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PHILADELPHIA, March 6.

ON Saturday, at twelve o'clock, agreeably to the notification which he gave to both Houses of Congress soon after his election, JOHN ADAMS, as President of the United States, attended in the Chamber of the House of Representatives, to take his Oath of Office, according to the directions of the Constitution. On his entrance, as well as on the entrance of the late President, and of THOMAS JEFFERSON, the Vice President, loud and reiterated applause involuntarily burst from the audience.—The President having taken his seat on the elevated chair of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Vice-President, the late President, and the Secretary of the Senate on his right, the Speaker and Clerk of the House of Representatives on his left, and the Chief Justice of the United States and Associate Judges at a table in the centre, all the Foreign Ministers and Ambassadors, the heads of departments, General Wilkinson, the Commander in Chief, and a very crowded auditory of the principal inhabitants of this city being present, the President proceeded to deliver the following

S P E E C H:

“WHEN it was first perceived in early times, that no mild course for America, remained between unlimited submission to a Foreign Legislature, and a total independence of its claims, men of reflection, were less apprehensive of danger, from the formidable power of fleets and armies; they must determine to resist, than from those contentions and dissensions, which would certainly, arise concerning the forms of Government to be instituted over the whole and over the parts of this extensive country. Relying, however, on the purity of their intentions, the justice of their cause, and the integrity and intelligence of the people under an overruling PROVIDENCE, which had signally protected this country from the first, *The Representatives of this nation, then consisting of little more than half its present numbers, not only broke to pieces the chains which were forging, and the rod of Iron that was lifted up, but frankly cut asunder the ties which had bound them, and launched into an ocean of uncertainty.*”

“The zeal and ardour of the people, during the Revolutionary War, supplying the place of Government, commanded a degree of order, sufficient at least for the temporary preservation of Society. The confederation, which was early felt to be necessary, was prepared from the models of the Batavian and Helvetic confederacies, the only examples which remain with any detail and precision, in history, and certainly the only ones, which the people at large had ever considered. But reflecting on the striking difference, in so many particulars, between this country and those where a courier may go from the seat of Government to the Frontier in a single day, it was then certainly foreseen by some who assisted in Congress at the formation of it, that it could not be durable.

“Negligence of its regulations, inattention to its recommendation, if not disobedience to its authority, not only in individuals but in States, soon appeared with their melancholy consequences; universal languor, jealousies and rivalries of States, decline of Navigation and Commerce; discouragement of necessary Manufactures; universal fall of the value of lands and their produce; contempt of public and private faith; loss of consideration and credit with foreign nations; and at length, in discontents, animosities, combinations, partial conventions, and insurrection, threatening some great national calamity.

“In this dangerous crisis, the people of America were not abandoned, by their usual good sense, presence of mind, resolution or integrity.—Measures were pursued to concert a plan, to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of Liberty. The public discussions, discussions and deliberations issued in the present happy constitution of government.

“Employed in the services of my country abroad, during the whole course of these transactions, I first saw the Constitution of the United States in a foreign country. Irritated by no literary altercation, animated by no public debate, heated by no party animosity, I read it with great satisfaction, as a result of good heads, prompted by good hearts; as an experiment, better adapted to the genius, character, situation, and relations of this nation and country, than any which had ever been proposed or suggested. In its general principles and great outlines, it was conformable to such a system of Government, as I had ever most esteemed, and in some States, my own native State in particular, had contributed to establish. Claiming a right of suffrage, in common with my fellow citizens, in the adoption or rejection of a Constitution which was to rule me and my posterity, as well as them and theirs, I did not hesitate to express my approbation of it on all occasions, in public and private. It was not then, nor has been since, any objection to it, in my mind, that the Executive and Senate were not more permanent. Nor have I ever entertained a thought of promoting any alteration in it, but such as the people themselves, in the course of their experience should see and feel to be necessary, or expedient, and by their Representatives in Congress and the State Legislatures, according to the Constitution itself adopt and ordain.

“Returning to the bosom of my country, after a painful separation from it, for ten years, I had the honour to be elected to a station under the new Order of Things, and I have repeated y laid myself under the most serious obligations to support the Constitution. The operation of it has equalled the most sanguine expectations on its friends; and from an habitual attention to it, satisfaction in its administration and delight in its effects, upon the Peace, Order, Prosperity and Happiness of the Nation, I have acquired an habitual attachment to it, and veneration for it.

“What other form of Government indeed can so well deserve our esteem and love?”

“There may be little solidity in an ancient idea, that congregations of men into Cities and Nations, are the most pleasing objects in the sight of Superior Intelligences: but this is very certain, that to a benevolent, Human Mind, there can be no spectacle presented by any Nation, more pleasing more noble, majestic or august, than an Assembly, like that which has so often been seen in this and the other Chamber of Congress, or a Government, in which the Executive Authority, as well as that of all the branches of the Legislature, are exercised by Citizens selected, at regular periods, by their neighbours, to make and execute laws for the general good. Can any thing essential, any thing more than mere ornament and decoration be added to this by Robes or Diamonds? Can authority be more amiable or respectable, when it descends from accidents, or institutions established in remote antiquity, than when it springs fresh from the hearts and judgments of an honest and enlightened People? For it is the People only that are represented: it is their power and majesty that is reflected and only

for their good in every legitimate Government, under whatever form it may appear. The existence of such a government as ours for any length of time, is a full proof of general dissemination of knowledge and Virtue, throughout the whole body of the people. And what object of consideration more pleasing than this, can be presented to the human mind? If national pride is ever justifiable or excusable, it is when it springs not from Power or Riches, Grandeur or Glory, but from conviction of national Innocence, Information and Benevolence.

“In the midst of these pleasing ideas, we should be unfaithful to ourselves, if we should ever lose sight of the danger to our liberties, if any thing partial or extraneous should infect the Purity of our free, fair, virtuous and independent elections. If an election is to be determined by a majority, of a single vote, and that can be procured by a Party, through Artifice or Corruption, the Government may be the choice of a Party, for its own ends not of the Nation, for the National Good. If that solitary suffrage can be obtained by Foreign Nations by flattery or menaces, by terror, intrigue, or venality, the Government may not be the choice of the American People, but of Foreign Nations. It may not be Foreign Nations who govern ourselves. And candid Men will acknowledge, that in such cases, Choice would have little advantage to boast of, over Lot or Chance.

“Such is the amiable and interesting system of Government (and such are some of the abuses to which it may be exposed) which the People of America have exhibited to the admiration and anxiety of the wise and virtuous of all Nations, for eight years, under the Administration of a Citizen, who by a long course of great actions, regulated by Prudence, Justice, Temperance, and Fortitude; conducting a People, inspired with the same virtues, and animated with the ardent Patriotism and love of Liberty, to Independence and Peace, to increasing Wealth and unexampled Prosperity; has merited the Gratitude of his Fellow Citizens, commanded the highest praises of Foreign Nations, and secured immortal Glory with Posterity.

“In that retirement which is his voluntary choice, may he long live to enjoy the delicious recollection of his Services, the gratitude of Mankind; the happy fruits of them to himself and the World which are daily increasing, and that splendid prospect of the future fortunes of his Country, which is opening from year to year. His name be still a rampart and the knowledge that he lives a bulwark against all open or secret enemies of his Country's Peace.

“This example has been recommended to imitation of his Successors, by both Houses of Congress, and by the voice of the Legislatures and the People throughout the nation.

“On this subject it might become me better to be silent, or to speak with diffidence. But as something may be expected, the occasion, I hope, will be admitted as an apology, if I venture to say, that:

“If, a preference, upon principles of a free Republican Government formed upon and serious reflection, after a diligent and impartial enquiry after truth, if, an attachment to the Constitution of the United States and a conscientious determination to support it, until it shall be altered by the judgment and wishes of the People, expressed in the mode prescribed in it;—if, a respectful attention to the Constitutions of the individual States, and a constant caution and delicacy towards the State Governments; if, an equal and impartial regard to the Rights, Interests, Honour and Happiness of all the States in the Union, without preference or regard to a Northern or Southern, an East-