

## CHAPTER X.

MR. ADAMS'S ADMINISTRATION—REFUSES TO REMOVE POLITICAL OPPOSERS FROM OFFICE—URGES THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS—APPOINTS COMMISSIONERS TO THE CONGRESS OF PANAMA—HIS POLICY TOWARD THE INDIAN TRIBES—HIS SPEECH ON BREAKING GROUND FOR THE CHESAPEAKE AND OHIO CANAL—BITTER OPPOSITION TO HIS ADMINISTRATION—FAILS OF RE-ELECTION TO THE PRESIDENCY—RETIRES FROM OFFICE.

IN administering the Government of the United States, Mr. Adams adhered with rigid fidelity to the principles embodied in his inaugural speech. Believing that "the will of the people is the source, and the happiness of the people the end, of all legitimate government on earth," it was his constant aim to act up to this patriotic principle in the discharge of his duties as chief magistrate. He was emphatically the President of the entire people, and not of a section, or a party. His administration was truly national in its scope, its objects, and its results. His views of the sacred nature of the trust imposed upon him by his fellow-citizens were too exalted to allow him to desecrate the power with which it clothed him to the promotion of party or personal interests. Although not unmindful of the party which elevated him to the

presidency, nor forgetful of the claims of those who yielded sympathy and support to the measures of his administration, yet in all his doings in this respect, his primary aim was the general good. Simply a friendship for him, or his measures, without other and requisite qualifications, would not ensure from Mr. Adams an appointment to office. Neither did an opposition to his administration alone, except there was a marked practical unfitness for office, ever induce him to remove an individual from a public station.

Looking back to the administration of Mr. Adams from the present day, and comparing it with those which have succeeded it, or even those which preceded it, the acknowledgment must be made by all candid minds, that it will lose nothing in purity, patriotism, and fidelity, in the discharge of all its trusts. He was utterly incapable of proscription for opinion's sake. With a stern integrity worthy the highest admiration, and which the people at that period were far too slow to acknowledge and appreciate, he would not displace his most active political opponents from public stations he found them occupying, provided they were competent to their duty and faithful in the discharge of the same. "It was in my hearing that, to a representation that a certain important and influential functionary of the General Government in New York was using the power of his office adversely to Mr. Adams's re-election, and that he ought to desist or be removed, Mr. Adams made this reply:—'That



gentleman is one of the best officers in the public service. I have had occasion to know his diligence, exactness, and punctuality. On public grounds, therefore, there is no cause of complaint against him, and upon no other will I remove him. *If I cannot administer the Government on these principles, I am content to go back to Quincy!*"\* Being in Baltimore on a certain occasion, among those introduced to him was a gentleman who accosted him thus—"Mr. President, though I differ from you in opinion, I am glad to find you in good health." The President gave him a hearty shake of the hand, and replied,—“Sir, in our happy and free country, we can differ in opinion without being enemies.”

These anecdotes illustrate the character and principles of Mr. Adams. He knew nothing of the jealousy and bitterness which are gendered, in little minds and hearts, by disparities of sentiment. Freedom of opinion he considered the birthright of every American citizen, and he would in no instance be the instrument of inflicting punishment upon the head of any man on account of its exercise. High and pure in all his aims, he sought to reach them by means of a corresponding character. If he could not succeed in the use of such instruments, he was content to meet defeat. The rule by which he was governed in the discharge of his official duties, is beautifully expressed by the dramatic bard :—

\* King's Eulogy on John Quincy Adams.

“Be just and fear not.  
Let all the ends thou aim'st at, be thy COUNTRY'S,  
Thy GOD'S, and TRUTH'S. Then if thou fall'st, O Cromwell,  
Thou fall'st a blessed martyr!”

In the truly republican position which Mr. Adams took in regard to appointments to office, and which, it is humiliating to believe, was one means of his subsequent defeat, he but faithfully imitated the example of “the Father of his country.” When Gen. Washington occupied the presidential chair, application was made for the appointment of one of his old and intimate friends to a lucrative office. At the same time a petition was received asking the same station for a most determined political opponent. The latter received the appointment. The friend was greatly disappointed and hurt in his feelings at his defeat. Let the explanation of Washington be noted and ever remembered :—“My friend,” said he, “I receive with cordial welcome. He is welcome to my house, and welcome to my heart ; but with all his good qualities he is not a man of business. His opponent, with all his politics so hostile to me, is a man of business. My private feelings have nothing to do in the case. I am not George Washington, but President of the United States. As George Washington, I would do this man any kindness in my power—as President of the United States, I can do nothing.”

The period of Mr. Adams's administration, was not



one which admitted of acts calculated to rivet the attention, or excite the admiration and applause of the multitude. No crisis occurred in national affairs—no imminent peril from without, or danger within, threatened the well-being of the country! Quietness reigned throughout the world, and the nations were allowed once more to cultivate the arts of peace, to enlarge the operations of commerce, and to fix their attention on domestic interests—the only true fountain of national prosperity. But though lacking in some of the more striking elements of popularity, the administration of Mr. Adams was pre-eminently useful in all its measures and influences. During no Presidential term since the organization of the Government, has more been done to consolidate the Union, and develop its resources, and lay the foundations of national strength and prosperity.

The two great interests which, perhaps, received the largest share of attention from Mr. Adams' administration, were internal improvements and domestic manufactures. A special attention to these subjects was recommended in his messages to Congress. And throughout his term, he failed not to urge these vital matters upon the attention of the people, and their representatives. He recommended the opening of national roads and canals—the improvement of the navigation of rivers, and the safety of harbors—the survey of our coasts, the erection of light houses, piers, and breakwaters. Whatever tended to facilitate communication

and transportation between extreme portions of the Union—to bring the people of distant sections into a more direct intercourse with each other, and bind them together by ties of a business, social and friendly nature—to promote enterprize, industry, and enlarged views of national and individual prosperity—obtained his earnest sanction and recommendation. To encourage home labor—to protect our infant manufactories from a fatal competition with foreign pauper wages—to foster and build up in the bosom of the country a system of domestic production, which should not only supply home consumption, and afford a home market for raw materials and provisions, the produce of our own soil, but enable us in due time to compete with other nations in sending our manufactures to foreign markets—he yielded all his influence to the levying of protective duties on foreign articles, especially such as could be produced in our own country. The wisdom of this policy, its direct tendency to promote national wealth and strength, and to render the Union truly independent of the fluctuations and vicissitudes of foreign countries, cannot be doubted, it would seem, by those possessing clear minds and sound judgment, of all parties.

Under the faithful supervision of one so vigilant as Mr. Adams, the foreign relations of the Government could not have been neglected. The intimate knowledge of the condition of foreign nations, their resources and their wants, which was possessed by himself and



by Mr. Clay, the Secretary of State, afforded facilities in this department, from which the country reaped the richest benefit. During the four years of his administration, more treaties were negotiated at Washington than during the entire thirty-six years through which the preceding administrations had extended. New treaties of amity, navigation and commerce, were concluded with Austria, Sweden, Denmark, the Hanseatic League, Prussia, Colombia, and Central America. Commercial difficulties and various arrangements of a satisfactory character, were settled with the Netherlands, and other European Governments. The claims of our citizens against Sweden, Denmark and Brazil, for spoils of commerce, were satisfactorily consummated.

“As time advances, the evidences are accumulating on all sides, that the administration of John Quincy Adams was one of the most wise, patriotic, pacific, just, and wealth-producing, in the history of the country; and no small part of that benefit may justly be ascribed to the aid he received from his Secretary of State. Mr. Adams himself was a great statesman, bred in the school of statesmen, and all his life exercised in the business of state, with recognized skill, and approved fidelity. The seven years immediately preceding the administration of Mr. Adams, was a period of great commercial embarrassment and distress; and the seven years subsequent to his entrance on the duties of chief

executive, was a period of great public and private prosperity.”\*

While Mr. Adams was thus seeking to foster and encourage the industrial and monetary interests of the country, he was not forgetful of the important claims of literature and science. President Washington, during his administration, had repeatedly urged on Congress the importance of establishing a national university at the capital; and he had located and bequeathed a site for that purpose. But his appeals on this subject had been in vain. In Mr. Adams's first message, he earnestly called on Congress to carry into execution this recommendation of the Father of his Country—insisting that “among the first, perhaps the very first instrument for the improvement of the condition of men, is knowledge; and to the acquisition of much of the knowledge adapted to the wants, the comforts, and the enjoyments of human life, public institutions and seminaries of learning are essential.”

In the same message Mr. Adams recommended the establishment of a national observatory. “Connected with the establishment of an university,” he said “or, separate from it, might be undertaken the erection of an astronomical observatory, with provision for the support of an astronomer, to be in constant attendance of observation upon the phenomena of the heavens, and for the periodical publication of his observations. It is with no feeling of pride, as an American, that the re-

\* Cotton's Life of Clay.



mark may be made, that, on the comparatively small territorial surface of Europe, there are existing upwards of one hundred and thirty of these light-houses in the skies; while, throughout the whole American hemisphere, there is not one. If we reflect a moment upon the discoveries which, in the last four centuries, have been made in the physical constitution of the universe, by the means of these buildings, and of observers stationed in them, shall we doubt of their usefulness to every nation? And while scarcely a year passes over our heads without bringing some new astronomical discovery to light, which we must fain receive at second hand from Europe, are we not cutting ourselves off from the means of returning light for light, while we have neither observatory nor observer upon our half of the globe, and the earth revolves in perpetual darkness to our unsearching eyes?"

It is humiliating to reflect that neither of these recommendations received an encouraging response from Congress. The latter suggestion, indeed, excited the ridicule of many of the opposers of Mr. Adams, and "a light-house in the skies," became a term of reproach in their midst. In this, however, it must be confessed, their ridicule was greatly at the expense of their intelligence, their public spirit, and their devotion to the highest interests of man. There are few reflections more mortifying to an American citizen, than that while so large a portion of the resources of the national Government have been exhausted in prosecuting

party measures, rewarding partisan services, and promoting sectional and personal schemes, little or nothing has been devoted to the encouragement of the arts and sciences, and the cultivation of those higher walks of human attainment which exalt and refine a people, and fit them for the purest and sweetest enjoyments of life.

It was during the first year of his administration, that the attention of Mr. Adams was called to a proposed Congress of all the Republics on the American Continent, to meet at Panama. The objects designed to be accomplished by such a Congress have been variously stated. It has been believed by some to have been called for the purpose of opposing a supposed project, entertained by the Allied Powers of Europe, of combining for the purpose of reducing the American Republics to their former condition of European vassalage. Be this as it may, the Panama Congress, among its objects, aimed at the cementing of the friendly relations of all the independent States of America, and the forming of a kind of mutual council, to act as an umpire to settle the differences which might arise between them.

The United States was invited to send representatives to Panama. Mr. Adams, as President, in view of the beneficial influences which in various ways might flow from such a meeting, accepted the invitation, with the understanding that the Government of the United States would take no part that could conflict with its neutral position, in the wars which might



then be in existence between any of the South American Republics and other powers. The acceptance of this invitation was announced by Mr. Adams in his first message to Congress. This was immediately followed by the nomination of Messrs. Richard C. Anderson and John Sargeant, as commissioners to the Congress of Panama, and Wm. B. Rochester, of New York, as secretary of the commission. These nominations were confirmed by the Senate; and an appropriation was voted by the House of Representatives, after strong opposition and much delay, to carry the contemplated measure into effect.

But the United States Government was never represented in the Panama Congress. The proceedings in the House of Representatives on this subject had been so protracted, that it was found too late for Mr. Sargeant to reach Panama in season for the meeting of the Congress, which took place on the 22nd of June, 1826. Mr. Anderson, who was then minister at Colombia, on receiving his instructions, commenced his journey to Panama; but on reaching Carthagena he was seized with a malignant fever, which terminated his existence.

During the second session of the nineteenth Congress, the subject of commercial intercourse with the British West India Colonies was thoroughly discussed. The British Parliament had laid restrictions so onerous on the trade of the United States with these Colonies, that it could be pursued to very little profit. Bills

were introduced into both houses of Congress, for the protection of the interests of American merchants, trading with the British Colonies; but the Senate and House failing to agree on the details of the proposed measures, nothing was done to effect the desired object. Congress having adjourned without passing any law to meet the restrictive measures of Great Britain, President Adams, on the 17th of March, 1827, agreeably to a law passed three years before, issued a proclamation closing the ports of the United States against vessels from the British colonies, until the restrictive measures of the British Government should be repealed.

The policy pursued by Mr. Adams toward the Indian tribes within the United States, was pacific and humane. The position they held toward the General Government was of an unsettled and embarrassing character. Enjoying a species of independence, and subject to laws of their own enactment, they were, nevertheless, dependent on the Government of the United States for protection, and were, in fact, wholly at its disposal. Near the close of Mr. Monroe's administration, in a message to Congress, on the 27th of January, 1825, he proposed a plan to remove the tribes scattered through the several States, to a tract of country west of the Mississippi, and to unite them in one nation, with some plan for their government and civilization. This proposition meeting with a decided opposition on the part of many of the Indians,



was modified during Mr. Adams's administration. It finally resulted in a plan of removing west of the Mississippi such individuals among the various tribes as would consent to go under the inducements held out; and allowing the remainder to continue in their old abode, occupying each a small tract of land. This policy has since been pursued by the General Government, and has resulted in the removal of most of the aborigines beyond the western shores of the Mississippi.

These removals, however, have been attended with no little difficulty, and at times have led to collisions which have assumed a serious aspect. An instance of this description occurred during the first year Mr. Adams occupied the presidential chair. In 1802, a compact was formed between the General Government and the State of Georgia, in which it was agreed, that in consequence of the relinquishment, on the part of Georgia, of all her claim to the land set off in the then new Mississippi Territory, the General Government, at its own expense, should obtain a relinquishment, from the Creek Indians, of all their lands within the State of Georgia, "whenever it could be peaceably done upon reasonable terms."

In compliance with this agreement, the United States had extinguished the Indian title to about fifteen millions of acres of land. At the close of Mr. Monroe's administration, over nine millions of acres were still retained by the Indians. The State authorities of

Georgia became very anxious to obtain possession of this also. At the solicitation of Gov. Troup, President Madison sent two Commissioners to make a treaty with the Creeks, for the purchase of their lands, and the removal of the Indians beyond the Mississippi. But the Creeks, having begun to appreciate and enjoy the comforts of civilization, and the advantages of the arts and sciences, which had been introduced into their midst, refused to treat on the subject, and passed a law in the General Council of their nation, forbidding, on pain of death, the sale of any of their lands. After the close of the council, a few of the Creeks, influenced by a chief named M'Intosh, met the United States Commissioners, and formed a treaty on their own responsibility, ceding to the General Government all the Creek lands in Georgia and Alabama. When intelligence of this treaty was circulated among the Indians, they were filled with indignation. Their General Council met—resolved not to sanction a treaty obtained in a manner so dishonorable and illegal—and despatched a party of Indians to the residence of M'Intosh, who immediately shot him and another chief who had signed the treaty with him.

This surreptitious treaty was transmitted to Washington, and under a misapprehension of the manner in which it was secured, was ratified by the Senate, on the 3d of March, 1825, the last day of Mr. Monroe's administration. Gov. Troup, acting under this treaty, sent surveyors into the Creek Territory, to