says: "You are sensible of the absolute dependence of this State upon the fishery for its trade, and how great an advantage will accrue from it to the United States, if they ever intend to have a navy. I hope our peace-makers are instructed, by all means to secure a common right in it."<sup>2</sup>

The negotiations at Paris were continued until towards the close of the year, when the treaty was signed, recognizing the independence of the United States, adjusting the mutual rights to the territories, providing in some measure for the restitution of the confiscated estates of the Loyalists, and establishing the Mississippi as the western, and Nova Scotia the northern and eastern boundaries.

At the meeting of the Legislature in the winter of 1782,

<sup>1</sup> S. Adams to a person unknown, Boston, April 21, 1783.

<sup>2</sup> S. Adams to A. Lee, Boston, Feb. 10, 1783.



Mr. Adams, despite his resignation and repeatedly expressed desire for a continuance in Massachusetts, was re-elected to Congress, and a letter from the two Houses, in joint convention, was sent, desiring to know if he would accept the office. He says, in reply : —

“In obedience to the order of the Honorable Court, requiring me to inform them whether I accept the seat in Congress for this Commonwealth to which I have been elected, I return my answer in the negative. Having served in that department more than seven years with much fatigue, and at a great distance from my family, I now beg to be relieved, and that another may be appointed in my room, assuring the Honorable Court that I esteem the repeated instances of their confidence the greatest honor, and, next to the consciousness of my own fidelity, the greatest happiness of my life.

“SAMUEL ADAMS.

“BOSTON, Feb. 20, 1782.”

A few of his friends put his name forward this year as a candidate for Governor, but he seems to have interested himself very little personally in the matter, and fell far behind Hancock, who was elected. He resumed, however, his place in the Senate, of which he was again chosen President. The original documents and rough drafts of bills and resolutions, preserved in the State archives, indicate his revision in many instances. In fact, as long as he remained a member of the Senate, his peculiar handwriting appears in amendments and marginal notes on the manuscript state papers. As presiding officer of that august body, he is said to have been particularly happy, and given uninterrupted satisfaction ; and his intimate knowledge of parliamentary usages, together with a never-failing courtesy of demeanor, was borne in memory many years by some of his fellow-members. He was very tenacious of the dignity of the Senate during his Presidency. A degree of formality, which would now be ridiculed, was then the invariable accompaniment of business. Messages from one House to the other

were carried by members especially appointed for the purpose, sometimes by a committee of several, whose chairman acted as spokesman, as in Colonial times. Before being admitted the messenger was announced by the doorkeeper, who stood with his hand upon the latch.

“He was accidentally absent one day when a venerable member of the House was in attendance with a message. A junior member of the Senate, who knew no difference in rank between a doorkeeper and a Senator, seized the door and announced the message, and considered himself as having performed a very kind and serviceable act, until the indignation of the President, Samuel Adams, terrified the astonished member, by threatening an expulsion for betraying the dignity of his station and the body to which he belonged.”<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Adams, from about middle life, was more or less affected with a constitutional tremulousness of voice and hand, peculiar to his family, which sometimes continued for several weeks together, and then disappeared for as long a time. His handwriting indicates the existence and the intervals of this visitation; and in several of his letters, after the Revolution, he excuses himself from a lengthy correspondence by “his trembling hand,” — “a tremor which,” says a contemporary, “was never communicated to his *soul*.” Gordon, describing the celebrated scene with Hutchinson, refers to this;<sup>2</sup> and the affidavit of Richard Sylvester, in the winter of 1769, forwarded by Hutchinson to the Ministry in evidence against

<sup>1</sup> Austin's Life of Gerry, I. 474.

<sup>2</sup> Gordon's American Revolution, I. 288. See also Austin's Life of Gerry, I. 359. The kindness of Professor Silliman supplies the following extract from a hitherto unpublished letter of John Adams to John Trumbull, dated March 18, 1817. The letter will appear in full in Professor Fisher's forthcoming Memoirs of Professor Silliman the elder.

“Who will paint Samuel Adams at the head of ten thousand freemen and volunteers, with his quivering, paralytic hands, in the Council Chamber, shaking the souls of Hutchinson and Dalrymple, and driving down to the Castle the two offending regiments which Lord North ever afterwards called ‘Sam Adams's regiments.’”

*Facsimiles of Signatures.*

Samuel Adams Son of Samuel Adams Esq,  
born the 16<sup>th</sup> Day of September 1722

*October 1722 from the family bible*

Samuel Adams  
December 6<sup>th</sup> 1764.

Sam Adams

*Declaration of Independence 1776.*

In Senate June 22<sup>nd</sup> 1787 —

read and nonconcurred  
S Adams Prefect

rec<sup>d</sup> Jan 7 28<sup>th</sup> 1806

1796 S Adams

*Governor of Massachusetts.*

S Adams

*June 1801.*



Adams of treason, also alludes to it.<sup>1</sup> His daughter and grandchildren in old age were equally affected. To the end of his days he continued to wear garments in the style of the Revolution, which, added to his gravity of aspect and dignity of address, gave an impressiveness to his remarks, not lessened by a very clear and decisive manner of speaking, while the tremulousness of voice accorded with his veteran appearance. John Adams, writing to his kinsman from the Hague this year, says : —

“The great work of peace advances slowly. Our excellent friend, Mr. Laurens, has declined acting on the commission on account of his ill health, an excuse that I might allege perhaps with equal reason for transmitting a resignation of all my employments, for I am really in a very feeble state. I have returned to my old physician, a saddle-horse ; and if his skill does not restore me, I shall certainly try the air of the Blue Hills.

“This moment comes in an invitation to sup with the Prince and Princess of Orange at his country-seat, which they call the *Maison du Bois*, this evening. All this is right. The Sons of Liberty have the best right of any people under heaven to dine and sup with this family. I wish you could be of the party. I always think of you when I see any of the portraits of this family. William the First looks much like you.”<sup>2</sup>

Throughout this year Mr. Adams appears, by the Boston records, to have presided at many town meetings ; and on some days he left the chair repeatedly to take part in the debates.

With the cessation of hostilities and the negotiations for peace, the necessary taxations for meeting State and national liabilities came more urgently before the country. Liberty had been achieved, but at a price involving entire communities in financial ruin. Massachusetts seems particularly to have suffered. Her own debt, at the close of the war, when consolidated and added to the obligations

<sup>1</sup> London State Paper Office, America and West Indies, Vol. 152.

<sup>2</sup> John to Samuel Adams, June 15, 1782. The resemblance in the portraits has been remarked by others.

due to the officers and soldiers, amounted to upwards of one and a half millions of pounds. The State's proportion of the Federal debt was at least a million and a half, while every town had been more or less drained of its substance to support the army. Before the war the State debt had fallen short of one hundred thousand pounds. An aggregate of more than three millions among a population of but three hundred and sixty thousand people was an enormous weight, for which the priceless blessings of freedom seemed to many hardly an adequate compensation. Private debts had accumulated to an amazing extent in the effort to meet the taxes; and when recourse was had to the law for collecting such indebtedness, dissatisfaction was manifested in some of the interior counties. The confusion of the times had served as an excuse for some, or had prevented others from discharging their obligations.

These were not the only causes which led to the succeeding public difficulties. That laxity of manners and dissipation which Samuel Adams had continually feared would sap the foundations of public morality, and consequently of public liberty, and against which his letters had for some years warned his friends in Massachusetts, had been alarmingly developed by the war, and with the return of peace was becoming still more prevalent. Minot, the contemporary historian of the rebellion the seeds of which were this year germinating, says: —

“The usual consequences of war were conspicuous upon the habits of the people of Massachusetts. Those of the maritime towns relapsed into the voluptuousness which arises from the precarious wealth of naval adventurers. An emulation prevailed among men of fortune to exceed each other in the full display of their riches. This was imitated among the less opulent classes of citizens, and drew them off from those principles of diligence and economy which constitute the best support of all governments, and particularly of the republican. Besides which, what was most to be lamented, the discipline and manners of the army had vitiated the taste, and relaxed the industry of the yeomen. In this disposi-

tion of the people to indulge the use of luxuries, and in the exhausted state of the country, the merchants saw a market for foreign manufactures. The political character of America, standing in a respectable view abroad, gave a confidence and credit to individuals heretofore unknown. This credit was improved, and goods were imported to a much greater amount than could be consumed and paid for.”<sup>1</sup>

Extravagance in living at this time is said to have exceeded anything of the kind then known in the history of Massachusetts. Hancock, as Chief Magistrate, led the way in a series of routs, balls, and glittering reunions, entirely incompatible with the stern spirit of republicanism which had produced and sustained the Revolution. His ostentation, profuse hospitality, and a natural desire to surround his office with consequence and eclat, led him to extremes ill suited to the distresses of the people he was called to govern, to whom, from his conspicuous station, he should have offered a very different example. Adams, though far from being a bigoted opponent of innocent pleasures, saw with misgivings the tendency of the style of life inaugurated under the new government; and on his arrival from Congress at once commenced, with the assistance of a few friends, to stem the tide of dissipation. But Boston, after the Revolution, was not that embodiment of rigid principle which started into action against the Stamp Act, and followed the “Chief Incendiary” through the trials and dangers of the ten years preceding the war. Most of the leading patriots were dead or away in foreign lands; and the masses who once composed the meetings at Faneuil Hall and the Old South, and looked to the original leaders for guidance, were thinned by the war. These efforts to effect a moral reform were not attended with much success, though public meetings at which Mr. Adams presided were held on the subject;<sup>2</sup> and he attempted to effect something

<sup>1</sup> Minot's Insurrections in Massachusetts, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Boston Town Records, 1780, 1781.

by combinations among families. Writing to a friend on the increasing levity of public manners, he says:—

“It was asked in the reign of Charles the Second of England, How shall we turn the minds of the people from an attention to their liberties? The answer was, By making them extravagant, luxurious, and effeminate. Hutchinson advised the abridgment of what are called English liberties by the same means. We shall never subdue them, said Bernard, but by eradicating their manners and the principles of their education. Will the judicious citizens of Boston be now caught in the snare which their artful, insidious enemies, a few years ago, laid for them in vain? Shall we ruin ourselves by the very means which they pointed out in their confidential letters, though even they did not dare openly to avow them? Pownall, who was indeed a mere fribble, ventured to have his riots and his routs at his own house to please a few boys and girls. Sober people were disgusted at it, and his Privy-Councillors never thought it prudent to venture so far as expensive balls. Our Bradfords, Winslows, and Winthrops would have revolted at the idea of opening scenes of dissipation and folly, knowing them to be inconsistent with their great design in transplanting themselves into what they called this ‘outside of the world.’ But I fear I shall say too much. I love the people of Boston. I once thought that city would be the *Christian Sparta*. But alas! will men never be free? They will be free no longer than while they remain virtuous. Sydney tells us, there are times when people are not worth saving; meaning, when they have lost their virtue. I pray God this may never be truly said of my beloved town.”<sup>1</sup>

There will doubtless be many ready to assert that Adams held an impracticable idea of public virtue; but it was very nearly realized before the Revolution; had it not been, that contest never could have been conceived and successfully accomplished. The terrible ordeal through which our country has just passed has been traced by acute reasoners to the decline of the public morality essential to freedom; and the historian in future generations may found his the-

<sup>1</sup> S. Adams to J. Scollay.



ory of the great Rebellion upon the extravagance, irreligion, and universal depravity of the age. That frugality and economy which Samuel Adams endeavored to inculcate was defeated by the conspicuous examples of the Governor and some of the wealthy families, by whom the efforts of Adams and those of his friends who still adhered to the old code of morality and frugal habits were derided as Utopian. Though the disturbances which succeeded cannot be entirely traced to these examples, it is certain that they were in no small degree attributable to such causes. Returned Revolutionary soldiers, and others who had suffered in the public cause, contrasted their poverty with the extravagance and dissipation of those who were profiting by the war. The results were such as to threaten the destruction of all that had been attained in the preceding twenty years' struggle.

The first symptoms of any outbreak in Massachusetts, resulting from the financial burdens imposed by the Revolution, appeared soon after the close of the war. Insurrections caused by the action taken by Congress to meet the public liabilities, and the executions issued by the courts for the payment of private demands, had arisen this year in Hampshire County. The courts of Northampton were menaced with violence, and the effect was to retard the collection of taxes throughout the State. In June, demonstrations of lawlessness on a more formidable scale occurred; bodies of armed malecontents appeared in the field against the legal authorities, and collisions took place between the rioters and the State forces in the vicinity of South Hadley, which resulted only in a few wounds on either side. The mob outnumbering the government party, the latter were taken prisoners, but were released on the road to Old Hadley. There the insurgents, finding their opponents rapidly collecting, and all the boats being secured on the west side of the river, they turned towards Amherst, where the advance of the government ranks fell upon their rear, and a second skirmish ensued. By the vigilance of the officers, both parties were

prevented from firing, and only one man was badly wounded. The leader of this mob was the notorious Samuel Ely, who had been already indicted at the session of the Supreme Judicial Court at Northampton for an attempt to prevent the sitting of the Court of Common Pleas at that place.<sup>1</sup> He urged in his defence the authority of a popular convention, which seems to have taken the law into their own hands in Western Massachusetts. While under sentence of the court, Ely, who pleaded guilty to the indictment, had been released from prison by the mob, and was now apparently their ring-leader. He effected his escape, however, pending the proposals of the rioters to repair to Northampton and choose a joint committee to arrange matters, if possible, without bloodshed. The committee met, and agreed that three hostages should be given for the return of Ely, and the mob promised to disperse. On the 15th, however, they assembled at Hatfield, and marched to Northampton to effect the release of their hostages. Despatches having been sent to the adjacent towns on Sunday morning, the 16th, some twelve hundred men, under General Parks, were mustered, including a small detachment of Continental troops and a light piece of artillery, and marched to Northampton for the support of government. The opposite party, consisting of about half that number, were surprised, surrounded, and captured. Willing to spare the effusion of blood, another agreement was made between mutually appointed committees, when, the mob having dispersed at a watchword, the State forces were dismissed after receiving the thanks of the General for their alacrity and attention to orders, and civil war was thus temporarily averted.<sup>2</sup>

These disturbances, fomented by a few fanatical malecontents, were the commencement of Shays's rebellion, which grew into such alarming proportions four years afterwards.

<sup>1</sup> Minot's Insurrections, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> A detailed account of these riots is contained in the Independent Ledger for July 1, 1782. "Correspondence from Springfield, June 25."

Appreciating the circumstances under which the public dissatisfaction had arisen, the General Court were determined to avert any serious internal dissensions at this critical period, by making every reasonable concession within the bounds of prudence and consistent with the dignity of government. One of the methods of relieving private debtors was the passage of the Tender Act, in July of this year, by which debts were made payable in other property than money, so that executions might be legally satisfied by neat cattle, and other enumerated articles. The act, however, had an entirely opposite effect from that intended. Its constitutionality was questioned, and it tended to destroy that implicit reliance upon the inviolability of legal engagements between debtor and creditor, ever necessary in a well-ordered government, and led the way to open attacks upon the courts, and defiance of the constituted authorities during the succeeding rebellion. After the establishment of republican institutions in America, Samuel Adams felt the most intense jealousy of any infringement upon the letter of the law. The great experiment of self-government was now to be tested before the curious gaze of the world; and he viewed with resentment the first signs of an attempt to harm the structure newly erected by the will and suffrages of the people. An armed array against the Constitution he could scarcely find it in his heart to forgive, even in this early instance. But, though at a subsequent period he inexorably advocated the execution of the leaders in the rebellion of 1786, he was disposed to show forbearance in this incipient outbreak, with the belief that such a course would convince the insurgents of their error, without having recourse to that severity which his more rigid sense of justice would have favored. Though several minor disturbances followed the riot, involving the violent rescue of some who had been arrested as ringleaders in the late troubles, the General Court in the next session chose to pardon all the offenders, and undoubtedly by their conciliatory

measures encouraged the disaffected to engage in the greater rebellion of 1786. On the eve of adjournment in the present instance, the Legislature, on the motion of Samuel Adams, appointed a committee to examine into the causes of complaint. The resolution, which is singularly lenient in tone, is as follows :—

“Whereas it hath been represented to the General Court that an uneasiness has lately taken place in the minds of some of the inhabitants of the county of Hampshire, and it is of importance still to preserve the union which has so remarkably prevailed ; *Resolved*, That a committee be appointed to repair to the county of Hampshire, who are hereby authorized and directed to take such measures as to them shall appear eligible ; to call before them such persons in the said county as they shall think proper ; to inquire into the grounds of dissatisfaction ; to correct misinformations ; to remove groundless jealousies ; and to make report to the General Assembly (or in case they should not be sitting, to the Governor and Council) of their doings, and what further measures are necessary to be taken in the premises.”

The projector of this conciliatory committee was made its chairman. The Senate on the next day passed the following order :—

“*Ordered*, That the Honorable Samuel Adams, with such as the Honorable House shall join, be a committee to repair to the county of Hampshire for the purposes expressed in a resolve of the General Court of the 2d instant, and report as in the said resolve is mentioned.”<sup>1</sup>

The House appointed Nathaniel Gorham and Artemas Ward. It is believed that only Adams and Ward proceeded on this mission. In the following September both were paid their expenses out of the public treasury. They were at Hatfield in July, and probably held examinations in several of the adjacent towns ; but the most diligent inquiry has brought to light very little relative to their proceedings, nor has their Report to the Legislature or Council been

<sup>1</sup> Journal of the Massachusetts Assembly, July, 1782.

discovered.<sup>1</sup> Thacher, after mentioning the fidelity of Adams in the office of President of the Senate, says of this mission : —

“ While in this station, he performed an important service to his country ; for commotions having arisen in the Western counties, he with several other gentlemen were joined in a committee to visit the disaffected places, and to quiet by their authority and influence the begun sedition. This trust was executed with such propriety and firmness that every trace of disturbance immediately vanished. Thus were the seeds of a dangerous rebellion crushed in embryo ; and the more important was this benefit to this country, as the war between America and Great Britain actually existed.”<sup>2</sup>

On the 4th of July a committee consisting of some of the principal members of the Legislature, with Samuel Adams as their chairman, was appointed “ to consider what measures were to be taken to reduce the expenses of government, show the best method of supplying the public treasury, and reforming the state of the finances.” The session was now drawing to a close ; and in the interval the committee confided the affair to their chairman, who, with James Sullivan, prepared a voluminous report. A copy exists among the papers of Mr. Adams, but Sullivan asserts that he assisted in its preparation. Among its recommendations is the establishment of customs and imposts as the sole resource remaining for sustaining public credit and meeting the public obligations.<sup>3</sup> A year later, Mr. Adams, with a small party in Massachusetts, found himself opposed to a very general feeling in the State against a similar measure, when recommended by Congress as a means of recruiting the Federal treasury.

<sup>1</sup> The action of this committee is alluded to in Tudor's *Life of Otis*, p. 258, where it appears that a convention, composed of two hundred, met the committee at Hatfield. The members were addressed by Mr. Hawley with such tact and ability that the rebels renounced their dangerous intentions, and signed a petition to the Governor and Council for pardon.

<sup>2</sup> Thacher's *Discourse*, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Amory's *Life of Sullivan*, I. 131.

The investigating committee remained in Hampshire County probably about a fortnight. A portion of this time Mr. Adams is believed to have been the guest of Colonel Phelps of Hadley. The Legislature appropriated £ 40 for their expenses on the mission.

Until that body met again, there was little rest for those who had taken upon themselves a variety of onerous duties, forming a part of the business of the last and the approaching sessions. To meet the requisitions of Congress, it was necessary to give prompt attention to collecting the Continental tax, which, however disagreeable it might be to an already overburdened people, was vital to the very being of the Federal power. Massachusetts, groaning under the load, still contributed men and money. But the difficulty of collecting the tax, even where the quota was only two hundred thousand pounds, affords some idea of the crushing burdens, and accounts in some measure for the troubles in the interior. The requisition of Congress, the act for which passed in October of the previous year, called for eight millions of dollars; but at the close of 1782 less than half a million had been obtained from all the States. Massachusetts appointed a certain number of commissioners to collect this tax; and Samuel Adams and Nathaniel Gorham, in the name of the General Assembly, despatched circulars to the most influential men, who were selected for the business. Excuses presently began to come back in answer, and many entirely disregarded the duties thus imposed upon them. Most of the replies are directed to Mr. Adams; and if all were published in a volume, they would afford an interesting statement of the financial distress then prevailing in all parts of Massachusetts.

With these commissions were forwarded the printed resolutions of the Legislature on the subject, and a circular letter to the selectmen and assessors of the several towns. One of the appointees, replying to Mr. Adams, represents the difficulty of obtaining even the smallest sum, the scarcity of

money, and the general murmuring at any continued taxation.<sup>1</sup> Another says: "I received some time in August last a resolution of Court, by which I had the honor of being appointed one of the commissioners to expedite the payment of the Continental tax in this county. The urgent necessities of government were a sufficient inducement to me to do everything in my power to contribute to their relief." The commissioner then represents that he has taken active measures to collect, but that the people declared themselves unable to contribute. "So that upon the whole," he continues, "I have not been able to obtain a shilling. Groundless surmises and jealousies are not uncommon among a people involved like us in difficulties, and threatened with greater in this county, and this part of it especially."<sup>2</sup> The writer thereupon desired to have some person appointed in his place. Another writes: "I found the Continental tax in a neglected state, the previous steps to payment not taken; but, in a few instances, the collectors were without warrants for collecting, some without rate bills. In some towns the number of collectors was not completed, in some the rates not posted, in others but in part, and no collections made in any."<sup>3</sup> This was the burden of nearly all the replies; and the aggregate sum collected was so inconsiderable that, during the time expended in these exertions, the State was obliged to borrow, and pledge the tax for payment.

<sup>1</sup> David Mosely to Samuel Adams and Nathaniel Gorham, Westfield, Oct. 7, 1782.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Nye to Samuel Adams, Sandwich, Sept. 19, 1782.

<sup>3</sup> Cotton Tufts to Samuel Adams, Weymouth, Sept. 24, 1782.

## CHAPTER LVI.

Negotiations in Paris.—Hopes in England of avoiding a total Recognition of American Independence.—British Intrigues for a Treaty distinct from France.—Adams's decisive Resolutions.—Massachusetts determines to prosecute the War until American Independence is recognized and established.—Congress follows the Example.—Adams opposes Illicit Trade with the Enemy.—His Circular Letter and Resolutions.—The French Army embark at Boston.—Congratulatory Correspondence between Washington and the Legislature.—Adams contemplates America as a Nation.—His Hopes for the Future.—Dissatisfied with the Treaty.—Deplorable Condition of the Federal Finances.—The Continental Impost Bill opposed in Massachusetts.—Adams supports it.—He objects to admitting the Refugees to Citizenship.—His Reasons.

IN the mean time the treaty with Great Britain was still pending in Paris. Sir Guy Carleton was appointed Commander-in-Chief in America, and, with Admiral Digby, attempted to induce Congress to agree to a separate treaty; but that body refused to negotiate except in concert with their allies, who had so signally assisted in promoting the happy issue of the war. It was at first the determination of George the Third, which he would "never relinquish but with his crown and life," to prevent a total, unequivocal recognition of the independence of America; and Lord Shelburne had hopes of recovering British sovereignty on terms similar to those granted to Ireland. There were those in England who flattered the King with this project of reunion; and perhaps the waiving by Congress, in their instructions to the Commissioners, of an express acknowledgment of independence had some weight in producing these hopes. Samuel Adams was in receipt of information respecting the negotiations, and was aware of the "private agents sent into America," to influence public opinion. The intention was fully understood, though Sir William Jones, who was the special



agent of Earl Shelburne for this purpose, returned to England from Paris without visiting America. The French Court, however, were still apprehensive that the Americans might be induced to make a separate peace, and on terms short of absolute independence. Enough had been seen of the active policy of British agents in former years to justify prompt action in so prominent a State as Massachusetts, whose example thrown early into the scale would do much to counteract such designs. Dr. Franklin advised Congress of his suspicions of Sir William Jones's plans; but his letter, written late in June, did not reach America until some time after Mr. Adams had received intelligence to the same effect. Shortly before the adjournment, he drew up a resolution expressing the sense of the Massachusetts Legislature, and indicative of that determined spirit which from the beginning had marked his counsels.<sup>1</sup>

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS,  
IN SENATE, July 4th, 1782.

Whereas the King of Great Britain, despairing to effect the subjugation of the United States of North America by menaces and the violence of a cruel and vindictive war, entertains the idea of effecting his purpose by artfully disseminating the seeds of disunion among ourselves, and detaching some of these United States, or some bodies of men therein, from the common cause, and from a connection with our illustrious ally, —

*Resolved unanimously,* That every idea of deviating from the treaty of the United States with his most Christian Majesty in the smallest article, or of listening to the proposals of accommodation with the Court of Great Britain in a partial and separate capacity, shall forever be rejected by us with the greatest abhorrence and

<sup>1</sup> This subject had given some anxiety to Gerard, the French Minister, soon after his arrival in 1778. In reply to a letter from him on the possibility of a treaty with Great Britain, separately from France, a committee, including Samuel Adams, was appointed to reassure the Envoy. The report says, in the most positive terms, that "these United States will not conclude either truce or peace with the common enemy, without the formal consent of their ally first obtained." (Journals of Congress, Jan. 14, 1779.)

detestation. And as we engaged in the present war with a solemn determination to secure, if possible, the rich blessings of freedom to the present and future generations, — a determination which we are firmly persuaded was suitable to the dignity of our nation and the precepts of our religion, and which we therefore reflect on with the highest satisfaction, — so will we persevere in our utmost exertions to support the just and necessary war we are engaged in; and, with the aid of that almighty and most merciful Being who has ever appeared for us in our distress, we will prosecute the war with unremitting ardor, until the independence of the United States shall be fully recognized and established.

Sent down for concurrence,

SAM. ADAMS, *President.*

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

July 4th, 1782.

Read and unanimously concurred in,

NATHANIEL GORHAM, *Speaker.*

Approved: JOHN HANCOCK.<sup>1</sup>

In October, Congress received the letters of Jay, La Fayette, and Franklin, exposing the intrigues of the British agents at Paris to effect a treaty independent of France, and justifying all the fears of dangerous consequences expressed in these Massachusetts resolutions, which had meanwhile been extensively published in the American press. Mr. Adams had also written on the subject to Arthur Lee, now a member of Congress. On the 4th of October Congress passed its resolutions, reiterating the determined spirit of Massachusetts, and resolving to conclude no peace without the assent of France. Renouncing its policy of the previous year, Congress now expressed its determination to prosecute the war with vigor, until the combined arms of France and the United States should accomplish a peace based upon the absolute sovereignty and independence of America. And to guard against the machinations of the enemy, the respective

<sup>1</sup> This paper is interesting as containing the autographs of the two proscribed patriots, written exactly six years after the Declaration of Independence.

States were recommended to seize all British emissaries and spies, and bring them to condign punishment.<sup>1</sup>

A disposition to indulge in the use of luxuries, and the consequent market created for foreign manufactures, for which, owing to the decline in home industry during the war, only specie could be exchanged, was one of the evils which Mr. Adams had feared as the struggle drew towards a close. As these expensive habits increased, competition in trade induced many unscrupulous persons to violate the law against importing British manufactures; and a considerable illicit trade was already established along the coast. This was increasing to such an extent, under the influence of British emissaries, and the results, both in draining the country of specie and in corrupting the public sentiment, were so greatly to be feared, that Congress, on the 21st of June, recommended the Legislatures, or in case of their recess the Executives of the several States, to impress on their respective citizens at large, by every means in their power, the baneful consequences apprehended from a continuation of this hateful and infamous traffic.<sup>2</sup> Co-operating with Congress, Mr. Adams procured, on the 19th of August, a town meeting at Faneuil Hall, of which he was moderator, "to take into consideration what steps were proper to be taken on account of the alarming and destructive lengths to which the illicit trade with our enemies is now carried." On the 6th of September, the committee of which Mr. Adams was chairman reported a series of resolutions, and a circular letter from Boston to the other towns, for the suppression of a traffic disgraceful to the participants and injurious to the cause.

"The artful and insidious Cabinet of Britain, sensible of the inefficacy of their fleets and armies to enslave America, and hitherto disappointed in their expectations from bribery and corruption (engines which, to their astonishment, have proved of no use when

<sup>1</sup> Journals of Congress, October 4, 1782.

<sup>2</sup> Journals of Congress, June 21, 1782.

applied to the free sons of America, though in common the most successful of all means to subdue mankind to the will of tyrants), have, in the excess of their folly and lust of domination, adopted the absurd idea of subjugating America by throwing in upon us a flood of their manufactures, and encouraging a commercial intercourse between us and them. For this purpose, their admirals and generals appear to have assumed the characters of custom-house officers, brokers, and such others as may be necessary to facilitate their views. By this trade they expect to destroy that great, that mutual confidence so happily subsisting between us and our magnanimous allies; to revive that foolish predilection which we once had for British manufactures and British manners; to open to themselves new avenues and acquire fresh means of instilling the principles of Toryism, and sowing the seeds of disaffection among the weak and unwary; to send their emissaries into all parts of the continent to foment divisions, create distrust as to our rulers, and by the meanest and the vilest arts to destroy that happy union which has hitherto been, and while it continues cannot fail (under God) to be, *our sure rock of defence*; and above all, to drain us of our money, the sinews of war. Having drawn from us our medium in this way, having made their arrangements, posted their emissaries, and secured their partisans, they expect, by a violent run on our national bank, to annihilate at one blow our national credit and deprive us of all future means of defence. Such are clearly their views, and these are the mean arts which haughty, though fallen, Britain is compelled to make use of. To the disgrace of America, a few of her sons, blinded by the lure, and devoid of all principle, have snatched at the bait, and, misled by avarice, have taken the high-road to *infamy* and ruin.

“The United States in Congress assembled, sensible of these evils, and attentive to the safety of their constituents, have in every instance within their jurisdiction, by their ordinances, endeavored to suppress such illegal commerce, trade, and intercourse, and in other instances, recommended to the Legislatures of the several States to make effectual provision by laws for that purpose, and called on the people to give aid in carrying such laws into effect.

“The inhabitants of Boston in town meeting, determined ever to be watchful of their common rights and liberties, and attentive to the public safety, sensible of the evil and destructive tendency of such

trade and intercourse, impressed with the necessity of restraining it, of testifying their abhorrence of such base practices, and giving all possible aid in the execution of the laws, do enter into the following resolutions."

A series of ten resolutions was then adopted unanimously by the meeting, pledging itself to detect and bring to punishment all those who should import goods from any part of the British dominions or any goods of British manufacture; to uphold and countenance informers against a crime so injurious to their country, regarding them as characters highly deserving of respect and esteem; denouncing as enemies to American freedom all who should be concerned in such trade; instructing the Boston Representatives to call for an immediate revision of the laws respecting trade and intercourse with the enemy; urging all citizens to be watchful and vigilant in detecting illegally imported goods; recommending the forming of associations for such purposes; and adopting a circular letter containing the foregoing resolutions, and invoking the aid of every town in suppressing this shameful traffic. The printed address to the other towns was signed by the venerable William Cooper, who still held the office of town clerk.

"BOSTON, Sept. 6, 1782.

"GENTLEMEN, —

"The rapid and destructive progress of an illicit trade with the British, in their different ports on this continent, has filled the inhabitants of this town with the most alarming apprehensions. As it is not surprising that a cruel and insidious enemy, so often disgraced by the failure of their other efforts to accomplish the ruin of this country, should have recourse to this last expedient, from which they undoubtedly expect the most important benefits, it is easy to see, gentlemen, that the continuance of this pernicious traffic must necessarily involve the want of a sufficient medium for the common purposes of society, — a circumstance, should it unfortunately happen, which must soon destroy the pecuniary and indispensable resources of the government, and, by giving a deep wound to our military operations, so necessary for our defence, endanger the very being of this Commonwealth.

“ Impressed with these sentiments, this town has thought proper, at a meeting of its inhabitants, legally convened for this express purpose, to communicate the enclosed resolutions for your serious consideration, in the fullest confidence of your adopting such measures as, in giving vigor to the laws, must undoubtedly contribute to the total extirpation of such an unnatural commerce.

“ As we are sensible that the efficacy of the best plan for the attainment of so salutary an object must, at last, depend on the united efforts of the other towns in this government, we trust, in such an interesting conjuncture, that the patriotic ardor which has so long and uniformly distinguished the inhabitants of this State will induce the most zealous concurrence in these or similar measures, which can have no other object but the public good.”<sup>1</sup>

Such resolutions as these, and the ones introduced in July in the Legislature, proved to the world the unalterable determination of America to consider no propositions of peace with Great Britain short of total independence, and led the way to the resolutions adopted in October by Congress to the same effect. Mr. Adams was inflexible in his determination to exclude every Loyalist from a residence in the State, and was most stringent in his desire to see enforced the law of Congress against permitting any British subject to remain, or even to be naturalized; for his penetration discerned that, in most of these instances, the desire of acknowledgment was founded in no love of America, but in the anticipation of commercial advantages. When British spies and emissaries were busily at work to destroy the sentiment of independence as a basis of negotiation, he wished to see every vestige of Toryism banished from the country. During the late session of the Legislature, an English merchant, who had just arrived by the way of Holland, presented his petition for naturalization. The General Court refused it, and directed him to leave the State, but he subsequently had interest enough to obtain permission to apply to Congress for his papers. Mr. Adams wrote to Arthur Lee in Congress, explaining the circumstances.

<sup>1</sup> Boston Town Records, September, 1782.

“Some of our good citizens,” said he, “are disgusted with the favor shown to Mr. B——. They say that, being a partner of Messrs. Champion and Dickenson, the latter of whom is reported to have been always inimical to America, by his residence here he will probably be instrumental in the importation of as many English goods as he will be able to vend; or, in other words, that the new house in Boston will be nearly, if not quite, as convenient in time of war as the old house in London was in time of peace. Whether there will be any danger, Congress will judge. Jealousy is a necessary political virtue, especially in times like these. Such a plan would gratify those among us who are still hankering after the onions of Egypt, and would sacrifice our great cause to the desire of gain. What need is there of our admitting (to use the language of Congress) any British subject whatever? Congress surely had some good reason when they so earnestly cautioned us against it. Our citizens are in more danger of being seduced by art than subjugated by arms. I give you this notice, that you may have an opportunity of conversing on the subject in your patriotic circles (if you think it worth while) in season.”<sup>1</sup>

As Massachusetts had commenced the war of the Revolution, so at its close she was appropriately the place of embarkation for the departing French army, which marched from the Hudson, after the declaration of peace, and sailed from Boston in December of this year for the West Indies, under command of Baron Vioménil. The conduct of the French troops, from their first landing, had been truly that of “magnanimous allies.” Their marches had been attended with far less mischief than those of the American soldiery; and their supplies being paid for in cash, they had seldom or never resorted to pillaging as the Continental troops often did, or the seizure of supplies to be paid for by arbitration, which was at times authorized by Congress. Though not at all times successful, the French had contributed by their efforts very materially to the independence of the United States; and their whole conduct offered a favorable contrast to the atrocities of the British, as illustrated in the

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Adams to Arthur Lee, Nov. 21, 1782.

employment of savages against helpless communities, the hanging of prisoners, the ravishing of women, and the massacre of surrendering garrisons. The French troops remained several days in and around Boston. Among their officers was Count Segur, who mentions in his writings a visit to Samuel Adams. Desirous of testifying "the gratitude and respect of the town to the army and navy of his most Christian Majesty," Mr. Adams procured a town meeting, of which he was the moderator, and he and James Sullivan were appointed a committee to prepare an address to Baron Vioménil, pursuant to the object of the meeting.<sup>1</sup>

The Legislature, early in the next year, took occasion to congratulate Washington as Commander-in-Chief of the American armies, upon the auspicious event of peace and independence. The letter, which for the Senate and House was from Samuel Adams and Tristram Dalton, is not found among the Massachusetts archives, though the reply of Washington is on file, as follows: —

HEAD-QUARTERS, 29th March, 1783.

GENTLEMEN, —

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your joint letter of the 18th instant.

Happy, inexpressibly happy, in the certain intelligence of a general peace, which was concluded on the 20th of January last, I feel an additional pleasure in reflecting that this glorious event will prove a sure means to dispel the fears expressed by your Commonwealth for their northeastern boundary, that territory being by the treaty secured to the United States in its fullest extent.

I have to thank you for the justice you do me, to believe that my attention to all parts of the United States is extended in proportion to the magnitude of the object, and that no partial considerations have any influence on my mind.

You will permit me, gentlemen, on this occasion, to express my warmest congratulations to you, to the Senate, and Representatives of your Commonwealth, and through them to all its good citizens, whose prompt exertions in the general cause have contributed largely

<sup>1</sup> Boston Town Records, Dec. 7, 1782.



towards the attainment of the great and noble prize for which the United States have so long and so successfully contended.

With the highest respect and regard, I have the honor to be, gentlemen,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

GEO. WASHINGTON.

THE HONORABLE SAMUEL ADAMS AND TRISTAM DALTON, ESQUIRES.

Fervently and devoutly did Samuel Adams join in the exclamation of Washington, "Happy, inexpressibly happy, in the certain intelligence of a general peace." We have seen him struggling for a national independence up to the immortal Declaration which asserted it to the world, and aiding with all his powers in the arduous contest for its attainment. His letters show the solemn joy which animated his soul, as he contemplated the grand achievement and the vast future of his country.

"I thank God," he writes, "that I have lived to see my country independent and free. She may long enjoy her independence and freedom if she will. It depends on her virtue. She has gained the glorious prize, and it is my most fervent wish (in which I doubt not you heartily join me) that she may value and improve it as she ought." <sup>1</sup>

And again, to another correspondent:—

"We are now at peace, God be thanked, with all the world; and I hope we shall never intermeddle with the quarrels of other nations. Let the United States continue in peace and union; and in order to this, let them do justice to each other. Let there no longer be secret journals or secret committees. Let the debates in Congress be open, and the whole of their transactions published weekly. This will tend to the speedy rectifying mistakes, and preserving mutual confidence between the people and their representatives, and let care be taken to prevent factions in America, *foreign or domestic.*" <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S. Adams to R. H. Lee, Boston, Dec. 2, 1783.

<sup>2</sup> Boston, April 21, 1783.

Writing to John Adams at Paris relative to the terms of the treaty, which he had lately received, he says, in reference to Great Britain : —

“ The sooner a commercial treaty is settled with that nation the better, as it appears to me. Our General Court in the late session thought of making retaliation on England for her prohibiting importations from America into her West India Islands but in British bottoms. They were sensible of the difficulty in the way of the United States coming into general regulations of this kind, and have written to their delegates on the subject. Should the States agree to give Congress a more extensive power, it may yet be a great while before it is completed ; and Britain, in the mean time, seeing our trade daily reverting to its old channel, may think it needless and impolitic to enter into express stipulations in favor of any part of it, while she promises herself the whole without them.”<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Adams did not wholly approve of the treaty. He was convinced that both the independence which the United States had successfully maintained, and the acknowledged hopelessness of a continuance of the strife, on the part of Great Britain, warranted the demand of terms less ambiguous in themselves, and more favorable to American interests. Those restricting the commerce with the British West Indies were particularly distasteful to him, but peace under any honorable stipulations was of paramount importance.

The customary oration on the 5th of March, commemorative of the Massacre in 1770, was this year formally discontinued, and the 4th of July substituted as a day of celebration. Mr. Adams was as usual one of the committee to provide an orator for the occasion. In April, his name was brought forward by some of his friends as a candidate for Lieutenant-Governor, with Hancock as Governor. Thomas Cushing was his opponent ; and though Hancock was elected, Adams received but a small proportion of votes. But among twenty-three candidates for Senator from Suffolk County, he was re-elected by a considerable majority, and resumed his place as

<sup>1</sup> To John Adams, April 16, 1784.

presiding officer of that body. In May, he was one of the town's committee to draft instructions to the newly elected Representatives,<sup>1</sup> and in July he was on a committee of the Legislature with Bowdoin and Lowell to report at the next session on the claims of Massachusetts to the Western lands, which in part were subsequently ceded to the United States.

The momentous question of finance, which had been steadily increasing in magnitude as the war progressed, now claimed the chief attention of Congress. Hamilton, Madison, and Ellsworth, with Morris, the superintendent of finances, were well qualified to grapple with its difficulties. The failure of the Impost Bill of 1781 did not discourage a second attempt, which was made in April of this year, in the form of a bill to confer upon Congress the right to collect internal revenues from the several States. This seemed the only plan by which the sinking credit of the country could be maintained. Congress was authorized to levy moderate specific duties upon certain enumerated imported articles for a period of twenty-five years, the proceeds to be used exclusively for discharging the principal and interest of the war debt; and the States were recommended to appropriate a portion of their own revenues for the same purpose. The plan was sent forth with an address to the States, eloquently urging its adoption as a means of trying the great experiment of republicanism, for which the States were held responsible in the eyes of the world. Congress was powerless to enforce the collection of this or any Federal revenue, and the address was simply an appeal to the pride and moral sentiment of the people, through their Legislatures. It was one of a series of comprehensive projects conceived by patriotic statesmen, for more effectually nationalizing the country, rescuing it from financial confusion, and establishing a joint responsibility for the common debt. It was not wholly adopted, but the very proposal and the consequent agitation opened the way to greater results.

<sup>1</sup> Town Records for March, April, and May, 1763.

Deeply impressed with the deplorable bankruptcy of the country, and particularly with the distresses of the army, Washington urged upon Congress a commutation of the half-pay for life, which had been granted in the fall of 1780, into five years' full pay, the certificates for which were to be issued immediately. Already meetings of the officers of the army had been proposed to take into consideration the unhappy aspect of their affairs, and there was reason to fear alarming combinations against the authority of Congress. The commutation of half-pay which had been under discussion for some time, and had been strongly disapproved in New England, particularly in Massachusetts and Connecticut, was in agitation in Boston when the Impost Bill passed and was submitted to the States for ratification. Mr. Adams had been opposed while in Congress to the original grant of half-pay for life, and probably did not indorse the commutation, payable in one gross sum at the present moment of financial distress, though it would benefit his own son, Dr. Adams, who, on retiring from the army, at the close of the war, was one of the officers entitled to it.<sup>1</sup> But he did not allow his doubts of the good policy of the proposed measures to alter his conviction of the unquestionable obligation of the States to meet their pledged faith in the action of Congress. His views on this subject were explicitly given shortly after to correspondents in Connecticut, where these questions were discussed under great excitement. His opinion being particularly solicited, he advised a prompt support of the act in fulfilment of the public engagements with the army.

The General Assembly, representing the Massachusetts sentiment, had a majority against the proposed Impost Bill; and in July they addressed a letter to Congress pointing to the commutation and half-pay as a matter of general complaint in New England, and as a reason why the Massachusetts Legislature had not been able to agree in granting the impost duty. They promised to consider the subject again

<sup>1</sup> Saffell's Records of the Revolutionary War, p. 410.

at the next session. Sullivan was chairman of the committee appointed to draft this address, which is signed by Samuel Adams as President of the Senate, and Tristram Dalton as Speaker of the House. Mr. Adams was individually favorable to the Impost Bill, as the only method of providing Congress with the means of sustaining the general government. He strongly supported that of the previous year, as is shown in his correspondence with John Lowell, then in Congress; <sup>1</sup> and one of his friends termed the one now pending in the House "the darling child" of Mr. Adams. Congress, he held, should be supported; for, said he, "it is, and must be, the cement of the union of the States." His strict regard for the rights of individual States never caused him to lose sight of the authority necessarily vested in the presiding Legislature of the nation.

When the General Court convened, a committee, of which Mr. Adams was chairman, was appointed on the plan of the former Committee of Correspondence, for a more perfect interchange of opinion between the General Court and the Massachusetts delegation in Congress. Adams, writing to Gerry on this subject, says: —

"Mr. Appleton and Mr. Rowe are my colleagues in this business. The correspondence is to be very extensive. 'Any other important matter which relates to the being and welfare of the United States'! My bodily illness has prevented my engaging in it. I wish the delegates would begin. The welfare, and perhaps the being, of the United States, in my opinion, depends much upon Congress possessing the confidence of the people at large; that upon the administration of public affairs being manifestly grounded upon principles of equality and justice; or upon the people being assured that Congress merit their confidence. The war is now over, and the people turn their eyes to the disposition of their money, — a subject which I hope Congress will always have so clear a knowledge of as to be able at any time to satisfy the rational inquiries of the people. To prevent groundless jealousies, it seems necessary, not

<sup>1</sup> Historical Magazine, September, 1857; I. 261.

only that the principal in that department should himself be immaculate, but that care should be taken that no persons be admitted to his confidence but such as have the entire confidence of the people. Should a suspicion prevail that our high treasurer suffers men of bad principles or of no principles to be about him and employed by him, the fidelity of Congress itself would be suspected, and a total loss of confidence would follow. I am much concerned for the reputation of Congress, and have labored to support it, because that body is, and must be, the cement of the union of the States. I hope, therefore, they will always make it evident to reasonable men that their administration merits the public applause. Will they be able to do this if they should cease to be very watchful over men whom they trust in great departments, especially those who have the disposition of the public moneys? Power will follow the possession of money, even when it is known that it is not the possessor's property. So fascinating are riches in the eyes of mankind!"<sup>1</sup>

The Committee of Correspondence at this time received a letter from the delegates relating to the public finances, the half-pay and commutation, and the reduction of the civil list. The delegates intimated that, "whatever might be the abstract propriety of an impost for supplying the Continental treasury, yet, as the only mode for one State to secure redress for grievances by the union was to withhold supplies, it was prudent to delay the proposed impost until arrangements were effected," and that they had given such opinion to Congress.<sup>2</sup> This letter was not communicated to the Legislature, owing to a misapprehension on the part of the Committee, who had not met since receiving it. It was during the excitement attending the Impost Bill, and a committee of investigation was appointed by the Legislature, who summoned the Committee of Correspondence before them. Mr. Rowe, having denied all knowledge of the delegates' letter, was exonerated from blame. Mr. Adams alleged his feeble health, the pressure of business upon him as President of the Senate, and the recent examination of Mr. Higginson,

<sup>1</sup> S. Adams to E. Gerry, Sept. 9, 1783 (Austin's Life of Gerry, I. 408 - 410).

<sup>2</sup> Austin's Gerry, I. 412, 413.

which he thought superseded the necessity of any further information. Mr. Appleton's excuse, which was, that, having read the letter, he had put it into his pocket, and thought no more about it, was voted unsatisfactory by the Legislature; and at the ensuing election he lost his seat. There was nearly interest enough to subject even Mr. Adams to reproof, but his enemies did not succeed in reaching that point. His known partiality to the Impost Bill was associated with the suppression of the letter, the story was industriously spread, and was used against him at the polls the following year with great effect, on account of the inveterate repugnance of a large number of the inhabitants to increasing the State taxation for Federal purposes. Mr. Adams alludes to it in a letter to Mr. Gerry: —

“Your letter of the 11th of September, directed to the Committee, was through mere forgetfulness omitted to be communicated in season. This was attributed to an abominable design to withhold from the Court the sentiment of the delegates respecting the expediency of refusing to yield supplies to the Continental treasury, till justice should be done with regard to the old money now in our public treasury and private hands. I could not help diverting myself with the ebullition of apparent zeal for the public good on this occasion; and upon its being said by a gentleman in Senate that it was the subject of warm conversation among the people without doors, I observed, that the clamor would undoubtedly subside on the afternoon of the first Monday in April next.”<sup>1</sup>

Upon the arrival in America of the preliminary articles of a treaty with England, the enmity of the New England people against the Loyalists was again manifested. Efforts having been made this year in the Legislature to restore the refugees to their original rights, the Committee of Correspondence, Inspection, and Safety, at a public meeting, were instructed by Mr. Adams, who was especially appointed for that purpose, to write to the several towns in the Commonwealth, and desire them to come into resolves similar to

<sup>1</sup> S. Adams to E. Gerry (Austin's Gerry, I. 415).

those adopted by Boston town meeting. The resolves are direct in their hostility to the return of the Tories. The Committee are enjoined to oppose "to the utmost of their power every enemy to the just rights and liberties of mankind; and that after so wicked a conspiracy against these rights and liberties by certain ingrates, most of them natives of these States, and who have been refugees and declared traitors to their country, it is the opinion of this town that they ought never to be suffered to return, but excluded from having lot or place among us."<sup>1</sup> The arguments employed by Mr. Adams against the return of these people have been already given. In the following year the subject was renewed, but the bitterness against the Tories gradually decreased, and after a few years the estates were generally restored. Mr. Adams seems to have been constantly associated with the State legislation on the subject. In February, 1784, he was one of a large committee, composed of the principal gentleman of the Senate and House, to take into consideration the confiscated estates; and in March of the same year he was chairman of a committee appointed for similar purposes. In his opposition to the return of the Loyalists, he pursued what he deemed a consistent course towards them. It was founded in no feelings of personal animosity, but in an anxious care for the public welfare. Nor was he desirous of excluding them all. His action referred particularly to those inveterate, dangerous characters whose presence would certainly, in any future complications, prove firebrands in a community towards which they could entertain no friendly feelings. In forming the preliminary articles to the treaty with Britain, John Adams, as well as the other negotiators at Paris, steadily refused compensation to the Tories whose property had been destroyed in the war, unless the late enemy would make similar awards for the injuries done by their troops. The definitive treaty, in its fifth article, simply agreed that Con-

<sup>1</sup> Boston Town Records, April, 1783.



gress should "earnestly recommend" to the several Legislatures a restitution of the confiscated estates of Loyalists, and that no legal impediment should be placed in the way of such persons in the prosecution of their just rights. This was all that the American commission felt warranted to concede, with a knowledge of the popular sentiment at home. Soon after the required recommendation had been made, Samuel Adams thus wrote to his kinsman at Paris:—

"When the recommendations of Congress, in pursuance of the fifth article of the treaty, were received here, they were treated with great decency, and very seriously considered. They were construed differently by men of sense, who were above the influence of old prejudices, or of party or family connections. This difference, I suppose, was owing to certain ambiguities in the treaty, which I afterwards found had been acknowledged in a joint letter to Congress of the 18th July, in which it appeared that our negotiation had studiously avoided any expressions in the articles of the treaty which should amount to absolute stipulations in favor of the Tories.

"From the first sight I had of the articles, I have been of opinion that no such construction could fairly be put upon them, but that it would finally lie with the several Legislatures of the States how far it would be proper to show lenity to them; and I was happy in being confirmed in this opinion by an expression in your joint letter to Congress, September 10th: 'It is much to be wished that the legislators may not involve all the Tories in banishment and ruin, but that such discrimination may be made as to entitle the decisions to the approbation of disinterested men and dispassionate posterity.' In this view, I early inculcated moderation and liberality towards them as far as could be consistent with that leading principle of nature which ought to govern nations as it does individuals,—self-preservation. I cannot think that all can be admitted consistently with the safety of the Commonwealth. I gave you my reasons in my letter of November 4th. Nor can I believe you intended to be understood universally in your private letter above referred to. Some of them would be useful and good citizens; others, I believe, highly dangerous."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Samuel to John Adams, Boston, April 16, 1784.

The letter alluded to has not been found ; but the grounds of Mr. Adams's opposition to the restoration of those persons to citizenship sufficiently appear in his writings already quoted. His resolutions, adopted at the town meeting on the 6th of September, 1783, show his anxiety respecting British emissaries, and the dangerous power of the numerous Tories, whose wealth and political machinations were becoming sufficiently important to awaken apprehension. Adams always continued to be wary of such enemies to his country, whose treachery and avarice had prolonged the war and aided the cause of the foreign invader. He had known their pernicious influence before and during the Revolution ; and experience taught him that their presence while republican institutions were forming, while a democratic government was only an experiment, was justly to be feared by true Americans.

## CHAPTER LVII.

Negro Servitude in Massachusetts in the Olden Time. — The Slave-trade conducted between Boston and the Coast of Africa. — Public Sales of Slaves. — Disappearance of Slavery at the Revolution. — Adams's Views on Slavery. — Boston in the Last Century. — Appearance of the Town. — Society, Equipages, and Dress. — Domestic Life. — Industrial Classes. — Scenes in the Streets. — Shops, Buildings, and Signs. — Gallows, Pillory, Stocks, and Whipping-post. — Commerce, Ship-building, and Seamen. — Education. — Popular Literature. — Comparative Hardihood and Longevity in the Last and Present Century. — Washington retires to Private Life. — Definitive Treaty with Great Britain. — Republican Theories of Adams. — His Ideas of Heraldry, Pedigree, and Secret Associations. — Order of the Cincinnati. — He opposes it as Anti-democratic and Hereditary in Character. — The Half-pay and Commutation. — Determined Opposition to Commutation in New England. — Adams supports the Authority of Congress.

DURING the present year, the final case relative to negro slavery was decided by the highest judicial authority of Massachusetts, by which involuntary servitude was abolished in the State. Mr. Adams had always disapproved of a condition of humanity so repulsive to his ideas of liberty. Family tradition represents him as often conversing on this subject; and though he would not by word or deed attempt an interference with the institution as existing in the Southern States, knowing that such action would effectually defeat his grand object of American independence, he was uncompromising in his determination to eradicate the evil from New England.

Slaves were not only bought and sold in Massachusetts, but the slave-trade with the African coast and the West Indies was openly countenanced. Under the caption of "Just imported from Africa," Captain Gwin advertises in the Boston Gazette for July 13, 1761, "a number of prime young slaves from the Windward Coast, to be sold on board his ship lying at New Boston." In the same paper is offered

“a likely, hearty male negro child, about a month old, to be given away”; and again, “To be sold, a likely negro woman, about thirty-five years of age; a very good cook, understands household business, and can be recommended for her honesty.” Ephraim Smith on the same day advertises his run-away negro man-servant Peter. After a full description the owner continues: “Whoever shall apprehend the same negro fellow and commit him to any of his Majesty’s gaols, or secure him, so that his master may have him again, shall have five dollars reward, and all charges paid. All masters of vessels and others are cautioned not to carry off or conceal the said negro, as they would avoid the penalty of the law.” A year previous, we find in the Gazette: “To be sold, a Spanish Indian woman twenty-two years of age, who can do any household work; is sold because she is a notable breeder”; and “by inquiring of the printer, a fine negro boy can be heard of, to be given away.” On the same day Peter Chardon at Loudoun Place advertises his negro woman, twenty-nine years old, for sale. Harris and Aves, on Foster Hutchinson’s wharf, offer for sale four young negro men and one young girl, just imported from Barbadoes, together with a quantity of rum and sugar. Ebenezer Smith of Cambridge holds for sale his strong, hearty negro girl and her son, about a week old. Joseph Lynde of Malden, having lost his negro John, offers four dollars to any person who will catch and return him to his master. John is described as “a pock-broken fellow, a scar on one of his shins, has lost one of his fore teeth, and pretends to be a doctor.” Instances might be multiplied. The newspapers contain such advertisements up to about the year of the first Congress. The policy of the British government had been to encourage the slave-trade, and instructions were received by the royal Governors Bernard and Hutchinson to negative bills passed by the Legislature for its suppression. But though the sale and barter of slaves, and even the detestable commerce, was thus countenanced, slavery existed in little more than a mild

form, gradually dying out under the progress of democratic theories and the manifest superiority of free labor. In one instance, the local courts of the Province ordered a slave to be set at liberty who had been urged to sue for his freedom ; and the decision was based upon the recognized principle, that a slave becomes free upon touching English territory. Slave property, as the Revolution approached, had but little value in Massachusetts, and was steadily depreciating, so that the custom increased of giving away negro children to whoever would accept of them. The refusal by Mr. Adams of a present of this kind to his wife, in 1764, has already been mentioned. The terms upon which " Surry " was received were, that the girl should become free upon crossing his threshold.

Against the curse of the slave-trade he frequently raised his voice. Prior to the controversies with the mother country, he consulted and corresponded with the celebrated Dr. Samuel Hopkins of Newport, R. I., on the subject of the African slave-trade ; and the two had resolved upon a vigorous warfare against it through the press, when the Stamp Act and its consequences engrossed the attention of Adams to the exclusion of most other matters. Another eminent divine with whom he probably conversed on this topic was Samuel Fothergill, whose efforts long before the Revolution were directed towards the emancipation of slaves held by the Society of Friends in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The eloquence and solemnity of manner attributed to this preacher are thus referred to by one who seems to have heard Mr. Adams speak of his power. " You will conceive of his style and manner of speaking," says Mr. Matlack, " from a description by Samuel Adams of the effect of his prayer in the Old South in Boston. ' When he prayed,' said he to me, ' it seemed as if heaven and earth were brought together.' " <sup>1</sup> Mr. Adams was among those in the

<sup>1</sup> Timothy Matlack to William Findley, Jan. 11, 1817 (Collections of the Mass. Hist. Society, Second Series, VIII. 189).

Massachusetts Convention of 1788 who indorsed the prohibition of the slave-trade after 1808 by the Federal Constitution. He was unequivocally opposed by nature and education to human servitude, and none more ardently than he longed for its discontinuance; but the infancy of the country was not the time to jeopardize her yet untried institutions by an opposition which would then have been equally dangerous and unavailing.

A few persons are yet living whose recollection extends to the appearance of Boston in the latter part of the last century, — its quaint old buildings, relieved here and there in the newer districts with more modern architecture; its narrow, crooked streets, even then retaining some names loyally indicative of “good old Colony times”; the costume of its people, and their habits, amusements, and routine of life. Those customs exist now only in story and print; but to Americans they present not merely the charm of antiquity: they belong to an era and a race which gave a great and free country to posterity. The reminiscences of aged persons, added to the fugitive facts to be gathered from diaries, pamphlets, books, letters, and particularly the newspapers of those times, afford outlines for endless pictures of past generations. It is easy to carry the imagination far beyond the limits permitted by our work, among the townspeople in their daily pursuits, and to trace the gradual decline of old customs before the change of fashion, the progress of knowledge, and the improvements in the arts.

Prior to the Revolution, the conveniences of life were by no means equal to those existing after the restoration of peace, and the consequent expansion of commerce. Then, as if to offset the privations of the war, an era of unprecedented extravagance commenced, inaugurated by those who had grown rich by trade or privateering, who were imitated by others less able to incur such expenses. With this change many comforts and luxuries, before unknown, were freely introduced.

While the Colonies were yet at peace with the mother country, and no speck on the political horizon presaged the approaching storm, the style of living in the interior towns was more primitive. Dr. Hedge has lately depicted the contrast between the two centuries: —

“What was luxury then would be penance now. Picture to yourselves the style of living of a family of average means in those years, and compare it with the average style of to-day. House unpainted, uncarpeted, dimly lighted; cavernous firesides that appropriated half the heat, and gave out half the smoke; furnaces and stoves unknown; gas-light unimagined. For dress, the single state suit that lasted a lifetime, of broadcloth or brocade for festive occasions, with homespun coats and stuffed gowns for ordinary wear. For the board, the inevitable porridge and salted meats; coarse fare, served in coarse dishes, eaten with coarse implements; no grace of the table, save always the customary ‘grace before meat,’ that duly auspicated the homely meal. Such the prevailing style of the middle class in New England in 1758. Compare it with the way of life on the same plane of society at the present day; with our upholstery and warming apparatus and gas-light; with our changes of raiment; with the wardrobes of your wives and daughters, ay, and your maid-servants, the cost of which for a single family, if not for a single matron or miss, exceeds the entire sum allotted to the public expenses of this town, — schools, highways, constables, and all, — a hundred years ago.”<sup>1</sup>

This description, obtained from contemporary documents, or the recollections of those whose memory reached farthest into the last century, applied rather to country than to city life. Boston, during the Revolution, contained some sixteen thousand inhabitants. It was a trading, ship-building community, the scene of maritime industry, and bustling with active commerce. Its inhabitants were in many instances wealthy; and as idleness was disreputable, comparatively few instances of poverty were known. Numbers of the opulent citizens lived with elegance. The education of many young

<sup>1</sup> Seventeen Hundred Fifty-eight and Eighteen Hundred Fifty-eight: a New-Year's Discourse.

ladies was considered incomplete without the accomplishment of the spinnet or harpsichord. The most costly dresses were ordered from England. On public occasions, prominent wealthy citizens often treated assemblages of the people to hogsheads of wine or punch. "The soldiers," wrote Andrew Eliot in 1769, soon after the establishment of military rule in Boston, "are in raptures at the cheapness of spirituous liquors among us."

The advertisements in the newspapers before the Revolution afford some indication of the general condition of the people. Teas, dried fruits, coffee, wines in great variety, cocoa, chocolate, rum, brandy, ale, spices, sugars, and numerous luxuries and conveniencies, are offered for sale, and were evidently in common use among the people; and meats, fish, and game were of course plentiful and cheap. For furniture and wearing apparel the shopkeepers advertised paper-hangings, pictures, plushes, English damask, cambrics, Irish linens, China silks, crimson Genoa velvet, vest patterns, gloves, swords, fans, ribbons, feathers, lawns, lace, fine dyed jeans, figured silk cloaks, best Bellandine sewing silks, gartering, galloons, silk ferrets, and Prussian flowered silk bonnets. A community in the daily consumption of these and a thousand similar articles must necessarily have been commercially prosperous, and in the highest enjoyment of life. This is fully substantiated by a British traveller, who writes as early as 1741:—

"The conversation in this town is as polite as in most of the cities and towns of England; many of their merchants having traded into Europe, and those that stayed at home having the advantage of society with travellers; so that a gentleman from London would almost think himself at home at Boston when he observes the number of people, their houses, their furniture, their tables, their dress and conversation, which is perhaps as splendid and showy as that of the most considerable tradesman in London. Upon the whole, Boston is the most flourishing town for trade and commerce in the English America. Near 600 sail of ships have been laden here in a year for Europe and the British plantations. The goodness of the



pavement may compare with most in London; to gallop a horse upon it is three shillings and fourpence forfeit."<sup>1</sup>

The prosperity here described increased up to the time of the taxation troubles, when it gradually ceased, and years elapsed before the town recovered from the effects of the Revolution.

The furniture of the better sort of dwellings was often imported from England, particularly the finest clocks, many of which yet remain in proof of the excellence of the manufacture; feather-beds were used in the best houses, and bed clothing was commonly quilted and worked with beautiful designs; artists were liberally patronized for the adornment of dwellings. China ware and porcelain were in common use; and the remnants of the table-ware that have been preserved show a refined taste in the choice of such articles. Jewellery of great value was displayed by the wealthy on grand occasions; and costly silver plate was frequently seen; and, in fine, there was every evidence of a thriving population, loyal to the Crown before the Parliamentary schemes for destroying their liberties, profuse in the consumption of English manufactures, and using more and more of "home" (that is, English) luxuries, to a degree not relished by the sterner republicans, who rigidly adhered to the precepts of their Puritan ancestors.

Among the floating population were seen people from all parts of the world; and the number of public houses for a town of such size shows the constant presence of seafaring men and the class of adventurers always frequenting a seaport. The public signs were such as, "Noah's Ark," "Lighthouse Tavern," "Half Moon," "Indian Queen Tavern," "Green Dragon," "Three Crowns," "Orange Tree," "Anchor Tavern," "Blue Anchor," "Ship in Distress," and others of a like maritime type. Here the sailors and people engaged in all branches of shipping business used to meet, smoke, and drink punch, and discuss the affairs of their call-

<sup>1</sup> Oldmixon's "British Empire in America," 2d ed. (quoted in Drake's Boston, p. 607).

ing and the prospects of trade. This was the class among whom the patriot leaders, — particularly Samuel Adams, — exerted themselves to carry their measures at “body” meetings.<sup>1</sup> The men employed at the rope-walks were a numerous and influential body. These establishments, of which there were several in the town, furnished the rigging for the vessels continually launched from the ship-yards. The affrays immediately preceding the Massacre, in 1770, were between the hands in Gray’s rope-walks and a party of the Twenty-ninth Regiment. They were generally young men used to hard work, jealous of their liberties, proud of their physical strength, and quite willing at any time to meet the soldiers in fair combat. These, with the carpenters, sail-makers, calkers, mast-yard hands, blacksmiths, and block-makers, composed the rival parties known prior to the Revolution as the “North-Enders” and “South-Enders,” and eagerly filled the ranks of the army or served as privateersmen during the war. In the pot-houses along the wharves there must have been lively and often noisy gatherings of this class, the greater part of them stanch in the cause of liberty, producing scenes curiously illustrative of the spirit of that day. The boisterous laugh and coarse jest, the odd nautical expressions, and the loud wrangling over the newspapers and political events, were all significant features of the times.

Conspicuous paintings or figures were used instead of the gilt-lettered signs adopted in after years. Among the instances found in Drake’s History of Boston, besides those already given, may be mentioned the “Dog and Pot,” “Three Nuns and Comb,” “Two Sugar Loaves,” “Wooden Head,” “King’s Arms,” “Bunch of Grapes,” “Bible and Dove,” “Black Boy and Butt,” “Blue Dog and Rainbow,” “Crown and Sceptre,” “Blue Glove,” “Golden Ball,” “Hat and Helmet,” “Three Horseshoes,” “Tun and Bacchus,” “Elephant,” “King’s Head and Looking-Glass,” and “Buck

<sup>1</sup> Mass meetings, in distinction from the regular town meetings of freeholders.

and Breeches." These represented the business, not of coffee-houses and taverns only, but also of shops and stores, which were known popularly and in newspaper advertisements by their signs.

Carried back to the Revolution, Boston would offer a curious contrast to its present appearance; and but for the scanty remaining landmarks which the march of progress has spared, one of its inhabitants, if permitted to revisit the scenes of life, might seek in vain to recognize the former Provincial town in its metropolitan descendant. The Old South, Faneuil Hall, the old State House, and a few other relics are yet standing, though some have been touched by the hand of improvement. But the ancient vestiges are fast disappearing, and a few generations hence will know of "Old Boston" only by tradition. The former names of streets have not escaped the change, which has sometimes been made with a questionable view to more fashionable or anti-monarchical appellations,—to the unwarranted obliteration of historical associations. What was once Black-Horse Lane is now Prince Street; the present High Street was formerly Cow Lane; Crab Lane is now a part of Kilby Street; Crooked Lane has become Wilson's Lane; Flounder Lane is merged in the south end of Broad Street; Frog Lane has been changed to Orange Street; George to Hancock Street; Castle William to Fort Independence; Hog Alley to Avery Street; Longacre to Tremont Street; Love Lane to Tileston Street; Paddy's Alley to North Centre Street; Pond to Bedford Street; Round Lane to William Street; Marlborough to Washington Street; King to State Street; Queen to Court Street; and Pudding Lane to Devonshire Street. These are but a few of the alterations appearing in several pages of Drake's History of Boston, where the old names are carefully arranged in alphabetical order and explained.

Towards the close of the last century, an English writer who visited Boston thus describes the town:—

“In the year 1740, Boston was esteemed the largest town in America; now Philadelphia and New York rank before it; nevertheless, it is a very flourishing place, full of business and activity. The merchants and tradesmen meet every day from twelve to two o'clock in State Street, as on an exchange. We inquired for a porter to fetch our luggage from the ship to the tavern, and a free negro offered himself, for which service he required half a dollar. The negroes in this State are all free, and are a respectable body of people. They have a Free-Masons' club, in which they admit no white person. However, I believe they are not yet admitted to hold offices of State, though they vote for them. This town or city contains about eighteen thousand inhabitants. State Street is the principal one, about twenty yards wide; is near the centre of the town, and leads down to the Long Wharf. Cornhill is another considerable street for trade: it put me in mind of Basingstoke. Their footways are not yet paved with flat stones; the horse and footway being alike pitched with pebbles, and posts and a gutter to divide them, like the old-fashioned towns in England. The buildings, likewise, are but indifferent; many of them, as well as their churches, are weather-boarded at the side, and all of them roofed with shingles. A very awkward looking railed enclosure on the top of the houses, for drying clothes, which gives them a very odd appearance. The part of the town called New or West Boston is an exception to this, for the houses there are all neat and elegant, of brick, with handsome entrances and door-cases, and a flight of steps up to the entrance.”<sup>1</sup>

Convenient sidewalks, it appears, did not exist in every street; though fashion, retreating before the advance of commerce, had already begun to spread to the westward, and some modern improvements were adopted. The old town was built principally of wood, and hence the disastrous conflagrations which occurred in its early history.

Among the busy throng in the streets we may picture the sailor, with his swarthy face, wide trousers, and long queue. In the neighboring seaports and in Boston was cen-

<sup>1</sup> Henry Wansey's Excursion to the United States of North America in the Summer of 1794, pp. 38, 39.

tered that wonderfully energetic class whose adventures in the whale-fishery elicited from Burke, in Parliament, his splendid eulogy of New England courage and enterprise. From Massachusetts sailed the best seamen and the stanchest ships in the world ; and Boston was made the maritime centre of America by the indomitable character of her people. The common, popular expressions, and even the slang phrases, were those of the sea ; boatmen, seamen, and wharf laborers were powerful elements in most of the town commotions which preceded the Revolution. Even the boys, in any excitement, cheered like ships' crews, and imitated the boatswain's call in their jeering and ridicule of the British soldiers. The sailors of the last century, if we may judge from the descriptions given by the English novelists, seldom, if ever, attained to the standard of education often met with among seafaring men of the present generation. The brutal coarseness of English naval commanders, as pictured by the popular novelists, is corroborated in at least one instance by John Adams, who in his Diary alludes with disgust to the "coarse, low, vulgar dialect," and "brutal, hoggish manners" of Rear-Admiral Montagu, in command of the British fleet at Boston in 1772, who, with his wife, was very much disliked at certain social meetings that winter. About the time of the French war, and between then and the Revolution, packets were sometimes advertised to go armed, as in the case of the ship *Happy Return*, which, in the summer of 1761, sailed for London from Long Wharf, "mounting sixteen carriage-guns, and men answerable ; also fitted for close quarters." The fishermen of the Grand Banks, on returning with their fares, showed their adaptability to every kind of life, by throwing off the garb of the sailor, and tilling their farms until the return of the fishing season.

Family carriages were rare. The showy equipage of John Hancock, drawn by four horses, occasionally passed through the streets, eclipsing all rivals. Numbers of the wealthier people kept their "chariots," which are mentioned in some

of Samuel Adams's essays as having been repeatedly challenged and stopped by the sentinels after the establishment of military rule in 1768. Such displays, however, were not frequent in the streets of Boston. People usually walked to and from their places of business, and the town was not then so extensive as to demand a general use of vehicles. Chairs, similar to those used in England, were occasionally seen. "A new and second-hand chair and a new and second-hand chaise, to be sold cheap for cash," are advertised in the Boston Gazette in 1761.

Amid a peaceful and industrious population the shedding of blood was regarded with horror. Life and property were always safe, capital offences were extremely rare, and the punishment of crime was certain. Delinquent debtors were often imprisoned, and once a printer was prosecuted and imprisoned by the Legislature for what was termed a libel on their proceedings in general, and many members in particular. The pillory was among the penalties for certain crimes. Public whipping was sometimes executed upon certain offenders, inflicted at the cart-tail or at the whipping-post, which stood, as late as 1770, near the Town House in King Street. The stocks were in the neighborhood. The gallows were out on the public highway towards Roxbury. Samuel Adams was always opposed to punishment at the whipping-post as barbarous and cruel; and to his influence was principally due its discontinuance in Massachusetts. While President of the Senate, he urged the passage of a law, substituting in certain cases imprisonment and hard labor for the degrading exhibitions of whipping and sitting on the gallows, believing that no benefit could be derived either to the offender or the spectators. The dreadful floggings of deserters from the British army were spectacles of which he heard with indignation. Public whipping, however, practically ceased long before its formal abolition by the Legislature, though the post was allowed to stand in many of the country towns; and this punishment was among

the penalties especially prescribed by the General Court in 1786, during the Shays's rebellion.

From the earliest times encouragement was extended to education and general reading. Popular instruction was believed to be the basis of public liberty, and nowhere in the world was greater importance attached to the necessity of educating the people than in Massachusetts. Oldmixon, already quoted, says that, in 1741, there were five printing houses in Boston, and that the presses were generally full of work; "which," he says, "is in a great measure owing to the colleges and schools for useful learning in New England; whereas in New York there is but one little bookseller's shop; and none at all in Virginia, Maryland, Carolina, Barbadoes, and the Sugar Islands." "The Town House or Exchange was surrounded with booksellers' shops." Pamphlets were attentively read, and newspapers flourished. A circulating library was opened by John Mein, in 1765, upon terms which placed books within the reach of nearly the whole community. His stock, soon after, comprised "above ten thousand volumes." The number of books imported from England is the best evidence of the popular reading. Mein's catalogue, in one advertisement, occupies nearly an entire page in the Massachusetts Gazette. Philip Freeman of the "Blue Glove," in Union Street, and Joshua Winter, near by, both booksellers, advertise extensively in the Boston Gazette in 1761. Their lists embrace classical, nautical, mercantile, historical, philosophical, and particularly theological and religious works, some of which are rarely seen in the present day. Vattel's Law of Nations; The Lives of the Martyrs, or the Dreadful Effects of Popery; Paradise Lost; Bland's Military Discipline; great numbers of sermons; The Trader's Sure Guide; Rollin's Ancient History; Trapp's Virgil; Lives of the Roman Emperors; Hewett's Tradesman; Watts's Improvement of the Mind; Cicero's Orations; Lucas on Happiness; Young's Night Thoughts; Anson's Voyages; The Country House-

wife ; Pilgrim's Progress ; and the Life of the King of Prussia, — are a fair sample of the reading offered by these collections. Such works as Pamela, Fielding's and Smollett's novels, the Royal Jester, and the like, are here and there mentioned, but do not appear to be in general favor. The books found in the private libraries of New England were generally of a serious character. The highly wrought "sensational" novels of the French and modern English school had not yet made their appearance. Books were bought to be carefully read and preserved for future reference. The library of Samuel Adams contained at his death about four hundred volumes, and their appearance indicated that they had not been kept merely for show. Those on government, history, morals, and philosophy were evidently the familiar companions of their owner, and each contained his name in his own handwriting.

Innumerable conveniences and comforts, now thoughtlessly enjoyed by millions, had not in the days of the Revolution entered into the remotest conceptions of man ; and yet it may be believed that as much of happiness existed then as has been attained by succeeding generations. The wants of society were fewer and more easily satisfied. The present dissipation, with its attendant evils, was unknown to our more sedate ancestors, whose " routs and riots," in the most lively circles, were but simple, social reunions, in comparison to our costly displays. If light could only be had from candles, where now the magic gas is within the reach of all, the glaring midnight assemblies of fashion and folly, which have kept pace with the march of improvement, were seldom seen. If the want of railroads, steamboats, and swift mail-coaches compelled a resort to horseback-riding or walking, the exercise found its reward in a better condition of physical health than now generally exists among both sexes. If the absence (until the scenes of the war) of exciting news left the community in a somewhat primitive quiet as to the events of the great world, the contented tranquillity of a pro-



vincial situation prolonged life, and fostered a positiveness and stability of character which stood the country in need in the hour of her extreme trial. And so comparisons might be made favorable to our ancestors in all that related to frugality, simplicity of life, and the honorable thrift which led to the most exact observance of obligations now so frequently ignored both in public and private station. It may yet be conceded that Samuel Adams entertained no Utopian, impracticable idea of public morality, when inculcating the great truth, that the liberties as well as the virtue and physical condition of a people decrease in proportion as they become effeminate and luxurious.

It was towards the close of 1783 that, the final treaty with Great Britain having been signed and transmitted to America, the invading forces departed, leaving the country, — at least its Atlantic regions, — in the quiet possession of the patriots, who had achieved a national independence after seven years of uninterrupted hostilities. Washington, bidding adieu to his companions in arms, in a scene memorable from the most affecting recollections, and amid the unutterable emotions of his brave officers, proceeded to Annapolis, where he resigned his command. “Having,” said he, “now finished the work assigned me, I retire from the great theatre of action; and bidding an affectionate farewell to this august body, under whose orders I have so long acted, I here offer my commission, and take my leave of all the employments of public life.” With the reverence of a grateful people, the illustrious chief withdrew temporarily from the scene, and resumed his rank as a private citizen.

Suffering under the manifold calamities of a protracted war, the United States issued from the contest burdened with taxes, its currency depreciated almost to worthlessness, and in a general financial condition discouraging to the ablest statesmen. Massachusetts, as we have seen, had been among the foremost in contributions of men, money, and

supplies, and was now groaning under enormous liabilities. The patriots, however, confident in the ultimate resources of the country, looked beyond the present embarrassments, and saw the great destiny dawning upon America. A particular source of apprehension with some was the possible subsidence of the spirit of democracy, and the gradual building up of a military or aristocratic family power, which might in time override the true republican doctrines upon which in New England the Revolution had been founded. Samuel Adams, unlike Hamilton, Gouverneur Morris, John Adams, Ames, and some others of the Northern statesmen, never lost his faith in the capacity of the "common people" to govern themselves. The idea of placing political power in the hands of a select few he considered as destructive to liberty. His theory was, that the people should be elevated and educated, that a manly development of character should be encouraged by perfect political equality, and that then they would never require rulers to be selected from among the privileged classes. Upon the virtue and intelligence of the masses, guided by liberal popular education, he was willing to stake the republican experiment. No brave, hardy people, brought up under a good common-school system, and taught to revere the ordinary rules of frugality and morality, could, in his opinion, ever be enslaved. They might be led astray, as in all times and countries, but they would be quick to see and return to their best interests under a government of their own making.<sup>1</sup> Of secret societies and combinations, such as Free-Masonry, he expressed his unqualified disapproval, founded probably in the fear that they would acquire an undue political power, and encourage the growth of hereditary and family influences, which he regarded as danger-

<sup>1</sup> Judge Sullivan, writing in 1803, from an intimate acquaintance with Samuel Adams, says, "Mr. Adams never yielded to the now fashionable idea, that there is no such thing as public virtue, or that the people of America cannot be the safe keepers of their own interests. Such an idea goes radically to the destruction of republicanism, and he therefore abhorred it."

ous to republican liberty, and leading to the establishment of aristocratic grades above the common people.

He equally disliked the growing desire among certain families to trace their descent to noble sources in England. Aside from its frivolity, he thought it aristocratic and unworthy of a true republican. Heraldry, orders, and coats-of-arms he considered as exploded vanities for Americans, whose nationality was to spring from ideas entirely foreign to such distinctions, which, in succeeding generations, might lead to more substantial assumptions of superiority. An acquaintance once proposed to seek out his pedigree, which it was thought might be followed back from Henry Adams of Braintree to some ancient stock of English nobility. "I think you had better not try," said Mr. Adams. "It is a subject I have not thought much about. On this side the water, I believe my ancestors were exemplary men and good citizens; but I have never looked much beyond that, not knowing what scoundrels a further research might rake out."

He regarded with anxiety all movements tending to encourage the distinction of patrician and plebeian in any form. As President of the Massachusetts Senate, he spared no effort to make his opinions felt on this subject, particularly as he descried danger already in an attempt which alarmed not only him, but many other eminent men.

At the close of the war many officers of the army formed themselves into the Order of the Cincinnati, a military association which extended through all the States, and was to meet from time to time by their deputies in a general congress. The Order, which was distinguished by its badges and ornaments, was hereditary, membership descending by primogeniture; and the strict republicans imagined that it would create and foster an hereditary aristocracy. Though sanctioned and presided over by Washington, this novel feature aroused the public jealousy, North and South, and created violent dissensions, which at one time threatened

serious consequences. Among its enemies were Franklin, Samuel and John Adams, Gerry, Jay, and others scarcely less distinguished; while in Europe, the opposition to its principles was equally decided, especially in France. The evil results predicted were not realized. The Order was what it professed to be,—a fraternal bond to render permanent the cordial affection subsisting between the officers for mutual acts of kindness, and “to promote and cherish between the respective States that unison and national honor so essentially necessary to their happiness and the future dignity of the American empire.” But judging by the examples of history, and especially by that of their own country, its opponents found no redeeming features in the Order; and though by the influence of Washington the hereditary principle was abolished, the society was regarded as equally dangerous.

It will serve as an instance of the extreme jealousy at that time harbored against any and every appearance of aristocratic sentiments, that Samuel Adams expressed his fears that the members of the Order, by becoming the joint proprietors of large tracts of land, and peopling their territories with multitudes from Germany, who would live in military service and fealty to their landlords, might in time revive the old feudal system. “And why,” he continues, “may not these lords and tenants or vassals, in process of time, become feudatory to a superior lord, who may then be set up and acknowledged, binding themselves to assist him in defence of the feudal society? And thus a system of military policy may be erected similar to that of the Northern conquerors of Europe, calculated merely for the support of an army.”<sup>1</sup> Vassalage among the Germans was an idea habitually associated in America with the old feudal establishments. As time has proved, Mr. Adams could scarcely have fixed upon a people the genius of whose character and habits is so entirely democratic as the Germans. The fear

<sup>1</sup> S. Adams to E. Gerry, Boston, Sept. 15, 1785.

of the anxious statesman, however, may well be pardoned. The speck which he descried in the political horizon never became a cloud: the storm came from a different quarter; but the cause of the evil was the same. At the South there was already that aristocratic and almost feudal element against which he warned his countrymen; at length, in another century, it produced a terrible convulsion; and a class without sympathy for the masses, opposed to the government of majorities, and favoring a patrician order, waged against democracy a bitter war, which for a time threatened to destroy the Federal structure.

Letters, speeches, and legislative resolutions followed each other in opposition to the Cincinnati, which was denounced as a bold stroke aimed at the civil liberties of America. The objections raised by Mr. Adams are interesting, not only in their bearing upon the society, but as illustrating an entire consistency of character and opinions throughout his long life. The extreme aversion to aristocratic claims and assumptions, which we have seen distinguishing him from his youth up and through all the arduous contests of intellect which preceded the war of the Revolution, is here plainly apparent, and may be traced to his latest days.

BOSTON, April 19, 1784.

MY DEAR SIR, —

Mr. Higgenson was so obliging as to show me your letter to him, dated the 4th of March. I was happy in having adopted an opinion of the Cincinnati so similar to what I found yours to be. I think I am as sensible as any man ought to be of the important services of our late army, and am very desirous that their full share of merit may be gratefully acknowledged and rewarded by the country. This would have been done (for the prejudice of the people against the gratuity of five years' pay began to subside), had they not adopted a plan so disgustful to the common feeling. It appears wonderful that they could imagine that a people who had freely spent their blood and treasure in support of their equal rights and liberties could so soon be reconciled to the odious hereditary distinction of families. This country must be, to a great degree,

humiliated and debased before they will patiently bear to see individuals stalking with their assumed honorary badges, and proudly boasting, "These are the distinctions of *our* blood." I cannot think that many of our officers entertained such an idea of haughty pre-eminence ; but the human mind is so captivated with the thought of being elevated above the ignoble vulgar, that their sons, if they should not themselves, when they perceive the multitude grown giddy with gazing, may assume more than the mere pageantry of nobility. When men begin to applaud themselves, they are not easily persuaded to believe they can take a greater share of honor than justly belongs to them. They will be pleased with the adulatory speeches of other men, and flatter themselves they are entitled to power and authority, as well as the ostentatious show of superiority above their equals. I confess I do not barely dislike the Order. With you I think it is dangerous, and look upon it with the eye of jealousy. When the pride of family possesses the minds of men, it is threatening to the community in proportion to the good they have done. The unsuspecting people, when they are in a mood to be grateful, will cry up the virtues of their benefactors, and be ready to say, "Surely those men who have done such great things for us will never think of setting up a tyranny over us." But even patriots and heroes may become different men, when new and different prospects shall have altered their feelings and views ; and the undiscerning people may too late repent that they have suffered them to exalt themselves and their families on the ruins of the common liberty.

The Cincinnati are very unpopular here. You will wonder then that one of the Order has had a majority of the votes of this town for a senator for the county. I am afraid the citizens are not so vigilant as they used and still ought to be. It was given out at the moment of election that he intended to withdraw himself from the society. If he does, it may weaken their influence ; if not, he will probably destroy his own. You have doubtless seen the sentiments of the General Court of the Order. The reprobating speech of the Governor of South Carolina has been published here.

I had the pleasure of receiving by the same post your several letters of the 15th, 20th, and 24th ultimo. If I have a seat in the General Court the ensuing year, (which is uncertain,) I shall with great reluctance communicate your intention to leave Congress, unless

you will gratify the earnest wishes of your friends by altering your determination. I assure you, there is no friend to our country, within my circle, who is not solicitous for your continuance longer. I was in hopes, when you was prevailed upon again to take a seat, you would have held it at least two years. Let me entreat you to release me from the obligation of complying with your request.

Adieu,

SAMUEL ADAMS.<sup>1</sup>

In a letter to John Adams at this time, he urges, among other objections to the Order, that "they convened in congress expressly to deliberate and adopt measures on great and national concerns proper only for the cognizance of the United States in Congress assembled, and the different legislators and officers of government." Hence he reasoned that, "being an order of *military* men, they might soon proceed to *enforce* their resolutions, not only to the lessening the dignity of the States in the eye of Europe, but the putting an end to their free existence."<sup>2</sup> There were no precedents in favor of the society, but every reason from example to fear its influence. Another letter on this subject should be given entire, as showing incidentally the sentiments of Adams respecting Washington and his association with the Order.

BOSTON, April 23, 1784.

MY DEAR SIR, —

I observe by the enclosed newspaper that the Cincinnati in congress assembled are to meet at Philadelphia on the 5th of May, and that General Washington is to preside. That gentleman has an idea of the nature and tendency of the Order very different from mine; otherwise, I am certain, he would never have given it his sanction. I look upon it to be as rapid a stride towards an hereditary military nobility as ever was made in so short a time. My fears may be ill grounded; but if they are not, it is impossible for me not to think it a great misfortune to these States that he is a member; for the reputation he has justly acquired by his conduct while Commander-in-Chief of our armies, and the gratitude and warm affec-

<sup>1</sup> To Elbridge Gerry.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel to John Adams, Dec. 16, 1784.

tion which his countrymen do and ought to feel towards him, will probably give weight to anything he patronizes, and lustre to all who may be connected with him. It is a tribute due to the man who serves his country well, to esteem him highly and confide in him. We ought not, however, to think any man incapable of error. But so it is with the bulk of mankind, and even in a free country: they reprobate the idea of implicit faith, and at the same time, while the impression of gratitude is deep in their minds, they will not admit that of a benefactor which must be said of every man, — *aliquando dormitat*. I would never inculcate a base and envious suspicion of any man, especially of those who have rendered signal services to their country. But there is a degree of watchfulness over all men possessed of power or influence, upon which the liberties of mankind much depend. It is necessary to guard against the infirmities of the best as well as the wickedness of the worst of men. Such is the weakness of human nature, that tyranny has perhaps oftener sprung from that than any other source. It is this that unravels the mystery of millions being enslaved by the few.

What was it that induced the Cincinnati gentlemen, who have undertaken to deliberate and act upon matters which may essentially concern 'the happiness and future dignity of the American empire,' to admit foreign military subjects into their society? Was there not danger before that a foreign influence might prevail in America? Do not foreigners wish to have weight in our councils? Can such a junction of the subjects of different nations (and those nations widely differing in their principles of government), to deliberate upon things which relate to the union and national honor, the happiness and future dignity of *one*, consist with sound policy? Are we sure that these two nations will never have separate views, and very national and interested ones too, because they once united in the same object, and it was accidentally their mutual interest to fight side by side? If we could admit that the Cincinnati had a right to erect themselves into an Order for the national purposes of their institution, had they a right to call in foreign aid for those purposes? It appears to me as impolitic, preposterous, and dangerous as it would be for the United States to invite and admit a delegation from that foreign power into their Congress.

I take notice that the committee of Congress propose that the governments of the ten new States to be formed shall be in repub-



lican form, and shall admit no person to be a citizen who holds any hereditary title. I hope Congress will not fail to make this an indispensable condition.

Believe me to be your sincere and affectionate friend,

SAMUEL ADAMS.

HON. MR. GERRY.

Reference has already been made to the proposal of Washington, in 1783, for the immediate relief of the officers of the army by a commutation of the half-pay for life which had been voted them by Congress into five years' full pay, in one gross sum. Throughout New England a strong opposition was made to this measure, and, as we have seen, the Legislature of Massachusetts at that time were as reluctant to indorse it as the Northern members of Congress had been to acquiesce in the half-pay proposition in 1780. In Connecticut particularly, the commutation produced popular agitations, and public conventions and meetings were held to prevent the consummation of the laws of Congress. At the convention at Middletown, two thirds of the towns in Connecticut were represented. These incipient steps towards throwing the Federal Congress into contempt alarmed the more moderate and reasonable in New England, and even from France the American Commissioners sent strenuous letters against popular movements in opposition to the established government. Noah Webster, then only twenty-five years of age, with others, exerted himself in his native State to support the action of Congress, and was the author, in 1784, of a series of essays, which were extensively read, and for which he received personally the thanks of Governor Trumbull. Among the papers of Mr. Adams is found a correspondence on this subject from which may be gathered his sentiments in relation to these important matters.

HARTFORD, 24th March, 1784.

SIR, —

The importance of this communication will, I flatter myself, be a sufficient apology for the freedom I take of writing to a gentleman with whom I have not the honor of an acquaintance. You are very

sensible, sir, that an unconstitutional body of men, the convention, headed by a few designing characters, principally Tories, have for a long time been endeavoring to throw the State into confusion, and crush the most illustrious characters. The leaders, in order to support the faction, hold up this idea to their constituents, that the States are disaffected with Congress, and are disposed to take measures similar to the *constitutional* plan in this State. It is said, sir, that their Committee of Correspondence have written to several gentlemen in other States, among whom your name is mentioned. It is reported that in your answer you reprobated the proceedings of the convention, in the most explicit manner. It is the wish of several gentlemen here, that, in order to show the deluded people of this State, many of whom are honest and well meaning, in what point of view the convention in this State is considered by our sister States, your letter to their committee might be published in our papers. For this purpose, I now send to you requesting a copy, and permission to publish it, either with your name or without it, as will be most agreeable. We conceive it could do no injury to the author, and would be very beneficial to this State. The convention begin to be suspected, and a few efforts of good men may soon bring them into contempt. If you can comply with this request, and so soon as to have the letter published before the next election, April 12th, you will probably do a public service, and particularly oblige

Your very humble servant,

NOAH WEBSTER.

HON. SAMUEL ADAMS, Esq.

It was more than a month before public business permitted Mr. Adams to reply, and his opinions are then, as usual, decidedly expressed and to the point.

BOSTON, April 30, 1784.

SIR, —

I was favored with your letter of the 24th March; but by a multiplicity of affairs, which it happened I was at that time engaged in, I was prevented returning your answer so speedily as you desired. For this reason, I afterwards thought an answer would be of no importance. Decency alone, however, should have induced me to acknowledge the favor. I hope you will excuse the omission.

Some time in the month of September last, a gentleman in Con-

necticut, by his letter, requested me to give him my opinion of a subject (I think) too much altercated in that State as well as this, — the commutation of the half-pay granted by Congress to the late officers of the army for life, for full pay during the term of five years. I did not hesitate to say in return, that Congress was, in the nature of their appointment, the sole judge of the necessary means of supporting the late army which had been raised for the defence of our common rights against the invasions of Great Britain; and if, upon their own deliberate counsels, and the repeated representations of the Commander-in-Chief of the army, they judged that the grant of half-pay for life was a measure absolutely necessary for the support of a disciplined army for that purpose, they had an undoubted right to make it; and as it was made in behalf of the United States, by their representatives authorized to do it, each State was held in justice and honor, even though it should seem to any to have been an ill-judged measure, to comply with it. Because States and individual persons are equally bound to fulfil their obligations; and it is given as a characteristic of a good and honest man, that “though he sweareth (or promiseth) to his own hurt, he changeth not.” I moreover acquainted him, that, although I was never pleased with the idea of half-pay for life, for reasons which were satisfactory to myself, some of which I freely explained to him, yet I had always thought that, as the opportunities of the officers of the army for acquiring moderate fortunes, or making such provision for their families as men generally wish to make, were by no means equal to those of their fellow-citizens at home, it would be but just and reasonable that an adequate compensation should be made them at, or as soon as conveniently might be after, the end of the war, and that therefore a suitable compensation had fully coincided with my views of justice and policy.

Nothing was mentioned in his letter to me respecting county conventions or their proceedings, and therefore I made no observations upon them. I hope it will not be in the power of designing men, by imposing upon “credulous, though well-meaning persons,” long to keep this country, which may be happy if they will, in a state of discord and animosity. We may see, from the present state of Great Britain, how rapidly such a spirit will drive a nation to destruction. It is prudent for the people to keep a watchful eye over the conduct of those who are intrusted with their public affairs.

Such attention is the people's great security ; for the wisest and best of men are liable to error and misconduct. But there is decency and respect due to constitutional authority ; and those men who, under any pretence or by any means whatever, would lessen the weight of government, lawfully exercised, must be enemies to our happy Revolution and the common liberty. County conventions and popular committees served an excellent purpose when they were first in practice. No one needs to regret the share he may have had in them. But I candidly own that it is my opinion, with deference to the opinions of other men, that, as we now have constitutional and regular governments, and all our men in authority depend upon the annual elections of the people, we are safe without them. To say the least, they are useless. Bodies of men, under any denomination whatever, who convene themselves with a design to deliberate upon and adopt measures which are cognizable by Legislatures only, will, if continued, soon bring Legislatures to contempt and dissolution. If the public affairs are ill conducted, if dishonest men have crept unawares into government, it is our happiness under American constitutions the remedy is at hand, and in the power of the great body of the people. Due circumspection and wisdom at the next election will set all right, without the aid of any self-created conventions or societies of men whatever. The whole people will not probably mistake their own true interests, nor err in the judgment of the men to whom they may safely commit the care of them. While we retain those simple democracies in all our towns, which are the basis of our State Constitutions, and make a good use of them, it appears to me we cannot be enslaved or materially injured. It must, however, be confessed that imperfection unavoidably attends all human affairs.

I am, sir, with great esteem, your obedient servant,

SAMUEL ADAMS.

## CHAPTER LVIII.

Adams in Favor of incorporating Boston as a City. — Chosen President of the Senate. — Elected to Congress. — Again declines. — His Views of the National Position and Duties of America. — Counsels against Disunion and British Intrigues. — His disinterested Exertions for Disabled Soldiers and Sailors. — Is defeated for Governor. — Declines a Seat in the Governor's Council.

AN effort was made in May of the present year, by a number of the most influential and intelligent men of Boston, for a change of the old municipal form of government into that of an incorporated city. The arguments on either side of this question have not been recorded; but a committee of thirteen, with Mr. Adams as chairman, and including Robert Treat Paine, James Sullivan, Perez Morton, and Thomas Dawes, was appointed to take the subject into consideration.<sup>1</sup> On the 4th of June following they reported two plans. The first of these provided for a "mayor and aldermen and common council of the city of Boston," with a recorder, twelve overseers of the poor, sixteen fire wards, seven assessors, a county treasurer, and registrar. The second plan embraced a "president and selectmen of the city of Boston," with the other officers nearly as above. These forms were ordered to be printed and distributed through the town. On the 17th, at a public meeting, both were summarily rejected by a great majority, — the people not being prepared for any innovations upon their ancient style of town government. In the following year a further attempt was made, when, on the petition of a number of inhabitants to that effect, a committee was appointed at town meeting, to "state the defects in the present consti-

<sup>1</sup> Boston Town Records, May, 1784. Quincy's Municipal History of Boston, pp. 23 - 25.

tution of the town, and to report how far the same may be remedied without having the town incorporated in a city, and how far and in what manner they, or any of them, may be cured by such incorporation.”<sup>1</sup> The committee, composed, like the other, of the most influential men, including Samuel Adams, finding the popular sentiment adverse to any of the proposed changes, reported virtually against them; and the project of incorporation was not renewed for six years, and then ineffectually, though advocated by Sullivan, Paine, John Quincy Adams, Austin, Gore, and others of equal public standing. The venerable system of general meetings was that upon which most of the great pre-Revolutionary results had been accomplished by the patriots, and it was many years before its inconveniences, and its want of adaption to the growth of the town, could reconcile the people to any new order of administration.

Having been re-elected to the Senate in April, Mr. Adams was again chosen President. Towards the close of the year he received the votes of the two Houses in joint ballot for delegate to Congress; but the condition of his health would not admit of his resuming his place in that body, from which, as we have seen, he had retired after a term of service commencing with the first Congress and extending nearly to the close of the Revolution. Perhaps, too, he remembered the malignant assaults which in his absence had been made upon his character and public course. He declined the honor in the following letter:—

BOSTON, November 8th, 1784.

SIR,—

I have this morning received your official notification of the honor the General Court have been pleased to confer on me, by electing me one of the delegates to represent this Commonwealth in the United States in Congress assembled. The election is flattering to me, as it is a repeated mark of great confidence. But to enter into the spirit of the business usually before that assembly, as becomes

<sup>1</sup> Boston Town Records, Nov. 9, 1785.

each of its members, is a task which, under the very precarious state of health I have experienced for several years past, I dare not undertake. It gives me pain to decline any trust which our republic calls upon me to execute, but a regard to its most important interests places me under the necessity of doing it. I beg the favor of you, sir, to lay this letter before the General Court for their information, and be assured that I am

Your friend and humble servant,

SAMUEL ADAMS.<sup>1</sup>

MR. SECRETARY AVERY.

Congress convened at Trenton this year, and Richard Henry Lee was chosen President. The declining power of that body is shown by the little interest felt by many of the delegates in its counsels. Mr. Lee wrote to Samuel Adams, that he was much grieved to observe the wonderful lassitude prevailing in public affairs. "It is now," he says, "eighteen days since Congress ought to have assembled here, and as yet we have but five States; and it surprises me that these five are Southern; none but the worthy Dr. Holton from your State being yet arrived from the Eastward, whence formerly we used to derive much punctuality, alacrity, and judicious despatch of public business. And yet there are many subjects of great importance, that demand the speedy, temperate, wise, and firm discussion of Congress."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Adams now resumed his familiar correspondence with his Virginia friend, and their sentiments on most of the great topics of government which a few years later agitated the public mind are found to be identical, as heretofore they had been on those of the Revolution. Only a few of the letters which for several years had passed between these patriots have been recovered. One from Mr. Lee, without date, but written evidently towards the close of the present year, is strongly opposed to the projected increase of the Federal power. The existing confederation, he admitted, should not

<sup>1</sup> Compare his letters on similar occasions, Dec. 1, 1778; March 13, 1781; and Feb. 20, 1782 (*ante*, III. 58, 135, and 153).

<sup>2</sup> R. H. Lee to S. Adams, Nov. 18, 1784.

be presumptuously called an infallible system for all times and all situations; "but," he continues, "though this is true, yet as it is a great and fundamental system of union and security, no change should be admitted until proved to be necessary by the fairest, fullest, and most mature experience." He was in favor of defraying the Federal liabilities by encouraging a payment of the quota of each State, the money to be collected in ways most agreeable to each. "This," he says, "is the plan of the confederation, and this I own will be mine, until more satisfactory experience has proved its inefficacy." An unwillingness to confer increased power upon Congress is evident throughout the correspondence of Lee, in opposition to the opinions of Hamilton, who had been for several years in favor of vesting complete sovereignty in Congress in all matters relating to national finance, trade, and foreign relations. Prior to the convention for forming the Federal Constitution, the opinions of Samuel Adams on this subject do not appear in any of his letters; but it may be presumed that, with his usual consistency, he was careful of the rights of individual States; while it is certain that he was never opposed to vesting Congress with exclusive and sufficient power to direct the system of finance and foreign relations of the confederated government, and he never lost sight of the national character of the United States, and the necessity of a perfect and permanent union, upon terms of equality, for the benefit of the whole. One of his letters gives an idea of the national position which he was desirous the United States should assume before the world.

BOSTON, December 23, 1784.

MY DEAR SIR, —

I congratulate our country on the choice Congress has lately made of a President. He who fills that chair is the most respectable citizen; and while he performs his duty well, he adorns the most dignified station in your confederated republic.

You observe in your letter to me, that at this moment moderation, wisdom, firmness, and attention are the principles proper for



our adoption. I agree with you, and devoutly wish that every man who has a share in the administration of public affairs may possess a large portion of those and other great qualities. They are in a particular manner necessary to him who presides in the important counsels of the American Amphictyon.

Congress has need to watch lest the commonwealth suffer harm. I doubt not they will be assiduous in their labors for the public welfare, and I pray God they may be his honored instruments in exalting to the highest pitch of human happiness that people who have testified to the oppressed world, that by patience, fortitude, and perseverance the iron rod can be wrested from the arm of a tyrant, and that all nations may be free, if they will magnanimously contend for their liberty.

By God's blessing on the counsels and the arms of our country, we are now ranked with nations: may he keep us from exulting beyond measure. Great pains are yet to be taken, and much wisdom is requisite, that we may stand as a nation in a respectable character. Better it would have been for us to have fallen in our highly famed struggle for our rights, or even to have remained in our ignoble state of bondage, hoping for better times, than now to become a contemptible nation. The world have given us an exalted character, and thus have laid on us a heavy tax! They have raised expectations from us! How shall we meet those expectations? They have attributed to us wisdom! How shall we confirm them in this opinion of us? Inexperienced as we are in the refinements of nations, can we expect to shine in the world as able politicians? Shall we, then, be hackneyed in the path of deception because some others, famed for their dexterity in politics, have long trod that path, and thought they had gained advantage by it? Or, because it is said all nations are self-interested, and that *no friendship in treaties* and national transactions is almost as proverbial as *no friendship in trade*, shall we depart from that excellent rule of equity, the observance of which should be characteristic of all nations, especially republics, as it is of all good men, — to do to others as we would have them do to us? Could we be induced thus to prostitute ourselves, how should we appear in the eyes of the virtuous and wise? Should there be found a citizen of the United States so unprincipled as to ask what will become of us if we do not follow the corrupt maxims of the world, I should tell him that the strength

of a republic is consolidated by its virtues, and that righteousness will exalt a nation. Was it true, as some affirm, that the Old World is absorbed in all kinds of vice, unhumanized and enslaved, it would indeed be a melancholy subject to contemplate; and I should think that common prudence would dictate to a nation situated as we are to have as little to do with them as possible. Such indiscriminate censure, however, may spring from ignorance of the world or unreasonable prejudice. Nations as well as individuals have different characters. We should not forget the friendship and kindness of *one*, because we have experienced the injustice and cruelty of *another*. But the inconstancy of friendship, and even infidelity, has been seen often enough among individuals to lead wise men to suppose it may happen in any case, and to excuse a kind of circumspection, different from base suspicion, consistent with the generous sentiments of friendship, and, considering the weakness of the human mind, a necessary guard. Does not the true policy, the honor and safety of our country greatly depend upon a national character consisting, among other particulars, in simplicity and candor in all her public transactions, showing herself in reality friendly to those to whom she professes to be a friend; a constant regard to mutual benefit in commercial treaties; suspecting the honesty of those who will not deal with her on equitable principles, and guarding her trade against their selfish designs by wise commercial laws, an exact and punctilious fulfilment of obligations on her part, to be performed by virtue of all treaties, and an unalterable determination to discharge her national debts with all possible speed. If, my honored friend, the leading men in the United States would, by precept and example, disseminate through the lower classes of people the principles of piety to God, love to our country, and universal benevolence, should we not secure the favor of Heaven and the honor and esteem of the wise and virtuous part of the world?

Great Britain, though she has concluded a treaty of peace with us, appears to be not a cordial friend. She cannot forget her unparalleled injustice towards us, and naturally supposes there can be no forgiveness on our part. She seems to have meant nothing more than a truce. A sensible gentleman, very lately from Canada, informs me that General Haldiman, who is going to England, has ordered those posts to be reinforced which, by treaty, were to be delivered to us. Encroachments are made, as I apprehend, on our

Eastern territories. Our fishery may, under some frivolous pretence, be next interrupted. Should we not guard ourselves against British intrigue and factions? Her emissaries, under the guise of merchants, repenting refugees, schoolmasters, and other characters, unless care is taken, may effect another and fatal revolution. The Commonwealth of England lasted twelve years, and then the exiled king was restored with all the rage and madness of royalty!—a caution to the citizens of the United States zealously to counteract the hopes our enemies entertain of “discord, disunion, and apathy on our part,” to watch over the public liberty with a jealous eye, and to practise the moral and political virtues upon which the very existence of a commonwealth depends. Mrs. Adams desires me to present her respectful compliments to you and your connections.

I am, with great esteem, your affectionate friend,

SAMUEL ADAMS.

HIS EXCELLENCY RICHARD HENRY LEE, *President of Congress.*

Mr. Adams availed himself of his influence with gentlemen in Congress to forward the interests of several war-worn soldiers and sailors, whose just claims of a special nature had particularly excited his sympathies. His humble mansion was the resort of many of these applicants. One of them was the noted Captain Landais, of the frigate Alliance, who received his appointment partly through the influence of Mr. Adams. He was unable for several years to obtain a settlement with Congress for his pay, and was reduced to destitution. After detailing the case, though without solicitation of Landais, Mr. Adams concludes his letter: “You will oblige me if you will interest yourself (if leisure will admit of it), as far as you may think it just, in his favor.” Of Colonel Waller, who fought in Canada, he writes to another friend: “He carries with him the strongest evidence of the abuse he then met with, and his honorable scars recommend him to the notice and friendship of every true patriot.” And again: “I know your attachment to an early, constant, and persevering patriot, and that you are ever ready to render to such a man the best service in your power.” His letter recommending Mr. Leonard Jar-

vis concludes: "It is not by his solicitation, or even knowledge, that I write this. I am induced to it, because I think that good men living at a distance from the seat of the Federal government, and capable of serving the United States, should be made known." Israel Keith was an applicant for the office of marshal, in a Northern district. Mr. Adams, after stating his claims and merits, says: "You will gratify the wishes of Mr. Keith, as far as shall consist with your own ideas of propriety." Learning that Mr. Edward Church was in New York, he writes of him: "I take him to have been a steady friend to the liberties of our country, and a man of sense and integrity; if it will not weary you with applications, I will beg your notice of him; and after your own inquiries, afford him your influence, if you shall think it proper, in promoting him to a suitable employment under Congress in the State of Georgia. This I mention without his solicitation or even knowledge." Adams, at this time, as well as several years before, wrote painfully, and was obliged occasionally to employ an amanuensis, owing to the constitutional trembling of his hand, so that it was now no ordinary task for him to maintain his correspondence with friends in different States. This makes his exertions in behalf of those in whom he interested himself still more praiseworthy. In his native State, his judicious care for the distressed, particularly those who had actively served their country, was constantly exemplified.

Hancock having resigned the office of Chief Magistrate, owing to ill health, Bowdoin and Adams were among the candidates before the people, in the April elections of 1785, but neither was successful. Adams received votes for the offices of Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, and Senator. There being no choice by the popular vote, the election went into the General Court, where Bowdoin was chosen. Cushing was Lieutenant-Governor, and Samuel B. Phillips, Jr., President of the Senate. Bowdoin found an increasing public debt, which, with the clamor of many creditors and

the general popular discontent, heightened the difficulties of the office. His first message to the Legislature recommended economy and retrenchment, for the purpose of paying the debts, and a convention to augment the authority of Congress. The General Court seconded the proposition, passed resolutions in favor of "a convention of delegates from all the States of the Union, as soon as may be, to revise the Articles of Confederation, and report to Congress how far it may be necessary to alter and enlarge the same." A feeling was slowly gaining ground in Massachusetts, among the most intelligent of her people, that the powers conferred upon Congress by the Articles of Confederation were inadequate for the due execution of its functions, and should be increased, at least so far as regarded the collection of moneys to meet the Federal debt. Still this was by no means general, and was originally urged in the Legislature by a small minority. The views of Adams and Bowdoin were alike on nearly all public questions. Adams was a prompt supporter of the energetic measures of Bowdoin's gubernatorial terms, during which some of the most critical passages in the history of the country occurred. In the delicate affair of Captain Stanhope of the British frigate *Mercury* in 1785, in which a popular outrage upon that officer was alleged, Mr. Adams wrote to John Adams, then Minister to England, explaining the circumstances, and upholding the Governor in treating it as a case belonging to the ordinary processes of law. He seems to have taken no very active part in politics this year, and, for the first time in nearly a quarter of a century, filled no public station. Very little can be ascertained of his life, public or private, during this time. John Adams, upon receiving his diplomatic appointment to England, wrote from France to his kinsman of his whereabouts and destination, and sent the letter by his son, John Quincy Adams, now returning home, and already giving promise of the distinguished abilities which afterwards made him so conspicuous in the political world.

“The child whom you used to lead out into the Common to see with detestation the British troops, and with pleasure the Boston militia, will have the honor to deliver you this letter. He has since seen the troops of most nations in Europe, without any ambition, I hope, of becoming a military man. He thinks of the bar and peace and civil life, and I hope will follow and enjoy them with less interruption than his father could. If you have in Boston a virtuous club, such as we used to delight and improve ourselves in, they will inspire him with such sentiments as a young American ought to entertain, and give him less occasion for lighter company.

“I think it no small proof of his discretion, that he chooses to go to New England rather than to Old. You and I know that it will probably be more for his honor and his happiness in the result, but young gentlemen of eighteen do not always see through the same medium with old ones of fifty.”<sup>1</sup>

It is probable that some of the precepts which helped to form the character of the child and youth were received from the wise teachings of his father's illustrious friend. Samuel Adams loved children, but particularly those exhibiting remarkable talents; and his interest in such a lad must have been enhanced by the reflection that he was the son of one of his own most intimate associates and coworkers in the Revolution.

“The child,” he says in reply, “whom I led by the hand, with a particular design, I find is now become a promising youth. He brought me one of your letters. God bless the lad! If I was instrumental at that time of enkindling the sparks of patriotism in his tender heart, it will add to my consolation in the latest hour.”<sup>2</sup>

By the town records Mr. Adams appears to have received votes for the several offices of Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, and Senator at the annual elections in the spring of 1786. Nominating conventions were then unknown; the citizens gave their suffrages entirely from individual preference. Adams resumed his seat in the Senate. His support-

<sup>1</sup> John to Samuel Adams, Auteuil, April 27, 1785 (Adams's Works, IX. 532).

<sup>2</sup> Samuel to John Adams, Boston, April 13, 1786 (*Ibid.*, p. 547).

ers in the popular elections were generally men of the stanch pre-Revolutionary school, whose numbers, however, had much diminished during the war. As he was on terms of perfect friendship politically and personally with Bowdoin, who was re-elected Governor, it is not easy to conjecture the circumstances which caused him to decline the position of Councillor, tendered him on the meeting of the Legislature. The following manuscript note is found in the State archives:—

BOSTON, May 5, 1786.

SIR,—

I received your letter of the 2d instant, officially acquainting me that I was that day “elected by the two branches of the Legislature, agreeably to the Constitution, a Councillor to advise the Governor in the executive part of the government.”

I am very much honored by the election; but although from the experience of the past year I should promise myself great satisfaction in such connection with his Excellency, and the honorable gentlemen who compose that Board the present year, yet, from a conviction that it is my duty, I am constrained to decline accepting of that trust.

I request you to communicate this to the General Court, and be assured that I am with esteem, sir,

Your humble servant,

SAM. ADAMS.

MR. SECRETARY AVERY.

## CHAPTER LIX.

Shays's Rebellion. — Its Causes and Gradual Development. — Adams presides over a Public Meeting in Boston. — Conciliatory Address to the Insurgents. — Meeting of the Legislature. — Adams summoned to attend the Governor's Council. — Patriotic Course of Governor Bowdoin. — The Senate in favor of sustaining the Laws. — They vote for a Suspension of the *Habeas Corpus*. — Feeble Policy of the Assembly. — They refuse to concur. — Opinions of Sullivan and Parsons. — Adams urges a Vigorous Enforcement of the Laws. — His Reply to the Proposition of the Insurgents. — No Compromise with Rebels in Arms. — Adams reports a Declaration of Rebellion. — The *Habeas Corpus* suspended for Eight Months. — Trial and Conviction of the Leaders. — Political Parties in Massachusetts. — Hancock elected Governor. — Reconciliation between Adams and Hancock. — The two Cannon. — Adams joins the Executive Council. — Efforts in favor of the Condemned. — Adams advocates their Execution. — The Prisoners pardoned.

AFTER the peace with England, the popular discontent in several States had been gradually increasing with the public burdens, and culminated in Massachusetts in 1786 with Shays's rebellion. The premonitions of this event, in the summer of 1782, have been already touched upon, and the policy of forbearance adopted by the Legislature. Samuel Adams, at the head of a deputation, visited Hampshire County, and quiet was temporarily restored; but the fire, it seems, was only smothered, and burst forth anew at the instigation of sundry mischievous agitators, who believed that by violently breaking up the courts of justice they could escape the payment of their debts. Gradually men of respectability and character were induced to join the movement, impelled by false views of the distress growing out of the Revolution. For several years the collection of both Federal and State taxes, though continually attempted, had not been generally enforced. The country was exhausted by the war; commerce was already passing into the control



of British merchants; and an increasing consumption of foreign productions caused a constant drain of specie. It was impossible for the people to meet the public demands. A growing extravagance in the manner of living, against which the old republicans vainly remonstrated, hastened the crisis, by encouraging profuseness where rigid economy was imperatively demanded. Personal debts, in thousands of instances, had been suffered to accumulate, and were now carried to the courts, which, in the western counties, were declared to be "engines of destruction." The grant of funds to Congress for Federal purposes, the inordinate fees of lawyers, the costs of civil suits, and the high salaries of sundry public officers were among the heads of complaint; and even the State Senate, with its small property qualification, was denounced as a needless and aristocratic branch of the government. These alleged grievances were magnified by demagogues and malecontents in the western part of the State, aided by the Tories, whose evil influence was already felt. Artful persuasions were used to bring the dissatisfied together in seditious meetings for the overthrow of government, with the impression that relief would be found under some new order of affairs, growing out of anarchy and confusion. Mr. Adams, among others, had long deprecated such assemblies, of which he plainly discerned the aim. Four years earlier, Ely, who then led the rioters in Western Massachusetts, had claimed to act upon the authority of one of these conventions assembled to prevent the sitting of the courts, and similar meetings had been organized in several of the States, soon after the peace with Great Britain, to thwart the measures of Congress. At the very outset of the democratic system, these movements were alarming to the most intelligent men, who saw that, without a due respect for the Federal laws, there could be no permanency to any form of government. The present practice of holding political conventions to define party platforms, prior to popular elections, was yet unknown. Nor can any similarity be

found between them and the seditious meetings in which the rebellion of 1786 commenced, and which had the express object of opposing by violence the established authorities of the land. The conventions and the mischievous agents of discord are occasionally mentioned in Mr. Adams's correspondence. A letter to Noah Webster on this subject has already been given. To John Adams he says:—

“I am fully in the sentiment expressed in your joint letter of September 10th, that now we have regular and constitutional governments, popular committees and county conventions are not only useless, but dangerous. They served an excellent purpose, and were highly necessary when they were set up, and I shall not repent the small share I then took in them.”

And again:—

“There are two great objects which, I think, should engage the attention of patriots here, and which appear to me to involve everything else,—to preserve entire our political liberties and to support our national faith. To effect either of these capital ends, we must counterwork the designs of Great Britain, who, to say the least, does not appear to be our most cordial friend, by her emissaries among us, to ruin both. The internal enemies of this country ridiculed our early ideas of opposition, embarrassed our measures through the whole conflict, and prolonged the war. They had nearly broken up our army in 1782, and they are now practising the same arts by influencing many weak men to withhold the necessary aid of taxes, to destroy the public faith. I should, therefore, think it very impolitic to increase their number by admitting the Tory refugees without *discrimination*. Jonathan Philanthrop, whom *you* well knew, with many others, took a very active part, and they were very successful in promoting the designs of the British government before the war. There are some among them who would be the fittest instruments to be employed by that court in tearing up, or rather in undermining, the foundations of our newly erected fabric.”<sup>1</sup>

As the disturbances swelled into an organized armed resistance to the laws, Mr. Adams saw that persuasion and

<sup>1</sup> Samuel to John Adams, Boston, April 16, 1784; July 21, 1786.

forbearance would be only temporary remedies, and indirect encouragement to the insurgents to renew their lawless proceedings whenever the acts of administration were contrary to their particular opinions. He therefore counselled vigorous coercive steps to maintain the dignity of government, when, from ample experience, it had been shown that the misguided rioters would impute to weakness what was intended for conciliation. Governor Bowdoin proved himself to be the man for the occasion. He had prorogued the Legislature to January; and in the mean time the malecontents were emboldened by the evidences of their increasing strength in the western counties. As in 1782, they at first made Hampshire County the centre of their proceedings. At Northampton, as before, the sitting of the court of common pleas was prevented by an armed force of fifteen hundred men. The Governor summoned the Legislature to meet late in September, and issued a proclamation, forbidding assemblages of the people to obstruct the regular course of the law, and calling on public officers and all good citizens to aid in preventing such meetings. The proclamation only added fuel to the flames, though worded with appropriate firmness and moderation. In the interval, the most influential men of Boston, — those who had long commanded the public respect, — procured a public meeting at Faneuil Hall on the 9th, of which Samuel Adams was moderator. A committee, consisting of Adams, Sullivan, Jarvis, Higginson, Paine, and Jackson, were appointed to prepare an address to the Governor, expressive of the public disapprobation of the riotous proceedings in the interior, and of “their readiness to assist government in every measure taken for the preservation of the constitutional rights of the people.” The address was presently reported, and also a circular to the several towns, after the old Revolutionary form. The style and peculiar expressions running through these documents, as well as the similarity in language to several of Mr. Adams’s letters just prior to this date, would indicate

his composition ; but the circular exists in the handwriting of his friend, Judge Sullivan. It eloquently recalls the principles which had sustained the Revolution, and, through trials and bloodshed, produced the inestimable blessings of a free, popular government, and calling to mind that there could be no medium between a state of government and a state of nature, urges the people to subordination, frugality, and industry, as a means of retrieving their circumstances and establishing the public credit. It is asserted that the disturbances arise from " British emissaries residing among us, whose every wish is for our overthrow and ruin, or from the machinations of wicked and unprincipled men, who seek their own emolument to the destruction of their country, or from a combination of both." The committee close by entreating their fellow-citizens, " by the mutual ties of friendship and affection ; by the sacred compact which holds us in one society ; by the blood of our brethren, shed to obtain our freedom ; by the tender regard we feel for our rising offspring, claiming freedom from our hands as their inheritance by the grant of Heaven, — to use your endeavors that redress of grievances be sought for in a constitutional and orderly way only."<sup>1</sup> This address probably had no more effect than the Governor's proclamation, though it is written in a spirit of singular gentleness, and appeals powerfully to the national pride, affecting recollections, and tenderest sympathies of the people. The insurgents, gathering recruits among the multitudes who were suffering from the results of the war, rapidly spread through the State, and having prevented the sitting of the court of common pleas at Worcester, assembled in large numbers at Springfield, intending to prevent the session of the supreme court now about convening.

The earliest meetings of the Governor and Council in relation to the outbreak were held in September. On the 7th, Governor Bowdoin called a special consultation, at which,

<sup>1</sup> Massachusetts Sentinel, Sept. 13, 1786.

besides the members of the Council, were Samuel Adams, Samuel Phillips, the judges of the Supreme Court, General Lincoln, and the Attorney-General. These meetings continued, at short intervals, nearly to the close of the year, — having been sometimes held on the Sabbath, — Mr. Adams regularly attending. This solicitation of his advice, even after he had declined a seat at the Council to which he had been appointed, indicates the value placed upon his judgment, as well as the friendship which had existed for so many years between himself and Bowdoin.

Meantime, the Legislature met in special session, and received the Governor's official account of his proceedings for the maintenance of law and order. While desiring that due forbearance might be shown, the Executive plainly avowed the necessity of effective steps for supporting the government. The Senate, representing to some extent the property and intellectual strength of the State, did not hesitate to indorse the Governor's manly and outspoken policy, and were ready for the adoption of decisive measures. But in the House, where the rebels were more intimately and numerously represented, a majority persistently delayed any exercise of force, and by its hesitancy gave encouragement to the revolt, and lessened public confidence in the stability of the government. Disposed to a temporizing course, until a change in accordance with their ideas of the administration of the laws had been effected, many in the House looked upon the existing commotions as a means of carrying measures which conceded most, if not all of the "reforms" demanded by the insurgents.

The two Houses were thus at variance in their policy during most of this session. A joint committee appointed to reply to the Governor's speech having indorsed his views, their report was bitterly opposed. The Senate agreed at once to the proposed measures; but the only really effective means of suppressing the rebellion, — a suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* for a period far within the time

prescribed by the Constitution, — met with a determined opposition in the House, where, “under the influence of lawless counsels,” the report was recommitted by a considerable majority. With the further object of concession, this branch of the Legislature voted to remove the General Court out of Boston, which was one of the peremptory demands of the insurgents in their published circulars. A bill also originated there, in pursuance of the wishes of the disaffected, for abolishing the lower courts. The delay thus occasioned, and the indefinite postponement of coercion, caused great apprehension among the zealous advocates of order,<sup>1</sup> who saw in this reluctance an evidence of the weakness of the government; and at the same time a class from among the wealthiest citizens, alleging a distrust of the permanency of a republican system, looked forward to a new revolution, from which might spring a firmer government and more security for the rights of property.<sup>2</sup> In this crisis Mr. Adams, solicitous to obtain the aid of the most distinguished friends of government outside of the Legislature, applied to several gentlemen, desiring their views upon the condition of public affairs. Judge Sullivan says, in a letter written two weeks after the commencement of the session: —

“My interest in the State, independent of any use I may have been of in the late Revolution, may apologize for my intruding my sentiments upon you in this day of public distress. I do not conceive that the court of common pleas is a grievance or even an inconvenience sufficient to raise the present commotions. There can be no substitute that can give satisfaction; and an attempt to find one yields to the insurgents, and overturns the government. Nor do I consider the suppression of the *habeas corpus*, on the other hand, to be of importance. Let me, to save your time from being wasted by me, only say that it is my opinion that an act ought to be reported and passed for the following purposes:— 1. For pardoning all, or nearly all, the late insurgents. 2. Declaring such in-

<sup>1</sup> Holland's History of Western Massachusetts, I. 250.

<sup>2</sup> Minot's History of the Insurrections in 1786, pp. 62, 63.

surrections in future high treason. 3. Providing a trial for such offences, in such counties as the General Court shall order. Let this be accompanied with a resolution, separate from the act, declaring such commotions rebellion, and requesting the Governor to call out the force of the State to quell them in future ; and let an act be reported providing a system of law-martial, not to control the persons or property of the citizens, and only to be exercised on the militia when called out by the Governor. Let this be accompanied by another resolution, declaring that the General Court will attend to the petitions of the people in their several towns, and redress all grievances which the powers of government can redress. I could wish that the idea of a county convention being a legal body could be exploded. I will only add, that I believe such decisive measures will save our freedom ; while, on the other hand, temporizing will inevitably overthrow the Constitution.”<sup>1</sup>

This advice coincided, with one or two exceptions, with the opinions of Mr. Adams, and it was soon after adopted in part by the General Court.

Through the month of October, owing to the humane but ill-judged pacific mildness of the Legislature, the revolt was steadily gaining strength. The Constitution clothed the Governor with ample powers to crush rebellion, if declared by the Legislature to exist, but this declaration the House would not make. This was observed by the insurgents, and it encouraged them to persistency, while the speeches advocating coercion were eagerly used by the rebel leaders to fan the flames of insurrection. Circular letters passed from town to town, in imitation of those of the Revolution ; new conventions were called ; and the militia, in many towns, were ordered by the rebel selectmen to be ready for active service. The report embodying the suspension of the *habeas corpus* was suffered to remain tabled in the House ; and in the mean time sundry expedients, designed to alleviate the public burdens, gave rise to lengthy debates. The proposed Tender Act, allowing the payment

<sup>1</sup> James Sullivan to S. Adams, Oct. 12, 1786 (Amory's Life of Sullivan, I. 197).

of back taxes and private debts with real and personal estate instead of specie, was particularly contested; and here the House again disagreed with the Senate, who were opposed to such an act, unless a just discrimination should be made in favor of foreign creditors, whose rights had been solemnly guaranteed by the Federal Congress, in the name of the whole United States.

These discussions assume historical importance as a forerunner of a similar condition of affairs preceding the gigantic rebellion which has just threatened the national existence. The same violent and unreasonable commotions excited by designing demagogues, the same apologizing for the rebels, who had their friends and spokesmen in the government councils, the same weak reluctance in the commencement to adopt vigorous measures, — all was the same but the prompt action of the Executive, who in this early instance had the courage to make the Constitution his only guide. During the debates intelligence arrived that the rioters had assembled in formidable numbers in Bristol County, with the avowed intention of preventing the approaching session of the Supreme Judicial Court. The occasion was seized upon in the Senate to advance the policy of enforcing obedience to the laws. A committee, with Samuel Adams as its chairman, and probably appointed, as Bradford says, at his instance, was chosen to request the Governor to order the Major-General of that division to protect the court in its session at Taunton.

“COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

“IN SENATE, Oct. 21, 1786.

“*Ordered*, That Samuel Adams and Tristram Dalton, Esqrs., with such as the Honorable House may join, be a committee to wait upon his Excellency the Governor, and acquaint him that, information having been given that there is a degree of probability that some attempts may be made to prevent the sitting of the Supreme Judicial Court at Taunton on Tuesday next, although the Legislature entertain full confidence that his Excellency will exercise that



authority on the occasion with which the Constitution has vested him, yet they cannot forbear expressing their desire that he would immediately give the most serious attention to the business."

The House, now for the first time assenting to coercion, concurred in the proposal, and joined the Senate in passing a riot act amply providing for the public emergency. In their message to the Governor, the Legislature tendered all the aid incumbent upon them, and were confident that he would still persevere in the exercise of such powers as were vested in him by their excellent Constitution for enforcing due obedience to the authority and laws of government; but as yet no formal declaration of rebellion could be obtained, owing to the cross-purposes between the Senate and House. The requisite orders, however, were immediately given by the Governor to Major-General Cobb, then also chief justice of the Court of Common Pleas for Bristol County. To the firmness of that officer was due the dispersion of the rebels without bloodshed; and similar preparations having been made at Cambridge, the insurgents were intimidated from breaking up the Supreme Court in Middlesex County.

The message was also the means of bringing up in the House the resolves for the suspension of the *habeas corpus*. The Governor, having complied with the request of the Legislature in protecting the courts, officially notified them of his proceedings. The Senate, in return, originated a message of thanks, the House concurring, in which the neglected resolves were introduced with some address. In the controversies with the royal governors, prior to the war of the Revolution, Adams and Bowdoin, as leaders respectively of the House and Council, had often concerted their plans to effect important political purposes; and it is probable that some such understanding existed in this instance. "This message," says Minot, the contemporary historian of the insurrection, "proved eventually of great consequence, as it was the foundation of very spirited measures on the part of

the Governor.”<sup>1</sup> Bradford, the historian, in a sketch of Samuel Adams written from personal knowledge, says that “he exerted all his influence in suppressing the insurrection, and gave his firm support to the measures adopted by Governor Bowdoin.”<sup>2</sup>

The opposition between the Senate and House continued as to several urgent points. Leniency was misconstrued by the insurgents, who still increased in boldness as a pacific disposition was manifested towards them. The alarming strides of the insurrection in Hampshire County were the subject of a special message from the Governor, on the 7th of November; and by the recommendation of the committee to whom this was referred, the important resolves which had so long slept in the House were forced up for discussion. The friends of the bill rallied to its support, and a series of exciting debates ensued between them and the advocates of continued forbearance. An additional clause had been introduced for the trial of insurgents outside of the county where the offence was committed. This was hotly contested by the opponents of the bill, whose ideas of the criminality of treason were not yet equal to such an infringement on personal rights. But these weak arguments at last gave way before the palpable fact, that total anarchy must presently ensue, unless society was protected by its legally elected officers. There was danger, too, that the rebels would seize the arms in the Federal arsenal at Springfield, and with the aid of the disaffected in the adjacent States, perhaps produce another revolution, and renew the horrors of a continental war. Congress, apprehending such a result, had already voted that an armed force should be raised by the several States, for the support of the Massachusetts government, though ostensibly for service against the Northwestern Indians.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Minot's *Insurrections*, pp. 58, 59.

<sup>2</sup> Bradford's *Biographical Notices*, pp. 22, 23.

<sup>3</sup> *Journals of Congress*, Oct. 20, 1786.

Alarmed at the timidity and dilatory course of the House, implying a partial acquiescence in these daring violations of the laws, the public were gradually losing confidence in the General Court,<sup>1</sup> which was now signally failing in the first test of its efficiency to maintain the constitutional government, and an adjournment began to be considered preferable to such continued exhibitions of feebleness and divided counsels. Theophilus Parsons, then, as afterwards, one of the most distinguished jurists in Massachusetts, was among those who deprecated the conduct of the House. Writing to a friend on this subject, he says:—

“Such are the reasons which have induced me to form my opinion, and I sincerely wish that all our *rulers* had entertained the same, and given it its full operation. We should not then have been puzzled to distinguish between political wisdom and personal timidity, nor between lenient measures and a submission to the claims of rebels in arms. But *nil desperandum de republica*. It is not yet too late; but if spirited measures are not adopted, *and executed*, before the next election, I fear the most alarming apprehensions will be justified.”<sup>2</sup>

These were the views of the leading intellects. But rebellion, with its hand at the throat of the country, had now been allowed to assume such formidable dimensions, that temporizing could no longer be tolerated, and the report was at last adopted. The writ of *habeas corpus* was suspended for eight months, and a bill passed, empowering the Governor and Council summarily to imprison any persons whose enlargement they might deem dangerous to the public liberty; pardon was offered to all who had been engaged in the late riots who should take the oath of allegiance; the Court of Common Pleas was temporarily discontinued; the expenses of lawsuits were lessened; and although the Legislature could not annihilate the public debt, nor interfere with private contracts, the Legal Tender Act, which the Senate had opposed early in this as well as in the previous

<sup>1</sup> Minot, p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Parsons's Life of Chief Justice Parsons, p. 131.

session, finally passed both Houses with certain modifications. At the motion of the Senate, its operation was limited to eight months. This session, in which, for the sake of harmony of action, the Senate conceded several important points to the House, closed on the 18th of November with an address to the people, which the ministers of the Gospel were requested to read to their congregations, setting forth the financial condition of the State, the true causes of the disturbances, and the efforts of the Legislature to alleviate the public distresses, and eloquently calling upon the different officers of the community and the whole body of the people to support the Constitution and laws.

In popular governments, the masses are easily misled by artful demagogues, whose recitals of fictitious grievances are powerful incentives to insurrection. The misguided and ignorant, who can be thus precipitated into revolt, without the intelligence to discriminate between real and fancied wrongs, are seldom to be reached by argument. To a blinded multitude, banded together for the purposes of lawless violence, with uncertain objects and cowardly instincts, persuasion and compromise are but additional evidences of the weakness and consequently of the contemptible character of the authorities. Government can exist only as a positive power, able and willing to defend itself equally against internal and external enemies. It is an institution for the protection of the whole people, who obey it only while it commands respect by a readiness to assert its prerogative whenever assailed. Hesitation, instead of conciliating its assailants, is usually regarded as a lack of confidence in its own self-sustaining power, and opens it to assault on the same principle that every undefended thing in nature invites attack from the stronger or rapacious of its kind. It is only by the prompt exertion of the strong arm that any government, republican or monarchical, when threatened, can be maintained. Thus it happened that the Act of Indemnity passed by the Legislature was treated with contempt by the

insurgents, who, with some reason in this instance, attributed it to timidity rather than forbearance; and a few days after the adjournment, the rioters, collecting in armed force, broke up the Court of General Sessions at Worcester. Finding that the late conciliatory proceedings, had only served to increase the tumult, the Governor, as Commander-in-Chief, now issued his orders, announcing his intention of crushing every dangerous opposition to the constituted authorities; and the whole of the State militia was directed to be in readiness to take the field. The coercion, which should have been countenanced by the Legislature as early as August, was now pushed forward on a scale commensurate with the power and extent of the insurrection. "In this dark scene of adversity," says Eliot, who was an eyewitness of these events, "when even a civil war had commenced, no man was more firm and intrepid than Mr. Adams. It was his constant declaration, that republics could only exist by a due submission to the laws; that the laws ought to be put in force against all opposition; and that a government could be supported by the exertions of a free, virtuous, and enlightened people."

The acts of violence at Worcester having been followed by similar ones elsewhere, especially at Springfield, where the notorious Shays was the leading spirit, Governor Bowdoin at once called out four thousand four hundred troops, which were placed under General Lincoln, an officer high in the public confidence for his prudence and energy. General Brooke, who had also lately shown his efficiency in supporting the laws, was intrusted with an important command. General Shepard, whose firmness during the disturbances at Springfield, earlier in the year, had been much applauded, was ordered to hold the arsenal at that place against the rioters, who now numbered two thousand men. Lincoln, aware of the critical situation of Shepard, marched to his relief; but before his arrival, Shays having wrought up his deluded followers by incendiary appeals, and being advised of the approach of the State forces, attacked Shepard, who

firing upon the advancing columns, after repeated warnings, killed three and wounded one. The rebels thereupon broke, and fled in confusion to Ludlow, some ten miles distant. Nothing discouraged, the leaders again collected their forces, and were preparing for another attack upon the arsenal, when the arrival of Lincoln from Worcester, with four regiments, compelled them to retire to Northampton and Hadley, whither they were followed by Lincoln and Shepard. Continuing their retreat, they posted themselves at Pelham, while Lincoln sheltered his troops at Hadley from the intense severity of the weather. Here some ineffectual negotiations took place, pending which the rebels, who were left without supplies, were obliged to retreat to Petersham. Advised of this movement, Lincoln immediately put his army in motion, and marching all night through a heavy snow-storm a distance of thirty miles, reached Petersham early in the morning, surprised and dispersed the insurgents, and took one hundred and fifty prisoners, after a pursuit extending two miles along the road. The head and front of the rebellion being thus broken, the rebels, unable to continue an organized resistance, formed in marauding parties, by which a system of guerilla warfare was maintained in the western part of the State.

The time for the meeting of the Legislature had arrived in January, but owing to the general disturbances, a quorum could not be obtained in the House until the 3d of February. The plans for the session seem to have been prearranged by some guiding minds; for there was a concert of action between the two branches as well as with the Governor, unknown since the outbreak. To Bowdoin's patriotic address, urging a determined suppression of the rebellion, the Senate replied by the hand of Samuel Adams, declaring a rebellion to exist, and promising to support him in all his measures to restore the supremacy of the law. The House immediately concurred, and the paper was presented to the Governor by Mr. Adams in person, as chairman of the joint committee for that purpose.

“TO HIS EXCELLENCY JAMES BOWDOIN, ESQ., GOVERNOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

“MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY:—

“The Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled have read and duly attended to your speech at the opening of this session, and take this earliest opportunity to express their entire satisfaction in the measures you have been pleased to take, pursuant to the powers vested in you by the Constitution, for the subduing a turbulent spirit which has too long insulted the government of this Commonwealth, prostrated the courts of law and justice in divers counties, and threatened even the overthrow of the Constitution itself.

“The General Court congratulate your Excellency on the success with which Providence has been pleased hitherto to bless the wise, spirited, and prudent measures which you have taken; and they earnestly entreat your Excellency still to encounter, repel, and resist, by all fitting ways, enterprises, and means, all and every such person and persons as attempt or enterprise in a hostile manner the destruction, detriment, or annoyance of this Commonwealth, and to pursue such further constitutional measures as you may think necessary for extirpating the spirit of rebellion, quieting the minds of the good people of the Commonwealth, and establishing the just authority of government. And in order that your Excellency may be possessed of the *full* power of the Constitution to effect these great purposes, the General Court have thought it highly necessary, after mature deliberation, to declare that a rebellion exists within this Commonwealth.

“This Court are fully persuaded that by far the greater part of the citizens of this Commonwealth are warmly attached to our present happy Constitution. They have a high sense of the merit of a respectable body of the militia, who have with readiness attended your Excellency's orders on this pressing emergency, as well as the patriotic zeal of a number of private citizens who have cheerfully advanced their money in aid to government; and you may be assured, sir, that the most speedy and effectual means will be used for the payment of the officers and soldiers who have been, or may be, employed in this necessary and most important service; and for the reimbursement of the moneys generously advanced for its support.

“It is to be expected that vigor, decision, and energy, under the direction and blessing of Heaven, will soon terminate this unnatural, unprovoked rebellion, prevent the effusion of blood, and the fatal consequences to be dreaded from a civil war; and it is the determination of this Court to establish a criterion for discriminating between good citizens and others, that each may be regarded according to their characters and deserts.

“If it should appear to your Excellency that the time for which the militia under the command of Major-General Lincoln are enlisted is too short to effect the great objects in view, it is the request of this Court that you would be pleased to direct the Commanding General to re-enlist the same men, or enlist others for such further time as you may think necessary, or to replace them by detachments from the militia, and, if you shall think it expedient, to increase their numbers and continue them in service until those purposes shall be completely accomplished.

“The General Court will give the most ready attention to your message of the 3d instant, and every other communication you shall be pleased to lay before them. They will vigorously pursue every measure that may be calculated to support the Constitution, and will still continue to redress any real grievances, if such shall be found to exist, humbly beseeching Almighty God to preserve union and harmony among the several powers of government, as well as among the honest and virtuous citizens of the Commonwealth, and to restore to us the inestimable blessings of peace and liberty under a wise and righteous administration of government.”

This vigorous policy took immediate possession of the Legislature. No formidable opposition was thenceforth made in the House to the determined measures proposed in the Senate. On the day following the adoption of the Address to the Governor a remarkable document was received from the insurgents. It was a formal proposition for a sort of armistice, by which all prisoners were to be liberated by the government, and a general pardon extended to all offenders, upon which they were to lay down their arms and disperse. Until that promise should be made by the General Court, the rebels would remain under arms and in open defiance of the authorities. Had the Assembly accepted



this proposition, it would not only have virtually recognized the rebellion as a power to be treated with, but, by a fatal precedent, would have openly encouraged future insurrections. The petition was as follows:—

“COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

“TO THE HONORABLE THE SENATE AND THE HONORABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN GENERAL COURT ASSEMBLED AT THEIR NEXT SESSION.

“A petition of the officers of the counties of Worcester, Hampshire, Middlesex, and Berkshire, now at arms, humbly showeth:—

“That your petitioners being sensible that we have been in an error in having recourse to arms, and not seeking redress in a constitutional way, we therefore heartily pray your Honors to overlook our failing, in respect to our rising in arms, as your Honors must be sensible we had great cause of uneasiness, as will appear by your redressing many grievances the last session. Yet we declare that it is our hearts’ desire that good government may be kept up in a constitutional way; and, as it appears to us that the time is near approaching when much human blood will be spilt unless a reconciliation can immediately take place, which scene strikes us with horror, let the foundation cause be where it may, we therefore solemnly promise that we will lay down our arms and repair to our respective homes in a peaceable and quiet manner, and so remain,—provided your Honors will grant to your petitioners and all those of our brethren who have had recourse to arms, or in other ways aided and assisted in our cause, a general pardon for their past offences; all which we humbly submit to the wisdom, candor, and benevolence of your Honors; and we in duty bound shall ever pray.

“[Read and accepted by the officers.]

“FRANCIS STONE,

*Chairman of the Committee of Counties.*

“PELHAM, Jan. 30th, 1787.”

The Senate made short work of the paper, and on the same day passed the following resolution:—

“*Ordered*, that Samuel Adams, Esq., with such as the Honorable House may join, be a committee to state the reasons why a proposal made in a certain paper signed Francis Stone, chairman

of a committee of certain officers from the counties of Worcester, Hampshire, Middlesex, and Berkshire, who are in arms against the government, cannot be complied with."

Messrs. Gorham and Ward were appointed by the House, and on the following day Mr. Adams, as chairman, reported over his own signature the following in the form of a joint resolution, which was ordered to be published:—

"COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

"A paper called a petition from the officers of the counties of Worcester, Hampshire, Middlesex, and Berkshire, now at arms, and signed by Francis Stone, chairman of the committee from the above counties, and addressed to the General Court, was read.

"Whereupon, *Voted*, That the paper cannot be sustained:—

"*First*. Because those concerned therein openly avow themselves to be at arms and in a state of hostility against the government; and for this reason alone the said paper would be unsustainable, even if the tenor of the application had discovered a spirit suitable to the object of it.

"*Secondly*. Because it does not appear *what officers* or *how many* are represented by the said paper, or that the said Stone had authority from *any officers whatever* to make the application by him subscribed.

"*Thirdly*. Because the applicants, although they call themselves petitioners, and acknowledge an 'error,' yet consider that error only as a 'failing,' and attempt, at least in part, to justify themselves therein.

"*Fourthly*. The said applicants appear to view themselves *on equal if not better standing* than the Legislature by proposing '*a reconciliation*.'

"*Fifthly*. They appear to threaten the authority and government of the Commonwealth with a great effusion of blood, unless this '*reconciliation*' can immediately take place.

"*Sixthly*. They implicitly declare their determination to continue in arms, unless all who now are and have been in a state of open war with the government, including those who have been apprehended and are now in custody as well as all others who have in any way aided or assisted in their cause, can have another full pardon granted for all offences, in addition to that which they have so lately despised.

“*Seventhly.* If the paper presented had been a *proper petition*, subscribed by the persons who desire a pardon, and expressive of a due sense of their crime, with proper resolutions of amendment, yet their engagements could not be depended on, as their cause has been supported by a multitude of falsehoods; and as no engagement can be more solemn than those made by the leaders of the rebels in the county of Middlesex, on the week before the judicial courts sat last in the said county, that they would not take any measures to obstruct the sitting of the said courts; which engagements were so far regarded as to induce the Commander-in-Chief to write counter orders to a considerable part of the militia whom he had ordered to be detached; and yet those engagements were on the next day violated.”

This plain rejection of all compromise with rebels against a popular government was published throughout the disaffected counties, and left the insurgents little to hope for from their friends in the House.

The state of rebellion having been at last acknowledged and declared by the Legislature, another important step remained to be taken. This was to secure the aid of the United States government in case it should be needed. On the 5th Mr. Adams introduced the following resolution:—

“COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

“IN SENATE, Feb. 5, 1787.

“*Resolved,* That his Excellency the Governor be requested to write to Congress and inform them of the commotions that have taken place in this Commonwealth, and the measures that have been adopted by government in consequence thereof; and of the declaration now made by the General Court that a rebellion exists within this State; and that, although the Legislature are firmly persuaded that by far the greater part of the Commonwealth are well affected to government, and that in all probability they will be able speedily and effectually to suppress the rebellion, yet, if any unforeseen event should take place which may frustrate the measures of government, they rely upon such support from the United States as is expressly and solemnly stipulated by the Articles of Confederation.”

A touch of the old opposition was again encountered in the House, where, after debate, the bill was rejected by the western county influence; for the friends of the rebels had no relish for the enlistment of additional force, and even some of the loyally disposed members questioned the wisdom of such an invasion of a sovereign State. A new bill materially modified was prepared in the House, which in turn was rejected by the Senate, who resolved "to adhere to their own vote"; and Samuel Adams and Samuel Baker were appointed to confer with the committee of the House on the subject. On the 9th a sufficient number had been gained to secure the passage of the original bill. Congress, however, as already stated, had taken measures to protect the arsenal at Springfield and sustain the State government of Massachusetts.

On the 6th, the Governor gave official notice of the success of the State forces at Petersham. This seemed to be the turning-point of the rebellion, but it was deemed prudent to keep up a force of fifteen hundred men. A free pardon, with certain exceptions, was offered to all who should lay down their arms and take the oath of allegiance; and three commissioners were appointed, with discretionary powers to pardon even those who had been excepted in the general act of indemnity, excepting Shays, Wheeler, Parsons, and Day, the principal characters. On the 10th of March, as there was apparently no further demand for legislative action relative to public disturbances, the session was closed.

The first important business in the Supreme Judicial Courts in the several counties where the rebellion had been most active was the trial of the prominent insurgents. Many were convicted of sedition, and an aggregate of fourteen in four counties were found guilty of treason and condemned to death. The time of execution of some of these misguided men came before the expiration of Bowdoin's term, and he mercifully postponed the day, at the urgent request of many influential persons, so that when he went

out of office none of them had suffered the penalty of the law.

At the annual elections in April, the most powerful parties were found to be the friends of the captive rebels on the one side, and the advocates of condign punishment on the other. The former party amounted to a third of the entire population of the State. Hancock, who during the crisis had taken little if any part in politics, and, as the insurgents and their sympathizers had reason to believe, would be more ready to pardon the convicts, now became a candidate for Governor against Bowdoin, whose character and inflexible sense of justice left less to hope for in favor of the prisoners. In fact, this became the great issue of the election. For Lieutenant-Governor, the candidates were General Lincoln, lately distinguished for his services in quelling the rebellion, Samuel Adams, and Thomas Cushing. Mr. Adams did not exert himself in his own behalf, but used his influence for Bowdoin and Cushing. The popular sentiment for the condemned, however, was all powerful, especially in the western counties, and the Hancock ticket was elected by a large majority. In Boston, Adams received but one hundred and seventy-nine votes for Lieutenant-Governor. Suffolk County, by thirteen hundred and seventy-three votes, retained him in the Senate; which, as it had resolutely sustained Bowdoin in his energetic measures during the insurrection, now reinstated Adams as President, in appreciation of his determined course when the very existence of the government was imperilled.

Since the winter of 1776, familiar association had ceased between Adams and Hancock. From the year when Adams had brought his young townsman forward into political life, at the commencement of the Revolution, his power of harmonizing and managing had been at times severely taxed to provide against the vacillating conduct of Hancock. As the contest with the mother country proceeded, and became more national in character by the assembling of the Colonies in General Congress, those circumstances occurred

which terminated their friendly intercourse.<sup>1</sup> For several years thenceforth Hancock lost no opportunity to display his enmity; but Adams, with a magnanimity peculiar to himself, never retaliated in kind, and in the divisions thus created scarcely ever alluded to his former friend and associate. Time, however, seems to have softened the asperity of this difference; and after the present election, when Hancock had resumed the gubernatorial chair, their friends determined if possible to effect a reconciliation. This was happily accomplished; and Adams, when chosen by the Senate, consented to become one of the Governor's Councillors.

Not long after this renewal of intimacy the State applied to Congress for two brass cannon which had been used in the war. Congress promptly returned them to their native State, having named them, probably at the suggestion of the Massachusetts delegation, respectively after the two proscribed patriots of the Revolution. The inscription on one is as follows:—

The  
ADAMS.  
Sacred to Liberty.  
This is one of four cannon  
which constituted the whole train  
of Field Artillery,  
possessed by the British Colonies of  
North America  
at the commencement of the war  
on the 19th of April. 1775.  
This Cannon  
and its fellow  
belonging to a number of citizens of  
Boston  
were used in many engagements  
during the war.  
The other two, the property of the  
Government of Massachusetts,  
were taken by the enemy.  
By order of the United States  
in Congress assembled.  
May 19. 1788.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See, *ante*, II. 380—387, 503—512.

<sup>2</sup> The pieces are now in the top of Bunker Hill Monument.

The three commissioners who had been appointed to grant indemnity at their own discretion to repentant rebels reported in the session of the Legislature under Hancock's administration, "that beyond the obvious and well-known causes of the rebellion, a delusion in regard to the action and position of the General Court had been a powerful cause in sowing discord and discontent, and that this delusion had in too many instances been excited and fostered by the members of the General Court themselves."<sup>1</sup> The wisdom and justice of Bowdoin's course was fully indorsed by the present Legislature, who, much to the surprise of those who had placed them in power, presently carried out all the measures of the late administration, — a pointed rebuke to the public sentiment by which Bowdoin had been defeated, despite his highly honorable conduct. Yet, as many of the members owed their seats to the friends of the rebellion, it was thought expedient to throw discredit on the previous General Court, by ostentatiously raising a committee to bring in a bill for the repeal of the law suspending the writ of *habeas corpus*, one of the obnoxious measures of the former Legislature, which would have expired by limitation two weeks later.<sup>2</sup> The general course of the government, however, was a triumphant vindication of the vigorous policy of Bowdoin.

At the numerous meetings of Governor Hancock and his Council Board, composed for the most part of gentlemen of very mature years and judgment, the subject now most discussed was the fate of the condemned leaders of the rebellion. Postponements from time to time had occurred,

<sup>1</sup> Holland's Western Massachusetts, I. 287, 288.

<sup>2</sup> Holland, who gives a full and complete account of Shays's rebellion, says of the conduct of the Legislature in this instance (I. 289): "The motives that led to this action are too evident to call for statement or admit of apology. The repeal could hardly have been carried through its various stages before the law would have expired of itself. It is not wonderful that the project should afterwards have miscarried, and that its advocates should have become so heartily ashamed of it as openly to renounce it."

and the gloomy preparations for death had once been made in Hampshire County, but a reprieve had stopped the execution. It was argued, that, now the constitutional authorities were re-established, as this was the first instance of treason under the new government, no salutary effect upon the people could be anticipated from such a spectacle, and that the late Governor and Council having themselves put off the fatal day, it was an evidence that even then the executions had not been considered necessary to the public safety. It was also said that those members who had urged Bowdoin to pardon the criminals were now under solemn obligations to counsel clemency. What arguments were used in reply are not known. One of Sullivan's speeches in the Council has been published, in which the views above were eloquently expressed.<sup>1</sup> Samuel Adams, though one of the most humane and merciful of men, was inexorable in this instance. He could not forgive an attempt to destroy by violence a government instituted by the people, whose establishment had cost the best blood of America. It was worse than a solitary instance of murder, to which the death penalty was naturally attached, inasmuch as many lives had been sacrificed, and incalculable calamities visited upon an innocent people. He, therefore, as Thacher says, advised the Executive "to inflict that just, condign punishment which the judicial sentence had awarded on the detestable leaders of that banditti who raised the rebellion."<sup>2</sup> "In monarchies," said Mr. Adams, "the crime of treason and rebellion may admit of being pardoned or lightly punished; but the man who dares to rebel against the laws of a republic ought to suffer death." The insurgent chiefs had been impartially tried, and their punishment in accordance with the sentence Mr. Adams believed to be necessary as a solemn warning to traitors who in after times might menace popular elective government. Public opinion was strongly in favor of leniency, and to such an extent that numerous members of the

<sup>1</sup> Amory's Sullivan, I. 205-207.

<sup>2</sup> Thacher's Discourse, pp. 17, 18.



Legislature who had taken an active part against the rebels had lost their seats in the succeeding General Court. But Adams, as usual, pursued what he deemed to be the path of duty, regardless of public clamor ; and it has been said that, had his own son been among the condemned, his Spartan character would with equal firmness have devoted the offender to a merited death.<sup>1</sup> The advocates of clemency, however, prevailed in the Council ; and Hancock, who was himself disposed to the side of mercy, after repeated delays, finally pardoned the prisoners.

<sup>1</sup> Had Samuel Adams been in the executive chair, probably every one upon whom the sentence of death had been passed would have suffered the extreme penalty of the law.

## CHAPTER LX.

Inefficiency of the Articles of Confederation. — Plans for their Revisal. — The Federal Constitution. — Convention in Massachusetts. — Adams a Delegate from Boston. — Importance attached by the Country to his Views. — His Anxiety for the Preservation of the individual State Sovereignities. — He fears for the future Peace of the Country, if the Question of State Rights is not definitely settled. — Death of Dr. Samuel Adams. — Public Apprehensions that the Constitution would be rejected. — The Conciliatory Propositions. — Statements as to their Origin. — Adams advocates them, and recommends their Adoption. — He proposes Additional Amendments. — Ratification of the Constitution. — Its Narrow Escape from Defeat. — Adams and the State Rights of the last Century. — His Desire for Perpetual Union. — Union, to be permanent, should have the respective Federal and State Powers distinctly specified and carefully observed.

A PARTIAL result of the insurrection, as well as of the disturbances elsewhere, which were to some extent encouraged by the independent character of the State governments under the Confederacy, was to confirm the impression which had already become general, that the central government should be vested with more authority than could be exercised under the existing system. But, long before this outbreak, the necessity of a government more national in character had been admitted by every intelligent statesman. At the close of the war, Samuel Adams, as we have seen, had been very solicitous for a proper support of the measures of Congress. He was desirous that the several States should sustain the waning importance of that body by a ready compliance with its necessary demands for imposts to meet the common obligations; and the few scraps which have been preserved of his correspondence, from the close of the war until 1787, express his recognition of its power for general purposes, and his unhesitating disapproval of popular conventions, then becoming too frequent, for the purpose of questioning and contravening the acts of Congress. Few,

however, had matured any definite plans of government, even among those who had earliest seen the necessity of a radical change.

From the very ratification of the Articles of Confederation efforts had been made to revise and amend them; amendment had been advocated by eminent men, and recommended by public bodies; and, just before Shays's rebellion, a convention from eight States met for that purpose at Annapolis; but as yet there was no approach to unanimity. The jealousy against enlarging the powers of Congress was wide-spread, and every step in that direction met with decided opposition among the many who feared tyranny under a consolidated government. Hence the Convention which met at Philadelphia in May, 1787, and formed the present Constitution, came together with no other expressed object than a revision of the existing form. The general impression of the majority of its members was, that all the exigencies of the times could thus be fully met, and few looked beyond such a result.

The inadequacy of the Articles for the direction of a continent, of which the political elements were just settling themselves after the Revolution, was generally admitted. Mr. Adams had for some time seen the necessity of a convention. He thought that its members should be vested with unlimited and specific powers to revise the original form of government, and to increase the central power enough to create a more efficient system of general taxation, and provide for the regulation of foreign treaties and trade on a national basis; but that the Continental Congress should be preserved, with such modifications as should enable it to collect imposts for Federal purposes. The circumstances existing when the Articles of Confederation were adopted during the war, and to meet which that system was as perfect as could then have been devised, had materially altered when, with the establishment of national independence, America commenced its republican experience.

The doctrine of State sovereignty, that is, that there should be a confederacy of sovereign States united, but preserving the individuality of each, was most attractive to the delegates from the smaller States; while those favoring a strong central government were found in the delegations from the Carolinas, Virginia, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania. The divisions continued during several months of animated argument, and a variety of plans of government were brought forward, some of them embodying elements of aristocracy; but the more conservative party, in the end, carried their point; and after a struggle which at times threatened to dissolve the Convention, the Constitution was matured and adopted. It was presently sent to Congress, and by that body to the several State Legislatures for acceptance.

On its reception by the Governor of Massachusetts, the proposed Constitution was laid before the Legislature, with a recommendation to submit it to a Convention to be summoned for the purpose. The delegates to this body, chosen like Representatives to the Legislature, met at Boston on the 9th of January, 1788. Among them were the foremost men of Massachusetts in ability and political strength, including Hancock, Adams, Parsons, Bowdoin, Sedgwick, Strong, Ames, Davis, Dana, King, and Cushing. Elbridge Gerry, who had been a delegate to the Philadelphia Convention, and had already expressed his disapproval of the Constitution, was invited to attend, though not an elected member.

This State Convention continued in session nearly four weeks. As their deliberations involved the decision of Massachusetts, which in turn must influence several other States, and indeed was believed to control the fate of the Constitution, their progress was everywhere watched with intense interest. The principal members were Adams and Hancock, the most conspicuous men in New England, and as they went it was commonly thought a majority of the Convention would be apt to follow. For this reason the friends

of the Constitution and the entire community turned to them with the strongest solicitude for an avowal of their opinion. The opposition of Massachusetts was especially feared, from its effect upon New York, Maryland, and Virginia. Madison, writing from New York, soon after the Massachusetts Convention assembled, says:—

“According to the prospect at the date of the latest letters there was very great reason to fear that the voice of that State would be in the negative. The operation of such an event on this State may easily be foreseen. . . . The decision of Massachusetts either way will involve the result in this State.”

And again, referring to the reception of the Constitution, soon after its passage in the general Convention at Philadelphia:—

“It is said Mr. Samuel Adams objects to one point only, namely, the prohibition of a religious test. Mr. Bowdoin’s objections are said to be against the great number of members composing the Legislature, and the intricate election of the President.”

But the principal objections of Samuel Adams to the instrument had no reference whatever to a religious test. His views are embodied with sufficient distinctness in the following letter, written just after the form of the proposed Constitution had become known in Boston, and before the assembling of the State Convention. To his friend in Virginia he says:—

“The session of our General Court, which lasted six weeks, and my station there requiring my punctual and constant attendance, prevented my considering the new Constitution, as it is already called, so closely as it was necessary for me, before I should venture an opinion. I confess, as I enter the building, I stumble at the threshold. I meet with a national government instead of a federal union of sovereign States. I am not able to conceive why the wisdom of the Convention led them to give the preference to the former before the latter. If the several States in the Union are to become one entire nation under one Legislature, the powers of which shall extend to every subject of legislation, and its laws be supreme

and control the whole, the idea of sovereignty in these States must be lost. Indeed, I think, upon such a supposition, those sovereignties ought to be eradicated from the mind; for they would be *imperia in imperio*, justly deemed a solecism in politics, and they would be highly dangerous and destructive of the peace, union, and safety of the nation.<sup>1</sup>

“And can this national Legislature be competent to make laws for the *free* internal government of one people, living in climates so remote, and whose ‘habits and particular interests’ are, and probably always will be, so different? Is it to be expected that general laws can be adapted to the feelings of the more Eastern and the more Southern parts of so extensive a nation? It appears to me difficult, if practicable. Hence, then, may we not look for discontent, mistrust, disaffection to government, and frequent insurrections, which will require standing armies to suppress them in one place and another, where they may happen to arise. Or, if laws could be made, adapted to the local habits, feelings, views, and interests of those distant parts, would they not cause jealousies of partiality in government which would excite envy and other malignant passions, productive of wars and fighting? But should we continue distinct sovereign States, confederated for the purpose of mutual safety and happiness, each contributing to the Federal head such a part of its sovereignty as would render the government fully adequate to those purposes, and *no more*, the people would govern themselves more easily, the laws of each State being well adapted to its own genius and circumstances, and the liberties of the United States would be more secure than they can be, as I humbly conceive, under the proposed new Constitution.

“You are sensible, sir, that the seeds of aristocracy began to spring, even before the conclusion of our struggle for the natural

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Adams here refers to an unlimited extension of the central power over the local affairs of the States; for all his writings on this subject admit that the Federal head should be vested with such attributes as should give the United States the standing and weight of nationality. The continuation of this letter sufficiently explains these views. As early as 1784 and 1786, when writing to Richard Henry Lee and John Adams, he refers to the vital importance of preserving the national character and faith. He speaks of the United States as a nation, when supporting the Constitution in the Massachusetts Convention; and in the inaugurals, while Governor, continually acknowledges the supremacy of Congress for national purposes.

rights of men, — seeds which, like a canker-worm, lie at the root of free governments. So great is the wickedness of some men and the stupid servility of others, that one would be almost inclined to conclude that communities cannot be free. The few haughty families think that *they* must govern; the body of the people tamely consent, and submit to be their slaves. This unravels the mystery of millions being enslaved by the few! But I must desist; my weak hand prevents my proceeding further at present. I will send you my poor opinion of the political structure at another time.”<sup>1</sup>

It was doubtless owing to the well-known views here expressed, which Mr. Adams freely uttered in conversation, that he had not been chosen a delegate to the national Convention at Philadelphia. Boston and the neighboring towns, which he would particularly have represented, had he been a member, drew their prosperity from trade. This made them favorable to a strong Federal power, which would increase foreign confidence in the national stability, and lead to satisfactory commercial relations with European states, such as could not be expected under a less positive central government. This vesting of authority, however, in the Federal head for the regulation of trade, the establishment of foreign relations, and the collection of a national revenue was exactly what Mr. Adams desired, provided there were very distinct reservations of all powers not expressly delegated by the several States. But at that time to entertain objections to the Constitution as it originally emanated from the Convention, or to express an honest distrust of what was conceived to be an undue concentration of power at the Federal head, was distorted into anti-Federalism, — an opposition to any confederation of States for general purposes. Almost immediately the country became thus politically divided; and, though the issue of adopting the Constitution died out with the establishment of the government under the new system, the opposing views of “Federalists” and “Republicans,” or “Democrats” as these came

<sup>1</sup> S. Adams to R. H. Lee, Dec. 3, 1787.

in time to be called, formed the staple of American politics far into the next century.

The firm union of America had been for twenty years, and was still, desired by Samuel Adams. He had persistently urged the confederation of the Colonies from the outset, and promoted it by his wise and timely measures. The principle which he had recognized at the commencement of the Revolution as the life of the national independence to which his single aim was directed had now most weight with him as he anxiously sought for the safest course for his country, when the long-desired freedom had been attained. With him in these patriotic hopes and fears were some of the most illustrious men of the Revolution, North and South, — men who had staked all in the contest, and ranked second to none in acknowledged wisdom and virtue.

It is more than probable that when the Massachusetts Convention assembled, a majority were against adopting the Constitution. The first motion after organizing was made by Mr. Adams, "That the Convention would attend morning prayers daily, and that the gentlemen of the clergy of every denomination be requested to officiate in turn." This was a step towards harmonizing possible sectarian differences among so many members which recalls to mind a similar wise policy at the opening of the first Continental Congress in 1774. Adams and Hancock, though their sentiments had not been expressed for or against adopting the Constitution, were regarded by many as likely to be opposed to it. A strong feeling in favor of adoption was publicly manifested in Boston by all interested in commerce and trade. But Adams never felt the public pulse for his own political guidance, though he had faith that the people in their capacity for self-government were generally right on public questions. He addressed himself to the consideration of great issues, with a proper appreciation of the interest felt as to his own course and its influence upon others; but the consciousness that the result of the Convention rested in no



small degree upon him had no other effect than to increase the sense of a grave responsibility. It probably did, however, deter him from raising any objections to the Constitution during the debates, in which he took little or no part. He noted the arguments advanced both in this Convention and in those of the sister States; and his delay in assenting to the instrument arose entirely from his desire that amendments should be introduced which he considered as essential to its acceptance by the country.

A few days after the Convention assembled he met with a severe domestic affliction in the death of his son, Dr. Samuel Adams, who expired at his father's house in Winter Street on the 17th of January, at the age of thirty-seven. Having served in his professional capacity through the war of the Revolution,<sup>1</sup> he returned to Boston with a shattered constitution and unable to resume his practice. One of his intimate acquaintances wrote of him, that "he possessed a substantial mind, social feelings, and a generous heart, and his greatest pleasure was to do good to his fellow-men." He was a member of the Massachusetts Medical Society, and a writer for scientific publications. He died of a scrofulous affection of several of the vital organs. At the invitation of Mr. Adams, the Convention adjourned to attend the funeral, which took place from the family residence, on the afternoon of the 18th. The loss of his only son deeply affected Mr. Adams, who now, as was afterwards remembered, evinced unusual emotion.

<sup>1</sup> "JOHN HANCOCK, ESQ.,  
*Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.*

"This certifies that Dr. Samuel Adams, surgeon of the regiment under my command, has served in that capacity from the 14th of March, 1778, *vice* Dr. John Spofford, resigned 14th of March, 1778; and having never received any warrant of his appointment, I therefore wish, if agreeable to your Excellency, that he may now be commissioned with one.

"JOHN CRANE, *Colonel Massachusetts Artillery.*

"WEST POINT, 5th May, 1782.

"In Council, July 2, 1782. — Read and advised that a warrant be made out agreeable to the above recommendation.

"JOHN AVERY, *Secretary.*"

When the Convention had been two weeks deliberating, and animated debates had brought it no nearer ratifying the Constitution, many began to fear, and with great reason, that it would totally fail to accomplish its object. Some of the bad blood engendered during the insurrection made itself apparent at times; and though ex-Governor Bowdoin was present as a member, an occasional reflection was heard against the late administration, which had been exceedingly unpopular in the western part of the State from its vigorous coercive measures against the insurgents. The rebellious counties were largely represented in the Convention, and perhaps it was thought that the erection of a strong central government would tend to the more prompt suppression of any future risings. Some rather pointed remarks touching the recent disturbances were leading to delicate ground, when the subject was quieted by the motion to adjourn. It was wise policy to prevent, if possible, any recurrence to the past; or perhaps Adams, who had been an unflinching supporter of Bowdoin during the rebellion, might have arisen in defence of his friend. Bowdoin was an advocate of the Constitution, and early in the Convention spoke in favor of its adoption. An attempt was also made by some of the opponents to precipitate a vote on the main question, by stopping the consideration by paragraphs, and taking up the subject at large. This was evidently a pre-concerted plan; for its progress, summarily terminated by an adjournment, was renewed on the next morning, and occupying a part of two days, was contested by some of the principal speakers on both sides. These particular debates are abridged in the report, and the votes are not given; but those who are mentioned as having favored the measure are found by the journals to have uniformly voted in the negative on the final question of ratifying the Constitution. Among them was General Thompson, who frequently took the floor against the ratification, and who, as a member of the Legislature during the insurrection, had opposed the

policy of Bowdoin, and on that issue had this year been re-elected. Had the attempt succeeded, it might, and probably would, have defeated the Constitution. Some of the number gave their pecuniary necessities as a reason why the business should be urged forward; but when Mr. Nasson renewed his motion on the second morning, Mr. Adams immediately arose, and objected to such ill-judged haste. The journal says:—

“The Hon. Mr. Adams said he was one of those who had difficulties and doubts respecting some parts of the proposed Constitution. He had, he said, for several months after the publication of it, laid by all the writings in the public papers on the subject, in order to be enabled leisurely to consider them. He had, he said, still more difficulties on his mind, but that he had chosen rather to be an auditor than an objector, and he had particular reasons therefor. As this was the case with him, and others, he believed, were in a similar situation, he was desirous to have a full investigation of the subject, that thereby such might be confirmed either in favor or against the Constitution; and was therefore against the motion. We ought not, he said, to be stingy of our time or the public money, when so important an object demanded them; and the public expect that we will not. He was sorry, he said, for gentlemen’s necessities, but he would rather support the gentlemen who were so necessitated, or lend them money to do it, than they should hurry so great a subject. He therefore hoped that the question would be put, and that we should proceed as we began.”

The question being then demanded, the motion was negatived without a return of the House, — a result which was received with “a buzz of congratulation” in the gallery. The debates by paragraphs were then resumed, and lasted another week.

In this week a plan was agreed upon among several prominent members, of which various accounts have been given by contemporaries. To meet the objections of those opposed to the Constitution, it was arranged to prepare certain amendments, afterwards historically known as the

“Conciliatory Propositions,” which Hancock should be persuaded to indorse, and submit in person to the Convention. The late Colonel Joseph May related from his personal knowledge the following interesting facts concerning the Convention.

“Adams and Hancock were both members of the Convention in Massachusetts, and the two most powerful men in the State: Mr. Hancock on account of his wealth and social rank (much thought of in 1787–88) and the chivalrous patriotism with which he went into the contest; but Adams had more intelligence, more judgment, and was less swayed by personal ambition than Hancock, and besides had done more for the independence which was then secured. Neither was well pleased with the Constitution. It made the central government too strong, and cut off the State rights and local power of the people. In short, it was not sufficiently democratic, as we say in these days. Mr. Adams foresaw none of the consequences of a strong central government which are now so obvious. The friends of the Constitution were anxious to have the votes of both; for it was thought Massachusetts would go as Hancock and Adams went, and New Hampshire would follow Massachusetts, and other States would copy their example. Adams questioned the policy of the adoption without amendments, and let men know his reasons; but Hancock was in great trouble, and, as usual on such occasions, he had, or affected to have, the gout, and remained at home, wrapped up in flannel. The friends of the Constitution gathered about him, flattered his vanity, told him the salvation of the nation rested with him: if the Constitution was not accepted, we should be a ruined nation; if he said accept it, Massachusetts and the nation would obey. They persuaded him to that opinion. It was reported abroad that he had made up his mind, and had recovered from his illness so far that, on a certain day, he would appear again in the Convention, and would make a speech which would probably be in favor of adopting the Constitution. Theophilus Parsons, afterwards the famous judge, was the most active in procuring this result. He wrote a speech for Hancock to read in the Convention.

“So when the day arrived, Mr. Hancock was helped out of his house into his coach, and driven down to the place where the Con-

vention was held, — Federal Street, — and thence carried into the Convention by several young gentlemen, who were friends of the family and in the secret. He rose in his place and apologized for his absence, for his feebleness, and declaring that nothing but the greatness of the emergency would have brought him from his bed of sickness; but duty to his country prevailed over considerations of health. He hoped they would pardon him for *reading* a speech which he had carefully prepared, not being well enough to make it in any other manner. Then he read the speech which Parsons had written for him, and from Parsons's manuscript, and sat down. One of his friends took the manuscript hastily from him, afraid that the looker-on might see that it was not in Hancock's hand, but Parsons's."

The narrator of this incident was intimate in the Hancock family, and his account agrees substantially with that of Stephen Higginson, "Laco," in the Massachusetts Sentinel in the following year. It is to some extent corroborated in the recently published life of Parsons. It differs from the journal of the Convention, in a few slight particulars as to Hancock's introductory remarks and in the fact that a short adjournment intervened between the remarks and the offering of the propositions. Colonel May, who was an administrator of the Hancock estate, found the original draft in the handwriting of Parsons among Hancock's papers. There is no doubt that Parsons wrote it.

As to the origination of the plan and Adams's connection with it, there is another contemporary narrative. Among the papers of Samuel Adams there is a copy of the "Conciliatory Propositions" and preamble, as submitted by Hancock. That Adams had had it under his personal inspection is shown by interlineations in his handwriting; but the document was penned by some person who often acted as an amanuensis for him, especially when his "trembling hand" rendered such services requisite. It was related early in the present century by Joseph Vinal, who visited both Hancock and Adams, that during the illness of the former, while the Convention was sitting, he called at Hancock's house, and found Adams in the room with him; that while he

was there several gentlemen came in, who appeared to be a committee. They desired to know specifically the objections of Hancock and Adams to the Constitution, and to endeavor to remove them by some means that would conciliate their favor and support. Adams, in the course of a free conversation, enumerated his objections, and suggested some of the amendments which seemed to be generally demanded, and which were afterwards proposed in the Convention. Hancock agreed with him, and added that, if such amendments were prepared, he would present them in person to the Convention, — an offer which seemed to give great satisfaction to all present, — one gentleman declaring that he should be willing to help drag the Governor in his carriage to the Convention.

Colonel May next relates the course adopted to secure the co-operation of Adams : —

“The same means were undertaken to influence Mr. Adams. It was not, however, so easy. They had done what they could with experiment : flattery would have no effect upon him ; but they knew two things, — first, that he had great confidence in the democratic instincts of the people ; and second, that he was a modest man, and sometimes doubted his own judgment when it differed from the democratic instincts aforesaid. So they induced some of the leading mechanics of Boston to hold a meeting at the ‘ Green Dragon Inn ’ in Union Street, their private gathering-place, and pass resolutions in favor of the Constitution, and send a committee to present them to him. He was surprised at the news of the meeting, and the nature of the resolutions, and asked who was there. They were just the men, or the class of men, whom he confided in. He inquired why they had not called him to attend the meeting. ‘ O, we wanted the voice of the people, ’ was the answer. Mr. Adams was still more surprised, and, after long consideration, concluded to accept the Constitution with the amendments.”

Daniel Webster, in 1833, thus alludes to this occasion, which seems to have been generally known in former times : —

“These resolutions were carried to the Boston delegates in the Convention, and placed in the hands of Samuel Adams. That great and distinguished friend of American liberty, it was feared, might have doubts about the new Constitution. Naturally cautious and sagacious, it was apprehended he might fear the practicability or the safety of a general government. He received the resolutions from the hands of Paul Revere, a brass-founder by occupation, a man of sense and character and of high public spirit, whom the mechanics of Boston ought never to forget. ‘How many mechanics,’ said Mr. Adams, ‘were at the Green Dragon when the resolutions were passed?’ ‘More sir,’ was the reply, ‘than the Green Dragon could hold.’ ‘And where were the rest, Mr. Revere?’ ‘In the streets, sir.’ ‘And how many were in the streets?’ ‘More, sir, than there are stars in the sky.’”<sup>1</sup>

The influence, however, which the resolutions of these mechanics had upon Mr. Adams has evidently been much exaggerated in local tradition. The honest convictions of so large and respectable an assemblage of the people undoubtedly had weight with him; but his acquiescence might be more reasonably traced to the “Conciliatory Propositions,” — as he himself first named them, — though even such amendments were not absolutely necessary to secure his vote. We have only to look at his seconding of the propositions upon their introduction, and his speeches thereupon in favor of adopting the Constitution, to see that the one and only thing which had kept him back was the desire for amendments.

These propositions, which came out on the last day of January, consisted of nine amendments; reserving to the several States all powers not expressly delegated to Congress; altering the basis of representation; restricting the powers of taxation, and the granting of commercial monopolies by Congress; providing for grand jury indictments in capital trials; limiting the jurisdiction of the Federal courts in cases between the citizens of different States, and prescribing the right of trial by jury in such cases. This embraces

<sup>1</sup> Webster's Works, I. 303.

all the points which Mr. Adams had already raised in objection. That he had been previously consulted as to the substance of these amendments, and that they had been prepared partly with reference to his expressed ideas, is highly probable. Whatever intentions Parsons and his friends may have had, as to bringing over Hancock by means of the propositions, Adams attached importance to them for their harmonizing influence in this Convention as well as in those of other States. That he was prepared to advocate them is also apparent; for, as if by preconcert, he immediately arose, and, having heartily indorsed them, moved for their consideration by the Convention. In his remarks on this occasion, he very plainly specifies what his own objections had been, and the effects likely to be produced by the proposed amendments. Addressing the chair, he said: —

“I feel myself happy in contemplating the idea that many benefits will result from your Excellency’s conciliatory proposition to the Commonwealth and to the United States; and I think it ought to precede the motion made by the gentlemen from Newburyport, and to be at this time considered by the Convention. I have said that I had my doubts of this Constitution. I could not digest every part as readily as some gentlemen; but this, sir, is my misfortune, not my fault. Other gentlemen have had their doubts; but, in my opinion, the proposition submitted will have a tendency to remove such doubts, and to conciliate the minds of the Convention and the people without doors. This subject, sir, is of the greatest magnitude, and has employed the attention of every rational man in the United States; but the minds of the people are not so well agreed on it as all of us could wish. A proposal of this sort, coming from Massachusetts, from her importance will have its weight. Four or five States have considered and ratified the Constitution as it stands; but we know there is a diversity of opinion, even in these States, and one of them is greatly agitated. If this Convention should particularize the amendments necessary to be proposed, it appears to me it must have weight in other States, where Conventions have not yet met. I have observed the sentiments of gentle-



men on the subject as far as Virginia, and I have found that the objections were similar in the newspapers and in some of the Conventions. Considering these circumstances, it appears to me that such a measure will have the most salutary effect throughout the Union. It is of the greatest importance that America should still be united in sentiment. I think I have not heretofore been unmindful of the advantage of such an union. It is essential that the people should be united in the Federal government to withstand the common enemy, and to preserve their valuable rights and liberties. We find in the great State of Pennsylvania one third of the Convention are opposed to it. Should, then, there be large majorities in the several States, I should fear the consequences of such disunion.

“Sir, there are many parts of it I esteem as highly valuable, particularly the article which empowers Congress to regulate commerce, to form treaties, &c. For want of this power in our national head, our friends are grieved and our enemies insult us. Our ambassador at the Court of London is considered as a mere cipher, instead of the representative of the United States. Therefore it appears to me that a power to remedy this evil should be given to Congress, and the remedy applied as soon as possible.

“The only difficulty on gentlemen’s minds is, whether it is best to accept this Constitution on conditional amendments, or rely on amendments in future, as the Constitution provides. When I look over the article which provides for a revision, I have my doubts. Suppose, sir, nine States accept the Constitution without any conditions at all, and the four States should wish to have amendments, where will you find nine States to propose, and the Legislatures of nine States to agree to the introduction of amendments. Therefore it seems to me that the expectation of amendments taking place at any future time will be frustrated. This method, if we take it, will be the most likely to bring about the amendments, as the Conventions of New Hampshire, Rhode Island, New York, Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina have not yet met. I apprehend, sir, that these States will be influenced by the proposition which your Excellency has submitted, as the resolutions of Massachusetts have ever had their influence. If this should be the case, the necessary amendments would be introduced more early and more safely. From these considerations, as your Excellency did not think it proper to make a motion, with submission I move that the paper read by your

Excellency be now taken under consideration by the Convention.”

This motion having been seconded, and the proposition submitted to a special committee, and again placed before the Convention, another week of debate ensued, in which the eloquence of Fisher Ames was particularly conspicuous in support of the Constitution. Mr. Adams took up the proposed amendments the day after their introduction, and considered their bearing upon the points in objection, and argued that these propositions would prove much more effectual in reconciling the country at large to the Constitution than the clause in that instrument providing for future revision. By plain matter-of-fact statements, he endeavored to remove the objections of members. He was convinced that the passage of the Constitution, with the proposed amendments by this Convention, would alone secure its acceptance by the nation. In fact, this speech, brief and condensed as it is, affords a complete index to the opinions of Mr. Adams on the Constitution. A curious feature of it is his evident desire to encourage the general idea of Hancock's origination of the amendments. Their success depended mainly on the popular supposition that the Governor had presented his own views and suggestions, and Adams constantly speaks of them as “your Excellency's propositions.”

“As your Excellency was pleased yesterday to offer for the consideration of this Convention certain propositions intended to accompany the ratification of the Constitution before us, I did myself the honor to bring them forward by a regular motion, not only from the respect due to your Excellency, but from a clear conviction in my own mind that they would tend to effect the salutary and important purposes which you had in view, — ‘the removing the fears and quieting the apprehensions of many of the good people of this Commonwealth, and the more effectually guarding against an undue administration of the Federal government.’

“I beg leave, sir, more particularly to consider those propositions, and in a very few words to express my own opinion that they

must have a strong tendency to ease the minds of gentlemen who wish for the immediate operation of some essential parts of the proposed Constitution, as well as the most speedy and effectual means of obtaining alterations in some other parts of it, which they are solicitous should be made. I will not repeat the reasons I offered, when the motion was made, which convinced me that the measure now under consideration will have a more speedy as well as a more certain influence in effecting the purpose last mentioned than the measures proposed in the Constitution before us.

“Your Excellency’s first proposition is, ‘that it be explicitly declared that all powers not expressly delegated to Congress are reserved to the several States, to be by them exercised.’ This appears to my mind to be a summary of a bill of rights which gentlemen are anxious to obtain. It removes a doubt which many have entertained respecting the matter, and gives assurance that, if any law made by the Federal government shall be extended beyond the power granted by the proposed Constitution, and inconsistent with the Constitution of this State, it will be an error, and adjudged by the courts of law to be void. It is consonant with the second article in the present confederation, that each State retains its sovereignty, freedom, and independence, and every power, jurisdiction, and right which is not by the confederation expressly delegated to the United States in Congress assembled. I have long considered the watchfulness of the people over the conduct of their rulers the strongest guard against the encroachments of power; and I hope the people of this country will always be thus watchful.

“Another of your Excellency’s propositions is calculated to quiet the apprehensions of gentlemen, lest Congress should exercise an unreasonable control over the State Legislatures with regard to the time, place, and manner of holding elections, which, by the fourth section of the first article, are to be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof, subject to the control of Congress. I have had my fears lest this control should infringe the freedom of elections, which ought ever to be held sacred. Gentlemen who have objected to this controlling power in Congress have expressed their wishes that it had been restricted to such States as may neglect or refuse that power vested in them, and to be exercised by them if they please. Your Excellency proposes, in substance, the same restriction which, I should think, cannot but meet with their full approbation.

“The power to be given to Congress to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises has alarmed the minds of some gentlemen. They tell you, sir, that the exercise of the power of laying and collecting direct taxes might greatly distress the several States, and render them incapable of raising moneys for the payment of their respective State debts, or for any purpose. They say the impost and excise may be made adequate to the public emergencies in the time of peace, and ask why the laying of direct taxes may not be confined to a time of war. You are pleased to propose to us that it be a recommendation that ‘Congress do not lay direct taxes, but when the moneys arising from the impost and excise shall be insufficient for the public exigencies.’ The prospect of approaching war might necessarily create an expense beyond the productions of impost and excise. How, then, would the government have the necessary means of providing for the public defence? Must they not have recourse to resources besides impost and excise? The people, while they watch for their own safety, must and will have a just confidence in a Legislature of their own election. The approach of war is seldom, if ever, without observation. It is generally observed by the people at large; and I believe no Legislature of a free country would venture a measure which would directly touch the purses of the people under a mere pretence, or unless they could show to the people’s satisfaction that there had in fact been a real public exigency to justify it.

“Your Excellency’s next proposition is to introduce the indictment of a grand jury, before any person shall be tried for any crime by which he may incur infamous punishment or the loss of life; and it is followed by another, which recommends a trial by jury in civil actions between citizens of different States, if either of the parties shall request it. These and several others, which I have not mentioned, are so evidently beneficial as to need no comment of mine; and they are all, in every particular, of so general a nature, and so equally interesting to every State, that I cannot but persuade myself to think they would all readily join with us in the measure proposed by your Excellency, if we should now adopt it. Gentlemen may make additional propositions, if they see fit. It is presumed that we shall exercise candor towards each other, and that whilst, on the one hand, gentlemen will cheerfully agree to any proposition intended to promote a general union which may not be inconsistent

with their own mature judgment, others will avoid the making such as may be needless or tend to embarrass the minds of the people of this Commonwealth and our sister States, and thereby not only frustrate your Excellency's wise intention, but endanger the loss of that degree of reputation which, I flatter myself, this Commonwealth has justly sustained."

After the propositions had been a few days under discussion, Mr. Adams embodied in a resolution, to be added to the first article, some further amendments which suggested themselves to him as essential.

"And that the said Constitution be never construed to authorize Congress to infringe the just liberty of the press or the rights of conscience; or to prevent the people of the United States who are peaceable citizens from keeping their own arms; or to raise standing armies, unless when necessary for the defence of the United States, or of some one or more of them; or to prevent the people from petitioning, in a peaceable and orderly manner, the Federal Legislature for a redress of grievances; or to subject the people to unreasonable searches and seizures of their persons, papers, or possessions."

These were long debated, but the journal makes no report of the arguments, merely adding that, "not meeting with the approbation of those gentlemen whose minds they were intended to ease, the honorable gentleman withdrew them." The only ground upon which reasonably to account for the rejection of these precious principles of human liberty is, that the original propositions being now under debate, and the acceptance of the Constitution, even with that recommendation, being still doubtful, it was judged hazardous to hamper the main issue with further conditions. The wisdom of all these amendments, some of which had been canvassed in other States, was apparent when most of them were accepted by the nation; the first, third, sixth, seventh, and eighth clauses of the "Conciliatory Propositions" being adopted as articles in the amendments to the United States Constitution; while the whole of Mr. Adams's reso-

lutions, above quoted, now form the first, second, third, and fourth articles.

Several prominent members of the Convention objected to the clause for the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus*, that it did not, as in the Massachusetts Constitution, limit the time. Mr. Adams evidently acquiesced in this important power, as now delegated for the preservation of the general government; for, in replying to the inquiries of a member on that subject, he explained that this power, given to the Federal Legislature to suspend the *habeas corpus* in cases of rebellion or invasion, did not deprive the several States of the exercise of that power within their own limits. In this he was entirely consistent, having a year before pressed upon the Legislature a suspension of the writ during Shays's rebellion. In the discussion of the section relative to the slave-trade, which the reporter of the debates has unfortunately abridged, it was considered by some that the prohibition of that traffic after the year 1808 was "one of the beauties of the Constitution, as a step towards the abolition of slavery." Others opposed it, preferring a clause for the immediate prevention of the slave-trade. Mr. Adams was among those who "rejoiced that a door was now to be opened for the annihilation of this odious, abhorrent practice in a certain time." Those who occupied this ground are represented as the opposite of a party who were in favor of eventually emancipating slaves by some special provision in the Constitution.

With all the harmonizing influence of the "Conciliatory Propositions," the Constitution narrowly escaped defeat, having passed by a majority of only nineteen out of three hundred and fifty-five votes. In Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia a majority in its favor was very doubtful; and had the question been decided by a direct popular vote, it must have been rejected, such was the general prejudice against it. Aware of this, Mr. Adams and others who urged the adoption of the "Conciliatory Proposi-

tions" could not have devised a plan of more consummate wisdom than this; for it must be inferred, from the small majority the Constitution finally received, that, had debate been silenced, and the question hurried to a vote early in the session, as was once attempted, not all the efforts of Adams and Hancock, and all its eloquent advocates, could have saved it. Adams intimated to the Convention his belief that, with the proposed amendments, a general acquiescence among the other States was probable; and the result verified his conjecture. Only two of the States adopted the Constitution after Massachusetts without recommending similar amendments for the future consideration of Congress. Whether, in case of a failure, another Federal Convention would have succeeded in creating a system combining the checks and balances necessary for the cohesion of a vast republic such as ours, or whether America could ever have advanced to its subsequent glory and power under any other form, are profound questions as yet beyond mortal solution.

In glancing back over the course and opinions of Samuel Adams in this interesting period of our national history, we find him actuated by a high, patriotic consciousness of duty, untainted by a single consideration of selfishness or sectional feeling. If he is thought to have erred in judgment, it must be remembered that he could not know the future. Republican institutions were yet on trial, and no precedent offered as a guide. Patriot statesmen could only reason upon the great principles of human freedom, apply them to the circumstances of the times, and adapt them to the genius of the people. The great and the wise cherished their own peculiar views of government, which they desired to frame upon the surest foundations. Adams, though he at first feared for the permanency of a national union which seemed totally to extinguish the sovereignty of the States, had been by no means opposed to the entire Constitution, even before the proposed amendments were offered; but he then be-

lieved that it was an instrument too defective in its original shape to long sustain the liberties of America. He saw also the necessity of its adoption with such amendments as would render it acceptable to the whole country. He delayed giving it his assent earlier in the Convention, with the hope that some such amendments would be introduced. The difference between the views of Adams and those of Parsons, Cabot, and other special advocates of the Constitution, as originally submitted, was, that the latter appear to have urged its adoption unconditionally up to the time of the "Conciliatory Propositions," apprehending that, though it had defects, it was better to accept it, and trust to the clause providing for future amendments, rather than imperil the whole; while Adams, fearing that the amendments could not be easily effected after the instrument had been adopted, desired to have them settled at once and definitely. There should be nothing left to inference, which might renew in another form and for another generation momentous questions similar to those which he had so often contested with the crown writers, and upon which was founded the memorable controversy with Governor Hutchinson in the winter of 1773. His thoughts on this subject have already been given in his speech to the Convention. He had confidence enough in that body to believe that nothing would be lost by delaying decisive action, until amendments could be brought forward. The Constitution, as originally framed, was distasteful to numbers in the general Convention of 1787, but for very different reasons. Hamilton and Morris, after vainly laboring to make the foundation of the instrument a life tenure of office for the President and Senate, had reluctantly assented to it in the present form, rather than risk a failure. Franklin objected to it for its lack of simplicity. He proposed an Executive without a salary, and a Legislature of a single body. In the end, these adverse elements harmonized, and the Constitution went forth as perfect a form of government as the world has ever seen, and, in fact, the only



plan upon which the members could have agreed. Hamilton and Madison immediately became its able and eloquent advocates in "The Federalist," assisted by Jay, who had not been a member; and their joint efforts were all-powerful in dispelling popular objections and securing its adoption in several of the State Conventions. Upon similar considerations Mr. Adams would have voted for it in the Massachusetts Convention under any and all circumstances, and would have influenced others in the same direction. Most of his doubts were shared by Jefferson, who wrote to that effect from Paris; and the amendments which Jefferson desired he afterwards admitted were fully met by the Massachusetts propositions, the first of which—that relating to the reserved rights of States—supplied, in his opinion, the vital absence of a bill of rights, which, he said, was what "the people were entitled to against every government on earth, general or particular, and what no just government should refuse or rest on inference." Adams had already said that this amendment appeared to him "to be a summary of a bill of rights." The necessity of this was generally recognized, and was recommended as an amendment to the Constitution by the Conventions of Virginia, New York, North Carolina, and Rhode Island.

The adoption of the amendments by Congress was a subject of great anxiety with him for many months, until they were finally added to the Constitution. His apprehensions, as to lessening the importance of each State by the exercise of the Federal authority over their local affairs, and thus reducing them to the condition of mere corporations, are apparent in his writings in 1789. To extend a single power, without the requisite safeguards, over such a variety of climate and a people so diverse in character would, he feared, sooner or later lead to national calamity. Without a plain discrimination at the outset between these authorities, and a definition of their respective forces, the States could not long continue to revolve harmoniously around the central

power. Dissatisfied ones would wander from their orbits, and a federative union be eventually destroyed by the very means intended for its perpetuation.

In a letter to Elbridge Gerry, who was then in Congress, written while the proposed amendments were pending, he says: —

“I hope Congress, before they adjourn, will take into very serious consideration the necessary amendments to the Constitution. Those whom I call the best, the most judicious and disinterested Federalists, who wish for the perpetual union, liberty, and happiness of the States and their respective citizens, — many of them, if not all, are anxiously expecting them. They wish to see a line drawn as clearly as may be between the Federal powers vested in Congress and the distinct sovereignty of the several States, upon which the private and personal rights of the citizens depend. Without such distinction, there will be danger of the Constitution issuing imperceptibly and gradually into a consolidated government over all the States, which, although it may be wished for by some, was reprobated in the idea by the highest advocates of the Constitution, as it stood without amendments. I am fully persuaded that the people of the United States, living in different climates, being of different education and manners, and possessed of different habits and feelings, under one consolidated government, cannot long remain free, or indeed contented, under any kind of government but despotism.”

He wrote to Richard Henry Lee: —

“You must not expect that I shall be even with you upon the epistolary score, for the reason which I have heretofore given you. I wish to know from *you* the state of Federal affairs as often as your leisure may admit. We organize our State governments, and I heartily wish that their authority and dignity may be preserved within their several jurisdictions as far as may be consistent with the purposes for which the Federal government is designed. They are, in my opinion, *petit* politicians who would wish to lessen the due weight of the State governments; for I think the Federal must depend upon the influence of these to carry their laws into effect; and while those laws have for their sole object the

promoting the purposes of the Federal Union, there is reason to expect they will have the due support of the State authorities.”<sup>1</sup>

And again to Lee : —

“I have always been apprehensive that, through the weakness of the human mind, often discovered in the wisest and best of men, or the perverseness of the interested and designing, in as well as out of government, misconstructions would be given to the Federal Constitution, which would disappoint the views and expectations of the honest among those who acceded to it, and hazard the liberty, independence, and happiness of the people. I was particularly afraid that, unless great care should be taken to prevent it, the Constitution, in the administration of it, would gradually, but swiftly and imperceptibly, run into a consolidated government, pervading and legislating through all the States ; not for Federal purposes *only*, as it professes, but in all cases whatsoever. Such a government would soon totally annihilate the sovereignty of the several States, so necessary to the support of the confederated commonwealth, and sink both in despotism. I know these have been called vulgar opinions and prejudices. Be it so. I think it is Lord Shaftesbury who tells us that it is folly to despise the opinions of the vulgar. This aphorism, if indeed it is his, I eagerly caught from a *nobleman* many years ago whose writings, in some accounts, I never much admired. Should a strong *Federalist*, as some call themselves, see what has now dropped from my pen, he would say that I am an Anti-Fed, an amendment-monger, &c. Those are truly vulgar terms, invented and used by some whose feelings would be sorely wounded to be ranked among such kind of men, and invented and used for the mean purpose of deceiving and entrapping others whom *they* call the vulgar. But in this *enlightened* age, one would think there was no such *vulgar* to be thus amused and ensnared.

“I mean, my friend, to let you know how deeply I am impressed with the sense of the importance of amendments ; that the good people may clearly see the distinction — for there is a distinction — between the *Federal powers* vested in Congress and the *sovereign authority* belonging to the several States, which is the palladium of the private and personal rights of the citizens. I freely protest to you, that I earnestly wish some amendments may be judiciously and

<sup>1</sup> S. Adams to R. H. Lee, July 14, 1789.

deliberately made, without partial or local considerations, that there may be no uncomfortable jarrings among the several powers; that the whole people may in every State contemplate their own safety on solid grounds, and the union of the States be perpetual.”<sup>1</sup>

None of Mr. Adams's letters, if any were written, on the immediate subject of the Constitution have come to light of a date later than 1789. The adoption by Congress of the amendments rendered the instrument satisfactory to him. He was ever a consistent and unvarying supporter of the Federal system of government, though not always of particular measures of administration, and was watchful against any infringement by Federal or State authorities upon each other, as equally dangerous to mutual safety. Eliot, who saw much of him towards the close of his life, says: “It was a favorite expression, which he often gave as a toast in public companies and private circles, ‘The States united and the States separate.’”

In his public address while Governor of Massachusetts, we find Adams repeatedly enjoining an obedience to the Federal Constitution and the State Commonwealth as distinct but correlative authorities. That doctrine was entertained by many wise and patriotic statesmen, whose anxiety for the integrity of the Union cannot be questioned. It was founded on the essential principles of the long struggle for human rights to which they had devoted their lives and fortunes. The sophistry of treason, enveloping the subject in a cloud of false reasoning, has yet to be entirely dissipated by the light of truth. The original theory was seized upon as a plausible pretext for the late Rebellion, until what was once the shining palladium of civil liberty became the badge of disunion for the overthrow of popular government. The doctrine of State rights as enunciated by the Revolutionary fathers, with all its solicitude for the inviolable preservation of State sovereignty in the administration of local government, asserted with equal positiveness the supremacy of the

<sup>1</sup> S. Adams to R. H. Lee, Aug. 24, 1789.

Federal power for all the purposes of nationality. But as construed in after years by the leaders of rebellion, it established the entire sovereignty of the States, not only in local, but in general affairs, and the consequent right of destroying the Union at pleasure. The one viewed the Constitution as a bond of perpetual union and common protection; the other considered it a mere league of States, to be broken at the will of any member. The Constitution was originally regarded as a means of giving America greater coherence than was afforded by the Articles of Confederation; according to the later arguments of treason, it reserved to rebels the right of remanding the country back into the chaotic helplessness of the old system. The one cheerfully admitted the power of declaring war and making treaties, as stipulated in the Constitution, to reside solely in the Federal head; the other, ignoring the express renunciation of that power, claimed for the States attributes which are purely national. The wide gulf between these interpretations of the Federal and State powers reaches to the very foundation of the American structure; and it is now that the great objects of our mixed system of government should be placed beyond the contingency of future convulsions. The principle of State rights is indestructible; but its limitation to the specific purpose of State legislation must be established as the arc of American liberty. But with all this treasonable distortion of their maxims, the great advocates of State rights require no apology. Their opinions may be fearlessly held up to the view of posterity; they are on record, and there they must remain forever. In reality these issues were a natural consequence of the principles with which the Revolution commenced. The doctrine of State rights was a continuation of the old pre-Revolutionary line drawn between the general rights claimed under the British Constitution and those special privileges which were guaranteed by the Provincial charters: the one extending over all parts of the King's dominions, the other relating exclusively to

the internal affairs of the Provinces. Each might work harmoniously in its appropriate sphere, but discord and ruin would come of any infringement by the stronger upon the weaker. The Colonies all cheerfully acknowledged obedience to the British Constitution ; but their local constitutions or charters, proceeding direct from the Crown, were not less sacred, and the rights vested in them were claimed as being independent of any other power. The deliberate violation of those charters by Parliament had produced the Revolutionary war and the dismemberment of the British empire. Experience was now the only guide, and the patriots might well recur to the past and to original principles.

On taking the oath as Lieutenant-Governor in 1790, Mr. Adams particularly expresses his idea of a union of allegiance to the Federal and State authorities, and it is defined in almost all his inaugurals. Even his Fast proclamations are occasionally made the vehicles for reasserting this principle. Collectively these instances plainly prove his anxiety for the perpetual integrity of the Federal union, and to that end for the preservation of the proper balances in the several State governments. He was reviled and subjected to party rancor in his declining years for these opinions, which, however, no considerations of political fashion or popularity could alter. And yet, if we may judge by the published correspondence of some of the ultra Federalists of the day, the century had hardly closed before they began to doubt the permanency of republican institutions, and longed for such changes as would check the expansion of democracy in the American government.

## CHAPTER LXI.

Congressional Election in Massachusetts. — Adams a Candidate. — Is assailed as Old and Anti-Federal. — Efforts of Friends in his Favor. — Is defeated by Fisher Ames. — Party Distinctions. — “Anti-Federalism” merely a Political Epithet. — The Federalists and Republicans equally desirous of National Union. — Gubernatorial Campaign. — The “Laco” Essays. — Hancock and Adams elected. — Duties and Emoluments of the Lieutenant-Governor. — His Inaugural Addresses. — His high Estimation of Washington. — His Declaration as to Federal and State Authorities. — Reminiscences of him by Dr. Waterhouse and Brissot de Warville. — He discountsenances Theatrical Exhibitions.

TOWARDS the close of 1788, the Federal Constitution having been accepted by all but two States, the elections for Congress took place in Massachusetts; and Mr. Adams, now claimed equally by Federalists and Anti-Federalists, — or Republicans, as the latter soon denominated themselves, — became a candidate for the national House of Representatives. He had repeatedly declined that position after his ~~final~~ return from Philadelphia, in 1781, when elected to it by the Legislature; but the importance of the position, under the new government, may have induced him to again look towards it as a means of serving his country. But though voted for by some of both parties, he was the exclusive candidate of neither. Between them, his friends appear to have made a strong effort in his behalf. The newspapers, just before the election, contain many articles reminding the public how much they were indebted to him, among all the old patriots, for the benefits of the free institutions resulting from the Revolution. One writer says: —

“The uniform character which this gentleman has sustained, during a long course of severe trials, must ever endear him to his countrymen. His firmness in support of his principles must readily convince every man that he was not guided by sinister views, as it was in his power at those periods to have secured to himself the

most liberal bounties of the British nation. The integrity of this patriot has often been conspicuous in times the most perilous, when even many of the friends of America dared but to whisper their political sentiments. At those times how often have we admired the zeal of this veteran, when asserting the liberties of his country in opposition to the arbitrary acts of the British Parliament, the malignity of a band of Tories, and the threats of a mercenary soldiery !

“The enemies of this gentleman, we know, are many ; but the *friends to liberty*, we trust, remain *his friends* ; and, provided they now unite in their choice of this great and good man, they will have the glory of introducing this patriot into our new government among other worthy characters, who early stood forth in vindication of the injured rights of this country, and resolutely pursued those measures which matured our national independence. By this conduct we shall convince the world that we still adhere to our old principles, notwithstanding the attempts of some individuals to quench every spark of real republicanism. While we are careful to introduce to our Federal Legislature the American *Fabius*, let us not be unmindful of the American *Cato*.”

Another says : —

“It is but too true that a prophet is without honor in his own country ; but there is scarce another spot in the globe where the actions of this great and good man are not celebrated. From youth to manhood, and from thence to old age, he has been a decided friend to the rights of mankind. Whenever he has promised, he hath not deceived ; and I now challenge the greatest among his enemies (if real enemies can be found to this gentleman in America) to step forward and point either to the conduct or the moment wherein he has once deviated from that steady attachment for the people of this country. So early as 1760 he distinguished himself for his opposition to Great Britain, and in the cabinet took a very active part against the king’s governors, Bernard and Hutchinson. His pen was always conspicuous in the controversies between the General Assembly and those gentlemen ; and with a few others, and but a few, to support him, he beat them from the field. As the opposition became more serious, his abilities and perseverance became more brilliant ; and in almost every important Assembly from that day to the present, he has not only been a member, but in it a man of atten-



tion and business. America, in her darkest periods, ever found him forward and near the helm, and for her sake he with cheerfulness for seven years served her with a halter about his neck. Naked he went into her employ, and naked he came out of it."

It seems strange that any contemporary of Samuel Adams (and this last writer was evidently some intimate friend, who had been near him during the Revolution) should have felt obliged to remind the people of Boston and vicinity of his claims on the gratitude of his country; but new men had come up in the last ten years, and new issues occupied the public mind. Adams himself had long before been willing that younger and fresher talents should take the field; and it was with the belief that his counsels might aid in organizing the new government, rather than any ambition for preferment, that he consented to become a candidate. A writer in the *Sentinel* had published some disparaging remarks on both Otis and Adams. One who seems to have fought under their leadership says in reply: —

"Twenty years have I been acquainted with Mr. Adams and Mr. Otis. I know them in their public and in their private characters, and have trodden the thorny path of politics with both. Mr. Adams needs no eulogium upon his reputation; his name is sufficiently respected, and his patriotism universally known. Every man in the community would be glad that the decline of his life may be rendered easy and agreeable by a permanent appointment at home, which he will undoubtedly obtain from the new government."

"He is the poor man's friend," says another, "and if he has a prejudice in his politics, it leans to the rights and privileges of the common people. It has been said he is old and Anti-Federal. My fellow-citizens, be not deceived. His age and experience are the very qualifications you want. *His influence caused the Constitution to be adopted in this State*; and if he fails to give it his support for a fair trial, remember it will be the first time he ever failed you. In forty years he has never deceived you. In times of more consequence than the present he has proved true."

Still another writes: —

“Aristides, surnamed the *Just*, was banished by the people he had saved; Cato was persecuted by his countrymen in Rome: but those were times when liberty was not thoroughly understood, and before the benefits of even the art of printing was thought of. But neither of these would be so extraordinary as that the Hon. Samuel Adams should be neglected and borne down by a party in that town the inhabitants of which he has preserved from massacre and rapine. . . . If there ever was a great and good man persecuted and reviled, Mr. Adams has been the man.”<sup>1</sup>

These notices appear to have come from those who had personally served with him. It was right that the remembrance of former days should have weight now; and that, after the toils of many years and the restoration of peace, the principal characters of the great contest should assume the direction of the public affairs which, in dark and stormy times, they had so successfully managed. The efforts of his friends, however, were unavailing; the election resulted in favor of Fisher Ames, a young lawyer, now in his thirty-first year, whose eloquence, both at the bar and in debates on public occasions, particularly in advocating the Constitution in the late Convention, had already given him political prominence. There were many who saw in this an ungrateful forgetfulness of the distinguished services of Samuel Adams. The divisions which had arisen on the adoption of the Constitution had increased in virulence. The Federalists claimed the accomplishment of the great measure as the result of their own labors against disorganizers and enemies to government,—an extreme assertion, for which even the excess of partisan rancor can afford no excuse. That some impracticable theorists had been radically opposed to the Constitution, both in the Federal and State Conventions, cannot be doubted. Many were hostile to the federative principle in any form, absurdly contending that each sovereign State could properly legislate for its own external as well as local affairs. These were truly “Anti-Federalists,”

<sup>1</sup> Independent Chronicle, December 11, 18, 1788.

and among them were found men of unquestioned ability. But to class with them the large and respectable party extending through the entire country, North and South, who honestly deemed certain amendments essential to the ultimate success of the new plan of government, was an injustice which nothing but shrewd political management could so long have maintained. Partisan strategy, employing the powerful weapon of odious epithets, was then as strong as at any subsequent period in American history, and was as artfully used. The reconstruction of the States under a new system opened inviting fields for official preferment, for the acquisition of which politicians were then, as now, not over scrupulous. Hence the opposing parties which sprang up with the question of a Federal Constitution formed themselves after the adoption of that instrument upon grounds existing only in name. The dominant party, holding most of the offices of honor and profit, easily affixed the stigma of "Anti-Federalism" indiscriminately upon all who stood outside of their lines,—even those whose indorsement of the Constitution had been only withheld until amendments were adopted in the State Conventions. When, as was shortly the case, these amendments were sanctioned by Congress, the agitations on that particular subject should have ceased. Practically, all were thenceforth Federalists, at least in the recognition of a national legislative head. The only points of variance were theoretical,—as to the distinction to be preserved between the Federal and State authorities. But the reputation of having even recommended amendments was eagerly seized upon and used to stigmatize their opponents by a school of politicians who now rose into power. Even the stoical equanimity of Mr. Adams was not entirely proof against this wholesale injustice, as we have seen by his letter to Richard Henry Lee on the subject. The greatest Revolutionary sacrifices were ignored.<sup>1</sup> Elbridge Gerry, who

<sup>1</sup> About this time an anonymous letter was thrown over his garden wall, warning Mr. Adams against the intentions of certain parties who were watch-

appears to have particularly felt this political proscription, wrote to one of his friends : —

“The vigilant enemies of free government have been long in the execution of their plan to hunt down all who remain attached to Revolution principles. They have attacked us in detail, and have deprived you, Mr. Samuel Adams, and myself in a great measure of that public confidence to which a faithful attachment to the public interest entitles us; and they are now aiming to throw Mr. Hancock out of the saddle, who, with all his foibles, is yet attached to the Whig cause. There seems to be a disposition in the dominant party to establish a nobility of opinion, under whose control, in a short time, will be placed the government of the Union and of the States, and whose insufferable arrogance marks out for degradation all who will not submit to their authority. It is beginning to be fashionable to consider the opponents of the Constitution as embodying themselves with the lower classes of the people; and that one forfeits all title to the respect of a gentleman, unless he is one of the privileged order. Is this, my friend, to be the operation of the free government which all our labors in the Revolution have tended to produce?”

In the spring of 1789 the reconciliation between Adams and Hancock, which had taken place socially in 1787, became of political significance, and their names were now brought forward together for the two leading offices of the Commonwealth. Their long alienation had been the foundation of wide-reaching enmities among their friends, that is, among the most influential men in Massachusetts. Taken in connection with other questions, it had helped to deter-  
ing him, and, unless he changed his political course, were determined to assassinate him. The writer professed to be actuated by personal esteem for Mr. Adams and by friendship for his late son; and added that the intelligence was given at his own personal peril. On the back of the missive, in Mr. Adams's handwriting, is the following: “This letter was found this morning in my yard, and immediately brought to me by my servant”; and then follow some contemptuous observations revealing a spark of the old Revolutionary fire. He concludes that little is to be feared from secret conspirators, who, if they really intended to assail him, dared only to do so in the dark. Neither the informant nor the conspirators were ever again heard from.

mine local politics in Boston, and only gave place to the more absorbing State issues raised by Shays's rebellion, which, in turn, at the close of the insurrection, were soon merged in the grand question of a stronger Federal government. This union of the two chiefs was therefore a matter of much public interest, the more so as the relative importance of their respective Revolutionary services had lately been the subject of a noted newspaper discussion. The celebrated "Laco" endeavored to show, through the columns of the Massachusetts Sentinel, that Hancock had wavered in the most imminent crisis of the Revolution, and had, in reality, only attained his prominence through the ability of his colleagues, who had advanced him as a part of their general political plan. These essays were penned in a sort of indignant reply to some electioneering articles, in which Hancock had been styled the "Saviour of his Country." They were by far the most vigorously written pieces of the time. If their author was ambitious of a local literary fame, he was more than gratified; though the evident personal hostility to Hancock, which was not entirely concealed under the claim to impartiality and candor, is said to have increased the friends rather than the enemies of the Governor.

The office of Lieutenant-Governor had been filled successively by Cushing and Lincoln since the organization of the State government in 1780. The present election, on the first Monday in April, resulted largely in favor of Hancock and Adams, — the latter having received in Boston twelve hundred and nineteen votes, against Lincoln's six hundred and seventeen. The public pleasure at seeing the two proscribed patriots and signers of the Declaration of Independence reconciled was testified in various ways, and the election tickets, some of which are still preserved, bear their names ingeniously printed in letters of gold. Perhaps, too, the omission of Adams from any participation in the national government, either by appointment or popular election, had some weight in the result. Falsely branded

among his enemies as an "Anti-Federalist," he soon gained the reputation of being opposed to any federal system, which at a distance was easily distorted into a reputation for the most absurd doctrines and a violent dislike of the existing administration, when in reality it commanded his highest respect and confidence. Such misrepresentations were enough effectually to debar his appointment to any position under the Federal government. Almost at the same time with this election, Richard Henry Lee, the old pre-Revolutionary friend of Samuel Adams, took his seat in Congress as a member from Virginia; and James Sullivan, writing to him from Boston, says:—

"Your arrival in Congress gives great satisfaction to the old Revolutionists of this State. While I presume to congratulate you on the subject, I wish to indulge myself in the pleasure of mentioning the success of the supporters of your old friend, the Honorable Samuel Adams. He has been exceedingly maltreated, or you would now have had him by the hand in the Senate of the United States. But the votes in our late elections, a sample whereof is exhibited in the Gazette enclosed, will evince how much he lives in the esteem of his fellow-citizens."

When taking the oath as Lieutenant-Governor, on the 27th of May, Mr. Adams preceded the act with some brief remarks to the Legislature,—a custom which he then thought necessary, though he discontinued it after the following year, while holding the office for successive terms. His speech is thus reported:—

"MR. PRESIDENT,—

"I have been politely notified by a joint committee of the two branches of the General Court that, having examined the returns of the votes for a Lieutenant-Governor of the Commonwealth, it appears that a majority of the electors have seen fit to give me their suffrages.

"I am impressed with a warm sense of the honor done me, and it is a pleasing reflection, in my own mind, that I have this testimonial of the confidence of my countrymen, without my solicitation or interference in any manner to obtain it.

“I rejoice in the freedom of our elections ; and it affords me particular satisfaction to be invited to take a share in government by citizens possessed of the most lively feelings of natural and civil liberty, and enlightened with the knowledge and true ends of civil government, who, in conjunction with their sister States, have gloriously contended for the rights of mankind, and given the world another lesson, drawn from experience, *that all countries may be free*, since it has pleased the righteous Governor of the universe to smile upon their virtuous exertions, and crown them with independence and liberty.

“If it be not improper on this occasion, may I beg leave to express a devout and fervent wish that gracious Heaven may guide the public councils of the great confederated commonwealth, and the several free and independent republics which compose it, so that the people may be highly respected and prosperous in their affairs abroad, and enjoy at home that tranquillity which results from a well-grounded confidence that their personal and domestic rights are secure.

“I feel, sir, a diffidence of my own abilities, and am anxious but in certain events they may be found inadequate to the importance of the duties I may be called to perform ; but relying on the aid of Divine grace, and hoping for the justice, candor, and liberal sentiments of the General Court and of my fellow-citizens at large, I venture to accept the trust, and am now ready to be qualified in the mode prescribed by the Constitution.”

The duties of the Lieutenant-Governor were little more than nominal, and no salary was attached to the office. Cushing, while holding it, had received the emoluments accruing from the command of the Castle in Boston harbor. Upon Lincoln's election, in 1788, Governor Hancock declined to appoint him to the command ; and when a question was raised in the Legislature as to the cause of this innovation, which deprived a public office of the accustomed salary, the Governor replied that he had the sole right to appoint, and that it was for him to decide whether he would have any one to command the Castle. The affair created no little discussion in the public press. Hancock's treat-

ment of Lincoln was regarded as illiberal and unjust, and was ascribed to personal motives. When Samuel Adams was elected to this office, Hancock expressed to him his intention to carry out this policy as to the salary. Adams, as might have been expected, promptly declined receiving wages for a sinecure, — which the command of the Castle certainly was; although in August of the previous year, when the expediency and legality of giving a salary to the Lieutenant-Governor was under consideration in the Senate, of which Adams was then President, he had opposed the appropriation, on the ground that already the emoluments of the Castle were attached to the office. The subject was finally settled by giving the Lieutenant-Governor a salary of about five hundred dollars a year. This sum, with the insignificant fees arising from his membership of the Council, constituted the entire public income of Mr. Adams for some years.

Meantime the Federal Congress had met at New York, and Washington and John Adams received the electoral vote for President and Vice-President of the United States. Before the close of the year, the most important of the amendments to the Constitution recommended by the several State Conventions were adopted. In organizing the new government, nothing seems to have been more closely debated, both in the Senate and the House, than the President's power of removing officers without the consent of the Senate. Upon this point the ablest minds were divided; and though the disputed power was finally conferred by small majorities, in principle it was displeasing to many eminent men, more especially those who were known as having been originally opposed to an undue concentration of power in the Federal head. Mr. Adams, strictly construing the Constitution, was among those who questioned the right of Congress to confer any such powers, particularly when not specified in that instrument. He wrote to Richard Henry Lee on this subject: —



“The power of removing Federal officers at the pleasure of the President is to be found in the Constitution, or it is not. If it is, what need was there of an act or decision of Congress to authorize it? But if it is not, could Congress give so important a power? Liberty,—this is the great object of their State governments; and has not the Federal Constitution the same object in view? If, therefore, a doubt arises respecting the exercise of any power, no construction, I conceive, should militate with the main design or object of the charter. If there is a total silence in the Constitution, is it not natural to conclude that an officer holding during pleasure is removable by the same power that appointed him, whether vested in a single person or a joint number? I am sensible it is said that a single person, being amenable for his exercise of power, will use the utmost circumspection; this may be true, but may not this idea be carried too far in practice? May not some powers vested in a single man give him such weight and influence as to render any restraint from his feeling himself amenable of little or no effect? If this power, lodged in the discretion of a single person, will afford a greater security against corruption, because of his amenability, why should not the power of appointing as well as of removing officers be given him? In the one case the gracious hand may be held forth, in the other the threatening rod; and both may be used for improper purposes. In England, ‘the king can do no wrong,’ is a maxim. His ministers are made accountable for him; and how often have corrupt ministers been brought to the block for follies and crimes committed by their royal masters, who can do no wrong? And it may also be asked, how often such ministers and counsellors have found means to get themselves screened from banishment through the influence of their masters by procuring Parliamentary sanctions to such crimes and follies.

“‘But in the removal of officers, the President has not a constitutional council; he must, therefore, be solely accountable.’

“I need not tell *you*, who have known so thoroughly the sentiments of my heart, that I have always had a very high esteem for the late Commander-in-Chief of our armies; and I now most sincerely believe that, while President Washington continues in the chair, he will be able to give to all good men a satisfactory reason for every instance of his public conduct. I feel myself constrained, contrary to my usual manner, to make *professions* of sincerity on

this occasion, because Dr. Gordon, in his history of the Revolution, among many other anecdotes, innocent and trifling enough, has gravely said that I was concerned in an attempt to remove General Washington from command, and mentions an anonymous letter written to your late Governor Henry, which I affirm I never saw nor heard of till I lately met with it in reading the history. This is a digression to which a man of my years is liable.

“Who will succeed the present President, — for it is the lot of man to die? Perhaps the next and the next may inherit his virtues; but, my friend, I fear the time will come when a bribe shall remove the most excellent man from office for the purpose of making room for the worst. It will be called an error in judgment; the bribe will be concealed; it may, however, be vehemently suspected; and who, in times of great degeneracy, will venture to search out and detect the corrupt practices of men? Unless a sufficient check is provided and clearly ascertained for every power given, will not the Constitution and the liberties of the citizens, for want of such checks, be finally subverted?”<sup>1</sup>

This objection was shared by the wisest men of the day. With the lights then before them, the examples of history as a guide, and the very genius of the people and of democratic government opposed, as it seemed, to whatever was likely to extend the executive power, they could hardly think otherwise. Having renounced one government for its aggressions on the popular rights, their own experience warned them against any measure which might renew the evil under a different name.

At the annual election in the spring of 1790, Hancock and Adams were again chosen. Mr. Adams addressed the Legislature, when he was sworn into office, and briefly explained his idea of the allegiance due by the citizens to the Federal and the State governments respectively.

“MR. PRESIDENT, —

“Having been regularly informed that a majority of the late electors in the several towns and districts within this Commonwealth have honored me with their suffrages for the office of Lieutenant-

<sup>1</sup> S. Adams to R. H. Lee, Boston, August 29, 1789.

Governor, I now present myself before the two branches of the General Court to be qualified as the Constitution directs. I do the more readily obey this *repeated* call, because I cannot help flattering myself that it has proceeded from a persuasion in the minds of my fellow-citizens of the attachment of my heart to their rights and liberties, and my earnest desires that they may be perpetuated. My fellow-citizens may be assured that I feel that attachment and the strength of those desires. The first of my wishes, as they respect this life, is for our country; and the best of my feeble abilities shall be ever employed for her prosperity.

“I shall presently be called upon by you, sir, as it is enjoined by the Constitution, to make a declaration upon oath (and shall do it with cheerfulness, because the injunction accords with my own judgment and conscience) that *the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is, and of right ought to be, a free, sovereign, and independent State.* I shall also be called upon to make another declaration, with the same solemnity, *to support the Constitution of the United States.* I see the consistency of this, for it cannot have been intended but that these Constitutions should mutually aid and support each other. It is my humble opinion that, while the Commonwealth of Massachusetts maintains her own just authority, weight, and dignity, she will be among the firmest pillars of the Federal Union.

“May the administration of the Federal government, and those of the several States in the Union, be guided by the unerring finger of Heaven! Each of them and all of them united will then, if the people are wise, be as prosperous as the wisdom of human institutions and the circumstances of human society will admit.”

During this and two succeeding terms in which Mr. Adams was Lieutenant-Governor, little is known by any records of his public acts. The office seems to have allowed him the leisure so much needed in his declining years. Dr. Waterhouse writes:—

“I never saw Mr. Adams until the year 1792; he was then far in the vale of years, with a constitution which was, judging from his appearance, naturally strong, but nearly worn out, not with toil, but care. He still continued to use all the exercise his strength would permit, by visiting occasionally a Mr. Hewes, a constable,—

a respectable calling in Boston in those days, whatever it may be now. They had been friends from early life, and the same intimacy was common between their respective ladies. Mr. Adams was then Lieutenant-Governor, — a place of honor, but little profit, and no duty at all, except in case of the death of the Governor, when, *ex officio*, the duties of the executive devolved upon the Lieutenant. Mr. Adams lived in a large old-fashioned frame-house on Winter Street, which had once been painted yellow, but, like its venerable owner, was a good deal the worse for wear. He entertained little or no company, having neither means nor inclination to do it.”

Brissot de Warville says, after a visit to Samuel Adams about this time : —

“If ever a man was sincerely an idolater of republicanism, it was Samuel Adams ; and never a man united more virtues to give respect to his opinions. He has the excess of republican virtues, — untainted probity, simplicity, modesty, and, above all, firmness. He will have no capitulation with abuses. He fears as much the despotism of virtue and talents as the despotism of vice. Cherishing the greatest love and respect for Washington, he voted to take from him the command at the end of a certain time. He recollected that Cæsar could not have succeeded in overturning the Republic but by prolonging the command of the army. The event has proved that the application was false ; but it was by a miracle, and the safety of a country should never be risked on the faith of a miracle.”<sup>1</sup>

After the organization of the Federal government, the legislative proceedings of the several States assumed a subordinate character. The permission of theatrical representations was one of the local questions in Massachusetts. In 1790 a petition was presented to the Legislature for opening a theatre in Boston, which was rejected. In November of the

<sup>1</sup> Brissot's *New Travels in the United States*, 2d ed., I. 93. The writer probably alludes to the vote of Congress in December, 1776, when a committee, of which Samuel Adams was a member, reported the resolutions investing Washington with dictatorial powers, and specifying the term of six months. Segur, in his brief allusion to Boston, through which he passed with the French army on its departure from America at the close of the war, mentions having visited Samuel Adams.

following year, though many of the old residents, including Mr. Adams, opposed the proceeding, a town meeting instructed the Boston Representatives to obtain, if possible, a repeal of the prohibitory act ; but the effort did not succeed. It was especially advocated by Morton, Tudor, and Dr. Jarvis, and opposed by Samuel Adams, Dawes, Austin, and H. G. Otis. The latter is represented as having spoken with such eloquence at Faneuil Hall in opposition to Goodman's instructions to the Representatives that Samuel Adams "thanked God that there was one young man willing to step forth in the good old cause of morality and religion."<sup>1</sup> Though the prohibitory act remained unrepealed, a theatre was opened in Boston, and representations were given under the name of moral lectures. Upon the meeting of the Legislature, Governor Hancock denounced this infraction of the law, and soon after the whole theatrical company were arrested on the stage. The audience, enraged at the attempt against their public amusements, took the portrait of the Governor from the stage-box, and trod it under foot. During these commotions, it was customary, says an eye-witness, to go to the theatre armed with clubs. Application was renewed to the Legislature, who, finding that the public voice was largely in favor of it, repealed the act. Mr. Adams, then Governor, refused to sign the bill, and the prohibitory law was nominally in force during the successive administrations.

<sup>1</sup> Loring's *Hundred Boston Orators*, p. 200. A town meeting was held on this subject some time in 1791, at which the voice of Adams was drowned in the uproar created by those in favor of repealing the prohibitory act. See an extract from the *Argus* of Nov. 1, 1791, quoted in *Alsop and Dwight's Echo*, 1807, pp. 10, 11, and the lines cited in the present work (II. 410) from their parody.

## CHAPTER LXII.

Theories of Government after the Revolution.—American Statesmen.—Aristocratic, Monarchical, and Democratic Ideas.—Celebrated Correspondence between Samuel and John Adams.—The French Revolution.—Its Effect on Politics in America.—Rise of the Republican or Democratic Party.—Enthusiasm for Republican France.—Samuel Adams a Zealous Sympathizer with the French Revolution.—Domineering Conduct of England towards the United States.—Landing and Proceedings of Genet the French Ambassador.—The European Wars.—Washington's Proclamation of Neutrality.—Death and Funeral of John Hancock.

WHILE the Revolution was in progress, there was little difference in the political creed of the American leaders. The devotion to a common cause left no disposition for wrangling on the principles of general government; and it was not until the final separation from Britain, and the division of the country into political parties, that the various theories fully developed themselves. Samuel Adams, in forwarding the Revolution, had based every movement upon the broadest principles of democracy, of which he was often called the "Father" by politicians of the last century. His whole faith and hope was in the people, from whom, said he, "all power should proceed." He believed that learning and virtue, founded on moral and religious education, would in time govern the country; to which end he was never weary of promoting a widely diffused common-school system, whereby the poorest inhabitant might educate his children to a point, at least, where talent could win its way on equal terms with their more wealthy neighbors. This was democratic doctrine in its purest form, and, as Mr. Adams conceived it, was the principle for which the Revolution had been accomplished.

With the establishment of peace, and the first steps towards forming a new government, many eminent men

came into prominence who had been comparatively subordinate characters before the Revolution, or had been until lately little known beyond their immediate field of politics. The novel questions presented by such a vast country, dependent upon its own genius to meet the circumstances of a new nationality, brought into full light the powers of men who had taken no very conspicuous stand in achieving independence. With some few exceptions, they might be regarded as another generation of statesmen, when compared with Washington, Franklin, the Adamses, Gadsden, Jefferson, Henry, Hawley, and the Lees. In the same way Otis, Samuel Adams, and Franklin had been known in England as political leaders long before the Warrens, John Adams, Gerry, Hancock, Sullivan, Jay, Quincy, and Jefferson attracted notice abroad. Otis and Samuel Adams and a few other pre-Revolutionary men — but these two particularly — began the contest with England. Even at the time of the Stamp Act such men were at middle life or past it; and when, after a quarter of a century of toil, the prize of American independence had been gained, and the new nation commenced its career, few of them survived to share in the glorious spectacle, or those who still lived were superannuated, worn out in the public service, and scarcely available for the great offices. At the close of the war, such men as Madison, Hamilton, the Pinckneys, Burr, Walcott, John Quincy Adams, Monroe, Clinton, the Livingstons, Randolph, Ames, Gouverneur Morris, and Sedgwick — men conspicuous for their abilities — began to claim the attention of the nation, and were presently exceeded in public importance only by those great luminaries of the Revolution who had been raised to the highest stations. Most of them had their peculiar ideas of government, and were generally ardent partisans. Many, by their name of “Federalist,” claimed to be the special supporters of a union of the States, and tried to cast reproach upon men whose desire for union was at least equal to theirs, although they wished to estab-

lish it upon a more popular and truly democratic basis, as the means of preserving it unimpaired for posterity. In others we find aristocratic or even monarchical tendencies, and a candid disbelief in the self-governing capacity of the masses. The difference between the Democrats and the Federalists soon assumed the proportions of a violent partisanship; and it was not until another century had commenced that the doctrines of democracy gained sufficient strength to control the government for successive Presidential terms.

John Adams, after a nine years' public service in Europe, returned in the summer of 1788. During his absence the war had terminated and the Federal Constitution had been adopted. In this time he had found leisure to study, and write extensively on the history of the Italian republics flourishing in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in which he had observed that the struggle for power was conducted by noble families. A long residence in diplomatic circles had apparently altered his early New England ideas; and Shays's rebellion and the other popular commotions which followed hard upon the achievement of independence had shaken his faith in the masses, so that he now entered the second place in the national government with little liking for democracy. In his publications he endeavored to show that a certain mixture of aristocracy and monarchy was necessary for the maintenance of a free government. He had agreed with Samuel Adams in general before the Revolution, but now he was directly opposed to him in theories of government; and the two kinsmen belonged to antagonistic parties from the commencement of the first administration. John Adams was disposed to favor the use of honorary titles and distinctions, and the establishment of an aristocratic Senate, which would supply an object for the ambition of the rich and well-born, while its power would be balanced by a popular assembly. Samuel Adams, on the other hand, cherished an inherent love for the essential principles of de-



mocracy, and saw no permanent happiness for his country should such principles be disowned. Of his school, it is needless to say, was Jefferson, whose ideas, afterwards practically illustrated in his administrations, have been supposed to be the foundation of the Democratic party. These political differences between the Adamses were exemplified in the character and address of the two men. While occupying their respective positions in the national and State governments, they temporarily renewed their correspondence, which had been discontinued for several years during the absence of John Adams at foreign courts. These letters on aristocracy and democracy were repeatedly published in different parts of the country, and appear to have excited interest, as much owing to the reputation of their writers as to the nature of the subjects treated.

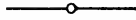
How the correspondence got into print is unknown; but in the change of political sentiment which produced a democratic administration at the close of John Adams's term, these letters appear to have been received as the standard of difference between the parties of which the Adamses were such prominent members.<sup>1</sup> A careful reading of them gives a clear insight into the respective political creeds of the two men. It is very evident, both from these letters and from the innumerable instances in the more extended writings of John Adams, that he was, like other Federalists,

<sup>1</sup> The letters were also published as a part of a political pamphlet with the following title: "Propositions of Colonel Hamilton, of New-York, in the Convention for establishing a Constitutional Government for the United States. Also, a Summary, of the Political Opinions of John Adams, late President of the United States, illustrated and proved by Extracts from his Writings on Government. And a most interesting Discussion, of the Fundamental Points of Difference between the Two Great Political Parties in the United States, by the said John Adams, a Federalist, and Samuel Adams, late Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, a Republican, in Four Letters, written while the Former was Vice-President of the United States, and the Latter was Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts. Pittsfield: Printed by Phinehas Allen, 1802." It may be found in the Law Library of Harvard University. (Political Tracts, Vol. II.)

a believer in an essentially different system from the present Constitution, — though had he been in the Convention, he might not have advocated his anti-democratic theories to so great an extent as Hamilton. But he denied that the people, or even the people's representatives, are the best keepers of the popular liberties; "the majority would invade the liberty of the minority sooner and oftener than an absolute monarchy."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the following correspondence (p. 312) Samuel Adams says of the British, referring to the Revolutionary War, "We feared their arts more than their arms." This was a favorite expression with him, and several instances may be found in the present work. In the letter of the Assembly to Deberdt in 1788 (I. 156) occurs the sentence, "There is a way of subduing a people by art as well as by arms"; as "Sincerus," in 1776, he says (II. 351, 352), "He was more concerned for the probable success of their arts than their arms"; in a letter to James Warren in 1776 (II. 399), "Their arts may be more dangerous than their arms"; in a letter to Elbridge Gerry in 1776 (II. 448), "I confess it is my opinion that more, much more, is to be apprehended from the arts of our enemies than their arms"; and in a letter to General Roberdeau in 1778 (III. 5), "Our business is to secure America against the arts and arms of a treacherous enemy. The former we have more to apprehend from than the latter." This frequent recurrence of the same phrase supplies an additional proof of his authorship of the letter to Deberdt.

FOUR  
LETTERS:



BEING AN

*Interesting Correspondence*

BETWEEN

THOSE EMINENTLY DISTINGUISHED CHARACTERS,

JOHN ADAMS,

LATE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES ;

AND

SAMUEL ADAMS,

LATE GOVERNOR OF MASSACHUSETTS.

ON THE

IMPORTANT SUBJECT OF GOVERNMENT.



*B O S T O N :*

PRINTED FOR ADAMS & RHOADES.....1802.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

IN fulfilling our engagement, we have the pleasure of presenting to the public the following letters from persons who have been eminently distinguished in the course of the American Revolution. At the time they were written, Mr. JOHN ADAMS was Vice-President of the United States, and Mr. SAMUEL ADAMS the Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts. They will, then, naturally be considered as expressing the opinions of public men, on a great and public question deeply interesting to every citizen. Had they have been earlier communicated, the uncommon agitation of the intervening time at certain periods might have given their contents a degree of importance, which the returning tranquillity of the country at this moment may in some measure prevent. We must still believe, notwithstanding, that but few publications can be more attractive of general notice, as well from the elevated station which the authors of them have long maintained in the world as from the nature and importance of the PRINCIPLES now brought into view, on the merits of which they so widely differ.

We shall not presume to anticipate the judgment of our fellow-citizens throughout the Union on these important letters, by interposing any comments of our own. The names hitherto omitted are supplied; and we trust that no exception will be taken to their being now published, as the spirit of the correspondence would be evidently defective without them. We shall only remark, in justice to Mr. SAMUEL ADAMS, that, in the composition of his answers, he was obliged to use the hand of a friend, as he had been long incapable of using his own with facility; and that his replies must be viewed as the extemporaneous productions of the moment in which they were written, without his having had an opportunity of giving them a second inspection. This circumstance will, no doubt, be duly appreciated.

The letters now appear in their proper order: what will be the public sense respecting them we will not pretend to calculate. We must at least hope, for the honor of the community, that the sentiments they contain will not be received with a torpid insensibility or a disgraceful indifference.

## LETTER I.

NEW YORK, September 12, 1790.

DEAR SIR, —

Upon my return from Philadelphia, to which beloved city I have been for the purpose of getting an house to put my head in next winter, I had the pleasure of receiving your favor of the 2d of this month. The sight of our old Liberty Hall, and of several of our old friends, had brought your venerable idea to my mind, and continued it there a great part of the last week ; so that a letter from you, on my arrival, seemed but in continuation. I am much obliged to the " confidential friend " for writing the short letter you dictated, and shall beg a continuance of similar good offices.

Captain Nathaniel Byfield Lyde, whom I know very well, has my hearty good wishes. I shall give your letter and his to the Secretary of the Treasury, the duty of whose department it is to receive and examine all applications of the kind. Applications will probably be made in behalf of the officers who served the last war in the navy, and they will be likely to have the preference to all others ; but Captain Lyde's application shall nevertheless be presented, and have a fair chance.

My family as well as myself are, I thank God, in good health, and as good spirits as the prospect of a troublesome removal will admit. Mrs. Adams desires her particular regards to your lady and yourself.

What, my old friend, is this world about to become? Is the millennium commencing? Are the kingdoms of it about to be governed by reason? Your Boston town meetings and our Harvard College have set the universe in motion. Everything will be pulled down. So much seems certain. But what will be built up? Are there any principles of political architecture? What are they? Were Voltaire and Rousseau masters of them? Are their disciples acquainted with them? Locke taught them principles of liberty; but I doubt whether they have not yet to learn the principles of government. Will the struggle in Europe be anything more than a change of impostors and impositions?

With great esteem and sincere affection, I am, my dear sir, your friend and servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

HIS HONOR SAMUEL ADAMS, ESQ., *Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts.*

## LETTER II.

BOSTON, October 4, 1790.

DEAR SIR, —

With pleasure I received your letter of September 12th. And as our good friend, to whom I dictated my last, is yet in town, I have requested of him a second favor.

You ask, what the world is about to become? and, Is the millenium commencing? I have not studied the prophecies, and cannot even conjecture. The golden age, so finely pictured by poets, I believe has never as yet existed but in their own imaginations. In the earliest periods, when, for the honor of human nature, one should have thought that man had not learnt to be cruel, what scenes of horror have been exhibited in families of some of the best instructors in piety and morals! Even the heart of our first father was grievously wounded at the sight of the murder of one of his sons, perpetrated by the hand of the other. Has mankind since seen the happy age? No, my friend. The same tragedies have been acted on the theatre of the world, the same arts of tormenting have been studied and practised to this day; and even religion and reason united have never succeeded to establish the permanent foundations of political freedom and happiness in the most enlightened countries on the earth.

After a compliment to Boston town meetings, and our Harvard College, as having "set the universe in motion," you tell me everything will be pulled down. I think, with you, "so much seems certain." "But what," say you, "will be built up?" Hay, wood, and stubble may probably be the materials, till men shall be yet more enlightened and more friendly to each other. "Are there any principles of political architecture?" Undoubtedly. "What are they?" Philosophers, ancient and modern, have laid down different plans, and *all* have thought themselves masters of the true principles. Their disciples have followed them, probably with a blind prejudice, which is always an enemy to truth, and have thereby added fresh fuel to the fire of contention, and increased the political disorder.

Kings have been deposed by aspiring nobles, whose pride could not brook restraint. These have waged everlasting war against the common rights of men. The love of liberty is interwoven in the soul of man, and can never be totally extinguished; and there are

certain periods when human patience can no longer endure indignity and oppression. The spark of liberty then kindles into a flame, when the injured people, attentive to the feelings of their just rights, magnanimously contend for their complete restoration. But such contests have too often ended in nothing more than "a change of impostors and impositions." The patriots of Rome put an end to the life of Cæsar, and Rome submitted to a race of tyrants in his stead. Were the people of England free, after they had obliged King John to concede to them their ancient rights and liberties, and promised to govern them according to the old law of the land? Were they free after they had wantonly deposed their Henrys, Edwards, and Richards, to gratify *family pride*? Or, after they had brought their first Charles to the block, and banished his family? They were not. The nation was then governed by King, Lords, and Commons; and its liberties were lost by a strife among three powers, soberly intended to check each other, and keep the scales even.

But while we daily see the violence of the human passions controlling the laws of reason and religion, and stifling the very feelings of humanity, can we wonder that, in such tumults, little or no regard is had to political checks and balances? And such tumults have always happened within as well as without doors. The best formed constitutions that have yet been contrived by the wit of man have, and will, come to an end, — because "the kingdoms of the earth have not been governed by reason." The pride of kings, of nobles and leaders of the people, who have all governed in their turns, have disadjusted the delicate frame, and thrown all into confusion.

What, then, is to be done? Let divines and philosophers, statesmen and patriots, unite their endeavors to renovate the age, by impressing the minds of men with the importance of educating their *little boys and girls*, of inculcating in the minds of youth the fear and love of the Deity and universal philanthropy, and, in subordination to these great principles, the love of their country; of instructing them in the art of self-government, without which they never can act a wise part in the government of societies, great or small; in short, of leading them in the study and practice of the exalted virtues of the Christian system, which will happily tend to subdue the turbulent passions of men, and introduce that golden age

beautifully described in figurative language, when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid; the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; none shall then hurt or destroy, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord. When this millennium shall commence, if there shall be any need of civil government, indulge me in the fancy that it will be in the republican form, or something better.

I thank you for your countenance to our friend Lyde. Mrs. Adams tells me to remember her to yourself, lady, and connections, and be assured that I am, sincerely, your friend,

SAMUEL ADAMS.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

### LETTER III.

NEW YORK, October 18, 1790.

DEAR SIR,—

I am thankful to our common friend, as well as to you, for your favor of the 4th, which I received last night. My fears are in unison with yours, that hay, wood, and stubble will be the materials of the new political buildings in Europe, till men shall be more enlightened and friendly to each other.

You agree that there are undoubtedly principles of political architecture; but, instead of particularizing any of them, you seem to place all your hopes in the universal, or at least more general, prevalence of knowledge and benevolence. I think, with you, that knowledge and benevolence ought to be promoted as much as possible; but despairing of ever seeing them sufficiently general for the security of society, I am for seeking institutions which may supply in some degree the defect. If there were no ignorance, error, or vice, there would be neither principles nor systems of civil or political government.

I am not often satisfied with the opinions of Hume; but in this he seems well founded, that all projects of government, founded in the supposition or expectation of extraordinary degrees of virtue, are evidently chimerical. Nor do I believe it possible, humanly speaking, that men should ever be greatly improved in knowledge



or benevolence without assistance from the principles and system of government.

I am very willing to agree with you in fancying that, in the greatest improvements in society, government will be in the republican form. It is a fixed principle with me that all good government is and must be republican. But, at the same time, your candor will agree with me, that there is not in lexicography a more fraudulent word. Whenever I use the word *republic* with approbation, I mean a government in which the people have collectively or by representation an essential share in the sovereignty. The republican forms of Poland and Venice are much worse, and those of Holland and Bern very little better, than the monarchical form in France before the late revolution. By the republican form, I know you do not mean the plan of Milton, Nedham, or Turgot; for, after a fair trial of its miseries, the simple monarchical form will ever be, as it has ever been, preferred to it by mankind. Are we not, my friend, in danger of rendering the word *republican* unpopular in this country by an indiscreet, indeterminate, and equivocal use of it? The people of England have been obliged to wean themselves from the use of it by making it unpopular and unfashionable, because they found it was artfully used by some, and simply understood by others, to mean the government of their Interregnum Parliament. They found they could not wean themselves from that destructive form of government so entirely as that a mischievous party would not still remain in favor of it by any other means than by making the words *republic* and *republican* unpopular. They have succeeded to such a degree that, with a vast majority of that nation, a republican is as unamiable as a witch, a blasphemer, a rebel, or a tyrant. If in this country the word *republic* should be generally understood, as it is by some, to mean a form of government inconsistent with a mixture of three powers forming a mutual balance, we may depend upon it that such mischievous effects will be produced by the use of it as will compel the people of America to renounce, detest, and execrate it as the English do. With these explanations, restrictions, and limitations, I agree with you in your love of republican governments, but in no other sense.

With you, I have also the honor most perfectly to harmonize in your sentiments of the humanity and wisdom of promoting education in knowledge, virtue, and benevolence. But I think that these

will confirm mankind in the opinion of the necessity of preserving and strengthening the dikes against the ocean, its tides and storms. Human appetites, passions, prejudices, and self-love will never be conquered by benevolence and knowledge alone, introduced by human means. The millennium itself neither supposes nor implies it. All civil government is then to cease, and the Messiah is to reign. That happy and holy state is therefore wholly out of this question. You and I agree in the utility of universal education. But will nations agree in it as fully and extensively as we do, and be at the expense of it? We know, with as much certainty as attends any human knowledge, that they will not. We cannot, therefore, advise the people to depend for their safety, liberty, and security upon hopes and blessings which we know will not fall to their lot. If we do our duty, then, to the people, we shall not deceive them, but advise them to depend upon what is in their power, and will relieve them.

Philosophers, ancient and modern, do not appear to me to have studied nature, the whole of nature, and nothing but nature. Lycurgus's principle was, war and family pride; Solon's was, what the people would bear, &c. The best writings of antiquity upon government — those, I mean, of Aristotle, Zeno, and Cicero — are lost. We have human nature, society, and universal history to observe and study; and from these we may draw all the real principles which ought to be regarded. Disciples will follow their masters, and interested partisans their chieftains; let us like it or not, we cannot help it. But if the true principles can be discovered, and fairly, fully, and impartially laid before the people, the more light increases, the more the reason of them will be seen, and the more disciples they will have. Prejudice, passion, and private interest, which will always mingle in human inquiries, one would think might be enlisted on the side of truth, at least in the greatest number, for certainly the majority are interested in the truth if they could see to the end of all its consequences. "Kings have been deposed by aspiring nobles." True, and never by any other. "These" (the nobles I suppose) "have waged everlasting war against the common rights of men." True, when they have been possessed of the *summa imperii* in one body, without a check. So have the plebeians, so have the people, so have kings, so has human nature in every shape and combination, and so it ever will.

But, on the other hand, the nobles have been essential parties in the preservation of liberty whenever and wherever it has existed. In Europe they alone have preserved it against kings and people, wherever it has been preserved, or at least with very little assistance from the people. One hideous despotism, as horrid as that of Turkey, would have been the lot of every nation of Europe, if the nobles had not made stands. By nobles, I mean not peculiarly an hereditary nobility, or any particular modification, but the natural and actual aristocracy among mankind. The existence of this you will not deny. You and I have seen four noble families rise up in Boston, — the *Craftses*, *Gores*, *Daweses*, and *Austins*. These are as really a nobility in our town as the Howards, Somersets, Berties, &c., in England. Blind undistinguishing reproaches against the aristocratical part of mankind, a division which nature has made and we cannot abolish, are neither pious nor benevolent. They are as pernicious as they are false. They serve only to foment prejudice, jealousy, envy, animosity, and malevolence. They serve no ends but those of sophistry, fraud, and the spirit of party. It would not be true, but it would not be more egregiously false, to say that the people have waged everlasting war against the rights of men.

“The love of liberty,” you say, “is interwoven in the soul of man.” So it is, according to La Fontaine, in that of a wolf; and I doubt whether it be much more rational, generous, or social in one than in the other, until in man it is enlightened by experience, reflection, education, and civil and political institutions, which are at first produced, and constantly supported and improved, by a few, that is, by the nobility. The wolf in the fable, who preferred running in the forest, lean and hungry, to the sleek, plump, and round sides of the dog, because he found the latter was sometimes restrained, had more love of liberty than most men. The numbers of men, in all ages, have preferred ease, slumber, and good cheer to liberty, when they have been in competition. We must not, then, depend alone upon the love of liberty in the soul of man for its preservation. Some political institutions must be prepared to assist this love against its enemies. Without these, the struggle will ever end only in a change of impostors. When the people who have no property feel the power in their own hands to determine all questions by a majority, they ever attack those who have property, till the injured

men of property lose all patience, and recur to *finesse*, trick, and stratagem, to outwit those who have too much strength, because they have too many hands, to be resisted any other way. Let us be impartial, then, and speak the whole truth. Till we do, we shall never discover all the true principles that are necessary. The multitude, therefore, as well as the nobles, must have a check. This is one principle.

“Were the people of England free, after they had obliged King John to concede to them their ancient rights?” The people never did this. There was no people who pretended to anything. It was the nobles alone. The people pretended to nothing but to be villains, vassals, and retainers to the king or the nobles. The nobles, I agree, were not free, because all was determined by a majority of their votes or by arms, not by law. Their feuds deposed their “Henrys, Edwards, and Richards,” to gratify lordly ambition, patrician rivalry, and “family pride.” But if they had not been deposed, the kings would have become despots, because the people would not and could not join the nobles in any regular and constitutional opposition to them. They would have become despots, I repeat it, and that by means of the villains, vassals, and retainers aforesaid. It is not family pride, my friend, but family popularity, that does the great mischief as well as the great good. Pride in the heart of man is an evil fruit and concomitant of every advantage, — of riches, of knowledge, of genius, of talents, of beauty, of strength, of virtue, and even of piety. It is sometimes ridiculous, and often pernicious; but it is even sometimes, and in some degree, useful. But the pride of families would be always and only ridiculous, if it had not family popularity to work with. The attachment and devotion of the people to some families inspires them with pride. As long as gratitude or interest, ambition or avarice, love, hope, or fear, shall be human motives of action, so long will numbers attach themselves to particular families. When the people will, in spite of all that can be said or done, cry a man or family up to the skies, exaggerate all his talents and virtues, not hear a word of his weakness or faults, follow implicitly his advice, detest every man he hates, adore every man he loves, and knock down all who will not swim down the stream with them, where is your remedy? When a man or family are thus popular, how can you prevent them from being proud? You and I know of instances in which popularity has been a wind, a tide, a

whirlwind. The history of all ages and nations is full of such examples.

Popularity, that has great fortune to dazzle, splendid largesses to excite warm gratitude, sublime, beautiful, and uncommon genius or talents to produce deep admiration, or anything to support high hopes and strong fears, will be proud; and its power will be employed to mortify enemies, gratify friends, procure votes, emoluments, and power. Such family popularity ever did, and ever will, govern in every nation, in every climate, hot and cold, wet and dry, among civilized and savage people, Christians and Mahometans, Jews and heathens. Declamation against family pride is a pretty juvenile exercise, but unworthy of statesmen. They know the evil and danger is too serious to be sported with. The only way, God knows, is to put these families into a hole by themselves, and set two watches upon them, — a superior to them all on one side, and the people on the other.

There are a few popular men in the Massachusetts, my friend, who have, I fear, less honor, sincerity, and virtue than they ought to have. These, if they are not guarded against, may do another mischief. They may excite a party spirit and a mobbish spirit instead of the spirit of liberty, and produce another Wat Tyler's rebellion. They can do no more. But I really think their party language ought not to be countenanced nor their shibboleths pronounced. The miserable stuff that they utter about the *well born* is as despicable as themselves. The *eugeneis* of the Greeks, the *bien nées* of the French, the *gewellgebornen* [*sic*] of the Germans and Dutch, the *beloved families* of the Creeks, are but a few samples of national expressions of the same thing, for which every nation on earth has a similar expression. One would think that our scribblers were all the sons of redemptioners or transported convicts. They think, with Tarquin, "*in novo populo, ubi omnis repentina atque ex virtute nobilitas sit, futurum locum forti ac strenuo viro.*"

Let us be impartial. There is not more of family pride on one side than of vulgar malignity and popular envy on the other. Popularity in one family raises envy in others. But the popularity of the least deserving will triumph over envy and malignity; while that which is acquired by real merit will very often be overborne and oppressed by it.

Let us do justice to the people and to the nobles, — for nobles

there are, as I have before proved, in Boston as well as in Madrid. But to do justice to both you must establish an arbitrator between them. This is another principle.

It is time that you and I should have some sweet communion together. I do not believe that we, who have preserved for more than thirty years an uninterrupted friendship, and have so long thought and acted harmoniously together in the worst of times, are now so far asunder in sentiment as some people pretend; in full confidence of which, I have used this freedom, being ever your warm friend,

JOHN ADAMS.

HIS HONOR SAMUEL ADAMS, ESQ.,  
*Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts.*

#### LETTER IV.

BOSTON, November 20, 1790.

MY DEAR SIR, —

I lately received your letter of the 18th of October. The sentiments and observations contained in it demand my attention.

A republic, you tell me, is a government in which “the people have an essential *share* in the sovereignty.” Is not the *whole* sovereignty, my friend, essentially in the people? Is not government designed for the welfare and happiness of all the people? and is it not the uncontrollable, essential right of the people to amend and alter or annul their Constitution, and frame a new one, whenever they shall think it will better promote their own welfare and happiness to do it? That the sovereignty resides in the people, is a political doctrine which I have never heard an American politician seriously deny. The Constitutions of the American States reserve to the people the exercise of the rights of sovereignty by the annual or biennial election of their governors, senators, and representatives; and by empowering their own representatives to impeach the greatest officers of the State before the senators, who are also chosen by themselves. *We the people*, is the style of the Federal Constitution: they adopted it; and, conformably to it, they delegate the exercise of the powers of government to particular persons, who, after short intervals, resign their powers to the people; and they will re-elect them, or appoint others, as they think fit.

The American Legislatures are nicely balanced. They consist of two branches, each having a check upon the determinations of the other. They sit in different chambers, and probably often reason differently in their respective chambers on the same question: if they disagree in their decisions, by a conference their reasons and arguments are mutually communicated to each other; candid explanations tend to bring them to agreement; and then, according to the Massachusetts Constitution, the matter is laid before the First Magistrate for his revision. He states objections, if he has any, with his reasons, and returns them to the legislators, who, by larger majorities, ultimately decide. Here is a mixture of three powers, founded in the nature of man, calculated to call forth the rational faculties, in the great points of legislation, into exertion, to cultivate mutual friendship and good humor, and, finally, to enable them to decide, not by the impulse of passion or party prejudice, but by the calm voice of reason, which is the voice of God. In this mixture you may see your "natural and actual aristocracy among mankind," operating among the several powers in legislation, and producing the most happy effects. But the son of an excellent man may never inherit the great qualities of his father; this is a common observation, and there are many instances of its truth. Should we not, therefore, conclude that hereditary nobility is a solecism in government? Their lordships' sons or grandsons may be destitute of the faintest feelings of honor or honesty, and yet retain an essential share in the government, by right of inheritance from ancestors who may have been the minions of ministers, the favorites of mistresses, or men of real and distinguished merit. The same may be said of hereditary kings. Their successors may also become so degenerated and corrupt as to have neither inclination nor capacity to know the extent and limits of their own powers, nor, consequently, those of others. Such kind of political beings, nobles or kings, possessing hereditary right to essential shares in an equipoised government, are very unfit persons to hold the scales. Having no just conception of the principles of the government, nor of the part which they and their copartners bear in the administration, they run a wild career, destroy the checks and balances, by interfering in each other's departments, till the nation is involved in confusion, and reduced to the danger, at least, of bloodshed, to remove a tyranny which

may ensue. Much safer is it, and much more does it tend to promote the welfare and happiness of society, to fill up the offices of government, after the mode prescribed in the American Constitutions, by frequent elections of the people. They may, indeed, be deceived in their choice; they sometimes are. But the evil is not incurable, the remedy is always near; they will feel their mistakes and correct them.

I am very willing to agree with you in thinking that improvements in knowledge and benevolence receive much assistance from the principles and systems of good government. But is it not as true that, without knowledge and benevolence, men would neither have been capable nor disposed to search for the principles or form the system? Should we not, my friend, bear a grateful remembrance of our pious and benevolent ancestors, who early laid plans of education, by which means wisdom, knowledge, and virtue have been generally diffused among the body of the people, and they have been enabled to form and establish a civil Constitution calculated for the preservation of their rights and liberties? This Constitution was evidently founded in the expectation of the further progress and *extraordinary* degrees of virtue. It enjoins the encouragement of all seminaries of literature, which are the nurseries of virtue, depending upon these for the support of government, rather than titles, splendor, or force. Mr. Hume may call this a "chimerical project"; I am far from thinking the people can be deceived by urging upon them a dependence on the more general prevalence of knowledge and virtue. It is one of the most essential means of further and still further improvements in society, and of correcting and amending moral sentiments and habits and political institutions, till "by human means," directed by Divine influence, men shall be prepared for that "happy and holy state" when "the Messiah is to reign."

"It is a fixed principle that all good government is, and must be, republican." You have my hearty concurrence; and I believe we are well enough acquainted with each other's ideas to understand what we respectively mean when we "use the word with approbation." The body of the people in this country are not so ignorant as those in England were in the time of the Interregnum Parliament. They are better educated. They will not easily be prevailed upon to believe that "a republican is as unamiable as a witch,



a blasphemous, a rebel, or a tyrant." They are charmed with their own forms of government, in which are admitted a mixture of powers to check the human passions, and control them from rushing into exorbitances. So well assured are they that their liberties are best secured by their own frequent and free election of fit persons to be the essential sharers in the administration of their government, and that this form of government is truly *republican*, that the body of the people will not be persuaded nor compelled to "renounce, detest, and execrate" the very word *republican*, "as the English do." Their education has "confirmed them in the opinion of the necessity of preserving and strengthening the dikes against the ocean, its tides and storms"; and I think they have made more safe and more durable dikes than the English have done.

We agree in the utility of universal education; but "will nations agree in it as fully and extensively as we do?" Why should they not? It would not be fair to conclude that, because they have not yet been disposed to agree in it, they never will. It is allowed that the present age is more enlightened than former ones. Freedom of inquiry is certainly more encouraged; the feelings of humanity have softened the heart; the true principles of civil and religious liberty are better understood; tyranny, in all its shapes, is more detested; and bigotry, if not still blind, must be mortified to see that she is despised. Such an age may afford at least a flattering expectation that nations as well as individuals will view the utility of *universal education* in so strong a light as to induce sufficient national patronage and support. Future ages will probably be more enlightened than this.

The love of liberty is interwoven in the soul of man, — "so it is in that of a wolf." However irrational, ungenerous, and unsocial the love of liberty may be in a rude savage, he is capable of being enlightened by experience, reflection, education, and civil and political institutions. But the nature of the wolf is, and ever will be, confined to running in the forest to satisfy his hunger and his brutal appetites; the dog is inclined in a very easy way to seek his living, and fattens his sides from what comes from his master's kitchen. The comparison of La Fontaine is, in my opinion, ungenerous, unnatural, and unjust.

Among the numbers of men, my friend, are to be found not only those who have "preferred ease, slumber, and good cheer to lib-

erty," but others who have eagerly sought after thrones and sceptres, hereditary shares in sovereignty, riches and splendor, titles, stars, garters, crosses, eagles, and many other childish playthings, at the expense of real nobility, without one thought or care for the liberty and happiness of the rest of mankind.

"The people who have no property feel the power of governing by a majority, and ever attack those who have property." "The injured men of property recur to *finesse*, trick, and stratagem to outwit them." True: these may proceed from a lust of domination in *some* of both parties. Be this as it may, it has been known that such deceitful tricks have been practised by some of the rich upon their unsuspecting fellow-citizens, to turn the determination of questions so as to answer their own selfish purposes. To plunder or filch the rights of men are crimes equally immoral and nefarious, though committed in different manners. Neither of them is confined to the rich or the poor; they are too common among both. The Lords as well as the Commons of Great Britain, by continued large majorities endeavored by *finesse*, tricks, and stratagems, as well as threats, to prevail on the American Colonies to surrender their liberty and property to their disposal. These failing, they attempted to *plunder* our rights by force of arms. We feared their arts more than their arms. Did the members of that hereditary House of Lords, who constituted those repeated majorities, then possess the spirit of nobility? Not so, I think. That spirit resided in the illustrious minorities in both Houses.

But "by nobles," who have prevented "one hideous despotism as horrid as that of Turkey from falling to the lot of every nation of Europe," you mean, "not peculiarly an hereditary nobility, or any particular modification, but the natural and actual aristocracy among mankind," the existence of which I am not disposed to deny. Where is this aristocracy found? Among men of all ranks and conditions. The cottager may beget a wise son; the noble, a fool. The one is capable of great improvement; the other is not. Education is within the power of men and societies of men; wise and judicious modes of education, patronized and supported by communities, will draw together the sons of the rich and the poor, among whom it makes no distinction; it will cultivate the natural genius, elevate the soul, excite laudable emulation to excel in knowledge, piety, and benevolence; and finally it will reward its patrons and

benefactors by shedding its benign influence on the public mind. Education inures men to thinking and reflection, to reasoning and demonstration. It discovers to them the moral and religious duties they owe to God, their country, and to all mankind. Even savages might, by the means of education, be instructed to frame the best civil and political institutions with as much skill and ingenuity as they now shape their arrows. Education leads youth to "the study of human nature, society, and universal history," from whence they may "draw all the principles" of political architecture which ought to be regarded. All men are "interested in the truth"; education, by showing them "the end of all its consequences," would induce at least the greatest numbers to enlist on its side. The man of good understanding, who has been well educated, and improves these advantages as far as his circumstances will allow, in promoting the happiness of mankind, in my opinion, and I am inclined to think in yours, is indeed "well born."

It may be "puerile and unworthy of statesmen" to declaim against *family pride*; but there is, and always has been, such a ridiculous kind of vanity among men. "Statesmen know the evil and danger is too serious to be sported with." I am content they should be put into one hole, as you propose; but I have some fears that your watchmen on each side will not well agree. When a man can recollect the *virtues* of his ancestors, he certainly has abundantly more solid satisfaction than another who boasts that he sprang from those who were *rich* or *noble*, but never discovers the least degree of virtue or worth of any kind. "Family popularity," if I mistake not, has its source in family pride. It is by all means sought after, that homage may be paid to the name of the title or estate, to supply the want in the possessor of any great or good quality whatsoever. There are *individuals* among men who study the art of making themselves popular for the purpose of getting into places of honor and emoluments, and, by these means, of gratifying hereafter the noble passion, "family pride." Others are so enchanted with the music of the sound, that they conceive it to be supreme felicity. This is indeed vanity of vanities, and if such deluded men ever come to their senses, they will find it to be vexation of spirit. When they reflect on their own folly and injustice, in having swallowed the breath of applause with avidity and great delight, for merit which they are conscious they never had, and that many who

have been the loudest in sounding their praises had nothing in view but their own private and selfish interests, it will excite in them the feelings of shame, remorse, and self-contempt. The truly virtuous man and real patriot is satisfied with the approbation of the wise and discerning: he rejoices in the contemplation of the purity of his own intentions, and waits in humble hope for the plaudit of his final Judge.

I shall not venture again to trespass on the benevolence of our confidential friend. You will not be sorry. It will afford you relief; for, in common civility, you *must* be at the trouble of reading one's epistles. I hope there will be a time when we may have "sweet communion together." In the interim, let me not lose the benefit of your valuable letters. Adieu.

Believe me, your sincere friend,

SAMUEL ADAMS.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

The establishment of an American hereditary aristocracy was by no means all that was desired by some of the Federalists. That decided monarchical ideas were current among many influential men from the very outset of the Federal government will now scarcely be denied. Monarchy, in a more or less modified form, found advocates before the close of the war; and such ideas assumed definite shape as soon as it was proposed to remodel the Articles of Confederation into a government better suited to the national exigencies. Not only were such speculations common among thousands of Tories, who during the war professed to be Whigs from pecuniary motives only, but there were well-meaning men who sincerely looked upon the British system as offering the greatest security to property and the safest guarantee of social and individual happiness. Volumes have been written to disprove the existence of these feelings; but it has been established beyond controversy, as the correspondence of one and another of the Federalists of that day has been published, — not to speak of the proposal of some of the army officers to Washington in 1782. Glossing over these facts cannot alter them; nor, indeed, does it

reflect any credit upon such men to distort their views to suit those of after times. The avowal of aristocratic or monarchical opinions at the close of the Revolution needs no apology. Republican government was as yet an experiment, whose speedy failure wise men the world over confidently predicted. The existence of such opinions remained no secret to close observers. Though discussed in confidential private circles, enough was from time to time disclosed to excite the jealousy or anxiety of some of the old Revolutionary characters; and their alarm might well be awakened, when, after the great struggle had ended in the accomplishment of all their wishes, the question was seriously raised, whether some kind of hereditary government might not be best for the country. The Revolution was commenced, not in opposition to the structure of the British government, but against arbitrary assumptions of illegal power by those who administered it at that time; and when the contest ended in a separation, there were thousands who saw no inconsistency in returning to a monarchical constitution, altered, indeed, to suit the new order of things, but retaining all its excellences.

The plan of government proposed by Colonel Hamilton, in the Constitutional Convention in 1787, beyond question looked forward to the eventual establishment of a monarchy, with titles of nobility. It provided that the supreme legislative power of the United States should be vested in two different orders of men, the one to be called the Assembly, and the other the Senate; that the Senate should consist of persons elected to serve during good behavior, their election to be made by electors chosen for that purpose by the people; that the supreme executive authority should be vested in a Governor, to be elected to serve during good behavior, and to have a negative, not only on all laws about to be passed, but on the execution of laws passed, together with the appointment of the Governors of all the States. In the election of Senators and a President for life, a king and nobility were foreshadowed; and had that plan been adopted,

regal pomp would long since have been inaugurated at Washington, if the democratic feelings of the people could meantime have been sufficiently perverted by the glare and parade of a privileged aristocracy. The Governors of the States being creatures of the national Executive, the powers of that officer would have penetrated to the minutest internal concerns of every community; for an adroit politician in the Presidency would naturally have appointed none as Governors who, with their local dependents throughout each State, were not of his party, if indeed parties could long have existed under such a system. Samuel Adams himself had for some time been sensible of the tendency of political speculation. "The seeds of aristocracy," he wrote in 1787, "began to spring even before the conclusion of our struggle for the natural rights of men, — seeds which, like a canker-worm, lie at the root of free governments." The term "during good behavior" admits of but one interpretation. A superior order, thus deliberately organized among a people, all of whom had been born and reared under an English monarch, must in no great time have become hereditary. With the enormous power which such a body would have centred in itself, it would soon have become its own judge as to the meaning of "good behavior," and nothing short of a revolution could have destroyed the incubus. Without a revolution, this nobility would have proved the stepping-stone to monarchy, as did the somewhat similar government of France in 1799, upon the overthrow of the Directory. Napoleon, as First Consul, resembled Hamilton's Chief Magistrate for life; and the French Dictator's privilege of nominating life senators differed from the plan of Morris only in the fact that the First Consul selected those officers from among a limited number of eligible candidates; and even in that the plans were not entirely different, for Morris desired the exclusion of the poor from the electors for national representatives.

Charles Pinckney's plan was more democratic; yet it

gave the Legislature of the United States the power to revise, negative, and annul all laws of the several States which might be supposed to infringe upon the powers exclusively delegated to Congress. Edmund Randolph's Virginia plan proposed that the first branch of the National Legislature should be elected by the people, and the second by the first out of a proper number of persons nominated by the individual Legislatures; and, furthermore, that the Executive should be elected by Congress for a term of years, and that he and a convenient number of the national judiciary should compose a Council of Revision, with authority to examine every act of the National Legislature before it should operate, and every act of a particular Legislature before a negative thereon should be final, and that the dissent of such Council should amount to a rejection.

Hamilton plainly disbelieved in the permanency of republican institutions, and always leaned towards the British Constitution. The "hereditary interest of a king," and the "permanent barrier against innovation" offered by the British House of Lords, were the subjects of his special encomiums when addressing the Convention. Gouverneur Morris, who was quite as influential in that body as Hamilton, and more active, advocated an aristocracy and a Senate for life, to be appointed by the Chief Magistrate,— a Senate which, he said, "must have great personal property, must have the aristocratic spirit, and must love to lord it through pride." These leaders had thousands of followers. Jefferson has left indisputable proofs of such tendencies in certain political circles during the first three Federal Administrations, and those proofs are amply supported by the contemporary letters of others.<sup>1</sup> Much as the democratic teachings

<sup>1</sup> A remarkable collection of the monarchical opinions of a number of leading men will be found in Randall's *Life of Jefferson*, I. 560–573. The private correspondence of prominent Federalists is arrayed in evidence of their own views on this subject; and that it was no secret, is shown by quotations from the writings of the first seven Presidents of the United States, each of whom pointedly alludes to the existence of a positive monarchical sentiment.

of the Republicans of that day have been assailed as ultra and impracticable, and indicating a wrong-headed opposition to government, it may be that this party and its principles served as a wholesome check on the influence of such Federalists as went to the other extreme against the popular power.<sup>1</sup>

Those who in 1789 had been stigmatized as "Anti-Federalists," in the course of time assumed the name of "Republicans." Jefferson was their national leader, and Samuel Adams their recognized head in Massachusetts. They were subsequently known as the Democratic party. At the close of 1792 all the original questions which had grown into importance with the new government were definitely settled. The most essential amendments to the Constitution had been adopted; the appointments to the principal Federal offices made; the revenue system digested; the public debt funded; and nearly every great national issue set at rest. The only party questions arose from theoretical differences, involving no great practical subject. There had been, particularly in Pennsylvania, some opposition to the collection of the revenue, which shortly grew into armed rebellion; and the Indian war in the Northwest had added to the common anxieties and burdens: but these offered no grounds for party quarrels.

Events, however, had occurred in Europe which could not but exert a controlling influence upon the young republic. The progress of the French Revolution, which had been watched with interest by all parties, presently formed wide

<sup>1</sup> The old Republicans felt the same jealousy of these departures from what they considered the original principles of the Revolution that they did of the Society of the Cincinnati at the close of the war. That association, however innocent in its intention, Samuel Adams considered to be "as rapid a stride towards an hereditary military nobility as ever was made in so short a time," and he feared that its members, "when they perceived the multitude grown giddy with gazing, might in time assume more than the mere pageantry of nobility." (Letters in April, 1784.) Time has proved any such fear groundless; but there is some excuse for it in the unmistakable sentiment which was then known to exist among powerful and influential men.



divisions between those who sympathized with the people and the less enthusiastic observers, who saw the dangers of the movement. The Republicans, headed by Jefferson, gave their moral support to this first practical assertion of democratic theories in Europe; for consistency, if not duty, seemed to demand that a nation to which was owing in no small degree the establishment of American independence should be countenanced in the struggle for its own freedom. The government of France was republican in form; and, in the spectacle of a people declaring against the oppression of monarchy and aristocracy, the hopes and sympathies of Samuel Adams could not be problematical. If the whole of Europe had arisen in arms against kings and nobles, the best wishes of his heart would have been with the cause of democracy. Reading and experience alike taught him that kingcraft and hereditary power were other names for tyranny. "No people," he used to say in conversation, "ever groan under the yoke of slavery unless they deserve it. Let them throw off the despotism, or perish with their oppressors."

"I have," he writes to General Clinton, "a strong attachment to the French republic, more especially because they have founded their Constitution upon principles similar to our own, and upon which alone, I think, free and lawful governments must be founded, and to which all nations that embrace them will naturally be bound by the strongest ties of friendship. I hope we soon shall see the time when all the machinations of those who wish to destroy the affection and confidence between the two republics shall be detected and treated with contempt."<sup>1</sup>

In some of the principal cities the temporary success of the Revolutionary armies, and the anniversary of the French alliance with the United States, were celebrated with civic feasts, which were honored with the presence of the most distinguished republican leaders. One of these took place at Boston in January, 1792. A barbecued ox, mounted on

<sup>1</sup> To George Clinton, Dec. 24, 1793.

a car drawn by sixteen horses, and decorated with the flags of France and the United States, passed through the streets, followed by cart-loads of bread and hogsheads of punch, which were dealt out to an immense throng in State Street, while in Faneuil Hall three hundred select guests sat down to a feast, over which Samuel Adams presided, assisted by the French Consul. The day was observed as a universal jubilee, at least by the friends of the French republic. The ungenerous course of England towards America, since the war, had assisted in creating this partiality for France.

While the sympathy for the French Revolution was everywhere kindling, the enthusiasm was increased by the landing of citizen Genet as Ambassador. The declaration of war by France against England arrived about the same time; and the position of the American government towards the belligerents became a question of extreme delicacy. The United States were bound by the treaty with France, signed during the American Revolution, to guarantee that nation forever against all other powers the existing possessions of the crown of France in America, as well as those which it might acquire by the future treaty of peace. This stipulation virtually pledged the United States to France, and the whole subject was surrounded with novel complications, embarrassing to every well-wisher of his country. The meetings in which Washington sought the counsel of his Cabinet found those statesmen divided in opinion on some essential points, but unanimously in favor of a proclamation of neutrality, which was issued in April, 1793. One of the first acts of Genet was to fit out privateers, manned by Americans, but flying the French flag, which soon made themselves felt upon British commerce. By authority of the French Convention he also created Courts of Admiralty in the ports of the United States, presided over by the several French Consuls, for condemning the prizes thus captured. In these and other extraordinary proceedings, though Washington peremptorily discountenanced and for-

bade them, Genet was supported by some portion of the Republican party, aided by its most influential presses and sundry political clubs. Jefferson and Randolph, who were inclined at first to adhere to the party of alliance, were not satisfied as to the illegality of the captures made by privateers; but all their leaning towards the French cause, and resentment at the injustice of England, could not have obtained from them any concession to the demands of the Ambassador. Samuel Adams, however, seems to have thought it better for America to secure the friendship of France, in the person of Genet, than to risk a quarrel with their "republican ally" by even appearing to favor the large British party in the United States. In a letter to Genet he says:—

"I am thoroughly convinced that your heart is animated with the same zeal for the interests of our country as for your own; and I have much pleasure in seeing that you firmly hope that a public discussion will insure to your conduct the approbation of all reasonable men, and will cover with shame those who, yielding to the force of prejudice, have so skilfully aimed calumnies and outrageous charges at you. I hope sincerely that your official residence in the United States may render you personally happy; and I am already convinced that it cannot but be useful to the universal cause of liberty and the rights of man."<sup>1</sup>

During the Revolution Adams had seen some of the most eminent of his fellow-laborers disappear from the field. In the winter of 1788 he had been one of the pall-bearers at the funeral of Thomas Cushing, his friend and colleague in the Massachusetts Legislature prior to the war, and in the Continental Congress. A still more interesting separation now took place. On the 8th of October, 1793, occurred the death of John Hancock. In the immense funeral which did honor to the public career of that celebrated patriot, Adams fol-

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Adams to Genet, Boston, Oct. 22, 1793. On the conduct of the Republicans towards Genet, see C. de Witt's *Jefferson*, translated by Church, pp. 195 - 207, 414 - 423.

lowed the bier as chief mourner; but his failing strength was unequal to the effort; and, on reaching State Street, he was obliged to withdraw from the procession. It can be imagined how much the recollections which must have crowded upon him had to do with his fatigue. Himself the observed of the multitude, and in all probability soon to follow his Revolutionary associate to his reward, the aged statesman might well reflect upon the path they had so long trodden together, and recall the momentous events in which they had taken so large a part.

## CHAPTER LXIII.

Adams as Governor of Massachusetts. — His Address to the Legislature. — The Family Circle. — His House in Winter Street. — He is presented with a Carriage and Horses. — The "Peacock Tavern." — Unostentatious Manner of Living. — His Library and the great Family Bible. — His Habits and Personal Appearance in advanced Life. — He is elected Governor in 1794. — The European Wars. — British Aggressions on American Commerce. — Order in Council. — John Jay sent to negotiate a Treaty of Commerce. — Hostilities imminent with Great Britain. — Adams is desirous of Neutrality and Peace, but recommends preparing for War. — Is re-elected in 1795. — Lays the Corner-Stone of the new State House. — The Federalists attack his Political Acts and Opinions. — James Sullivan defends him. — Sermons by Dr. Osgood and Dr. Forbes. — Adams on the Necessity of National Union.

WHEN Adams became Governor, on the death of Hancock, Washington was in his second Presidential term. Questions of increasing magnitude were arising out of the French Revolution, and augmented the difficulties surrounding the Federal Administration. The war between France and England had given rise to complications as to the powers of belligerents on the high seas. England claimed the right of seizing French goods from American vessels, and even of capturing neutral ships laden with breadstuffs for France. She seemed totally to ignore the existence of American maritime rights; and disregarding the treaty of 1783, she continued to hold the western posts, and in other respects acted the part of an overruling power, careless of its encroachments upon weaker nations. The infant commerce of the country had also been subjected to the piracies of Algerine cruisers, which led eventually to the first achievements of the American navy in defence of the national honor. All these things were of great interest to Massachusetts for their effect on trade and commerce, upon which depended the prosperity of the State; but as they fell exclusively under

the jurisdiction of the Federal government, they were not, of course, much discussed in the State Legislature.

The General Court convened on the 17th of January. On that day, at noon, Mr. Adams pronounced without notes his speech to the Senate and House: —

“FELLOW-CITIZENS OF THE TWO BRANCHES OF THE LEGISLATURE, —

“It having pleased the Supreme Being, since your last meeting, in his holy Providence to remove from this transitory life our late excellent Governor Hancock, the multitude of his surviving fellow-citizens, who have often given strong testimonials of their approbation of his important services, while they drop a tear, may certainly profit by the recollection of his virtuous and patriotic example.

“You are sensible that on this melancholy event our Constitution directs that the Lieutenant-Governor for the time being shall perform all the duties which were incumbent on him, and exercise all the powers and authorities, during the vacancy of the chair, which by the Constitution he was vested with when personally present. Diffident as I am of my abilities, I have yet felt myself constrained to undertake the performance of those duties, and the exercise of those powers and authorities in consequence of a sovereign act of God. To him I look for that wisdom which is profitable to direct. The Constitution must be my rule, and the true interest of my constituents, whose agents I am, my invariable object.

“The people of this Commonwealth have heretofore been possessed of the entire sovereignty within and over their own territories. They were not controllable by any other terms than those to which their constituted representative body gave their consent. This, I presume, was the case with every other State of the Union. But after the memorable Declaration of their Independence was by solemn treaty agreed to and ratified by the British King, the only power that could have any pretence to dispute it, they considered themselves decidedly free and independent of all other people. Having taken rank among nations, it was judged that their great affairs could not well be conducted under the direction of a number of distinct sovereignties. They therefore formed and adopted a Federal Constitution, by which certain powers of sovereignty are delegated and intrusted to such persons as they shall judge proper

from time to time to elect, to be exercised conformably to, and within the restrictions of, the said Constitution, for the purpose of strengthening and confirming the Union, and promoting the safety and happiness of the confederated commonwealth. All powers not vested in Congress remain in the separate States, to be exercised according to their respective Constitutions. Should not unremitting caution be used, lest any degree of interference or infringement might take place, either on the rights of the Federal government on the one side, or those of the several States on the other? Instances of this kind may happen, for infallibility is not the lot of any man or body of men, even the best of them on earth. The human mind, in its present state being very imperfect, is liable to a multitude of errors. Prejudice, that great source of error, often creeps in, and takes possession of the hearts of honest men, without even their perceiving it themselves. Honest men will not feel themselves disgusted when mistakes are pointed out to them with decency, candor, and friendship, nor will they, when convinced of truth, think their own dignity degraded by correcting their own errors.

“Among the objects of the Constitution of this Commonwealth, liberty and equality stand in a conspicuous light. It is the first article in the Declaration of Rights, — ‘all men are born free and equal, and have certain natural, essential, and inalienable rights.’ In the supposed state of nature, all men are equally bound by the laws of nature, or, to speak more properly, the laws of the Creator. They are imprinted by the finger of God on the heart of man. Thou shalt do no injury to thy neighbor is the voice of Nature, and it is confirmed by written Revelation. In the state of nature every man hath an equal right by honest means to acquire property and to enjoy it, — in general, to pursue his own happiness, — and none can consistently control or interrupt him in the pursuit. But, so turbulent are the passions of some, and so selfish the feelings of others, that in such a state, there being no social compact, the weak cannot always be protected from the violence of the strong, nor the honest and unsuspecting from the arts and intrigues of the selfish and cunning. Hence it is easy to conceive that men, naturally formed for society, were inclined to enter into mutual compact for the better security of their natural rights. In this state of society, the inalienable rights of nature are held sacred, and each member is entitled to an equal share of all the social rights. No man can of right

become possessed of a greater share. If any one usurps it, he so far becomes a tyrant, and when he can obtain sufficient strength the people will feel the rod of a tyrant. Or, if this exclusive privilege can be supposed to be held in virtue of compact, it argues a very capital defect, and the people, when more enlightened, will alter their compact and extinguish the very idea.

“These opinions I conceive to be conformable to the sentiments held up in our State Constitution. It is there declared that government is instituted for the common good, not for the profit, honor, or private interest of any one man, family, or class of men. And further, all the inhabitants of this Commonwealth having such qualifications as shall be established by their Constitution have an equal right to elect or be elected for public employments.

“Before the formation of this Constitution it had been affirmed as a self-evident truth in the Declaration of Independence, very deliberately made by the representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that all men are created equal, and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights. This Declaration of Independence was received and ratified by all the States in the Union, and has never been disannulled. May we not from hence conclude that the doctrine of liberty and equality is an article in the political creed of the United States?

“Our Federal Constitution ordains that no title of nobility shall be granted by the United States. The framers of that Constitution probably foresaw that such titles, vain and insignificant in themselves, might be in time, as they generally, and, I believe, always have been, introductory to the absurd and unnatural claim of hereditary and exclusive privileges.

“The republic of France have also adopted the same principle, and laid it as the foundation of their Constitution. That nation having for many ages groaned under the exercise of the pretended right claimed by their kings and nobles, until their very feelings as men were become torpid, at length suddenly awoke from their long slumber, abolished the usurpation, and placed every man upon the footing of equal rights. ‘All men are born free and equal in rights,’ if I mistake not, is their language.

“From the quotations I have made, I think it appears that the Constitutions referred to, different as they may be in forms, agree altogether in the most essential principles upon which legitimate



governments are founded. I have said essential principles, because I conceive that, without liberty and equality, there cannot exist that tranquillity of mind which results from the assurance of every citizen that his own personal safety and rights are secure. This, I think, is a sentiment of the celebrated Montesquieu, and it is the end and design of all free and lawful governments. Such assurance impressed upon the heart of each would lead to the peace, order, and happiness of all. For I should think no man, in the exercise of his reason, would be inclined in any instance to trespass upon the equal rights of citizens, knowing that if he should do it he would weaken and risk the security of his own. Even different nations, having grounded their respective constitutions upon the aforementioned principles, will shortly feel the happy effects of mutual friendship, mutual confidence, and mutual strength. Indeed, I cannot but be of opinion that when those principles shall be rightly understood and universally established, the whole family and brotherhood of man will then nearly approach to, if not fully enjoy, that state of peace and prosperity which ancient philosophers and sages have foretold.

“I fear I have dwelt too long upon this subject. Another presents itself to my mind which, I think, is indeed great and important. I mean the education of our children and youth. Perhaps the minds even of infants may receive impressions, good or bad, at an earlier period than many imagine. It has been observed that ‘education has a greater influence on manners than human laws can have.’ Human laws excite fears and apprehensions, lest crimes committed may be detected and punished; but a virtuous education is calculated to reach and influence the heart and to prevent crimes. A very judicious writer has quoted Plato, who, in showing what care for the security of states ought to be taken for the education of youth, speaks of it as almost sufficient to supply the place both of legislation and administration. Such an education, which leads the youth beyond mere outside show, will impress their minds with a profound reverence of the Deity, universal benevolence, and a warm attachment and affection towards their country. It will excite in them a just regard to Divine revelation, which informs them of the original character and dignity of man, and it will inspire them with a sense of true honor, which consists in conforming as much as possible their principles, habits, and manners to that original character.

It will enlarge their powers of mind, and prompt them impartially to search for truth in the consideration of every subject that may employ their thoughts; and, among other branches of knowledge, it will instruct them in the skill of political architecture and jurisprudence, and qualify them to discover any error, if there should be such, in the forms and administration of government, and point out the method of correcting them. But I need not press this subject, being persuaded that this Legislature, from the inclination of their minds, as well as in regard to the duty enjoined by the Constitution, will cherish the interest of literature, the sciences, and all their seminaries.

“Fellow-citizens, legislation is within your department, yet the Constitution assigns a part to be taken by the Governor when bills and resolves, intended to operate as laws, shall be presented to him, which is merely to state objections, if he has any, of which the Legislature will judge and finally determine. Let me entreat you to despatch the weightier business so early in the session as to afford me opportunity to perform my duty with due consideration and ease.

“I have communications to make, such as the state of the Treasury, of the military stores belonging to the Commonwealth, and others, which I shall transmit to you by the Secretary.

“SAMUEL ADAMS.

“COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, January 17, 1794.”

It is only by studying the political condition of the country towards the close of the last century that this recurrence in a gubernatorial speech to the original doctrines of republican government can be properly appreciated. What might now be regarded as needless repetitions of trite principles had, at that time, a distinct bearing upon the great questions which were agitating Europe and America. The French Revolution was a gigantic effort of the masses to throw off the insupportable weight of a depraved, privileged class. The fires of democracy which had lain dormant for ages first found vent in America. The next crater burst forth in France, where the popular mind had been gradually prepared for the approaching upheaval. The hideous excesses which followed,—natural effects of so violent a convulsion,

— were deeply deplored by the friends of republicanism in America; but the democratic principles which underlay that revolution, and the establishment of popular liberties among the nations of Europe, never failed to excite an abiding interest in the Western world; and a bright and hopeful future seemed to loom up beyond the bloody scenes attending the extinction of monarchy and aristocracy.<sup>1</sup> The theories of government entertained by the statesmen of America became more diverse as the century advanced. A want of faith in the capacity of the people to govern themselves under a purely republican Constitution, and a doubt of the permanency of such institutions, if not strengthened by the infusion of an aristocratic element, prevailed, as we have

<sup>1</sup> In July of this year, Mr. Adams attended a grand Republican banquet at Faneuil Hall in honor of the destruction of the Bastille. The Independent Chronicle of July 17th contains a description of the celebration, at which the flags of the two republics were equally conspicuous. The French Consul presided. The Governor, on retiring, gave as a toast, "May the laurel of victory never wither on the brow of republicanism." On another occasion (Sept. 22, 1795), at the celebration of the "Anniversary of the French Republic," he proposed, "May Heaven direct the measures of the republic of France and the United Netherlands, and may they establish a Constitution that may secure the liberties of the citizens." There is scarcely any document by Adams, during his administration, which does not contain evidences of his decided sympathy with the French Revolution. Even his Fast proclamations indicate it. In that issued in March of this year he recommends the ministers of religion to supplicate Divine aid, —

"To guide and succeed the counsels of our Federal government, as well as those of the several States in the Union, that under their respective Constitutions they may be led to such decisions as will establish the liberty, peace, rights, and honor of our country; to inspire our friends and allies, the republic of France, with a spirit of wisdom and true religion, that, firmly relying on the strength of His almighty arm, they may still go on prosperously, till their arduous conflict for a government of their own, founded on the justice and equal rights of men, shall be finally crowned with success."

And again, in the Fast Proclamation, October, 1776: —

"That the nations who are contending for true liberty may still be succeeded by His almighty aid; that every nation and society of men may be inspired with the knowledge and feeling of their natural and just rights, and enabled to form such systems of civil government as shall be fully adapted to promote and establish their social security and happiness."

seen, among some of the leading Federalists. The influence of aristocratic and wealthy families was already beginning to be felt, — an influence which the more rigid republicans regarded without any mean jealousy, but with an anxious fear of its effect upon that system of democracy which, following the example of the New World, France had lately adopted. Mr. Adams in his old age fondly reverted to the vital principles of the great writers on human liberty, whose precepts he had studied early in life, and had maintained during the disputes with the mother country. Those original ideas of popular rights with which the Revolution commenced had, it was thought, become somewhat indistinct since the establishment of the nation; and now, when their avowal in Europe had set the world in motion, he revived the arguments which he had used in his vigorous manhood, and endeavored to impress them anew upon the community over which he was called to preside.

One feature in the original form of the Federal Constitution to which Mr. Adams had objected was the amenability of the States to the national courts. His letters on the subject predicted disputes between the Federal and State authorities, unless the instrument was amended in that as well as in other particulars. One of the amendments proposed by the Massachusetts Convention limited the amount in which the Supreme Federal Court could have jurisdiction in causes between citizens of different States; but the suability of any State by individuals through that court does not appear to have been suggested in the debates. A judge of the Supreme Court having decided that a State could be sued by an individual, a suit under that ruling was instituted against Massachusetts by an alien. This was shortly before the death of Governor Hancock, who summoned a special session of the Legislature, where it was resolved to take no notice of the suit; and a resolution having been adopted for amending the Constitution in that particular, the Governor was requested to transmit it to the other Legis-

latures. This was done by Samuel Adams in his executive capacity. Together with Jarvis and Judge Sullivan, he was instrumental in securing the adoption of the amendment guaranteeing the States individually against the Federal judicial power. It was in conformity with his ideas of entire State sovereignty in local affairs, as the only practicable and durable relation with the Federal government.

That republican simplicity which all contemporary allusions to Samuel Adams invariably describe as his peculiar characteristic was not confined to his political creed. Never did the executive of a wealthy and cultivated community illustrate with more consistency, by his manner of life, the professions of his heart. His natural aversion to display and parade was not less remarkable now than in the primitive days of the Revolution. Dr. Waterhouse, who lived near the Governor, thus alludes to this trait : —

“The then salary of the Governor of Massachusetts,<sup>1</sup> if our memory serves, was a thousand pounds currency, or three thousand three hundred and thirty-three dollars,—but a very small sum towards enabling the incumbent of the gubernatorial chair to follow the example in style and hospitality set by Mr. Hancock, who lived and entertained like a prince. Mr. Adams possessed neither carriage nor horses, but he had been elected Governor only a few weeks, when some gentlemen of Boston presented the venerable patriot with a new and handsome chariot and a pair of as handsome horses as there were in the city. The first use he made of his equipage shows the man in a point of view too rare not to be admired. Seating himself beside his venerable lady, they drove to Constable Hewes's, where the Governor alighted, and, handing Mrs. Hewes into the seat, the two old ladies drove off together, while he staid and talked with his old friend, and we stood by devouring their discourse.”

Another account of this says, that the carriage arrived in time for him to ride to the State House to deliver his inau

<sup>1</sup> Massachusetts at this time, and for a quarter of a century later, included the whole of the present State of Maine.

gural, but that, after directing the coachman to drive the ladies about town, he quietly walked to the Representatives' chamber, and pronounced his speech. On retiring from public life in 1797, Mr. Adams returned the gift to the donors.<sup>1</sup>

His dwelling, which was a large, old-fashioned frame-house on the south side of Winter Street, was a part of the confiscated estate of Sylvanus Gardiner, a Loyalist absentee, whose property, like that of many others, was sold during the war to satisfy the demands of creditors, under an act of the General Court in 1781, entitled "An Act to provide for the Payment of Debts due from Conspirators and Absentees." The purchaser was John Bois, who, in May, 1784, sold the property to Mr. Adams for one thousand pounds, secured by mortgage, which was taken up in April, 1793.<sup>2</sup>

We have already alluded to the afflicting death of Dr. Samuel Adams in 1788.<sup>3</sup> He bequeathed to his father his claims for services as surgeon during the war. The redemption of these, soon after the organization of the Federal gov-

<sup>1</sup> This is the only presentation of a public nature ever made to Samuel Adams. He was known always to have disapproved of gifts to public servants, such as orders, ribbons, and medals.

<sup>2</sup> The house was taken down about the year 1820, and upon its site was erected the residence of the late John Randall, M. D., who married Miss Elizabeth Wells, a granddaughter of Samuel Adams. The lot is thus described in an abstract from the records made in 1782. "Bounded north on Winter Street, 51 feet 6 inches; west on the land of John Thaxter and Ebenezer White, there measuring 66 feet 8 inches; south on land of Dr. John Sprague, there measuring 67 feet 8 inches; including house, outhouses, and every privilege and appurtenance."

What remained of the old homestead on Purchase Street, built by the elder Samuel Adams about the year 1712, where Governor Adams and his children were born, was sold in October, 1802, to "Philip Wentworth of Boston, in the county of Suffolk, gentleman." It is believed to have been mortgaged before this sale for nearly all it was worth.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Adams died a bachelor. His father having left at his own death only a daughter, the name of Adams is no longer borne by any of his descendants. It was commonly said in former times that, "had not the death of an only son relieved his latter-day poverty, Samuel Adams would have been obliged to claim a burial at the hand of charity or at the public expense."

ernment, placed Mr. Adams above the financial straits to which he had been subjected for the greater part of his life. Dr. Adams had the good sense, even under considerable pecuniary pressure, to refuse all offers of speculators to buy his scrip. The old patriot thus became the owner of twelve hundred pounds, the largest amount of ready money he had ever possessed. In May, 1794, he expended a considerable portion of this in the purchase of the "Peacock Tavern" and forty acres of land at Jamaica Plains, "with the dwelling-house and other buildings and edifices thereon standing; the whole being late the property of Lemuel Childs." These investments proved to be so profitable, that, at the time of Mr. Adams's death, his real estate was worth sixteen thousand dollars, and had very materially increased in value at the time of his daughter's death, about the year 1820.

The house in Winter Street was a heavily framed and substantial-looking structure, built early in the last century, and was perhaps older than its proprietor. It was of three stories, and had been painted yellow; but, according to some of the family, its clapboarded sides looked dingy and weather-worn. From the front door, which was of oaken panels and ornamented with a brass knocker, there was but a single step into the street; and the windows of the lower story descended to within two feet of the ground. Over the arch of the front entrance, and almost touching it, was a large bow-window. The windows, with this exception, were small. The dwellings above and below on that side of the street were of the same style, saving two or three small shops, one of which, a baker's, stood next west of Mr. Adams's house. In the rear of the residence was a paved court-yard and a garden adorned with flowers and shrubbery.

The interior was a model of neatness and thrifty house-keeping. The front door opened into a broad entry, from which a staircase with heavily capped, twisted banisters, led to the upper stories, and terminated near a bow-window

on the second landing. The two principal apartments below were the east and west parlors, though only one was known as a parlor; the other was used by Mr. Adams towards the close of his life as a sitting-room. Here also was his library, of which some of the books are yet preserved, and here he commonly received his most intimate visitors. The parlor was spacious, even for those days. There was a large fireplace, with huge brass andirons. The jambs were fronted with porcelain tiles with sky-blue figures. These tiles were about five inches square, and formed a sort of mosaic work, comfortably reflecting the light of the fire. Most of the furniture was old but substantial. The inventory, taken soon after the death of Mr. Adams,<sup>1</sup> shows that, while Governor, he maintained some little state at his residence, such as a proper regard for the dignity of the office required. The fragments of the old eight-day clock, said to have belonged to his father, are yet in existence. Among the paintings were the life-size picture of himself by Johnston, one of Mrs. Adams by the same artist,<sup>2</sup> and a number

<sup>1</sup> This "inventory and appraisement" is in the records of the Probate Court, Boston, Dec. 12, 1803. The total value of all his personal estate was \$665.70. It is a curious list of old-fashioned household ware, in which figure carpets, pictures, fire-dogs, swords, silver plate, bed-curtains, "lolling-chairs," clocks, urns, glasses, desks, and books. The appraisers were William Donnison, Andrew Oliver, and Azor Archibald. The first of these was General Donnison, an old friend of the family, who held a number of offices, civil and military, during the Revolution. He was the executor of the will of Mrs. Adams in 1808.

<sup>2</sup> Major John Johnston, a brave officer of the Revolution. Reduced to want, after the peace with England, he resorted to painting as a means of support. His portraits are more remarkable as faithful likenesses than for skill in coloring and drawing. The painting of Mrs. Adams still exists. That of Governor Adams, taken in 1795, was destroyed a few years since by fire. The frontispiece of this volume is from a folio mezzotint engraved by Graham from the original painting in 1797. The author has met with but a single copy, which is in the rare collection of John W. Randall, Esq., of Boston.

There is in Boston, in the possession of J. K. Wiggin, Esq., another equally rare mezzotint of Adams, engraved by Samuel Okey from a painting by J. Mitchell after the Copley portrait, and "printed by and for Cha<sup>s</sup> Reak & Sam<sup>l</sup> Okey, Newport, Rhode-Island, April, 1775." If this means that



of framed engravings of eminent Americans, — the portrait of Washington occupying the most conspicuous place. There were also six oval-shaped half-length portraits of distinguished advocates of liberty in the Old World, said to have been presented by Jefferson, who visited him in 1784.

Persons who were living within ten years of this writing have described Governor Adams as they used to see him in their youthful days. He always walked with his family to and from church, until his failing strength prevented.<sup>1</sup> His stature was a little above the medium height. He wore a tie-wig, cocked hat, buckled shoes, knee-breeches, and a red cloak, and held himself very erect, with the ease and address of a polite gentleman. On stopping to speak with any person in the street, his salutation was formal, yet cordial. His gestures were animated, and in conversation there was a slight tremulous motion of the head. He never wore glasses in public, except when engaged in his official duties at the State House. His complexion was florid, and his eyes dark blue. The eyebrows were heavy, almost to bushiness, and contrasted remarkably with the clear forehead, which, at the age of seventy, had but few wrinkles. The face had a benignant, but careworn expression, blended with a native dignity (some have said majesty) of countenance, which never failed to impress strangers.<sup>2</sup>

the portrait was engraved as well as printed at Newport, it is interesting as a specimen of early American mezzotint. Beneath it are the following verses : —

When haughty North, impress'd with proud disdain,  
Spurn'd at the virtue which rejects his chain;  
Heard with a tyrant-scorn our rights implor'd ;  
And when we su'd for justice, sent the sword :  
Lo ! Adams rose, in warfare nobly try'd,  
His country's saviour, father, shield, & guide ;  
Urg'd by her wrongs, he wag'd y<sup>e</sup> glorious strife  
Nor paus'd to waste a coward-thought on life.

<sup>1</sup> Owing, it is said, to some circumstance displeasing to him, which occurred at the New South, or Summer Street, Church, where he had worshipped from childhood, he removed, about the year 1792, to the Old South, which he attended ever after.

<sup>2</sup> An aged citizen of West Bridgewater, whose father was a member of the

His manner of living was regular and frugal, for he hoped even from his official salary to be able to leave his family provided for at his death, which he felt could not be far distant. Yet there was nothing approaching to parsimony in his nature. On public occasions, where wine was used, he rarely went further than to touch it to his lips, generally making a single glass suffice during the entertainment. He eat but little and of the simplest food. Though the table was bountifully supplied, he was often satisfied with milk and coarse brown bread. No comfort within his means was wanting in the household, nor was any reasonable gratification denied his family. Grace preceded every meal, and morning and evening prayers were read from the old Bible.<sup>1</sup>

first Provincial Congress in 1774, was asked if he had ever seen Sam Adams. "Sir," said he, impressively, "I once touched the hem of his garment"; and he then narrated how, in his own boyhood, on a bleak winter evening about the year 1782, he was riding with his father in a sleigh down what is now Washington Street. Adam Colson, one of the Boston Tea-Party, was driving. The weather was piercingly cold. Passing by the head of Essex Street, they overtook some one whom his father and Colson addressed with marked respect and invited to ride with them. Acknowledging the courtesy, this person took a seat in the sleigh, — the lad, during the rest of the ride, being sheltered under the folds of the stranger's great red cloak. The old people conversed on some political subject until they came to Concert Hall, when the passenger, having been assisted out of the sleigh, politely took his leave. The boy, after some time, asked who the gentleman was. "That," said his father, "was Sam Adams."

<sup>1</sup> This Bible is now the property of Mr. Drake, the well-known antiquarian. It was originally owned by the father of Samuel Adams, who probably purchased it soon after his marriage with Miss Fifield in 1713. The entries begin with the date of his own birth, and are carried in his handwriting down to 1740. The next is by the subject of these memoirs, who notes the death of his father in 1747 (O. S.). The record thus begun is continued by Adams until 1764, — the year of his second marriage. Mr. Drake, in the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, July, 1854, VIII. 283, says of the volume: "It is in folio, and a large folio for that day, being about seventeen inches high and three and a half in thickness, and of proportionable width. The paper and print are beautiful, and the binding was of the most substantial kind, with massive brass mountings and clasps. That it does not contain the Apocrypha is easily accounted for. The Old Testament was printed in 1708, the New in 1707, and the Psalms in 1679; the last at Edinburgh and the first

A grand-niece of Samuel Adams was invited to stay at the house several weeks in the winter of 1795. Although now about ninety years old, she has a clear recollection of her visit. The family circle was one of the most cheerful and agreeable in the town. The Governor enjoyed nothing more than the society of young persons. He loved to have them about him, and both he and Mrs. Adams took special pains to bring together such as were congenial. The three children of his daughter, Mrs. Wells, passed much of their time at the house. One of them was his special favorite, and some of the pleasantest memories of this grandson's life have been those which were associated with the affectionate kindness of his revered relative. There were three servants, among them the faithful old negress Surry, who had been in the family thirty years.

Mrs. Adams's friends fondly claimed for her the merit of being the best housekeeper in Boston; and it often excited remark among her more fashionable acquaintances, that the wife of the Governor of Massachusetts should condescend to personally meddle with the details of household duties. But she had been reared in the hard school of adversity, and all through the Revolution had known what it was to work with her hands; and, though elegant in her person, and possessing more than ordinary accomplishments, she was never above a matronly supervision of her domestic affairs.

Mr. Adams was this year re-elected Governor. A desperate effort was made by the Federalists to defeat him; but he had a large majority over Judge William Cushing, the only other candidate who got even a respectable vote. Some of the newspapers, as usual, published squibs, written with all

at London. Copies of this edition of the Bible are of exceeding rarity, at least they are believed to be so, as our great Bible collector, George Livermore, Esq., has never yet been able to obtain one, and the venerable Dr. Jenks has remarked to the editor that he has seen no other copy of the edition. It contains several beautifully executed maps, but no ornamental plates, with the exception of a view of London in the title-page and vignettes upon the corners of the maps."

the violent prejudice characterizing the party warfare of that day; but the State was too firmly Republican for the opposition to be seriously felt. His enemies laid particular stress on the tried legal abilities of Judge Cushing, who had been Chief Justice under the royal government in Hutchinson's administration, but, alone among those of his station, had taken the patriot side at the commencement of the Revolution. The advanced age of Adams was also urged to prove his unfitness for the office. Among the indignant responses to these flings, the following may be taken as characteristic of the estimation in which he was held by the Republicans. The writer is concluding a lengthy review of his public career.

“As to Mr. Cushing, it would be an affront to the common understanding of the world to place him for a moment, in point of political reputation or ability, on a footing with Mr. Adams. This last character appeared in the front of your opposition to the British power, with a halter around his neck, and is known everywhere in Europe as well as America. As to Mr. Cushing, the moderation of his political character might have secured him the place under any government. Whether America was triumphant or enslaved, he had done nothing to forfeit the favor of any party; and shall Samuel Adams be deprived of the suffrages of his fellow-citizens in Boston by the influence of such a competitor? What has he done? What has Samuel Adams not done for the trade and tradesmen of Boston? If he had passed as many hours in raking oysters as he has spent by day and by night, without fee or reward, in the service of his countrymen in general and his townsmen in a particular manner, he would have been as rich as the most opulent speculator on the continent.”

At this time the country was intensely excited by the continued aggressions of Great Britain. Although a definitive treaty of peace with that power was signed in 1783, acknowledging American independence, no specific treaty of commerce had been negotiated. All the efforts of John Adams, while Ambassador to England, had been unavailing to establish a basis for commercial intercourse, and no

British Minister had been appointed to the United States. The European wars growing out of the French Revolution opened a vast field for the employment of American shipping, which had thus already secured to itself a lucrative carrying trade. With the arrogance of conscious power, and perhaps influenced by an ever active commercial jealousy, the British government continued to direct its cruisers to capture neutral vessels laden with breadstuffs for France; and an Order in Council was issued in the summer of 1793, authorizing British war ships to seize all vessels carrying French goods bound to a French colony. These and other acts, aimed especially against the commerce of the United States, had for two or three years been subjects of angry complaint among merchants. Madison's resolutions, in favor of discriminating duties on the products of nations with whom no commercial treaty existed, had lately passed Congress; but as yet the young republic had taken no decisive measures for redress. It needed only this Order in Council to raise a storm of indignation, especially in the sea-coast cities; and the fact gradually forced itself upon all unprejudiced minds, that the hostility of the mother country had not ceased with the Revolutionary war. Congress passed acts for increasing the navy, and for the fortification of the principal harbors, in preparation for a contest which the most sagacious statesmen believed to be at hand. Governor Adams considered war as very imminent. In a letter to the Governor of New York, he said:—

“ In reviewing the political situation of the United States in their relation to foreign nations, particularly with regard to that with Great Britain, we have reason to apprehend that the continuation of peace cannot long be expected, unless events shall prove more propitious than they promise at present. If I may judge from the reports of newspapers, the Legislature of your State at their late session made some provision for fortifying the harbors of the coast of New York; and having it in intention to have the same matter laid before the General Court of this Commonwealth, which will be in session in a little time, I am desirous of being able to inform

them of the nature and extent of the views of your Assembly on that important subject, in hopes that this State may not be behind any other in the Union in making suitable provision within themselves for the defence of the sea-coast of the Commonwealth.”<sup>1</sup>

The Legislature convened on the thirty-first day of May. Adams delivered a speech to both branches at the Representatives' Chamber, where “the Governor was attended by the Secretary and the sheriff of the county.” With all his anxiety for the preservation of the individual rights of the States, Mr. Adams in this address explicitly recognizes the Federal supremacy in national affairs. That supremacy was sometimes questioned by extreme Republicans as it was overestimated by ultra-Federalists; but Adams endeavored to point out the proper mean between Federal and State authority, that a clear definition of the just limits of each might prevent fatal collisions in the future. This speech expresses his opinion on the impending troubles with Great Britain. He was desirous of peace, but considered the infant republic as quite competent to defend her honor and commercial rights; and he was for making preparations for war if a proper respect for the United States could not otherwise be secured.

“We are met,” he said, “at a very critical period. The baneful influence of war in Europe has already too far extended itself into this remote region,—a war of kings and nobles against the equal rights of men. Their first object was to control the common right of all civil societies, by prostrating the attempt of a magnanimous nation to establish a constitution of government for themselves according to their own mind. More lately the nefarious design has been to crush the new-formed republic in its infancy. But the God of armies, who favors the brave in a righteous cause, has hitherto appeared for its protection, and crowned the astonishing efforts of its defenders with astonishing victories.

“Great Britain takes an active part with the mighty combination of kings. Indeed, it does not appear that she has yet made a demand

<sup>1</sup> Adams to George Clinton, April 10, 1794.

on our confederate republic to join the league, — a demand which we are well informed she has made upon some of the neutral republics of Europe. But whilst we have preserved the most strict neutrality towards the belligerent powers of Europe, in observance of treaties made under the authority of the United States, which are the supreme law of the land, she, for the sake of aiding the cause in which she is so deeply engaged, has employed her naval force in committing depredations on our lawful and unprotected commerce. Thus, in fact, she has commenced hostilities. The Federal government, although very solicitous, if possible, to prevent the calamities of war, have meditated measures preparatory for the event. The papers and communications which I have received on this subject shall be laid before you. It was a declared intention of the people of the United States, when they adopted our present Constitution, ‘to form a more perfect union,’ — an important object indeed. The deliberate voice of the people is commonly the voice of reason; the voice of the people ought, therefore, to be attended to. Union formed upon the genuine republican principles and views of our political institutions, by combining our strength, will have a powerful tendency in time of war to reduce an unreasonable enemy to terms of justice and the re-establishment of tranquillity, and in peace to secure the blessings of equal liberty to the present and future generations.”<sup>1</sup>

Neutrality in the wars of Europe is the policy indicated by Governor Adams in every allusion to the subject found in his public addresses. Nor could his avowed interest in the success of the republican arms of France overbalance his appreciation of the value of peace to a young and rising nation like the United States. Convinced that the country would have been justified in making reprisals for the continued outrages of British cruisers, he yet recognized the advantageous position which perfect impartiality of conduct would insure; and he acknowledged the wisdom of President Washington’s proclamation of neutrality, issued soon after the arrival of Genet. Many of the ultra-sympathizers with France, however, looked upon the proclamation as rather

<sup>1</sup> Independent Chronicle, June 2, 1794.

intended to conciliate Great Britain, whose every act from the close of the Revolutionary war had betrayed a dictatorial feeling towards the United States, if not positive hostility. This soon became the all-engrossing question of the time, and was the subject of excited debate in and out of Congress, when Washington nominated Chief Justice Jay an envoy extraordinary to obtain redress if possible from Great Britain, recommending at the same time the proper military precautions, in case negotiation should prove unsuccessful. Adams approved of this embassy as the act of the national authorities; but he was convinced that the proposed treaty should be explicit and final in guaranteeing the national rights, and that any evasions now, to suit temporary purposes, would produce no lasting peace, but sooner or later lead to renewed complications and perhaps war. The party strife received a new bitterness from this issue; and, as at the adoption of the Constitution, the Federalists freely applied such epithets to their opponents as "disorganizers," "Jacobins," "Anti-Federalists," and "enemies to government." In his address to the Legislature in January, 1795, Mr. Adams thus alludes to the British aggressions and the embassy to London:—

"We have been under apprehensions of being made a party in the desolating contests in Europe. Permit me just to observe, that the first and main principle which urged the combined powers to enter into the contest is, in my opinion, unsupportable by reason and nature, and in violation of the most essential rights of nations and of men. The repeated acts of violence which have been committed on the property of American citizens might, in the opinion of some, have justified reprisals; but the policy of the Federal government has directed to other measures. The wisdom of our own counsels, with the unexampled successes of our magnanimous ally, the republic of France, afford the strongest ground of hope that, under the continued smiles of Divine Providence, peace and tranquillity, so interesting to a rising republic, will in the end be firmly established."



Governor Adams was again elected in 1795, and, as before, by an almost unanimous vote, notwithstanding the continued attacks of a class who systematically aspersed his every motive. Scurrilous poetry and hints of his incompetency, by reason of his old age, to fill the executive station were not wanting in the columns of the *Sentinel*, sometimes coming from the opposite political party, at others from the remnants of the old Tory faction, who, after the peace, had been permitted to return to Massachusetts,—a concession which, during the Revolution, was strenuously opposed by Mr. Adams, for reasons already given. The *Chronicle*, then the recognized Republican party organ, thought it necessary once to reply to these assaults:—

“The character of our Chief Magistrate stands on a basis too permanently fixed to be shaken by the desperate attempts of a British faction; and the pages of American history will transmit his name to posterity with all the effulgence of honor and veneration which are due to the virtues of those patriots who advocated the cause of their country at periods the most interesting and important; while the contemptible wretches who are spending the pitiful remains of their existence in vilifying the Chief Magistrate will be buried in obscurity, and their more ignominious tools will be swept away among the offal of society.”

It was in truth a strange spectacle, that one whose abilities and courage in leading the Revolution had provoked the bitterest attacks from the Loyalist writers should now, in his old age, be the object of calumny and lampoon among the people to whose welfare his whole life had been devoted. But his assailants were not confined to the writers in party newspapers. In the heat of political rancor even the pulpit was used for his detraction. To defeat him in the late election, no one instrument had been more confidently relied on by his enemies than a sermon by the Rev. David Osgood of Medford, an eminent preacher, who engaged with much zeal in the political controversies of his day, and had attached himself to the decided Hamiltonian school. He rudely as-

sailed the Governor, whose actions, especially as regarded the French Revolution, were distorted to suit the purposes of the Federal party.<sup>1</sup> The sermon was immediately published, and widely circulated; but with all its literary merit, its purpose was not attained. Republicans read it with indignation, and even Federalists were found who reprobated its assertions and temper. James Sullivan, who, to use the words of his biographer, was "incensed at this almost sacrilegious attack upon one whom he considered entitled to gratitude and veneration for his invaluable services to the country," answered it in an able pamphlet; and references to the sermon are occasionally found in the correspondence of that time. The Rev. Perez Fobes evidently had these revilings in mind when, in his election sermon this year, he touchingly alluded to the patriarch.

"In the presence of an Assembly that contains so many living characters of dignity, his Excellency claims our first attention. Two annual suns have not yet revolved over the silent corpse of the patriot, the generous, the amiable Hancock, since we saw him here. The man of dignity, the patron of liberty, the friend of religion, of its ministers and institutions, must die! But happy for us, his co-patriot lives, and this day fills his vacant seat. Venerable with age, more venerable for his piety and unconquerable love of liberty, we behold him again placed in the first seat of government by the united voice of his grateful country. She loved *his brother* in proscription, and still remembers the name of Adams, enrolled with him on the immortal list of exemptions from pardon, for no other crime but that of being a friend to his country. If his inflexible attachment to the same principles has since procured him the wounds of censure, *are they not wounds without a cause?* And will he not

<sup>1</sup> This political animosity extended far into the present century, long after the death of Adams, and indeed has not yet entirely disappeared. A curious instance of it will be found in the Boston Patriot, July 26, 1826. Within a few years a distinguished Massachusetts statesman was invited to New York by a literary society, before whom he lectured on the "Patriots of the Revolution." In that address the speaker seemed studiously to avoid even mentioning the name of Samuel Adams.

with his dying breath forgive his enemies, and pray for the liberties of mankind? His eminent services in the cause of freedom are too deeply engraved on the hearts of all true republicans ever to be forgotten. May the fostering hand of Heaven guard him at this critical period of life from every adverse event which might shake the few remaining sands that now measure his important life. With all the sensibilities of an imperfect, offending mortal, united with the honest intrepidity of virtue, may he not appeal to Heaven and earth, in the language of an inspired patriot of his own name, and say: 'I am old and gray-headed; I have walked before you from my childhood to this day. Behold, here I am, witness against me before the Lord and before his people. Whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? Or of whose hand have I taken a bribe?' And the people will say: 'Thou hast not defrauded, thou hast not oppressed us, the Lord is witness. The Lord think upon you for good according to all that you have done for this people.'

The inaugural speech was delivered on the 3d of June. The Governor goes back to the original principle, that "the sovereignty of a nation always of right resides in the people." He then speaks of the condition of the country.

"We have a regular exercise of our Federal and State governments; and we owe our unceasing gratitude to the Supreme Ruler of the universe, who safely carried us through our arduous struggle for freedom, for which other nations are now contending at the expense of their blood and treasure. We cannot but rejoice that the principles for which we contended, and which are constitutionally established in United America, are irresistibly spreading themselves through two mighty nations in Europe. We are now able to embrace those powerful sister republics; and what adds much to our joy on this occasion is, that those nations became allied to us in an hour when we were engaged in our hard conflict with an oppressive tyranny."

His recognition of the distinct functions of the State and Federal power is seen in the concluding paragraph:—

"Let us, fellow-citizens, cultivate a due observance of the laws which are constitutionally made by the authority of this government as well as those of the Federal government, agreeable to the Con-

stitution of the United States. Let us transmit our liberties, our equal rights, our laws, and our free republican Constitutions, with their various concomitant blessings, to those who are coming upon the stage of action, and hope in God that they will be handed down in purity and energy to the latest posterity.”<sup>1</sup>

In all his public documents, while Governor of Massachusetts, appears this same earnest solicitude for the preservation of the national unity, which he considered as dependent upon a faithful mutual observance of the respective Federal and State obligations. In another address to the Legislature in 1795, he says:—

“We have solemnly engaged ourselves, fellow-citizens, to support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of this Commonwealth. This must be reconcilable in the mind of every man who judiciously considers the sovereign rights of the one as limited to Federal purposes, and the sovereign rights of the other as acting upon and directing the internal concerns of our own republic.

“Those who wish to persuade the world to believe that a free representative republic cannot be supported will no doubt make use of every art to injure, and by degrees to alter, and finally to eradicate, the principles of our free Constitutions. But the virtuous and enlightened citizens of this Commonwealth and of all United America have understanding and firmness sufficient to support those Constitutions of civil government which they have themselves formed, and which have done them so much honor in the estimation of the world.

“It is with pain that I mention the insurrection<sup>2</sup> which has lately taken place in a sister State. It was pointed more immediately at an act of the Federal government. An act of that government as well as of the governments in the Union is constitutionally an act of the people; and our Constitutions provide a safe and easy method to redress any real grievances. No people can be more free than under a Constitution established by their voluntary compact, and

<sup>1</sup> Independent Chronicle, June 4, 1795.

<sup>2</sup> The “Whiskey Rebellion” in Pennsylvania.

exercised by men appointed by their own frequent suffrages. If any law shall prove oppressive in its operation, the future deliberations of a freely elective representative will afford a constitutional remedy. But the measures adopted by the President of the United States, supported by the virtue of citizens of every description in that and the adjacent States, have prevailed, and there is an end to the insurrection. Let the glory be given to Him who alone governs all events, while we express the just feelings of respect and gratitude due to all those whom he honors as instruments to carry into effect his gracious designs."

On March 5, 1795, he appointed a day of fasting, —

"To pray that the light of the Gospel and the rights of conscience may be continued to the people of United America, and that his holy word may be improved by them, so that the name of GOD may be exalted and their own liberty and happiness secured. That he would be graciously pleased to bless our Federal government, that by a wise administration it may be a sure guide and safe protection in national concerns for the people who have established and who support it. That he would continue to us the invaluable blessings of civil liberty, guarding us against intestine commotions, and enabling the United States in the exercise of such governmental powers as are devolved upon them, so that the honor and dignity of our nation upon the sea and the land may be supported, and peace with the other powers of the world, upon safe and honorable terms, may be maintained. That he would direct the administration of our Federal and State governments, so that the lives, liberty, and property of all the citizens, and the just rights of the people as men and citizens, may forever be acknowledged and at all times defended by Constitutions founded upon equal rights, and by good and wholesome laws, wisely and judiciously administered and duly executed."

And in the same year, addressing the Legislature, he said : —

"The sovereignty of a nation always of right resides in the body of the people ; and while they have delegated to their freely elected Legislature the power of exercising that sovereignty in their behalf, the executive department, as well as the magistrates who are appointed to render the Constitution efficient by carrying the laws into

effect, are no less important to the people. For what avails the making of good and wholesome laws, unless they are duly executed?"

Again, in January, 1796, while defining the mutual relations of Federal and State authorities: —

"The government of the United States is intrusted solely with such powers as regard our safety as a nation; and all powers not given to Congress by the Constitution remain in the individual States and the people. In all good governments the legislative, executive, and judiciary powers are confined within the limits of their respective departments. If, therefore, it should be found that the constitutional rights of our Federal and local governments should on either side be infringed, or that either of the departments aforesaid should interfere with another, it will, if continued, essentially alter the Constitution, and may in time, I hope far distant, be productive of such convulsions as may shake the political ground upon which we now happily stand."<sup>1</sup>

Quotations to this effect might be multiplied, were it necessary further to show the anxiety of the venerable statesman to avert future national calamities, by inculcating in the infancy of the Republic those original principles which, in his opinion, were essential to the public safety.

The corner-stone of the new State House was laid on the 4th of July, this year. A silver plate, bearing the names of the depositors, and a quantity of current coin, were placed beneath the stone, which was plumbed and levelled by Governor Adams, assisted by the Grand Masters of Masonic Lodges. It was drawn to the spot by fifteen white horses, — one for each State then in the Union. The Legislature attended in full numbers, marching in company with the Masons from what is now known as the Old State House. Having completed the ceremony, Adams delivered a short address to the immense concourse of citizens,<sup>2</sup> after which,

<sup>1</sup> Independent Chronicle, Jan. 21, 1796.

<sup>2</sup> Independent Chronicle, July 6, 1795. The inscription on the stone is found in Snow's History of Boston, 2d ed., p. 323, note, as follows: —

"This corner-stone of a building intended for the use of the legislative and

amid cheers, cannonading, and musketry, the Executive and officers of the day were escorted to the Council Chamber.

executive branches of government of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, was laid by his Excellency Samuel Adams, Esq., Governor of said Commonwealth, assisted by the Most Worshipful Paul Revere, Grand Master, and the Right Worshipful William Sedley, Deputy Grand Master, the Grand Wardens, and brethren of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, on the 4th day of July, An. Dom. 1795, A. L. 5795, being the XXth anniversary of American Independence."

## CHAPTER LXIV.

Arrival of Jay's Treaty. — Washington reluctant to give it his Assent. — It encounters a Storm of Opposition throughout America. — Arguments of the Federalists in its Favor, and of the Republicans against it. — Adams opposed to the Treaty as "Pregnant with Evil." — National Relations with England and France. — Washington ratifies the Treaty. — Memorable Debate in Congress on granting the Appropriations. — Adams re-elected Governor in 1796. — Washington retires from Office. — Third Presidential Election. — Question of Vacancies in the Electoral College. — Adams Fifth on the List of Candidates.

EARLY in the present year the treaty which Mr. Jay had negotiated with Great Britain arrived, and Washington called a special session of the Senate to consider it. After two weeks' discussion, that body advised a ratification, and the treaty was presently published in the newspapers. Its terms surprised and disappointed all parties. It was instantly assailed in every part of the country as destructive to the commercial interests of the United States, and derogatory to their national honor. The most eminent men in America were divided as to the expediency of a ratification. The whole country was agitated. Public meetings were held in the principal cities, and resolutions expressing an unqualified disapproval were forwarded to the President from numerous commercial bodies. Many of the old Revolutionary patriots were opposed to the treaty, and among them Mr. Adams did not hesitate to employ all the influence of his personal and official character against it. He did not believe that, for the sake of having a treaty, the country should hasten to accept one which exhibited in so remarkable a degree the advantage which a strong power has in negotiating with a weaker; nor did he conceive that delay in the matter would necessarily lead to war. A number of interesting letters, which were in existence several years since,



prove that he regarded it with particular disfavor. Popular demonstrations of angry discontent took place. Public meetings were held. A British vessel, supposed to have been a privateer, was burned in Boston harbor; and parties of rioters, among them many boys, paraded the streets at night, carrying on poles the rinds of watermelons cut into grotesque imitations of the human face, and illuminated by candles. Windows were broken and other violence committed. An application was signed by two hundred residents, requesting the Governor to call out the military. He thought, however, that the disturbance was not of sufficient magnitude to warrant bringing on a collision between the troops and citizens, and replied that it was "only a watermelon frolic," which would soon subside without his having recourse to such harsh measures.<sup>1</sup> The arguments against the treaty were numerous, and not easily refuted. Some of the ablest writers in America engaged in controversies as to its merits,—among them Hamilton and Brockholst Livingston.

One of Governor Adams's principal objections related to the clause which conceded to Great Britain the right to search American vessels on the high seas,—an arrogant assumption of maritime power, founded on the principle that might makes right,—an assumption to which he thought it disgraceful for America to yield, and which a firm front on our part would oblige England to relinquish. In his address to the Legislature in January, 1796, he was explicit in the avowal of his dislike of the treaty.

"I have been accustomed," he says, "to speak my mind upon matters of great moment to our common country with freedom, and every citizen of the United States has the same right that I have. I may never hereafter have an opportunity of publicly expressing my opinion on the treaty lately made with the Court of London.

<sup>1</sup> This circumstance gave rise to the remark among the enemies of Governor Adams's administration, that he was quite consistent in thus countenancing a mob, for he had been the grand mob-leader during the Revolution.

I am therefore constrained, with all due respect to our constituted authorities, to declare that the treaty appears to me to be pregnant with evil. It controls some of the powers specially vested in Congress for the security of the people; and I fear that it may restore to Great Britain such an influence over the government and people of this country as may not be consistent with the general welfare. This subject, however, it is expected will come up before Congress, whose immediate province it is to discuss it, and to determine, so far as it may be in their power, as they shall think for the safety and welfare of the people."

He foresaw trouble as to this right of search, and his prediction was verified. Some of the newspapers which were in mourning for the death of Samuel Adams in October, 1803, contained also announcements that the British frigate *Cambrian* was cruising off New York harbor, boarding American vessels and impressing their crews; while other war ships were arriving on the coast with the same object. A few years later the inevitable collision, which had been long pending, was hastened by the affair between the *Leopard* and *Chesapeake*, arising out of this very question. Another clause expressly gave to Great Britain the right of capturing on the high seas American ships suspected of having on board articles contraband of war. A British war ship might carry the prize into port, and seize all such property. A subsequent article was so worded that even provisions and breadstuffs, if considered as contraband by the existing law of nations, could also be taken; but the owners were to be indemnified for the seizure, and paid for the detention. Out of this treaty, but particularly from those articles which admitted the right of search, and that the flag of neutrals did not cover the merchandise, grew the war of 1812. These fatal concessions were the Pandora's box whence sprung a destructive contest, in which the rallying cry was "Free trade and sailors' rights." In a brilliant succession of American victories, the star of British invincibility on the ocean went down; and the achievements

of American genius and courage justified the confidence reposed in the naval prowess of the young Republic. The spirit which at last aroused the nation to assert its injured honor, by the declaration of war, completed the ruin of the Federalists, who were not more violent in advocating Jay's treaty in 1796 than they were in opposing and hampering the war in 1812. Could the life and usefulness of Samuel Adams have been prolonged to that time, he would have been a staunch supporter of the war. His opinion of conventions designed to contravene the constitutional government of the United States may be seen in a letter already quoted, relating to an organized opposition to the authority of Congress, similar to that of the afterwards famous Hartford Convention.<sup>1</sup> If the principal reason for accepting the treaty was to avoid the danger of a conflict with Great Britain, it is plain that the concession served but to encourage the haughty demeanor of that power, and, at best, only delayed the war. As it was, the defect in the treaty respecting impressment was even now considered of so grave a character that Congress, in this session, passed an act creating government agents to reside abroad for the protection of American seamen against British cruisers. It had been argued, during the public discussions, that if war with either France or Great Britain was unavoidable, it would be more politic for the nation, and more congenial to public sentiment, to engage the latter than the former power; that in case of a war with England, the aid of France, the natural and pledged ally of the United States, would be ready with all the energy of its triumphant arms; while in the event of a collision with France, the country ought not to count upon the affections and could not rely upon the power of England for assistance. War with Great Britain, however, was not believed to be a necessary alternative, though the disposition of that court had been decidedly hostile to her former Colonies. But a year had not passed after the ratifi-

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 208 - 210 of this volume.

cation of the treaty before the relations with France assumed an aspect so threatening that a resort to arms was deemed inevitable, and a conflict with that nation was only averted by careful negotiation.

Among the many objections raised against the treaty were these:— that no compensation was made for the twelve years' detention of the Western posts, nor for negroes carried away by the British, contrary to the original treaty of peace in 1783; that the navigation of the St. Lawrence was denied to us, while the British were allowed that of the Mississippi; that the terms were far from reciprocal in numerous instances relating to inland as well as foreign trade and navigation, and must prove destructive to American commerce in their operation; and finally, that Mr. Jay has been unduly influenced in his negotiations by the belief that the continued ascendancy of the Federalists, and the prevention of a war with Great Britain, depended on his making a treaty, and that the British Ministry, profiting by their knowledge of this, "had insisted on everything he could venture to give, and had conceded nothing which they could decently refuse."

President Washington hesitated for some time, and at first decided to give a conditional sanction, only to take effect upon the revocation of the Order in Council by Great Britain; but finally, following the advice of his Cabinet, he determined to ratify it at once. At the meeting of Congress in March, 1796, occurred the famous contest between the Federalists and the Democrats, or Republicans, as to granting appropriations for carrying the treaty into effect, in which Fisher Ames distinguished himself by a masterly speech in its favor, while Madison, Giles, Gallatin, and Livingston led the opposition. A considerable party raised the question, whether the Constitution, by vesting the national legislative authority in Congress, had not also clothed that body with the power of executing or rejecting a treaty; and the right claimed by the British Parliament of passing upon all

treaties was cited as an instance. There was no precedent by which to determine this novel point, and it was closely debated in and out of Congress. Before the meeting of the Massachusetts Legislature in January, 1796, Governor Adams had considered this subject; and, as might be supposed, his opinions leaned towards as direct a connection as possible between the people and their immediate representatives in deciding a question of great national importance. He does not appear to have adopted the extreme ground of some eminent statesmen, that Congress should exercise the final decision as to accepting a treaty, but he thought that, by the terms of the Constitution, there was actually a conflict between the treaty-making power of the President and Senate and the authority of the House; and in his speech he suggested an amendment in the Constitution to remedy the defect.

“Under these impressions,” he says, “I cannot forbear to mention to you a subject which has lately arrested the public attention, and employed the pens of ingenious men of different sentiments concerning it. In discussing a subject so exceedingly momentous as a national treaty, no personal attachment or prejudice, no private or selfish feelings, no arts of deception, should be suffered to intermingle. Truth should be the object, and reason the guide.

“By the Constitution of the United States it is provided that all legislative powers therein granted shall be vested in a Congress to consist of a Senate and House of Representatives. These several branches have and exercise a positive negative upon each other. No legislative act, therefore, can pass without their joint concurrence. But in another part of the Constitution, under the head of executive, the President has the power, with the advice and consent of the Senate, provided two thirds of the Senate present concur, to make treaties; and all treaties which are made, or shall be made, under the authority of the United States shall be among the supreme laws of the land. The Senate, therefore, partakes with the executive so far as to advise and consent, but the most popular branch of Congress has no concern therein. I do earnestly recommend to you to turn your attention to those parts of the Constitu-

tion, at least, which relate to the legislative and executive powers, and judge for yourselves whether they may not be construed to militate with each other, and lead to an absurd conclusion that there actually exists in the government of the United States two distinct and decisive Legislatures.

“I am far from being desirous that unnecessary alterations of our Constitution should be proposed; but it is of great consequence to the liberties of a nation to review its civil constitution, and compare the practice of its administrators with the essential principles upon which it is founded. We, fellow-citizens, are under the strongest obligations, from the solemnity of our mutual compacts and even our sacred oaths, with a watchful eye at every point, to defend and support our Constitutions; and to strengthen the essential principles upon which they are founded, when it shall become needful, falls, in my opinion, within these solemn obligations.”

The Governor, with this speech, transmitted the resolutions lately adopted in Virginia, recommending amendments to the Constitution; but they were not favorably received, and both Senate and House replied decidedly against suggesting any amendments. The appropriations having at last been voted by Congress, after several weeks' debate, the treaty was carried into effect in April by a small majority.

The growth and stability of the Republican party, in and around Boston and on the sea-board, was this year again exemplified by the re-election of Governor Adams, who received in his native town sixteen hundred and fourteen votes, against Increase Sumner's eight hundred and forty-eight. Several other candidates obtained in Boston one vote each. Adams had a large majority in the State, though the western counties went for Sumner, who was supported by many Federalists.

The Governor's Council was at that time chosen by the Legislature. During the several administrations of Mr. Adams, there are found among his constitutional advisers the names of his old fellow-laborers, James Warren, General Eleazer Brooks, Samuel Holton, James Bowdoin, General William Shepard, Azor Orne, and Oliver Wendell, besides

others of less note. From 1794 until 1797 the Lieutenant-Governor was Moses Gill, a member with Adams in the Provincial Congress during the Revolution. The State Treasurer was Peleg Coffin; the Secretary of State, John Avery, who had acted as deputy when Mr. Adams filled that office at intervals during the war; the Attorney-General was his particular and intimate friend, James Sullivan, afterwards Governor of the State, — a man of great abilities, and the never-failing supporter and champion of the venerable patriot against his partisan assailants. The inauguration ceremonies took place on the Common, and some interesting reminiscences are yet preserved of these events. His address to the Legislature speaks the sentiments of a heart truly devoted to the public welfare, and keenly sensitive of any undue assertion of power by the Executive.

“FELLOW-CITIZENS, —

“It is not my intention to interrupt your business by a lengthy address. I have requested a meeting with you at this time, principally with the view of familiarizing the several branches of government with each other, of cultivating harmony in sentiment upon constitutional principles, and cherishing that mutual friendship which always invites a free discussion in matters of important concern.

“The union of the States is not less important than that of the several departments of each of them. We have all of us recently laid ourselves under a sacred obligation to defend and support our Federal and State Constitutions. A principal object in the establishment of the former, as it is expressed in the preamble, was, ‘to form a more perfect Union.’ To preserve this Union entire, and transmit it unbroken to posterity, is the duty of the people of United America, and it is for their lasting interest, their public safety and welfare. Let them be watchful for the preservation of the Union, attentive to the fundamental principles of our free Constitutions, and careful in the application of those principles in the formation of our laws, lest that great object which the people had in view in establishing the independence of our country may be imperceptibly lost.

“The members of the General Court, coming from all parts of

the Commonwealth, must be well acquainted with the local circumstances and wants of the citizens ; to alleviate and provide for which, it is presumed you will diligently inquire into the state of the Commonwealth, and render such legislative aid as may be found necessary for the promoting of useful improvements, and the advancement of those kinds of industry among the people which contribute to their individual happiness as well as that of the public. Honest industry tends to the increase of sobriety, temperance, and all the moral and political virtues. I trust also that you will attend to the general police of the Commonwealth, by revising and making such laws and ordinances, conformably to our Constitution, as in your wisdom you may think further necessary to secure as far as possible the safety and prosperity of the people at large.

“ It is yours, fellow-citizens, to legislate, and mine only to revise your bills under limited and qualified powers ; and I rejoice that they are thus limited. These are features which belong to a free government alone.<sup>1</sup>

“ I do not, I ought not to, forget that there are other duties constitutionally attached to the supreme executive. I hope I shall be enabled within my department, with the continued advice of a wise and faithful Council, so to act my part, as that a future retrospect of my conduct may afford me consoling reflections, and that my administration may be satisfactory to reasonable and candid men, and finally meet with the approbation of God, the Judge of all. May his wisdom preside in all our counsels and deliberations, and lead to such decisions as may be happily adapted to confirm and perpetuate the public liberty, and secure the private and personal rights of the citizens from suffering any injury.

“ I shall further communicate to you by subsequent messages as occasion may offer.

“ SAMUEL ADAMS.

“ COUNCIL CHAMBER, May 31, 1796.”

<sup>1</sup> He was guarded almost to over-cautiousness against the use of the veto power. The Legislature he considered as not only the direct exponent and embodiment of the popular will, but as constituting a body whose combined deliberations must necessarily have brought to bear on general and special subjects a far greater degree of wisdom and correct judgment than any one man could possibly claim. The duty of the Chief Magistrate, he always held, was to execute the laws, not to make them.



Very little of the private correspondence of Adams, during his successive administrations, has been preserved. It is probable that now, in his old age, he seldom wrote, except in compliance with his public duties. He continued to receive friendly letters from some of his associates in the Revolution; but most of his old correspondents, with whom he had concerted measures of public safety in former years, were dead, or, like himself, near the end of life's journey. A letter from the distinguished painter, John Singleton Copley, remains among his papers, and is interesting as coming from the father of an eminent English statesman, and reviving recollections of the earlier days of the contest with Great Britain. Copley left his native Province in 1774 to reside in England. His son, the late Lord Lyndhurst, was about visiting his birthplace, and the old artist thought the occasion a fitting one to renew the acquaintance, and secure the kind offices of Governor Adams for the gifted young student.

GEORGE STREET, HANOVER SQUARE,  
8th October, 1795.

DEAR SIR,—

After the lapse of one-and-twenty years, and the many great and important concerns that have successively occupied your mind, if you still retain any remembrance of Mr. Copley, who once had the honor of your acquaintance, you will not, I flatter myself, be displeased that I take the liberty to address a letter to you in behalf of my son. He goes to see his native country, and transact some business for me before he fixes for life. He has lately been elected fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. He has also the assurance of the University of the additional appointment of travelling fellow, as soon as the forms can be gone through. Unless the wind should prove unfavorable, the appointment must follow him. I wish to introduce him to you; and it is his own desire to know and be known to a gentleman who has borne so distinguished a part in promoting the happiness and true dignity of his country, and who now enjoys, under the calm sunshine of its prosperity, the applause and gratitude of a brave, wise, and enlightened people. I congratulate you on the attainment of this highest earthly bliss; and it is my most sincere

wish that your reward may follow you when time shall be no more.  
I am, sir, with great respect and esteem,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

J. S. COPLEY.

HIS EXCELLENCY SAMUEL ADAMS.

Washington had lately declared his intention of withdrawing from public life. After the choice of Presidential electors in Massachusetts, the Legislature, by joint resolution, authorized the Electoral College to fill any vacancies in their body, and to certify the same to the Executive, who should furnish the necessary credentials. Governor Adams signed this resolution on the day of its passage; but before night, having more maturely considered the subject, he entered the Secretary's office, and erased his name, and on the following day sent a message to the Senate, expressing his belief that the filling of vacancies among the electors by proxies appointed by themselves formed a dangerous precedent for so momentous a question as the choice of President of the United States. The Senate, however, declined a reconsideration, on the ground that the resolution, having once been signed by the Governor and recorded in the Secretary's office, had become a law. The next day he again addressed the two Houses. He did not deny that the resolution was a formal act of government; but added that the matter was now properly before the General Court, and the only question was, whether it ought to be repealed, and another provision made for the same object.

“But,” said he, “should my fellow-citizens of the Senate and House think differently from me, while I shall feel quite contented with your decision, I shall be happy that I have candidly acknowledged an error in signing that resolve, and yet done with firmness what has appeared to me as the true interest of the State of which I am a member, and the nation of which I am a citizen.”

The message was referred to a joint committee, who reported in favor of repealing the objectionable resolution, in accordance with the suggestion of the Governor. The Sen-

ate did not accept this report, and applied to the House for concurrence in their action. A long and able debate ensued on this novel question, extending into the evening, when, by a vote of fifty-seven to forty-one, the House concurred with the Senate.

In the vote of the Electoral College for President, Samuel Adams was honored by Virginia with nearly her whole strength, receiving fifteen of the votes of that State, and ranking next to their own Jefferson.<sup>1</sup> By the provisions of the Constitution at that time the votes for all the candidates were counted, and the person having the highest number became President, while the second office fell to whoever had the next highest number. Mr. Adams stood fifth on the entire list, having been preceded by John Adams, Jefferson, Thomas Pinckney, and Burr. The honor was unsolicited, and was probably due, if not to the direct influence of Jefferson, at least to that of some of the old Revolutionary friends of Adams in Virginia, who were of the Jefferson school of politics, then rapidly growing in power.

<sup>1</sup> The Virginia votes stood as follows: Thomas Jefferson, 20; S. Adams, 15; George Clinton, 3; George Washington, 1; J. Adams, 1; Thomas Pinckney, 1; Aaron Burr, 1. The vote of the State was manifestly for Jefferson for President, and S. Adams for Vice-President, though this specification ceased in the Electoral College. Samuel Adams was named by his friends a candidate for Presidential Elector in the Boston District against Thomas Dawes, who was chosen.

## CHAPTER LXV.

Adams retires from Public Life. — His Parting Address to the Legislature. — The Two Houses respond. — Fast Proclamation. — Affectionate Attentions received in his Old Age. — Fourth Presidential Election. — Triumph of the Democratic Party. — Correspondence with Jefferson. — Letter to Thomas Paine. — Last Sickness of Adams. — His Death and Funeral. — Party Prejudices carried beyond the Grave. — Tribute of Respect by John Randolph adopted in Congress. — Resolutions of the Massachusetts Senate. — Last Will and Testament of Adams. — Thacher's Funeral Discourse. — Will of Mrs. Adams.

As the century drew to a close, Samuel Adams perceived, in the decline of his strength and the increasing weight of years, the necessity of a final retirement from public duties. These admonitions were not lost upon him. Addressing the Legislature in January, 1797, he announced this determination, and thus concludes a speech of more than ordinary length: —

“I think it is a duty incumbent upon me to acquaint you and our fellow-citizens at large, that, having arrived to a stage of life marked in holy writ and verified by constant experience as a time of labor and sorrow, it is highly proper, both upon my own account and that of the public, to decline the future suffrages of my fellow-citizens for the office I have now the honor to sustain. I have had this in contemplation for near a twelvemonth past. The infirmities of age render me an unfit person in my own opinion, and very probably in the opinion of others, to continue in this station; and I mention it now, that those of the electors who may probably be too warmly attached to me may not nullify their own votes by giving them for me. I have always been convinced that many others might have been found to fill my place with greater advantage to the Commonwealth than is now, or ever has been, in my power. In the civil department, during the times of war and peace, I have served her in various stations to the best of my ability, and I hope with general

approbation ; and I can say with truth, that I have not enriched myself in her service. My warmest thanks are justly due to my constituents for the confidence they have repeatedly placed in me. When I shall be released from the burdens of my public station, I shall not forget my country. Her welfare and happiness, her peace and prosperity, her liberty and independence, will always have a great share in the best wishes of my heart.”<sup>1</sup>

Venerable with years, and standing among men most of whom were yet unborn when he was advocating the natural and the charter liberties of the Colonies, Adams delivered his farewell. His hearers looked upon him as a patriarch associated with bygone generations, as a connecting link between the early Colonial days and the new American empire already expanding into splendid proportions. His parting words are perfectly consistent with his character, and in their unaffected style showed an unchangeable devotion to the welfare of America. Several public allusions to the occasion, written by spectators, appeared in the press.

“The republican sentiments,” says one, “which he has through life practised are earnestly recommended for our future conduct ; and while the address breathes those fervent wishes for the peace and happiness of his country, he enforces those great objects with that Christian pathos which will endear his name to every real friend to America.”<sup>2</sup>

The committee appointed by the Senate to reply to his farewell soon reported an address expressive of the sentiments of many who had witnessed his Revolutionary career.

“Your Excellency having announced your determination to retire from the public service, the Senate ask leave to express the sense they entertain of the many and important services rendered by you to our common country.

“In times of difficulty and danger, you, sir, were engaged in the cause of freedom, and years of unremitting exertion in various civil departments since the establishment of our independence prove the interest you have felt in the preservation of so invaluable a blessing.

<sup>1</sup> Independent Chronicle, Jan. 30, 1797.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

“To have lived to see the independence of your country firmly established, her prosperity increasing, and the principles of liberty and good government daily gaining strength, must be a source of happiness in retirement equal to the fondest wishes of your heart.

“It is the sincere wish of the Senate that you may enjoy such a measure of health as will long permit you to witness and partake of the blessings of that independence which you have so largely contributed to insure, and that the evening of your life may be as tranquil and happy as its morning and meridian have been active and honorable.”

The answer of the House was not less affecting.

“Your Excellency having announced your determination to decline the future suffrages of your fellow-citizens, we naturally recollect your early labors in the cause of freedom, the firmness and integrity with which you have discharged the duties of the most important public stations, and the courage with which you asserted the rights of your country through the trying vicissitudes of a Revolutionary war: these great services claim this public acknowledgment of our gratitude and respect.

“Having been repeatedly called by your fellow-citizens to the first office in their gift, it must afford you very pleasurable feelings in your own mind, after having been so distinguished by your country, in withdrawing from the councils of the Commonwealth and retiring to peaceful repose, to be conscious of the good will of the people towards you, and that you have served them with purity of intention and upright zeal.”<sup>1</sup>

The political career of Samuel Adams was ended. He remained in office until May, 1797, when, Judge Sumner having been elected to the executive chair, he became a private citizen, after a continuous and entire devotion to the rights and liberties of America for upwards of half a century.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Independent Chronicle, Feb. 2, 1797.

<sup>2</sup> Tudor, in his *Life of Otis*, p. 274, makes a few interesting remarks on Adams's political character:—

“He attached an exclusive value to the habits and principles in which he had been educated, and wished to adjust wide concerns too closely after a particu-

The usual Fast Proclamation was published on the 20th of March, 1797. Those of preceding years having been omitted for the sake of brevity, this may appropriately claim place, as the last public paper of Adams.

PROCLAMATION BY HIS EXCELLENCY GOVERNOR ADAMS.

It having been the invariable practice, derived from the days of our renowned ancestors, at this season of the year to set apart a day of public fasting and prayer, and the practice appearing to be in itself productive, if well improved, of happy effects on the public mind, —

I have therefore thought fit, by and with the advice and consent of the Council, to appoint Thursday, the fourth day of May next ensuing, to be observed and improved throughout this Commonwealth for the purpose of public fasting and prayer, earnestly recommending to the ministers of the Gospel, with their respective congregations, then to assemble together and seriously to consider, and with one united voice to confess, our past sins and transgressions, with holy resolutions, by the grace of God, to turn our feet into the path of his law, humbly beseeching him to endue us with all the Christian spirit of piety, benevolence, and the love of our country; and that in all our public deliberations we may be possessed of a sacred regard to the fundamental principles of our free, elective, civil Constitutions; that we may be preserved from consuming fires and all other desolating judgments.

And as at this season the general business of the year commences, it seems highly proper humbly to implore the Divine blessing on our husbandry, trade, and fishery, and all the labor of our hands; on our University and schools of education; on the administration of the government of the United States; and in a particular manner

lar model. One of his colleagues who knew him well, and estimated him highly, described him with good-natured exaggeration in the following manner: 'Samuel Adams would have the State of Massachusetts govern the Union, the town of Boston govern Massachusetts, and that he should govern the town of Boston, and then the whole would not be intentionally ill governed.'"

that all misunderstanding between them and a sister republic may be happily so adjusted as to prevent an open rupture and establish permanent peace.

And as it is our duty to extend our wishes to the happiness of the great family of man, I conceive we cannot better express ourselves than by humbly supplicating the Supreme Ruler of the world that the rod of tyrants may be broken into pieces, and the oppressed made free; that wars may cease in all the earth, and that the confusions that are and have been among the nations may be overruled by the promoting and speedily bringing on that holy and happy period when the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ may be everywhere established, and all the people willingly bow to the sceptre of Him who is the Prince of Peace.

And I do hereby recommend that all unnecessary labor and recreation may be suspended on the said day.

SAMUEL ADAMS.

20th day of March, 1797.

In the retirement of his home Mr. Adams enjoyed the society of friends, and his declining years were attended with affectionate care by a devoted wife and daughter, and the cheerful company of family connections. The author has conversed with persons who remembered him walking in his garden, clad in cap and gown, or in the summer time seated at his door. He was occasionally visited by some of the old patriots, worn out like himself in public duty.

“At this time,” says Judge Sullivan, who was often with him in his later years, “Mr. Adams delighted in a recapitulation of the scenes of the Revolution. In this, as in other circumstances, he resembled the late Earl of Chatham, who, while he was in advanced age, became impatient of all topics which did not relate to the French war, in which his administration had added gems to the crown of his nation. A recollection of the dangerous and difficult circumstances of the war, which had been encountered by the courage and overcome by the genius of his country, fell like the choicest cordials on the palsied nerves of Mr. Adams. To the advantages of education, trials, and victories, Mr. Adams added the deportment of a gentleman: he was a well-bred, polite man. Among strangers,



and in mixed companies, he was reserved and silent; but among his friends he was cheerful and companionable, was a lover of chaste wit, and remarkably fond of anecdote."

His granddaughter, Miss Elizabeth Wells, had often acted as his amanuensis, and during his recent administrations had penned, at his dictation, inaugurals and other State documents. These kind offices he never failed to acknowledge with that courtesy which he invariably used in addressing ladies, and which in this case was mingled with an affectionate regard for his amiable and accomplished relative. If confined to the house, he was never more pleased than when Miss Elizabeth or either of her brothers read to him from the favorite books in his library, or from the newspapers, many of which were sent to him from all directions. He took the greatest interest in common schools, and sometimes visited them, listening attentively to the recitations. He was known and loved literally by crowds of school-children, who well understood his desire for their advancement. Eliot, in his biographical sketch, says that Mr. Adams was a constant advocate of public schools, by which "he meant such as there are in every town in Massachusetts, which diffuse knowledge equally among all classes of the people." The same idea of educating children of all conditions alike will be found in one of his letters to John Adams in 1790. In the summer of 1795, when addressing the Legislature, he alludes with pleasure to the establishment of academies in different parts of the State; but while acknowledging the advantages derived from those institutions, he fears that a large increase of them might proportionably lessen "the ancient and beneficial mode of education in grammar schools," the peculiar advantage of which, he says, "is that the poor and the rich may derive equal benefit from them, while none, excepting the more wealthy, generally speaking, can avail themselves of the benefits of the academies."

In January, 1800, he received a letter from Jefferson, in

answer to a note introducing two gentlemen to the Vice-President.

PHILADELPHIA, February 26, 1800.

DEAR SIR, —

Mr. Irving delivered me your favor of January 31st, and I thank you for making me acquainted with him. You will always do me a favor in giving me an opportunity of knowing gentlemen as estimable in their principles and talents as I find Mr. Irving to be. I have not yet seen Mr. Winthrop. A letter from you, my respectable friend, after three-and-twenty years of separation, has given me a pleasure I cannot express. It recalls to my mind the anxious days we then passed in struggling for the cause of mankind. Your principles have been tested in the crucible of time, and have come out pure. You have proved that it was monarchy, and not merely British monarchy, you opposed. A government by representatives elected by the people at *short* periods was our object, and our maxim at that day was, "Where annual election ends, tyranny begins." Nor have our departures from it been sanctioned by the happiness of their effects. A debt of a hundred millions, growing by usurious interest, and an artificial paper phalanx overruling the agricultural masses of our country, with other *et ceteras*, have a portentous aspect.

I fear our friends on the other side of the water, laboring in the same cause, have yet a great deal of crime and misery to wade through. My confidence has been placed in the head, not in the heart, of Bonaparte. I hoped he would calculate truly the difference between the fame of a Washington and a Cromwell.<sup>1</sup> Whatever his views may be, he has at least transferred the destinies of the republic from the civil to the military arm. Some will use this as a lesson against the practicability of republican governments. I read it as a lesson against the danger of standing armies.

Adieu, my ever respected and venerable friend. May that kind overruling Providence which has so long spared you to our country still foster your remaining years with whatever may make them comfortable to yourself and soothing to your friends. Accept the cordial salutations of your affectionate friend,

TH. JEFFERSON.

<sup>1</sup> The news of the dissolution of the French Directory, and the appointment of Napoleon as First Consul, had recently reached America.

In the year 1800, Caleb Strong was elected Governor. He had long been a sincere friend of Samuel Adams, and had been his associate on several important occasions before and during the Revolution. Though a decided Federalist, his generous nature forbade him to draw party distinctions when estimating the noble and disinterested character of Adams, or to forget the debt of gratitude due from his country for a lifetime spent in sustaining its liberties. The old statesman had been spared to witness the dawn of a new century; and it required no prophetic eye to foresee the future grandeur of the Republic, and the teeming millions who would populate its vast domain, as the principles of popular government — principles favorable to human progress — were practically tested. On some public occasion, perhaps the day of inauguration, a large military procession, with Governor Strong and suite at its head, was passing through Winter Street. As they approached the house of Adams, they saw him looking upon the pageant. Strong immediately ordered a halt, and alighting from the vehicle, met his ancient friend at the door, where he grasped him by the hand, while, with uncovered head, he publicly expressed his deep reverence for the name of Samuel Adams. The military presented arms, and the multitude remained uncovered and silent during the interview.

Owing principally to complications arising out of Jay's treaty, and the subsequent relations with France, the administration of John Adams had been gradually losing its popularity, and in the election this year Jefferson was chosen to the Presidency. The national Democratic party, which had been gathering strength under his leadership, now began to assume that ascendancy which has since had so powerful an influence in shaping American policy. Before long it absorbed the Republican party, which had sprung from a wide-spread sympathy with the French Revolution, and had largely increased its numbers during the excitement caused by Jay's treaty. Samuel Adams had been the principal

leader of this party in Massachusetts. In fact, though it has since become habitual to speak of Jefferson as the "Father of Democracy" (a term merited in its national sense), its fundamental doctrines, considered as the distinguishing mark of a party, must be traced to the early teachings of Adams in New England. His political sympathies having been with the principles of the Republicans, he was highly gratified at their success in the late election. The event gave rise to the following correspondence.

WASHINGTON, March 29, 1801.

I addressed a letter to you, my very dear and ancient friend, on the 4th of March; not indeed to you by name, but through the medium of my fellow-citizens, whom occasion called on me to address.<sup>1</sup> In meditating the matter of that address, I often asked myself, Is this exactly in the spirit of the patriarch Samuel Adams? Will he approve of it? I have felt a great deal for our country in the times we have seen, but individually for no one so much as yourself. When I have been told that you were avoided, insulted, frowned on, I could but ejaculate, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." I confess I felt an indignation for you which for myself I have been able under every trial to keep entirely passive. However, the storm is over, and we are in port. The ship was not rigged for the service she was put on. She will show the smoothness of her motions on her republican tack. I hope we shall once more see harmony restored among our citizens, and an entire oblivion of past feuds. Some of the leaders, who have most committed themselves, cannot come into this. I hope the great body of our fellow-citizens will do it. I will sacrifice everything but principle to procure it. A few examples of justice on officers who have perverted their functions to the oppression of their fellow-citizens must, in justice to those citizens, be made. But opinion, and the just maintenance of it, shall never be a crime in my view, nor bring injury on the individual. Those whose misconduct in office ought to have produced their removal, even by my predecessor, must not be protected by the delicacy due only to honest men. How much I lament that time has deprived me of your aid. It

<sup>1</sup> Alluding to his Inaugural.

would have been a day of glory which should have called you to the first office of the administration. But give us your counsel, my friend, and give us your blessing; and be assured that there exists not in the heart of man a more faithful esteem than mine to you, and that I shall ever bear you the most affectionate veneration and respect.

TH. JEFFERSON.

BOSTON, April 24, 1801.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND, —

Your letter of the 29th of March last came duly to my hand. I sincerely congratulate our country on the arrival of the day of glory which has called you to the first office in the administration of our Federal government. Your warm feelings of friendship most certainly have carried you to a higher tone of expression than my utmost merits will bear. If I have at any time been avoided or frowned upon, your kind ejaculation, in the language of the most perfect friend of man, surpasses every injury. The storm is over and we are now in port, and I dare say the ship will be rigged for her proper service. She must also be well manned and very carefully officered. No man should be fit to sustain an office who cannot conform to the principles by which he must be governed. With you I hope we shall once more see harmony restored; but after so severe and long a storm, it will take a proportionate time to still the raging of the waves. The world has been governed by prejudice and passion, which never can be friendly to truth; and while you nobly resolve to retain those principles of candor and justice, resulting from a free elective representative government, such as they have been taught to hate and despise, you must depend upon being hated yourself, because they hate your principles; not a man of them will dare openly to despise you. Your inaugural speech, to say nothing of your eminent services to the acceptance of our country, will secure you from contempt. It may require some time before the great body of our fellow-citizens will settle in harmony, good will, and peace. The eyes of the people have too generally been fast closed from the view of their own happiness. Such, alas! has been always the lot of man. But Providence, who rules the world, seems now to be rapidly changing the sentiments of mankind in Europe and America. May Heaven grant that the principles of liberty

and virtue, truth and justice, may pervade the whole earth. When deep prejudices shall be removed in some, the self-interestedness of others shall cease, and many honest men, whose minds, for want of better information, [. . . ?], shall return to the use of their own understanding, the happy and wished-for time shall come. It is not in my power, my dear friend, to give you counsel; an old man is apt to flatter himself that he stands upon an equal footing with younger men; he indeed cannot help feeling that the powers of his mind, as well as his body, are weakened, and fondly wishing his young friends to think that he can instruct them by his experience, when in all probability he has forgotten every trace of it that was worth his memory. Be assured that my esteem for you is as cordial, if possible, as yours is to me. Though an old man cannot advise you, he can give you his blessing. You have my blessing and my prayers.

SAMUEL ADAMS.

P. S. — My dear Mrs. Adams will not suffer me to close this letter till I let you know that she recollects the pleasure and entertainment you afforded us when you were about to embark for France,<sup>1</sup> and she hopes that your administration may be happy to yourself and prosperous to your country.

The last writing of Samuel Adams of which any trace remains is a letter to Thomas Paine, who returned to America in October, 1802, after an absence of fourteen years in France. Having been informed that he intended to recommence in the United States writing against Christianity, Mr. Adams addressed him the following lines: —

BOSTON, November 30, 1802.

SIR, —

I have frequently with pleasure reflected on your services to *my* native and *your* adopted country. Your Common Sense, and your Crisis, unquestionably awakened the public mind, and led the people loudly to call for a declaration of our national independence. I therefore esteemed you as a warm friend to the liberty and lasting welfare of the human race. But when I heard you had turned your

<sup>1</sup> In July, 1784, when Jefferson as minister plenipotentiary embarked at Boston for France, to act in conjunction with Franklin and John Adams in negotiating treaties of commerce with foreign nations.

mind to a defence of infidelity, I felt myself much astonished and more grieved, that you had attempted a measure so injurious to the feelings and so repugnant to the true interest of so great a part of the citizens of the United States. The people of New England, if you will allow me to use a Scripture phrase, are fast returning to their first love. Will you excite among them the spirit of angry controversy at a time when they are hastening to amity and peace? I am told that some of our newspapers have announced your intention to publish an additional pamphlet upon the principles of your Age of Reason. Do you think that your pen, or the pen of any other man, can unchristianize the mass of our citizens, or have you hopes of converting a few of them to assist you in so bad a cause? We ought to think ourselves happy in the enjoyment of opinion, without the danger of persecution by civil or ecclesiastical law. Our friend, the President of the United States, has been calumniated for his liberal sentiments by men who have attributed that liberality to a latent design to promote the cause of infidelity. This, and all other slanders, have been made without the least shadow of proof. Neither religion nor liberty can long subsist in the tumult of altercation, and amidst the noise and violence of faction. *Felix qui cautus.* Adieu.

SAMUEL ADAMS.

Paine replied to this in January of the following year, in a long and very respectful letter, defending his works by quotations from Scripture and the writings of eminent divines, and aiming to prove that the ideas advanced in his Age of Reason were the real basis of all true religion. It was not answered; but the two letters were soon printed in several forms, as circulars and pamphlets, and in the newspapers throughout the United States. As Adams had entered upon no extended argument, the publication could only have carried weight as his expressed opinion against infidel sophistry.

As the year advanced, it was evident that the eventful life of Adams was hastening to a close. During the summer of 1803, he was occasionally seen walking for a few minutes in front of his house. His steps were slow and feeble, and

it was seldom that Dr. Jarvis would permit even this slight exercise. Late in September, it was observed that he spoke less frequently, and that occasionally his mind seemed to wander. He was perfectly conscious of his approaching dissolution. He enjoined upon his family that there should be an entire absence of parade or ostentation in the funeral, and that his coffin should be of the plainest description. On the night of Saturday, October 1st, he slept for a few hours, but breathed with difficulty. Towards daylight on Sunday morning, he was evidently sinking fast, and Dr. Jarvis informed the family that the hour was at hand. At a few minutes past seven, Mr. Adams uttered some words in a whisper. Mrs. Wells bent over to catch them, but they were unintelligible; and immediately his spirit passed peacefully away.<sup>1</sup> A few gentlemen, who had been present, friends of the family, now left the house; and soon after the solemn event was announced by the tolling of all the church-bells.

The Independent Chronicle, which was in mourning, thus speaks of the deceased:—

“SAMUEL ADAMS

“IS DEAD!

“We have the painful task to announce to the public, that on yesterday morning, about a quarter past seven o'clock, at his house in this town, died, in the eighty-second year of his age, SAMUEL ADAMS, late Governor of this Commonwealth, the consistent and inflexible patriot and republican.

“To attempt at this moment even to sketch an outline of a character equally conspicuous for private virtue and public service would betray a want of that information respecting the deceased which time and profound reflection alone can justly describe. We shall now only observe, that he has been a prodigy of talents and industry of which the lapse of ages will not produce a parallel.

<sup>1</sup> It was said among the friends of Adams at the time of his decease, in speaking of his religious character, that it was a somewhat remarkable coincidence that his birth, baptism, and death all occurred on Sunday.



“In his useful career, he seemed occupied with but one sentiment; and that comprehended every circumstance which had any relation to the interests and independence of his native country, and the rights and liberty of the human race.

“The foe of tyrants in every form; the friend of virtue and *her* friends, he died beloved, as he had lived respected. Admiring posterity, penetrated by a just sense of his transcendent merits, will emphatically hail him as the undeviating friend of civil and religious liberty, and the FATHER OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION!

‘Let virtuosì, with assiduous dread,  
Preserve from rust a medalled Cæsar’s head;  
Freemen will keep, with more industrious aim,  
From slander’s vile aspersion HANCOCK’S fame.

‘While sun and stars revolve with course sublime,  
ADAMS shall scorn th’ all-sweeping rage of time;  
His glorious toils in life perennial bloom,  
Till Nature’s winter strip his laurelled tomb.’

“The funeral, we understand, will be from his late dwelling-house in Winter Street on Thursday next, at four o’clock, P. M. The friends of our POLITICAL PARENT, in this and the neighboring towns, are requested to attend.”

A few particular friends of the family took charge of the arrangements for the funeral, and they learned that party rancor could extend even to these sad details. Judge Sullivan, some months afterwards, wrote to his friend General Dearborn:—


“I promised soon to forward to you some anecdotes in regard to Samuel Adams’s funeral. But on reflection I find that I cannot do it without appearing to estimate my own consequence and influence more than perhaps either truth or modesty would allow of; and I therefore enclose a funeral sermon preached by Thomas Thacher of Dedham. I arrived in town the day after the Governor died. Governor Strong was far in the country; the Lieutenant-Governor had no authority; the Adjutant-General *wished*, but was afraid to act; the Major-General would issue no order. Jarvis and a few others proposed to form a procession of the school-boys, which I had inter-

est enough to prevent. If there could not be a proper military procession, I wanted none. But the bier of Samuel Adams, followed only by his widow, supported by two '75 men, who had never forsaken their old principles, I considered enough. They were afraid of this, and found power to order out a military corps, and there was the usual parade. Before this was determined upon, Thacher left the town, and under his good and worthy feelings, composed and delivered finally the excellent sermon enclosed."<sup>1</sup>

On the morning of October 6th cards appeared in the newspapers, calling the selectmen, the reverend clergy, foreign consuls, and such public characters as might be in Boston, to meet at the new State House to attend the remains to the grave; and Major-General Eliot, by his adjutant, "desired the officers of the first division, who could attend the funeral of the deceased with convenience, to assemble at Trinity Church in uniform." The procession formed at the new State House, under the superintendence of Majors Gibbs and Brazer and Mr. J. S. Lovell; and the funeral train moved from the house in Winter Street at four o'clock in the following order:—

Military Escort.

The Independent Cadets,  
under command of Colonel Welles.

Pall-Bearers.	{	Hon. James Sullivan,		William Cooper, Esq.,	}	Pall-Bearers.
		Hon. Oliver Wendell,		Gen. William Heath,		
		His Honor Lieut.-Gov. Robbins,		Hon. Elbridge Gerry,		

Relations.

Marshal of the United States.  
Legislature, Judicial, and Executive  
Officers of the United States.  
Sheriff of Suffolk.  
Councillors, Senators, and Representatives  
of Massachusetts.  
Judicial Officers of Massachusetts.  
President and Professors of Harvard College.  
Reverend Clergy of this and the neighboring towns.

<sup>1</sup> Amory's Life of Sullivan, II. 111.

Selectmen.  
Overseers of the Poor. Board of Health.  
Municipal Officers of Boston.  
Foreign Consuls.  
Academy of Arts and Sciences.  
Massachusetts Charitable Society.  
Officers of the Militia.  
Citizens and Strangers.  
Private Carriages.

The *cortege* passed up Winter Street, down West and through Washington, around the old State House, and thence by Court and Tremont Streets to the Granary Burying-ground, where the body was placed in the family tomb.<sup>1</sup> The bells were tolled while the funeral was in motion; the shops were shut in the streets through which it passed; the ships in the harbor wore their flags at half-mast, and minute-guns were fired by the artillery companies and at Fort Independence.

Judge Sullivan, noble-hearted and faithful friend to the last, prepared a graphic outline of the character and public career of Adams, which was published in the Independent Chronicle of October 10th. Coming from one who had long enjoyed his intimacy, and who had personally witnessed the most important actions of his life, the sketch is justly regarded as perfectly reliable authority; and as such having been occasionally quoted in these volumes, it need not be here reproduced. "This," says Sullivan in conclusion, "is but a gazette sketch of his character; to give his history at full length would be to give a history of the American Revolution."

The death of Adams was formally brought before Congress by John Randolph on the 19th of October.

"It has been lately announced to the public," said he, "that one of the earliest patriots of the Revolution has paid his last debt to

<sup>1</sup> A number of gentlemen, among whom was an experienced anatomist and physician, entered the tomb in 1857, and were able to identify a portion of the coffin and remains. These were collected and placed in a proper receptacle, upon which were carved the initial letters of the patriot's name.

Nature. I had hoped that some other gentleman, better qualified for the task, would have undertaken to call the attention of the House to this interesting event. It cannot indeed be a matter of deep regret that one of the first statesmen of our country has descended to the grave full of years and full of honors; that his character and fame are put beyond the reach of that time and chance to which everything mortal is exposed. But it becomes this House to cherish a sentiment of veneration for such men, since such men are rare, and to keep alive the spirit to which we owe the Constitution under which we are now deliberating. This great man, the associate of Hancock, shared with him the honor of being proscribed by a flagitious Ministry, whose object was to triumph over the liberties of their country by trampling on those of her Colonies. With his great compatriot, he made an early and decided stand against British encroachment, whilst souls more timid were trembling and irresolute. It is the glorious privilege of minds of this stamp to give an example to a people, and fix the destiny of nations.

“I feel myself in every way unequal to the attempt of doing justice to the merits of our departed countryman. Called upon by the occasion to say something, I could not have said less. I would not, by any poor eulogium of mine, enfeeble the sentiment which pervades the House, but content myself with moving the following resolutions:—

“*Resolved unanimously*, That this House is penetrated with a full sense of the eminent services rendered to his country in the most arduous times by the late Samuel Adams, deceased, and that the members thereof wear crape on the left arm for one month in testimony of the national gratitude and reverence towards the memory of that undaunted and illustrious patriot.”

The motion having been seconded with some appropriate remarks by Mr. Eliot of Vermont, it was carried unanimously, when, on motion of Mr. Nicholson, the House adjourned.

The Massachusetts Legislature convened in January following; and a series of resolutions were offered in the Senate highly eulogistic of the public services of the late Governor.

These immediately became a subject for cavil; and after considerable discussion they were "whittled down"<sup>1</sup> to suit a certain political sentiment. The difference between the original resolutions and those with which the friends of Adams were finally obliged to be content may be seen by consulting the written archives of the Senate. The following were adopted:—

"It having pleased the Supreme Being, in the course of his all-wise and righteous providence, since the last session of the General Court, to remove by death the venerable Samuel Adams, lately Governor of this Commonwealth, and one of the most distinguished patriots of the United States, during our Revolutionary war with Great Britain,

"*Ordered*, That in token of sincere and profound respect for the memory of the distinguished services of that illustrious man, the members of both branches of the Legislature wear black crape on the left arm during the remainder of the present session of the General Court."

#### LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF SAMUEL ADAMS.

In the name of God, Amen. I, Samuel Adams of Boston, in the County of Suffolk, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Esquire, being, through Divine goodness, of sound and disposing mind and memory, and considering the uncertainty of human life, do make and ordain this to be my last will and testament, in manner and form following, viz.: Principally and first of all, I recommend my soul to that Almighty Being who gave it, and my body I commit to the dust, relying on the merits of Jesus Christ for a pardon of all my sins; and as to such worldly estate as God hath been pleased to bestow upon me, I give, devise, and dispose of the same in the following manner:—

<sup>1</sup> The phrase is James Sullivan's. See his *Life*, by Amory, II. 111. "It was whittled down," he says, "by Mason, Tudor, and others." It may be taken as an evidence of the extreme bitterness existing between the Republicans and Federalists, that partisan rancor on such an occasion could extend beyond the grave, and that men were found who could weigh the name of Samuel Adams against private and political prejudices.

*Imprimis.* I order that my executors hereinafter named dispose of all the real estate which I shall die seized and possessed of, not lying in the town of Boston, as soon as conveniently may be after my decease; and I further order, that my just debts and funeral charges be paid out of the proceeds of the real estate before mentioned; and if the said real estate shall not be sufficient for the payment of my debts and funeral charges, the deficiency shall be supplied out of my personal estate; and in case my real estate not lying in the town of Boston should yield a sum more than sufficient to pay my just debts and funeral charges, the surplus shall be placed upon interest, and the principal sum of such surplus and the interest thereof I dispose of in the way and to the uses hereinafter provided with respect to my real estate lying in Boston, or the proceeds thereof, if it shall be sold.

*Item.* I give to my beloved wife Elizabeth all her wearing apparel. I also give her such books as she was the owner of previous to my intermarriage with her; and I also give to my said wife one half of all my other personal estate, to her sole use and disposal.

*Item.* I give to my beloved daughter Hannah Wells the use and improvement of the residue of my personal estate during her natural life.

*Item.* I give to such of the children of my said daughter as may be living at the time of her decease, and such as shall legally represent them, if any of them should die before that time, in equal shares, all my real estate in the town of Boston, and all my personal estate, the use of which is given to my said daughter during her natural life. Reserving, nevertheless, to my said wife and daughter respectively the use and improvement of my real estate in Boston, and which I hereby give them; that is to say, that my said wife shall have the use and improvement of one half of the said real estate in Boston during her natural life, and my said daughter shall have the use and improvement of the other half thereof during her natural life, and in case my daughter shall survive my wife, she shall have the use and improvement of the whole of said real estate in Boston during her natural life.

*Item.* It is my will, and I further order, anything hereinbefore to the contrary notwithstanding, that if my said wife at any time be desirous of having my real estate in Boston sold, and of receiving one half of the interest of the proceeds thereof during her natural

life in lieu of the use and improvement of a moiety of said real estate, it shall be the duty of my executors, and they are hereby authorized to sell the same, and the principal sum arising therefrom shall be to the use and benefit of the children of my said daughter instead of the fee of said real estate and the interest thereof to the use of my said wife and daughter respectively in the proportion and for the terms mentioned in the article immediately preceding, in lieu of their right to the use and improvement of said real estate.

And I do hereby nominate and appoint my said wife Elizabeth, and Thomas Wells of Boston, aforesaid, gentleman, executors of this my last will and testament, hereby revoking all former will and wills by me heretofore made.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this twenty-ninth day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety.

SAMUEL ADAMS. [L. S.]

Signed, sealed, published, and declared by the said testator, Samuel Adams, as and for his last will and testament, in presence of us, who, at his request, in his presence and in the presence of each other, have hereunto subscribed our respective names as witnesses.

JOHN AVERY, JR.

JOHN SWEETZER, JR.

JOHN ROULSTONE.

SUFFOLK, SS.: COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS. — At a Probate Court held at Boston, within and for the county of Suffolk, on the 10th day of October, 1803, by the Honorable Thomas Dawes, Jr., Esq., Judge of Probate of said county, the annexed will being presented by Elizabeth Adams, the executor therein named, for probate, John Avery, Esq., appears and makes oath that he saw the said testator, Samuel Adams, sign, seal, and heard him publish the same instrument as his last will and testament, and that he was then, to the best of his discernment, of a sound disposing mind and memory, and that he and John Sweetzer, Jr., Esq., and John Roulstone, who are now deceased, subscribed their names thereto as witnesses in his presence.

THOMAS DAWES, JR., *J. Probate.*

Examined :

PERKINS NICHOLS, *Regr.*

The following discourse was delivered by a son of Oxenbridge Thacher, whose death, in 1765, created a vacancy in the Legislature, to fill which Samuel Adams was elected. Another son was the distinguished Dr. Peter Thacher, minister of Malden, and afterwards of Brattle Street Church in Boston. Some brief quotations from it have been made in the foregoing narrative to illustrate particular points; but the extreme scarcity of the pamphlet warrants its publication entire with any extended memoir of Samuel Adams. The author is indebted for this copy to Samuel G. Drake, Esq., of Boston.



A  
Tribute of Respect,  
TO THE MEMORY OF  
SAMUEL ADAMS, L.L.D. A.A.S.

LATE GOVERNOR OF THE  
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS;

WHO DIED, OCTOBER 2, 1803, IN THE  
82D YEAR OF HIS AGE.

EXPRESSED

IN A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED THE NEXT LORD'S DAY AFTER HIS  
FUNERAL.

Published by the Request of the Hearers.

---

BY THOMAS THACHER, A. M.  
MINISTER OF THE THIRD PARISH IN DEDHAM.

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—UTCUNQUE FERENT EA FACTA MINORES,  
VINCET AMOR PATRIÆ, LAUDUMQUE IMMENSA CUPIDO.  
*Virg. Æne. Lib. vi. l. 822.*

*Ne'er to those chambers, where the mighty rest,  
Since their foundation, came a nobler Guest:  
Nor e'er was to the bowers of bliss convey'd  
A fairer Spirit, or more welcome Shade. TICKEL.*

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DEDHAM:  
PRINTED AND SOLD BY G. Mann,  
January—1804.

## TRIBUTE OF RESPECT, &amp;c.

ECCLESIASTES vii. 1.

*A good name is better than precious ointment.*

The desire of present reputation, as well as future fame by existing in the good opinion and applause of posterity, is a principle deeply engraven on the human heart. Implanted by the DEITY, for wise and valuable purposes, it is the parent of actions useful and beneficent, as well as great and splendid. When bounded by religion and morality, it may be safely encouraged by the approbation, and supported by the gratitude, of mankind.

The wisest of men hath therefore sanctioned this principle by the declaration in the text, that *a good name is better than precious ointment*; because the former defies the ravages both of time and death, and exhibits to after periods the intellectual and moral pre-eminence of those who by their brilliant talents and conduct have commanded admiration, and for their important services to mankind have imposed an everlasting obligation on their own age and on posterity; whereas the latter can only preserve some faint and imperfect representation of the body, by screening it from the putrescence of the tomb.

Among nations, not only civilized and polished, but ignorant and barbarous, this sentiment has stimulated to noble and important enterprise; and the honor and even adoration which those great characters have received from their own and after generations is an unquestionable proof that it is founded on truth and nature. Nor are its rewards confined to him who obtaineth the prize. For, while on the one hand generous and noble minds are excited to distinguish themselves with zeal and ardor for their religion and country, on the other, the contemplation of moral and intellectual excellence, when delineated by example, affords a pleasing source of instruction and improvement for every grade in society.

It cannot indeed be denied that the love of fame, when neither bounded by piety nor benevolence, is a principle productive of incalculable mischief and misery to the human race; that in consequence of being actuated by it, men of great ability have sacrificed moral principle, their friends, and their country to their ambition; and

that their actions have, by a fortune they did not deserve, been embellished by the efforts of genius, and transmitted to after ages with honor and admiration.

Therefore we do not wonder that wise and good men are frugal of praise; nor that they are critical in examining the character and conduct of those who have lived in a former period. We ought both to justify and applaud them when they unveil the mask which hath concealed the crimes of the great, and when they throw aside that false mirror through which their character and moral complexion have been viewed.

But however sparing we ought to be in bestowing encomium upon the wicked, or cautious in deciding on the conduct of men of whose motives we are ignorant, yet uncommon merit, whether moral or mental, when exhibited before our eyes and senses, demands a tribute of respect; more especially when its efforts have been copiously evidenced in our own age and country. For if a good man in the shade of retirement, acquitting himself honorably in every relation of life, hath a claim to our approbation, if it be injustice to withhold it from his person when living, or his memory when dead, most certainly this tribute is due to him who, in addition to the practice of religion and social virtue, hath exhibited those powers of mind that fall to the lot of few, that goodness of heart which led him to the most excellent study and pursuit, that ardent patriotism which produced the most important advantages to his country; and who has for his past actions acquired such a celebrity of reputation as will both secure him a place in the brightest page of history, and entitle him to the gratitude of very late posterity. To suffer such an illustrious character to descend to the silent grave without those honors to his memory which prove our sensibility of his worth, to attempt to bury in silence and oblivion the important services he has performed, would expose us not only to the charge of envy, but to the blackest ingratitude. It would exhibit that sottish apathy and indifference which neither have penetration to discern, nor dignity of sentiment to admire, human nature, when ennobled by those qualities which produce glory to their owner and important advantage to mankind.

You will naturally suppose I have been led to these reflections by the death of the late Governor of this Commonwealth, who for so many years made a distinguished figure on the public stage, was

so important an instrument in the late Revolution, and to whom, upon every account, they are so directly applicable.

I am by no means fond of funeral encomium. You can all of you witness, that I have been sparing of drawing characters for the dead. Examples of religion and virtue have occurred since my residence in this place which might not have been improperly exhibited for your imitation. But there are also inconveniences arising from the practice which more than balance the good which might be expected. For some fault or weakness is to be found in the character of those whom we most love and esteem. There are few in the shade of private life whose reputation is so far elevated as to rise superior to envy and local prejudice. If all were noticed in this way whose moral merit rendered them worthy of it, it would raise expectation in other instances where such respect would be injurious. Besides, a character exhibited to the public eye should have some interesting and original traits. It should be eventful and uncommon, — in a word, so distinguished as to have a commanding influence on survivors. As these circumstances are not usually expected in retirement, so we observe that pre-eminent merit alone, in such a situation, is a sufficient warrant for deviating from general custom.

Reasons of a different kind have generally prevented me from noticing in this manner those eminent and worthy characters who have retired from the world when in a public station, — want of personal knowledge sufficient to undertake the duty; a wish to avoid the imputation of flattery to their connections; and at the same time a consciousness that there were others better qualified than myself to avail themselves of such an opportunity to acquire popularity and consideration. In this effort, no suspicion can exist of mercenary design. If censure is escaped, it will be as much as can be expected, and more than, under existing circumstances, can be rationally hoped.

It is not my intention to enter on a polemical defence of the political sentiments of the dead, or of the party to which he was allied. Such a subject is disagreeable, both to the inclination and habit of the speaker. Every man placed in so elevated a situation as the deceased is like *a city on a hill, he cannot be hid*. His life and actions are displayed before the world. All have a right to judge of them according to their own estimation. Fully persuaded the character about to be drawn will bear not only a critical, but a

malignant inspection, private friendship, though like the single soldier inhuming the ashes of the great Pompey, will not shrink back from offering one solitary suffrage.<sup>1</sup>

The remark of a celebrated writer, "that it is necessary for every great man to be born at a proper time," was never more verified than in the character we are about to portray. The same sentiment may be applied to the most celebrated men who have lived either in ancient or modern time. Had many of the most distinguished characters in Greece or Rome lived in any other age or in any other country or government besides that in which they flourished, they probably would have lived unknown, and their names perished in the same sepulchre with their body. Had the venerable first settlers of this Commonwealth lived in the present age, their manners would be derided, their virtues exploded, and themselves destined to occupy an inferior or retired grade in society. Or were some of our most conspicuous men to have lived when our country was first settled, they had sailed down the stream of life neglected, and would have been engulfed in darkness and oblivion. And to add no more, had the illustrious Washington, who, having merited and received the applause and admiration of the whole civilized world, expired with the universal groan of his country,—had he lived, I say, but seventy years earlier, he might have passed through life known only in a confined circle as the best private citizen. The wisdom, therefore, of Divine Providence will be strikingly displayed by an immediate review of the life of this great man of whom we are now speaking, by fitting him with such genius, disposition, and acquirements, so exactly adapted to the great and important part he was to act, as well as in opening those scenes before him on which these qualities were so splendidly displayed.

He was born at Boston, of a reputable family, in the year 1722. The superior powers of his mind were cultivated at the grammar

<sup>1</sup> The author, at the time this discourse was delivered, had no authentic information of the laudable attention paid by the government to the memory of Mr. Adams, in directing a public funeral; nor had he seen the excellent and ingenious biographical remarks of the Hon. Judge Sullivan on the subject, which, had they been printed as a pamphlet, had superseded the necessity of publishing this discourse. The author hath seen several other valuable testimonies to his memory, as well as noticed with pleasure the respect paid by the Legislature of the United States.

school in that place, and afterwards at the University of Harvard, in Cambridge, where he received its public honors in 1740.

Though we are not able to give any anecdotes of his early life, yet in respect to his literary progress we may very naturally infer from his after appearance in the world that he was one of the best scholars of that day. His correct moral deportment in every subsequent period of his life, as well as the silence of his enemies, amount to a demonstration that his juvenile years were neither stained by vice, nor yet degraded by indolence and folly.

His disposition for political inquiry, and the predominant sentiments which he retained to the conclusion of his life, were evidenced at an early period; for when he commenced Master of Arts in the year 1743, according to a custom then existing, each candidate proposed his own question for discussion; the subject of which was usually either religious, moral, physical, or political. The question proposed by Mr. Adams, the affirmative of which he defended, was this, "Whether it be lawful to resist the Supreme Magistrate, if the Commonwealth cannot otherwise be preserved?" So early was he in *avowing* an opinion scarcely *contemplated* at that day, unless in the retirement of a closet.

Early distinguished for his talents as a writer, his first attempts were marks of filial piety. In consequence of these efforts, he preserved the estate of his father from what he considered an unjust prosecution. Even in this cause, in which he had powerful interests to contend with him, by the acuteness of his wit and depth of his understanding he gained the respect of every party. And such was the influence of his pen and language, that the family estate was liberated from that prosecution by an act of the Legislature.<sup>1</sup>

He was known and celebrated as a political writer during the administration of Governor Shirley, whose character was respectable, and who was probably as great a friend to his country as the *time* in which he presided and the *offices* he sustained would admit.

<sup>1</sup> The father of Mr. Adams was a reputable magistrate in Boston, who unfortunately had engaged in the Land Bank bubble, and was one of its directors. In consequence of this embarrassment, his house was attached, and after a due course of law taken by execution. When exposed to sale, Mr. Adams said and wrote so much against the procedure, that no one ventured to become a purchaser. Some time after this, the Legislature liberated the directors from the prosecution.

Mr. Adams, however, was opposed to the union of so great a degree of civil and military power as was intrusted to that gentleman, and endeavored to awaken his countrymen to a sense of danger, though at a distance. It is true that the topics then discussed are of very little importance to the present age. But yet the few distinguished characters who yet survive speak with the highest respect of the wit, ingenuity, and profound argument discovered by the deceased, and affirm that the reputation he then gained laid the foundation of that public confidence and esteem which afterwards introduced him to those important situations where his fellow-citizens largely experienced those talents with which the God of nature had so amply endowed him.

The public mind being thus impressed in his favor, he was elected, in the year 1765, to represent his native city in the General Assembly. Important and interesting was this period. Our political horizon was overcast with clouds. "The thunder, which in past time had only grumbled in the air, was ready to burst upon our heads." The Stamp Act, and the claim of the British Parliament "to bind America in all cases whatsoever," was heard as a knell announcing the funeral of American liberty. Truly difficult and responsible was the duty of a pilot called to steer in so violent a tempest! Such, however, was the skill and dexterity discovered by our departed friend that even the favorable and flattering opinion which his fellow-citizens had formed was exceeded by the ability he displayed in directing their affairs. He became at once the most influential member of the Legislature. He was the soul that animated that respected body to all their most important resolutions, and to their unequivocal opposition to every unjust claim and innovation made by the corrupt ministers of Great Britain. In cases where other great and good men were perplexed and apprehensive that this ardor for liberty would hasten, not defeat, the design of despotism, this illustrious patriot remained undismayed. *Aut Caesar aut nullus* was his maxim. He wished either to see his *country* completely emancipated from every unjust, unconstitutional claim, or else that it might become the common sepulchre of its inhabitants; for *slavery* and *dependence* he abhorred, even in their mildest and most polished form.

For nearly ten years successively he continued in the Legislature; where, I presume, it will not be overrating his merit to af-

firm, that no one man (at least in the Northern Provinces) did so much, both in opposing the designs of our common enemy and in exciting the people to defend their privileges, as this departed patriot. He was a sentinel, ever at his post, a watchman ever awake to discern, and prepared to sound the alarm, when any danger approached.

When the charter of this late Province was dissolved, he was chosen a member of the General Congress, and of the Provincial Convention, which succeeded the legal and constitutional government. In these employments it would exhaust both your time and patience to relate the great and important services he performed. We leave the last to some correct historian more capable of his duty. Sufficient it will be for us to observe, that the character Mr. Adams had acquired in his native Province was preserved and sustained when he was a member of the General Council of these States. The great qualities of his mind were more fully displayed in proportion as the field for their exertion was extended. And the records of that period will announce, that the energy of his language was not inferior to the depth of his mind. It was an eloquence admirably adapted to the age in which he flourished, and exactly calculated to attain the object of his pursuit. It may be described in the language of the poet, "Thoughts which breathe and words which burn,"—an eloquence, not consisting of theatrical gesture, or the pomp of words, not that kind which hath been described as "more concerned for the cadence of a period than the fall of a commonwealth"; but that which was a true picture of a heart glowing with the sublime enthusiasm and ardor of patriotism; an eloquence to which, as before, his fellow-citizens had listened with applause and rapture, so afterwards senates heard with reverence and conviction; an eloquence little inferior to the best models in antiquity for simplicity, majesty, and persuasion.

The power of language was, however, by no means his only qualification for the important post his country had assigned him. He had a penetration which no artifice nor sophistry could deceive, a decision which no difficulty or embarrassment could discourage, and a fortitude which no danger, however formidable, could appall. To these might be added a happy address to the heart and understanding of those who were his colleagues; so that he could combine men of opposite interest in supporting and establishing any favorite



point; by which accomplishments he became one of the most active and efficient members of the General Congress. And though in this, as well as in the former situation which he filled, he was joined by an illustrious band of patriots, who deserve the eternal gratitude of their country, yet among many of these choice spirits he appeared (to borrow the language of the Roman poet) "as the moon among the lesser lights of heaven."

Of the high importance and consideration attached to his character, what greater proof can be adduced than that he and another eminent patriot<sup>1</sup> were proscribed from a general pardon in the last act of state exercised by the British government in this Commonwealth! We certainly have no reason to doubt but that he would have maintained his principles as firmly on the scaffold as in the Senate, had Providence called him to the dreadful sacrifice.

When our valuable State Constitution was framed and adopted, Mr. Adams was chosen a member of the Senate, which honorable body elected him their president. In this office he remained several years, executing its incident duties with great correctness and fidelity. While in this station, he performed an important service for his country; for commotions having arisen in the western counties, he and several other gentlemen were joined in a committee to visit the disaffected places, and to quiet, by their authority and influence, the begun sedition. This trust was executed with such propriety and firmness that every trace of disturbance immediately vanished. Thus were the seeds of a dangerous rebellion crushed in embryo; and the more important was this benefit to this country, as the war between America and Great Britain then actually existed.

After being elected several years a member of the Executive Council, he was, in the year 1789, elected Second Magistrate of this Commonwealth. In this office he continued till the year 1794, when at that election, being the next preceding the death of Mr. Hancock, he was chosen Governor. In this honorable station the repeated suffrages of his country confirmed him, until in the year 1797, being oppressed with age and infirmity, he voluntarily retired from every public employment.

That some acts of his administration were censured while he was

<sup>1</sup> The Hon. John Hancock, Esq.

First Magistrate cannot be denied. That there was a division and discord in the opinions of men who deserved equally well of their country; that it was carried to a very painful length; that it hath since progressed in a very affecting manner, even to this day; that it now threatens our country with terrible calamity, — are facts, alas! too obvious to be concealed. Every man, however, of real worth and respectability, who differed from the Governor in opinion, was ready to allow that his intention was pure and upright; nor could they be induced to believe that one who sustained so venerable a name, and had so long been the friend and father of his country, would ever err from design. They thought a candid allowance ought to be made for the infirmity attending the decline of life, as well as for a mind which, though retaining much of its former vigor, yet in some degree sympathized with a debilitated constitution.

Though in every part of his conduct he demonstrated himself the friend of his country and an advocate for the rights of mankind, yet he did not, like some pretended patriots, vary his opinion with the mere whim and caprice of the multitude. But when differing from the majority, he acted with great independence and decision. It was from this manly, open principle, at the close of the late war, he opposed a peace with Britain, unless the Northern States retained their full privilege in the fishery; though it is credibly reported such a peace was then patronized by the French Ministry. The same dignified consistency led him, in the year 1787, when he was of the Council to the Executive, to advise the Supreme Magistrate to inflict that just condign punishment which the judicial sentence had awarded on the detestable leaders of that banditti who raised the rebellion in 1786. And we doubt not he was actuated by a motive equally pure and correct to oppose the treaty with Great Britain, though in this last instance he was almost alone. Certain it is, that he put his election as Chief Magistrate to hazard by the avowal of a sentiment so opposite and disagreeable to the favorite wishes of the most influential and leading characters in the Commonwealth.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Without giving any opinion upon the utility or injury of that treaty to the United States, the author feels himself warranted to affirm, that, unless there be such a degree of candor in the people as to admit every Chief Magistrate to act with independence in those important trusts of deciding on laws and measures, according to his best and most deliberate conviction, that every trait of republican government will soon vanish, and the community become a prey

We cannot close our remarks on his political character, without affirming that his integrity was proof, not only against all fear and terror, but against every species of corruption and blandishment offered him as a temptation. That many such attempts were made is very probable; considering, on the one hand, the influence and consideration he possessed with his fellow-citizens; and on the other, the depressed and deranged state of his private affairs. But we shall only speak of such facts as were either believed from credible report or are properly authenticated by documents of that period.

Some years previous to the Revolution it was reported "that Mr. Adams was offered a lucrative place under the British government, if he would change his political conduct, and abandon that cause and interest in which he was engaged; that this offer was made after the dissolution of the General Court of that year, which happened soon after its first session; that, in consequence of this last circumstance, he was deprived of a stipend allowed him by the Representatives as their clerk, which, though small, still was a great part of his support: but yet, in this critical condition, he reprobated the offer, choosing rather to subsist by individual or common beneficence, or even perish, than to sacrifice the cause of truth, and betray the liberty of his country." How far this particular anecdote is founded on fact, I do not determine. But it is plain, from indubitable testimony, that some efforts of this kind had been made;

to some successful usurper. If it be said the people will always adhere to their best interests, it is admitted. But yet, they want time and reflection, as much as an individual, before they can properly determine. If we were under a royal government, or an hereditary aristocracy, there would be just causes to apprehend danger from the exercise of those trusts which we deposit with our Executive. But the short time that intervenes between every act of this sort and a new election gives assurance that if injury hath been designed it will be soon redressed. Besides, under a form of government like ours, every First Magistrate is a representative of the people. Any exercise of his right contrary to the sense of the Legislature is but an appeal to the fountain and origin of all power,—the people. The latter in their sovereign capacity will determine whom of their servants they think most worthy of their confidence. Whenever any faithful Magistrate is called by duty and conscience to differ from his fellow-citizens who fill a respectable department, he will find his situation "a painful pre-eminence." But yet such firmness may at some time save the community from terrible convulsion and distraction,—may I not add, from total ruin?

for in the private correspondence of Governor Hutchinson with the English Ministry, he replies to a question put to him by some one of them, or of their friends, — *Why hath not Mr. Adams been taken off from his opposition by an office?* — that “such was the obstinacy and inflexible disposition of the man, that he never would be conciliated by any office or gift whatever; that, was he even to accept of any emolument or favor from the Crown, he would be still more confirmed in his opposition; and therefore such an attempt would answer no manner of purpose.” What an honorable testimony this from a gentleman who was his avowed political enemy and antagonist! “What the Eastern sage in vain wished for, our departed friend obtained.<sup>1</sup> *His adversary had written a book.* He had, without intending it, engraven his fame in characters never to be erased, and given such a memorial of his conflicting, triumphant virtue as is worthy the applause and admiration of every future age.”

Had there been no other proof of his uncorruptible integrity except what we have just recited, it would have entitled him to an honorable remembrance in the annals of his country. But the fact is, that his virtue was repeatedly tried in the crucible of poverty and necessity; that his sensibility was equally wounded by the neglect of his *friends*, and by the malignity of his *enemies*; that under each, he was triumphant, and that every new trial exhibited some new proof that no external evil or depression could tempt him to any conduct unworthy of his reputation. For while he was occupied abroad in the most important and responsible public duties, the amiable partner of his cares supported the family at home by manual industry; and notwithstanding his whole resources were so

<sup>1</sup> This testimony from Mr. H.'s letters, as well as Governor Adams's conduct respecting his father's estate, and his reputation as a writer in the time of Governor Shirley, I received from the verbal communication of my venerable and highly esteemed friend, the Honorable Samuel Dexter, Esq., who was for a number of years previous to the Revolution the particular and intimate friend of Mr. Adams, was one of the committee of the General Court, in 1775, for publishing Hutchinson's letters, and who still retains those very superior powers of mind which distinguished him in early life, and enabled him to make so important a figure among the friends of his country at that period. It is highly probable that the letters referred to are preserved in the archives of the Historical Society; if not, they would be well worth their care to collect and reprint as historical memoranda.

small that there are few among my hearers who would not have deemed it a very imperfect support, yet such was the union of dignity with economy, that, to the foreigner or the native casually visiting the family, nothing of degradation or abasement appeared, but every circumstance of propriety necessary to the honorable grade which his country had assigned him. In this situation did his country permit this illustrious character to remain; and while inferior merit and circumstantial claims, oftentimes trivial, entitled their owners to large donations from the public, he knew, by very painful experience, the ingratitude and baseness of mankind. It would be, however, unjust in us to pass over in silence the marks of friendship and attachment which in those periods were exhibited by worthy and respectable individuals to the deceased, which did honor to themselves, the object of their esteem, and to human nature. The speaker is not able, from knowledge or acquaintance, to announce their names; but the testimony of their conscience is a better reward than any praise in his power to bestow.

In this honorable and voluntary poverty he continued to a very late period of his life; and had it not been prevented by the painful, melancholy event of the death of an only, valuable son, by which he obtained a decent competency, he must have recurred either to individual or to common charity for the continuation of his existence. Such contempt of opulence, of personal convenience, is held in very little estimation at the present day; and I know not but that this statement of facts, so honorable to the deceased, may be viewed in a very different light by some. But in the most splendid eras of antiquity, nay, in some former period of our own history, such temperance and such elevation would have been highly applauded; neither would such virtue, alas! now almost obsolete, have been attributed to pride, to indolence, nor yet to the want of wisdom to estimate riches by their just value.

The dignity of his manners was well expressed by the majesty of his countenance, — an index of a mind never debased by grovelling ideas nor occupied in contemplating low pursuits. Yet this appearance was accompanied with a suavity of temper, qualifying him for those charities and graces so highly ornamental to the most sublime and dignified character. Few are there who better discharged the social relations of life than our departed friend; neither would it be easy to find a more tender husband, more affectionate parent, or

more faithful friend. He would easily relax from severer care and study, to enjoy the delight of private conversation. Nor did he ever omit any patronage or kindness due to any in the circle of his acquaintance which was in his power to execute. So that some who disliked his political conduct loved and revered him as a neighbor and friend. But though he could thus disrobe himself from more elevated duty to attend the calls of common life; yet his life and manners embraced such correct decorum as never to deserve a reproof from the wise or good. His house was the seat of domestic peace, of method and regularity. In a word, — to borrow the language of a very great, in describing the life and manners of a very good man, — “When did his walls ever witness any tumult or dissipation, when was any spectacle or conduct either to be seen or heard within them inconsistent with the discipline of a most venerable and holy man?”<sup>1</sup>

While we are employed in reviewing other laudable and distinguished traits in the character of this great man, it would be highly blameable to omit his reverence for the Supreme Being, his belief in Divine revelation, and his attention to every religious duty. His mind was early imbued with piety, as well as cultivated by science. But his religion was rational; it was free from bigotry as from ostentation. It was known by its best effects, i. e. a life free from vice, and productive both of benevolent affections and undeviating morality. As he supposed the institutions of religion and its practical precepts produced this effect; so no one was more uniformly steady than he in cultivating the practice of them. Accordingly, his family can attest the constancy of his morning and evening devotion, — the temple of the Most High God, his reverence for the Christian Sabbath, and the altar of Jesus Christ, his compliance with every ritual derived from the authority of Heaven. If he preferred the mode of divine worship in which he was born and educated to other religious institutions of antiquity, or to other forms in which Christianity has appeared, it was not from the prejudices of education, or mere mechanical habit; but because he conceived our churches, when confined to their original design, were excellent schools of morality; that they were adapted to promote the future happiness of mankind; and because by experience he had known

<sup>1</sup> Cicero for Deiotarus.

them a powerful auxiliary in defending the *civil* as well as *religious* privileges of America. In this mode of thinking he was instituted. The purity of his life witnessed the sincerity of his profession, and with the same faith he expired. The last printed production of which he was the author has given unquestionable proofs of his belief in, and respect for, our holy religion.

The celebrated Plutarch assigned this as his first and highest motive for recording the lives of great and good men, "that, by meditating on their sublime virtues, he might both enlarge his understanding and correct his heart." Much may be collected from the religious and moral character of this great man whom we have attempted to describe which will assist us in the same laudable design. Such an example of piety and purity is better than a system of ethics to instruct us in our duty to Almighty God, and in the practice of those moral and social virtues which embellish and dignify human life. We have had presented before us a man struggling with adverse fortune, yet elevated by his mind above every external evil; never discouraged by the numerous obstacles opposing his progress; performing with fortitude every dangerous duty; equally uniform, open, and consistent in his opinion and conduct, under the cruel coldness and negligence of his friend, as under the malignant obloquy and rancor of his enemy; and finally, under the darkest scenes of his existence, refreshing the native energy of his soul by sublime contemplation on the wisdom and goodness of the eternal Providence. And now let me ask whether the portrait thus exhibited doth not warrant us in borrowing the eulogium of the son of Sirah on King Josiah, and applying it to our departed friend. "His remembrance is like the composition of a perfume made by the art of the apothecary. It is sweet as honey in all mouths, and as music at a banquet of wine."

But in addition to the private virtues of the man, contemplate the sage and patriot, — the important instrument of American sovereignty and independence. Therefore, for a moment, review some of the numerous advantages of our separation from Britain. Our country free from those scenes of war and carnage which has crimsoned Europe, and now threaten it with a second desolation, behold the opulence introduced by our enlarged commerce, our progression in agriculture, arts, and sciences, the "gorgeous palaces" erected by individuals, the magnificent public fabrics, and "the cloud-

capt towers," appearing to pierce the very sky; consider the plenty and felicity disseminated among every class in society, — can you possibly cease to venerate the memory of one whose counsels and efforts were so important a means in procuring them! *Will you suffer the poor man whose wisdom relieved the city to be basely forgotten?*

Finally, if we wish to continue those copious blessings already enumerated, and to convey them for an inheritance to posterity, let us cultivate the memory and virtue of those illustrious men by whom they were obtained. Let their august image ever dwell before our eyes; that they may still live, not merely on marble or canvas, or yet in the historic page, but in the heart and morals of the survivor. Then may we expect from the tomb of the patriots, as the phoenix from its ashes, their exalted worth, their dignified qualities, will be newly delineated in the life and actions of posterity; and that our country will still produce characters so elevated and noble, that even those venerable shades will cheerfully hail them as kindred spirits. But if, which God forbid! we sink in luxury and licentiousness; if our hearts are cankered with avarice, and we become dead to every noble and generous principle; if the torch of civil discord is blown up, and is permitted to blaze with increasing fury; if unbridled faction and unprincipled ambition are elevated to dominion, while true patriotism and genuine worth are thrown into obscurity, — then may we expect a total eclipse of our past and present glory. We shall be ripe for the avenging hand of Heaven. Every footstep of order and liberty will vanish, and the iron age of despotism most probably succeed. Then may it be said of this great and good man, whose memory and virtue we have celebrated, as well as other illustrious luminaries whose eyes are now closed in the slumbers of the grave, "*that Heaven hath not so much deprived them of life, as rewarded them with death.*"

FINIS.



WILL OF MRS. ELIZABETH ADAMS.<sup>1</sup>

In the name of God, Amen. I, Elizabeth Adams of Boston, in the County of Suffolk, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, widow, being of sound and perfect mind and memory, and being in my usual health of body, but calling to mind the uncertainty of life, do make this my last will and testament. I commend my soul into the hands of my blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and, depending absolutely, entirely, and exclusively on his atonement and finished work of righteousness for the pardon of my sins and acceptance with God to eternal life, I commit my body to the earth to be decently and prudently buried at the discretion of my executor hereafter named. Respecting my worldly estate, after all my debts, charges, and expenses are paid, I dispose of the same as follows, viz.: *Imprimis*. I give and bequeath to my daughter Hannah Wells any one of my gowns which she may choose. I also give her my picture, and ten dollars to buy a ring. — *Item*. I give and bequeath to Elizabeth Wells, daughter of the aforesaid Hannah, six chairs of my own working, six pictures which were given me by Captain Homans, one half of my books, and any one of my gowns she may choose, after the choice of her mother as aforesaid. — *Item*. I give to Thomas Wells, son of my said daughter, Stackhouse on the Bible, in two volumes, and half the remainder of my books.

*Item*. I give to Samuel [Adams] Wells, brother of Thomas aforesaid, the other half of the remainder of my books. — *Item*. I give to my sister Mary Newell three hundred dollars. I also give to my sister Newell one of my gowns. — *Item*. I give to my niece Mildred Byles one half of my wearing apparel, after taking out the gowns herein particularly disposed of, and six hundred dollars, she paying the lawful interest thereof to her mother during her natural life.

*Item*. I give to Abijah Adams two hundred dollars, and ten dollars to his wife to buy a ring. — *Item*. I give to William Donnison, Esq., two hundred dollars, and ten dollars to his wife to buy a ring. — *Item*. I give to Mrs. Abigail Leighton fifty dollars and two third parts of all the residue and remainder of my wearing apparel, not herein otherwise disposed of; and I give the other third part of

<sup>1</sup> The widow of Samuel Adams died in May, 1808, aged seventy-four.

the residue and remainder of my wearing apparel, not otherwise herein disposed of, to the female domestic servant who shall live with me during the time of my last sickness.

*Item.* I give to Joseph Allen, Esq., and Samuel Allen, both of Worcester, and to Mrs. Avery, wife of the Reverend Joseph Avery of Holden, ten dollars each for a ring of Mr. Adams's and my hair, which hair is reserved in my little trunk for that purpose. —

*Item.* I give to each of the children of my brother Francis Wells ten dollars to buy a ring. — *Item.* I give to Mr. William Breed ten dollars to buy a ring. — *Item.* I give to Francis Wells and his sister, lately Mary Wells, now the wife of Joseph Plummer, both of the County of Burk, near Wynesborough, in the State of Georgia, children of my late brother Andrew Elton Wells, all the residue and remainder of my estate, real, personal, and mixed, of which I may die seized and not hereinbefore disposed of, to have and to hold to them and their heirs forever; but if at the time this will shall take effect, the said Francis and Mary last mentioned shall both be dead, leaving no children, then it is my will that the said residue and remainder of all my estate, real, personal, and mixed, rest in the hands of my executor as a fund, the interest of which is to be applied to the relief and benefit of the virtuous poor of the town of Boston.

*Item.* It is my will that all my household goods not hereinbefore disposed of be sold at public auction to the highest bidder. And lastly, I do hereby constitute, ordain, and appoint William Donnison of Boston, in the county and Commonwealth aforesaid, Esquire, sole executor of this my last will and testament, who is to be compensated for his services without affecting the legacy hereinbefore given to him. In testimony whereof I do hereunto set my hand and seal this fifteenth day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seven, at Boston.

ELIZABETH ADAMS. [*A seal.*]

Signed, sealed, published, and declared by the above-named Elizabeth Adams to be her last will and testament, in the presence of us, who have hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses in the presence of the testator.

GEO. BENDER, JR.

WILLIAM B. WHITE.

ELIJAH WHITE.

*Memorandum.* Having given to my daughter Hannah Wells two thousand dollars, and the interest of three thousand dollars due for many years from her husband in my lifetime and before the making of this will, is the reason why I have not given her any more in this will than what is hereinbefore mentioned in the first item.

ELIZABETH ADAMS.

Whereas, on the fifteenth day of December last past, I made my last will and testament, and by mistake therein I gave to Mrs. Abigail Leighton a part of my wearing apparel, I do therefore revoke that bequest as far as relates to the said apparel; and I do now give and bequeath the said wearing apparel to Mrs. Ann Wheeler which was before given to Mrs. Leighton; and it is my intention in my lifetime to put up and mark for Mrs. Wheeler the said apparel; but if I should not be able to do it, then my executor will set out the same after my death. I do also give and bequeath to my brother Ebenezer Wells twenty dollars to buy rings for himself and his wife; and I declare this to be a codicil to be annexed to, and to make a part of, my last will and testament which I have hereinbefore described. In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this fourteenth day of February, eighteen hundred and eight.

ELIZABETH ADAMS.

Signed, sealed, published, and declared by the said Elizabeth Adams as a codicil to be annexed to her last will and testament in presence of us,

MARY WHITE,  
MARY GREENE.

[L. S.] SUFFOLK, SS.: COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.—  
At a Probate Court holden at Boston within and for the County of Suffolk on the ninth day of May, Anno Domini 1808, by the Honorable Thomas Dawes, Jr., Esq., Judge of the Probate of Wills, &c., the annexed will, dated the 15th December, 1808, being presented by William Donnison, Esq., the executor therein named, for probate, George Bender, Jr., and Elijah White, both of Boston, in said county, appear and make oath that they saw the said Elizabeth Adams sign, seal, and heard her publish the same instrument as her last will and testament; and that she was then, to the best of their discernment,

of a sound disposing mind and memory; and that they, with William B. White, who is absent, subscribed their names thereto as witnesses in the presence of said testator and of each other. And the annexed codicil being also presented by said executor, Mary Greene appears and makes oath that she saw said testatrix sign, seal, and publish the same as a codicil to said will, and she then appeared to be of a sound disposing mind, and that she, said Greene, with Mary White, who is absent, subscribed their names as witnesses of said codicil in presence of said testatrix and of each other; and all the heirs at law of said deceased having had due notice, and now making no objection, I do prove, approve, and allow said will and codicil, and order the same to be recorded. Given under my hand and seal of office the day and year before written.

THOMAS DAWES, JR.,  
*Judge of Probate.*

Examined:

JOHN HEARD, JR., *Reg.*

# A P P E N D I X I.

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THE ORATION SAID TO HAVE BEEN DELIVERED BY SAMUEL  
ADAMS AT PHILADELPHIA, AUGUST 1, 1776.

(See Vol. II. pp. 439, 440.)



A N  
O R A T I O N

Delivered at the STATE-HOUSE,

I N

P H I L A D E L P H I A,

T O

A very NUMEROUS AUDIENCE;

On THURSDAY the 1st of AUGUST  
1776;

By S A M U E L A D A M S,

MEMBER of the \*\*\*\* \* the GENERAL  
C O N G R E S S

O F

THE \*\*\*\*\* OF AMERICA.

---

Per damna, per cædes, ab ipso  
Ducit opes, animumque ferro.

Oh! save my Country, Heaven! shall be my last.

HOR.

POPE.

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PHILADELPHIA Printed;  
LONDON, Re-printed for E. JOHNSON, No. 4,  
Ludgate-Hill.

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M.DCC.LXXVI.





# ORATION.

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COUNTRYMEN AND BRETHREN:—

I would gladly have declined an honor to which I find myself unequal. I have not the calmness and impartiality which the infinite importance of this occasion demands. I will not deny the charge of my enemies, that resentment for the accumulated injuries of our country, and an ardor for her glory, rising to enthusiasm, may deprive me of that accuracy of judgment and expression which men of cooler passions may possess. Let me beseech you, then, to hear me with caution, to examine without prejudice, and to correct the mistakes into which I may be hurried by my zeal.

Truth loves an appeal to the common sense of mankind. Your unperverted understandings can best determine on subjects of a practical nature. The positions and plans which are said to be above the comprehension of the multitude may be always suspected to be visionary and fruitless. He who made all men hath made the truths necessary to human happiness obvious to all.

Our forefathers threw off the yoke of Popery in religion ; for you is reserved the honor of levelling the popery of politics. They opened the Bible to all, and maintained the capacity of every man to judge for himself in religion. Are we sufficient for the comprehension of the sublimest spiritual truths, and unequal to material and temporal ones? Heaven hath trusted us with the management of things for eternity, and man denies us ability to judge of the present, or to know from our feelings and experience what will make us happy. “You can discern,” say they, “objects distant and remote, but cannot perceive those within your grasp. Let us have the distribution of present goods, and cut out and manage as you please the interests of futurity.” This day, I trust, the reign of political protestantism will commence. We have explored the temple of royalty,

and found that the idol we have bowed down to has eyes which see not, ears that hear not our prayers, and a heart like the nether millstone.<sup>1</sup> We have this day restored the Sovereign to whom alone men ought to be obedient. He reigns in heaven, and with a propitious eye beholds his subjects assuming that freedom of thought and dignity of self-direction which he bestowed on them. From the rising to the setting sun may his kingdom come.

Having been a slave to the influence of opinions early acquired and distinctions generally received, I am ever inclined not to despise, but pity, those who are yet in darkness. But to the eye of reason what can be more clear than that *all men* have an equal right to happiness? Nature made no other distinction than that of higher or lower degrees of power of mind and body. But what mysterious distribution of character has the craft of statesmen, more fatal than priestcraft, introduced?

According to their doctrine, the offspring of perhaps the lewd embraces of a successful invader shall, from generation to generation, arrogate the right of lavishing on their pleasures a proportion of the fruits of the earth more than sufficient to supply the wants of thousands of their fellow-creatures, claim authority to manage them like beasts of burden, and without superior industry, capacity, or virtue, nay, though disgraceful to humanity by their ignorance, intemperance, and brutality, shall be deemed best calculated to frame laws, and to consult for the welfare of society.

<sup>1</sup> The homage that is paid in some countries to monarchs and their favorites is disgraceful to humanity. Should one of my honest countrymen be suddenly conveyed to an European court, he would fancy himself admitted into some heathen temple. The policy of courtiers seems to have been to render their sovereigns as dependent on themselves as possible, by accustoming them to hear with their ears, see with their eyes, and perform the most common offices with their assistance and under their direction; like the cunning of priests, who labor to place themselves between the Deity and mankind, and to make themselves the only channels of communication between earth and Heaven. Such monarchs resemble Rabelais's Queen, who never chewed anything; not that her teeth were not good and strong, and that her food did not require mastication, but such was the indispensable ceremonial of her court: her officers took her meat and chewed it nobly, having their mouths lined with crimson satin, and their teeth cased over with fine white ivory; after this they passed it into her stomach by a golden pipe. — *Rabelais*, lib. 5. [One sentence of this note has been omitted. — W.]

Were the talents and virtues which Heaven has bestowed on men given merely to make them more obedient drudges, to be sacrificed to the follies and ambition of a few, or were not the noble gifts so equally dispensed with a divine purpose and law, that they should, as nearly as possible, be equally exerted, and the blessings of Providence be equally enjoyed by all? Away, then, with those absurd systems which, to gratify the pride of a few, debase the greatest part of our species below the order of men! What an affront to the King of the universe to maintain that the happiness of a monster sunk in debauchery, and spreading desolation and murder among men, — of a Caligula, a Nero, or a Charles, — is more precious in his sight than that of millions of his suppliant creatures who do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with their God! No! in the judgment of Heaven, there is no other superiority among men than a superiority in wisdom and virtue. And can we have a safer model in forming ours? The Deity, then, has not given any order or family of men authority over others, and if any men have given it, they only could give it for themselves. Our forefathers, 'tis said, consented to be subject to the laws of Great Britain. I will not at present dispute it, nor mark out the limits and conditions of their submission; but will it be denied that they contracted to pay obedience, and to be under the control of Great Britain, because it appeared to them most beneficial in their then present circumstances and situation? We, my countrymen, have the same right to consult and provide for our happiness which they had to promote theirs. If they had a view to posterity in their contracts, it must have been to advance the felicity of their descendants. If they erred in their expectations and prospects, we can never be condemned for a conduct which they would have recommended had they foreseen our present condition.

Ye darkeners of counsel, who would make the property, lives, and religion of millions depend on the evasive interpretations of musty parchments, who would send us to antiquated charters of uncertain and contradictory meaning, to prove that the present generation are not bound to be victims to cruel and unforgiving despotism, tell us whether our pious and generous ancestors bequeathed to us the miserable privilege of having the rewards of our honest industry, the fruits of those fields which they purchased and bled for, wrested from us at the will of men over whom we have no check? Did they contract for us that, with folded arms, we should expect that justice

and mercy from brutal and inflamed invaders which had been denied to our supplications at the foot of the throne? Were we to hear our character as a people ridiculed with indifference? Did they promise for us that our meekness and patience should be insulted, our coasts harassed, our towns demolished and plundered, and our wives and offspring exposed to nakedness, hunger, and death, without our feeling the resentment of men, and exerting those powers of self-preservation which God has given us? No man had once a greater veneration for Englishmen than I entertained. They were dear to me as branches of the same parental trunk, and partakers of the same religion and laws. I still view with respect the remains of the Constitution as I would a lifeless body which had once been animated by a great and heroic soul. But when I am roused by the din of arms; when I behold legions of foreign assassins paid by Englishmen to imbrue their hands in our blood; when I tread over the uncoffined bones of my countrymen, neighbors, and friends; when I see the locks of a venerable father torn by savage hands, and a feeble mother clasping her infants to her bosom, and on her knees imploring their lives from her own slaves, whom *Englishmen* have allured to treachery and murder; when I behold my country, once the seat of industry, peace, and plenty, changed by *Englishmen* to a theatre of blood and misery, — Heaven forgive me if I cannot root out those passions which it has implanted in my bosom, and detest submission to a people who have either ceased to be human or have not virtue enough to feel their own wretchedness and servitude.

Men who content themselves with the semblance of truth and a display of words talk much of our obligations to Great Britain *for protection!* Had she *a single eye* to *our* advantage? A nation of shopkeepers<sup>1</sup> are very seldom so disinterested. Let us not be so amused with words; the extension of *her* commerce was her object. When she defended our coasts she fought *for her* customers, and convoyed our ships loaded with wealth, which we had acquired *for her* by our industry. She has treated us as beasts of burden, whom the lordly masters cherish that *they may carry a greater load.* Let us inquire also against whom she has protected us? Against *her own* enemies with whom we had no quarrel, or only on *her account,* and against whom we always readily exerted our wealth and strength

<sup>1</sup> [This may be the original of Bonaparte's well-known expression, as the oration was translated into French, and published at Paris. — W.]

when they were required. Were these Colonies backward in giving assistance to Great Britain when they were called upon in 1739 to aid the expedition against Carthagera? They at that time sent three thousand men to join the British army, although the war commenced without their consent. But the last war, 't is said, was purely American. This is a vulgar error, which, like many others, has gained credit by being confidently repeated. The dispute between the courts of Great Britain and France related to the limits of Canada and Nova Scotia. The controverted territory was not claimed by any in the Colonies, but by the Crown of Great Britain. It was therefore their own quarrel. The infringement of a right which England had, by the treaty of Utrecht, of trading in the Indian country of Ohio was another cause of the war. The French seized large quantities of British manufacture, and took possession of a fort which a company of British merchants and factors had erected for the security of their commerce. The war was therefore waged in defence of lands claimed by the Crown and for the protection of *British property*. The French had at that time no quarrel with America; and, as appears by letters sent from their commander-in-chief to some of the Colonies, wished to remain in peace with us. The part, therefore, which we then took, and the miseries to which we exposed ourselves, ought to be charged to our affection for Britain. These Colonies granted more than their proportion to the support of the war. They raised, clothed, and maintained nearly twenty-five thousand men; and so sensible were the people of England of our great exertions, that a message was annually sent to the House of Commons purporting, that "his Majesty, being highly satisfied of the zeal and vigor with which his faithful subjects in North America had exerted themselves in defence of *his Majesty's* just rights and possessions, recommended it to the House to take the same into consideration, and enable him to give them a proper compensation."

But what purpose can arguments of this kind answer? Did the protection we received annul our rights as men, and lay us under an obligation of being miserable?

Who among you, my countrymen, that is a father, would claim authority to make your child a slave, because you had nourished him in his infancy?

'Tis a strange species of generosity which requires a return infinitely more valuable than anything it could have bestowed; that

demands as a reward for a defence of our property *a surrender* of those inestimable privileges to the arbitrary will of vindictive tyrants, which alone give value to that very property.

Political right and public happiness are different words for the same idea. They who wander into metaphysical labyrinths, or have recourse to original contracts to determine the rights of men, either impose on themselves or mean to delude others. Public utility is the only certain criterion. It is a test which brings disputes to a speedy decision, and makes its appeal to the feelings of mankind. The force of truth has obliged men to use arguments drawn from this principle, who were combating it in practice and speculation. The advocates for a despotic government and non-resistance to the magistrate employ reasons in favor of their systems, drawn from a consideration of their tendency to promote public happiness.

The Author of nature directs all his operations to the production of the greatest good, and has made human virtue to consist in a disposition and conduct which tends to the common felicity of his creatures. An abridgment of the natural freedom of man, by the institution of political societies, is vindicable only on this foot. How absurd, then, is it to draw arguments from the nature of civil society for the annihilation of those very ends which society was intended to procure. Men associate for their mutual advantage. Hence the good and happiness of the members — that is, the majority of the members — of any state, is the great standard by which everything relating to that state must finally be determined; and though it may be supposed that a body of people may be bound by a voluntary resignation (which they have been so infatuated as to make) of all their interests to a single person, or to a few, it can never be conceived that the resignation is obligatory to their posterity; because it is *manifestly contrary to the good of the whole that it should be so*.

These are the sentiments of the wisest and most virtuous champions of freedom. Attend to a portion on this subject from a book in our defence, written, I had almost said, by the pen of inspiration. "I lay no stress," says he, "on charters; they derive their rights from a higher source. It is inconsistent with common sense to imagine that any people would ever think of settling in a distant country on any such condition, or that the people from whom they withdrew should forever be masters of their property, and have power to subject them to any modes of government they pleased. And

had there been express stipulations to this purpose in all the charters of the Colonies, they would, in my opinion, be no more bound by them than if it had been stipulated with them that they should go naked, or expose themselves to the incursions of wolves and tigers."

Such are the opinions of every virtuous and enlightened patriot in Great Britain. Their petition to Heaven is, "That there may be one free country left upon earth, to which they may fly when venality, luxury, and vice shall have *completed* the ruin of liberty there."

Courage, then, my countrymen! our contest is not only whether we ourselves shall be free, but whether there shall be left to mankind an asylum on earth for civil and religious liberty. Dismissing, therefore, the *justice* of our cause as incontestable, the only question is, What is *best* for us to pursue in our present circumstances?

The doctrine of *dependence* on Great Britain is, I believe, generally exploded; but as I would attend to the honest weakness of the simplest of men, you will pardon me if I offer a few words on that subject.

We are now on this continent, to the astonishment of the world, three millions of souls united in one common cause. We have large armies, well disciplined and appointed, with commanders inferior to none in military skill, and superior in activity and zeal. We are furnished with arsenals and stores beyond our most sanguine expectations, and foreign nations are waiting to crown our success by their alliances. These are instances of, I would say, an almost astonishing Providence in our favor; our success has staggered our enemies, and almost given faith to infidels; so that we may truly say, it is not our own arm which has saved us.

The hand of Heaven appears to have led us on to be, perhaps, humble instruments and means in the great providential dispensation which is completing. We have fled from the political Sodom; let us not look back, lest we perish and become a monument of infamy and derision to the world! For can we ever expect more unanimity and a better preparation for defence, more infatuation of counsel among our enemies, and more valor and zeal among ourselves? The same force and resistance which are sufficient to procure us our liberties will secure us a glorious independence, and support us in the dignity of *free, imperial States*. We cannot suppose that our opposition has made a corrupt and dissipated nation more friendly to America, or created in them a greater respect for the rights of

mankind. We can therefore expect a restoration and establishment of our privileges, and a compensation for the injuries we have received, from their want of power, from their fears, and not from their virtues. The unanimity and valor which will effect an honorable peace can render a future contest for our liberties unnecessary. He who has strength to chain down the wolf is a madman, if he lets him loose without drawing his teeth and paring his nails.

From the day on which an accommodation takes place between England and America, on any other terms than as *independent States*, I shall date the ruin of this country. A politic minister will study to lull us into security by granting us the full extent of our petitions. The warm sunshine of influence would melt down the virtue which the violence of the storm rendered more firm and unyielding. In a state of tranquillity, wealth, and luxury, our descendants would forget the arts of war and the noble activity and zeal which made their ancestors invincible. Every art of corruption would be employed to loosen the bond of union which renders our resistance formidable. When the spirit of liberty which now animates our hearts and gives success to our arms is extinct, our numbers will accelerate our ruin, and render us easier victims to tyranny.<sup>1</sup> Ye abandoned minions of an infatuated Ministry, — if peradventure any should yet remain among us, — remember that a Warren and Montgomery are numbered among the dead! Contem-

<sup>1</sup> Temporary tumults and civil wars may give much disturbance to rulers, but they do not constitute the real misfortunes of a people, who may even enjoy some respite while they are disputing who shall play the tyrant over them. It is from their permanent situation that their real prosperity or calamity must arise; when all submit tamely to the yoke, then it is that all are perishing, then it is that their chiefs, destroying them at their ease, *ubi solitudinem faciunt pacem appellant*. When the intrigues of the Ministry agitated the kingdom of France, and the Coadjutor of Paris carried a poniard in his pocket to Parliament, all this did not hinder the bulk of the French nation from growing numerous, and enjoying themselves in happiness and at their ease. Ancient Greece flourished in the midst of the most cruel wars: human blood was spilt in torrents, and yet the country swarmed with inhabitants. It appears, says Machiavel, that in the midst of murders, proscriptions, and civil wars our Republic became only the more powerful: the virtue of the citizens, their manners, their independence, had a greater effect to strengthen it than all its dissensions had to weaken it. A little agitation gives vigor to the mind; and *liberty*, not *peace*, is the real source of the prosperity of our species. — J. J. ROUSSEAU.



plate the mangled bodies of your countrymen, and then say what should be the reward of such sacrifices. Bid us and our posterity bow the knee, supplicate the friendship, and plough and sow and reap, to glut the avarice of the men who have let loose on us the dogs of war to riot in our blood, and hunt us from the face of the earth! If ye love wealth better than liberty, the tranquillity of servitude than the animating contest of freedom, go from us in peace. We ask not your counsels or arms. Crouch down and lick the hands which feed you. May your chains sit lightly upon you, and may posterity forget that ye were our countrymen.

To unite the supremacy of Great Britain and the liberty of America is utterly impossible. So vast a continent, and at such a distance from the seat of empire, will every day grow more unmanageable. The motion of so unwieldy a body cannot be directed with any despatch and uniformity, without committing to the Parliament of Great Britain powers inconsistent with our freedom. The authority and force which would be absolutely necessary for the preservation of the peace and good order of this continent would put all our valuable rights within the reach of that nation.

As the administration of government requires firmer and more numerous supports in proportion to its extent, the burdens imposed on us would be excessive, and we should have the melancholy prospect of their increasing on our posterity. The scale of officers, from the rapacious and needy commissioner to the haughty governor, and from the governor with his hungry train to perhaps a licentious and prodigal viceroy, must be upheld by you and your children. The fleets and armies which will be employed to silence your murmurs and complaints must be supported by the fruits of your industry.

And yet, with all this enlargement of the expense and powers of government, the administration of it at such a distance, and over so extensive a territory, must necessarily fail of putting the laws into vigorous execution, removing private oppressions, and forming plans for the advancement of agriculture and commerce, and preserving the vast empire in any tolerable peace and security. If our posterity retain any spark of patriotism, they can never tamely submit to such burdens. This country will be made the field of bloody contention till it gains that independence for which Nature formed it. It is therefore injustice and cruelty to our offspring, and would stamp us with the character of baseness and cowardice, to leave the

salvation of this country to be worked out by them with accumulated difficulty and danger.

Prejudice, I confess, may warp *our* judgments. Let us hear the decision of *Englishmen* on this subject, who cannot be suspected of partiality. "The Americans," say they, "are but little short of half our number. To this number they have grown from a small body of original settlers by a very rapid increase. The probability is that they will go on to increase, and that in fifty or sixty years they will be *double* our number, and form a mighty empire, consisting of a variety of States, all equal or superior to ourselves in all the arts and accomplishments which give dignity and happiness to human life. In that period will they still be bound to acknowledge that supremacy over them which we now claim? Can there be any person who will assert this, or whose mind does not revolt at the idea of a vast continent, holding all that is valuable to it at the discretion of a handful of people on the other side the Atlantic? But if at that period this would be unreasonable, what makes it otherwise *now*? Draw the line, if you can. But there is still a greater difficulty.

"Britain is now, *I will suppose*, the seat of liberty and virtue, and its legislature consists of a body of able and independent men, who govern with wisdom and justice. The time may come when all will be reversed; when its excellent Constitution of government will be subverted; when, pressed by debts and taxes, it will be greedy to draw to itself an increase of revenue from every distant province, in order to ease its own burdens; when the influence of the Crown, strengthened by luxury and an universal profligacy of manners, will have tainted every heart, broken down every fence of liberty, and rendered us a nation of tame and contented vassals; when a general election will be nothing but a general auction of boroughs; and when the Parliament—the grand council of the nation, and once the faithful guardian of the state and a terror to evil ministers—will be degenerated into a body of sycophants, dependent and venal, always ready to confirm any measures, and little more than a public court for registering royal edicts. Such, it is possible, may some time or other be the state of Great Britain. What will at that period be the duty of the Colonies? Will they be still bound to unconditional submission? Must they always continue an appendage to our government, and follow it implicitly through every change

that can happen to it? Wretched condition, indeed, of millions of freemen as good as ourselves! Will you say that we now govern equitably, and that there is no danger of such revolution? Would to God that this were true. But will you not always say the same? Who shall judge whether we govern equitably or not? Can you give the Colonies any *security* that such a period will never come?"—No! THE PERIOD, COUNTRYMEN, IS ALREADY COME. The calamities were at our door. The rod of oppression was raised over us. We were roused from our slumbers; and may we never sink into repose until we can convey a clear and undisputed inheritance to our posterity. This day we are called upon to give a glorious example of what the wisest and best of men were rejoiced to view only in speculation. This day presents the world with the most august spectacle that its annals ever unfolded,—millions of freemen, deliberately and voluntarily forming themselves into a society for their common defence and common happiness. Immortal spirits of Hampden, Locke, and Sidney,—will it not add to your benevolent joys to behold your posterity rising to the dignity of men, and *evincing to the world the reality and expediency* of your systems, and in the actual enjoyments of that equal liberty which you were happy, when on earth, in delineating and recommending to mankind!

Other nations have received their laws from conquerors; some are indebted for a constitution to the sufferings of their ancestors through revolving centuries. The people of this country alone have formally and deliberately *chosen a government for themselves*, and, with open and uninfluenced consent, bound themselves into a *social compact*. Here no man proclaims his birth or wealth as a title to honorable distinction, or to sanctify ignorance and vice with the name of *hereditary authority*. He who has most zeal and ability to promote public felicity, let him be the *servant* of the public.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A celebrated foreigner gives us a very just description of the methods by which eminence is generally acquired in monarchies. "One makes a fortune because he can cringe, another because he can lie; this man because he seasonably dishonors himself, that because he betrays his friend; but the surest means to mount as high as Alberoni, is to offer, like him, ragouts of mushrooms to the Duke of Vendome,—and there are Vendomes everywhere. They who are called great have generally no other ascendancy over us but what our weakness permits them, or what our meanness gives them."

This is the only line of distinction drawn by Nature. Leave the bird of night to the obscurity for which Nature intended him, and expect only from the eagle to brush the clouds with his wings, and look boldly in the face of the sun.

Some who would persuade us that they have tender feelings for *future generations*, while they are insensible to the happiness of the *present*, are perpetually foreboding a train of *dissensions* under our popular system. Such men's reasoning amounts to this, — give up all that is valuable to Great Britain, and then you will have no inducements to quarrel among yourselves; or suffer yourselves to be chained down by your enemies, that you may not be able to fight with your friends.<sup>1</sup>

This is an insult on your virtue as well as your common sense. Your unanimity this day and through the course of the war is a decisive refutation of such invidious predictions. Our enemies have already had evidence that our present Constitution contains in it the justice and ardor of freedom, and the wisdom and vigor of the most *absolute system*. When the law is the will of the people, it will be uniform and coherent; but fluctuation, contradiction, and inconsistency of councils must be expected under those governments where every revolution in the ministry of a court produces one in the state; such being the folly and pride of all ministers, that they ever pursue measures directly opposite to those of their predecessors.

We shall neither be exposed to the necessary convulsions of *elec-*

<sup>1</sup> From the absurd reasonings of some men we may conclude that they are of opinion that all free governments are equally liable to convulsions; but the differences that are in the constitution and genius of popular governments are astonishingly great, some being for defence, some for increase, some more equal, others more unequal, some turbulent and seditious, others like streams in a perpetual tranquillity. That which causeth much sedition in a commonwealth is inequality, as in Rome where the Senate oppressed the people. But if a commonwealth be perfectly equal, it is void of sedition, and has attained to perfection, being void of all internal causes of dissolution. Many ancient moral writers, Cicero in particular, have said that a well-constituted commonwealth is immortal, — *æterna est*. An equal commonwealth is a government founded upon a balance, which is perfectly popular, and which from the balance, through the free suffrage of the people given by ballot, amounts in the superstructures to a senate debating and proposing, a representative of the people resolving, and a magistracy executing; each of these three orders being upon rotation, that is, elected for certain terms, enjoining like intervals. — *Vide HARRINGTON.*

*tive* monarchies, nor to the want of wisdom, fortitude, and virtue to which *hereditary* succession is liable. In your hands it will be to perpetuate a prudent, active, and just legislature, and which will never expire until you yourselves lose the virtues which give it existence. And, brethren and fellow-countrymen, if it was ever granted to mortals to trace the designs of Providence, and interpret its manifestations in favor of their cause, we may, with humility of soul, cry out, "Not unto us, not unto us, but to Thy name be the praise." The confusion of the devices among our enemies, and the rage of the elements against them, have done almost as much towards our success as either our councils or our arms.

The time at which this attempt on our liberties was made, when we were ripened into maturity, had acquired a knowledge of war, and were free from the incursions of enemies in this country; the gradual advances of our oppressors, enabling us to prepare for our defence; the unusual fertility of our lands and clemency of the seasons; the success which at first attended our feeble arms, producing unanimity among our friends and reducing our internal foes to acquiescence, — these are all strong and palpable marks and assurances that Providence is yet gracious unto Zion, that it will turn away the captivity of Jacob.

Our glorious reformers, when they broke through the fetters of superstition, effected more than could be expected from an age so darkened. But they left much to be done by their posterity. They lopped off, indeed, some of the branches of Popery, but they left the root and stock when they left us under the domination of human systems and decisions, usurping the infallibility which can be attributed to revelation alone. They dethroned one usurper, only to raise up another; they refused allegiance to the Pope, only to place the civil magistrate in the throne of Christ, vested with authority to enact laws and inflict penalties in his kingdom. And if we now cast our eyes over the nations of the earth, we shall find that instead of possessing the pure religion of the Gospel, they may be divided either into infidels, who deny the truth, or politicians, who make religion a stalking-horse for their ambition, or professors, who walk in the trammels of orthodoxy, and are more attentive to traditions and ordinances of men than to the oracles of truth.

The civil magistrate has everywhere contaminated religion by making it an engine of policy; and freedom of thought and the

right of private judgment in matters of conscience, driven from every other corner of the earth, direct their course to this happy country as their last asylum. Let us cherish the noble guests, and shelter them under the wings of a *universal toleration*. Be this the seat of unbounded *religious freedom*. She will bring with her, in her train, industry, wisdom, and commerce. She thrives most when left to shoot forth in her natural luxuriance, and asks from human policy only not to be checked in her growth by artificial encouragements.

Thus, by the beneficence of Providence, we shall behold an empire arising, founded on the justice and the voluntary consent of the people, and giving full scope to the exercise of those faculties and rights which most ennoble our species. Besides the advantages of liberty and the most equal Constitution, Heaven has given us a country with every variety of climate and soil, pouring forth in abundance whatever is necessary for the support, comfort, and strength of a nation. Within our own borders we possess all the means of sustenance, defence, and commerce; at the same time these advantages are so distributed among the different States of this continent as if Nature had in view to proclaim to us, Be united among yourselves, and you will want nothing from the rest of the world.

The more northern States most amply supply us with every necessary, and many of the luxuries of life, — with iron, timber, and masts for ships of commerce or of war, with flax for the manufactory of linen, and seed either for oil or exportation.

So abundant are our harvests, that almost every part raises more than double the quantity of grain requisite for the support of the inhabitants. From Georgia and the Carolinas, we have, as well for our own wants as for the purpose of supplying the wants of other powers, indigo, rice, hemp, naval stores, and lumber.

Virginia and Maryland teem with wheat, Indian corn, and tobacco. Every nation whose harvest is precarious, or whose lands yield not those commodities which we cultivate, will gladly exchange their superfluities and manufactures for ours.

We have already received many and large cargoes of clothing, military stores, &c., from our commerce with foreign powers; and, in spite of the efforts of the boasted navy of England; we shall continue to profit by this connection.

The want of our naval stores has already increased the price of

these articles to a great height, especially in Britain. Without our lumber, it will be impossible for those haughty islanders to convey the products of the West Indies to their own ports; for a while they may with difficulty effect it, but without our assistance their resources must soon fail. Indeed, the West India Islands appear as the necessary appendages to this our empire. They must owe their support to it, and ere long, I doubt not, some of them will from necessity wish to enjoy the benefit of our protection.

These natural advantages will enable us to remain independent of the world, or make it the interest of European powers to court our alliance, and aid in protecting us against the invasions of others. What argument, therefore, do we want, to show the *equity* of our conduct; or motive of *interest*, to recommend it to our *prudence*? Nature points out the path, and our enemies have obliged us to pursue it.

If there is any man so base, or so weak, as to prefer a dependence on Great Britain to the dignity and happiness of living a member of a *free and independent nation*, let me tell him that *necessity* now demands what the generous principles of patriotism should have dictated.

We have now no other alternative than independence, or the most ignominious and galling servitude. The legions of our enemies thicken on our plains; desolation and death mark their bloody career; whilst the mangled corpses of our countrymen seem to cry out to us as a voice from heaven, "Will you permit our posterity to groan under the galling chains of our murderers? Has our blood been expended in vain? Is the only reward which our constancy till death has obtained for our country, that it should be sunk in a deeper and more ignominious vassalage? Recollect *who* are the *men* that demand your submission; to whose decrees you are invited to pay obedience! *Men* who, unmindful of their relation to you as brethren, of your long implicit submission to their laws, of the sacrifice which you and your forefathers made of your natural advantages for commerce to their avarice, formed a deliberate plan to wrest from you the small pittance of property which they had permitted you to acquire. Remember that the *men* who wish to rule over you are they who, in pursuit of this plan of despotism, annulled the sacred contracts which had been made with your ancestors, conveyed into your cities a mercenary soldiery to compel

you to submission by insult and murder, who called your patience cowardice, your piety hypocrisy.

Countrymen! the *men* who now invite you to surrender your rights into their hands are *the men* who have let loose the merciless savages to riot in the blood of their brethren, who have dared to establish popery triumphant in our land, who have taught treachery to your *slaves*, and courted them to assassinate your wives and children.

*These* are the *men* to whom we are exhorted to sacrifice the blessings which Providence holds out to us, — the *happiness*, the *dignity* of uncontrolled *freedom and independence*.

Let not your generous indignation be directed against any among us who may advise so absurd and maddening a measure. Their number is but few, and daily decreases; and the spirit which can render them patient of slavery will render them contemptible enemies.

Our Union is now complete; our Constitution composed, established, and approved. You are now the guardians of your own liberties. We may justly address you, as the Decemviri did the Romans, and say, "Nothing that we propose can pass into a law without your consent. Be yourselves, O Americans, the authors of those laws on which your happiness depends!"

You have now in the field armies sufficient to repel the whole force of your enemies, and their base and mercenary auxiliaries. The hearts of your soldiers beat high with the spirit of freedom. They are animated with the justice of their cause; and while they grasp their swords, can look up to Heaven for assistance. Your adversaries are composed of wretches who laugh at the rights of humanity, who turn religion into derision, and would, for higher wages, direct their swords against their leaders or their country. Go on, then, in your generous enterprise, with gratitude to Heaven for past success, and confidence of it in the future. For my own part, I ask no greater blessing than to share with you the common danger and common glory. If I have a wish dearer to my soul than that my ashes may be mingled with those of a Warren and Montgomery, it is, that these *American States* may never cease to be *free and independent!*



## APPENDIX II.

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### ADAMS GENEALOGY.<sup>1</sup>

HENRY ADAMS of Braintree [was] of the sixteenth generation from Ap Adam, who "came out of the Marches of Wales," at a very remote period, — about six hundred years ago. And it will perhaps not exceed the bounds of probability to say, that no emigrant to the shores of New England has at this day so numerous a posterity. He brought with him eight sons, and he was the great-great-grandfather of JOHN ADAMS, second President of the United States. This great-great-grandson erected a granite column to his memory, with the following inscription thereon: —

"IN MEMORY OF HENRY ADAMS WHO TOOK HIS FLIGHT FROM THE DRAGON PERSECUTION IN DEVONSHIRE IN ENGLAND, AND ALIGHTED WITH EIGHT SONS, NEAR MOUNT WOLLASTON. ONE OF THE SONS RETURNED TO ENGLAND, AND AFTER TAKING TIME TO EXPLORE THE COUNTRY, FOUR REMOVED TO MEDFIELD AND THE NEIGHBORING TOWNS; TWO TO CHELMSFORD. ONE ONLY, JOSEPH, WHO LIES HERE AT HIS LEFT HAND, REMAINED HERE, WHO WAS AN ORIGINAL PROPRIETOR IN THE TOWNSHIP OF BRAINTREE, INCORPORATED IN 1639.

"THIS STONE AND SEVERAL OTHERS HAVE BEEN PLACED IN THIS YARD, BY A GREAT-GREAT-GRANDSON, FROM A VENERATION OF THE PIETY, HUMILITY, SIMPLICITY, PRUDENCE, PATIENCE, TEMPERANCE, FRUGALITY, INDUSTRY AND PERSEVERANCE OF HIS ANCESTORS, IN HOPES OF RECOMMENDING AN IMITATION OF THEIR VIRTUES TO THEIR POSTERITY."

<sup>1</sup> From the N. E. Hist. and Geneal. Register, January, 1853; VII. 40–43. The extracts here given are preceded by a pedigree showing the descent of Henry Adams from Ap Adam. It was discovered by William Downing Bruce, of the Middle Temple, London, who is maternally descended from the Adams family, "among the papers of the late Edward Hamlin Adams, Esq., M. P. for the county of Carmarthen, and it is now in the possession of his son, Edward Adams, Esq., of Middleton Hall, in the said county. Mr. Adams is a gentleman of great wealth and consequence in this county." For Samuel Adams's feeling in regard to his English ancestry see Vol. III. p. 201.

President Adams has by some been supposed to be wrong in assigning Devonshire as the place from which his ancestor came. What the President's authority was for Devonshire is not stated; nor does there any proof appear that he was wrong. Henry died in October, 1646. He left a will, which has lately been discovered, in which he speaks of his wife, and mentions the following six children, — Peter, John, Ursula, Joseph, Edward, and Samuel. From the manner of their mention there does not appear to be any certainty of their order of birth. His will was proved 8 June, 1647.

The children of HENRY ADAMS, according to the best account which we have been able to obtain, are as follows: — I. HENRY, b. 1604, settled in Medfield, where he was killed in the second year of Philip's War, and his wife likewise, in the most tragical manner. Her name was Elizabeth Paine, and they were married in 1643. Their children were, 1. Eleazer, b. 1644; 2. Jasper, b. 1647; 3. Elizabeth, b. 1649; 4. John, b. 1652; 5. Moses, b. 1654; 6. Henry, b. 1657; 7. Samuel, b. 1661. II. SAMUEL, settled in Chelmsford, d. 1666. III. THOMAS, settled in Chelmsford. IV. PETER, settled in Braintree, and had sons, 1. Peter, of Medway; 2. Samuel, of Medfield; and 3. Joseph, of Medfield and Canterbury. V. EDWARD, of Medfield, whose children were, 1. Henry, of Medfield, &c.; 2. John, of Medway; 3. Jonathan, of Medway; 4. James, of Barrington; 5. Elisha, of Bristol; 6. Edwin, of Bristol; 7. Elishib, of Bristol. VI. JONATHAN, of Medfield, who had sons, 1. Jasper, of Medway; and 2. Jonathan, of Medway. VII. JOHN. VIII. JOSEPH, of Braintree, b. 1626; freeman 1653; d. 6 Dec. 1694. His monument is at Quincy in the family burial-place, and is that referred to in the inscription on his father's tombstone, "who lies here at his left hand." IX. URSULA.

VIII. JOSEPH ADAMS, of Braintree, the *eighth* son of HENRY, m. Abigail, dau. of Gregory Baxter. She died 27 August, 1692. Their children were, 1. Hannah, b. 1652; m. S. Savil. 2. Joseph, b. 24 Oct. 1654; m. 1. Mary Chapin, 1682, who d. 14 June, 1687; 2. Hannah Bass; he d. 12 Feb. 1736-7. 3. Abigail, b. 1658; m. John, son of John Bass of Braintree. 4. John, b. 1661; lived in Boston, followed the seas, and is known in the records as Captain John Adams; his 1st wife was Hannah —; and he m. 2d, Hannah, dau. of Anthony Checkley, Esq. Captain Adams died intestate, before 20 January, 1712. 5. Bethia (probably twin of John),

b. 1661; m. John Webb of Braintree. 6. Samuel, b. 1665. 7. Mary, b. 1667; m. 1st, Samuel Webb; 2d, Samuel Bass. 8. Peter, b. 1669; m. Mary Webb, 1695. 9. Jonathan, b. 1671. 10. Mehitable, b. 1678; m. Thomas White of Braintree.

JOSEPH ADAMS, the *second* child of "VIII. Joseph of Braintree," at the head of the last paragraph, was the grandfather of JOHN ADAMS, second President of the United States. He had by his first wife, Mary Chapin, 1. Mary, b. 1683; m. Ephraim Jones of Braintree. 2. Abigail, b. 1684; m. Seth Chapin of Mendon. And by his 2d wife, Hannah Bass, he had, 3. Joseph of Newington, b. June, 1688; H. C. 1710; d. 20 May, 1784. 4. John, father of President John, 1691; m. Susanna, dau. of Peter Boylston of Brookline; d. 25 May, 1761. 5. Samuel, b. 1694; m. Sarah, dau. of Moses Paine. 6. Josiah, b. 1696; m. Hannah Thompson. 7. Hannah, b. 1698; m. Benjamin Owen of Braintree. 8. Ruth, b. 1700; m. Rev. Nathan Webb of Uxbridge. 9. Bethia, b. 1702; m. Ebenezer Hunt of Weymouth. 10. Ebenezer, b. 1704.

CAPTAIN JOHN ADAMS, brother of Joseph, at the head of the last paragraph, was the grandfather of SAMUEL ADAMS the Patriot, signer of the Declaration of Independence, Governor of Massachusetts, &c., &c. He had by his first wife Hannah —, 1. Hannah, b. 24 Jan. 1685. 2. John, b. 28 Sept. 1687. 3. SAMUEL, of Boston, father of SAMUEL the Patriot, bapt. 12 May, 1689; m. Mary, only dau. of Richard Fyfield of Boston, 21 April, 1713; d. 8 March, 1748. By his 2d wife, Hannah, dau. of Anthony Checkley, Esq., he had, 4. Joseph, b. 20 Dec. 1695. 5. Mary (twin of Joseph) m. Samuel Jones of Boston, 12 May, 1715. They were m. by Rev. Mr. John Webb. 6. Thomas, b. 29 March, 1701. 7. Abijah, b. 11 May, 1702; m. Deborah Cutler, 1725; d. 1768. He lived in Boston, and was many years Clerk of Faneuil Hall Market, to which office he was chosen 23 March, 1753.

HENRY ADAMS, sixth child of Henry of Medfield, and grandson of the Henry who came to Braintree, lived in Medfield, and had the following children, and perhaps others:— 1. Thomas, of Medfield, who was grandfather of MISS HANNAH ADAMS of Boston, the celebrated authoress; 2. Jeremiah, of Medway; 3. Henry, of Medfield. Thomas, of Medfield (father of HANNAH the authoress, just mentioned), died there 13 July, 1812, aged 87.

JOSEPH ADAMS of Newington, N. H., third child of Joseph of

Braintree, and grandson of the first Joseph of Braintree, had sons, 1. Benjamin; 2. Joseph, M. D.; 3. Ebenezer. Of this family is the inventor of the famous Adams Printing Press.

EBENEZER ADAMS, brother of Joseph of Newington, was the father of Zabdiel, minister of Lunenburgh, and was born in Braintree, 5 Nov. 1739; d. 1 March, 1801.

HENRY ADAMS, Esq., of Medfield, third son of Henry of the same town above mentioned, was the father of Elisha, Esq., of Medfield, Rev. Amos of Roxbury, and Enoch of Medfield.

The REV. AMOS ADAMS, of Roxbury, married Sarah, daughter of Dr. Charles Chauncy. She died in Boston, July, 1748. Mr. Adams was an author of reputation, and has left some productions behind him of a historical character, of much value. He died at Dorchester, October 5th, 1775, in the 48th year of his age. A brief sketch of him is contained in Allen's Biographical Dictionary.

EBENEZER ADAMS of Braintree, well known in his time as CAPTAIN EBENEZER ADAMS, was the tenth child of the second Joseph of Braintree, as before mentioned. His wife was Anne, dau. of Peter Boylston of Brookline. He was the father of the REV. ZABDIEL ADAMS, minister of Lunenburgh, Mass., a distinguished preacher, and the author of several good sermons; and the grandfather of Z. B. ADAMS, M. D., of Boston, an eminent physician, and most valued citizen.

The children of Ebenezer and Anne (Boylston) Adams, were, 1. Peter; 2. Anne; 3. Boylston; 4. Ebenezer, before mentioned; 5. Zabdiel, minister of Lunenburgh; 6. Micajah. Of this family, Ebenezer, m. Mehitable Spear, 14 December, 1758; the 5th of whose children was Zabdiel Adams, Esq., b. (just within the limits of Roxbury, and near the line separating it from Boston) 9 Dec. 1767. His wife was Rachel Lyon, b. 23 March, 1772, an only child; her parents dying while she was an infant, she was brought up by her maternal grandfather, the late Jonathan Bird of this city. The oldest child by this marriage was ZABDIEL BOYLSTON ADAMS, M. D., of Boston, above mentioned.

RECORDS IN THE ADAMS FAMILY BIBLE.<sup>1</sup>

(See Vol. III. pp. 336.)

Sam<sup>l</sup>: Adams, the son of John and Hannah Adams, born the 6<sup>th</sup> day of May, 1689.

Mary Fifield, daughter to Richard and Mary Fifield, born the 8<sup>th</sup> day of May, 1694.

Sam<sup>l</sup>: Adams and Mary Fifield were marryed on Tuesday in the forenoon, being the 21 day of April, 1713, by y<sup>e</sup> Rev<sup>d</sup>: Mr. Pemberton.

Richard Adams (their first born;) born the 21<sup>th</sup>: of January, 1715 - 16; being on Saturday morning at seven of the Clock. The said Richard Adams dyed on Tuesday the 26<sup>th</sup>: day of June, about 10 of y<sup>e</sup> Clock at night, 1716.

Mary Adams their first daughter, born Tuesday morning, at 4 of the clock, being the 30<sup>th</sup>: day of July, 1717.

Hannah Adams their 2<sup>d</sup> daughter, born the 6<sup>th</sup> day of Nov<sup>br</sup>: at half an hour after eleven at night, 1720, and dyed the 13<sup>th</sup> Jan. [*oblit.*] at eight of the Clock at night.

Samuel Adams their second son, born the sixteenth day of Sept<sup>br</sup> at twelve of the Clock at noon, being Sabbath day, 1722.

John Adams their third son, born the 4<sup>th</sup>: of September, 1724, about ten of the Clocke in y<sup>e</sup> morning (Fryday.) Baptised pr. Mr. Checkley. Dyed Aug<sup>st</sup>: 9. 1725, about 2. of y<sup>e</sup> Clock, Monday morning.

John Adams their fourth son, born 28<sup>th</sup>: Oct<sup>br</sup>: 1726, Fryday, 5 of y<sup>e</sup> Clock post meridian. Baptised pr. Mr. Checkley. Dyed June 15. 1727, at four of y<sup>e</sup> Clock Thursday morning.

Joseph Adams their fifth son born the 29<sup>th</sup>: of Decem<sup>br</sup>: 1728, one quarter after one of y<sup>e</sup> Clock in y<sup>e</sup> morning, Sabbath day. Baptised pr. the Rev. Mr. Checkley y<sup>e</sup> same day.

Abigail Adams, their third daughter, born July 20. 1730, eight minutes after nine Monday night. Baptised by Mr. Checkley, and dyed the 29<sup>th</sup>: of August, following.

Thomas Adams, their sixth son, born Dece<sup>br</sup>: 22. 1731, Wednes-

<sup>1</sup> From the N. E. Hist. and Geneal. Register, July, 1854; VIII. 283 - 285.

day, ten minutes after 2 o'Clock, afternoon; and dyed the 16<sup>th</sup>: of August, 1733, 20 minutes after four of the Clock in the morning.

Sarah Adams, their fourth daughter, born the 18<sup>th</sup> of Nov<sup>br</sup>: 1733, at half an hour after 8 o'Clock, the Lord's day morning. Baptised the same day by the Rev. Mr. Checkley. Dyed the 28. Feb. 1735 - 6, at 2 O'Clock, morning.

Abigail Adams, their fifth daughter, and Eleventh living child, born Wednesday the 22 of Oct<sup>br</sup>: 1735, at 12 o'Clock at noon. Baptized by the Rev. Mr. Samuel Checkley. Dyed the 3<sup>d</sup> day of March, 1735 - 6.

Mehetable Adams, their sixth daughter, born the 12<sup>th</sup> of April, 40 minutes after 11 o'Clock, A. M. Saturday. Baptised by the Rev<sup>d</sup>: Mr. Checkley — 1740, dyed June 11<sup>th</sup> at 11 o'Clock at night.

[*Here ends the record of SAMUEL ADAMS, ESQ., as kept by himself, which occupies a folio page of the size of the Bible, upon paper apparently bound in it for the purpose. At the foot of the same page, SAMUEL THE PATRIOT has recorded the death of his father, as follows: —*]

Samuel Adams aforesaid, dyed on Tuesday the eighth day of March, 1747, about eleven o'Clock in the forenoon; having lived with his wife thirty-four years, and about ten months. By her he had twelve children, only three of which survived him.

[*Then follows upon the next page the record as kept by SAMUEL ADAMS the son. ]*

Samuel Adams, son of Samuel Adams, Esq. born the 16<sup>th</sup>: day of September, 1722.

Elizabeth Checkley, daughter of the Rev. Mr. Samuel Checkley, born the 15<sup>th</sup>: of March, 1725.

Samuel Adams and Elizabeth Checkley were marryd on Tuesday the 17<sup>th</sup> of Octob<sup>r</sup>: 1749, at evening, by y<sup>e</sup> Rev<sup>d</sup>: Mr. Samuel Checkley. — Detur, Pietatis Metam tangere; Contentiq. vivant!

Samuel Adams their first child, born the 14<sup>th</sup>: of September, 1750, at one quarter of an hour after two in the morning, being Fry-day, and was baptiz'd y<sup>e</sup> Sabbath following, by y<sup>e</sup> Rev. Mr. Checkley — — — And dyed on Wednesday y<sup>e</sup> 2<sup>d</sup>: of October following, at 5 O'clock in y<sup>e</sup> morning, aged 18 days.

Samuel Adams their second child was born Wensday the 16 of October, 1751, at one quarter of an hour after ten in the morning,

and baptized the Sabbath following, by the Rev<sup>d</sup>. Mr. Checkley. — Born the 27 day New Style, and died January 17th, 1788.

Joseph Adams, their third child, born Saturday 23<sup>d</sup>: June, 1753, at three quarters after nine in the morning, and baptized the day following by Rev<sup>d</sup>. M<sup>r</sup>. Checkley, and dyed the evening of the next day at ten of the Clock.

Mary Adams their first daughter and fourth child, born on Lord's day the 23 June, 1754, at half after six in the morning. The same day baptiz'd by the Rev<sup>d</sup>. Mr. Checkley — — — and dyed on Thursday the 3<sup>d</sup>. October following, at three o'Clock in the morning, aged three months and 9 days.

Hannah Adams their second daughter and fifth child, born Wednesday, January 21, 1756, at a quarter after eight in the morning. Baptiz'd the Sabbath following by the Rev. Mr. Checkley.

Wensday, July 6<sup>th</sup>: 1757. — This day my dear Wife was delivered of a dead son, being our fifth child. God was pleased to support her under great weakness, and continue her life till Lord's day the 25<sup>th</sup> of the same month, when she expired at eight o'Clock A. M. — To her husband she was as sincere a Friend as she was a faithful Wife. Her exact economy in all other relative capacities, her kindred on his side as well as her own admire. She ran her Christian race with a remarkable steadiness and finished [it] in triumph. She left two small children. God grant they may inherit her graces!

SAMUEL ADAMS.

My son Samuel and daughter Hannah had the meazles in February, 1759. S. A. They also had the small-pox very favorably, by inoculation, March, 1764.

Elizabeth Wells, daughter of Francis Wells, Esq<sup>r</sup> was born January 26. 1735 — 6.

Samuel Adams and Elizabeth Wells were married by the Rev<sup>d</sup>. Mr. Checkley, December 6th, 1764.

[Such are the entire records. From the variation in the color of the ink, they were evidently written from time to time, excepting about half of that by the elder Adams. This half was perhaps copied from memoranda at the time he provided himself with the Bible. Most of the deaths were inserted, apparently, at or near the time of their occurrence. There are slight and unimportant variations in the spelling of some words. These are printed as they were written.]





**I N D E X E S .**



# LIST

OF

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