

SOME UNPUBLISHED CORRESPONDENCE
OF JOHN ADAMS AND RICHARD
RUSH, 1811-1822

III.

Washington October 23. 1814

Respected Sir.

I was made happy by your last esteemed favor, from its assuring me that your health was restored to its usual tone.

I lately spent an evening with young Mr Dallas, who came home in the John Adams. He is an intelligent young gentleman, and deals out a great deal of European anecdote, of Lords and Emperors, Kings and princes.

He speaks with nothing but praise of Mr J. Q. Adams; who, he says, was both our spokesman and penman at Ghent; the leading man of our group of ambassadors there.

Dining at Lord Erskine's in London, his Lordship said "Mr Dallas, America is right and we wrong in this war," enforcing his remark with an oath. The son David, the ex minister, was at the table, and denied it, adding that the sooner we gave up the better. Upon which the father exclaimed "David, if you should ever be brought before me on a trial for your life I'd acquit you, because I am sure you dont know right from wrong! [""] So much for the chancellor and minister.

He says the noble Alexander, "the Titus of the age," has a contempt for the Prince Regent, which he scarcely conceals in public. Dancing at a ball with the countess of Jersey (with whom the Prince is not upon terms) the prince passed close by the countess; the countess made him a curtsy: the prince turned from her without returning the civility, upon which the Emperor, looking at the prince, said "tres gallant monsieur!" A pretty imperial rebuke.

The emperor was at the theatre one night in the box with the prince, the King of Prussia, old Blucher, etc. The Princess came into the adjoining box. The prince, according to his custom when she came there, took not the least notice of her at first. Alexander seeing her approach rose ceremoniously to do her honor. The King of

Prussia, old Blucher, and the rest followed the example of Alexander. The prince, thus shamed into the thing, was forced to rise too. Among other benefits which Alexander is conferring upon mankind, it seems therefore that he is teaching men good manners to their wives! All appear to set him down as the best bred gentleman in Europe. The prince a mere beef-eater compared to him.

At the Lord Mayors feast in London given to the foreign sovereigns, when the hour of dining came, the emperor had not arrived. "It signifies nothing to wait" said the prince, "he knows *I* am here, and won't come." Whether from accident, or having no relish for the prince's society, or from what cause, but, true enough, the Emperor did not come!

These royal and momentous anecdotes did Mr Dallas give me! He considers it a well established fact that the Prince, with all his pageantry and serpentine rivers, did not gain the least portion of Alexander's respect.

He thinks France will be at war again very soon for Belgium. The French minister here agrees in this opinion. But I should value the opinion of Mr J. Q. Adams more than either. Pray, sir, does this gentleman ever talk of returning to us soon? I ask not from mere idle curiosity, but should like to know.

If England can exclude us from the Indian country; if she can get the lakes with fortifications on their southern banks; if she can get New Orleans which no doubt she expects to have, with the right to navigate the Mississippi, where will be the difference between her plans and those of France in 1752? It will be the old story revived. I hope equal disappointment will follow. If New England says the word it will be so. Where England will only *threaten* to invade Canada and make some bustle, it will go far towards altering the tone of Britain and scaring her into a peace.

I am not without a hope that the events of Baltimore, Plattsburgh, and Champlain, with the drubbings which my Lord Wellingtons heroes have received on the Niagara, will induce many people in England to Lord Erskine's way of thinking. The old opposition are anxiously hunting up ground to rally upon, and I strongly hope that the developments at Ghent with British blunders and defeats here, will afford it to them.

I have to conclude with offering my own and Mrs. R.'s respectful

compliments to Mrs Adams, and adding with how much devotion and respect I am at all times your obliged

correspondent and friend
Richard Rush.

His Excellency, John Adams.

Washington November 13. 1814

Dear Sir.

Mr Dallas insists upon it that the emperor Alexander is a republican. As one proof of it he tells this anecdote. Conversing with Louis the 18th, he said "Sir, were I so happy as to reign over such a people as the French, it should be my study to make them perfectly free." This is a noble sentiment even if it does not prove him a republican. Kings and Emperors, by the way, are very apt to be republicans, or democrats to be more plain, with regard to each other. They are always talking about the necessity of an equal distribution, or balance as they call it, of power, and affecting great anxiety lest any one of the royal community should obtain too much. Now what is this but paying homage to those great principles of equal right upon which our own governments are founded. Thus we have even Kings upon our side.

I thank you kindly, sir, for Mr Adam's letters which you were good enough to enclose, and which I herewith return. They have been a great treat to me, and are like all the rest of his letters I have ever seen, perfect models of intellectual and mechanical beauty. What he says of Books reminds me of a saying of Doctor Johnsons, that there were but three in the world worth reading; the bible, Pilgrims progress, and Don Quixote. But Johnson often said what he did not think; I rather agree with Mr Adams.

I am giving myself up to the hope, from the tenor of his letters, that this accomplished scholar and statesman may be among us again before long. He is wanted more than I can express. He might, if at home, render the highest benefits to his country, and serve to connect as illustriously the name of Adams with the preservation of American liberty and union, as it will be in remotest history with their foundation. I say it without disparagement, that there are a dozen others could perform well enough the trust committed to his hands at S'

Petersburgh; whereas there is not a man in the nation, no not one, north of the Hudson or any where else, can fill up the chasm which his absence makes. Therefore I deplore it; nor do I deplore it alone.

We are anxiously waiting to hear the issue of the Massachusetts election. Among other hopes that I am cherishing is that of seeing Mr T. B. Adams in congress next year, as well on personal as public accounts. But this, with other similar changes, I rather hope than expect.

I tender you, Sir, as at all times, my respectful and devoted friendship.

Richard Rush.

His Excellency John Adams.

Washington December 24. 1814

Respected Sir.

I do not know that I have ever yet made my acknowledgments to you for the favor you were kind enough to do me in sending me a letter by the Revd. Mr Everett. That I was not fortunate enough to make his acquaintance I consider a real loss. I knew of his being here only the day before he went away, and was unlucky enough, (a thing that very rarely happens with me,) to have an engagement that same evening in Georgetown. I left a note of regrets, with my own hand, at his lodgings in Georgetown and proceeded to where I was to spend the evening. Your letter was abundantly sufficient, to fill me with anticipations of the pleasure and advantage I should have derived from his acquaintance and since he went away, I have learned from various sources how much I lost, in both ways, by not knowing him. To have had such a man in Washington, and from New England, in times like these, was indeed a treasure.

I have also to thank you for your instructive letter of the 24th of last month, in reply to mine about the republicanism of Alexander.

In the accession of fame to Mr J. Q. Adams from the Ghent correspondence, I beg leave to offer my respectful congratulations. It is well known that he was our penman. Lest the pamphlet containing the late letters, may not have fallen into your hands, I take the liberty to send one. May the distinguished son never be obliged to yield by treaty, a single iota of those rights which the illustrious father ac-

quired for us; no, not a hair! This is my political wish and prayer.

Now, as at all times, I remain your respectfully devoted friend
and obt. Sevt.

Richard Rush.

His Excellency John Adams.

Washington March 6. 1815.

Dear Sir.

After thanking you, most cordially, for the affectionate interest you have taken in my late indisposition, I must now say that I have happily gotten rid of all my complaints. Daily rides and walks this fine weather, with fish, oysters, and other good things in moderation, are fast giving me my usual strength. I hope soon to be better than ever. The Jesuits bark I hope I shall be able to do without; but the cider and water I have already commenced with, as a daily drink at dinner.

My wife was favored with your valued and gratifying letter last evening. She considers herself greatly honored, and says she will always remember the favor with pleasure and with pride.

You have now, Sir, lived to see your country through another war, and gloriously I hope. May I return you my respectful congratulations on the event, and may you still live to see many of the beneficial results upon the safety, interests, and grandeur of that country, which the struggle she has just passed through will, I trust, be the means of producing.

Although Mr J. Q. Adams, is now destined to fill our first foreign mission, as the reward, in part, of his useful services; yet, for my part, I must still say, that I wish we had the benefit of his talents at home. But the coincidence is remarkable in the hereditary honors continuing to run *pari passu*;—father and son each signing a treaty of peace; father and son successively ministers after the peace!

Accompanying this letter, I beg leave to send you a pamphlet lately prepared, with some care, by the government. It was in press and within a few days of being ready for distribution when the news of peace arrived. It was then determined to suppress it notwithstanding the note in front; whether on sufficient grounds I do not undertake to decide. But as it seems such has been the determination, you will permit me the liberty of saying, that it will be only for your own eye,

or such discreet friends as you would trust it to, and from whom you would receive it again without publication. No other copy, that I know of, has gone from Washington. Mr Dallas was the penman of it, and I trust you will view it as an able and lucid display of historical truth.

With the highest respect, I am, as at all times, your attached and devoted friend and Sevt.

Richard Rush.

His Excellency, John Adams.

Washington March 27. 1815.

Dear Sir:

Your very obliging and gratifying favor of the 17th of this month, with all its accompaniments, was safely received, and I have to return my particular acknowledgments for your goodness in sending them. The letter from Ghent was like all other letters from the same pen, and I have no higher commendation to bestow upon it. It would have increased, beyond measure, the value of your favor to me if it had also been accompanied by some reflections of your own tending to the same construction of the treaty of Ghent, in its operation upon the one of :83, contended by Mr J. Q. Adams to be the sound construction. If you should have thrown any together, may I still flatter myself with the hope of seeing them?

The memoir upon the fisheries I read twice over with unusual interest and care. It is evidently the production of a well informed and candid mind, and holds up views of the subject not understood by the country at large, or, indeed, by scarcely any south of New England. The value of such a paper, added to that of Mr J. Q. Adams's letter, must be my apology, which I pray you will have the goodness to accept, for not returning them at the present moment. The President left Washington on the day I was favored with your communication; and Mr Monroe in whose hands the letter and memoir have been since, and who is struck with their importance, has this day requested permission of me to transmit them to the President. I have ventured to grant it, knowing that the utmost care will attend them; and requesting also, on my part, that they may be returned to me when the President has done with them. I shall set out on a visit to

Philadelphia this week, and if they are returned by the President while I am still away, which is most probable as I shall be gone a fortnight, Mr Monroe has promised to be good enough to enclose them to me there, whence I shall have pleasure in forwarding them to Quincey.

With my most respectful compliments to Mrs Adams, in which Mrs Rush asks to be included, I beg you, Sir, to receive for yourself the usual assurances of my great attachment and respect.

Richard Rush.

His Excellency, John Adams.

Washington March 27. 1815.

Dear Sir.

Since writing to you this morning, I have determined upon doing a bold thing. I do not often write for the newspapers, as other duties and studies give me for the most part, as I would hope, better employment. But, a week or ten days ago, as the first small effort of industry after my recovery, I threw together some loose reflections upon our late war, which are here enclosed in three half sheets of a Philadelphia paper. I say it is a bold step on my part; and it would be far too much so for me to venture upon, did I not hope for refuge from your critical, in your kind and friendly eye. Where you cannot approve, I am sure I shall have credit, in your partialities, for good intentions, and under this shield, though with trembling hand, I let the whole go.

R. Rush.

Excellency, John Adams.

Washington April 15. 1815.

Dear Sir.

Your valued favors of the 5th and 10th, have gratified, instructed, and consoled me. As far as I stand informed, the administration have never dreamed that the war, or the treaty of Ghent, diminished the nicest hair of our rights to the fisheries, as we have ever before enjoyed them. On the 10th of November 1814, the joint mission wrote to the British commissioners exactly as follows—"In answer to the declaration made by the British plenipotentiaries respecting the fisheries, the undersigned, referring to what passed in the conference of the 9th of August, can only state, that they are not authorised to bring

into discussion any of the rights or liberties which the United States have heretofore enjoyed in relation thereto. From their nature, and from the peculiar character of the treaty of 1783 by which they were recognized, no further stipulation has been deemed necessary by the government of the United States to entitle them to the *full* enjoyment of *all* of them." But fears have been entertained here, that some of the violent politicians of New England, (caring not so as they stabbed Mr Madison "if the wound went through their own hearts,)" would set the example of a different doctrine, and leave the rest of the nation to make out the case of its fisheries not merely single handed against Great Britain, but induce all New England finally to help her in the argument, as happened in the end with the case of impressment. This, although it never could or ought to have led to any abandonment of any rights or privileges on this important subject, might have lessened the zeal to move in their defence. The opinions from such writers as Richlieu, and from such men as Mr Lloyd, are calculated to dispel such discouraging apprehensions. It holds out the hope, that New England will be herself again. And let New England but will it, and in six months we will tare old England to pieces, if she dare attempt to curtail in the slightest particular this antient, indefeasible, valuable, right. I mean tare her to pieces on this continent, and give her blows elsewhere that she would sorely feel, and report having drawn upon herself.

I am greatly indebted to you for the piece signed Richlieu. I have read it twice over with great attention. It is admirably calculated to open the way to sound opinions. It is written with ability; though I must say what I think, that one of the letters I have had the pleasure to receive traces the outline of a bolder, a more comprehensive, a more powerful argument. The title by original occupancy, in the first hardy settlers of New England, is a striking view of the subject. So the one which treats it as an adjunct of our independence. And under the head that former treaties not formally, or by necessary implication, repealed in a new one, are presumed to be revived, the strongest authorities of written law may be adduced. On all points the argument is with us. Only let New England be so too, and there will be no difficulty.

The memoir of Mr Lloyd has not yet been returned to me, detained I am sure from the interest taken in the subject. I now look

for it daily. As soon as it comes I shall have the pleasure to transmit it to Quincy. Every letter I receive from that place increases the pleasure and renews the obligations I feel at the kindness and friendship with which its venerable inhabitant honors me. May I prove worthy of it, and transmit to my own children the lessons of patriotism, which, in ways always to be remembered with delight, I have learnt at his hands.

Richard Rush.

His Excellency, John Adams.

R. Rush presents his respectful compliments to Mr Adams, and begs leave to enclose him a note which he has just received from Mr Monroe. In consequence of it, R. R. has, in the face of all past trespasses, ventured to send the papers back again to Mr Monroe. This will add a few days more to delays hitherto incurred, but to such good purpose that R. R. flatters himself with the hope of absolution. Washington, April 25. 1815.

The enclosed papers have just been sent on to R. Rush by this days southern mail, and he loses not a moment in forwarding them to Mr Adams, with renewed apologies, with renewed thanks, with cordial respects and compliments, with a hope that they will find him in his usual health.

His mother also, under whose roof he now has the happiness to be a guest for a few days, desires that he will make her affectionate and kindest remembrance to Mrs Adams.

Philadelphia May the 11. 1815.

R. Rush presents his affectionate respects to Mr Adams, with the hope that Mrs Adams and himself are both well. He begs the favor of Mr Adams to present to Mrs A. the enclosed letter.

On his return to this shabby village the day before yesterday after a month's absence on a visit to beautiful Philadelphia, R. R. had the pleasure to find Mr Adams's favor of the 26th [24th] of April, *sealed with a large, pretty, and very appropriate, seal*. When the arrears of business accumulated during his absence have been conquered, R. R. hopes for the pleasure of doing more than simply acknowledging this favor.

Washington June 3. 1815.

Washington August 16. 1815.

Dear Sir.

Grattan said of Burke lately, "that he had read more than all mankind, and that his command of history gave him the power of prophecy."

I do not say it idly, sir,—I say it because I believe it,—the book of history lies more open to you than to any individual, at least on this side of the water.

Pray, what is to be the end of the great scenes that are passing? What is to become of poor France? A dismemberment?

The royal European hunt of the beast they called a usurper, is at an end, and Wellington has got the brush.

England now sees the long purpose of her ambition accomplished. She is triumphantly at the head of Europe. What says history that nations commonly do in such situations? I observe that her foreign secretary has begun, by giving an official insult to the monarchs and generals of Europe by that exclusive compliment to the duke of Wellington. If it be in itself true, neither Russia, nor Austria, nor Prussia will think so. And if they did, they will be offended at its utterance. The military power of France would seem to have been first broken down in the campaigns of 1812, 1813, and 1814 between Moscow and Paris with which the English had nothing to do.

But, more important than all, how are we to be affected? There is nothing would afford me so much gratification as to hear you, sir, for an hour upon these subjects, could I transport myself to Quincey. The newspapers which spoke of your visit to the Independence, gave me the assurance of your being well up to that date, and I fervently hope that this letter may find you equally so.

The information which Mr Crawford brought us of France, and of Europe generally, has been in a great degree superseded by subsequent events. We are now upon a par with him. Nothing that comes from him is more grateful to the American ear, than his accounts of the raised views which are entertained of us abroad since the war. The evidences of this he says are as visible, as its good effects are likely to be solid. Had the war continued, he states it to have been the fixed determination of the Marquis La Fayette to come over, and ask a command in our armies. What a spectacle, thus to have repeated at the close of life what gave so much lustre to his early days!

Mr Crawford, I think, has but feeble expectations of the French people being able to make any further struggle. He says it is a perfectly well understood fact in the cabinets of Europe, that the allies, in 1814, offered to place the crown upon the empress, and secure the succession to her son. She at that time, however, would listen to nothing that would separate her from the fortunes of Napoleon. This fact assumes some new importance now; though the deductions we would make from it may all be dissipated by the next arrival. Who can say what a day or an hour may bring forth in Paris?

Your letters from our minister at London must be full of interest. I pray our government have no late communication from him.

I have to offer to you the assurances of my greatest respect and warmest friendship.

Richard Rush.

His Excellency, John Adams.

Washington August 20. 1815

Dear and respected Sir.

Your opportunities of obtaining correct information from S^t Petersburg, were long superior to those of any one else. In the loss of your accustomed fountain of supply, I send you a few extracts that I have copied from a couple of letters lately received from Mr Harris. I think they will afford you pleasure. Mr Russell writes from Stockholm under date of May 27th, that, the crown Prince was so struck at the manner in which we had sustained ourselves against Britain, that he was for a treaty of alliance with us outright! Thus it would seem, that while our country, our government, and the war, are so depreciated by many of our own citizens, those testimonies which after all will make up the historical verdict to be awarded, are likely to be quite different.

I can do nothing, sir, but repeat to you at all times the assurances of my genuine attachment and respect.

Richard Rush.

His Excellency, John Adams.

Extracts from Letters from Mr. Harris, Chargé d'Affaires
at S^t Petersburg to the Secretary of State. Feb:28. 1815.

"The British agents at the congress in the Austrian capital, have latterly, 'tis said, acted a part very hostile to the views and disposi-

tions of the Emperor Alexander; and their conduct has been reported here in such a light that Lord Walpole has been treated with marked coldness in society, and his government spoken of with equal disrespect. A like temper has been discovered at the court of the empress mother, where the British minister has lately been very little noticed."

May 26.

"The ukase of 1811 is revived, and under circumstances somewhat peculiar. The sentiments of the Emperor towards England are too well known, for one to mistake the course of his majesty's policy in his future commercial relations with that nation, and the late proceedings at Vienna have sufficiently shown the political feeling which the British agents at the memorable congress have, by their conduct there, excited in the breast of Alexander. The English merchants here are outrageous at the revival of a supposed exploded system, and consider it as a death blow to the privileges on which they had buoyed themselves for some time with the hope of seeing fully restored to them."

"It has been a source of satisfaction which I feel proud to announce to you, that during the contest which we have just so honorably closed, we have enjoyed in all the first circles here, the most distinguished favor. Our cause has been supported even with enthusiasm, and which the English agents have witnessed, as may well be supposed, with no little chagrin. At the court of the empress mother, I have found myself equally noticed with the envoy from St James, though inferior to him in grade. At a dinner at a principal nobleman, at which were present several ministers of the empire, the American army and general Jackson were given as a toast."

The chancellor, Count Romanoff, who is considered the first nobleman of the land, continues to entertain for our country, the same sentiments he has long been known to possess for it. He considers our war, even short as it has been, as one of the greatest benefits that could have befallen us; and the resolution that decreed it as an evidence of human wisdom equal to any which his knowledge of public events enabled him to compare it with."

"I can say nothing as to the return of the chancellor to power. He still enjoys the esteem and confidence of his sovereign, and on his

majesty's return there doubtless will be many important changes in the ministry."

Washington October 2. 1815.

Respected Sir.

I have been obliged within the last year or two to be very much of a law student. The solitude of Washington during the present and past season, has favored the habit; and for three or four months I have been reading and reading until I have found myself alternately a languid book-worm, and a heated enthusiast. The three last volumes of Robinson's admiralty reports systematically; Pothier on contracts; Vattel through and through, (for the second time since I came to Washington;) both volumes of Brownes lectures upon civil and admiralty law, a good deal of incidental law reading, with lastly "Wheaton on Captures," have been my achievements in the mere professional line since I returned from my jaunt to Philadelphia. Gibbon records of himself, that he once "devoured a hundred pages of Cluvers Italy, a closely printed folio abounding with quotations, in a single day." I have no conception of such rapid reading as this; but I at least find that I can read a law book through in a much shorter time than I could when a younger man.

During the last fortnight, probably in the paroxysm of enthusiasm, I have been throwing out a little law pamphlet, a copy of which I beg leave to send herewith for your acceptance. I have some tremblings for its fate. It is by no means clear to me that the profession in our own country will relish it. I have endeavoured, it is true, to fight a little battle for them all; but I am not sure that other sentiments which it contains may not do away in their eyes any imaginary merit resulting from such an attempt. If however, Sir, it meets in any degree the approbation of such a judgment as yours, it will be to me a gratification that cannot easily be outweighed. But your kind partiality must not tell me so, unless it really does; in that case it may help to prevent my doing better in another attempt.

I make the usual offerings of my respectful and devoted friendship.

R. Rush.

His Excellency, John Adams.

Washington November 3. 1815.

Respected Sir.

Professor Cooper of Carlisle in Pennsylvania, formerly Tom Cooper the friend of Dr. Priestly, is, I imagine, one of the most learned men in this, or in any country. His genius is universal, and his attainments seem without limit. Abandoning politicks, he is more usefully engaged in scientifick and literary discussions. My father used to doubt whether he or Priestly had most knowledge. He now writes, more copiously I fancy than any other man in America (at least so far as I am informed,) for the periodical works that are published in Pennsylvania; and is, I also believe, doing a great deal towards diffusing a useful zeal for letters throughout our country.

In a late number of the Port Folio, Mr Cooper, in the course of a general notice which he takes of Mr Clintons discourse, delivered not long since before the Literary and Philosophical society of New York, thus expresses himself.

"Mr Adams's defence of the constitution of the United States, however his opinions may be controverted on this side of the Atlantic, is such a condensed view of the merits and defects of the various forms of government, antient and modern, as is no where else to be found, so far as I know. An Englishman would probably admire it more than I do; but Mr Adams has certainly furnished ample materials for reflection to those who differ from his political creed. *England can show no such work.* The trifling and popular panegyric of De Lolme is not to be compared with it." So much for Mr Cooper; and I cannot resist the occasion, Sir, to say that I agree with Mr Cooper. I have never yet read any English author upon government, so rich with learning and reflections, so profound and generally so wise. I prize very much your favor to me of the 9th of last month. What you say of the consulate del mare, is already carefully noted for use at a future day. I have read Plowdens commentaries, and every word of "Cocus quidam," with all Hargraves and Butler's improvements upon him, long before I read Bynkershœk.

I agree to all you say of them, *with some little allowance.*

The little pamphlet I threw out embraced only a few outlines rapidly sketched. If ever I come to a year or two of comparative leisure, after the toil of study and the bustle of affairs shall have in a degree gone by with me, I have in view the plan of a work upon juris-

prudence, of which some of the materials are already laid up while others are to be collected, and of which the little tract knocked off at a heat, last month, is but in part the vestibule. However, like a thousand others, perhaps I have merely formed a plan to think of, to nurse up, and never execute. But in this consists part of our happiness.

I hear with great concern of the inflammation in your eyes, which I trust by this time has passed off. May your health and life long continue blessings to yourself, your friends, and your country. So prays—

Richard Rush

His Excellency John Adams.—

Washington June 9. 1816

Dear Sir

I think I must have been the debtor. But be that as it may, I seized with equal avidity and delight the letter that had upon it the well-known, and always welcome Quincy post mark, and the commencement of which flattered me so much.

Time and knowledge are powerful agents in working upon the judgment. I never knew Mr Dexter until the last supreme court. I had, indeed, seen him before, conversed with him before, and heard him speak before. But there was not in his mere exterior, at all times at least, any thing very ambitious or painstaking. It required a closer inspection than could be had in casual or hasty interviews to find him out. But each new examination disclosed new riches, & I have deplored him with but the more heart-felt sorrow from his having been taken off when my own opportunities of judging had just taught me how great and how good a man he was. For the present at least, his death leaves an awful chasm.

It was towards the close of the term, and during an hours disengagement from professional calls that I had, at the fire side in the court room, my last conversation with him. It so happens that it was exclusively about you. He spoke with a respect and veneration which marked the force of his attachment, and threw in an anecdote or two, until then new to me. He could, indeed, have performed the office of a faithful historian. But, Sir, pardon me for saying, that truths connected with so important a period of our publick history, cannot perish with him. Time will bring them out. There are even other depositaries of them than his luminous and honest mind.

With other notes that my father occasionally took of revolutionary occurrences, while that great work was going along, he sketched a short character of every delegate in congress who subscribed the declaration of independence. It forms, to my contemplation, a beautiful little gallery of portraits. I remember he skips over himself with only two words; but those I believe are as just as ever were applied to a mortal. They are, "He aimed well."

Yours is drawn at more length than any other. Still, however, it is but a summary; more fit perhaps, from its brevity, to stand at the end of a biographical sketch, in the manner that Hume's characters close each reign, than to go forth to the world by itself. My only fear is, that my father himself, if living, would think the work too imperfect, and not executed within a sufficient range, to do proper justice. What order the family council at Philadelphia may have taken on M^r. Delaplaine's request, I am, as yet, not informed. It is probable, however, that I shall be. If so it will furnish me with the occasion, and afford me the pleasure, of another letter to you.

In the meantime, my wife joining me in the kindest and most respectful remembrance to Mrs Adams, I have to beg your acceptance of my respectful friendship and attachment.

Richard Rush.

His Excellency, John Adams.

Washington July 13. 1816

Dear Sir.

In a letter from one of our family in Philadelphia, I am given to understand, that Mr Dellaplaine has, as yet, made no request for the little manuscript character alluded to in a former letter which I had the pleasure to write you. But I have obtained a copy of it, which I beg leave herewith to enclose. It may be much too imperfect for the publick eye. I will say this of it however, that as far as it goes it is full of merit. It would enrich, as I think, in the form of a note or addendum, some more full biography, from whatever hand such a work may at a future day come. At our fire side in Philadelphia it was always esteemed a precious little relict, and has been read to many a friend. The copy sent, which is respectfully designed for the acceptance of Mrs Adams and the grandchildren about you, is taken, word for word, from the original in my father's handwriting. It was

written during the revolution, except a few sentences toward the close which he added afterwards.

Allow me to say, that I have read within the last few days, what I have esteemed quite a treat. It is the letter dated "Quincy February 6. 1816" addressed to the society established in Massachusetts to discourage war. I rejoice in its publication. There is nothing in Tacitus that goes beyond it.

I beg to offer, as usual, the tribute of my respectful admiration and friendship.

Richard Rush.

President Adams.

Washington September 29. 1816

Dear and respected Sir

For the first time since I was a lad, I have been making an excursion this season. Health and recreation were the double motive, though I am glad to say the latter predominated. I set out on horseback for the mountains in Virginia. I had never been into the antient dominion before, except merely upon its edge. Although it is filled with "Blenheims," and "Hagleys" and "Mount Airys," I was still very glad to think, that my home and that of my children and fathers, was Philadelphia. Personally, however, my excursion was, on many accounts, a delightful one. I went with Mr Monroe; was at Mr Madison's seat, and at Mr Jeffersons. They are both very pretty. The latter in some respects superb; wonderfully artificial—a curiosity!! I sat off early in August, and did not get back until this month.

A few days before I went, I received your kind and very agreeable favor of the 22d of July. It is the one in which you say you "have thoughts of addressing to me a book of paradoxes." I shall look, Sir, with impatience for the fulfilment. I shall ask nothing more than that the body of the work be equal to the samples sent! Indeed, Sir, they have afforded me no small share of entertainment. The pamphlet addressed to Mr. Wyth I should very much like to see. If favored with it for a little while, it shall be safely returned. The letter to D^r Webb, I shall make "search" for when next in Philadelphia. It will be a curious relick.

Mr Clark arrived here while I was away. The kind letter from Mrs Adams which he brought, I had not the good fortune to receive

until the day before his departure. It would have been a source of particular pleasure to my wife, and self, to make the acquaintance of such friends had we been at home. I have also, since my return, received your favor of the 20th of this month, respecting D^r Mease, and my father's letters.

A few days before I was at Mr. Jefferson's, it so happens, that he had received precisely such a letter from D^r Mease as the one addressed to you. He was also so obliging as to refer it to me, in the manner you have kindly done. Being on the spot, he added an offer to deliver into my hands, for the family, such of my father's letters as he still had, the number not being considerable. Dr Mease's project was new to me; and I confess I am not wholly without my fears, that, should it proceed, there may be more good intention than good judgment in it. In regard to my fathers long and valued correspondence with you, sure I feel, that it was ever conceived in such a spirit of friendship on his part, whether as to confidence or carelessness, as to forbid all idea of the press; the remote thoughts of which, as I view the subject now, would have made him start. However, for the present, only sincerely thanking you for your kind communication of the matter, I will give no ultimate answer or opinion. In the course of the next month I think it most probable, that I shall be in Philadelphia, when I can have an opportunity of conferring with my mother. From thence, or when I get back here, I may have occasion to trouble you with another line upon the subject. In the meantime, your letter gives me the comfortable assurance that D^r Mease's request will remain suspended.

With my kindest and most respectful compliments to Mrs Adams, in which I know how cordially Mrs Rush would join if She were at home, I have only, dear Sir, to add the testimonials of my great attachment and respect.

Richard Rush.

His Excellency, John Adams.

Washington October 31. 1816

Dear Sir.

In further answer to your favor of the 20th of last month, I beg leave to say, that I have just returned from the visit I talked of making to Philadelphia.

Now, venerable Sir, if you will condescend to look over it, and, wholly at your convenience, favor me with an aye, or a no, I shall consider the question as taken.

Believe in the
profound respect of

R. Rush.

His Ex. President Adams.

The burning of the publick buildings in Washington; seems to have drawn down reprobation from all quarters, England excepted.

In England, it is boasted of, not merely by individuals, and at festivals, but under the auspices of the government, which has used occasions to emblazon it. Indeed the capture of Washington, of which the conflagration forms so chief a feature, is proclaimed by them as the principal trophy of the war.

It is conceived that an event so important merits, at our own hands, some monumental perpetuation; something that shall be conspicuous in addition to the pen of history, and that shall bring it under the eye of the government itself, whose seat of deliberation was thus handed over to flames.

It is therefore proposed, that it be recorded in an inscription upon the capitol itself when rebuilt. The inscription to be short, and without passion, the design being to present nothing more than an historical memento of the fact.

For example. Let a suitable tablet be prepared, upon the outside, and the following words, or others equivalent, be engraved upon it.

Founded AD. 1791.

Burnt

by the

Torch

Of a British army

August 24. AD 1814

with the national library and records.

Rebuilt

by an

Order of Congress

The same year.

The complimentary notice which has been conferred upon the event in England, both in parliament and by the crown, would seem to recommend the inscription, as a fit step of counteraction on our side. It might serve to show, that we had no desire to withhold from after times, what England seeks to blazon.

I would drop the word *Torch*, in compliance with the calm style, alone suited to such an inscription, keeping in mind also that it should have all possible brevity, compatible with a display of necessary facts. But to say "Burnt" merely would not answer, as that might have grown out of some unavoidable accident, or justifiable measure, of war. "By the Torch" seems the only expression accurately descriptive of the spirit in which it was done. Thus it will be the faithful record of an historical truth.

Will such an inscription unwisely obtrude upon the publick eye an event reproachful to ourselves? No. If it be a reproach, this is the measure to rob it of a part of its sting. The remembrance of it cannot be expunged. It would be in vain that we attempt to shrink from it. By presenting it under an aspect odious to the invader, of which it certainly also admits, the attention of the mind is awakened to new thoughts, and the reproach otherwise tending towards ourselves, drawn off in the stronger feelings which recoil upon the authors of a mode of warfare so ruthless. By thus avowing the fact, (never to be hidden) we forestall the upbraidings of others. It throws upon the nation perpetrating it, the necessity of justification, which she can never satisfactorily make out, in place of the uninterrupted vaunting in which she had aimed at being left.

Will it be offensive to England? inconsistent, upon grounds of a true and liberal policy, with a state of restored amity? Much is due to this sentiment. But, are these questions which a just pride ought to allow us to ask? She celebrates the act with her park and tower guns; she elevates her Ross into a hero, rendering him the thanks of parliament, and quartering Bladensburgh upon his escutcheon as an addition forever to the honors of his name, and shall she inquire into our mode of perpetuating it? As well might she complain that we publish, in our statute books, the instrument of our Independence, which sets forth, historically the arbitrary conduct of one of her kings; as well demand that we abstain from the celebration of events of recent or earlier renown, in which her disgrace, or at least defeats, are

unavoidably brought into view as the counterparts of our glory. The inscription, or one tantamount, is therefore recommended.

R.R

Washington January 7. 1817

Dear Sir.

The winter is always the busy season here. With me, it is especially so from the fortnight that precedes the session of the supreme court, until its close. Therefore, before the arrival of that time, I must, while I can, have the pleasure of writing to you.

It is chiefly that I may thank you for one or two of your late favors. That from "Montezillo," written on Christmas day, I have particularly in mind. In reading the defence of the American constitution, I have some recollection of a name like this, with a description of the attributes of the mountain. I searched for it last summer, before I set out for the *other* "Monticello," suspecting that Mr Jefferson had borrowed it from this source. I did not find it, but must make another search some other time. And who can turn over the pages of that work without instruction? especially when the eye meets the interesting narratives of Italian history. Perhaps I ought rather to say, the awful admonitions of Italian factions.

It is this flattering Christmas gift from "Montezillo," that invites me to visit Quincy. Really, Sir, I know not what would gratify me so much. Truly no other visit that I could pay in the world. Nor will I despair of one day accomplishing it. Aside from the primary gratification of going to Quincy, I want to see New England, and chiefly old Massachusetts. I want to see if it equals my part of Pennsylvania. Nothing that I have yet seen does, from New York to North Carolina. I have seen no more. No, a Philadelphia—city and county—a Chester, a Delaware, a Bucks, a York, a Lancaster, a Dauphin, no where else have I seen.

My wife charges me (until she is able to make them herself) with her affectionate and most respectful acknowledgments to Mrs Adams, for her kind and gratifying letter by Miss Sumner. She received it only yesterday. Col: Sumner was also so good as to call. Our only regret is, that they stay on capitol hill, near three miles from us. We are always obliged by the opportunity of knowing such, and all other, persons who are known to you. Mr Colmans countenance bespoke

I find it to be as decidedly the opinion of my mother and brothers, as I confess it was my own, that my fathers letters should not be given up for the press.

If, therefore, you should write to Doctor Mease, may we venture to ask it of your kindness to say to him, that, with all possible respect for his intentions, you know it to be the wish of the family, that none of the letters in question should go out of your hands.

I find things all calm here. The prospect of a war with Spain, does not seem greater than it has been for half a dozen years. To be sure there is ill-blood enough between us, which may one day explode. But the late affair in the gulf is not likely, in itself, to produce such a result.

I wish it had been our lot to batter Algiers, instead of Lord Exmouth. Chauncey, with the Independence and Franklin added to his fleet, would have done it as well. However, it has had a battering; and that is a great gain. They will certainly be upon us before long, if they are not already; unless, indeed, the chastisement they have received should completely break them down for a time.

Receive, Sir, all the assurances
of my cordial and most re-
spectful friendship.

Richard Rush.

President Adams.

Washington November 18. 1816

Respected Sir.

You have seen so much, read so much, and thought so much, of publick affairs under all aspects; you know so well what is becoming in national dignity and spirit, and what is due also to policy and seemliness, that I declare, according as your ripe judgment may disapprove or sanction the enclosed paper will I either put it by, or lay it before those who have the power, if they think fit, to act upon it.

After such an introduction you may possibly conjecture it to be some grave affair of state. Not so; it is something of far less importance. Yet, the idea has been running in my mind for full a couple of years. At length it grew quite restless there, and passing by the ruined walls of the capitol not long since, I determined to dress it up as you will see.

him an estimable man, and we found him even more than his first presence bespoke. Shall I add, that his society was made doubly pleasing to us, from the family at Quincy entering so frequently into his conversation.

The newspapers, as you see, have been forming cabinets for Mr Monroe. Already have they given him a large number of secretaries of state. Amongst them there is one, who towers high above all others in every just pretension. You can be at no loss for my meaning. I allude to the mature age, the wide experience, the profound talents, the long services, of the present American Minister at London. Believe me, sir, I have long thought, and still think, that his genius, his principles, and his pen, stand, most conspicuously, number one, for the elevated and difficult duties of our own foreign office. Truly do I hope, that he may be invited, and that he will come to it. What Mr Monroe's intentions, in this respect, may be, I know not. All I know is, that he estimates, in a very high degree, the publick and personal worth of the gentleman in question.

I bid you, dear Sir, adieu with all the respectful assurances of my devoted friendship.

Richard Rush.

His Excellency, John Adams.

London. May 2. 1818.

Dear and Respected Sir.

An old Scotch woman, in North-Shields, signing herself Ann Hewison, has sent me a manuscript Quarto of what she calls extracts from the diary of William Langborm, an American officer, kept during his travels through several parts of Europe. I copy, word for word, the following passages.

London July 18. 1786.

"Saturday—Did myself the pleasure, agreeably to yesterdays invitation, of dining with Mr Adams and his family. We had but one stranger, he remarkable for his American attachments. Our dinner was plain, neat, and good. Mrs Adams's accomplishments and agreeableness would have apologized for any thing otherwise; after dinner took an airing in the park."

"Thursday the 23. Dined again with Mr Adams. Mr Trumbull, a student of Mr Wests was there. The English custom although bad

still exists; we set to our bottle; I not for wine, but for the conversation of the minister, which was very interesting, honest and instructive. He informed us that the Portuguese Minister had by order of his Queen a pleasing piece of intelligence, which was, that her fleet in the Mediterranean had her orders to give the same protection to all American vessels as to her own. I must not forget Mr Adams's requisites to make citizens like those republicans of New England; they were, that we should form ourselves into townships, encourage instruction by establishing in each public schools, and thirdly to elevate as much the common people by example and advice to a principle of virtue and religion."

These sentiments will bear reviewing after a lapse of thirty years. If they serve to excite one agreeable recollection, I shall be amply compensated for transcribing them.

What shall I say to you, dear Sir, of England? to you who know it so much better than I? It is not by a few months residence that such a country is to be known. It is only by studying during a whole life, as you have been doing, its institutions and character. I have no right as yet to form any opinions, much less to hazard them before you. First impressions I have; but they should all be held subject to alteration. During the bustle of an official career, and especially amidst its novelties, perhaps all that can be done is, to catch and record the materials of future reflection.

This letter, therefore, at least as a first, is merely to be taken as another proof, that I regard the privilege of writing to you, as one of the gratifying circumstances of my life, and cherish as much as ever from this distance, the recollection of your patriotism, services, and worth. I cannot close it without saying, that in all the circles I frequent, whether official or private, I hear of nothing but the most flattering testimonials towards my predecessor in this mission. I include in this remark, Queens and royal dukes, as well as his more humble neighbours at Eling. Mrs Rush asks permission to join me in the kindest and most respectful compliments to Mrs Adams, and I beg to offer to yourself, Sir, fresh assurances of my constant veneration and friendship.

Richard Rush.

His Excellency—John Adams.

London December 4. 1818.

Dear and Respected Sir.

Out of the circle of your own family, there are none who can feel more sorrow at the heavy affliction that has fallen upon you than we do here. We heard the melancholy news two days ago. "What exalted and long-tried excellence, exclaimed my wife, has gone to the tomb." "As soon as my confinement was over," She continued, "I had intended that my first letter, after one to my own mother, should have been to Mrs Adams, to convey my thanks for her last to me, full of such flattering and affectionate kindness." Alas, it is now too late. Believe me, venerable Sir, we feel sincerely for your bereavement. We can conceive the desolation of your heart. But your known firmness we trust will not forsake you. That this and all other sources of support and consolation may be open to you, is most ardently the hope of one, who is at all times dear Sir,

With sentiments of the utmost respect, your attached and devoted friend.—

Richard Rush.

His Excellency John Adams.

London, February 9, 1821.

Venerable Sir.

Since I read in the newspapers the address which you delivered in November to the convention of Massachusetts, as President of that body, the scene has been so often before my eyes, that I can no longer remain silent.

As a political incident, its character is memorable. If I could forget the scene of General Washington surrendering up his sword at Annapolis, I should say that it was the finest in our history. In some respects, it goes beyond even that. It would have done for the best days of Rome. Livy has no passage to surpass it.

Although you declined presiding over the deliberations of the convention, your consenting to be a member, and the part which you have acted, are assurances to your country, that, whilst your life is still spared, your health is also good. That this blessing may be extended to you for years yet to come, none of your countrymen wish more ardently than I.

We owe you, all of us, an immense debt; nor shall our gratitude be withheld. In the long life which it has pleased Heaven to grant you, you enjoy already, in the universal respect and affections of your fellow citizens, a foretaste of the judgment of posterity; a judgment that will become but the more fixed, the longer it reviews the train of your illustrious virtues and services.

Please, dear and venerable Sir, to receive this tribute of remembrance from one whom you have heretofore honored with your kindness, and who requests to express to you anew in this form, and from this distance, the sentiments of his respectful and devoted friendship.

Richard Rush.

His Excellency John Adams.

London September 30. 1821

Dear and Venerable Sir.

Your life will never cease to be useful to your country. In spite of yourself, in spite of your years, you will always belong to it. The incident, from alluding to which I could not refrain in my letter of February, has been followed up by another scarcely of less interest, and which perhaps may one day produce effects still more worthy to be noted. I mean, Sir, to address to the cadets, those children of the Republick, which you delivered during the past summer from your retreat near Boston. I read it I can scarcely say with what feelings. Will not Trumbull, or Sully, or Allston, or some one at Boston with a pencil better than theirs, if there be any better, give us this scene upon canvass? We ought to have it so, and I hope will.

For the letter which you kindly took the trouble to write to me in reply to mine of February, I desire to offer my thanks. As to the constitution of the United States, it is so superior to that of any other country, that we shall, I suppose, have to overlook whatever of imperfection has found a place in it, and cling to it as it is. Constitution-making is, doubtless, the most difficult task that human skill can take in hand. Many of its best rules are to be found in a commentary upon the factions of the free states and cities of Italy, in an American work which I need not name, but that I heartily wish could be read and properly estimated at this peculiar moment throughout Spain and Portugal. But how often have we not been told, that nations as well as individuals, forget all the lessons of experience!

As far as I know, there will be no rupture for the present between

Russia and the Turks. But I hear nothing on the subject but what the newspapers contain, this being a season when official people, and nearly all others with whom I mix, are out of London.

I have read, and with great delight, the secretary of state's address on the 4th of July. It is eloquent and profound; sound in its principles and sterling in its patriotism.

I remain dear and venerable Sir, with devoted respect and friendship, your obt Sevt—

Richard Rush.

His Excellency John Adams.

London February 26. 1822.

Dear & venerable Sir.

I must insist upon it, notwithstanding the authority of your veto, that the subject is truly a noble one for the painter. A great patriarch, one of the chief founders of his country's liberties, the steady advocate of her rights at the courts of foreign potentates as well as in all departments at home, is permitted by a kind Providence to live as it were into posterity, beholding the vast increase of her fame, her happiness, her power; and is seen, tottering if you will under the weight of his sacred years, (so much the more affecting and sublime the spectacle) to go forth from his hallowed domicil to meet a band of young men, the children of the Republick, rearing up for its defenders, into whose ears and hearts he pours his parental advice, the rich fruits of his experience and wisdom; his pious and patriotick exhortations; his excitements to virtue and to true glory, and this no subject for a painter? I shall have a poorer opinion of Boston painters than I have of Boston genius in all other lines, if the subject is not seized hold of. I will answer for it, that the historian, and the poet too, will give it a touch in good time, and why should the painter be released from his part? I care not what point of time is selected; that may safely be left to the taste of the artist. He will have a choice. Sir Joshua Reynolds I know tells us, that the painter has but one sentence to utter, but one moment to exhibit, and such has ever been the law of historical painting. It will be no hard task to keep to it in immortalizing upon canvass this incident of the Sage of Quincy receiving the cadets and giving them his blessing.

So much for answer, in part, to your valued favor of November

the 28th, which reached me in January. Now, as to what Europe is going to do, I feel much less confident. The opinion of this court has been all along, and it still continues I think to predominate, that matters will be made up between Turkey and Russia. This is the policy which the British ambassador at Constantinople has been striving his utmost to bring about. It is not that England dislikes war, or is afraid of it; no, for in my opinion, and notwithstanding her immense debt, she will be as ready as ever to fight whenever she chooses, and will begin her next war whenever, and with whomsoever, it may be, with a larger navy, a larger army, and larger means of annoyance of all kinds, whether men or money, than ever she began any former war. But, for the present, she is content with her already enormous power in all parts of the globe, and wishes, like the gambler with his pockets full, to keep things as they are, having thrown sixes at Waterloo. She wishes to keep Turkey as she is, and the Greeks as they are, the latter being essentially maritime, and she would by no manner of means have Russia any nearer the Mediterranean than she is, that sea being the undoubted property of England. We shall soon see how it will all end.

I pray you dear and venerable Sir to recall me to the most friendly recollection of your son, Mr T. Adams, and craving leave to repeat your flattering conclusion, I remain, with hereditary devotion and attachment, yours

Richard Rush.

His Excellency John Adams.