

a higher and more respectful sense than myself. The names of two of them were, in the fulfilment of the provisions of the constitution, presented to the selection of the House of Representatives in concurrence with my own,—names closely associated with the glory of the nation, and one of them farther recommended by a larger majority of the primary electoral suffrages than mine.

In this state of things, could my refusal to accept the trust thus delegated to me give an opportunity to the people to form, and to express, with a nearer approach to unanimity, the object of their preference, I should not hesitate to decline the acceptance of this eminent charge, and to submit the decision of this momentous question again to their determination. But the constitution itself has not so disposed of the contingency which would arise in the event of my refusal. I shall, therefore, repair to the post assigned me by the call of my country, signified through her constitutional organs; oppressed with the magnitude of the task before me, but cheered with the hope of that generous support from my fellow-citizens, which, in the vicissitudes of a life devoted to their service, has never failed to sustain me—confident in the trust, that the wisdom of the legislative councils will guide and direct me in the path of my official duty; and relying, above all, upon the superintending providence of that Being “in whose hands our breath is, and whose are all our ways.”

“Gentlemen, I pray you to make acceptable to the House, the assurance of my profound gratitude for their confidence, and to accept yourselves my thanks for the friendly terms in which you have communicated to me their decision.”

The diffidence manifested by Mr. Adams in accepting the office of President, under the peculiar circumstances of his election, and his wish, if it were possible, to submit his claims again to the people, were unquestionably uttered with great sincerity of heart. He was the choice of but a minority, as expressed in the electoral vote; and in accordance with his republican principles and feelings, he would have preferred another

expression of public opinion. But the constitution made no provision for such an arbitrament. He must either serve or resign. In the latter case, the Vice President would have discharged the duties of President during the term. Mr. Adams had no alternative, therefore, but to accept the office, agreeably to the terms of the constitution. Had either of his competitors been elected by the House of Representatives, they would have been, as he was, a minority President. Notwithstanding Gen. Jackson received fifteen more electoral votes than Mr. Adams, yet it is believed that in the primary assemblies the latter obtained a greater number of the actual votes of the people than the former.

“Although Gen. Jackson had a plurality in the nominal returns from the electoral colleges, the question is, whether he had a plurality in the popular votes of the States. In North Carolina, the Crawford men had a great plurality over either of the Jackson and Adams sections; but the two latter joining their forces, gave the electoral vote of the State, it being fifteen, to Gen. Jackson. Deduct this from Gen. Jackson’s plurality—as it should be, if the principle of plurality is to govern—and it leaves him *eighty-four*, the same as the vote of Mr. Adams. But Mr. Adams had a great plurality of the popular vote of New York, and on this principle should be credited the entire *thirty-six* votes of that State, whereas, he received only *twenty-six*. This adjustment would carry Mr. Adams up to

ninety-four, and leave Gen. Jackson with *eighty-four*. Besides, the popular majorities for Mr. Adams in the six New England States were greatly in excess of the Jackson majorities in the eight States which gave their vote for him; which largely augments Mr. Adams' aggregate plurality in the Union over Gen. Jackson's. Then deduct the constitutional allowance for the *slave* vote in the slave States, as given by their masters. It will not be pretended that this is a *popular* vote, though constitutional. Gen. Jackson obtained *fifty-five* electoral votes, more than half his entire vote, and Mr. Adams only *six* from slave States. It will therefore be seen, that on the principle of a popular plurality, carried out, and carried through, (it ought not to stop for the advantage of one party,) Mr. Adams, in the election of 1824, was FAR AHEAD of Gen. Jackson.*

On the the 4th of March, 1825, John Quincy Adams was inaugurated as President of the United States, and took the executive chair, which had been entered twenty-eight years before by his venerated father. The declaration of that father in reference to the son, when a lad—"He behaves like a man!"—had gathered strength and meaning in the lapse of years. The people of the American republic, taught by a long series of faithful and eminent services, in the fulfilment of the

* Colton's Life and Times of Henry Clay.

prophetic words, placed him in a position the most elevated and honorable, the most worthy the aim of a pure and patriotic ambition, that earth can afford!

The scene at the inauguration was splendid and imposing. At an early hour of the day the avenues leading to the capitol presented an animated spectacle. Crowds of citizens on foot, in carriages, and on horseback, were hastening to the great centre of attraction. Strains of martial music, and the movements of the various military corps, heightened the excitement.

At 12 o'clock, the military escort, consisting of general and staff officers, and several volunteer companies, received the President elect at his residence, together with President Monroe, and several officers of government. The procession, led by the cavalry, and accompanied by an immense concourse of citizens, proceeded to the capitol, where it was received, with military honors, by the U. S. Marine Corps under Col. Henderson.

Meanwhile the hall of the House of Representatives presented a brilliant spectacle. The galleries and the lobbies were crowded with spectators. The sofas between the columns, the bar, the promenade in the rear of the Speaker's chair, and the three outer rows of the members' seats, were occupied by a splendid array of beauty and fashion. On the left, the Diplomatic Corps, in the costume of their respective Courts, occupied the place assigned them, immediately before the steps which lead to the chair. The officers of the army and

navy were scattered in groups throughout the hall. In front of the Clerk's table chairs were placed for the Judges of the Supreme Court.

At twenty minutes past 12 o'clock, the marshals, in blue scarfs, made their appearance in the hall, at the head of the august procession. First came the officers of both Houses of Congress. Then appeared the President elect, followed by the venerable ex-president Monroe, with his family. To these succeeded the Judges of the Supreme Court, in their robes of office, the members of the Senate, preceded by the Vice-President, with a number of the members of the House of Representatives.

Mr. Adams, in a plain suit of black, made entirely of American manufactures, ascended to the Speaker's chair, and took his seat. The Chief Justice was placed in front of the Clerk's table, having before him another table on the floor of the hall, on the opposite side of which sat the remaining Judges, with their faces towards the chair. The doors having been closed, and silence proclaimed, Mr. Adams arose, and, in a distinct and firm tone of voice, read his inaugural address.

At the conclusion of the address, a general plaudit burst forth from the vast assemblage, which continued some minutes. Mr. Adams then descended from the chair, and, proceeding to the Judges' table, received from the Chief Justice a volume of the Laws of the United States, from which he read, with a loud voice, the oath of office. The plaudits and cheers of the

multitude were at this juncture repeated, accompanied by salutes of artillery from without.

The congratulations which then poured in from every side occupied the hands, and could not but reach the heart, of President Adams. The meeting between him and his venerated predecessor, had in it something peculiarly affecting. General Jackson was among the earliest of those who took the hand of the President; and their looks and deportment towards each other were a rebuke to that littleness of party spirit which can see no merit in a rival, and feel no joy in the honor of a competitor.

Shortly after 1 o'clock, the procession commenced leaving the hall. The President was escorted back as he came. On his arrival at his residence, he received the compliments and respects of a great number of ladies and gentlemen, who called on him to tender their congratulations. The proceedings of the day were closed by an "inaugural ball" in the evening. Among the guests present, were the President and Vice-President, Ex-President Monroe, a number of foreign ministers, with many civil, military, and naval officers.*

Mr. Adams's Inaugural Address is as follows:—

"In compliance with an usage coeval with the existence of our federal constitution, and sanctioned by the example of my predecessors in the career upon which I am about to enter, I appear, my

* National Intelligencer.

fellow-citizens, in your presence, and in that of heaven, to bind myself, by the solemnities of a religious obligation, to the faithful performance of the duties allotted to me, in the station to which I have been called.

"In unfolding to my countrymen the principles by which I shall be governed, in the fulfilment of those duties, my first resort will be to that constitution which I shall swear, to the best of my ability, to preserve, protect, and defend. That revered instrument enumerates the powers and prescribes the duties of the Executive Magistrate, and in its first words, declares the purposes to which these, and the whole action of the Government instituted by it, should be invariably and sacredly devoted—to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to the people of this Union, in their successive generations. Since the adoption of this social compact, one of these generations has passed away. It is the work of our forefathers. Administered by some of the most eminent men, who contributed to its formation, through a most eventful period in the annals of the world, and through all the vicissitudes of peace and war, incidental to the condition of associated man, it has not disappointed the hopes and aspirations of those illustrious benefactors of their age and nation. It has promoted the lasting welfare of that country so dear to us all; it has, to an extent far beyond the ordinary lot of humanity, secured the freedom and happiness of this people. We now receive it as a precious inheritance from those to whom we are indebted for its establishment, doubly bound by the examples which they have left us, and by the blessings which we have enjoyed, as the fruits of their labors, to transmit the same, unimpaired, to the succeeding generation.

"In the compass of thirty-six years, since this great national covenant was instituted, a body of laws enacted under its authority, and in conformity with its provisions, has unfolded its powers, and carried into practical operation its effective energies. Subordinate departments have distributed the executive functions in their various relations to foreign affairs, to the revenue and expenditures, and to the military force of the Union, by land and sea. A co-ordinate department of the judiciary has expounded the constitution and the laws; settling, in harmonious coincidence

with the legislative will, numerous weighty questions of construction, which the imperfection of human language had rendered unavoidable. The year of jubilee since the first formation of our Union, has just elapsed; that of the Declaration of our Independence is at hand. The consummation of both was effected by this constitution. Since that period, a population of four millions has multiplied to twelve. A territory bounded by the Mississippi has been extended from sea to sea. New States have been admitted to the Union, in numbers nearly equal to those of the first confederation. Treaties of peace, amity, and commerce, have been concluded with the principal dominions of the earth. The people of other nations, inhabitants of regions acquired, not by conquests, but by compact, have been united with us in the participation of our rights and duties, of our burdens and blessings. The forest has fallen by the axe of our woodsmen—the soil has been made to teem by the tillage of our farmers; our commerce has whitened every ocean. The dominion of man over physical nature has been extended by the invention of our artists. Liberty and law have marched hand in hand. All the purposes of human association have been accomplished as effectually as under any other Government on the globe, and at a cost little exceeding, in a whole generation, the expenditures of other nations in a single year.

"Such is the unexaggerated picture of our condition under a constitution founded upon the republican principle of equal rights. To admit that this picture has its shades, is but to say, that it is still the condition of men upon earth. From evil—physical, moral, and political—it is not our claim to be exempt. We have suffered, sometimes by the visitation of Heaven through disease, often by the wrongs and injustice of other nations, even to the extremities of war; and lastly, by dissensions among ourselves—dissensions, perhaps, inseparable from the enjoyment of freedom, but which have more than once appeared to threaten the dissolution of the Union, and, with it, the overthrow of all the enjoyments of our present lot, and all our earthly hopes of the future. The causes of these dissensions have been various, founded upon differences of speculation in the theory of republican government, upon conflicting views of policy in our relations with foreign nations; upon jealousies of partial and sectional interests, aggravated by prejudices and prepossessions, which strangers to each other are ever apt to entertain.

"It is a source of gratification and of encouragement to me, to observe that the great result of this experiment upon the theory of human rights, has, at the close of that generation by which it was formed, been crowned with success equal to the most sanguine expectations of its founders. Union, justice, tranquillity, the common defence, the general welfare, and the blessings of liberty—all have been promoted by the Government under which we have lived. Standing at this point of time, looking back to that generation which has gone by, and forward to that which is advancing, we may at once indulge in grateful exultation and in cheering hope. From the experience of the past, we derive instructive lessons for the future.

"Of the two great political parties which have divided the opinions and feelings of our country, the candid and the just will now admit, that both have contributed splendid talents, spotless integrity, ardent patriotism, and disinterested sacrifices, to the formation and administration of the Government, and that both have required a liberal indulgence for a portion of human infirmity and error. The revolutionary wars of Europe, commencing precisely at the moment when the Government of the United States first went into operation under the constitution, excited collisions of sentiments and of sympathies, which kindled all the passions and embittered the conflict of parties, till the nation was involved in war, and the Union was shaken to its centre. This time of trial embraced a period of five-and-twenty years, during which the policy of the Union in its relations with Europe constituted the principal basis of our own political divisions, and the most arduous part of the action of the Federal Government. With the catastrophe in which the wars of the French Revolution terminated, and our own subsequent peace with Great Britain, this baneful weed of party strife was uprooted. From that time no difference of principle, connected with the theory of government, or with our intercourse with foreign nations, has existed or been called forth in force sufficient to sustain a continued combination of parties, or given more than wholesome animation to public sentiment or legislative debate. Our political creed, without a dissenting voice that can be heard, is, that the will of the people is the source, and the happiness of the people is the end, of all legitimate government upon earth: that the best security for the beneficence, and the best guaranty against the abuse of power, consists

in the freedom, the purity, and the frequency of popular elections: that the General Government of the Union, and the separate Governments of the States, are all sovereignties of legitimate powers, fellow-servants of the same masters—uncontrolled within their respective spheres, uncontrollable by encroachments on each other. If there have been those who doubted whether a confederated representative democracy was a Government competent to the wise and orderly management of the common concerns of a mighty nation, those doubts have been dispelled. If there have been projects of partial confederacies to be erected upon the ruins of the Union, they have been scattered to the winds. If there have been dangerous attachments to one foreign nation, and antipathies against another, they have been extinguished. Ten years of peace at home and abroad have assuaged the animosities of political contention, and blended into harmony the most discordant elements of public opinion. There still remains one effort of magnanimity, one sacrifice of prejudice and passion, to be made by the individuals throughout the nation who have heretofore followed the standards of political party. It is that of discarding every remnant of rancor against each other, of embracing, as countrymen and friends, and of yielding to talents and virtue alone that confidence which, in times of contention for principle, was bestowed only upon those who bore the badge of party communion.

"The collisions of party spirit, which originate in speculative opinions, or in different views of administrative policy, are in their nature transitory. Those which are founded on geographical divisions, adverse interests of soil, climate, and modes of domestic life, are more permanent, and therefore, perhaps, more dangerous. It is this which gives inestimable value to the character of our Government, at once federal and national. It holds out to us a perpetual admonition to preserve, alike, and with equal anxiety, the rights of each individual State in its own Government, and the rights of the whole nation in that of the Union. Whatever is of domestic concernment, unconnected with the other members of the Union, or with foreign lands, belongs exclusively to the administration of the State Governments. Whatsoever directly involves the rights and interests of the federative fraternity, or of foreign powers, is, of the resort of this General Government. The duties of both are obvious in the general principle, though sometimes perplexed with

difficulties in the detail. To respect the rights of the State Governments is the inviolable duty of that of the Union: the Government of every State will feel its own obligation to respect and preserve the rights of the whole. The prejudices everywhere too commonly entertained against distant strangers are worn away, and the jealousies of jarring interests are allayed, by the composition and functions of the great national councils, annually assembled, from all quarters of the Union, at this place. Here the distinguished men from every section of our country, while meeting to deliberate upon the great interests of those by whom they are deputed, learn to estimate the talents, and do justice to the virtues, of each other. The harmony of the nation is promoted, and the whole Union is knit together by the sentiments of mutual respect, the habits of social intercourse, and the ties of personal friendship, formed between the representatives of its several parts in the performance of their service at this metropolis.

“Passing from this general review of the purposes and injunctions of the Federal constitution and their results, as indicating the first traces of the path of duty in the discharge of my public trust, I turn to the administration of my immediate predecessor, as the second. It has passed away in a period of profound peace: how much to the satisfaction of our country, and to the honor of our country's name, is known to you all. The great features of its policy, in general concurrence with the will of the Legislature, have been—To cherish peace while preparing for defensive war—to yield exact justice to other nations, and maintain the rights of our own—to cherish the principles of freedom and equal rights, wherever they were proclaimed—to discharge, with all possible promptitude, the national debt—to reduce within the narrowest limits of efficiency the military force—to improve the organization and discipline of the army—to provide and sustain a school of military science—to extend equal protection to all the great interests of the nation—to promote the civilization of the Indian tribes; and—to proceed to the great system of internal improvements, within the limits of the constitutional power of the Union. Under the pledge of these promises, made by that eminent citizen at the time of his first induction to this office, in his career of eight years the internal taxes have been repealed; sixty millions of the public debt have been discharged; provision has been made for the comfort and

relief of the aged and indigent among the surviving warriors of the Revolution; the regular armed force has been reduced, and its constitution revised and perfected; the accountability for the expenditures of public monies has been more effective; the Floridas have been peaceably acquired, and our boundary has been extended to the Pacific Ocean; the independence of the southern nations of this hemisphere has been recognized, and recommended by example and by counsel to the potentates of Europe; progress has been made in the defence of the country, by fortifications and the increase of the navy—towards the effectual suppression of the African traffic in slaves—in alluring the aboriginal hunters of our land to the cultivation of the soil and of the mind—in exploring the interior regions of the Union, and in preparing, by scientific researches and surveys, for the further application of our national resources to the internal improvement of our country.

“In this brief outline of the promise and performance of my immediate predecessor, the line of duty, for his successor, is clearly delineated. To pursue to their consummation those purposes of improvement in our common condition instituted or recommended by him, will embrace the whole sphere of my obligation. To the topic of internal improvement, emphatically urged by him at his inauguration, I recur with peculiar satisfaction. It is that from which I am convinced that the unborn millions of our posterity, who are in future ages to people this continent, will derive their most fervent gratitude to the founders of the Union—that in which the beneficent action of its Government will be most deeply felt and acknowledged. The magnificence and splendor of their public works are among the imperishable glories of the ancient republics. The roads and aqueducts of Rome have been the admiration of all after ages, and have survived thousands of years after all her conquests have been swallowed up in despotism, or become the spoil of barbarians. Some diversity of opinion has prevailed with regard to the powers of Congress for legislation upon objects of this nature. The most respectful deference is due to doubts, originating in pure patriotism, and sustained by venerated authority. But nearly twenty years have passed since the construction of the first national road was commenced. The authority for its construction was then unquestioned. To how many thousands of our countrymen has it proved a benefit? To what single individual has it ever proved an

injury? Repeated, liberal and candid discussions in the Legislature have conciliated the sentiments, and approximated the opinions of enlightened minds, upon the question of constitutional power. I cannot but hope that, by the same process of friendly, patient, and persevering deliberation, all constitutional objections will ultimately be removed. The extent and limitation of the powers of the General Government, in relation to this transcendently important interest, will be settled and acknowledged to the common satisfaction of all; and every speculative scruple will be solved by a practical public blessing.

"Fellow-citizens, you are acquainted with the peculiar circumstances of the recent election, which have resulted in affording me the opportunity of addressing you at this time. You have heard the exposition of the principles which will direct me in the fulfilment of the high and solemn trust imposed upon me in this station. Less possessed of your confidence, in advance, than any of my predecessors, I am deeply conscious of the prospect that I shall stand more and oftener in need of your indulgence. Intentions upright and pure, a heart devoted to the welfare of our country, and the unceasing application of the faculties allotted to me to her service, are all the pledges that I can give for the faithful performance of the arduous duties I am to undertake. To the guidance of the legislative councils; to the assistance of the executive and subordinate departments; to the friendly co-operation of the respective State Governments; to the candid and liberal support of the people, so far as it may be deserved by honest industry and zeal; I shall look for whatever success may attend my public service: and knowing that 'except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain,' with fervent supplications for His favor, to His overruling providence I commit, with humble but fearless confidence, my own fate, and the future destinies of my country."

In entering upon the discharge of his duties as President, Mr. Adams proceeded to form his cabinet by nominating Henry Clay, of Kentucky, Secretary of State; Richard Rush, of Pennsylvania, Secretary of the Treasury; James Barbour, of Virginia, Secretary

of War; Samuel L. Southard, Secretary of the Navy, and Wm. Wirt, Attorney General. These were all men of superior talents, of tried integrity and faithfulness, and well worthy the elevated positions to which they were called.