

**REVIEW**

OF

**The Address**

DELIVERED BY

**HON. JOHN Q. ADAMS,**

**AT WASHINGTON,**

ON

**4TH OF JULY, 1821.**

**BOSTON:**

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**1821.**

## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE following paper was offered for insertion in the *North American Review*, at the request of one of the conductors. An unwillingness was expressed to decide on it immediately, in consequence of the absence of two of their number from town; as it was thought desirable not to delay its publication, except with a certainty of its eventually appearing in that work, it is now given to the publick in a separate shape.

# REVIEW.

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*An Address, delivered at the Request of the Committee of Arrangements, for Celebrating the Anniversary of Independence, at the City of Washington, on the 4th of July, 1821. By JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.*

**T**HE Author of this Address holds the second political station in our country :—he is an experienced and able politician :—he formerly filled the chair of the professor of rhetorick and oratory, in the oldest and best endowed literary institution in America :—and, what is still more, he has been for a long time looked up to as one of our most accomplished scholars. It was therefore but a matter of course that the performance should attract much more of public attention, than is usually bestowed on similar productions. So far as we have been able to learn the opinion of those qualified to judge on such subjects, we have seldom witnessed with regard to any production, a sorer disappointment. If this feeling were merely negative,—if it were merely the case that Mr. Adams had not done as well as his reputation has led us to expect, we should not think it worth while to say any thing on the subject. But when it is thought that the production is marked by positive and glaring faults ;—we hold it right and

proper, for several reasons, that those faults should be pointed out. In the first place, we fear that there are some parts of this Address, which considered in connexion with the character of the author, will cause it to be read abroad. And if this should be the case, it would be anticipating rather more charity than we have hitherto experienced, to suppose that it will be viewed in any other light, than as a fair sample of American literature. And indeed, when a piece comes from one of our best scholars; and is extensively read without being pointedly condemned amongst ourselves—we do not see how foreigners, even those most liberally disposed towards us, can do otherwise than to look at such a piece as a criterion of our taste. And if we will sit still; and from motives of personal delicacy, or from mistaken notions of national pride, allow such a production to go forth to the world, without attempting to show that we are capable of discovering and of condemning its faults—we shall have no right to complain, when foreign critics speak irreverently of our literature. For ourselves, we have no hesitation in saying, that if our educated men could be gratified with such stuff as this Address is made of, we should on the score of taste, merit no better treatment from abroad than that which we have hitherto experienced. We know however, that this is not the case; and knowing it ourselves, it behoves us as far as we are able, to make it apparent to others.

But even if it were possible to confine the circulation of this Address to our own country, our obligations to deal with it according to its deserts, would

not be the less strong. If there is ever a time when criticism should speak boldly and pointedly, it is when her just canons are violated by those like Mr. Adams, whose examples are likely to be imitated, and whose precedents may be appealed to as authorities. And when we consider how much of the young ambition of the country is directed towards politics, we can conceive of nothing so entirely calculated to debauch what of taste there is among us, than a few performances from men of Mr. Adams' standing, written in a style as vitiated as that of the piece before us.

It is not our intention to go through an examination of the opinions advanced in this Address;—for as to the greater part of them, we shall hardly be thought to dissent from Mr. Adams. If, however, in the greater part of these opinions we see nothing to condemn, we are not aware of many which call for any peculiar praise for their novelty or originality. Although most of the topics immediately connected with our national anniversary are somewhat hacknied; yet we had thought that a politician of Mr. Adams' age, learning and experience, would hardly treat of any national subject without giving us something which by its maturity of thought, its comprehensiveness and discrimination of view, and dignity of feeling, would have been distinguished from the ordinary crowd of performances on the same occasion. Others may have been more fortunate:—but for ourselves we have met with nothing of the kind; and it is only by the help of the title page that we

have been able to discover, that the piece was written by an accomplished scholar more than fifty years old.

There is throughout a constant straining after hyperbole, both of thought and expression, which is not only to be condemned in point of taste, but which often causes Mr. Adams when starting with a correct idea to render it apparently otherwise, by his unqualified and extravagant statement of it. Thus, what he says about the "sympathies" appears to us metaphysical and overstrained. His theory on this subject is certainly carried too far, and would lead him to consequences, at which he and every honest man must shudder. After representing patriotism as merely an extension of those sympathies which unite us to our relations and families; he says—"But these sympathies can never exist for a country we have never seen."—"The ties of neighbourhood are broken up, those of friendship can never be formed, with an intervening ocean; and the natural ties of domestic life, the all-subduing sympathies of love, the indissoluble bonds of marriage, the heart-riveted kindness of consanguinity, gradually wither and decay in the lapse of a few generations. All the elements which form the basis of that sympathy between the individual and his country, are dissolved." (p. 14.) Now if all this be true, (which we deny) we are unable to discover how it is that the distant parts of a large empire are ever held together: and especially how it is that our own glorious union, not only spreading over a vast extent of territory

but composed of separate, independent states, has been preserved, and seems to have gained new strength the wider it has spread. We are far from supposing that Mr. Adams meant to embrace such consequences in his theory: but this part of the Address is a specimen of the indiscriminating and unqualified style in which the whole is written. We have seen several descriptions of that feeling, or rather of that combination of feelings denominated patriotism, some of which we liked for their eloquence, but none, that we recollect, which altogether satisfied us with a philosophical definition of the term. That the domestic affections come in as a part of its composition, and furnish it with not a little of its dignity we have no doubt: but that they form its only basis, and that the feeling cannot exist for regions too distant to furnish the scene for the exercise of those affections, we think, is disproved by our own daily experience. And as to a sight of the country being necessary to the support of our attachment to it,—if this be true it is difficult to tell how any love of the common country should ever pervade the mass of the community, since it is but comparatively a small number who have ever seen any thing more of it than their own little town or district. The passion is a more complex one, than Mr. Adams seems to imagine. Community of interest, common objects of pride and attachment, a common language, similarity of laws, of manners and customs, are to a certain degree necessary to hold a country together; but these have generally been

found sufficient for the purpose, without the existence of what Mr. Adams calls "the heart-riveted kindness of consanguinity" between all its citizens. We have said more than we intended on this subject, and will only add, that whether Mr. Adams be right or wrong in his metaphysics, we doubt his being correct in point of history, if it were his intention to intimate that his remarks were illustrated by the separation of the colonies from Great Britain. We are far from believing that the affections of the colonists for the mother country had died of themselves, before the revolutionary contest came in to destroy them. All that we have been able to read of the history of those times had led us to a different conclusion: to the belief that up to the time of the contest those affections continued strong and ardent. And this so far from detracting from the merit of our countrymen, seemed rather to enhance it: as it showed more clearly than any thing else that their conduct was the result of principle, and not of passion, or a groundless spirit of disaffection. But to detain our readers no longer, we refer them to the last No. of the *North American Review*, for some lucid remarks on this subject, to the article on Otis' *Botta*.

It seems to be an object of some magnitude with Mr. A. to prove that the liberties enjoyed by Americans are something different in kind as well as in degree, from those enjoyed by any other people. It is not enough for him that we are more free than the people of any other nation, but he seems



desirous of having it thought that our liberties are likewise of a higher order ; inasmuch as the liberties of other nations were originally derived by grant or charter from their sovereigns. We will give our first sample of the style of this Address, by quoting a passage connected with this topic.

“ In the progress of time, that vial of wrath was exhausted. After seven years of exploits and achievements like these, performed under the orders of the British king ; to use the language of the Treaty of Peace, “ it having pleased the Divine Providence to dispose the hearts of the most serene and most potent Prince, George the Third, by the grace of God king of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, defender of the faith, duke of Brunswick and Luneburg, arch treasurer and prince elector of the holy Roman empire, and so forth—and of the United States of America, to”—what ?—“ to forget all past misunderstandings and differences that have unhappily”—what ?—“ interrupted the good correspondence and friendship which they mutually wish to restore”—what then ? why—“ His Britannic majesty **ACKNOWLEDGES** the said United States, viz. New-Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, to be *free, sovereign, and independent* States ; that he treats with them as such ; and for himself, his heirs and successors, relinquishes all claims to the government, propriety, and territorial rights of the same, and every part thereof.”

“ Fellow Citizens, I am not without apprehension that some parts of this extract, cited to the word and to the letter from the Treaty of Peace, of 1783, may have discomposed the *serenity* of your temper. Far be it from me, to *dispose your hearts* to a levity unbecoming the hallowed dignity of this day.”  
p. 26, 27.

If all this were intended for wit, as from the two last sentences we have no doubt it was, we have only to say, that it is wit of the most mechan-

ical and ordinary sort. The sentence which follows is not of a more elevated character, viz. "But this Treaty of Peace is the *dessert* appropriate to the sumptuous banquet of the Declaration." In our opinion Mr. A. would have done better to have kept this for his toast after dinner.—But this sumptuous banquet and appropriate *dessert* seem to have animated the orator; for he suddenly exclaims—"Observe, my countrymen and friends, how the rules of unity, prescribed by the great masters of the fictive stage, were preserved in this tragedy of pity and terror in real life. Here was a beginning, a middle, and an end, of one mighty action."—p. 27. Viz. beginning was the Declaration of Independence;—middle the Revolutionary War (how unlucky that the middle began before the beginning!)—the end the Treaty of Peace! The whole idea strikes us as a most puerile conceit.\* Having exhausted his pleasantry, Mr. A. observes—"Here was no great character of Runnimead, yielded and accepted as a grant of royal bounty. That which the Declaration had asserted, which seven years of mercy-harrowing war had contested, was here in express and unequivocal terms *acknowledged*." (p. 28.)

\* Mr. Adams knows as well as any man, what is meant by the "*unities*;" and ought to have seen how wholly inappropriate was the above figure (if figure it may be called.) A piece is said "to preserve the rules of unity," when it has unity of *time*, of *place*, and of *action*. Mr. A. however would make these rules to apply merely to *action*. And as to the unity of *action*—it consists in all the incidents having a relation to a common end. We believe it is not very remarkable for the transactions of this world to have a *beginning*, a *middle*, and an *end*; and that our Revolution is not in that respect particularly distinguished.

“*Mercy-harrowing war!*”—But to return to the argument.—It is doubtless true that the operative words of Magna Charta are “*dedimus et concessimus,*” and the word “*concessimus*” Mr. A. may translate “*we have granted,*” though we conceive it would not be wrong to translate it “*we have yielded.*” In the treaty of 1783, which Mr. A. cites with such pomp and circumstance, the King “*acknowledges*” us to be independent, and “*relinquishes*” his claim to all sovereignty over us. Now what is the mighty difference between the two cases? In one the King grants or yields (as Mr. A. pleases;) in the other he relinquishes: in the one he gives up a part and that not a small part of his prerogative, which he would have been very glad to have retained:—in the other, he gives up a part of his territorial jurisdiction, which likewise he would have been very glad to have kept. But whatever may have been the formal language of Magna Charta, we will remind Mr. A. that English lawyers do not admit that the liberties therein secured were merely the gift of their sovereign’s bounty; and would refer him to what Sir Edward Coke, and Sir William Blackstone have said on the subject. The latter in speaking of the attempts against the tyranny of the Normans, and more particularly of Magna Charta, says—“and which therefore is not to be looked upon as consisting of mere encroachments on the crown, and infringements on the prerogative, as some slavish and narrow-minded writers in the last century endeavoured to maintain: but as, in general, a gradual restora-

tion of that ancient constitution, whereof our Saxon forefathers had been unjustly deprived, partly by the policy, and partly by the force of the Normans.”\* And such we believe to be the language generally of writers on the English Constitution. We however do not think it a matter of much practical importance, what were the ideas of government prevalent in the time of King John. We do not suppose that the men, who framed Magna Charta, were so enlightened on subjects of this nature, as those who framed our Declaration of Independence. It however becomes us to pause, before we speak reproachfully of Magna Charta, seeing that at the time it was framed, our fathers were Englishmen; and the glory or disgrace of the measure (whichever it be) makes part of our inheritance. Our own liberties and those of Englishmen flowed from a common source; and it ill becomes us to cry out, that the fountain of theirs was polluted. If it be true that Englishmen originally held their liberties by grant from their sovereign, and the time of the Charter of Runnimead is pointed to as the time when this happened, then is the assertion true of us likewise: and if the fact be disgraceful to the one, it is equally so to the other. But if Mr. Adams meant farther to insinuate, that this is still considered in England as the tenure of the liberty of the subject, (and from his exulting challenge to “the chivalrous knights of *chartered liberties* and the rotten borough,” it would seem that he did) we have only to express our astonishment at the

\* 4 Bl. Com. 419.

boldness of the insinuation. We are inclined to think it would startle even Mr. Hunt and the most clamorous of the radical reformers, to be told that Englishmen possessed no unalienable rights;—that all power, according to the English constitution, or rather according to the English notions of government (for of course England has no constitution) as vested in the King; and that the subject possessed no privileges but such as he held from the bounty of his sovereign. He might be inclined to ask; how the present Brunswick family came to the throne? Whether they claimed to hold by conquest or any “divine rights of kings?”—Whether they ever had it in their power to say how much liberty the nation should enjoy; or whether it was not the nation who determined how much power the king should possess; and then who should be the king? If Mr. A. could answer these questions consistently with this theory, it is more than we could.

Having given above a specimen of Mr. A.’s wit, we will furnish an instance or two of his attempts at the sublime:

“Fellow Citizens, our fathers have been faithful to them before us. When the little band of their Delegates, “with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, for the support of this declaration, mutually pledged to each other their *lives*, their *fortunes*, and their *sacred honour*,” from every dwelling, street, and square of your populous cities, it was re-echoed with shouts of joy and gratulation! and if the silent language of the heart could have been heard, every hill upon the surface of this continent which had been trodden by the foot of civilized man, every valley in which the toil of your fathers had opened a paradise upon the wild, would have rung, with one accord-

ant voice, louder than the thunders, sweeter than the harmonies of the heavens, with the solemn and responsive words, "*We swear.*"—p. 24, 25.

Again—the following school-boy figure :—

"It was with a sling and a stone, that your fathers went forth to encounter the massive vigour of this Goliath. They slung the heaven-directed stone, and

"With heaviest sound, the giant monster fell."

In speaking of the Declaration of Independence, Mr. A. says,

"It was the first solemn declaration of a nation of the only *legitimate* foundation of civil government."—p. 22.

The grand principle of the Declaration of Independence is this :—that government is instituted for the protection of the unalienable rights to which all are by nature equally entitled;—that it derives its just powers from the consent of the governed;—and that when it becomes subversive of those ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it. This principle was not first discovered or proclaimed on the 4th of July, 1776. The avowal of the doctrine was not new in this country; and in other countries if not so openly avowed, it had certainly been acted on. Upon what other ground could the separation of Holland from Spain have been justified? How was it in the revolution in the time of Charles 1st, and in that of 1688? All of these and many others which might be cited, were practical applications of the principle that a people have a right to change the government, when it becomes subversive of the purposes for which it was institut-

ed. But then it is true, there is in this respect a difference between us and other nations. Even in England they are fond of considering their liberties as an inheritance; and when they have from time to time made any improvements in their civil polity instead of calling them by their right name, their lawyers are wont to call them a restoration of their ancient liberty. They are more fond of talking of the rights of Englishmen, than of the rights of men. Thus the revolution of 1688, although to all intents and purposes a change of the government; although it was a full exercise of the ultimate sovereignty of the people, for if they felt a right to drive James from the throne and place William on it, they must have felt that they had a right to declare that they would have no King,—yet they avoided as far as possible declaring it to be so. The reasons of this were merely those of policy. They are afraid, excessively afraid of the spirit of innovation. And in making an alteration of any part of the constitution, they are cautious to guard against its furnishing a precedent for an attack upon the sounder parts. To show what are the views of English politicians on this subject, it may not be uninteresting to quote the words of Mr. Burke. “ You will observe, that from Magna Charta to the declaration of right, it has been the uniform policy of our constitution to claim and assert our liberties, as an intailed inheritance derived to us from our forefathers, and to be transmitted to our posterity; as an estate specially belonging to the people of this kingdom without any

reference whatever to any other more general or prior right. By this means our constitution preserves an unity in so great a diversity of its parts. We have an inheritable crown, an inheritable peerage; and a house of commons, and a people inheriting privileges, franchises, and liberties, from a long line of ancestors.

“This policy appears to me to be the result of profound reflection; or rather the happy effect of following nature, which is wisdom without reflection, and above it. A spirit of innovation is generally the result of a selfish temper and confined views. People will not look forward to posterity, who never look backward to their ancestors.”

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“Through the same plan of a conformity to nature in our artificial institutions, and by calling in the aid of her unerring and powerful instincts to fortify the fallible and feeble contrivances of our reason, we have derived several other, and those no small benefits from considering our liberties in the light of an inheritance. Always acting as if in the presence of canonized forefathers, the spirit of freedom, leading in itself to misrule and excess, is tempered with an awful gravity. This idea of a liberal descent inspires us with a sense of habitual native dignity, which prevents that upstart insolence almost inevitably adhering to and disgracing those who are the first acquirers of any distinction. By this means our liberty becomes a noble freedom. It carries an imposing and majestic aspect. It has a pedigree and illustrating ancestors. It has its bearings and ensigns armo-



rial. It has its gallery of portraits ; its monumental inscriptions ; its records, evidences, and titles. We procure reverence to our civil institutions on the principle upon which nature teaches us to revere individual men ; on account of their age ; and on account of those from whom they are descended.”\*

But in this country the case is different. We have uniformly avowed without reserve, the right of the people to change their government, when they please ; and the exercise of the right seems hardly to be thought a matter of extreme danger. This principle appears on the face of all our institutions : and although there is much eloquence, and not a little good sense in the observations we have just quoted, yet we think the effects of thus constantly keeping the principle in view have been of the happiest kind. Our government has hence acquired a simplicity in theory and practice, which seems the best preservative of its purity and economy. We therefore think that Mr. A. well selected this peculiarity in our politics, as the chief topic of his address. Indeed, the general plan of his oration seems to us very happy. Our complaints are chiefly of its execution. Considering how minutely Mr. A. is acquainted with ancient and modern history ; and how peculiar have been his opportunities for personal observation of the effects of almost every form of government,—it seems to us that he might by following the track he had entered on, have furnished a dignified, manly,

\* Reflections on the Revolution in France, p. 76–80.

and judicious defence of our institutions, which would have been interesting (if not altogether new) at home, and have attracted notice and been respected abroad. Instead of this, his remarks on this subject are principally made up of the merest declamation, like that we have extracted above, and the following.

“ A nation was born in a day.

“ How many ages hence  
Shall this their lofty scene be acted o'er  
In states unborn, and accents yet unknown ?”

It will be acted o'er, fellow-citizens, but it can never be repeated. It stands, and must forever stand alone, a beacon on the summit of the mountain, to which all the inhabitants of the earth may turn their eyes for a genial and saving light, till time shall be lost in eternity, and this globe itself dissolve, nor leave a wreck behind. It stands forever, a light of admonition to the rulers of men; a light of salvation and redemption to the oppressed. So long as this planet shall be inhabited by human beings, so long as man shall be of social nature, so long as government shall be necessary to the great moral purposes of society, and so long as it shall be abused to the purposes of oppression, so long shall this declaration hold out to the sovereign and to the subject the extent and the boundaries of their respective rights and duties; founded in the laws of nature and of nature's God.”—p. 23, 24.

It was not our intention when we sat down, to write a defence of England or of English politics. But so much of the address is occupied with sneers and bitter remarks on that nation, that we shall perhaps seem to be so doing. We will, however, now state distinctly that one of our great objections to the piece, is the temper which it discovers on this subject. If there were ever two nations on the globe, who owed

it to humanity, to true religion, and to civil liberty, to cultivate peace and good will—Great Britain and the United States are such nations. Yet the melancholy fact is, that in England the vilest traducers of our country are encouraged and applauded; whilst here, where we profess the most unbounded freedom of discussion, where we may praise whatever is good in any other foreign country, yet if a man would speak well of England, he must stop to choose his words and measure his expressions, for fear that his patriotism may be called in question. For ourselves we declare that we will not now or at any time be restrained by such paltry considerations. Whilst we will yield to none in a real love of our country; whilst we will never be found the apologists of any wrongs which Britain has done us, or which she may hereafter do; yet we hereby notify all whom it may concern, that we have none of that self styled “national feeling,” which lives upon hatred or contempt of other nations, and particularly of that one which we hold to be the greatest, and next to our own, the freest and the happiest nation on earth. Whilst we make it one of our charges against Great Britain, that she cherishes a feeling hostile to this country; let us look to it, that we give her no occasion for flinging back the charge. We have never been satisfied with the spirit in which that, which has been dignified with the name of the “literary controversy” between the two nations, has been conducted. We do not consider it a fortunate circumstance, that the dirty work of crimination and recrimination has passed into more reputable hands,

than those which formerly exercised it. The controversy may thus acquire more importance; but we fear it will lose little of its asperity. But to confine our remarks to Mr. A. His situation, with respect to foreign nations, is a peculiar one, and seems to us to call for rather more than ordinary caution. What he says on such subjects will not be uttered to inattentive ears or treacherous memories. It must be viewed as indicative of the temper of the cabinet, if not of the nation. England, to say no more of her, is a nation on friendly terms with us; a treaty of Peace exists unbroken between the two nations, and her minister is residing at our capital. It seems to us to belong to the Secretary of State—if to no one else—to wear the appearance of courtesy towards her, and all nations similarly situated. He is not to seek opportunities of speaking evil of them; and when it becomes his duty to do so, he owes it to his station and to the dignity of his country, not to do it in language, which, if applied to an individual, would amount to absolute rudeness. But in this Address,—whilst the feelings it breathes are of the most bitter kind, they are expressed in the coarsest style of newspaper phillipicks. Let any man, who feels offended at this remark, ask himself, what would be the feelings of this country, if the Marquis of Londonderry, at any public festival, should condescend to use respecting America, language similar to that used by Mr. Adams in speaking of England?—What, for instance, could be considered more insulting to the pride of Englishmen than to hear the late *head of their nation* thus unnecessarily assailed?

“It is not by the yearly reiteration of the wrongs endured by your fathers, to evoke from the sepulchre of time the shades of departed tyranny; it is not to draw from their dread abode the frailties of an unfortunate monarch, who now sleeps with his fathers, and the sufferings of whose latter days may have atoned at the bar of divine mercy, for the sins which the accusing angel will read from *this scroll* to his charge :—” p. 11.

This would be strong language to use of a private individual. A man of Mr. A.’s sense of religion, one would think, would pause before undertaking to pronounce on what, in any particular case, will be the judgments at “the bar of divine mercy;” or to scan the motives of the most dreadful visitation of Providence to which our nature is liable. Besides, for aught we ever heard, George III., though not of the most commanding political character, was far from being a worthless or unprincipled individual. How far the King in England, is answerable for the acts of the kingdom, Mr. A. knows as well as any one: and to his sober judgment, too, we are willing to leave it to decide, how far it is safe for either party in a political contest, to take upon themselves to say, in what light the motives of their opponents will be viewed at the bar of God.

Again,

“Stand forth, ye champions of Britannia, ruler of the waves! Stand forth, ye chivalrous knights of chartered liberties and the rotten boroughs!” p. 32.

“—— In the half century which has elapsed since the declaration of American independence, what have you done for the benefit of mankind?” p. 33.

If “Britannia, ruler of the waves,” should condescend to answer so polished an appeal, we think it possible she might show some small services render-

ed for the benefit of mankind, within the last half century. She would probably ask, "To whom is it owing that there is now more than one independent power in Europe; and that the whole civilized world has been saved from the sternest despotism which ever oppressed it? Go back to the period of 1798. A general despair had settled on the nations of the continent. Holland and Italy were subdued; Austria had been compelled to receive, at the gates of her own capital, such a peace as the generosity of her conqueror had vouchsafed; Prussia was exhausted; Russia, under a shortsighted monarch, was not yet awake to the danger of Europe. Yet, not content with the domination of Europe, France had already sent a large army to Egypt, under her ablest general, and was plotting with the native chiefs of the East for the conquest of India. America, though distant, was not beyond the reach of her ambition. She had openly demanded of you a tribute; and to punish your presumption in refusing it, she had commenced hostilities on your commerce. To resist these aggressions, and others with which you were threatened, your Truxton was abroad on the ocean; whilst at home you had raised a large army, for the command of which, Washington himself, though in the decline of life, had consented to quit his retirement. At this moment, if, in accordance of the the prayers of some of your politicians, Britain had been sunk in the ocean;—what would now be the situation of the world? But she stood, and under the guidance of her greatest statesman. She sent forth her Nelson; and from the shores of Aboukir there went forth a voice proclaiming hope to the oppress-

ed and deliverance to the nations. Of more recent events, we will not speak. For when the emergency was over, the politicks of America took a new turn, without condemning which, it may not be easy for you to praise the efforts of England. But we would ask of you, Mr. Secretary; or rather we would ask of your venerable father; if, when he first heard of the battle of the Nile, he would have said that Britain had done nothing for the benefit of mankind."

But whether we are right or wrong in our ideas of diplomatic propriety, in supposing that a man in Mr. Adams's station ought not to seek occasions of speaking reproachfully of the English nation; we are quite confident that, as a scholar, he has no right to speak sneeringly of her literature and philosophy. Mr. Adams seems to us to do this. There is a taunting, reproachful manner about him whenever he speaks upon these subjects, which we are mortified in witnessing in any American scholar. For instance—

"And now, friends and countrymen, if the wise and learned philosophers of the older world, the first observers of nutation and aberration, the discoverers of maddening ether and invisible planets, the inventors of Congreve rockets and sharpnel shells, should find their hearts disposed to inquire," &c.—p. 31.

"Enter the lists, ye boasters of *inventive* genius! ye mighty masters of the palette and the brush! ye improvers upon the sculpture of the Elgin marbles! ye spawners of fustian romance and lascivious lyrics!"—p. 33.

"Fustian!" In our humble opinion, the man who talks as Mr. A. does of "mercy-harrowing war"—of being "bound by the grappling hooks of common suffering under the scourge of despotism"—of "an im-

perial diadem, flashing in false and tarnished lustre the murky radiance of dominion and power"—of "soaring to fame on a rocket and bursting into glory from a shell"—with other figures equally forced and unnatural—such an orator should be cautious of suggesting to his hearers that epithet "fustian." It will be lucky for him if none of them think of it without being prompted. "Fustian romances!" and this too in the age of Miss Edgeworth and the author of *Waverley*! "Lascivious lyrics!" Proh dolor! Proh pudor! A man of letters can think of the land of Shakspeare and Milton, of Dryden, Pope and Cowper only as the "*spawner of lascivious lyrics!*"

Again:

"We shall not contend with you for the prize of music, painting, or sculpture. We shall not disturb the extatic trances of your chemists, nor call from the heavens the ardent gaze of your astronomers."—p. 33.

"It is not by the contrivance of agents of destruction that America wishes to commend her inventive genius to the admiration or gratitude of after times;"

Be it so;—but then the rest of the sentence is—

—"nor is it even by the detection of the secrets or the composition of new combinations of physical nature."—p. 34.

And why not? Why should not America seek to commend herself to the admiration or gratitude of after times by her attention to the physical sciences? In point of practical utility they are not the least important of the sciences;—Cicero (who we remember was in former days no light authority with



Mr. A.) has said something about a "commune vinculum" of all the sciences and arts; and Mr. A. himself, if we remember the first part of his Address, has there spoken of the discovery of the mariner's needle, the invention of gunpowder, and of the art of printing, as events which had some little influence in forwarding the religious and political reformation of the world.—Then why should these sciences be thought unworthy of American genius?

We hardly know of terms in which to express our disgust at passages like those we have just quoted. If the time is coming, when it is to be considered a mark of patriotism and American feeling to speak contemptuously of the rich and noble literature of England (and with a few such examples as that of Mr. Adams, it would very shortly come;) and if at the same time our own great men are to furnish us with models of composition like this address, then are our literary prospects melancholy indeed: and we see nothing in store for our country but a base, Carthaginian greatness, such as after times will never point to, but by way of derision or warning.

The two last pages of this address, beginning with "stand forth ye champions of Britannia," are written in such extremely bad taste, that the rest of the piece appears almost good in comparison. We have already made two or three extracts from them, and will conclude with the very last sentence.

"My countrymen, fellow-citizens, and friends; could that Spirit, which dictated the Declaration we have this day read,

that Spirit which 'prefers before all temples the upright heart and pure,' at this moment descend from his habitation in the skies, and within this hall, in language audible to mortal ears, address each one of us, here assembled, our beloved country, Britannia ruler of the waves, and every individual among the sceptered lords of humankind; his words would be,

'Go thou and do likewise!'

What this adverb "likewise" refers to, what it is that each of Mr. Adams' auditors, and Britannia ruler of the waves, and every sceptered individual is to go and do,—every one may guess out for himself. Mr. A. for some time previous has been indulging himself in a *tirade* against England, and telling us that our country has "a spear and a shield, and that the motto upon her shield is *Freedom, Independence, Peace.*" And he then ends by telling us to go and do likewise. Now if this refers to the example which Mr. A. had been setting—to that which he himself had been doing (and this seems to us the only grammatical construction;) we beg leave to say,—that though what Britannia and the other sceptered ladies and gentlemen may do is none of our concern,—yet we protest against such an example being followed in this country. We are quite aware that there are many (all those who would "soar to fame on a rocket,") who will have no disinclination to follow such a mandate, attested as it is by John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State. But upon the whole, we do trust there is sober taste enough in the country, which will disregard both the authority and the example.

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