

in German, in Italian, not less than in English—he could draw at will from the wealth of all these tongues to illustrate any particular topic, or to explain any apparent difficulty. There was no literary work of merit in any of these languages, of which he could not render a satisfactory account; there was no fine painting or statue, of which he did not know the details and the history; there was not even an opera, or a celebrated musical composer, of which or of whom he could not point out the distinguishing merits and the chief compositions. Yet he was a hard-working, assiduous man of business, in his particular vocation, and a more regular, punctual, comprehensive, voluminous diplomatic correspondence than his no country can probably boast of; and it is thought the more necessary to note this fact, because sometimes an opinion prevails that graver pursuits must necessarily exclude attention to what used to be called the “humanities” of education—those ornamental and graceful acquirements, which, as Mr. Adams well proved, not only are not inconsistent with, but greatly adorn, the weightier matters of the law and of diplomacy. I could dwell with much satisfaction upon the memory and incidents of the days to which I am now adverting, but am admonished, by the length to which these remarks have already extended, that I may not loiter.”\*

\* Eulogy on John Quincy Adams, by Charles King.

## CHAPTER VI.

MR. ADAMS APPOINTED SECRETARY OF STATE—ARRIVES IN THE UNITED STATES—PUBLIC DINNERS IN NEW YORK AND BOSTON—TAKES UP HIS RESIDENCE IN WASHINGTON—DEFENDS GEN. JACKSON IN THE FLORIDA INVASION—RECOGNITION OF SOUTH AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE—GREEK REVOLUTION.

JAMES MADISON, after serving his country eight years as President, in a most perilous period of its history, retired to private life, followed by the respect and gratitude of the people of the United States. He was succeeded by James Monroe, who was inaugurated on the 4th of March, 1817.

Mr. Monroe was a politician of great moderation. It was his desire, on entering the presidency, to heal the unhappy dissensions which had distracted the country from the commencement of its government, and conciliate and unite the conflicting political parties. In forming his cabinet, he consulted eminent individuals of different parties, in various sections of the Union, expressing these views. Among others, he addressed Gen. Jackson, who, on account of his successful military career, was then rising rapidly into public notice. In his reply the general remarked:—



"Everything depends on the selection of your ministry. In every selection, party and party feeling should be avoided. Now is the time to exterminate that *monster*, called party spirit. By selecting characters most conspicuous for their probity, virtue, capacity, and firmness, without any regard to party, you will go far, if not entirely, to eradicate those feelings, which on former occasions, threw so many obstacles in the way of government, and, perhaps, have the pleasure and honor of uniting a people heretofore politically divided. The Chief Magistrate of a great and powerful nation, should never indulge in party feelings."

Admirable advice! Sentiments worthy an exalted American statesman! The President of a vast Republic, should indeed know nothing of the interest of party in contradistinction to the interest of the whole people; and should exercise his power, his patronage, and his influence, not to strengthen factions, and promote the designs of political demagogues, but to develop and nourish internal resources, the only sinews of national prosperity, and diffuse abroad sentiments of true patriotism, liberality, and philanthropy. No suggestions more admirable could have been made by Gen. Jackson, and none could have been more worthy the consideration of Mr. Monroe and his successors in the presidential chair.

In carrying out his plans of conciliation, President Monroe selected John Quincy Adams for the responsible post of Secretary of State. Mr. Adams had never been an active partizan. In his career as Senator, both in Massachusetts and in Washington, during Mr. Jefferson's administration, he had satisfactorily demonstrated his ability to rise above party considera-

tions, in the discharge of great and important duties. And his long absence from the country had kept him free from personal, party, and sectional bias, and peculiarly fitted him to take the first station in the cabinet of a President aiming to unite his countrymen in fraternal bonds of political amity.

Referring to this appointment, Mr. Monroe wrote Gen. Jackson as follows, under date of March 1, 1817:—"I shall take a person for the Department of State from the eastward; and Mr. Adams, by long service in our diplomatic concerns appearing to be entitled to the preference, supported by his acknowledged abilities and integrity, his nomination will go to the Senate." Gen. Jackson, in his reply, remarks:—"I have no hesitation in saying you have made the best selection to fill the Department of State that could be made. Mr. Adams, in the hour of difficulty, will be an able helpmate, and I am convinced his appointment will afford general satisfaction." This prediction was well founded. The consummate ability exhibited by Mr. Adams in foreign negotiations had elevated him to a high position in the estimation of his countrymen. His selection for the State Department was received with very general satisfaction throughout the Union.

On receiving notice of his appointment to this responsible office, Mr. Adams, with his family, embarked for the United States, on board the packet-ship



Washington, and landed in New York on the 6th of August, 1817.

A few days after his arrival, a public dinner was given Mr. Adams, in Tammany Hall, New York. The room was elegantly decorated. In the centre was a handsome circle of oak leaves, roses, and flags—the whole representing, with much effect, our happy Union—and from the centre of which, as from her native woods, appeared our eagle, bearing in her beak this impressive scroll:—

“Columbia, great Republic, thou art blest,  
While Empires droop, and Monarchs sink to rest.”

Gov. De Witt Clinton, the Mayor of New York, and about two hundred citizens of the highest respectability, sat down to the table. Among other speeches made on the occasion, was the following from an English gentleman, a Mr. Fearon, of London:—

“As several gentlemen have volunteered songs, I would beg leave to offer a sentiment, which I am sure will meet the hearty concurrence of all present. But, previous to which, I desire to express the high satisfaction which this day’s entertainment has afforded me. Though a native of Great Britain, and but a few days in the United States, I am for the first time in my life in a free country, surrounded by free men; and when I look at the inscription which decorates your eagle, I rejoice that I have been destined to see this day. A great number of the enlightened portion of my coun-

trymen advocate your cause—admire your principles. And though we have, unfortunately, been engaged in a war, I trust the result has taught wisdom to both parties. In your political institutions you have set a noble example, which, if followed throughout the world, will rescue mankind from the dominion of those tyrants who jeer at the destruction which they produce—

‘Like the moonbeams on the blasted heath,  
Mocking its desolation.’

“Gentlemen, in conclusion, I beg to express the delight which I feel, and propose to you as a toast—May the United States be an example to the world; and may civil and religious liberty cover the earth, as the waters do the channels of the deep.”

A public dinner was also given Mr. Adams on his arrival in Boston. Mr. Gray presided, and Messrs. Otis, Blake, and Mason, acted as Vice Presidents. His father, the venerable ex-President John Adams, was present as a guest. Among other toasts given on the occasion, were the following:—

“The United States.—May our public officers, abroad and at home, continue to be distinguished for integrity, talents, and patriotism.”

“The Commissioners at Ghent.—The negotiations for peace have been declared, in the British House of Lords, to wear the stamp of American superiority.”

“American Manufactures.—A sure and necessary object for the security of American independence.”

This occasion must have been one of great interest



to the patriarch John Adams, then more than four-score years of age. Nearly forty years before, he had said of his son:—"He behaves like a man!" That son, in the prime of his days, had recently been called from foreign service, where he had obtained accumulated honors, to fill the highest station in the gift of the Executive of his country. The people of two continents would now unite with the venerable sage, in repeating the declaration—"He behaves like a man!" The patriarch stood upon the verge of the grave. But as the sun of his existence was gently and calmly sinking beneath the horizon, lo! its beams were reflected in their pristine brightness by another orb, born from its bosom, which was steadily ascending to the zenith of earthly fame!

John Quincy Adams took up his residence at Washington, and entered upon his duties as Secretary of State, in September, 1817.

During the eight years of President Monroe's administration, Mr. Adams discharged the duties of the state department, with a fidelity and success which received not only the unqualified approbation of the President, but of the whole country. To him that office was no *sinecure*. His labors were incessant. He spared no pains to qualify himself to discuss, with consummate skill, whatever topics legitimately claimed his attention. The President, the cabinet, the people, reposed implicit trust in his ability to promote the interests of the nation in all matters of diplomacy, and confided unre-

servedly in his pure American feelings and love of country. Perfectly familiar as he was with the political condition of the world, Mr. Monroe entrusted him, without hesitation, with the management of the foreign policy of the Government, during his administration.

In the autumn of 1817, the Seminole and a portion of the Creek Indians commenced depredations on the frontiers of Georgia and Alabama. Troops were sent to reduce them, under Gen. Gaines. His force being too weak to bring them to subjection, Gen. Jackson was ordered to take the field with a more numerous army, with which he overran the Indian country. Believing it necessary to enter Florida, then a Spanish territory, for the more effectual subjugation of the Indians, he did not hesitate to pursue them thither. The Spanish authorities protested against the invasion of their domains, and offered some opposition. Gen. Jackson persisted, and in the result, took possession of St. Marks and Pensacola, and sent the Spanish authorities and troops to Havana.

Among the prisoners taken in this expedition, were a Scotchman and an Englishman, named Arbuthnot and Ambrister. They were British subjects, but were charged with supplying the Indians with arms and munitions of war; stirring them up against the whites, and acting as spies. On these charges they were tried by a court martial, of which Gen. Gaines was President—found guilty—condemned to death, and executed on the 27th of April, 1818.



These transactions of Gen. Jackson caused great excitement throughout the United States, and subjected him to no little blame. The subject excited much debate in Congress. A resolution censuring him for his summary proceedings was introduced, but voted down by a large majority. In Mr. Monroe's cabinet, there was a strong feeling against Gen. Jackson. The President, and all the members, with a single exception, were disposed to hold him responsible for having transcended his orders. Hon. Wm. H. Crawford, who was in Mr. Monroe's cabinet at that time, in a letter to Mr. Forsyth, says:—"Mr. Calhoun's proposition in the cabinet was, that Gen. Jackson should be punished in some form, or reprimanded in some form."

Mr. Adams alone vindicated Gen. Jackson. He insisted that inasmuch as the Government had ordered him to pursue the enemy into Florida, if necessary, they were responsible for the acts of the American general, in the exercise of the discretionary power with which he had been clothed. Several cabinet meetings were held on the subject, in July, 1818, in which the whole matter was thoroughly discussed. Mr. Adams succeeded at length in bringing the President into the adoption of his views, which Mr. Monroe substantially embodied in his next annual message to Congress.

The intelligence of the execution of Arbuthnot and Ambrister, excited the highest indignation in England. The people viewed it as a violation of the rights of British subjects, and an insult to their nation, and were

ready to rush to war. Lord Castlereagh declared to Mr. Rush, the American Minister, that had the English cabinet but held up a finger, war would have been declared against the United States. But so able and convincing were the arguments which Mr. Adams directed Mr. Rush to lay before the British Ministers, in defence of the proceedings of Gen. Jackson, that they became convinced there was no just cause of war between the two countries, and exerted their influence against any movement in that direction.

On the 22nd of February, 1819, a treaty was concluded at Washington, between the United States and Spain, by which East and West Florida, with the adjacent islands, were ceded to the Union. The negotiations which resulted in the consummation of the treaty, were conducted by Mr. Adams and Luis de Onis the Spanish Ambassador. This treaty was very advantageous to the United States. It brought to a close a controversy with Spain, of many years' standing, which had defied all the exertions of former administrations to adjust, and placed our relations with that country on the most amicable footing. In effecting this reconciliation, Mr. Adams deserved and received a high share of credit.

The recognition of the independence of the Spanish South American Provinces, by the Government of the United States, took place during Mr. Adams's administration of the State Department. The honor of first proposing this recognition, in the Congress of the



United States, and of advocating it with unsurpassed eloquence and zeal, belongs to the patriotic Henry Clay. Mainly by his influence, the House of Representatives, in 1820, passed the following resolutions:—

“Resolved, That the House of Representatives participate with the people of the United States, in the deep interest which they feel for the success of the Spanish Provinces of South America, which are struggling to establish their liberty and independence.

“Resolved, That this House will give its constitutional support to the President of the United States, whenever he may deem it expedient to recognize the sovereignty and independence of any of said Provinces.”

Mr. Adams at first hesitated on this subject. Not that he was opposed to the diffusion of the blessings of freedom to the oppressed. No man was a more ardent lover of liberty, or was more anxious that its institutions should be established throughout the earth, at the earliest practicable moment. But he had many and serious doubts whether the people of the South American Provinces were capable of originating and maintaining an enlightened self-government. There was a lack of general intelligence among the people—a want of an enlarged and enlightened understanding of the principles of rational freedom—which led him to apprehend that their attempts at self-government would for a long season, at least, result in the reign of faction and anarchy, rather than true republican principles. The subsequent history of these countries—the divisions and contentions, the revolutions and counter-revolutions, which have rent them asunder, and deluged

them in blood—clearly show that Mr. Adams but exercised a far-seeing intelligence in entertaining these doubts. Nevertheless, as they had succeeded in throwing off the Spanish yoke, and had, in fact, achieved their independence, Mr. Adams would not throw any impediment in their way. Trusting that his fears as to their ability for self-government might be groundless, he gave his influence to the recognizing of their independence by the United States.

In 1821 the Greek revolution broke out. The people of that classic land, after enduring ages of the most brutal and humiliating oppression from the Turks, nobly resolved to break the chains of the Ottoman power, or perish in the attempt. The war was long, and sanguinary, but finally resulted in the emancipation of Greece, and the establishment of its independence as a nation.

The inhabitants of the United States could not witness such a struggle with indifference. A spirit of sympathy ran like electricity throughout the land. Public meetings were held in nearly every populous town in the Union, in which resolutions, encouraging the Greeks in their struggle, were passed, and contributions taken up to aid them. Money, clothing, provisions, arms, were collected in immense quantities and shipped to Greece. In churches, colleges, academies and schools—at the theatres, museums, and other places of amusement and public resort—aid was freely and generously given in behalf of the struggling pa-