

mission being obtained, he returned to the United States. Three months after his return, 29th Sept. 1779, he was a second time sent to France, authorized, should opportunity offer, to negotiate with Great Britain a treaty of Peace, and a treaty of Commerce. (a)

June 20, 1780, he was authorized to borrow money for the use of the United States, by a Commission unlimited in amount. (a)

Oct. 5, 1780, he was authorized to join the U. States, with the Confederacy of Northern European Powers, forming the armed neutrality, (a) of which Catharine, Empress of Russia, was the head—he was not received into their Councils, the Empress being unwilling to offend Great Britain, by acknowledging our Independence, and Mr. Adams sternly refusing any union in their Councils, unless he was received as the minister of a Sovereign State.

Dec. 29, 1780, he was commissioned to negotiate a treaty of Amity and Commerce with Holland; (a) and he had the happiness to obtain as the powerful alliance of the Dutch; and a loan of some millions of dollars.

He was commissioned minister to the Stadtholder and to the States General of the Netherlands. (a)

History may be searched in vain to find an instance in which so many and so important trusts were ever, in so short a time, confided to the care of one individual. How Mr. Adams acquitted himself in these trusts, let the Journals of Congress declare.

From the Journal of Congress, 6th Vol. p. 172—12th Dec. 1780—"Congress took into consideration the report of the Committee on the letter of June 26, from the Hon. John Adams: Whereupon, Resolved, that the said letter be referred to the Committee of Foreign Affairs, and they be instructed to inform Mr. Adams of the satisfaction which Congress receive from his industrious attention to the interest and honor of these United States abroad, especially in the transactions communicated to them by that letter."

Of the correct and patriotic views of Mr. Adams, and of the firmness with which, even under adverse circumstances, he maintained the cause of his country in Europe, and of the zeal with which he continued to animate his fellow-citizens to perseverance in the contest for Independence, though three thousand miles distant, I will submit some evidence from his correspondence during his stay in Europe.

The papers which I am about to submit to you, afford the highest evidence of the feelings and conduct of Mr. Adams during his stay on the continent of Europe, under the various commissions which have been mentioned. They have been long before the public and their authenticity is unquestionable. They are sufficiently interesting to excuse their length:—if an apology is necessary for the time to be consumed in attending to them, it is to be found in the determination that the evidence of Mr. Adams' high claims to our respect and gratitude shall rest on better evidence than the assertion of an individual.

Letter from Mr. Adams from Holland, 20th Sept. 1780, to Doctor Rush, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence:—"Your account of the resurrection of the spirit of 1765 and 1766, is very refreshing. The ladies having undertaken to support American Independence settles the point. Surely no gentleman will ever dispute it against so many of the fair. The ill bred mortals at St. James's will continue to wrangle about it, but we know long ago that they had no politeness of manners. If Mrs. Rush reproaches you with lukewarmness, I am sure there must be zeal enough in the country; for it is impossible that you should be wanting in the necessary proportion of that quality. My best respects to Mrs. Rush, and desire her to move in the assemblies of the ladies, that their influence may be exerted to promote privateering. This and trade are the only way to lay a foundation of a navy, which alone can afford a solid protection to every part of our country. If I could have my will, there should not be the least obstruction to navigation, commerce or privateering; because I firmly believe one sailor will do us more good than two soldiers."

This letter though written in a style of pleasantry, probably had a seriously beneficial effect. Gordon in his History of the Revolution, (3 vol. 138,) records that the generous exertions of the daughters of liberty in Philadelphia, collected by committees of ladies, a sum of money sufficient to purchase linen, of which the ladies made more than two thousand shirts, which were presented to our suffering soldiers.

To Congress, 14th October, 1780.—"There is no future event more certain in my mind than that they (the British) never will acknowledge American independence, while they have a soldier in the United States, nay they would not do it, even after their troops shall be all driven from the continent. I think I see very clearly that America must grow up in war. It is a painful prospect to be sure. But when I consider there are more people in America, than there are in the uni-

* 3 Gordon, 463.
(a) Journals of Revolutionary Congress—passim.

ted provinces of the low countries: that the earth itself produces abundance in America, both for consumption and exportation, and that the United Provinces produce nothing but butter and cheese; and that the United Provinces have successively maintained wars against the formidable monarchies of Spain, France and England, I cannot but persuade myself, it is in the power of America to defend herself against all that England can do.

"The republic where I now am, has maintained an army of one hundred and twenty thousand men, besides a formidable navy. She maintains at this day a standing army of thirty thousand, besides a considerable navy. All this in a profound peace. What cause, physical or political, can prevent three millions of people in America from maintaining for the protection of their altars and firesides, as many soldiers as the same number of people in Europe can maintain for mere parade, I know not.

"A navy is our natural and only adequate defence. But we have but one way to increase our shipping and seamen, and that is privateering. This abundantly pays its own expenses, and procures its own men. The seamen taken generally inist on board our privateers, and that is the surest way of distressing the commerce of our enemies, protecting our own, increasing our seamen, and diminishing theirs. And this will finally be the way, by capturing their supplies, that we shall destroy, or captivate, or oblige to fly, their armies in the United States."

On the 16th April, 1781, from Leyden, he concludes a letter to Dr. Franklin, then at Paris, in the following words:—"America has fought Great Britain and Ireland six years; and not only Great Britain and Ireland, but many states of Germany, many tribes of Indians, and many negroes, their allies. Great Britain has been moving earth and hell to obtain allies against us, yet it is improper in us to propose an alliance! Great Britain has borrowed all the superfluous wealth of Europe; in Italy, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, and some even in France, to murder us! yet it is dishonourable in us to propose to borrow money! By Heavens! I would make a bargain with all Europe, if it lay with me. Let all Europe stand still; neither lend men nor money, nor ships to England nor America; let them fight it out alone. I would give my share of millions for such a bargain. America is treated unfairly and ungenerously by Europe. But thus it is, mankind will be servile to tyrannical masters, and basely devoted to vile idols."

To a clear understanding of the next extract it is necessary to remember that in 1781, the Empress of Russia had (at the instance of England) offered through France to mediate between the belligerent parties. It was known that England insisted on considering us as revolted subjects, and her wish was to treat only upon the terms on which we should return to our allegiance to her. Mr. Adams reports to Congress, an interview (July, 1781,) with the French Minister, in which the Minister said—"The English had not made any proposition; but it was necessary to consider certain points, and make certain preparatory arrangements, to know whether we were British subjects, or in what light we were to be considered, smiling. I said, I was not a British subject; that I had renounced that character many years ago, forever; and that I should rather be a fugitive in China or Malabar, than ever re-assume that character."

On the 11th July, 1781, Mr. Adams communicated to Congress, certain articles proposed by Austria and Russia (as mediators) to serve as a foundation of the negotiation for Peace, submitted by the French ministers.—The 1st article proposes, that there shall be peace between Great Britain and the American Colonies; the 2d, that the ratification of the articles when agreed on, shall be suspended, until all the belligerents shall have separately concluded their terms of peace; and the 3d proposed an armistice for one year. Mr. Adams writes, "It is not in my power, at this time, to enclose to Congress my answer, because I have not made it, nor written it; but Congress must see that nothing can come of this manoeuvre, at least for a long time.—Thus much I may say, that I have no objection to the proposition of treating with the English separately, in the manner proposed, upon a peace with them, and a treaty of commerce consistent with our engagements with France and Spain—but that the armistice never can be agreed to by me. The objections against it are as numerous as they are momentous and decisive. I may say farther, that as there is no judge upon earth of a sovereign power but the nation that composes it, I can never agree to the mediation of any power, however respectable, until they have acknowledged our sovereignty, so far at least, as to admit a Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States as the representative of a free and independent power. After this we might discuss questions of peace or truce with Great Britain, without her acknowledging our sovereignty, but not before.

"I fancy, however, that Congress will be applied to, for their sentiments, and I shall be ever ready and happy to obey their instructions, because I have a full confidence that nothing will be decided

by them but what will be consistent with their character and dignity.

"Peace will only be retarded by relaxations and concessions, whereas firmness, patience and perseverance will insure us a good and lasting one in the end.

"The English are obliged to keep up the talk of peace, to fill their enemies and sustain their credit. But I hope the people of America will not be deceived. Nothing will obtain them real peace but skillful and successful war."

The answer of Mr. Adams to the propositions of Russia and Austria are given in a letter to the French Minister, on the 13th July, 1781. To the first proposition he answers, the United States have no objection to peace with Great Britain, provided their allies have none—to the second, they have no objection if their allies have none—to the third, he answers that preliminary to taking the subject of a truce into consideration at all, must be that the allies agree that their treaties shall remain in full force, until the final acknowledgment of the Independence of the United States, and of the antecedent removal of the British land and naval forces from every part of the United States. The letter of which a mere outline has been given, concludes—"The sovereigns of Europe have a right to negotiate concerning their own interests, and to deliberate concerning the question whether it is consistent with their dignity and interests to acknowledge expressly the sovereignty of the United States, and to make treaties with them, by their ministers, in a congress or otherwise; and America could make no objection to it, but neither the United States nor France can ever consent that the existence of their sovereignty shall be made a question in such congress, because, let that congress determine as it might, their sovereignty, with submission only to divine Providence, never can, and never will be given up."

December 6, 1780, Mr. Adams writes to Arthur Lee.—"As to our being forced to an accommodation, God forbid! We can gain no accommodation but unconditional submission. No propositions the English ever made us, had any sincerity, or meant any thing more than to deceive, divide and betray us. Malice is in all their thoughts towards us. No man or nation can do a more fatal injury to America, or lead her into a more ruinous error, than by countenancing an opinion that England will give us terms. No sir! war we must have, and that for years, or slavery without alloy."

On the same day he writes Mr. William Lee—"Our business is, as you say, at present, to drive the English out of the thirteen states; and, as I say, to build a navy. A navy is our only defence, more necessary for us than for Great Britain. By this alone can we defend a long sea-coast, and transport troops from one place to another. We need not march armies nine hundred miles, if we had a navy."

Dec. 9, 1780—writing to the Dutch minister, he says,—"These little alarms of merchant, or of nations, are not much to be regarded. The American question, one of the greatest which was ever decided among men, will be determined by the cabinets of Europe, according to great national interests. But let these decide as they will, America will be independent. It is not in the power of Europe to prevent it. American independence is no longer a question with one man of sense in the world, who understands any thing of the subject. That merchant must be a very superficial thinker indeed, who dreads the rivalry of independent America, in the fisheries, in freight, and in the coasting trade, and yet would not be afraid of it, connected with Great Britain. The possibility of America's interfering with any nation, in any of these things, will certainly be retarded by her independence."

Bear in mind the circumstances under which the papers of which the occasion admits only extracts to be submitted to you, were dated;—reflect on the firmness and the scorn with which he rejects the attempts of the most powerful monarchs of Europe to seduce him into a negotiation as a subject representing revolted subjects; and the dignified tone in which he claims for his Country the rank of a SOVEREIGN AND INDEPENDENT STATE! The persuasive and convincing language in which he encourages Congress and his Countrymen to persevere in the contest for Independence, and to be satisfied with nothing less: The wisdom with which he foresees the favorable issue of perseverance, and the correct and statesman-like view which, even at that early day, he took of a navy.

And is this the man whose attachment to his Country has been questioned!—Nothing short of proofs of Holy Writ can convince a man, possessing one ray of reason, that John Adams could ever be lukewarm in his Country's cause, or ever, for an instant, have found any other earthly subject of devotion than her glory and happiness.

The next important service of Mr. Adams, was the negotiation for peace with Great Britain, in conjunction with Dr. Franklin and Mr. Jay. In the negotiations, they had difficulties to contend with, not originating with England alone. The French wished the fisheries secured to them: the English insisted to retain them in their hands. In a political point of view, as a nursery for seamen alone, the fisheries are invaluable:—they sup-

ply that host of hardy, brave and active seamen, who are always ready to support their country's cause. In a commercial consideration, they add in the exports of the products of the ocean, the average value of the exports of a state of the products of agriculture, and may be considered as adding the wealth of a state to the union. In the negotiations, Mr. Adams has the credit of having declared, "We would fight eight years longer, before we would surrender the fisheries."

Peace was at length concluded, on terms as favorable as we could demand: Our independence was acknowledged—the fisheries secured to us—and boundaries settled to our satisfaction—and the royalists in this country, for whom England claimed protection in the treaty, let to be dealt with as we in our discretion thought proper. The treaty dated at Paris 3d September 1783, is signed by JOHN ADAMS, Benjamin Franklin, John Jay.

Such were the services of John Adams. In every stage of the revolution, we discover him the decided, the firm and active friend of his country's rights, independence and glory. His zeal, and the thunders of his eloquence, were always exerted to give spirit to the enterprise. In common with the rest of his countrymen, he was exposed to the enemy at home;—he encountered also the perils of the sea, and braved the death of a traitor, if captured in the several passages across the Atlantic. He aroused us from lethargy to activity and resistance—he aided in obtaining the Declaration of Independence—he gained us allies—he procured for us money, arms, and clothing for our suffering soldiers—he procured us respect and honor abroad—he resisted the selfish demands of France on the fisheries—he obtained us peace and independence. It is not my task nor desire to contrast Mr. Adams' course with that of any other man—nor would I obstruct one ray of the sun of glory which shines upon the tomb of the illustrious Jefferson: "I could not, if I would, and I would not, if I could." But I am authorized to say, and faithful history must so decide, that from the dawn of the revolution to its close, John Adams had no superior, except that great man who had no equal—I need not name the father of his country.

I will add here, as justice to Mr. Adams, and as creditable to the candor of Mr. Jefferson, his political rival, the following extract from a paper edited by a respectable gentleman:—"We remember to have heard Mr. Jefferson, in 1816, emphatically mention that his federal predecessor was the very life of the Congress of 1776—that he urged the assertion of independence, privately and officially, with incredible zeal and eloquence; and that no man could love his country more than he;—and that he served her with keener perseverance, or acted with more general rectitude than John Adams."

National Gazette, July 11, 1826.

After the peace, Mr. Adams was sent by Congress as Minister Plenipotentiary to Great Britain, with authority to negotiate a treaty of commerce. In his correspondence with his government, he gives an interesting account of his first presentation as Minister, to the King.—The scene was embarrassing. George the 3d saw before him the representative of the people of these sovereign states, who for eight years before, he had fought as rebels and traitors—he saw in that representative, the individual who had been among the most instrumental in depriving his crown of its brightest jewel. Nevertheless, he received Mr. Adams with respect. In the conversation, the king said he had been the last to conform to the separation; but the separation having been made, "I have always said, and say now, I would be the first to meet the friendship of the United States as an independent power." The king further observed, alluding to the plainness of Mr. Adams' manners, "It is said, Mr. Adams, you are not as much attached to the manners of France as most of your countrymen"—to which Mr. Adams replied—"That opinion is not mistaken; I avow to your majesty, I have no attachment but to my own country." The king replied, as quick as lightning, "An honest man will never have any other." Mr. Adams remained some years in England endeavoring to make a treaty of commerce—without success. On the 5th October, 1787, Mr. Adams obtained leave to return to the United States. From the journals of Congress of that day, I read the following:

"Resolved, That the Hon. John Adams, the minister plenipotentiary of the United States, at the court of London, be permitted, agreeably to his request, to return to America at any time after the 24th day of February, in the year of our Lord 1788, and that his commission of minister plenipotentiary to their high mightinesses do also then determine.

"Resolved, That Congress entertain a high sense of the services which Mr. Adams has rendered to the United States, in the execution of the various important trusts which they have, from time to time, committed to him, and that the thanks of Congress be presented to him for the patriotism, perseverance, integrity and diligence with which he has ably and faithfully served his country."

12th vol. Journals Congress, p. 116.
Before his return, the Federal Constitution was adopted; and at the first election of President and Vice-President, in 1793, George Washington was elected

President and John Adams Vice-President. At the second election, in 1791, he was a second time elected to the Vice-Presidency—an office which derives its chief importance from the provision of the Constitution, that the Vice-President shall fill the office of President, in case of the death of the President before the expiration of his term.

During the eight years of Washington's administration, Mr. Adams shared his confidence, and was admitted into his councils: discontents arose at Washington's administration. Mankind cannot think alike; and he who created man, is alone qualified to govern him. Upon the refusal of Washington, in 1796, to serve again, Mr. Adams, though warmly opposed, was elected to the Presidency. The day has not arrived when the history of these times can be written with impartiality. We have not the virtue nor candor to judge our own conduct:—that privilege belongs to posterity. But the subject requires a glance at Mr. Adams' situation at this period.

Many circumstances, whether favorable or not to the interests of the country, but certainly inauspicious to the popularity of Mr. Adams occurred in his administration. His stubborn honesty and independence, admitted no compromise for personal favor. Solely responsible for his measures, he heard advice, but decided for himself, though he incurred the displeasure of respectable friends. Of this kind was his third mission to France, which eventuated however in a settlement of differences. On the other hand, the energy with which he acted towards France, when he commissioned our public ships to capture the public ships of France, increased the displeasure of a large party, neither his personal nor political friends. The elevated national feelings created by the victories of our infant navy, and the increased reputation gained to the United States, had their weight with France also, and convinced her proud ruler of the truth of the declaration of Genl. Pinckney, one of our Ambassadors, that the United States had "millions for defence, but not a cent for tribute," and obtained us a speedy and honorable adjustment of differences. Mr. Adams was guilty of borrowing money, and imposing taxes for the public service, but succeeding enlightened and patriotic administrations, under similar circumstances, have gone beyond his example. He levied a provisional army, but it was such an one, and under such circumstances, that Geo. Washington accepted the command of it, and happily its services were never needed.

The Navy was ever a favorite with Mr. Adams:—he overlooked no duty, always contending—as well by his letters abroad, as against States and Statesmen at home. It was a principle with him, that nations find no safety in humiliation:—to be secure, they must be respected, and that respect is not to be bought, but must be commanded.

Under Gen. Washington, not one public ship, of any size or force, ever left the U. States.—Adams created the navy and drew it forward. Succeeding administrations chided it with neglect and indifference, until it fought itself into favor. Adams, therefore, has the right to be called the Father of the American Navy. Whenever, therefore, the glorious deeds of our navy, upon the lakes, or on the ocean, in humbling the pride of the nation whose boast it was, "Her march is on the mountain wave—her home is on the deep—in checking the insolence of British or French power, or chastising the pirates of the Barbary coast, shall be remembered; and whenever the gallant seaman, who bore the star-spangled banner of his Country in triumph around the globe, or rather than strike it, nailed the flag to his shattered mast and sank with it, come to your recollection—mingle—in justice to Adams I beseech you—mingle, with gratitude to the seaman, a sentiment of reverence and gratitude to Adams also: the father of that navy, your Country's boast and safety.

With one more testimony to the merit of this period of Mr. Adams' life, we quit that part of the subject: it is a letter from George Washington to John Adams, written amidst the clamor which assailed him, and dated 13th July, 1793.

"Believe me, sir, no man can more cordially approve the wise and prudent measures of your administration. They ought to inspire universal confidence, and will no doubt, combined with the state of things, call from Congress such laws and means, as will enable you to meet the full force and extent of the crisis."

5th Vol. Marshall's Life of Washington, 760.

Yet after all, Mr. Adams could not retain the confidence of the Country; and at the election in 1800, Mr. Jefferson was elected President; having received eight votes more than Mr. Adams.—Let us here pause and reverence the man like John Adams,

"Who noble ends by noble means attains, Or failing, smiles in exile or in chains.— Like good Aurelius, let him reign, or bleed Like Socrates, that man is great indeed."

At the close of his administration, Mr. Adams retired to his farm near Boston, at an age exceeding three score years, and without a spot to tarnish the lustre of his name. His desire was to live in retirement, and to pass that "interval which there should always be between the life and the death of a public man," in the