

lay out the land in lots, which were to be distributed among the white inhabitants of Georgia, by lottery. The Indians resisted this encroachment, and prepared to defend their rights by physical force—at the same time sending to Washington for protection from the General Government. The authorities of Georgia insisted upon a survey, and ordered out a body of militia to enforce it.

On hearing of this state of affairs, President Adams despatched a special agent to inquire into the facts of the case. After due investigation, the agent reported that the treaty had been obtained by bad faith and corruption, and that the Creeks were almost unanimously opposed to the cession of their lands. On receiving this report, the President determined to prevent the survey ordered by the Governor of Georgia, until the matter could be submitted to Congress, and ordered Gen. Gaines to proceed to the Creek country with a body of United States troops, to prevent collision between the Indians and the Georgia forces.

On the 5th of February, Mr. Adams transmitted a message to Congress, giving a statement of these transactions, and declaring his determination to fulfil the duty of protection the nation owed the Creeks, as guaranteed by treaty, by all the force at his command. "That the arm of military force," he continued, "will be resorted to only in the event of the failure of all other expedients provided by the laws, a

pledge has been given by the forbearance to employ it at this time. It is submitted to the wisdom of Congress to determine whether any further acts of legislation may be necessary or expedient to meet the emergency which these transactions may produce."

The committee of the House of Representatives, to which this message was referred, reported that it "is expedient to procure a cession of the Indian lands in the State of Georgia, and that until such a cession is procured, the law of the land, as set forth in the treaty at Washington, ought to be maintained by all necessary, constitutional, and legal means." The firmness and decision of President Adams undoubtedly prevented the unhappy consequences of a collision between the people of Georgia and the Creek Indians. A new negotiation was opened with the Indians, by direction of the President, which resulted in declaring the M'Intosh treaty null and void, and in obtaining, at length, a cession of all the lands of the Creeks within the limits of Georgia, to the General Government.

As the friend and promoter of internal improvements, Mr. Adams was invited to be present at the interesting ceremony of "breaking ground," on the Chesapeake and Ohio canal, then about to be commenced, which took place on the 4th of July, 1828. On the morning of that day, the President, the Heads of Departments, the Foreign Ministers, the Corporations of Washington, Georgetown, and Alexandria, the

President and Directors of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, with a large concourse of citizens, embarked on board of steamboats and ascended the Potomac, to the place selected for the ceremony. On reaching the ground, a procession was formed, which moved around it so as to leave a hollow space, in the midst of a mass of people, in the centre of which was the spot marked out by Judge Wright, the Engineer of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, for the commencement of the work. A moment's pause here occurred, while the spade, destined to commence the work, was selected by the committee of arrangements, and the spot for breaking ground was precisely denoted.

At that moment the sun shone out from behind a cloud, giving an appearance of the highest animation to the scene. Amidst an intense silence, the Mayor of Georgetown handed to Gen. Mercer, the President of the Canal Company, the consecrated instrument; which, having received, he stepped forward from the resting column, and addressed as follows the listening multitude:—

“Fellow-citizens: There are moments in the progress of time which are the counters of whole ages. There are events, the monuments of which, surviving every other memorial of human existence, eternize the nation to whose history they belong, after all other vestiges of its glory have disappeared from the globe. At such a moment have we now arrived. Such a monument we are now to found.”

Turning towards the President of the United States, who stood near him, Mr. M. proceeded:—

“Mr. President: On a day hallowed by the fondest recollections, beneath this cheering (may we not humbly trust auspicious) sky, surrounded by the many thousand spectators who look on us with joyous anticipation; in the presence of the representatives of the most polished nations of the old and new worlds; on a spot where little more than a century ago the painted savage held his nightly orgies; at the request of the three cities of the District of Columbia, I present to the Chief Magistrate of the most powerful Republic on earth, for the most noble purpose that was ever conceived by man, this humble instrument of rural labor, a symbol of the favorite occupation of our countrymen. May the use to which it is about to be devoted prove the precursor, to our beloved country, of improved agriculture, of multiplied and diversified arts, of extended commerce and navigation. Combining its social and moral influence with the principles of that happy constitution under which you have been called to preside over the American people, may it become a safeguard of their liberty and independence, and a bond of perpetual union!

“To the ardent wishes of this vast assembly I unite my fervent prayer to that infinite and awful Being without whose favor all human power is but vanity, that he will crown your labor with his blessing, and our work with immortality.”

As soon as he had ended, the President of the United States, to whom Gen. Mercer had presented the spade, stepped forward, and, with an animation of manner and countenance which showed that his whole heart was in the thing, thus addressed the assembly of his fellow-citizens:—

“Friends and Fellow-citizens: It is nearly a full century since Berkely, bishop of Cloyne, turning towards this fair land, which we now inhabit, the eyes of a prophet, closed a few lines of poetical inspiration with this memorable prediction—

“Time's noblest empire is the last:”—

a prediction which, to those of us whose lot has been cast by Divine Providence in these regions, contains not only a precious promise, but a solemn injunction of duty, since upon our energies, and upon those of our posterity, its fulfilment will depend. For with reference to what principle could it be that Berkely proclaimed this, the last, to be the noblest empire of time? It was, as he himself declares, on the transplantation of learning and the arts to America. Of learning and the arts. The four first acts—the empires of the old world, and of former ages—the Assyrian, the Persian, the Grecian, the Roman empires—were empires of conquest, dominions of man over man. The empire which his great mind, piercing into the darkness of futurity, foretold in America, was the empire of learning and the arts,—the dominion of man over himself, and over physical nature—acquired by the inspirations of genius, and the toils of industry; not watered with the tears of the widow and the orphan; not cemented in the blood of human victims; founded not in discord, but in harmony,—of which the only spoils are the imperfections of nature, and the victory achieved is the improvement of the condition of all. Well may this be termed nobler than the empire of conquest, in which man subdues only his fellow-man.

“To the accomplishment of this prophecy, the first necessary step was the acquisition of the right of self-government, by the people of the British North American Colonies, achieved by the Declaration of Independence, and its acknowledgment by the British nation. The second was the union of all these colonies under one general confederated Government—a task more arduous than that of the preceding separation, but at last effected by the present constitution of the United States.

“The third step, more arduous still than either or both the others, was that which we, fellow-citizens, may now congratulate ourselves, our country, and the world of man, that it is taken. It is the adaptation of the powers, physical, moral, and intellectual, of this whole Union, to the improvement of its own condition: of its moral and political condition, by wise and liberal institutions—by the cultivation of the understanding and the heart—by academies, schools, and learned institutes—by the pursuit and patronage of learning and the arts; of its physical condition, by associated labor to improve the bounties, and to supply the deficiencies of nature; to stem the torrent in its course; to level the mountain with the

plain; to disarm and fetter the raging surge of the ocean. Undertakings of which the language I now hold is no exaggerated description, have become happily familiar not only to the conceptions, but to the enterprize of our countrymen. That for the commencement of which we are here assembled is eminent among the number. The project contemplates a conquest over physical nature, such as has never yet been achieved by man. The wonders of the ancient world, the pyramids of Egypt, the Colossus of Rhodes, the temple at Ephesus, the mausoleum of Artemisia, the wall of China, sink into insignificance before it:—insignificance in the mass and momentum of human labor required for the execution—insignificance in comparison of the purposes to be accomplished by the work when executed. It is, therefore, a pleasing contemplation to those sanguine and patriotic spirits who have so long looked with hope to the completion of this undertaking, that it unites the moral power and resources—first, of numerous individuals—secondly, of the corporate cities of Washington, Georgetown, and Alexandria—thirdly, of the great and powerful States of Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Maryland—and lastly, by the subscription authorized at the recent session of Congress, of the whole Union.

“Friends and Fellow-laborers. We are informed by the holy oracles of truth, that, at the creation of man, male and female, the Lord of the universe, their Maker, blessed them, and said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it. To subdue the earth was, therefore, one of the first duties assigned to man at his creation; and now, in his fallen condition, it remains among the most excellent of his occupations. To subdue the earth is pre-eminently the purpose of the undertaking, to the accomplishment of which the first stroke of the spade is now to be struck. That it is to be struck by this hand, I invite you to witness.—[Here the stroke of the spade.]* And in performing this act,

* Attending this action was an incident which produced a greater sensation than any other that occurred during the day. The spade which the President held, struck a root, which prevented its penetrating the earth. Not deterred by trifling obstacles from doing what he had deliberately resolved to perform, Mr. Adams tried it again, with no better success. Thus foiled, he threw down the spade, hastily stripped off and laid aside his coat, and went seriously to work. The multitude around, and on the hills and trees, who could not hear, because of their

I call upon you to join me in fervent supplication to Him from whom that primitive injunction came, that he would follow with his blessing, this joint effort of our great community, to perform his will in the subjugation of the earth for the improvement of the condition of man—that he would make it one of his chosen instruments for the preservation, prosperity, and perpetuity of our Union—that he would have in his holy keeping all the workmen by whose labors it is to be completed—that their lives and their health may be precious in his sight; and that they may live to see the work of their hands contribute to the comforts and enjoyments of millions of their countrymen.

“Friends and brethren: Permit me further to say, that I deem the duty, now performed at the request of the President and Directors of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, and the Corporations of the District of Columbia, one of the most fortunate incidents of my life. Though not among the functions of my official station, I esteem it as a privilege conferred upon me by my fellow-citizens of the District. Called, in the performance of my service, heretofore as one of the representatives of my native commonwealth in the Senate, and now as a member of the executive department of the Government, my abode has been among the inhabitants of the District longer than at any other spot upon earth. In availing myself of this occasion to return to them my thanks for the numberless acts of kindness that I have experienced at their hands, may I be allowed to assign it as a motive, operating upon the heart, and superadded to my official obligations, for taking a deeper interest in their welfare and prosperity. Among the prospects of futurity which we may indulge the rational hope of seeing realized by this junction of distant waters, that of the auspicious influence which it will exercise over the fortunes of every portion of this District is one upon which my mind dwells with unqualified pleasure. It is my earnest prayer that they may not be disappointed.

“It was observed that the first step towards the accomplishment of the glorious destinies of our country was the Declaration of Independence. That the second was the union of these States under our federative Government. The third is irrevocably fixed by the

distance from the open space, but could see and understand, observing this action, raised a loud and unanimous cheering, which continued for some time after Mr. Adams had mastered the difficulty.

act upon the commencement of which we are now engaged. What time more suitable for this operation could have been selected than the anniversary of our great national festival? What place more appropriate from whence to proceed, than that which bears the name of the citizen warrior who led our armies in that eventful contest to the field, and who first presided as the Chief Magistrate of our Union? You know that of this very undertaking he was one of the first projectors; and if in the world of spirits the affections of our mortal existence still retain their sway, may we not, without presumption, imagine that he looks down with complacency and delight upon the scene before and around us?

“But while indulging in a sentiment of joyous exultation at the benefits to be derived from this labor of our friends and neighbors, let us not forget that the spirit of internal improvement is catholic and liberal. We hope and believe that its practical advantages will be extended to every individual in our Union. In praying for the blessing of heaven upon our task, we ask it with equal zeal and sincerity upon every other similiar work in this confederacy; and particularly upon that which, on this same day, and perhaps at this very hour, is commencing from a neighboring city. It is one of the happiest characteristics in the principle of internal improvement, that the success of one great enterprise, instead of counteracting, gives assistance to the execution of another. May they increase and multiply, till, in the sublime language of inspiration, every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill shall be made low; the crooked straight, the rough places plain. Thus shall the prediction of the bishop of Cloyne be converted from prophecy into history; and, in the virtues and fortunes of our posterity, the last shall prove the noblest empire of time.”

The administration of Mr. Adams, from the first day of its existence, met with an opposition more determined, bitter, and unscrupulous than any which has ever assailed a President of the United States. It evidently was not an opposition based on well-grounded objections to his principles or his measures. Before an opportunity had been given fairly and fully to develop

his policy as President, the opposition had taken its stand, and boldly declared that his administration should be overthrown at every hazard, whatever might be its policy, its integrity, or its success. A favorite candidate, having certain elements of immense popularity with a large class of people, and supported with enthusiasm by his immediate friends, had been defeated in the previous presidential canvass, at a moment when it was thought triumphant success had been secured. Under the exasperation and excitement of this overthrow, it was determined that his more fortunate rival should be displaced at the earliest moment, at whatever cost, though his administration should prove unrivalled in patriotism, and the successful promotion of the general welfare.

The opposition did not fail to seize upon certain points, which, in the exercise of a due degree of adroitness, yielded an ample material for popular declamation and censure. The fact that Mr. Adams had a less number of electoral votes than Gen. Jackson was greatly dwelt upon as positive evidence that the will of the people had been violated in the election of the former to the presidency—although it has since been satisfactorily ascertained that Mr. Adams had a larger number of the primary votes of the people than his prominent opponent.

The charge of "bargain and corruption," alleged against Mr. Adams and Mr. Clay, was also used as an effective weapon against the former, in the suc-

ceeding presidential canvass. Notwithstanding the charge had been promptly and emphatically denied by the parties implicated, and proof in its support fearlessly challenged—notwithstanding every attempt at evidence to fix it upon them had most signally failed, and involved those engaged therein in utter confusion of face—yet so often and so boldly was the charge repeated by designing men, so generally and continually was it reiterated by a venal press from one end of the Union to the other, that a majority of the people was driven into its belief, and the fate of Mr. Adams's administration was sealed against him. Subsequent developments have shown, that, in the annals of political warfare, there never was a charge uttered against eminent public men, so thoroughly destitute of the shadow of truth as this. But it answered the immediate ends of its authors. Posterity will do ample justice to all the parties in this transaction.

Another event which operated seriously to the disadvantage of Mr. Adams, was the amalgamation of the strong Crawford party with the supporters of Gen. Jackson. This combination threw obstacles in the way of the administration which were insurmountable. It enabled the opposition to send a majority of members to the twentieth Congress, both in the Senate and the House of Representatives. The test of the strength of parties in the House took place on the election of Speaker. Andrew Stevenson, of Virginia, was elected on the first ballot, by a majority of ten votes over John

W. Taylor, the administration candidate. Mr. Stevenson was a supporter of Mr. Crawford in 1824. His election to the Speaker's chair clearly indicated the union of the different sections of the opposition, and foreshadowed too evidently the overthrow of the administration of Mr. Adams.

In this state of things, with a majority of Congress against him, the President was deprived of the opportunity of carrying into execution many important measures which were highly calculated to promote the permanent benefit of the country, and which could not have failed to receive the approbation of the people. A majority of all the committees of both Houses were against him; and for the first time an administration was found without adequate strength in Congress to support its measures. In several instances the reports of committees partook of a strong partisan character, in violation of all rules of propriety and correct legislation.

The first session of the twentieth Congress, which was held immediately preceding the presidential campaign of 1828, was characterized by proceedings, which, at this day, all will unite in deciding as highly reprehensible. Instead of attending strictly to the legitimate business of the session, much of the time was spent in discussions involving the merits of the opposing candidates for the presidency, and designed to have an express bearing on the election then near at hand. Of this character was a resolution introduced into the

House of Representatives, on the 8th of January, 1828, by Mr. Hamilton, a supporter of Gen. Jackson, to inquire into the expediency of having a historical picture of the battle of New Orleans painted, and placed in the rotunda of the Capitol. This was followed by a resolution, introduced by Mr. Sloane, an administration member, requiring the Secretary of War to furnish the House with a copy of the proceedings of a court-martial ordered by Gen. Jackson, in 1814, for the trial of certain Tennessee militiamen, who were condemned and shot.

At this session of Congress may be dated the introduction of a practice which has become an evil of the greatest magnitude in the present day. Reference is had to the custom of making the halls of Congress a mere arena, where, instead of attending to the legitimate business of legislating for the benefit of the country at large, political gladiators spend much of their time in wordy contests, designed solely for the promotion of personal or party purposes, to the neglect of the interests of their constituents. From this has grown the habit of speech-making by the hour, on topics trivial in their nature, in which the people have not the slightest interest, and which, quite often, are totally foreign to the subject ostensibly in debate. Valuable time and immense treasures are thus squandered to no profitable purpose. Should not this evil be abated?

The stern integrity of Mr. Adams, and his unyielding devotion to principle, were made to operate against

him. Had he chosen to turn the vast influence at his command to the promotion of personal ends—had he unscrupulously ejected from office all political opposers, and supplied their places with others who would have labored, with all the means at their disposal, in his behalf—little doubt can be entertained that he could have secured his re-election. But he utterly refused to resort to such measures. Believing he was promoted to his high position not for his individual benefit, but to advance the welfare of the entire country, his view of duty was too elevated and pure to allow him to desecrate the trust reposed in him to personal ends. Hence the influence derived from the patronage of the General Government was turned against the administration rather than in its behalf; and the singular spectacle was presented of men exerting every nerve to overthrow Mr. Adams, who were dependent upon him for the influence they wielded against him, and for their very means of subsistence.

A hotly contested political campaign ensued in the fall of 1828. In view of the peculiar combination of circumstances, and of the means resorted to by the opposing parties to secure success, the result could be foreseen with much certainty. Gen. Jackson was elected President of the United States, and was inaugurated on the 4th of March, 1829.

Thus closed the administration of John Quincy Adams. At the call of his country he entered upon the highest station in its gift. With a fidelity and

uprightness which have not been surpassed, he discharged his important trust to the lasting benefit of all the vital interests which tend to build up a great and prosperous people. And at the call of his country he relinquished the honors of office, and willingly retired to the private walks of life.

No man can doubt that Mr. Adams could look back upon his labors while President with the utmost satisfaction. "During his administration new and increased activity was imparted to those powers vested in the Federal Government for the development of the resources of the country, and the public revenue was liberally expended in prosecuting those liberal measures, to which the sanction of Congress had been deliberately given, as the settled policy of the Government.

"More than one million of dollars had been expended in enlarging and maintaining the light-house establishment—half a million in completing the public buildings—two millions in erecting arsenals, barracks, and furnishing the national armories—nearly the same amount had been expended in permanent additions to the naval establishment—upwards of three millions had been devoted to fortifying the sea-coast—and more than four millions expended in improving the internal communications between different parts of the country, and in procuring information, by scientific surveys, concerning its capacity for further improvement. Indeed, more had been directly effected by the aid of Government in this respect, during Mr. Adams'

administration, than during the administrations of all his predecessors. Other sums, exceeding a million, had been appropriated for objects of a lasting character, and not belonging to the annual expense of the Government; making in the whole nearly fourteen millions of dollars expended for the permanent benefit of the country, during this administration.

"At the same time the interest on the public debt was punctually paid, and the debt itself was in a constant course of reduction, having been diminished \$30,373,188 during his administration, and leaving due on the 1st of January, 1829, \$58,362,136. While these sums were devoted to increasing the resources and improving the condition of the country, and in discharging its pecuniary obligations, those claims which were derived from what are termed the imperfect obligations of gratitude and humanity were not forgotten.

"More than five millions of dollars were appropriated to solace the declining years of the surviving officers of the Revolution; and a million and a half expended in extinguishing the Indian title, and defraying the expense of the removal beyond the Mississippi of such tribes as were unqualified for a residence near civilized communities, and in promoting the civilization of those who, relying on the faith of the United States, preferred to remain on the lands which were the abodes of their fathers.

"In the condition which we have described—in

peace with all the world, with an increasing revenue and with a surplus of \$5,125,638 in the public treasury,—the administration of the Government of the United States was surrendered by Mr. Adams on the 3d of March, 1829.*

The "Georgia Constitutionalist" thus describes Mr. Adams' retirement from office:—"Mr. Adams is said to be in good health and spirits. The manner in which this gentleman retired from office is so replete with propriety and dignity, that we are sure history will record it as a laudable example to those who shall hereafter be required by the sovereign people to descend from exalted stations. It was a great matter with the ancients to die with decency, and there are some of our own day whose deaths are more admirable than their lives. Mr. Adams' deportment in the Presidency was lofty and proud; but the smile with which he throws aside the trappings of power, and the graceful propriety with which he takes leave of patronage and place, are truly commendable."

* American Annual Register.