

task to keep me a studying. I own I am ashamed of myself. I have but just entered the third volume of Rollin's History, but designed to have got half through it by this time. I am determined this week to be more diligent. Mr. Thaxter is absent at Court. I have set myself a stint this week, to read the third volume half out. If I can but keep my resolution, I may again at the end of the week give a better account of myself. I wish, sir, you would give me in writing, some instructions with regard to the use of my time, and advise me how to proportion my studies and play, and I will keep them by me, and endeavor to follow them.

With the present determination of growing better, I am, dear sir,
your son,
JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

P. S. Sir—If you will be so good as to favor me with a blank book, I will transcribe the most remarkable passages I meet with in my reading, which will serve to fix them upon my mind.

After making all just allowance for precocity of genius, we cannot but see that the early maturity of the younger Adams proves the great advantage of pure and intellectual associations in childhood.

The time soon arrived when John Quincy Adams was to enjoy advantages of education such as were never afforded to any other American youth. Among the earliest acts of the American Congress, was the appointment of Benjamin Franklin, Silas Dean, and Arthur Lee, as Commissioners to France; they were charged to solicit aid from France, and to negotiate a treaty, by which the Independence of the United States should be acknowledged by Louis Sixteenth, then at the height of his popularity. Silas Dean was recalled in 1776, and John Adams was appointed to fill his place. He embarked on this mission the 13th of February, 1778, in the frigate Boston, commanded

by Captain Tucker. John Adams had gone down to Quincy, and the frigate called there to receive him on board. On the eve of embarkation he wrote the following simple and touching letter to Mrs. Adams:

"Uncle Quincy's,—half after 11 o'clock, 13 February, 1778.

DEAREST OF FRIENDS,

"I had not been twenty minutes in this house, before I had the happiness to see Captain Tucker and a midshipman coming for me. We will be soon on board, and may God prosper our voyage in every stage of it as much as at the beginning, and send to you, my dear children, and all my friends, the choicest blessings!

"So wishes and prays yours, with an ardor that neither absence, nor any other event can abate,

JOHN ADAMS.

"P. S. Johnny sends his duty to his mamma, and his love to his sisters and brothers. He behaves like a man."

"He behaves like a man!"—Words which gave presage of the future character of John Quincy Adams. His education had now commenced: an education in the principles of heroic action, by John Adams, the colossus of the American Revolution. How devoted he was to this important charge, and with what true philosophy he conducted it, may be seen by the following letter written about that time by him, to Mrs. Adams:

"Human nature, with all its infirmities and depravation, is still capable of great things. It is capable of attaining to degrees of wisdom and of goodness which we have reason to believe appear respectable in the estimation of superior intelligences. Education makes a greater difference between man and man, than nature has made between man and brute. The virtues and powers to which

men may be trained, by early education and constant discipline, are truly sublime and astonishing.

"Newton and Locke are examples of the deep sagacity which may be acquired by long habits of thinking and study. Nay, your common mechanics and artisans are proofs of the wonderful dexterity acquired by use; a watchmaker, finishing his wheels and springs, a pin or needle-maker, &c. I think there is a particular occupation in Europe, which is called paper staining, or linen staining. A man who has long been habituated to it, shall sit for a whole day, and draw upon paper various figures, to be imprinted upon the paper for rooms, as fast as his eye can roll and his fingers move, and no two of his draughts shall be alike. The Saracens, the Knights of Malta, the army and navy in the service of the English Republic, among many others, are instances to show to what an exalted height, valor or bravery or courage may be raised, by artificial means.

"It should be your care therefore, and mine, to elevate the minds of our children, and exalt their courage, to accelerate and animate their industry and activity, to excite in them an habitual contempt of meanness, abhorrence of injustice and inhumanity, and an ambition to excel in every capacity, faculty, and virtue. If we suffer their minds to grovel and creep in infancy, they will grovel and creep all their lives.

"But their bodies must be hardened, as well as their souls exalted. Without strength, and activity and vigor of body, the brightest mental excellencies will be eclipsed and obscured.

"JOHN ADAMS."

No one can read this extraordinary letter, and compare it with the actual character of John Quincy Adams as ultimately developed, without regarding that character as a fulfilment, in all respects, of the prayers and purposes of his illustrious parent.

The voyage of the American Minister was made in a time of great peril. The naval supremacy of Great

Britain was already established. Her armed ships traversed the ocean in all directions. Captain Tucker saw a large English ship showing a row of guns, and with the consent of the Minister, engaged her. When hailed, she answered with a broadside. John Adams had been requested to retire to the cockpit, but when the engagement had begun, he was found among the marines, with a musket in his hands.

The desired treaty with France had been consummated by Dr. Franklin, before the arrival of John Adams. After that event, Congress decided to have but one minister in that country, and Dr. Franklin having deservedly received the appointment, John Adams asked and obtained leave to return home, after an absence of a year and a half. During that period the younger Adams attended a public school in Paris, while his leisure hours were filled with the instructions casually derived from the conversation of John Adams, and Dr. Franklin, and other eminent intellectual persons, by whom his father was surrounded. The improvement of the son during his sojourn abroad is thus mentioned by John Adams, just before his embarkation on his return to America.

"My son has had a great opportunity to see this country, but this has unavoidably retarded his education in some other things. He has enjoyed perfect health from first to last, and is respected wherever he goes, for his vigor and vivacity both of mind and body; for his constant good-humor, and for his rapid

progress in French, as well as in general knowledge, which, for his age, is uncommon."

John Adams now regarded his public life as closed. He wrote to Mrs. Adams :

"The Congress, I presume, expect that I should come home, and I shall come accordingly. As they have no business for me in Europe, I must contrive to get some for myself at home. Prepare yourself for removing to Boston, into the old house, for there you shall go, and I will draw writs and deeds, and harangue juries, and be happy."

This calculation was signally erroneous, as all calculations upon personal ease and peace by great and good men always are. He remained at home only three months, and during that time he had other and higher occupations than drawing writs and deeds. He was elected Delegate to the Convention charged with the responsible and novel duty of forming a written constitution for Massachusetts. In that body he labored with untiring assiduity, as in Congress; the constitution thus produced was in a great measure prepared by himself, and it is due to his memory to record the fact, that it was among the most democratic of all the constitutions which were adopted by the new States. The younger Adams having returned to America with his father, had thus the advantage of seeing republican theories brought into successful, practical application.

About this time Congress resolved on sending a

Minister Plenipotentiary to Great Britain, to negotiate, if possible, a treaty of peace. John Adams and John Jay received each an equal number of votes. The result was the appointment of Mr. Jay as Minister to Spain, and of John Adams as Minister to the Court of St. James. He was instructed to insist on the independence of the United States.

The younger Adams again attended the Diplomatist. They embarked in the French frigate *La Sensible*, on the 17th of November, 1779.

The frigate sprang a leak, and was obliged to put into the port nearest at hand, which proved to be Ferrol in Spain. They disembarked on the 11th of December, and traversed the intervening distance to Paris over land, a journey of a thousand miles. This journey was performed through the mountains on mules. Spain, as well as France, was then in alliance with America, and the Minister was everywhere received with respect and kindness. The French officers at Ferrol wore cockades in honor of the Triple Alliance, combining a white ribbon for the French, a red one for the Spanish, and a black one for the Americans.

The United Powers proposed demands which were ominous of disappointment to the Minister.—On the 12th of December he wrote:—"It is said that England is as reluctant to acknowledge the independence of America, as to cede Gibraltar, the last of which is insisted upon, as well as the first."

The travellers reached Paris about the middle of

February, 1780. John Adams mentioned a singular coincidence in his letter announcing their arrival. "I have the honor to be lodged here with no less a personage than the Prince of Hesse-Cassel, who is here upon a visit. We occupy different apartments in the same house, and have no intercourse with each other, to be sure; but some wags are of opinion, that if I were authorised to open a negotiation with him, I might obtain from him as many troops to fight *on our side* of the question, as he has already hired to the English *against us!*"

The American Revolution has wrought wonderful changes since that day. No German Prince could now send a man, or a musket, to war against its principles.

John Adams soon discovered that there was no prospect of success for his mission to England. He remained at Paris until August, 1780, and during the interval his son was kept at an academy in that city.

At the expiration of that period the Minister repaired to Holland, and there received instructions to negotiate a loan, and then a treaty of amity and commerce with the states of that country. The younger Adams while in Holland was placed at school, first at Amsterdam, and afterwards in the University of Leyden.

A letter of the father, dated at Amsterdam, 18th December, 1780, gives us a glimpse of the system of instruction approved by him, and a pleasant view of the principles which he deemed it important to be inculcated.

"I have this morning sent Mr. Thaxter with my two sons to Leyden, there to take up their residence for some time, and there to pursue their studies of Latin and Greek under the excellent masters, and there to attend lectures of the celebrated professors in that University. It is much cheaper there than here. The air is infinitely purer, and the company and conversation are better. It is perhaps as learned a University as any in Europe.

"I should not wish to have children educated in the common schools of this country, where a littleness of soul is notorious. The masters are mean spirited wretches, pinching, kicking, and boxing the children upon every turn. There is, besides, a general littleness, arising from the incessant contemplation of stivers and doits, which pervades the whole people.

"Frugality and industry are virtues everywhere, but avarice and stinginess are not frugality. The Dutch say, that without a habit of thinking of every doitt before you spend it, no man can be a good merchant, or conduct trade with success.

"This, I believe, is a just maxim in general; but I would never wish to see a son of mine govern himself by it. It is the sure and certain way for an industrious man to be rich. It is the only possible way for a merchant to become the first merchant, or the richest man in the place. But this is an object that I hope none of my children will ever aim at. It is indeed true every-

where, that those who attend to small expenses are always rich.

"I would have my children attend to doits and farthings as devoutly as the merest Dutchman upon earth, if such attention was necessary to support their independence. A man who discovers a disposition and a design to be independent, seldom succeeds. A jealousy arises against him. The tyrants are alarmed on the one side, lest he should oppose them: the slaves are alarmed on the other, lest he should expose their servility. The cry from all quarters is, '*He is the proudest man in the world: he cannot bear to be under obligation.*'"

"I never in my life observed any one endeavoring to lay me under particular obligation to him, but I suspected he had a design to make me his dependent, and to have claims upon my gratitude. This I should have no objection to, because gratitude is always in one's power. But the danger is, that men will expect and require more of us than honor, and innocence, and rectitude will permit us to perform.

"In our country, however, any man, with common industry and prudence, may be independent."

One cannot turn over a page of the domestic history of John Adams, without finding a precept or example, the influence of which is manifested in the character of his illustrious son. Thus he writes to Mrs. Adams, touching certain calumnies which had been propagated against him:—

"Don't distress yourself about any malicious attempts to injure me in the estimation of my countrymen. Let them take their course, and go the length of their tether. They will never hurt your husband, whose character is fortified with a shield of innocence and honor, ten thousand-fold stronger than brass or iron. The contemptible essays, made by you know whom, will only tend to their own confusion. My letters have shown them their own ignorance, a sight they could not bear. Say as little about it as I do. I laugh, and will laugh before all posterity, at their impotent rage and envy."

In July, 1781, Francis Dana, who had attended John Adams as Secretary of Legation, was appointed Minister to Russia. John Quincy Adams, then fourteen years old, was appointed Private Secretary of this mission. He remained at that post fourteen months, performing its duties with entire satisfaction to the minister. The singular ripeness of the youthful secretary was shown in his travelling alone, on his return from St. Petersburg, by a journey leisurely made, and filled with observations of Sweden, Denmark, Hamburgh, and Bremen. On arriving in Holland, he resumed his studies at the Hague.

John Adams, having completed his mission in Holland, was charged, with Dr. Franklin, John Jay, and Thomas Jefferson, with the duty of negotiating a definitive treaty of peace with Great Britain. The treaty was executed at Paris on the 3d of Septem-

ber, 1783, and was ratified January 14th, 1784. The younger Adams enjoyed the satisfaction of being present at the conclusion of the treaty; and while it was under process of negotiation, he was constantly favored with opportunities of listening to the instructive conversation of Franklin and Jefferson.

The negotiation of the treaty was dilatory in the extreme. It was embarrassed with French intrigues, great carelessness at home, and greater reluctance on the part of England. The wearied Minister wrote to Mrs. Adams on the 30th of May, 1783: "Our son is at the Hague, pursuing his studies with great ardor. They give him a good character wherever he has been, and I hope he will make a good man." On the 9th of June he wrote in these homely, but manly words: "I am weary, worn, and disgusted to death. I had rather chop wood, dig ditches, and make fence upon my poor little farm. Alas, poor farm! and poorer family! what have you lost that your country might be free! and that others might catch fish and hunt deer and bears at their ease!

"There will be as few of the tears of gratitude, or the smiles of admiration, or the sighs of pity for us, as for the army. But all this should not hinder me from going over the same scenes again, upon the same occasions—scenes which I would not encounter for all the wealth, pomp, and power of the world. Boys! if you ever say one word, or utter one complaint, I will disinheret you. Work! you rogues, and be free. You

will never have so hard work to do as papa has had. Daughter! get you an honest man for a husband, and keep him honest. No matter whether he is rich, provided he be independent. Regard the honor and the moral character of the man, more than all circumstances. Think of no other greatness but that of the soul, no other riches but those of the heart."

After concluding the treaty of peace, John Adams, together with Franklin and Jay, was charged with the duty of negotiating a treaty of commerce with Great Britain, and John Adams, taking his son John Quincy with him, proceeded to London, and took up his residence at the British Court. Mrs. Adams embarked in June, 1784, to join her husband.

John Adams was appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to the same Court in 1785, and thus he, who ten years before, when a subject, in the province of Massachusetts, had said, "*I know that Great Britain has determined upon her system, and that very determination determines me on mine,*"—was the first Representative of his independent country admitted to an audience by the discomfited majesty of the Imperial States. The occasion was adapted to excite profound emotions, though of different kinds, in each party. John Adams addressed the King thus:—

"The United States of America have appointed me their Minister Plenipotentiary to your Majesty, and have directed me to deliver to your Majesty this letter, which contains the evidence of it. It is in obedience

to their express commands, that I have the honor to assure your Majesty of their unanimous disposition and desire to cultivate the most liberal and friendly intercourse between your Majesty's subjects and their citizens; and of their best wishes for your Majesty's health and happiness, and for that of your royal family.

"The appointment of a Minister from the United States to your Majesty's Court, will form an epoch in the history of England, and of America. I think myself more fortunate than all my fellow citizens, in having the distinguished honor to be the first to stand in your Majesty's royal presence, in a diplomatic character; and I shall esteem myself the happiest of men, if I can be instrumental in recommending my country more and more, to your Majesty's royal benevolence, and of restoring an entire esteem, confidence and affection, or in better words, 'the old good nature, and the old good harmony,' between people, who, though separated by an ocean, and under different governments, have the same language, a similar religion, and kindred blood. I beg your Majesty's permission to add, that although I have sometimes before been intrusted by my country, it was never, in my whole life, in a manner so agreeable to myself."

George III. replied with dignity, but not without some manifestations of excitement:—

"The circumstances of this audience are so extraordinary, the language you have now held is so extremely proper, and the feelings you have discovered so justly

adapted to the occasion, that I must say that I not only receive with pleasure the assurances of the friendly disposition of the People of the United States, but I am very glad the choice has fallen upon you to be their Minister. I wish you, sir, to believe, and that it may be understood in America, that I have done nothing in the late contest, but what I thought myself indispensably bound to do, by the duty which I owed my people. I will be frank with you—I was the last to conform to the separation, but the separation having been made, and having become inevitable, I have always said, as I say now, that I would be the first to meet the friendship of the United States, as an independent power.

"The moment I see such sentiments and language as yours prevail, and a disposition to give this country the preference, that moment I shall say, let the circumstances of language, religion and blood have their natural and full effect."

The kindly feelings expressed by the King, were, however, comparatively, only the language of ceremony, for the British Ministry, and the British people, did not regard the new republic with favor. But they could not withhold the exhibition of reluctant respect.

It was at such a time as this, and in such circumstances, that John Quincy Adams surveyed, from a new position, the colossal structure of British power, and the workings of its combined systems of conservative aristocracy, and progressive democracy. It was here that he imbibed new veneration for Russell, Sid-

ney, Hampden, and Milton, its republican patriots; for Shakspeare, Dryden, and Pope, its immortal poets; and for Addison and Johnson, its moralists; here he learned from Wilberforce the principles of political philanthropy, as well as the patience and perseverance to defend them, and studied eloquence by the living models of Pitt, Fox, Erskine, Burke, and Sheridan.

This, indeed, was a fitting conclusion to a precocious education by the patriots and philosophers of his own country, with practical observations in the courts of Spain and the Netherlands, of the weak but amiable Louis XVI., and the accomplished, but depraved, Catharine II.

John Quincy Adams now became fearful that the duties of manhood would devolve upon him without his having completed the necessary academic studies. He therefore obtained leave to return home in 1785, at the age of eighteen years, and entered Cambridge University, at an advanced standing, in 1786. He graduated in 1788 with deserved honors.

CHAPTER II.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS STUDIES LAW—HIS PRACTICE—ENGAGES
IN PUBLIC LIFE—APPOINTED MINISTER TO THE HAGUE.

AFTER leaving the University, young Adams entered the office of Theophilus Parsons, who was then in the practice of law at Newburyport, and who afterwards for so many years filled with dignity and ability the office of Chief Justice of Massachusetts.

Adams completed the usual term of professional study, and then commenced the practice of the law in Boston. It may encourage some who are oppressed by the difficulties attending initiation in the profession, to know, that during the first and only four years of John Quincy Adams' practice, he had occasion for despondency.

"I had long and lingering anxieties, (he afterwards said,) in looking forward, doubtful even of my prospects of comfortable subsistence, but acquiring more and more the means of it, till in the last of the four years, the business of my profession yielded me an income more than equal to my expenditures."

But the country and the age had claims on John Quincy Adams, as well as on his father, for higher