

fellow-citizens refused the boon of credit for these qualities. It remained for another stage of his life, another field of display, to correct them of this error, and to vindicate his character. It was requisite that he should step down from his high position, disrobe himself of office, power and patronage, place himself beyond the reach of the remotest suspicion of a desire for political preferment and emolument, to satisfy the world that John Quincy Adams had from the beginning, been a pure-hearted patriot, and one of the noblest sons of the American Confederacy. His new career was to furnish a luminous commentary on his past life, and to convince the most sceptical, of the justice of his claim to rank among the highest and best of American patriots. Placed beyond the reach of any gift of office from the nation, with nothing to hope for, and nothing to fear in this respect, he was to write his name in imperishable characters, so high on the tablets of his country's history and fame, as to be beyond the utmost reach of malignity or suspicion! The door which led to this closing act of his dramatic life, was soon opened.

On returning to Quincy, one of the first things which received the attention of Mr. Adams, was the discharge of a filial duty towards his deceased parents, in the erection of a monument to their memory. The elder Adams in his will, among other liberal bequests, had left a large legacy to aid in the erection of a new

Unitarian church in Quincy. The edifice was completed, and ex-President J. Q. Adams caused the monument to his father and mother to be erected within the walls. It was a plain and simple design, consisting of a tablet, having recessed pilasters at the sides, with a base moulding and cornice; the whole supported by trusses at the base. The material of which it was made was Italian marble; and the whole was surmounted by a fine bust of John Adams, from the chisel of Greenough, the American artist, then at Rome. The inscription, one of the most feeling, appropriate, and classical specimens extant, was as follows:—

“LIBERTATEM AMICITIAM FIDEM RETINEBIS.

D. O. M.*

Beneath these Walls

Are deposited the Mortal Remains of

JOHN ADAMS,

Son of John and Susanna (Boyalston) Adams,

Second President of the United States.

Born 19-30 October, 1735.

On the fourth of July, 1776,

He pledged his Life, Fortune, and Sacred Honor

To the INDEPENDENCE OF HIS COUNTRY.

On the third of September, 1783,

He affixed his Seal to the definitive Treaty with Great Britain,

Which acknowledged that Independence,

And consummated the redemption of his pledge.

On the fourth of July, 1826,

He was summoned

To the Independence of Immortality,

And to the JUDGMENT OF HIS GOD.

This House will bear witness to his Piety:

This Town, his Birth-place, to his Munificence:

History to his Patriotism:

Posterity to the Depth and Compass of his Mind.

* *Deo, Optimo, Maximo*—to God, the Best and Greatest

At his side
 Sleeps till the Trump shall sound,
 ABIGAIL,
 His beloved and only Wife,
 Daughter of William and Elizabeth (Quincy) Smith.
 In every relation of Life, a pattern
 Of Filial, Conjugal, Maternal, and Social Virtue.
 Born 11-22 November, 1744.
 Deceased 28 October, 1818,
 Aged 74.

Married 25 October, 1764.

During a union of more than half a century,
 They survived, in Harmony of Sentiment, Principle and Affection,
 The Tempests of Civil Commotion ;
 Meeting undaunted, and surmounting
 The Terrors and Trials of that Revolution
 Which secured the Freedom of their Country ;
 Improved the Condition of their Times ;
 And brightened the Prospects of Futurity
 To the Race of Man upon Earth.

PILGRIM:

From lives thus spent thy earthly Duties learn ;
 From Fancy's Dreams to active Virtue turn :
 Let Freedom, Friendship, Faith thy Soul engage,
 And serve, like them, thy Country and thy Age."

Mr. Adams had remained in the retirement of Quincy but little more than a single year, when the following paragraph appeared in the public prints throughout the country :—

"Mr. Adams, late President of the United States, is named as a candidate for Congress, from the district of Massachusetts now represented by Mr. Richardson, who declines a re-election."

It would be difficult to describe the surprise created by this announcement, in every quarter of the Union.

Speculation was at fault. Would he accept or reject such a nomination? By a large class it was deemed impossible that one who had occupied positions so elevated—who had received the highest honors the nation could bestow upon him—would consent to serve the people of a single district, in a capacity so humble, comparatively, as a Representative in Congress. Such a thing was totally unheard of. The people, however, of the Plymouth congressional district in which he resided, met and duly nominated him for the proposed office. All doubts as to his acceptance of the nomination were speedily dispelled by the appearance of a letter from Mr. Adams, in the *Columbian Sentinel*, Oct., 15, 1830, in which he says :—

"If my fellow-citizens of the district should think proper to call for such services as it may be in my power to render them, by representing them in the twenty-second Congress, I am not aware of any sound principle which would justify me in withholding them. To the manifestations of confidence on the part of those portions of the people who, at two several meetings, have seen fit to present my name for the suffrages of the district, I am duly and deeply sensible."

In due time the election was held, and Mr. Adams was returned to Congress, by a vote nearly unanimous. From that time forward for seventeen years, and to the hour of his death, he occupied the post of Representative in Congress from the Plymouth district, in Massachusetts, with unswerving fidelity, and distinguished honor.

There can be no doubt that many of the best friends

of Mr. Adams seriously questioned the propriety of his appearing as a Representative in the halls of Congress. It was a step never before taken by an ex-President of the United States. They apprehended it might be derogatory to his dignity, and injurious to his reputation and fame, to enter into the strifes, and take part in the litigations and contentions which characterize the national House of Representatives. Moreover, they were fearful that in measuring himself, as he necessarily must, in the decline of life, with younger men in the prime of their days, who were urged by the promptings of ambition to tax every capacity of their nature, he might injure his well-earned reputation for strength of intellect, eloquence and statesmanship. But these misgivings were groundless. In the House of Representatives, as in all places where Mr. Adams was associated with others, he arose immediately to the head of his compeers. So far from suffering in his reputation, it was immeasurably advanced during his long congressional career. New powers were developed—new traits of character were manifested—new and repeated instances of devotion to principle and the rights of man were made known—which added a brighter lustre to his already widely-extended fame. He exhibited a fund of knowledge so vast and profound—a familiarity so perfect with nearly every topic which claimed the attention of Congress—he could bring forth from his well-replenished storehouse of memory so vast an array of facts, shedding light upon subjects deeply

obscured to others—displayed such readiness and power in debate, pouring out streams of purest eloquence, or launching forth the most scathing denunciations when he deemed them called for—that his most bitter opposers, while trembling before his sarcasm, and dreading his assaults, could not but grant him the meed of their highest admiration. Well did he deserve the title conferred upon him by general consent, of “the Old Man Eloquent!”

Had Mr. Adams followed the bent of his own inclinations—had he consulted simply his personal ease and comfort—he would probably never have appeared again in public life. Having received the highest distinctions his country could bestow upon him, blessed with an ample fortune, and possessing all the elements of domestic comfort, he would have passed the evening of his earthly sojourn in peaceful tranquillity, at the mansion of his fathers in Quincy. But it was one of the sacred rules in this distinguished statesman’s life, to yield implicit obedience to the demands of duty. His immediate neighbors and fellow-citizens called him to their service in the national councils. He was conscious of the possession of talents, knowledge, experience, and all the qualifications which would enable him to become highly useful, not only in acting as the representative of his direct constituents, but in promoting the welfare of our common country. This conviction once becoming fixed in his mind, decided his course. He felt he had no choice left but to com-

ply unhesitatingly with the demand which had been made upon his patriotism. In adopting this resolution—in consenting, after having been once at the head of the National Government, to assume again the labors of public life in a subordinate station, wholly divested of power and patronage, urged by no influence but the claims of duty, governed by no motive but a simple desire to serve his country and promote the well-being of his fellow-man—Mr. Adams presented a spectacle of moral sublimity unequalled in the annals of nations!

For many years Mr. Adams was a member, and one of the Vice Presidents, of the American Bible Society. In reply to an invitation to attend its anniversary in 1830, he wrote the following letter:—

“Sir:—Your letter of the 22d of March was duly received; and while regretting my inability to attend personally at the celebration of the anniversary of the institution, on the 13th of next month, I pray you, sir, to be assured of the gratification which I have experienced in learning the success which has attended the benevolent exertions of the American Bible Society.

“In the decease of Judge Washington, they have lost an able and valuable associate, whose direct co-operation, not less than his laborious and exemplary life, contributed to promote the cause of the Redeemer. Yet not for him, nor for themselves by the loss of him, are they called to sorrow as without hope; for lives like his shine but as purer and brighter lights in the world, after the lamp which fed them is extinct, than before.

“The distribution of Bibles, if the simplest, is not the least efficacious of the means of extending the blessings of the Gospel to the remotest corners of the earth; for the Comforter is in the sacred volume: and among the receivers of that million of copies distributed by the Society, who shall number the multitudes

awakened thereby, with good will to man in their hearts, and with the song of the Lamb upon their lips?

“The hope of a Christian is inseparable from his faith. Whoever believes in the divine inspiration of the holy Scriptures, must hope that the religion of Jesus shall prevail throughout the earth. Never since the foundation of the world have the prospects of mankind been more encouraging to that hope than they appear to be at the present time. And may the associated distribution of the Bible proceed and prosper, till the Lord shall have made ‘bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.’

“With many respects to the Board of Managers, please to accept the good wishes of your friend and fellow-citizen,

“JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.”

On the 4th of July, 1831, at half past three o'clock in the afternoon, the venerable JAMES MONROE, fifth President of the United States, departed life, aged 73 years. He died at the residence of his son-in-law, Samuel L. Gouverneur, Esq., in the city of New York. His decease had been for some days expected; but life lingered until the anniversary of his country's independence, when his spirit took its departure to a better world. Throughout the United States, honors were paid to his memory by hoisting of flags at half mast, the tolling of bells, firing of minute guns, the passing of resolutions, and delivery of eulogies. He was, emphatically, a great and good man, respected and beloved by the people of all parties, without exception. There are few instances in the history of the world, of more remarkable coincidences than the death of three Presidents of the United States, who took most prominent parts in proclaiming and achieving the independ-

ence of our country, on the anniversary of the day when the declaration of that independence was made to the world. The noise of the firing of cannon, in celebrating the day, caused the eyes of the dying Monroe to open inquiringly. When the occasion of these rejoicings was communicated to him, a look of intelligence indicated that he understood the character of the day.

At this anniversary of our National Independence, Mr. Adams delivered an oration before the citizens of Quincy. It was an able and eloquent production. The following were the concluding paragraphs. In reference to nullification, which was threatened by some of the Southern States, he said:—

“The event of a conflict in arms, between the Union and one of its members, whether terminating in victory or defeat, would be but an alternative of calamity to all. In the holy records of antiquity, we have two examples of a confederation ruptured by the severance of its members, one of which resulted, after three desperate battles, in the extermination of the seceding tribe. And the victorious people, instead of exulting in shouts of triumph, came to the house of God, and abode there till even, before God; and lifted up their voices, and wept sore, and said,—O Lord God of Israel *why* is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to-day one tribe lacking in Israel? The other was a successful example of resistance against tyrannical taxation, and severed forever the confederacy, the fragments forming separate kingdoms; and from that day their history presents an unbroken series of disastrous alliances, and exterminating wars—of assassinations, conspiracies, revolts, and rebellions, until both parts of the confederacy sunk into tributary servitude to the nations around them; till the countrymen of David and Solomon hung their harps upon the willows of Babylon, and were totally lost amidst the multitudes of the Chaldean and Assyrian monarchies, ‘the most despised portion of their slaves.’

“In these mournful memorials of their fate, we may behold the

sure, too sure prognostication of our own, from the hour when force shall be substituted for deliberation, in the settlement of our constitutional questions. This is the deplorable alternative—the extirpation of the seceding member, or the never-ceasing struggle of two rival confederacies, ultimately bending the neck of both under the yoke of foreign domination, or the despotic sovereignty of a conqueror at home. May heaven avert the omen! The destinies, not only of our posterity, but of the human race, are at stake.

“Let no such melancholy forebodings intrude upon the festivities of this anniversary. Serene skies and balmy breezes are not congenial to the climate of freedom. Progressive improvement in the condition of man, is apparently the purpose of a superintending Providence. That purpose will not be disappointed. In no delusion of national vanity, but with a feeling of profound gratitude to the God of our fathers, let us indulge in the cheering hope and belief, that our country and her people have been selected as instruments for preparing and maturing much of the good yet in reserve for the welfare and happiness of the human race. Much good has already been effected by the solemn proclamation of our principles—much more by the illustration of our example. The tempest which threatens desolation may be destined only to purify the atmosphere. It is not in tranquil ease and enjoyment that the active energies of mankind are displayed. Toils and dangers are trials of the soul. Doomed to the first by his sentence at the fall, man by submission converts them into pleasures. The last are, since the fall, the conditions of his existence. To see them in advance, to guard against them by all the suggestions of prudence, to meet them with the composure of unyielding resistance, and to abide with firm resignation the final dispensation of Him who rules the ball—these are the dictates of philosophy—these are the precepts of religion—these are the principles and consolations of patriotism—these remain when all is lost—and of these is composed the spirit of independence—the spirit embodied in that beautiful personification of the poet, which may each of you, my countrymen, to the last hour of his life, apply to himself,—

‘Thy spirit, Independence, let me share,
Lord of the lion heart, and eagle eye!
Thy steps I follow, with my bosom bare,
Nor heed the storm that howls along the sky.’

"In the course of nature, the voice which now addresses you must soon cease to be heard upon earth. Life and all which it inherits lose their value as it draws towards its close. But for most of you, my friends and neighbors, long and many years of futurity are yet in store. May they be years of freedom—years of prosperity—years of happiness, ripening for immortality! But, were the breath which now gives utterance to my feelings the last vital air I should draw, my expiring words to you and your children should be, *Independence and Union forever!*"

A few weeks subsequent to the death of ex-President Monroe, Mr. Adams delivered an interesting and able eulogy on his life and character, before the public authorities of the city of Boston, in Faneuil Hall. In drawing to a conclusion, he used the following language:—

"Our country, by the bountiful dispensations of a gracious Heaven, is, and for a series of years has been, blessed with profound peace. But when the first father of our race had exhibited before him, by the archangel sent to announce his doom, and to console him in his fall, the fortunes and misfortunes of his descendants, he saw that the deepest of their miseries would befall them while favored with all the blessings of peace; and in the bitterness of his anguish he exclaimed:—

'Now I see
Peace to corrupt, no less than war to waste.'

"It is the very fervor of the noonday sun, in the cloudless atmosphere of a summer sky, which breeds

'the sweeping whirlwind's sway,
That, hushed in grim repose, expects his evening prey.'

"You have insured the gallant ship which ploughs the waves, freighted with your lives and your children's fortunes, from the fury of the tempest above, and from the treachery of the wave beneath. Beware of the danger against which you can alone insure yourselves—the latent defect of the gallant ship itself. Pass but a few

short days, and forty years will have elapsed since the voice of him who addresses you, speaking to your fathers from this hallowed spot, gave for you, in the face of Heaven, the solemn pledge, that if, in the course of your career on earth, emergencies should arise, calling for the exercise of those energies and virtues which, in times of tranquillity and peace remain by the will of Heaven dormant in the human bosom, you would prove yourselves not unworthy the sires who had toiled, and fought, and bled, for the independence of the country. Nor has that pledge been unredeemed. You have maintained through times of trial and danger the inheritance of freedom, of union, of independence bequeathed you by your forefathers. It remains for you only to transmit the same peerless legacy, unimpaired, to your children of the next succeeding age. To this end, let us join in humble supplication to the Founder of empires and the Creator of all worlds, that he would continue to your posterity the smiles which his favor has bestowed upon you; and, since 'it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps,' that he would enlighten and lead the advancing generation in the way they should go. That in all the perils, and all the mischances which may threaten or befall our United Republic, in after times, he would raise up from among your sons deliverers to enlighten her councils, to defend her freedom, and if need be, to lead her armies to victory. And should the gloom of the year of independence ever again overspread the sky, or the metropolis of your empire be once more destined to smart under the scourge of an invader's hand,* that there never may be found wanting among the children of your country, a warrior to bleed, a statesman to counsel, a chief to direct and govern, inspired with all the virtues, and endowed with all the faculties which have been so signally displayed in the life of JAMES MONROE."

* Alluding to the burning of the city of Washington, in the war of 1812.