

the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty. The public disquisitions, discussions and deliberations issued in the present happy constitution of government.

Employed in the service of my country abroad during the whole course of these transactions, I first saw the constitution of the United States in a foreign country. Irritated by no literary altercation, animated by no public debate, heated by no party animosity, I read it with great satisfaction, as the result of good heads prompted by good hearts, as an experiment better adopted to the genius, character, situation relations of this nation and country, than any which had ever been proposed or suggested. In its general principles & great outlines it was conformable to such a system of government as I had ever most esteemed; and in some States my own native State in particular had contributed to establish. Claiming a right of suffrage in common with my fellow citizens in the adoption or rejection of a constitution, which was to rule me and my posterity, as well as them and theirs, I did not hesitate to express approbation of it on all occasions in public and in private. It was not then, nor has been since any objection to it in my mind, that the Executive and Senate were not more permanent. Nor have I ever entertained a thought of promoting any alteration in it, but such as the people themselves, in the course of their experience should see and feel to be necessary or expedient, and their representatives in Congress and the state legislatures, according to the constitution itself, adopt and ordain.

Returning to the bosom of my country after a painful separation for it for ten years I had the honour of being elected to a station made under the new order of things, and I have repeatedly laid myself under the most serious obligations to support the constitution. The operation of it has equalled the most sanguine expectations of its friends, and from an habitual attention to it, satisfaction in its administration and delight in its effects, upon the peace, order, prosperity and happiness of the Nation, I have acquired an habitual attachment to it and veneration for it.

WHAT OTHER FORM OF GOVERNMENT INDEED CAN SO WELL DESERVE OUR ESTEEM AND LOVE?

There may be little solidity in an ancient idea, that congregations of men into cities and nations, are the most pleasing objects in the sight of superior intelligences; but it is very certain, that to a benevolent mind, there can be no spectacle presented by any nation, more pleasing, more noble, majestic or august, than an assembly, like that which has so often been seen in this and the other Chamber of Congress of a government, in which the Executive Authority, as well as that of all the branches of the Legislature, are exercised by citizens selected, at regular periods, by their neighbours, to make and execute laws for the general good. Can any thing essential, any thing more than mere ornament and decoration be added to this by robes or diamonds? Can authority be more amiable or respectable, when it descends from accidents or institutions established in remote antiquity, than when it springs fresh from the hearts and judgements of an honest and enlightened people? For it is the people only that are represented; it is their power and majesty that is reflected and only for their good, in every legitimate government, under whatever form it may appear. The existence of such a government as ours for any length of time is full proof of a general dissemination of knowledge & virtue, throughout the whole body of the people.

And what object or consideration more pleasing than this can be presented to the human mind? If national pride is ever justifiable or excusable it is when it springs, not from power or riches, grandeur or glory, but from conviction of national innocence, information and benevolence.

In the midst of these pleasing ideas we should be unfaithful to ourselves, if we should ever lose sight of the danger to our liberties, if any thing partial or extraneous should infect the purity of our free, fair, virtuous and independent elections. If an election is to be determined by a majority of a single vote, and that can be procured by a party,

through artifice or corruption, the government may be the choice of a party, for its own ends; not of the nation, for the national good. If that solitary sufferage can be obtained by foreign nations by flattery or menaces, by fraud or violence, by terror, intrigue or venality, the government may not be the choice of the American people, but of foreign nations. It may be foreign nations who govern us, and not we the people who govern ourselves. And candid men will acknowledge that in such cases choice would have little advantages to boast off, over lot or chance.

Such is the amiable & interesting system of government (and such are some of the abuses to which it may be exposed) which the people of America have exhibited to the admiration and anxiety of the wife and virtuous of all nations, for eight years, under the administration of a citizen, who, by a long course of great actions, regulated by prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude; conducting a people, inspired with the same virtues, and animated with the same ardent patriotism and love of liberty, to independence and peace, to increasing wealth and unexampled prosperity, has merited the gratitude of his fellow citizens, commanded the highest praises of foreign nations, and secured immortal glory with posterity.

In that retirement which is his voluntary choice, may he long live to enjoy the delicious recollection of his services, the gratitude of mankind, the happy fruits of them to himself and the world, which are daily increasing, and that splendid prospect of the future fortunes of his country, which is opening from year to year. His name may still be a rampart, and the knowledge that he lives a bulwark against all open or secret enemies of his Country's Peace.

This example has been recommended to the imitation of his successors, by both Houses of Congress, and by the voice of the Legislatures and the people throughout the nation.

On this subject it might become me better to be silent, or to speak with diffidence; but as something may be expected, the occasion, I hope, will be admitted as an apology, if I venture to say, that

If a preference, upon principle, of a free and Republican Government, formed upon long and serious reflection, after a diligent and impartial enquiry after truth; if an attachment to the constitution of the United States, and a conscientious determination to support it until it shall be altered by the judgments and wishes of the people, expressed in the mode prescribed in it,—if, a respectful attention to the constitutions of the individual states, and a constant caution and delicacy towards the state governments; if, an equal and impartial regard to the rights, interests, honour and happiness of all the states in the Union, without preference or regard to a northern or southern, eastern or western position, their various political opinions on unessential points, or their personal attachment; if a love of virtuous men of all parties and denominations; if a love of science and letters, and a wish to patronize every rational effort to encourage schools, colleges, universities, academies and every institution for propagating knowledge, virtue and religion, among all classes of the people; not only for their benign influence on the happiness of life in all its stages and classes, and of society in all its forms; but as the only means of preserving our Constitution from its natural enemies, the Spirit of Sophistry, the Spirit of Party, the Spirit of Intrigue, the Profligacy of Corruption, and the Pessilence of Foreign Influence, which is the Angel of Destruction to Elective Governments;

If a love of equal laws, of justice and humanity, in the interior administration, an inclination to improve agriculture, commerce, and manufactures for necessity, convenience and defence; if a spirit of equity and humanity towards the aboriginal nations of America, and a disposition to ameliorate their condition, by inclining them to be more friendly to us, and our citizens to be more friendly to them; if in an inflexible determination to maintain peace and inviolable faith, with all nations, and that system of neutrality and impartiality, among the belligerent powers of Europe, which has been adopted by this government, and so solemnly sanctioned by the legislatures of the states and the public opinion until it shall be otherwise

PHILADELPHIA, March 7.

On Saturday, at twelve o'clock, agreeably to the notification which he gave to both Houses of Congress soon after his election, JOHN ADAMS, as President of the United States, attended in the chamber of the House of Representatives, to take his Oath of Office according to the Constitution. On his entrance, as well as on the entrance of the late President, and of THOMAS JEFFERSON, the Vice-President, loud and reiterated applause involuntarily burst from the spectators.

The President having taken his seat on the elevated chair of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Vice President, the late President, and the Secretary of the Senate on his right, the Speaker and Clerk of the house of Representatives on his left, and the Chief Justice of the United States and the Associate Judges in the centre: all the foreign ministers, the heads of departments, General Wilkinson the commander in chief, and a very crowded Auditory of the principal inhabitants of this city being present; the PRESIDENT proceeded to deliver the following

SPEECH:

When it was first perceived, in early times, that no middle course for America remained, between unlimited submission to a foreign legislature and a total independence of its claims; when reflection were less apprehensive of danger from the formidable power of fleets and armies, they must determine to resist, than from those contels and dissensions which would certainly arise concerning the forms of government to be instituted over the whole and over the parts of this extensive country. Relying, however, on the purity of their intentions, the justice of their cause, and the integrity and intelligence of the people under an over-ruling providence, which has so signally protected this country from the first, the representatives of this nation, then consisting of little more than half its present numbers, not only broke to pieces the chains which were forging and the rod of iron that was lifted up, but frankly cut asunder the ties which had bound them, and launched into an ocean of uncertainty.

The zeal and ardour of the people during the revolutionary war supplying the place of government, commanded a degree of order sufficient at least for temporary preservation of society, the consideration which was early felt to be necessary, was prepared from the models of the Batavian & Helvetic confederacies, the only examples which remain with any detail or decision in history, and certainly the only ones which the people at large had ever considered. But reflecting on the striking difference, in so many particulars between this country and those, where a courier may go from the seat of government to the frontier in a single day, it was then certainly foreseen by some who assisted in Congress at the formation of it, that it could not be durable.

Negligence of its regulations, inattention to its recommendation, if not disobedience to its authority, not only in individuals, but in states soon appeared, with their melancholy consequences; universal languor; jealousies and rivalries of states; decline of navigation and commerce, discouragement of necessary manufactures, universal fall in the value of lands and their produce; contempt of public and private faith; loss of consideration and credit with foreign nations, and at length, in discontents, animosities, combinations, partial conventions, and insurrections threatening some great national calamity.

In this dangerous crisis, the people of America were not abandoned by their usual good sense, presence of mind, resolution or integrity. Measures were pursued to concert a plan to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquillity, provide for

obtained by Congress; if a personal esteem for the French nation, formed in a residence of seven years chiefly among them, and a sincere desire to preserve the friendship which has been so much for the honor and interest of both nations, if, while the conscious honor and integrity of the people of America, and the internal sentiment of their own power and energies must be preserved, an earnest endeavour to investigate every just cause, and remove every colourable pretence of complaint; and if an intention to pursue, by amicable negotiation, a reparation for the injuries that have been committed on the commerce of our fellow citizens by whatever nation; and if success cannot be obtained, to lay the facts before the legislature, that they may consider, what further measures the honor and interest of the government and its constituents demand; if a resolution to do justice, as far as may depend upon me, at all times and to all nations, and maintain peace, friendship and benevolence with all the world; if an unshaken confidence in the honor, spirit and resources of the American people, on which I have so often hazarded my all, and never been deceived; if, elevated ideas of the high destinies of this country, and of my own duties towards it, founded on a knowledge of the moral Principles and Intellectual Improvements of the people, deeply engraven on my mind in early life, and not obscured but exalted by experience and age: and, with humble reverence I feel it to be my duty to add, if, a veneration for the religion of the people, who profess and call themselves christians, and a fixed resolution to consider a decent respect for christianity, among the best recommendations for the public service: can enable me in any degree to comply with your wishes, it shall be my strenuous endeavour that this sagacious injunction of the two houses shall not be without effect.

With this great example before me; with the sense and spirit, the faith and honor, the duty and interest of the same American people, pledged to support the constitution of the United States, I entertain no doubt of its continuance in all its energy, and my mind is prepared, without hesitation, to lay myself under the most solemn obligations to support it to the utmost of my power.

And may that Being who is Supreme over all, the patron of order, the fountain of justice, and the protector in all ages of the world of virtuous liberty, continue his blessings upon this nation and its government, and give it all possible success and duration consistent with the ends of his Providence.

After concluding his speech, the President descended from his seat to receive his oath of office from the Chief Justice, who pronounced the constitutional oath with great solemnity, and it was repeated by the President in an equally audible and solemn manner.

"I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the constitution of the United States."

Having taken his oath, the President again resumed his seat, and sitting a moment, rose, bowed to the audience, and retired. After him followed the Vice-President (though not without a contest between him and the late President, with respect to precedence, the latter insisting upon the Vice-President taking it, and he with great reluctance receiving it.) The whole assembly then followed.

This ceremony and spectacle must have afforded high satisfaction and delight to every genuine republican.— Justly may we ask in the words of our First Citizen,

What other form of Government, indeed, can so well deserve our love and esteem?

The oath of office was the same day administered in the presence of the Senate of the United States to THOMAS JEFFERSON, Vice-President of the United States and President of the Senate, when he took the chair and addressed them.

GENTLEMEN OF THE SENATE,

Entering on the duties of the office to which I am called, I feel it incumbent on me to apologize to this honorable house for the insufficient manner in which I fear they may be discharged— At an early period of my life, and through some considerable portion of it, I have been a member of the Legislative Bodies and not altogether inattentive to the forms of their proceedings; but

much time has elapsed since that, other duties have occupied my mind, and in a great degree it has lost its familiarity with this subject. I fear that the house will have but too frequent occasion to perceive the truth of this acknowledgment. If a diligent attention, however, will enable me to fulfil the functions now assigned me, I may promise that diligence and attention shall be sedulously employed. For one portion of my duty I shall engage with more confidence, because it will depend on my will and not on my capacity. The rules which are to govern the proceedings of this house, so far as shall depend on me, for their application shall be applied with the most rigorous and inflexible impartiality, regarding neither persons their views nor principles, and seeing only the abstract proposition subject to my decision. If in forming that decision I concur with some and differ from others, as must of necessity happen, I shall rely on the liberality and candor of those from whom I differ, to believe that I do it on pure motives.

I might here proceed and with the greatest truth, to declare my zealous attachment to the constitution of the United States; that I consider the UNION of these States as *the first of Blessings*, and as *the first of Duties the preservation of that Constitution which secures it*; but I suppose these declarations not pertinent to the occasion of entering into an office whose primary business is merely to preside over the forms of this house; and no one more sincerely prays that no accident may call me to the higher and more important functions which the Constitution eventually devolves on this office.

These have been justly confided to the eminent character which has preceded me here, whose talents and integrity have been known and revered by me through a long course of years, have been the foundation of a cordial and uninterrupted friendship between us, and I devoutly pray he may be long preserved for the government, the happiness and prosperity of our common country.

The Senate at the close of the sitting adjourned without day.