

LETTERS OF THOMAS BOYLSTON ADAMS
TO WILLIAM SMITH SHAW,¹ 1799-1823.

BY CHARLES GRENFILL WASHBURN

Thomas Boylston Adams was the third son and youngest of the five children of John Adams. He was born September 15, 1772, in that part of Braintree later known as Quincy, and died March 12, 1832. The following mention of him as an undergraduate may be found in John Quincy Adams' diary. Tuesday, July 1, 1788.

"It was nine o'clock before I could get away from Braintree this morning, and I arrived at the College just before the exhibition began.

"The Greek Dialogue between the youngest Sullivan² and my brother Tom was quite short and not the worse for that."

He was graduated from Harvard College in 1790, was Treasurer of the Town of Quincy in 1792, and was admitted to the Suffolk Bar in 1795. He was chargé d'affaires of the Hague from October 1795 to May 1796, and accompanied his brother John Quincy Adams, who had been appointed Minister to Prussia, to Berlin where he was Secretary to the Legation.

The following is a quotation from a letter from John Adams, then President, to T. Pickering, Secretary of State, dated East Chester, Pa., October 26, 1797:

¹ William Smith Shaw (1778-1826) Librarian of the Boston Athenæum and the Mass. Hist. Soc. and one of the incorporators of the Amer. Antiq. Soc. He was private secretary to his uncle, John Adams, during his Presidency.

² George Sullivan (1771-1838).

"My youngest son, Thomas Boylston Adams, has been in Paris, and instead of being ordered out of France, as our Jacobinic papers boasted, he accepted, the day before he returned, a polite invitation to dine with one of the Directors, Citizen Carnot, by whom he was civilly treated, and urged to endeavor to reconcile the two countries. He was admitted, and had a convenient seat assigned him, at the ceremony of drawing the lot, for the director who was to rate out. In short, he was treated with great distinction. I am disappointed in my hopes of seeing him this season. His brother, who is a little disconcerted at his removal to Berlin (which he says is in the heart of Germany, where he shall not see an American in a year), has taken advantage of it to insist upon his Company so earnestly, that I think he will prevail, and I must remain, another year, at least, forlorn."

While in Berlin he kept a diary covering the calendar year 1798. This diary³ is fragmentary and is confined to ordinary daily happenings of rather a commonplace order. The last entry is dated December 25, 1798, at sea, on his way back to America.

May 16, 1805, he married Ann Harrod, daughter of John Harrod of Haverhill, Mass. They had seven children, four sons and three daughters. He was Representative from Quincy in the legislature, 1805-1806, and a member of Governor Gerry's Council in 1811.

On August 28, 1806, he delivered the Phi Beta Kappa oration before the Harvard chapter, the subject was "Philosophy." The *Boston Columbian Centinel* of August 30, 1806, said of it:

"Mr. Adams manifested diligent and laborious research into the '*Philosophy*' of the antients; and instructed the assembly by a very learned and deep research into the opinions of the different sects of the antient philosophers, and honorably maintained the reputation of the family from which he is descended; which family is rendered noble, not by office and power in the State, but by a taste and capacity for acquiring antient and modern literature."

³ *Berlin and the Prussian Court in 1798. Journal of Thomas Boylston Adams, Secretary of the United States Legation at Berlin.* Edited from the original manuscript in the New York Public Library by Victor Hugo Paltsits. See *Bulletin N. Y. Pub. Lib.* Nov. 1915.

In 1811 he was appointed by Governor Gerry one of three Commissioners, the other members being Perez Morton and Jonathan Smith, Jr.,

“to investigate thoroughly the nature, causes and state of the difficulties and grievances complained of concerning the land titles in the County of Lincoln (District of Maine).”

It is stated in various places that Thomas Boylston Adams was Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts. This is of course incorrect. He was a Judge, but of another and an inferior court.

A Court of Common Pleas was established July 3, 1782. This was a County Court kept by four judges appointed from within each county, holding jurisdiction in all cases of more than forty shillings. It was abolished June 21, 1811. Thomas Boylston Adams was one of the twelve judges from Norfolk County of this Court, which was succeeded by the Circuit Court of Common Pleas. The Commonwealth, except Nantucket and Dukes County, was divided into six circuits; one of the fourteen Judges for the Southern Circuit was Thomas Boylston Adams, Chief Justice of the Norfolk Common Pleas, appointed June 28, 1811.

It seems rather strange that there was no notice of Mr. Adams' death excepting the formal announcement of the fact in the Centinel—nor is any account of him to be found in the modern biographical dictionaries.

Washington City, 21st May, 1799

My dear William:—

Your friendly & excellent letters of the 1st & 10th inst. have reached me at this place, where I arrived the night before last, having passed a few days at Baltimore & Annapolis on my way. My tour has hitherto been highly pleasing to me, and should it conclude as it began, I shall not regret having made it; indeed a more favorable moment could not have occurred, since had I remained in Philadelphia, my

time would not have been effectively employed, for want of an Office and a boarding place, which could not be had to my fancy until the beginning of next month. Should you be anxious to know in what street my dwelling is to be, I have no objection to your being informed, that the Bishop is one of my neighbors and that I hope to see the ladies of that family the oftener on this account.

I am not in the humor to write you a "long excellent letter" at this time, for several reasons, which shall not here be given, nor do I promise to write you such a letter at any future period, and yet I may write you many letters.

The City of Washington, if I were in a descriptive mood, would furnish a most captivating picture. "Cities shall grow where forests late have stood," which might be paraphrased thus—

A City growing in the midst of wood. What admiration must it not excite on reading of the stately Capitol, the magnificent Presidential palace, the commodious Blodget Hotel, placed equidistant from each other, though scarcely visible by reason of that distance. Here, in the language of Geographers, is a fine champain country, well stored with wood, abounding in various sorts of game, a majestic river, navigable, full of fish and wild fowl, and other natural advantages too numerous to be enumerated.

The situation of the ground on which the City is to stand is very pleasant, from different positions you are presented with very fine prospects uniting landscape with water scenes, and from almost every point a view of Alexandria mingles with and diversifies the whole.—The Capitol is in very considerable forwardness; I mean one wing of the building, and might be finished in a few months; The President's house is not quite so forward, and as to the rest, they are yet on the ground.

During my stay at Annapolis I received great attention and hospitality from the first characters

of the place and had an opportunity of making the acquaintance of several gentlemen of the Bar and Bench, among the former Mr. Winchester⁴, Mr. Luther Martin and a Mr. Hollingsworth⁵, all of Baltimore; Mr. Key⁶ of Annapolis and Mr. J. T. Mason⁷ of Georgetown, brother to S. T. M. of memory.⁸

I ought to have mentioned the family of Governor Ogle and that of Charles Carroll of Carrollton from whom I received distinguished marks of politeness. Madam Ogle gave a Ball, which I am almost ashamed to say, was entirely a compliment to me. What a fine thing it is to have a *father* when his merits are thus visited on the child.

I intend to visit the General at the Mount on Thursday, accompanied by Mr. & Mrs. Johnson,⁹ who have been very kind and studious to accommodate me in every thing within their power. Mr. Tom Johnson has resided for some time at Annapolis for the benefit of his health and has recovered surprizingly; he enquired very kindly after you.

Mr. Cranch¹⁰ is well; better I think since I have been here—we got him into company at Annapolis and revived his spirits wonderfully; Mrs. C. is yet confined to her chamber, though doing very well.

Present me kindly to my father and mother, to Louisa and Boylston. I had forgotten to notice the triumph in town meeting warfare. B——n's remark was in character. Poor Benj'y, how frail we are! I do suppose the whole connection will now be ready to desert the Government and abandon it to its fate, as Rats will a ship, just before she sinks.

⁴ James Winchester.

⁵ Zebulon Hollingsworth.

⁶ Philip Barton Key.

⁷ John Thomson Mason.

⁸ Stevens Thomson Mason.

⁹ Mr. and Mrs. Joshua Johnson, whose daughter Louisa had recently married John Quincy Adams.

¹⁰ William Cranch (1769-1855) Chief Justice of the Circuit Court of the District of Columbia. He was a cousin of T. B. Adams.

I shall write soon to my Mother, whom I now thank for her favor of the 10th. The newspapers are acceptable.

Thomas B. Adams

Philadelphia 8th June 1799

My dear William:—

On my arrival here the day before yesterday I should have found your favor of the 28th ult., if I had gone directly to see Mr. & Mrs. Otis as I ought; instead of which I went to make a wedding visit to Captain Henry, who left town for New York the day following, on his way to Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Mrs. H—— accompanies him and I have promised to give them letters. Well, as I was saying, I should have got your letter, had I gone where I ought, but as I failed in my duty, for the sake of performing an act of civility, so I was justly punished by the deprivation of your agreeable favor till yesterday. My visit was performed within a few days of the time originally fixed for my return, and I have been highly delighted, satisfied and gratified with every part of it, except the most essential, I mean the business I went upon, which turned out very contrary to my wishes, though I was never sanguine in my expectation of success.

I was accompanied in my visit to Mount Vernon by Mr. & Mrs. Johnson and Tom; we passed two nights there very happily and received from the General and Mrs. Washington a most cordial welcome. Owing to the excessive heat of the weather, I could not make the usual tour, with which the General often favors his guests, that is, some 8 or 10 miles walking about his grounds. I regretted it was out of my power to pay this customary tribute, because I am sure I should not have tired in the performance as some folks are said to do.

I told the General that if the President were to see Mount Vernon, he would be quite ashamed of his own place. He smiled at the remark as if to say, "I like the compliment, though I am not sure of your sincerity." I am by no means confident that the prospects from the heights of Quincy would suffer even in my own opinion, by a comparison with those of Mount Vernon; I am sure the President would not give them up, but in point of improvements the two seats will not bear a parallel. Mrs. Lewis¹¹ was absent on a visit to her husband's relations; we had the pleasure however of seeing her sister Mrs. Peter, who is a very fine woman.

I stayed only a day at Georgetown on my return from Mount Vernon and then accompanied Mr. Cranch back again to Annapolis, where I spent nearly another week in a very pleasing society, partaking of all their amusements with the same freedom as if I had been domiciliated among them. I returned to Baltimore on Saturday last and passed several days more with equal satisfaction as on my first visit. I don't mention, because it has made me vain, that the day I left the place I had seven different invitations to dinner. This is a mark only of the hospitality of the place, as some people express it.

There is federalism enough I believe to answer present exigencies and I hope it will increase; this State, is but a poor creature, but we shall say less, I am afraid, in her favor, e're long. I am distressed at the accounts we hear of Governor Sumner's health. God grant he may yet live an ornament to his Country and the world.

Why don't you tell me *more than* all about your late return with the boys. Am happy to hear your Mother has better health than in the winter.

I have been writing for the first time, all this forenoon in my Office, which however is not yet

¹¹ Eleanor Parke Custis married Lawrence Lewis, the son of Washington's sister Elisabeth.

deserving the name, having for all furniture a chair and table. I have gone to my lodgings though my landlady has not yet removed from Pine Street—you know how much I shall be out of the way here, but it is only for a short time. Retirement is more necessary for me now, than society.

Present me kindly everywhere and think me

Yours,

T. B. Adams

P. S. Inform Uncle and Aunt Cranch that their son and his family are in health. I left him much better than I found him.

I shall send Fries's¹² trial shortly. As to Porcupine,¹³ if you have complaints against him, drop him a line—I will none of him.

Philadelphia 16th June 1799

My dear William:—

I have just now got your letter of the 7th inst, and been made very happy by its contents. I am quite ashamed of myself for not being so great a politician as you are, but the fact is I have thought for some time past, that politics is but a remote branch of my trade, and though I am not indifferent on any subject particularly interesting to the public, I feel some listlessness respecting the generality of political news and unascertained reports. The news from Europe of late has roused me in a degree, because it is of a complexion rather different from my expectations. I did think that the French armies would not meet with an effectual check, from the Imperial troops. I really believed and on strong presumptive grounds, that the Emperor was on the brink of the abyss which has swallowed so many illustrious victims within a few years past, and after Sardinia, Naples, Sicily and Tuscany were gone, without a struggle on his part to save them, my belief was confirmed that

¹² John Fries, convicted of treason, pardoned by John Adams, see his *Works*.

¹³ See *Memorials of William S. Shaw*. p. 88.

the present campaign would hurl the King of the Romans from his throne with almost as much facility as it had already levelled the state and dignity of his father in law. I rejoice to find that fact otherwise, and that the French armies in all quarters have been beaten by skill and bravery. The Directory state the incompletness of the Conscription levies as the cause of Jourdan's victory, who by the official account gained the battle of Stochach and then fled with precipitation across the Rhine. The French armies are incomplete, there is the secret. They began the campaign prematurely in hopes of taking the Allies by surprize, and they found, what has never before been the case, that their own numbers were not inexhaustible. It is much to be wished that this reverse of fortune on the French side may be followed up by others of equal magnitude, for my opinion coincides with your's, that what has already happened will do little towards humbling the great nation, considering that *arts* and not arms are the chief weapons of the war they wage against the present establishments of the world. We may yet expect to hear of hard fighting, since this gleam of success must inspire fresh courage to the drooping hearts of the *fraternized* nations and more especially to the Imperialists.

I thank you for the good intelligence respecting our baggage from Lisbon. My brother's library is a treasure not surpassed in value by any private collection in this Country. It would be desirable to get the boxes up to Quincy and have a few of them inspected to ascertain their condition, but as there is no preparation for putting them up, it would be best, if no damage has come to them to let them remain in the boxes, stowed away in some safe place, though not in a garret for fear of fire. I wish the little trunk of my cloaths to be *broken* open, as I have not the key, and such garments as appear obsolete to be applied to charitable purposes under the direction of my Mother.

I enclose the letter I received from Berlin after my return. I should have done it when I last wrote my Mother, but was restrained by the circumstance of its ancient date and the hope that more recent letters had been received at Quincy. You will please return it.

I am not yet fixed in the neighborhood where I wrote you my Office was to be; the lady I board with lives at present in Pine, between 2^d & 3^d Streets, but we hope to move *somewhere* in the course of the next month. I am not dissatisfied with my present situation, but should like a more central one if Clients were my object immediately.

The weather begins to wax warm and in ten days all my acquaintance will be gone to the Country; this is the most retired season at Philadelphia, and if the heat is not too severe I can pursue my studies to advantage. I have, on reflection, given up the idea of buying & maintaining a quadruped this Summer—the expense is frightful & would be oppressive to a much heavier purse than mine,—I'll rather buy a few law tools to decorate the (at present) bare walls & empty tables of my Office, & trust to my heels for exercise.

I was out at Judge Peters's country seat on Friday but heard nothing of your letter to Richard. The Judge & Lady were well & desired to be remembered at Quincy.

Poor Massachusetts! What severe losses are heaped & multiplied upon thee, by the great leveller of Science, virtue, talents & worth! The great ornaments of thy family are summoned in rapid succession to the world of spirits, & few of equal accomplishments are left to comfort thy affliction.

I am, with best love to all our friends

Sincerely your's,

T. B. Adams

P. S. I omitted to remark on the information brought out by M^r. F. Williams. The influence of Sieyès at

Berlin may be considerable but the King of Prussia independent of that influence would not be induced to attack France anew. He will find it difficult to keep aloof, but the Allies will not push him into the opposite scale, if they have their senses about them. Count Haugwitz seems to hold his seat in the king's affections, against very powerful antagonists. He is the foster father of the present system—the Marquis of Lucchesini was the reputed author and chief advisor of it. In *Secret Memoirs*¹⁴ you will find the characters of these two gentlemen.

I shall write to the President in a day or two. Meantime present me kindly to him & mother.

Philadelphia 29th June 1799

Dear William

I am favored with your's of the 23^d inst. and the enclosures—one of which is herewith returned.

The Lieutenant Governor's address is *quite equal* to my expectations, and there is little doubt with me, that he will rise a peg higher, merely, or chiefly because the people would not be united in any man of more capacity and talents. If any considerable interval takes place prior to a new election, other candidates will be brought forward and I think there will be some risk of a division of the federal interest, which may turn the scale in favor of our General, who will doubtless be found at his post on a new trial of electioneering strength. A suggestion of this sort might be serviceable in the newspapers.

I have nothing particular to communicate. The weather has been & still is intensely hot; for two days, successively, the thermometer stood at 92°, but since then we have had a thunder storm or two, which has cooled us a little. Reports are circulated almost daily of cases having already occurred of the yellow fever.

¹⁴ Mirabeau's *Secret History of the Court of Berlin*.

The doctors deny most positively that anything so bad exists, though several very sudden deaths have occurred. We expect continual alarm, but no vessel has yet arrived upon which the burthen of importation can be thrown; about the beginning of August we may expect one. The heat is sufficiently intense to create a plague almost of itself.

Our Court is still sitting—on Monday another begins—in short there is very little intermission at this Season.

Great preparations are making for the 4th by all the military gentlemen. I am invited to dine with the Cincinnati.

What has become of the answer you expect, I cannot conjecture. It was sent nearly a month ago, but I believe by a private hand.

I should have sent you Fries's trial, but it has never been published; a new trial having been granted by the Court, the publication would have been improper.

Give my regards & love where due and accept the best esteem of

T. B. Adams

P. S. I am very sure you will thank me for reminding you that your Orthography grows worse & worse. I know my own to be incorrect occasionally, but I use a dictionary for the most part when writing. "Do thou *likewise*."

Philadelphia 8th July 1799

My dear William:

Your's of the 2^d is in hand, with the enclosures, which receive thanks. I am sorry you dislike short letters, because I shall make an excuse therefrom for writing more seldom & only when I have matter enough to fill my paper on all sides. Against this I am sure you will protest & on second reflection, will prefer frequent brevity, to scarce prolixity.

Among my brother's books you will find many belonging to me, which if you are able to distinguish, either by my name being in them or otherwise, please to put them aside. There is a very handsome sett of Pindar's works, which if you use be careful of it. Should the books be put on shelves, I must beg you to take care that the setts be not broken. I went to the house in Market street today and deposited my trunk there as a precursor to my leaving the City for Germantown. Every thing was in good order but the books & those were quite otherwise scarcely a complete sett on the shelves. There are several odd volumes, Pope among others only four volumes, but I think the other two are at Quincy. One vol. *L'Esprit de la Ligne*, one vol. Moliere's works (the 1st vol.). At New York among the books I found, were some belonging to setts at Quincy. I took them away, but they are of little benefit without the rest. Some day or other I hope they will all meet again in one company, for it is vexatious to break the setts of good & rare books, such as are the french authors & editions of Lattin classic's. I found 3 vols. of Cicero's Orations at N. Y. French & Lat., and I think there is one still deficient, perhaps you may find it.

The alarm which was created a few days since, from the report of the prevalence of *the fever*, has nearly subsided, and I observe in Brown's paper of the evening some strictures on that subject which repel with a sort of indignant triumph the suggestion of its existence. I am not, nor have I been much alarmed for several days, since there was no evidence that the fever of which several persons in my neighborhood have died, had been communicated to others by infection; nevertheless I am not one of those who rail at the Doctors for saying that they have had cases of a malignant fever, resembling in every particular except contagion the fever of last fall. It is their duty to tell truth, though its unpleasant quality draws down upon them, the momentary censure of many Citizens.

I am going to the Country for my own health, because I am confident it will be better there than here for some time to come. There are no Courts except the Federal Court in August, which I can attend as well while I lodge out of town as if I stayed in it, and I shall thereby probably save myself the trouble, fatigue & expence of a second removal from any other part of the town I might go to. I hate this unsettled mode of life however, for it distracts one's ideas, deranges schemes of application both to business & study, and whether the yellow fever is here in fact or only in apprehension the effect at this season is the same—you hear of nothing else.

I have read none of the intercepted correspondence, lately published in *Porcupine*,¹⁵ because I dont take his paper. Brown¹⁶ is the only one I take. If the correspondence is published separately, I will obtain a copy for you. The papers you are so good to enclose me are always very acceptable.

I am fearful that young M^r. Henry was either captured or lost though at the time my brother wrote he had sailed only 10 or 11 weeks, and some chance yet remained of his being safe; I have intended to enquire after him of his uncle, but it has escaped my memory when I saw him.

With best love to all I am dear William
Your friend & Serv^t

T. B. Adams

Philadelphia 14th July, 1799

Dear William:

If it be only to thank you for your favor of the 7th I will devote a minute previous to the meeting of Court; I thank you also for the Walpole paper,¹⁷ which

¹⁵ *Porcupine's Gazette*, William Cobbet's daily paper had a run of nearly three years from Mar. 1797 to Oct. 1799.

¹⁶ *Philadelphia Gazette & Universal Daily Advertiser*, published by Andrew Brown.

¹⁷ *Farmer's Museum or Lay Preacher's Gazette* was the title at this time of the periodical, begun in April 1793 by Isaiah Thomas and David Carlisle, which had no rival in the country. In 1795 Joseph Dennie began to write for the *Museum* his series of papers entitled "The Lay Preacher". Later he became sole editor until he removed to Philadelphia. See footnote no. 42.

entertains and delights me more than any of the literary productions of the Country. If there were an Editor here of the same taste as the *Walpole Bard*, I should sometimes indulge an itching which besets me for scribbling. I know not precisely in what strain I might indulge, but having a wide field before me full of rich vegetation & delicious fertility I could not long hesitate on what to bestow my mite of cultivation. Perhaps, with "the bee," I might also "travel & expatiate." But what encouragement is there to "cast pearls before Swine?" There is no taste, no relish for miscellaneous reading among the professional men of the place—I ask pardon of those who may be exceptions to the general rule—some there are, tho' few—I dread these mere Lawyers & Doctors & Divines, they are of no use or amusement but to their respective fraternities, and yet they are eminent men—full of professional knowledge & formidable on their own ground—soaring high in their appropriate elements & only fit to dwell therein.

The high Court of Errors & Appeals will close its Session today. Not much business has come before it, but two important questions of law particularly relating to our State practice & jurisprudence have been argued with great professional skill by the old ones of the Bar. My Master Ingersoll's¹⁸ reputation stands unquestionably foremost on the list of worthies & able. He surpasses all the rest in some particulars & is inferior in none.

This Court Consists of a large number of Judges—to wit, The Chief Justice or President (M^r. Chew)¹⁹ Three Judges of the Supreme Court, and the Presidents of the Court of Common Pleas in all the Counties. As however the jurisdiction of this Court is only appellate, all cases brought before it by writ of Error from the Supreme Court, which have been there adjudged, can have no second opinion passed on them

¹⁸ Jared Ingersoll (1749-1822) Attorney General of Penn.

¹⁹ Benjamin Chew (1722-1810) Chief Justice of the State of Penn.

by the judges of the *Supreme Court*. This circumstance has in one or two instances created embarrassment during this term, because the chief Justice's health would not permit his attendance and there were only four Justices present besides the Supreme Court Judges, five being necessary to make a Court (a quorum) when the case to be heard had been previously adjudged in the Court below. Another Justice has been sent for from Lancaster & is expected on the bench today. I have been in company with the *strange* Justices one of whom is Mr Addison & was pleased with their conversation. Judge Rush (a brother of the D^{rs}) though a man of some Science & very federal is nevertheless, as Stockdale the English bookseller said to my father, of him, a thick sculled, water drinker. He thinks Buonaparte the most wonderful General that has appeared since Caesar. I observed that in my opinion the Arch Duke Charles was the superior man & General. He treated the observation rather slightly, by saying, the only time the two men were opposed to each other, the Arch Duke's laurels withered in an instant.—With warmth, I retorted—He nevertheless compelled the preliminaries of Lisbon & had it in his power, if the fate of Vienna could have been risked on the event of a battle, to have annihilated Buonaparte & his Army. I have always understood otherwise said he, & there we stopped. I always get in a passion when I hear the French Idol of the day, extravagantly extolled by any other than a Frenchman—The ephemeral butterfly will always dazzle an infantine imagination.

The little extract you made from a letter, makes amends for the groundless suspicion once excited by the same author. The last sentence contains a truth to which every Son in the Country will give a ready assent & every reasonable parent will not refuse to concur in it. At the age of maturity every man in a free Country, is entitled to judge for himself unless he is in a state of dependence. Men often judge

erroneously even in things most interesting to themselves, but men are also wicked & commit crimes against positive commands. Is this a reason for denying them the exercise of free will on one hand, or a good argument for dispensing with prohibitions against vice, on the other?

I go out of town this afternoon—A fresh alarm of the fever, these two days past has existed. A son of F. A. Muhlenberg, died of it yesterday, & two more are sick, who were apprentices in the same store in Water Street. I think the public offices will soon remove.

I cannot make another journey this summer, though it would give me pleasure to pass it with you & the family at Quincy. If I remove from this State, it shall be the last time.

With best love to all, I remain,

Yours in truth & sincerity,

T. B. Adams

Philadelphia 23^d July 99

Dear William

I have just come to Town after a week's absence, with the intention of removing a small portion of baggage, which I had left behind, & return again this evening to the Country. The weather has been quite temperate during the last week and few, if any, new cases of the fever have occurred, indeed there is no unusual mortality at present, and we earnestly hope there will be none, but the season has not yet come. If the month of August should pass over with as little *cause* of alarm as the present has thus far, I shall feel a confidence that the City will escape the calamity and I shall return immediately to it. I enclose you a very recent publication of D^r Rush on the subject, which you will be glad to see.

I wrote a letter to my Mother two days ago & intended to bring it to Town with me, but forgot it,

so you must give my best love instead of it, and promise the letter speedily.

People here are very angry at the Bostonians for impeding the commercial intercourse in consequence of the rumors of fever. Coming in the Stage this morning, I heard some Quakers complain of its being an hasty & illiberal measure—I judge not between you—

Thanks for the Oration, which I read with much pleasure. What sort of a Commencement had you?

T. B. Adams

Rock Hall, Germantⁿ 29th July 1799

Dear William

The 26th inst^t brought me yours of the 18th and the 28th that of the 21st with accompaniments—*Accipe gratias et incepto permanete*. You anticipated my request to be informed of how the rituals were this year performed at Alma mater. I am, among other pursuits attempting to renew my acquaintance with school & College books, for which I own I had little relish while they occupied me as a task; had I made this confession at the time I was employed in reading the classics & saying them “like a lad,” my Masters & all others concerned in my education would have said I was a stupid, idle boy, who has no business to indulge or even entertain his likes and dislikes, & with them, a well grounded disgust would have passed for a cloak to an idle humor or as a mark of deficiency of intellect. I made no such avowal and I learnt, like others, just as much latin & Greek as I was bound to, and no more—I never saw or never distinguished the beauties classic & poetic of Virgil or of his master Homer. The eloquence of Cicero enveloped in what, to me, was difficult language, never melted my frigid and congealed faculties so that I could perceive wherein he surpassed predecessors, contemporaries & successors in that style for which he was most aptly

formed to excell; nor did his *copia verborum* then arrest my admiration, as it has done since. Horace with all his wit, could scarcely boast of having excited a smile on my visage, and as to his Satires, had they never been written, my wisdom & instruction would not have been less than they are. Juvenal is not one of our College books—Nor is Ovid—or even Tacitus—I am ashamed to acknowledge that I never read them in their original dress,—Ovid, with a french translation, is now under my eyes and it strikes me as one of the most necessary of all the latin poets to be read in schools,—it is in fact a useful nomenclator to the rest. Fiction, to use a strong expression, is made intelligible—even “the melancholy madness of poetry” becomes rational matter of fact, in comparison to the obscurity which seems to envelope antient literature without this author’s aid.

We have very few classic scholars in this Country, and the number will not increase until the capacities of boys in our Grammar schools & Colleges are better discriminated—until our Masters, Tutors, preceptors, professors & Presidents become scholars themselves in the dead languages, which they pretend to teach. Who ever undertakes to advise boys to read the biography of the authors they learn at school, or points to the beauties & properties peculiar to each? Who attempts to explain the difficult passages continually occurring in the best classic writers or comments upon an allusion without which it lies hid “in darkness visible” from the apprehension of a child?

It would be a source of high satisfaction if I read latin with as much facility as I do french. One of them I learnt involuntarily by seven years reading, when young—the other I acquired in less than three years at a more advanced age, unassisted by a teacher. Since I came out here, I have been infinitely more amused, instructed, & gratified with the company I have kept, than that I was obliged to frequent in the City. I converse with Cicero, Tacitus, Ovid, Horace,

in addition to professional writers. But these will not give me bread, no! we must dwell with bricks & stones, filth & heat & all the disagreeables of life, because there dwells man, sordid, money making animal. It is time this strain should cease for it begins to border on the querulous.

In one of the boxes of books lately arrived at Quincy, there must be certain odd volumes of a work (I think the history of France) which my brother presented to the College. If you can find them, they should be sent to complete the set at Cambridge.

I am as usual your's

T. B. Adams

Philadelphia August 16th 1799

Dear William

I have not yet acknowledged the receipt of your favor of the 30th ult^o enclosing M^r. Paine's Oration, but when I write to one of the family once a week, my conscience acquits me of negligence. I wrote twice to my mother last week.

Your letter is not by me, but I recollect it noticed your having just finished "Davila's history".²⁰ Did you ever read the discourses²¹ on the author written in 89-90, which some writers of *that day* who were displeased with the political doctrines inculcated by them, used to call long-winded, dull, tedious sermons in favor of Monarchy & Aristocracy? I well remember the time when the public were taught & persuaded to conceive an horror & disgust against the reputed author of those harmless papers. Faction existed then as now, but it had not then been organised. The inflammatory materials were concealed beneath the cinders, but the breath of party animosity aided by the strong gale of French revolution could alone kindle the flame which shortly after burst forth with unspeakable violence in all quarters of the globe.

²⁰ Davila, Arrigo C. *History of the Civil Wars of France.*

²¹ Adams, John. *Discourses on Davila.*

I distrust the political temper & spirit of our Commercial towns and Cities. Whence I derive this jealousy, unless experience & observation have imperceptibly suggested it to my conviction, I am unable to ascertain, but according to my creed the God, Goddess, & Patron or Patroness of trade, was one of the first democrats in the world and her votaries have ever since been more or less infected by such influence. Here is a suggestion which you are welcome to combat if you disagree, and which until I have your opinion of it, I shall pursue no further.

The electioneering campaign goes on briskly here—We shall have a curious publication on the subject of McKean's²² character, pretensions & qualifications, in a few days, if the Committee appointed to draft it comply with their duty; in the course of the work, some interesting sketches & anecdotes respecting a few of McKean's friends & recommenders, are likewise promised. Both sides, in many respects, are weak on the score of former character. Old Tories serve to fill the foremost ranks on each. Tench Coxe & Levi Hollingsworth may be balanced against each other. There will be very warm work in some places at the time of election, you may depend.

The Country has suffered much, I hear, for want of rain in the interior of this State, though in other parts the crops of grain were never more abundant. We have a fine rain today, for the first time, since this month came in. The dust has been suffocating at Germantown, though I have kept pretty clear of it.

Paine's Oration, though a good one, does not strike me so favorably as others you have sent me. It has great merit as an hasty production, but the style is stiff & seems to labor in several places rather unpleasantly for the reader. I would not criticise a work of a promising Contemporary, under the cir-

²² Thomas McKean, Chief Justice of Penn., elected Governor over the Federalist candidate, James Ross.

cumstances of the one I allude to, if my remarks were for public inspection. It would be ungenerous.

Present me kindly to Quincy, my friend & to my Quincy friends—believing me always in truth

Your's

T. B. Adams

Rock-hall, 23d August 1799

Dear William:—

I received your agreeable birthday tribute the day following the date of my last; since then the deadly pestilence has burst forth again with ten fold violence & every part of the City is more or less infected. The inhabitants are flying in every direction & not a room is left unoccupied at Germantown. I go there but seldom. The Banks & other public Offices are soon expected.²³

New York, we understand, is equally afflicted & alarmed. Another mournful Autumn menaces on all sides, & yet the weather seems favorable to an high degree of health in the Country. I shall not expose myself to fever infection, so, be of no concern for me.

I had heard nothing of the pamphlet you mention, but am desirous of seeing it, wicked & abandoned as it is. Barlow is deep in the mysteries of modern philosophy. He is not only a deliberate plotting villain, but of slender intellect. His mind was never capable of a manly thought on subjects of government. Poets in general are the worst of politicians—they are by trade & occupation worshipers of ideal images, dealers in fiction, builders of air born castles & master workmen only in the edifices of Parnassus' summit. These things belong not in any manner to the Science of Government. In France indeed, under the mockery of Republicanism, the Chénier's, the Beaumarchais's

²³ The public offices were removed to Trenton August, 1799, because of yellow fever.

have prostituted their muses to the vile purpose of blasphemy & Atheism. In Republican France, Poets may be legislators, for the Republic originated in fraud, has been maintained by violence & yet exists only in imagination. All these things appertain to Poetry. Ergo a poetical form of Government is the most arbitrary, absurd & monstrous that ever prevailed among mankind. Who but a Frenchman would have endured a rhyming race of governors & legislators?

The above is about on a level with the reasoning of Tom Paine in "Age of Reason part 2d" wherein he aims all the shafts of his railery & gibes at the Bible. He dwells much on a conceit which he thinks original, in both parts of this work, viz.—That *prophet* originally meant nothing more nor less than *poet*, and that the prophesies are only poems in the Eastern style, which deals much in allegory fable & parable, so that to sanctify these poems by calling them prophesies & respecting them as authentic traditions of the word of God, is solemn mockery. Well, I have proved that the French nation have in latter days pay'd more respect than any other to these sort of folks called poets, by admiting them to give laws to their Country, & therefore France is incontestably more culpable in retaining a reverence for impostors than all the world besides.

I hope Dr. Hopkins is not ranked among the fraternity, though he is rather a visionary than otherwise in some of his opinions. His professional reputation at Hartford is very good.

I got a letter from J. Q. A. dated 29 April, a day or two since. It was brought by a vessel that was carried in & detained a month in England, but was finally liberated, being freighted with a cargo for Government.

The subject of this letter is business merely, on the details of which I shall write shortly to my Mother. I have no letter from her later than the 4th curr't.

Truxton²⁴ insinuates that he has been coaxed to go out after another Monsieur frigate. I don't believe this would have been done if the S of N had felt himself unconscious of promising more than he had a right to do on the subject of rank. He is resolved to persist in his resignation. He has a right so to do, but he is preparing chagrin, discontent & torment for himself during his life, by the obstinate exercise of it. Discipline must be established at the outset, for the vices & errors of infancy are hard to correct in maturer ages. Our navy is the most hopeful & promising of our Country's offspring & I hope it will be trained up in the nurture of due subordination to its parent authority. A really good & valuable officer or servant, is he that unites courage, capacity, humanity & humility, but how rare is the association complete. I wish Truxton well, but older and abler must not be overlooked, however they may have been eclipsed by a fortunate & well timed adventure.

Dear William you write a very slovenly hand and you spell shockingly ill. Truth is sometimes disagreeable, but ought not therefore to be disguised. She is, you know, the only female that wants no fig leaf to cover her nakedness.

I am dear William Sincerely Yours,

T. B. Adams

P. S. If the Post Office does not remove it will be difficult to get letters very soon from town or to it—you must make due allowance therefore for irregularity.

Germantown, 30th August [1799].

Dear William:—

I enclose, as directed, under cover to you, the Summary Statement of services rendered at an important & critical period of our Country's affairs, by an intelligent, brave & deserving Officer. I think it an hardship that such merit & such services are so

²⁴ Thomas Truxton, the first of our naval officers to win distinction, was Captain of the *Constellation* and captured the French frigate *L'Insurgente*, Feb. 9, 1799.

soon obliterated from the recollection or so much out of the knowledge of Gentlemen now in Office, that a statement under the hand of the Agent himself should be deemed necessary to obtain for them the notice they merit.

We have in the papers of yesterday and the day before the letters of the Secretary of the Navy & of Truxtun himself on the subject of his resignation. The Secretary differs, I perceive, from the President as to the right of this decision, and as I am ignorant of the principles which governed it, I can form no other opinion of its propriety, than my confidence in the deciding authority would inspire. Whether Talbot's Commission is new, & subsequent to Truxtun's, or whether in consideration of Talbot's former services, he is judged worthy of a rank above Truxtun, is what I should like to know, for Truxtun says "every palpitation of his soul tells him that the injury he has received is unaccountable."

I have spent two days in preparing a statement for publication on this subject, but my information & the means of obtaining it are so insufficient that I wave the thoughts of sending anything to the press. Indeed the difficulty of sending to the printing Office at this time operates as a restraint. I am loth to be suspected of interference in deed on a question of this sort. The proper authority has decided & I doubt not justly, between the disputants, and the public will acquiesce. If Truxtun was not too proud, he might bear a Commission under Talbot²⁵ without dispising himself. Even Dale²⁶ would not serve under him.

If none of my letters have miscarried, I ought to have a reply from you very soon. I shall deliver your enclosure of last week shortly.

Present me kindly to Boylston & believe me

Yours' in haste

T. B. A.

²⁵ Captain Silas Talbot.

²⁶ Captain Richard Dale.

P. S. The fever abates in town but little. The banks are not yet removed. September 2d. I am going this morning to attend the Supreme Court, which is to meet at Frankford. I shall apply for admission as a Counsellor during the term. I was in hopes to have got a letter last evening, but did not. I am three or four in advance with you.

Germantown, 8th September, 1799

Dear William:—

I have your favor of the 31st ult., with an enclosure for R. Peters Junr, which shall be delivered as soon as an opportunity of sending it presents. I have not yet found means to forward the last enclosure you made me—which is rather the effect of misfortune than neglect, though you doubtless will think I have no excuse for being nine weeks within 3 miles of the Bishops, without having made one single visit there. The fact is, I have been very little from the spot of my retreat in any direction except to Frankford, where I last week attended Court & took the oath as a practitioner therein. I hope that the money which a licence to practise costs, may be placed at good interest, but the prospect is barren.

I shall have to attend another Court this week at Frankford, where a Debtor of my brother is to avail himself of the cheating insolvent law of this State passed last year, and under which the most flagrant frauds & perjuries are practised. The debtor always gets out, unless you can convict him of perjury by discovering property which he has not disclosed. The man in question, is a swindling fellow, who borrowed money of my brother at the Hague, to prevent his going to Jail in Holland. It seems that he has not been able to escape it here. His name, J. P. Ripley.

This morning (the 10th Sept.) I got your favor of the 2d, with enclosures, for which accept my

cordial thanks. The affray between Livermore & Lee, had fallen under my observation, but the pieces I had never seen, except Lee's publication. Fisher Ames's remark, that "a character even unjustly aspersed, never appears so unsullied, as before" occurs forcibly to my recollection on this occasion.

One of my speculative letters to you of the latter end of July, remains, I think, yet unacknowledged. I wont be sure however. The subject most descanted on was, my attempting to renew an acquaintance with School & College books—I notice this circumstance for no particular reason, though a doubt exists whether it reached you. Several of my letters went to town by different private conveyances and some of them might have miscarried naturally enough. At present we have a regular post office established here during the fever.

The *Aurora* pronounces the letters which appeared a few days since in the papers, relative to the assassination of the Frenchmen at Rastadt, a bare faced forgery. The story is so consonant to my own suspicions & to the appearances which struck our notice in the relation on the French side, that I think them genuine, though their coming here first from St. Sebastian is against them. We shall soon know the fact.

The mortality in Philadelphia increases slowly—for many days the average was about 20, and has never exceeded 31. A long spell of rainy weather has prevailed and we hope checked the disease in a degree. Several useful men have fallen within a short time.

I have nothing of moment to say further than an assurance of the esteem & friendship

of T. B. A.

If you can obtain for me the words of the patriotic songs, written by Mr. Paine, I shall thank you. There are two or three. Quincy will ask for them of the Author, if you give him a hint with my best remembrance. Paine has a claim on me for a retribution, which on occasion I shall be happy to make. I

think highly of his poetic talents, and wish he might meet as much admiration & encouragement as his genius merits. A professional Poet cannot live here by his trade & unluckily he is seldom fit for any other. I think that when the Gods make a man poetical, it is a sure mark of their vengeance not their mercy.

16th September 1799

Dear William:—

Yours of the 6th saluted me on my return from a little excursion on a visit to the Bishop's & Mr. Brecks. H. Wyckoff my particular friend, called and dined with me on Thursday, took me in his chair to the Bishop's in the afternoon, where we paid our respects to his worship & the ladies, thence to the seat of Wyckoffs father; across the Schuylkill, where I stayed the night & in the morning of Friday went in the same vehicle to Frankford where we attended Court & towards night rode as far as Mr. Breck's where we stayed until yesterday morning, having found the family and left them in good health. In performing this tour, business as well as exercise & relaxation was in a degree my object—and I was very happy to make the first an apology for the latter. As a proof of [torn] having made this excursion—*ecce signum!* A budget of [torn] your care, both of which you will deliver to Miss Gray.

The poem &ca came in course. I may take the trouble to read it, & I may not—your account of it is as much as I wish to know of it, though it is but fair to make my own opinion from perusal.

Your Bolystonian anecdote is rich. I fear he has spoiled sport thereby. Give him my love.

I shall write soon again being now in haste,

Your's

T. B. Adams

Germantown, 22 September, 1799

Dear William:—

I received your obliging and copious communication of the 13th and render thanks for the trouble you have taken to explain a subject, which had excited my curiosity & interested my feelings, but which without your aid I should have been unable to comprehend to my satisfaction. I think it necessary only to observe in reply that I fully concur in the opinion of the rectitude, propriety & justice, of the ultimate decision in this case, and entertain no doubt respecting the correctness of the judgment that the public will form upon the circumstances of it. I hold this historical detail in perfect confidence & high estimation, it is drawn with ability and the arrangement of materials is methodical and accurate.

Since I last wrote you I have been a journey of 30 miles from this place, to accompany a lady on a visit to her sick child. We were summoned by a messenger from the place where the boy resides, after all our family had retired to bed. The nature of his disorder (a putrid sore throat) struck terror to the minds of the parents; whose anxiety was more poignant from the recollection of two lovely babes, who died of the same complaint in 1793, at the same place. The father sat off immediately & I gave him my word to accompany his wife the next morning, which I accordingly did; we performed the journey in a few hours & had the satisfaction to find the lad recovering from his disorder which had taken a favorable turn the same morning & his physician had pronounced him out of danger. I must not forget to mention, that within two or three hundred yards of our journey's end, our chaise upset & spilt its contents on the ground, in performing which it gave me a pretty violent contusion on the left leg, which however is mending fast. The lady was a good deal bruised, but not materially injured. We were both able to return the day but one following. It was in the discharge

of an act of friendship of the most interesting kind that this accident occurred, but it was of so slight a nature, that I only mention it because no bad consequences ensued upon it. The gentlemen & lady are fellow lodgers with me during the sickness in the City, my very valuable & particular friends & intimate acquaintances to whom I have been indebted for more acts of kindness & attention than I ever received out of the circle of my own family connections. When you return I will make you known to them; you are already acquainted with some of the lady's family, through my introduction last winter.

I passed through Norristown, the shire of Montgomery County, where the State prisoners were lately transferred & where their trial is to take place on the 11th October. Fries & Co are in good spirits, and I am told, rather sanguine in the expectation of being acquitted on this trial. Marks, one of the number, is very impudent & violent in his language, persisting in his error & justifying his conduct which was much more outrageous than that of Fries. I believed, that Fries would be acquitted on the first trial, but I now incline to think the second verdict will be like the first. There is a guard kept at the Jail to prevent a rescue, but I heard fears expressed lest some of the prisoners should escape notwithstanding.

The day of our election approaches fast. The Citizens are summoned to vote at the usual place, the State house, and present prospects justify a belief, that we may return in safety by that day to the City. Dr. Rush permits his friends to return already, but enjoins them not to go into the suburbs. The Banks no longer contemplate removal, and we may expect the town will very soon reassume its wonted appearance. I shall not be too hasty to venture in, rather to satisfy my mother, than because I am personally apprehensive.

My vote will count one in the majority, which our side count upon with so much certainty, but against

which I have made a wager of a pair bootees. McKean will outrun us by 1500 or 2000. We say 4000 will be the majority in our favor. No election in this State ever excited such interest on all sides.

I am, dear William, your's sincerely,

T. B. Adams

P. S. Please to make my congratulations acceptable to our Cousin Foster on the happy event which you notice in one of your last favors. What name has it received?

Professor Pearson, whose critical remarks on style & composition I highly approve, says that dashes under emphatical words & phrases are very inelegant, and should be omitted altogether or very sparingly used. He recommends attention to orthography & punctuation.

Private, 13 October, [1799]

Dear William:—

Before I heard of your coming this way, sooner than was expected, I enclosed you in two packets, letters to different persons, & in each one from some of your correspondents. After hearing of your departure I wrote to my Mother requesting her to forward some & return others, which a letter from her of the 7th informs me she has done. Your caution came too late, but no harm is done, at least, I hope not. When we meet, you shall hear how & what, if you can wait so long. I am a little vexed, but not so much as I might & perhaps ought to be, about it. Let me know if your seals are respected where you are.

I shall send you letters soon for my Mother, who I rejoice to hear is well escorted. She mentioned my meeting her at East Chester, to accompany her hither, which I shall willingly do, if I am summoned; this is the reason why I cannot go very soon to see you, because I may find it convenient to do both, under one jaunt. I have some desire to pass a few hours in

New York for the sake of business, but do not think expedient to go on purpose, the object not authorising time & expence.

I am in truth

Your's

Germantown, 13th October, 99

Dear William:—

I must beg you to congratulate the President & yourself from me, on your safe arrival in our neighborhood. Your journey was, I apprehend, more favorable in point of weather than my mother's is likely to be, for we have had very heavy rains & dull skies all the last week, more or less. Even on Tuesday, the all important 8th of October, big with the fate of Pennsylvania, we had in the morning a very unpromising prospect of weather, but it fortunately cleared away before noon & left a chance for a fair trial of strength on both sides. I was present on the election ground a considerable part of the day, & retired with stronger hopes of success than I went. The Demo's however mustered strong after dark & poured in their numbers beyond calculation, so that we came off with only a small majority in the City. It was however larger than I expected, and the federal candidate yet keeps his competitor at a respectful distance. I am in better hopes than I was prior to the Election, but not by any means confident of success.

It will give me great pleasure to see you here, though I cannot promise to accompany you back to Trenton, very speedily. If it should be in my power however without inconvenience to make the excursion, I will give you timely notice. If you meet, as you cannot fail, I think, with the lay preacher, return him my best thanks for his recent remembrance of me, communicated by my friends, Ross & Simpson.

Your letters of the 20th, 29th ult. & 11th inst., came in course. If you could have acquainted me

with the time of your intended departure, it would have been acceptable as I wanted some books put into my trunk, which is coming round by water. I shall not go into the City to stay sooner than the 1st November, about which time we expect the public Offices will return.

I have a letter from J. Q. A. of July 16th, the latest from him, & but a few lines. From Consul Pitcairn I get the *précis des événemens militaires* Nos. 2 & 3 with a line to the 10th August; no news.

Present me kindly to my father & believe me

Your's sincerely

T. B. Adams

P. S. I have the key of the President's house remember!

Philadelphia, 19th Oct. [1799]

Dear William:—

I have only time to say that after the severe frost of last night & the night before, I conceived there was no danger in coming to the City. Of course came in this morning & find the town quite cheerful though the houses not generally open. Have been upon the hunt for an Office but can find none as yet. I go out again this evening. Our house in Market Street is aired in part, as I have had the windows open all day. We expect the public Offices will shortly remove—if so inform me.

Your letter of the 15th is in hand & my father's of the 17th which I got this morning.

I am in haste Your's

T. B. A.

Germantown, 23d October, 1799

Dear William:—

I have yet to reply to your favors of the 15th & 21st inst., the latter of which with the letters of Mr. Pitcairn, came to hand last evening.

I have been anxious for some days on account of reports, which have been circulated with great zeal & industry, of a serious misunderstanding in the Cabinet at Trenton, and though I give credit slowly to the idle rumors of the day, I cannot but wish it were in my power to contradict some of them, which their very extravagance tells me cannot be true. I know pretty well how to appreciate the stories circulated on the Subject of the departure of the Commissioners, but when great pains are taken to propagate a belief that the President has declared his intentions of resigning the Chair, and means are taken in consequence to promote the election of a Successor, I confess that the feeling to me is unpleasant and I am sure that the effect upon others is pernicious.

The story is, that the Secretary of State²⁷ opposed with all his influence the departure of the Envoys for France. That his opposition was seconded by a declaration of the British Minister, that a fresh attempt at negotiation by our Government, would be considered by the Coalesced powers, as an act of hostility against them, since they had come to a resolution to force a declaration from every neutral power, for or against them. The President is said to have replied with characteristic energy to this communication. The Secretary persevered in his disaffection, which produced a warm explanation, in the course of which the P-t declared he would resign, rather than submit to be influenced by the menaces of any other power on earth, on the subject of our external connections or intercourses. The Envoys of course are to go.

I do not write this account, with an expectation that you will be at liberty to tell me in return, what foundation there is in fact for any part of it, but only

²⁷ Timothy Pickering, Secretary of State from 1795-1800, bitterly opposed sending the new Envoys to France, who were Oliver Ellsworth, Wm. Vans Murray and Wm. R. Davie.

to acquaint you with what we the people hear daily in out intercourse with Society.

Since the triumph of Jacobinism in the State, there is a manifest scheme set on foot of irritating the public mind against Great Britain. I see the drift of it in part, but I should wish to know what fresh provocation has excited the animosity which thus discovers itself. McKean Governor of the State—Jefferson President of the United States is the next object of that faction. I have done looking up to the legislative branches of the Government for a relief and provision for our great & serious difficulties. “La puissance legislative” (said a Frenchman who was no fool however he may have been a knave) “est essentiellement destructrice;” “le pouvoir Executif, est essentiellement conservateur.” I think I can foresee an expeditious sacrifice & sure destruction of our Government, in the prospect of such an overwhelming war as we are not sure of escaping. The legislative branches would abandon the Executive, by refusing the supplies necessary to carry it on, & it would fall lifeless to the ground, like a body of inert matter, elevated upon pillars too weak to sustain the burthen. If such must be the fate of this fabric, I had rather that myself & family were buried in its ruins, than survive the catastrophe by an untimely flight.

Be so good as inform me, how soon the President intends coming to the City, and whether it would be worth while for me to visit you before you come. I could go next Saturday to Trenton or at furthest on Monday, but if you think a speedy removal will take place, I will defer my journey altogether.

I am truly your's

T. B. Adams

Philadelphia, 3d July, 1800

Dear William:—

I enclose you a receipt from Watson for your last pr of Pantaloons, and Mr. Lynch's receipt for the last

quarter's rent of the house; the last you will please give to my Mother.

Frederick, the Hostler, called upon me some days ago, to give him a character, as a Coachman, saying that his own, was gone in his chest to Quincy, and praying me to write for it. I promised to do the latter, but was not so ready to certify for his ability and good conduct, which I knew nothing about. He was very importunate, plead poverty &c. but I dismissed him, none the better for me. Mr. Briesler will see that the Chest be returned & you will notify me when it is sent.

There is nothing new here, except a report, that the V. P. had suddenly departed this life, after 48 hours illness. The *Aurora* of this morning, says it is a federal bore, & a trick of a Baltimore Editor, to prevent the author of the American Declaration of Independence, from being toasted throughout the Continent, at the approaching Festival. It adds Mr. Jefferson, was in perfect health, at his seat, on the 28th ult. I never was the Dupe of this story, and suspecting it to be a sheer fabrication (for what purpose I knew not) I refrained from any hasty expressions, which fell from others—Such as, "too good to be true;" "no matter if it is;" & such like, which, when the Democrats are perfectly recovered from their consternation, we shall see detailed at large, in print.

The weather continues fine & temperate here, and no alarm of fever yet exists. I never knew the streets & gutters more offensive both to sight & smell.

Remember me kindly to all friends; write me now & then and Believe me always your

T. B. Adams

Love & duty, to father & mother & Sister & Cousin.
Send me a newspaper, if anything clever appears.

Philadelphia, 29th July, 1800

Dear William:—

I cry your Mercy, for deferring an acknowledgement of your favor of the 11th & 14th inst., to this

late hour, but I have been busy for several days past, more than usual.

There are some things, which occur here from time to time that would furnish matter for writing about—such as the scandalous stories of Duane & Madam Peggy's courtship-sham marriage to prevent bad or unlucky consequences & real marriage afterwards to legitimatise the consequences whenever they shall happen. Visits paid by the gentleman & lady to one Tom Cooper, in Jail, a convict under sentence of the law &ca but altho' I pick up a little scandal & laugh when I hear it—I have not patience to commit the same to paper.

I thank you for the enclosures of newspapers &ca. The Oration is a sort of picture of modern politics. I like the greater part of it very well.

I enclose the 2nd Number of Horatius, written, I think intelligibly, but printed on such paper as a federal type ought never to be impressed on.

My dear friend, I invite you to correct your rage for metaphoric allusion, or I shall assume the liberty, which the pursuits of Literature uses so abundantly, of stricture & censorship, all for your own good & improvement.

What is your idea of a Hercules Government & an Atlas faction throwing burthens on said Hercules shoulders, which prove too heavy for his strength? Your answer I pray you.

Have you thought of my books—I am going to tell you how I think you may chance to come at mine, at once. Open the box which has the highest number upon it, which most probably contains my Peter Pindar—the Rolliad—& several other works, which I want very much. If this dont succeed I know not what will. Have you found my 5th Term Reports? My classics &ca which you promised to send?

I am your friend &ca

T. B. Adams

P. S. I mean to write you a letter ere long. Today, the federal Committee made a report of the names of Candidates to be supported at the ensuing election to fill the several offices, State & Congress. Gen. Gurney²⁸ at present a State Senator is to run, instead of Mr. Waln.²⁹ The other Officers are not sufficiently important to mention. I predict that the federal ticket will fail; I mean the Representative for Congress. The Republican Candidate is half one thing and three fourth's another—his name is Jones, a Captain of a troop of horse in the Shee legion.

Philadelphia, 8th August, 1800

Dear William:—

I received in due course your favor of the 25th ult., together with the volume of Debates, Catalogue &ca for all which I return you thanks. I have been but a negligent correspondent this Summer, compared with the last, for the plain reason that I have had more pressing claims upon my attention. You shall eventually lose nothing, however, by continuing your regular communications.

The favorable state of health enjoyed this Season by the Citizens of this place, has made the City residence quite pleasant, and I have, for the most part, been satisfied with taking a ride once or twice a week into the Country for the benefit of fresh air. Some times I go to Germantown—sometimes to Merion-Belmont—the Bishop's & Mr. Breck's—this range is wide enough & satisfies all my propensities for rambling.

Your letter to J. White was delivered—not a word of the enclosure. An acknowledgement may be looked for.

The Sup. Court are waiting for the Hon'ble Judge Chase,³⁰ who is said to be too much engaged

²⁸ Gen. Francis Gurney (1738-1815) Speaker of the State Senate.

²⁹ Robert Waln (1765-1836) Federalist Congressman, 1798-1801.

³⁰ Samuel Chase (1741-1811) Associate Justice of the Supreme Court.

in Electioneering, to be able to attend. He is the only man in Maryland perhaps, able to cope with Mercer³¹ at, what they call, a Canvass. These are always held, in different parts of the State of Maryland, and generally in the Southern States, as I am told, when there is known to be a great concourse of people—at a horse race—a cock-fight—or a Methodist quarterly meeting. Here, the Candidates for political honors or preferment, assemble with their partizans—they mount the Rostrum, made out of an empty barrel or hogshead, Harrangue the Sovereign people—praise & recommend themselves at the expence of their adversary's character & pretentions. Such was the mode pursued lately at Anapolis-Elk Ridge, & elsewhere. Col. Mercer, who is a Sovereign Demagogue—a fluent & audacious Speaker & a deadly Jacobin—is running as a member of Assembly. Mr. Key,³² whose talents & acquisitions are surpassed by few men in this Country & whose reputation as an Orator is very eminent—is also a Candidate, but in a different district. These Gentlemen met upon the same ground at Anapolis, and canvassed for votes. Key was at home, Mercer was in some measure a stranger, but the contrast between the effect of the two Speakers on the Audience, was very striking. Key triumphed & Mercer slunk away. But at the next place of meeting Mercer played the perfect Buffoon to the singular entertainment of the Sovereign assembly. He laughed—he cried—he stormed by turns, by turns he was placid, “as the smooth surface of a Summer Sea”. He abused & vilified President Adam's administration & extolled the virtues of Gen'l Washington & Mr. Jefferson. Hear him—“We are told by the friends of Mr. Adams—(Mr. Key, who asserts it) that Gen'l Washington approved of all the measures of Mr. Adams—Yes! “the sacred shade of that venerable

³¹ John Francis Mercer (1759-1821) Gov. of Maryland, 1801-1803.

³² Philip Barton Key (1757-1815) Federalist Congressman, 1807-1813.

hero, is now conjured from the silent tomb to sanction the measures of those who have aimed at the subversion of your liberties”.

Now, mark the moral—Mercer during the life of Washington was his personal, avowed, active & rancorous enemy—there was not in creation the man whom he hated so much—the breach was notorious & always reflected disgrace, contempt & detestation upon Mercer. Yet look at the dastardly hypocrit. Who but a Southern Maniac could be guilty of such duplicity?

Our friend Edw. Coale, who was present at both these meetings, gave me the outlines of the above narration. I send you the *Aurora* account, which when read, please return.

Judge Peters,³³ has this day given a Decree in the case of Salvage in which I was concerned in the Admiralty Court. He allows us only a fourth part of the property saved, or the value, which is something more than four thousand Dolls. to be divided among three. We calculated upon a third or half—but a fourth, must do.

Present me kindly to all friends. I presumed Quincy would Summer with you & therefore took the liberty to consider him as part of our family by introducing several of my friends to whom I had given letters, for them—to him. I hope he will excuse the freedom.

Adieu Your's

T. B. Adams

Philadelphia, 28th August, 1800

Dear William:—

Yesterday I received the newspapers which you enclosed with my Mother's letter of the—inst., & which by accident was sent on to Washington instead of Philadelphia. Moreover not having had time to

³³ Richard Peters (1744-1828) Judge U. S. District Court for Penn. 1792-1828.

read the papers yesterday, they were laid aside and I did not, until this morning, discover my Mother's letter, which was concealed in one of the papers. You will easily believe that the letter was more valuable to me, than all the Gazettes, though I am not the less obliged to you for sending them. This morning also brought me your favor of the 21st inst., with more papers. I am thus supplied with an abundance of unprofitable reading, from which however I find it difficult to refrain. Upon an average I read, or rather look over, between 30 & 40 Diaries, pr week, and it seems to me, whatever some of my friends may think to the contrary, that I cannot be fairly accused of apathy or indifference to the political concerns of my Country.

Your's & my Mother's letters sometimes give me information which is not to be collected from the public prints. I learn with regret, the political Schism, which many gentlemen of talents, influence & fortune have too readily & too lightly given in to. They have not been & never can be so materially affected by the measures, which seem to have incurred their censure, as to authorize their present cool & sullen behavior towards the Chief Magistrate. There is something foul & rotten at the bottom of this systematic distance, observed by certain distinguished characters. The public cannot readily fathom it, because a veil is drawn before it, which conceals the cloven foot under plausible professions necessary to carry on the delusion. I hope the depth & wickedness of the plot will be seasonably laid open, and defeated. Junius Americanus is the only writer I have seen, who knows the Actors thoroughly. His No. 3 which you point out to me, is the Key to the whole Cypher. The composition is nervous, spiritual & intelligent. It strikes at the root & every blow is felt by the faction against whom it is aimed. His vindication under the signature of "Truth" is not so able as it might be, for his opponents expose themselves at all points. I have

not read with so much attention the two first numbers, but I will look them up again. Our friend J. G. is struck at as the Author. He is the most probable man I can fix it on & I should not be at fault, in the least, if his father-in-law, did not rank with the Junto. Our friend J. Q. how is he? I am afraid of his connections too—though, if he had a good adviser, and his ambition should not too much interfere he would try to be right. There are very few of Mr. Adams's advocates in this State. We are all Jacobins or Hamiltonians. But the high toned Federalists, would not risk the experiment of a change in the Administration, for the sake of securing Mr. Pinckney. At least, they say so. Boston folks say the same. Believe them who may.

On the subject of Our Envoys to France—Plutarch to which I referred you, in the Gazette of the U. S. was inserted at my request, in reply to some stupid remarks of the *Aurora*,³⁴ upon the intelligence, or rumor, that the negociation was broken off. Something I knew, would be said, and as I had undertaken, (under the auspices of D-e,³⁵ who shows a good disposition to co-operate), to effect a regeneration of that paper—it struck me as a good opportunity for beginning the work. The paper had so bad a name, when Fenno³⁶ left it, and the public were so thoroughly disgusted with it, that the labor seems Herculean to redeem it from perdition. D—has not an unlimited controul over it, & the proprietor is less refined in his taste & more deficient in Education, than could be

³⁴ *The Aurora*, a strong anti-Federal paper, was established by Benjamin Franklin Bache in 1790. He died of yellow fever, Sept. 10, 1793.

William Duane, who was one of the editors of the *Aurora* under Bache, assisted his widow in the management of the paper until March, 1800, when he became sole proprietor. He later married the widow of his former employer.

³⁵ Joseph Dennie, who went to Philadelphia in Sept., 1799 to become private secretary to Timothy Pickering, Sec. of State, contributed spirited Federalist editorials to the *United States Gazette*.

³⁶ John Fenno established the *Gazette of the United States* in 1789, and although he had announced "to keep detached from the influence of parties," it soon became intensely Federal. He died of yellow fever Sept. 14, 1798, four days after his political antagonist, Benjamin F. Bache of the *Aurora*.

wished. I think the paper improves by degrees & I think nothing outrageously indecorous will hereafter find admittance into it.

Have you seen the pamphlet published by Fenno? It out does the *Aurora* in extravagance & scurrility & blasphemy, against the Government & the President. I think "it will do the State good service."

The long threatened letter, has at length come out, in the *Aurora* of to-day—with remarks—I send the paper, but you must return it, with the rest I have sent. The file is invaluable to me.

Here is a dish of politics for you, which I would not take the trouble to set before any other than yourself.

I am sorry to hear of your excellent Mother's²⁷ violent & serious indisposition; but it is grateful to hear that she had so far recovered, as you represent. I do not despair of seeing her once more, in this world, though my lot is cast in a corner so remote from all my tenderest connections.

Remember me kindly to all friends, particularly to my Cousin Boylston, of whom you say less in your letters than heretofore. Your anecdote of Job Bass is pithy, I mean to put in the newspaper for the benefit of Duane.

Good night, I am weary of scribbling

Your's Sincerely,

P. S. You have ably vindicated your metaphor; though I must still think it rather an heavy one. Atlas & Hercules together in the same sentence are too strong for any single undertaking, whether they pull together or in different directions.

Philad'a, 13th September, 1800

Dear William:—

Your Favors of the 28th ult & 4th curr't are received. The post takes nine days to come from

²⁷ Elisabeth Smith Shaw, sister of Abigail Adams, the mother of T. B. A.

Boston here. This circumstance I know not how to account for, because even in winter, I had thought not more than a week was required—perhaps however you are not very attentive to the regular Mail days any more than I am.

I thank you for the newspapers, which I read with some interest. Junius Americanus is certainly the ablest, the most impartial & honest writer of the whole tribe. "Truth" as I once before observed, is another signature of the same writer. I spoke to Mr. Dennie on the subject of republishing No. 3 of J. A. & he promised to do so, but the truth is, every thing of a domestic nature is forced to yield to mercantile avidity for foreign intelligence. Besides, there is a want of fervor—the nominal Editor³⁸ is of the Junto more or less; but I think you judge the paper harshly in not allowing it to be at all reclaimed of late. It has admitted nothing disreputable by Dennie's consent, but he has not the exclusive management of it.

I asked of you in a separate postscript sometime since, by Dennie's desire, how subscriptions for his work came on at Boston? You forgot the answer. James White the Bookseller can tell you, if you'll take pains to enquire. The subscription list here amounts to more than five hundred names.

The reported rupture of our Parisian negotiation, is no longer credited here. But the belief in a general European peace gains ground from the last accounts. For my own part I believe, that G. B. will be compelled by the desertion of her Allies to make peace; but had the Emperor been able to make another struggle by the help of a subsidy, it would have been supplied. Paul waxeth wroth & packeth off Mr. Whitworth in great haste. Young Sweden imitates by compulsion. An armed Neutrality in the North, similar to that which took place towards the conclusion of our

³⁸ After the death of John Fenno his son, John Ward Fenno, continued the publication of the *U. S. Gazette* until May 1800. Then Caleb P. Wayne, a merchant, who had owned the paper for some time, conducted the paper for about a year and a half.

Revolutionary war, is the bubble of the day. Our Jaco's censure us for not joining it. Sensible people!

I am in haste,

Your friend,

T. B. Adams

P. S. I gave a letter to young Ingersoll, for you— one for Quincy & one for Mr. Smith. He came to beg it & I could not refuse. I only regret for his family's sake that he behaves as he does. He has no character to lose. You must apologize for me to Quincy & Mr. Smith.

Philadelphia, 23 Sept'r, 1800

Dear William:— I enclose you the *Aurora* of this morning which is pretty rich in contents. For some time past it has been too flat & insipid to compensate the trouble of sending it to you.

I observe that the pieces under the signature of Decius are ascribed to H. G. Otis. I have read but a few of the numbers, but I have no doubt the Author is clearly & rightly designated.

The story he tells in his No. 15 of the Caucus, is not quite correct. Mr. Otis should have dared to avow, that all except one agreed, "as far as their advice & influence would go," to run Mr. Adams & Mr. Pinckney, both "fairly" as President, and that the one who differed from the rest discovered, that this fair proposition was both artful & insidious, because all the gentlemen upon their return to their Constituents, "as far as their advice & influence would go," might endeavor to undermine Mr. Adams for the purpose of promoting the choice of Mr. Pinckney. This he must have foreseen & although the Gentlemen professed an intention of "supporting Mr. A— fairly as President", he well knew that very few of them had any intention of doing so; and the fact has since been amply verified. Mr. Dexter³⁹ differed from all the

³⁹ Samuel Dexter (1761-1816) appointed Secretary of War by President Adams.

rest of the federalists. Mr. D— understood the party he was dealing with.

The Jacobins here, & in Virginia are very sanguine in their expectations of success. They are very quiet & still about it, but their activity & zeal is unabating. Corresponding Committees exist in every State and information is regularly circulated from the extremities to the center. The grand Committee is at New York. This is no visionary thing I can assure you. They count upon Connecticut, or Rhode Island, to give them votes by withholding them from Mr. Adams. I rather think it is Connecticut. New Jersey & Maryland are yet doubtful, and some talk revives of convening the new Legislature of this State for the purpose of prescribing a mode of choosing Electors. If the completion of the Legislature should be more democratic than the present, it will be convened—otherwise I think not.

Why dont you find out who writes Chatham, Cato, Junius Americanus &ca. I should know if I were acquainted with the Printer. There were three papers under the signature of Mutius Scœvola, giving an history of the *Aurora* lately published in Wayne's Gazette—Did you read them?

I am dear William

Your friend

T. B. Adams

P. S. I sent your letter to Peters.

29th Sept'r, 1800

Dear William:—

Here you have some more of the genuine. "The Constitutionalist" is your Hble Serv. Thomas Cooper Esq'e late of Manchester G. B. now of Philadelphia Jail—A most potent & zealous advocate for the federal Constitution in opposition to "Mr. Adams's Defence & the Discourses on Davila. He has attained No. 6 in the paper of this morning, but it would swell

my packet too much to send it, as nothing else of consequence is contained in it.

I thank you for the name of Junius Am's given in your favor of the 19th curr't. Chatham is a good writer. Does (torn) write anything? He can & ought to write—but I do not believe he does. You dont send me quite enough Boston papers.

What do you think of our poetical warfare here? S. Ewing,⁴⁰ your friend & Correspondent, is "Laureat to his honor". He wrote Seneca in Wayne's paper. The Gov'r is dreadfully goaded by the combined laborers of Parnassus. He threatens to make them desist. What a pity he has no gagg-law in his favor. Our annual Election takes place tomorrow fortnight. Israel⁴¹ runs for Sheriff against a good federal Candidate & no Jew—the struggle will be violent and the result is dubious.

The trunk has arrived in safety and will be delivered when called for.

I am &ca

Your's T. B. Adams

Philadelphia, 2nd Dec.'r, 1800

Dear Shaw:—

Please to deliver the enclosed letters to my Mother with my best thanks, and request her to send me the letter I left with her. I will endeavor to send you the series, ere long.

I enclose you a receipt for the shoes I bought for Mrs. Johnson, which you will have the goodness to deliver to Mr. T. Johnson who asked me for it when I was at Washington. If he chuse, he may pay it to you on my behalf.

The fears I have heard you express respecting the "Lay Preacher's" executing his proposals for publish-

⁴⁰ Samuel Ewing, a Philadelphia lawyer. See *Memorials of W. S. Shaw.*

⁴¹ Israel Israel was elected high sheriff.

ing his writings and a weekly magazine,⁴² are, I apprehend, too well grounded. If he does not come out according to promise this time, I will give him up and never concern myself more on his account. His friends here begin to be angry with him for his practical trifling with their exertions in his favor.

My books, I understand, have at length arrived. I had almost despaired of their safety.

I had a remarkably pleasant journey from Washington—rendered more delightful by the Society of two fine, accomplished & tolerably handsome females. You know what charming creatures they are. And though neither your experience or mine extend beyond their enlivening powers in the journeying of a Stage Coach—some faint notion, I apprehend, may be gathered of their happy influence upon the journey through life. On this subject I can scarcely bear to meditate—therefore no more.

I am with true attachment & esteem,

Your h'ble serv't,

T. B. Adams

Philadelphia, 7th December, 1800

Dear William:—

I thank you for your favor of the 3rd inst. and the newspapers enclosed. I will endeavor to comply with your request, that I communicate with you more frequently, but I will be free to confess to you, that every year of my life, I grow more selfish & less disposed to write letters, merely of friendship. You will experience the same thing in a few years, & I believe you assigned the true cause of it when you attributed it to "commerce with the world." I would not be understood as subscribing to the force of your comparison & its application for I do not find that the "concerns of life" have at all weakened my friendships,

⁴² *The Port Folio* began to be published Jan. 3, 1801, by Joseph Dennie, under the cognomen of Oliver Oldschool, Esq. Dennie was a classmate at Harvard of T. B. Adams.

though they have destroyed that relish for epistolary correspondence, which youthful ardor generally feels. So long as professions of friendship will pass for common civility they may be made without risk, but a man should be very cautious in pledging himself upon paper, where the utmost confidence does not exist between the parties. It is better to be wanting in professions than in performance & sincerity. Our friend, Mr. T. Johnson, will subscribe to this truth, which he was so fond of calling to my memory. I know not exactly why.

I am, as you conjectured, again seated in my Office, though not full of business—a small portion nevertheless falls to my share, and I look to time & perseverance for a moderate increase. Since my return I have spoken once in the Court of Oyer & terminer, by appointment of the Judges, in behalf of a man who was indicted for highway robbery, and had the good fortune to obtain a verdict of not guilty, directly against the charge from the bench. The Attorney Gen. & one of the Judges told me I had great luck, and I was much of their opinion.

I was joined by Forbes & Sumner⁴³ at Baltimore, and the latter came on with me hither, where he remained several days. Mr. Rogers⁴⁴ told me he had seen you & the family a few days since.

Your young male friends here are all well. Several of them have within a few days assumed the dignity of professional advancement. Rush, Peters, Ewing & Bird⁴⁵ are of the number. Your friends of the other Sex, are, I believe, likewise well.

I enclose at the request of my friend, Mr. Rutter, a sample of cotton, which you will give to my Mother and request her to write to New England for two pounds, (or one pound, if she thinks there will be difficulty in sending so much as two pounds) of

⁴³ William Hyslop Sumner.

⁴⁴ Abner Rogers.

⁴⁵ Richard Rush. Richard Peters, Jr. Samuel Ewing. Shippen E. Bird.

Cotton of the same quality, and to direct that it be sent to me, by some private hand. It is a commission for a lady to whom I am greatly obligated for numerous acts of kindness. I shall therefore be the more anxious to have this performed to her satisfaction. My mother is my sole resort in such cases.

I share your apprehensions on the score of Southern faith; if the failure of the federal ticket shall lie at the door of S^o. Carolina, there will never be any future confidence on the part of N. England in that State. I believe the elections of several of their City members is contested for no other purpose than to lessen, perhaps entirely take away the federal majority.

We have no news from New York yet. I am sorry to hear that my Mother had taken a severe cold. There must be Dutch stoves put up in the great Hall, or you will all be sick.

Please to offer my congratulations to Miss Caroline Johnson upon her happy recovery. I hope she will have her health confirmed. Present me kindly to all the family & to our own—to Mr. Cranch & his lady.

Your's sincerely,

T. B. Adams

I shall send you the Rush light,⁴⁶ though a spurious one, I believe. Did Judge Washington write those strictures in the Augusta paper? If you write to Sturgiss he will inform you.

Philadelphia, 14th December, 1800

Dear William:—

I received your's of the 10th yesterday & am obliged to you for giving me so early information on the subject of the South Carolina election. I had the satisfaction of imparting it to many of my acquaintance, who looked very blue for the most part,

⁴⁶ Peter Porcupine's *Rush Light*, against Dr. Benj. Rush.

though some were much overjoyed. Our Sheriff Israel, was the first person who acquainted me with the letter from Gen'l Pinckney⁴⁷ to Mr. Marshall,⁴⁸ which he had been informed of by Dr. Leib,⁴⁹ from Washington. It has fairly done us over, as the saying is. To me, you know, it was not unexpected, but to many here it was. How happier is that man who hangs not on the favor of the giddy & inconstant multitude!

The project you hint at as contemplated by the federalist will not take effect, unless some of the Jacobins desert their chief, which is not probable. I can endure any thing but the insolent triumph and exultation of these vulgar dogs who have got the day.

Your friends here desire remembrance.

I am, in no haste to conclude, but fairly for want of other matter, Your friend,

T. B. Adams.

Something more concerning two pair of black-silk stockings which I think you or some of the family must have in possession, belonging to me. I wish you to ask Mother & Betsy Howard, if I did not give them out last spring to be mended, for unless the fact be so, they are lost. I want my worsted stockings, which were taken to Quincy for new feet or legs—perhaps both.

I shall attend to my mother's directions for Mr. Kirkham. This is a post-script for her.

Your's

Philadelphia, 21st Dec'r, 1800

Dear William:—

I have given an introductory letter for yourself and one for my father, to a young man by the name of Charles D. Coxe; he will probably be at the federal

⁴⁷ Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, at this time Federalist candidate for the vice-presidency.

⁴⁸ John Marshall, Secretary of State, was elected a member of Congress, defeating the democratic candidate.

⁴⁹ Dr. Michael Leib, leader of the Democratic party in Philadelphia, and a member of Congress 1799-1801.

City towards the last of this week. From himself I understand he intends making application for the Consulship at the Isle of France, and his reason for applying during the present administration he avers to be because he is a federalist & a friend to the government as hitherto administered. I know nothing to the contrary of this profession, but I have given him my opinion that the appointment he wants will not be immediately made, and further that I believed there were competitors for the office already. This gentleman is a brother of Tench Coxe's wife, but he is anxious to have it known that he thoroughly despises the political character of his brother in law, and wishes not to be involved in the disgrace which that fellow's conduct has brought upon the name. I do not undertake to recommend him for the place he is about to seek, for I am too little acquainted with his character or qualifications to do it, and I have only given him letters of civility which he is not unworthy of receiving.

I thank you for the papers you sent me, containing the frivolous debates about the short-hand writers. I had already seen their contents in our papers.

The other debate respecting the Mausoleum excited some indignant reflections in my bosom. I am angry that the legislature of the Union should spend days & weeks in debating on a subject of that nature, which cannot but revive painful thoughts in the mind of the surviving friends & relatives of Washington, and reflect neither honor or credit on themselves. I am in principle opposed to any thing like a monument or Mausoleum, or Statue, commemorative of the life & services of that good man, not from any wish to detract from the merit of them, but because I think every device I have ever seen falls short of such a design. Moreover I think, enough has already been done to perpetuate the name, by calling the City which is to be the permanent seat of government, after him. This was no trifling

tribute, and if you measure respect by the money it may cost, as some members of Congress seem to do, it will be found, that few monuments of that kind ever cost so much. I did not like the motive which actuated Mr. Macon⁵⁰ of N. Carolina, in the speech he made on this occasion, but I was amused with it more than by anything uttered on the subject. Gen'l Lee,⁵¹ instead of his recollection of Statues erected by European noblemen to the memory of their Mistresses, as a classic scholar would have done more credit to himself & more dignified his subject, had he remembered the remarkable instance of Demetrius Phalerous, who is said by his eloquence & the purity of his manners to have gained such an influence over the Athenians, that during the period in which he exercised the office of decennial Archon 360 brazen Statues were erected to his honor. This would have been an instance not unworthy to be cited, but for the other, I blushed at the sight of it.

Can you tell what plan our wise legislators are going to pursue hereafter to keep the drooping head of federalism from total depression. To whom can we look for a clue to our conduct, unless to them? I expect little concert here-after in our national concerns, but I feel as if I had less interest in the reputation of our Country than heretofore.

We are threatened here with rejoycing & exultation upon the 4th of March.⁵² There is even a talk of illuminating the City, but I doubt whether any thing so rash will be attempted. Riot & bloodshed would be the inevitable result of such a measure.

I take the liberty to enclose you a paragraph which I cut out of the *Aurora* a few days ago, ex-

⁵⁰ Nathaniel Macon (1757-1837) U. S. Congressman from North Carolina, 1791-1815.

⁵¹ Henry Lee (1756-1818) Member of Congress from Virginia.

⁵² Mayor Inskeep issued a proclamation granting the firing of cannon and the ringing of bells but forbidding bonfires and illuminations. The public festival March 4, 1801, was to celebrate the success of Democratic principles.

pressly for your perusal. By it you will see the great power & consideration of your Asiatic namesake.

Adieu,

Your's T. B. Adams

By Mr. Mason I sent you some books which Dickens says you spoke for.

Christmas night, 1800

Dear Shaw:—

I have for several days been struggling hard against a violent cold, which has at length overcome me so far as to confine me to my chamber all this day. Dr. Rush recommended a gentle bleeding, to which I have submitted and found relief from it. I hope to be out again tomorrow.

Several of your enclosures are yet unacknowledged—the *Gazettes* I got yesterday & the Treaty to-day. I do not like the Convention any better than I expected. It is the cause of much murmuring here. I look upon it as a matter of indifference whether ratified or not, except from a well grounded apprehension that Jefferson will agree to make worse terms.

I send you the pamphlet you wrote for. I would not send you the Rush-light, which was an undoubted forgery. The pamphlet of Gentz⁵³ has at length come out in a handsome dress. You must endeavor to diffuse its fame for the sake of the bookseller. I shall send one to you & one for the Sec'y of State by the next post.

I am afraid to write more at present on acc't of my head which is much affected.

Your's

T. B. Adams

⁵³ Gents, Friedrich von. *Origin of Am. Revolution, compared with the French Revolution.* Tr. by J. Q. Adams.

Dear William:—

I send you a pamphlet for yourself & one for the Secretary of State which you'll please to present with my best Compliments.

I have never read a more authentic history of the American Revolution than this little work contains. Strange that a foreigner at 4000 miles distance should understand so much better than 99 hundredths of Americans themselves, the principles on which they contended for Independence.

I am much better to day though I have not ventured out.

T. B. Adams

26th Dec'r, 1800.

Philadelphia, 13th January, 1801 .

Dear William:—

Your favors of the 8th & 9th inst., with sundry enclosures & pamphlets came to hand this day, and I beg you to accept my best thanks for the prompt and correct manner in which you discharged my Commission. I have now to request another favor of a similar nature, which is to procure the transfer, at the Register's Office, of the enclosed Certificates, six in number, and amounting to \$5400. I wish the whole transferred to the books of the Pennsylvania loan Office in the name of J. Q. Adams, so that in future I may receive the interest here. You will receive but \$40, upon the stock in my name, which you can remit as before.

Your pamphlets were very seasonable & acceptable; I may find use for one of them ere long. The detail of Congressional proceedings with which you have furnished me is by far the most ample & satisfactory of any I have had. The judiciary Bill is one of the first magnitude and must be passed this Session, if the federal gentlemen have any anxiety for the public good. Able lawyers enough are to be found

and who will eagerly accept the offer of elevation to the Bench under an improved system; but the arduous service imposed by the present establishment is a discouragement not easily overcome. I hope Mr. Ingersoll⁶⁴ will be allowed till February to make up his mind. He will then be at Washington in person, and can be consulted as to his determination. He will accept the appointment of associate Judge, if the new law be passed. It is reported that Mr. Jay⁶⁵ has declined, but I know not on what authority.

The port Folio goes on swimmingly. Several active & influential Gentlemen have entered so largely into the plan of promoting its success, that Subscribers multiply with rapidity. Between three & four hundred are already on the list, and no day passes without adding many to it. Your suggestion as to the advance of the Subscription, is duly appreciated, but the requisition was indispensable. I read Dennie some of your observations and he discovered a grateful sense of your zeal & activity in furthering his views. Mess'rs Newman⁶⁶ & Rogers⁶⁷ are considered as Subscribers and I have ventured to say their subscriptions would be advanced. Your paper shall go with the President's. I send you Dicken's⁶⁸ receipt for both.

The large contribution from the pen of J. Q. A.⁶⁹ in the first numbers are sufficient to arrest the attention of men of taste wherever they may be. Juvenal's 13th Satire never appeared before the public in so neat & elegant attire, since it wore a foreign dress. Its beauties are conspicuous to all eyes.

⁶⁴ Jared Ingersoll (1749-1822).

⁶⁵ See W. Jay's *Life of John Jay*, vol. 1, p. 422.

⁶⁶ John Newman.

⁶⁷ Abner Rogers.

⁶⁸ Asbury Dickins, bookseller of Phila., was associated for one year with Joseph Dennie in publishing *The Port Folio*.

⁶⁹ *Journal of a tour through Silesia*. See footnote, no. 64.

You shall have some more of Gentz speedily and may adopt any method of disposing of them which your judgment shall prefer.

The price is three-eighths of a dollar.

I am faithfully your's

T. B. Adams.

Philadelphia, 21st January, 1801.

Dear William:—

I have acknowledged the rec't of the money you sent me from T. Johnson and likewise the two orders upon the Bank of the U. S. and enclosed two receipts from Dickens for your's & the President's subscription. My letter could not have reached you, so early as the date of your last (the 17th inst.). The exertions you have made for the diffusion of Dennie's paper are gratefully acknowledged by him. He will attend to your suggestions and supply his subscribers with punctuality & dispatch, though the regular train has not yet got a going. Even City subscribers are not supplied with such readiness as could be wished, owing to the ignorance or carelessness of the Carriers. I shall send you some sets of the paper which you will distribute according to your judgment. Dickens has not sent me, as he promised, the packet of pamphlets, which I promised to send you by Mr. Wheeler. They must wait another opportunity.

I have just met with a small work, purporting to be a translation from the Italian, called "Romans in Greece." It was sent to Dickens by Nancrede⁶⁰ from Boston. It is worth your reading, if you never saw it, and I shall send you one when opportunity offers. The object of it seems to be to point out the affinity & striking resemblance of the scenes which are acting in our day, to those of remote antiquity—and the parallel between the conduct of the Romans in Greece, and the French in Italy, Holland, Germany, Egypt—in short

⁶⁰Joseph Nancrede, a Boston bookseller.

wheresoever their Armies have successfully penetrated, is drawn with precision and ability, which must strike every reader with conviction. The style is plain, simple, intelligible and free from flourish or ornament, but the matter of fact is therefore the more perspicuous.

I thank you for the Newspaper containing the Connecticut iad. I had only before seen an extract from it. Its satyre is as bold as the topics, which provoked it were glaringly exposed to it.

Little Sammy Harrison Smith, has I find taken up his Congressional Observatory in the upper gallery—by being brushed off the lower floor. He is very saucy & provoking to the Hon'ble Speaker. I could not help laughing at the keen satyre he vented on one occasion—when he said that for his part, "he did not profess to understand the Speaker always, even when he heard distinctly all he uttered."

I am in haste & must break off,

Your's

T. B. Adams.

27th January, 1801.

Dear William:—

I thank you for your letter of the 23d which came to hand this forenoon & informed me of the rejection of the Convention. I suppose the Senate, since they have begun to show their teeth, will continue to be surly, but I do not think they will negative the appointment of Gen'l Marshall, as Ch. Justice. It is thought by some people I know, that Mr. Patterson⁶¹ was the most prominent character for the Ch. Justiceship but no body disapproves, on other grounds, the nomination of Mr. M. Mr. Stockton's⁶² nomination was a surprise, but it might be a question, whether any body would accept the office on such fluctuating conditions as those on which it rests.

⁶¹William Paterson (1745-1806) Associate Justice, U. S. Supreme Court.

⁶²Richard Stockton (1764-1828). See *Works of John Adams*, vol. 9; p. 94.

I have heard but few opinions expressed on the subject of the non-ratification. Let me know what sensation it produced with you.

The burning of the Treasury Office causes some murmuring. You see how the Aurora speaks of it.

I wish you to give me the earliest information in your power, as you have done generally hitherto, of nominations & the passage of Bills.

Enclosed, you have Manlius No. 8⁶³ and Fabius in reply. The business is, I presume, now at an end, and we shall have no more discussion of a dead letter.

I have sent you several setts of the P-folio, for your distribution. I send you another with this. Your lines of the 20th came to hand.

Your's

T. B. A.

Philadelphia, Jn'ay, 29th 1801.

Dear William:—

I received the letter you enclosed me from my father on the 25th inst., with a few names of members, & others, for Dennie. I have sent you three or four setts already of the P-F—to be distributed and now enclose you another. The opinion, here is pretty general, that the journal of the Silesian tour⁶⁴ is by far the most interesting of all the Contents. Indeed, whatever comes from the pen of that writer is finished and instructive. I wish that my parents would furnish me with some of his private letters, written from Holland, England and Berlin—they would continue to adorn the literary vehicle, when the tour is exhausted. No. 5 is a beautiful and elegant letter, which displays more classical scholarship than is possessed by

⁶³Christopher Gore (1753-1827) *Manlius*, the Federal views of C. G., were published in seven numbers of the *Columbian Centinel* from Sept. 3—Sept. 24, 1794. In the issue of Sept. 27 there appeared an "Extra" of *Manlius*.

⁶⁴*Journal of a tour through Silesia*, written by J. Q. Adams during his residence in Berlin, as minister to Prussia, appeared regularly in *The Port Folio* in 44 numbers from Jan. 3—Nov. 7, 1801.

any man, that I know in this Country. You will see it in the next number.

Our Lawyers are gone off to day for the City. Mr. Ingersoll⁶⁵ will give in his resignation and I hope Mr. Wm. Tilghman⁶⁶ will be his Successor.

Lieut't Parker of the Navy is going on tomorrow, and I give him a line for you together with the bundle of Gentz—for which you must be sure to get the Cash—price $33\frac{1}{3}/100$.

Your's

T. B. A.

30th January, 1801.

Dear William:—

Yours of the 25th is just rec'd and with it a number of pamphlets & a letter from my Mother. All shall be attended to in course. I have so much other occupation, that writing to the whole family is something of a tax upon my time. Yet I write to & receive letters from Washington, with more satisfaction than from any other quarter save one.

Your remarks upon the unseemly political speculation, which appeared in the third number of the portfolio—are coincident with a number, which have been expressed both to the Editor & myself. He must yield to many writers in the beginning for the sake of feeling the public pulse. The Editor is Hamiltonian in a degree himself. I know it. He knows it, and many others know it. But he wants a guide—anything strong and bold will lead him with the current.

I have sent you four complete setts of the Port Folio. Some receipts which I sent you are not acknowledged.

I shall attend when I have more time to your State papers, but I doubt whether a sett is to be procured. Mr. Read once told me he sent two setts to the President.

⁶⁵Jared Ingersoll (1749-1822).

⁶⁶William Tilghman (1756-1827).

Robert Burns shall be submitted. I almost hate the name of the man. I know not why, unless it is the antipathy created against the name of Mary Burns when I was a child, who was a lewd woman and hung upon Boston Commons for being a thief. Ever since, the name of Burns has been to me a hanging name.

I am &ca,

T. B. Adams.

The Certificates are rec'd and thank you for your trouble. Lt. Parker sets off tomorrow.

Philadelphia, 8th Feb'y, 1801.

Dear William:—

I have your letters of the 30th ult & 3d curr't for which I thank you. The letter, which has so copiously extracted your indignation, not without good cause, did not provoke me however, in the same degree. I do not see for my part, what other notions of Government Mr. Jefferson could be expected to entertain. It was because he was known to think in the style of this letter, that the people have rewarded him, as far as they could, with the Chief Magistracy. I know not how far Mr. J-n is sincere in these opinions, but he has been so long in the habit of avowing them, that I suspect he believes himself so. Now, I dont think at all worse of the writer of this letter, than I did before I saw it. I believe, that it necessarily arises out of our Constitution of Government, that men must lose their honesty, or despair of promotion, to the exclusion of the present incumbent. An elective democratic republic, is of all forms of Government, that which admits the greatest latitude of corruption, and in my opinion necessarily leads to it. We shall swim in blood before this evil will be corrected.

I believe, rather more than you do, in Mr. Jefferson's observation, as to "the great question, which divides our Citizens," because I can trace the same consequences from this source of division, as you attribute to a different one. When our Citizens shall try

the experiment, as I think they will ere long, of giving a preponderance of power to the Republican branch of our government—then I shall look for all the horrors of Anarchy and uproar. This is my notion of “the tempestuous sea of liberty.”

It is reported, on what authority I know not, that Judge Addison, Mr. Kittera & Joseph Hopkinson are applicants for the Office of federal judge should the judiciary Bill pass. Either of these men, in my opinion, would be improper. Hopkinson alone would only not disgrace it. The other two, though strong friends of James Ross, are men of less character than ought to appertain to a judge. The President will do right, in all things, I am persuaded, where his information will enable him.

I am dear William,

Your friend,

T. B. Adams.

Philadelphia, 9th Feb'y, 1801.

Dear William:—

I have your favors of the 4th & 5th curr't with pamphlets & papers &ca, which are valuable to me. I regret that I have not yet been able to procure the pamphlets relative to the 6th article of the B-T. I spoke to Mr. Evans on the subject and was told that he could not furnish more than two or three. Mr. Read has no more & Wm. M. Smith wont part with the case of And. Allen, which he had the disposal of to any but very good Englishmen.

I suppose I made use of the expression, which you retort upon me, respecting the punishment of poor Mary Burns, the lewd woman that was hung for being a thief. I meant something else, though I can't say precisely what. But does not Burns, himself, justify my remark, that it is a hanging name, by the quotation—

“My ancient, but ignoble blood,
Has crept through scoundrels ever since the flood!”

I have been highly delighted with the perusal of this little sketch of Biography, which is so spiritedly & cleverly drawn. I think better of the Burns's than I did before. Joe wont publish it yet awhile, but I cant return the thing before I shew it to a friend or two.

I am glad you got the pamphlets, but I am very sorry you sent for them. Dickens will look to me for 9 Dols & 3-8 for the packet I sent you and this would be paying rather too dear for your gratification in distributing them Gratis—what you dont sell, bring back. I should suppose so small a number as 25 might find vent in Congress. If Oswald would take the trouble to dispose of them, as you suggested, the thing would go.

Lt. Parker must have been a welcome visitor to you charged with so many valuable articles for your own consumption. Mr. C— is glad that the quality is so much to your mind.

The article "Levity" in the last & preceding numbers of the P-F—has caused more disturbance than any thing in the paper. You will not be able to unravel the enigma, nor am I, to explain who are all the characters delineated. The production is from a firm of wags, whom you know, but I am not allowed to name them.

The news of the day is, that some Merchants of the town, give a dinner this day to Oliver Wolcott,⁶⁷ Esq're. Nothing else.

Your's

T. B. Adams.

Philadelphia, 15th Feb'y, 1801.

Dear William:—

Your favors of the 10th & 11th inst are received. We have heard of the proceedings in the Representative chamber as far as the 22d Ballot, and we have admired that firmness, which puts the issue of the

⁶⁷Oliver Wolcott (1760-1833), former Secretary of the Treasury.

choice upon the strength of nerves, rather than numbers. I have but little expectation that the thing will go through, as it began. Some body will go over to the majority, but it is not easy to say or even conjecture who this will be. When Dallas⁶⁸ came home he had the audacity to say that he had seen a paper signed by Mr. Baer⁶⁹ pledging himself to vote for Jefferson; the story was believed here until it was contradicted by the State of the Ballot. It now passes for one of Mr. Dallas's Reports. Even the recent risk he ran for his life, when the Stage upset with the cargo of Lawyers, on their return from Washington, did not deter him from circulating this groundless charge against Baer. The Aurora threatens to seize on the public arms and force down the man of the people upon us—the desperation of the jacobins is almost indescribable, and I know not how soon it may shew itself in acts of tumult and violence. Yesterday I was walking in Chesnut Street, in the middle of the afternoon, and passed three men, of whom I took no notice at the time, but before I was beyond hearing distance, one of them, in a loud voice, said—"That cockade will be very little longer in fashion. It wont last but a few days more—might as well be laid by."⁷⁰ Knowing this discourse was addressed to me, I paused a step & turned round to look at my adversaries; they appeared to be sturdy red nosed Butchers, with each a piece of beef in his hand. After making a pretty correct observation of their persons, I walked on and they ceased talking. I have no doubt of being insulted more grossly than this if I continue to wear the Cockade, which I certainly shall do, so long as I have a head to wear a Hat—that is, if agreeable to myself. Therefore let the man who would dare to tear it out, "look to it."

⁶⁸Andrew J. Dallas, Secretary of State.

⁶⁹George Baer, Member of Congress from Maryland.

⁷⁰The War Office established the *black* round cockade as the true American badge. Some good Federalists objected on the ground that it was in imitation of the French. See *Columbian Centinel*, July 4, 7, 1798.

The Subscribers to the P-Folio multiply gradually. Between 5 & 600 is the present number. The paper of yesterday has several articles of the Editor's own.

I have been looking for my Mother daily, for a week past, but it seems she had not left you on the 11th.

I hope you will continue to keep me informed of all tellable matters.

With true esteem,
Your
T. B. Adams.

Philadelphia, 17th Feb'y, 1801.

Dear William:—

I received your favor of the 13th this morning, informing of the departure of my mother, and at the same time I had a letter from her dated at Baltimore the 14th. She is accompanied by Lieut't Parker, and expected to be here to night. This moment Richard called at my Office and announced the Carriage approaching, having left it about 5 miles on the other side of Gray's ferry, so that I may venture to predict their safe arrival.

Your's in haste,
T. B. Adams.

P. S. The Carriage has just passed.

Philadelphia, 19th Feb'y, 1801.

Dear Shaw:—

We have been rejoicing with exceeding joy at the news of the result at Washington. Now we hope the Gentlemen will do Something. I got your letter of Monday & at the same time was informed that the choice was finally made. Our former suspence was so uncomfortable, that any thing would have been considered a relief. It comforts me that New England would not yield, but the rest have done better than nothing.

I shall accompany my Mother to New York, where I may probably remain three or four days. You need not cease writing however, nor will I.

Your's

T. B. Adams.

Philadelphia, 30th March, 1801.

Dear William:—

I had not time to write before the departure of the post to day to both you & my mother, and having received a letter from her she was best entitled to my earliest regards, though, if I rightly remember, your favor written at Suffield has not yet been acknowledged.

Watson's bill is enclosed as you desire. Dickens is not your debtor. But you are his to the amount of four or five dollars, as I wrote you before. How shall I pay you for the Book you brought me?

I exhibited the order for the three remaining vols' of the journals of Congress to Hyde who says only the 11th is yet printed and that the others will not be ready these two months.

What interest is making for a new Governor in your State? Will Gerry run again for the seat?⁷¹ We hope to create a diversion in favor of Gen'l Muhlenberg here—the Republicans are divided as to him, & if he would consent to run, the Germans would nearly all vote for him; the federalists, I fear, will let slip this only chance of getting rid of the old rascally tyrant, who goads & vexes them without mercy. I would vote for any united Irish man, as soon as I would for Mr. McKean.⁷² Hear a fact of recent date. Col. John Shee who held the office of Inspector of flour, under the Governor, was appointed to Supercede the Marshall. He declined the honor intended him, preferring

⁷¹Elbridge Gerry was nominated by the Republican party, and in a close election he was defeated by Caleb Strong.

⁷²Thomas McKean (1734-1817) Gov. of Pennsylvania, 1790-1808, defeated Gen. John P. G. Muhlenberg.

less honor & more profit in the place he held. The Governor signified to him his pleasure that he should accept the proffered appointment, since he could no longer continue as inspector of flour, the office having been bestowed on his son Mr. Robert McKean. We must say of Mr. McKean, that he acts independently, for in spite of all that his party can do, he will provide snug birth's for his family.

I enclose you a paper, which I wish you to exhibit to the Clerk of the Circuit Court, and to ascertain whether the costs in any of the enumerated cases, have been received. If so—whether he is disposed to pay them over to you, when you shall be authorized to receive them?

When do you begin your studies? With whom & where?

I am, dear Shaw,
Your friend,
T. B. Adams.

Philadelphia, 5th April, 1801.

Dear William:—

Your letter of the 29th ult., is just received, with the papers enclosed, for which I thank you. The address of the Legislature is friendly—Answer proper. The letter, which is published in the Commercial Gazette, as from the Washington federalist, I had read, with great satisfaction, in manuscript. I hope to grasp the hand that wrote it in a few months. The gentleman will find it more difficult than I did to recommence at the Bar, but he must do it, and then perhaps the good people, will, sometime or other, chuse him a Representative. If he understands his interest, he will never accept a public employment, that depends on election, so think I.

The plan, which you have adopted, for yourself, I think judicious, and I wish you much delight in the pursuit of it. While you are reading law, there may

occur some vacancy, into which you may step, from the Office of your patron, but, upon this you cannot calculate. It matters little, however, whether there be few, or many lawyers, in the same place, for business will always be done by a few. I am not much in the habit of expressing the anxiety, which perplexes my mind, on the subject of my own professional success, but I cannot help feeling gloomy at times, under the conviction, that my business will not be sufficient to support me, for two or three years to come. Will this be enough to satisfy me? Do I not wish for something beyond this? Perhaps I do—What then? Why wait two or three years more, until the best part of your Life is spent, and there is a chance that you may gain a livelihood by your profession. Very consolatory upon my word. But of this, somewhat too much.

I send you herewith the Farmer's boy,⁷³ for which I paid 50/100 on account. The Oration spoken by Beckley⁷⁴ is not printed in pamphlet, as I know of.

We are to pass sentence, this evening, on a new historical play, written by Charles Ingersoll. It is called "Edwy & Elgiva," the story you will remember is to be found in the first vol. of Hume, to which I refer you to refresh your memory. The cast of characters, you have enclosed, and on Monday you shall hear the fate of it. Unfortunately the Author could not keep his secret. All the town are long since informed who wrote the piece & it now stands upon its deliverance under less favorable circumstances than if the author had been invisible. I believe it will go down once, perhaps more.

I return best regards to Boylston. His story tells pretty straight; just enough so, to make me think, he made it himself. The conditions he imposed, were quite as rigid, as I should expect from any Quaker, with

⁷³*Farmer's Boy*, by Robert Bloomfield.

⁷⁴The reference, without doubt, is to an *Address to the People of the U.S., with vindication of the life of Thomas Jefferson*, signed Americanus, Pennsylvania, July, 1800. John Beckley was Clerk of the Ho. Rep. from 1790-1797, and from 1801 to 1807. He was political agent of the southern Republicans.

an only daughter; for if the same measure of fortune be required to be paid down, by a young lawyer, as he may expect to receive for a marriage portion, if he marry for money, very few rich Quakers, with only daughter's would ever be connected with young lawyers. Cousin B. & I have laid a wager, if I remember well, that one of us will be married sooner than the other, & he who marries first is to lose the bet. I hold him to the bargain in full expectation of winning.

I am, for the present,

Your's

T. B. A.

Monday Morn'g, 7th April.

The Tragedy was performed, on Saturday Evening, to a very full & respectable house, and received with applause enough to ensure it a repetition, this evening. I think it less faulty & exceptionable, than I expected. Some alterations might be suggested for the better, and in expressing an opinion of its merits, it is necessary to add; "it is well, for such a youth." I will say more after a second hearing of it. The audience were so intent upon carrying the piece through, that they bewildered sober criticism, with their clamor.

Your's

T. B. A.

Philadelphia, 27th April, 1801.

Dear William:—

I have your letter of the 17th, which travelled from Boston hither, in very agreeable company. I can readily conceive, the novelty of your situation in a Lawyer's office, joined to other novelties of quite as pleasant a nature, would tend to distract your thoughts for some time.

Without undertaking to advise you on the subject of your recent pursuit, I will barely say, that the Office of my principal, were I to be again a Student, should be my place of dwelling, almost uninterruptedly during

the first twelve or fifteen months of my apprenticeship; during this time, you ought to read Blackstone, Coke on Littleton, the two first vol's of Hume's England; Robertson's Charles 5th & Reeve's history of the Eng. law. What course your patron will advise I know not, but all other advice ought to be subservient to his direction. As a general memento, you may learn from me, that the best time to study law, is while you are in the Office of another person, for after you have one of your own, your attention & time must be occupied chiefly by attendance upon Courts &c. It was not until I had considerable experience, that I could look upon a Client in any other light than an intruder into my Office, and nothing but his fee could persuade me to the Contrary. Jo. Dennie says that he used to lock his Office door to keep Clients out. This is no violence to the truth, in his case, as I can readily conceive.

I shall be obliged to you, for occasional memoirs of town & Country occurrences, and will give you similar coin in return.

I am glad you have a chief magistrate of your choice, and hope this may always be your lot, as it is mine, never to have been gratified in this particular.

The Shee Gen'l⁷⁵ after all, would not be Marshall, & therefore a far more ignoble man, has been appointed in his room—a man of crimes, if report be true. I do not know the man, even by sight; his reputation is much of a piece with that of many of our State Officers; indeed, I think it a pity, that the President, in appointing the man, has, so far, diminished the list of Candidates for the patronage of our Governor.

I have nothing new to offer. Present me kindly to all friends, and particularly to Mr. and Mrs. Foster.

Your's

T. B. Adams.

⁷⁵Gen. John Shee, nominated "marshall of, the Eastern District of Pennsylvania," declined, and John Smith took the place.

Tell Mr. Callender, if you please, that the lottery in which he is interested has commenced & nearly finished drawing. I leave the examination of his tickets 'till the last.

Sunday, 10th May, 1801.

Dear William:—

The trial of the Gentlemen who were indicted for a Riot & Assault & Battery upon William Duane,⁷⁶ was lately decided in the Mayor's Court. Counsel for the Prosecutor, were Dickenson, Cooper & Dallas—for Defendants—M. Levy & Rawle. By a mode of proceeding before this Court, the Defendant may first plead the general issue, *Non cul.* and afterwards retract it & submit to the Court, protesting his innocence. This enables both parties to relate their own story and supercedes a trial by Jury. The cause was opened by the junior Counsel for the Commonwealth, and he was followed by Duane, as the first witness. He delivered a plain story, though not unvarnished, but the fact of a violent beating & wholesome chastisement appeared pretty clearly proved. He stated a number of facts however, which were false and in one instance was guilty of absolute perjury; but he retracted his assertion, when it appeared that he could not make it good & placed the circumstance of which he had been so positive, to the score of his belief.

The witnesses on the part of the prosecution, were more or less biassed towards Duane's politics and they saw things in a very different color from what, on the whole testimony appeared to be the true one.

When the def'ts related their stories, many circumstances of atrocity which had been attributed to the affair, vanished from the view of the Court, and excepting the manner in which the correction was administered I could not discover that it was disproportioned to the offence.

⁷⁶See *Aurora*, May 8, 1801.

The Court took some days to consider upon the punishment and having come to an agreement, they pronounced sentence upon the def'ts on Thursday last. Some of them were fined \$120 and the costs of prosecution which amounted to \$34 more; some an hundred & two of the number, only one cent each.

You may possibly remember the provocation, which was the cause of this chastisement, inflicted by the members of several volunteer troops of horse, who had served against the Northampton insurgents. It was the refusal of Duane to give up the author of certain infamous paragraphs, which had been printed in the Aurora, charging those troops with improper conduct during their expedition, that originated the disturbance & obtained for the printer so faithful a drubbing. Instead, however of prosecuting criminally the greatest offenders, he has sued them for damages & expects to obtain very ample satisfaction from the verdict of a jury. In this he may possibly be disappointed as the cause must be tried by a special jury, which will be summoned by the prothonotary instead of the Sheriff. The Court which passed so severe a Sentence against these people, was so anxious to testify its impartiality, that many folks are of opinion, they have done injustice in this instance. This is my opinion also, and I look upon it as a sore grievance, that our magistrates are, some of them, so much influenced by popular considerations & so apprehensive of being abused in the Aurora, that they will sacrifice men of their own party at the shrine of vulgar favor. The majority of the Bench are nominal federalists, and yet least it should be said they had shewn favor to their own party, they have imposed a fine, which is more than double the amount which any body expected, and that too upon men who had no share in beating Duane, but were only present when it was administered.

Captain McKean is one of those against whom civil suits are instituted. Peter Mierken & three or four more are in the same predicament.

Our worthy Governor went, last Sunday, to one of the Quaker meetings in this place. No particular attention was paid to him, except making room for him & Suite to sit down. The Spirit moved an elderly Sister to unburden herself of a few thoughts, and she made the attempt, though without attracting much notice or attention from the Governor, until she happened rather awkwardly & mal - apropos to say—"We will not have this man to rule over us." At this he roused & became suddenly a patient listener to the sequel, which contrary to his apprehensions, did not enlarge upon that text. The application however did not escape many of the Congregation though far from being intended by the speaker.

I have nothing new—love to all friends.

Your's

T. B. Adams.

Monday 11th, I have the pleasure to acknowledge the rec't of your favor of the 5th inst., informing me of the safe arrival of the Coachee, at which I am much rejoiced, for I omitted insuring as I intimated a design to do in my letter to my Mother.

Philadelphia, 22d June, 1801.

Dear William:—

It falls to my lot to do things so repugnant to my inclination & so contrary to my sense of strict propriety, that I know not what apology to offer for complying, in opposition to both, with the absurd customs of the times, which so often impose a necessity of thus betraying my judgment. What answer can be given to a man who after living for a few months under the same roof with you, though in no particular habits of intimacy, shall accost you thus? "Mr. Adams have you any commands for Boston?" Are you going to Boston Sir? "Yes." I know not that I have any particular commands. "Will you give me some letters to your friends?" I will Sir, with pleasure. This is the substance of a dialogue, which passed between your friend,

Mr. Thomas Radcliff & myself last evening. He has lived, during the whole winter, under the same roof with me, and though I did not become acquainted with him, until about two or three months ago, he presumes on this as a sufficient title to ask letters to my friends in Boston. You know what a kind of reputation he had in this place, at one time; but in justice to him I must say, that I think a great deal of artificial, malignant censure was cast upon him, though he was certainly somewhat to blame in all the disputes, in which he has been involved. I have found him, in the little intercourse I have had with him, perfectly correct in his conduct, while he was not affected with wine; but when exhilarated, he is often thrown off his guard.

I have entered into this detail for the sake of explaining to you how it happened, that I should give letters of introduction to a man of this stamp. This is the third instance wherein I have introduced people to my friends by solicitation, & I confess it is a very irksome thing, for I place considerable importance upon this custom of giving introductory letters, though others may esteem it lightly.

I beg you to apprise Mr. Smith that I have given a letter to Radcliff, for him under these circumstances; I have also given a letter for my father. I am not afraid that any conduct of Mr. Radcliff, in their company, would disgrace my introduction, but I cannot answer for him else where. My friends, in Boston, I fear, will think I keep strange company, by the specimens I have given in my introductions.

Mr. Radcliff accompanies his mother, who has recently arrived at New York from So. Carolina.

I have your favor of the 10th and the paper with it, containing an account of the Juvenile procession,⁷⁷ which warmed my filial blood. Youth, ingenuous

⁷⁷ Reference, no doubt, is made to the procession June 1, annual Artillery Election day, with escort of young Boston men to ex-President Adams, who accepted an invitation to dine with the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Co. See *Columbian Centinel*, 3 June, 1801.

youth! The bias of envious, interested, ambitious rivalry, hath not warped the natural propensities of your hearts! The paralyzing stroke of age, hath neither perverted your understandings, nor blinded the eye of gratitude. Contemporaneous emulation, though exhibited in glowing colors before you, hath not dazzled your powers of discernment; nor taught you to be unjust. In blushing for your Sires, some of whom, with less sincerity than yourselves, may have swelled the numbers of your procession, you may proudly apply the motto from Gay's immortal fable of the "Hare & many friends," "Older & abler pass'd you by; How strong are those! how weak am I."

I have this morning a letter of the 11th April, from my brother. He is the most exhaustless writer that I ever knew. The three last numbers of the *Port folio*, are compiled from his communications, more than half. You may know his mark, by one of the letters which make the word *Columbus*, being at the bottom of each poetical effusion.

I have my mother's letter of the 12th this morning. Cordially your's

T. B. Adams.

Philad'a, 22d August, [1801]

Dear William:—

I have paid you all I owed in the article of letters, but I receive few communications from home. Please to tell my mother that I like to know, now & then, a little of the Cabinet secrets.

The Report that the negociation with France is broken off, creates considerable sensation here & at New York. I think few people actually believe the story, but it serves the turn of newspaper Scribblers to abuse the Mission or the President. The *Gazette of the U. S.* which is now in a great measure Edited by Mr. Dennie, has, I think, spoken a different language with respect to this news of Our Envoys, from that

which it employed before the change. Tell me if "Plutarch," in the Gazette of last night meet with approbation, & then I will tell you who wrote it.

You may see how the Aurora of this morning speaks of the legal adjudication on the question whether America & France are at War, or at peace. This decision of the Supreme Court is a very dreadful thing to the Jacobins. They talk, you see, of impeaching the Judges for violating the Constitution.

Duane says "the Report" is likely to be a forgery—but if accurate, then highly momentous for three reasons.

I have no need to tell you, I presume, that I was the Reporter, and can vouch for the correctness of the Statement.

I perceive by extracts from "the Centinel" how "Mister Major Big Ben of Boston"⁷⁸ goes on. He is one of the most stupid fellows on the Continent. A political Whirligig, moving & twisting, turning & shifting with every pull of the string. Even the Commercial Gazette is false at times—but how can it be otherwise when no one man thinks in politics just like another, nor like himself for a week together, & every body will write.

I enclose you a letter from T. W.

I must have the Aurora back again, or my file will be broken. You say nothing of my Books—there are several Philadelphia Gentlemen to whom you might entrust that which I want most, if you have found it.

Give my love to all & believe me,

Your's

T. B. Adams.

Philadelphia, 20th September, 1801.

Dear William:—

I have your letter of the 14th with a paper for which I thank you. Mr. Reed, has written to you, in

⁷⁸Reference probably to Benjamin Russell of the *Columbian Centinel* who occasionally disaffected his Federal friends.

consequence of the information respecting the demur, about delivering his trunk, and contrary to my advice, has sent money to pay Bills, which he says he had already, once discharged. I never will recommend any of my friends to that vile house. So help me, truth!

Since my return, I have been more occupied with my profession than I had been, for a long time before, though with little immediate profit. My ambition does not aspire to any thing out of the pale of Bar promotion, but it is by no means an easy task to attain eminence in this Sphere. The number of competitors added to the difficult and laborious duties in the exercise of our profession, make it a perfect lottery as to success & profit. Every opportunity I get, of holding forth, at the Bar, invigorates zeal, but I have not yet vanquished the terrors & palpitations incident to inexperienced speakers.

During the session of our Supreme Court, we have had some interesting trials & arguments. The case of Pickering vs Reynolds, for a libel was heard a second time, but before the trial was finished, one of the jurors, (a democrat) took sick; the Court adjourned and the juryman was unable to attend during the term. The jury therefore was discharged and another trial must be had. Brown & Relf, who were arraigned on an Indictment for a libel upon Dallas, which was removed to the Sup. Court, plead guilty; or submitted with leave to give matter of extenuation in evidence; the Court sentenced them to pay a fine of three hundred dollars each, the costs of prosecution & bound them over to good behavior for one year. So much for this Brimberion.

The ex-ambassador has had a long confab with the port-folio man and I trust it will be profitable to him. He has been seriously addressed by several of his warmest friends, and promises reformation.

I spoke to Dickens about sending your paper.

By this or the next Mail I shall send under cover to my father some papers for Mr. Gay, upon business; you will please to deliver them.

Your friends are all well here. When you write to your good mother, please to remember me kindly to her, and tell her, I hope we shall some day or other meet again, even in this vale of tears, though I hope on no mournful occasion.

Love to Mr. & Mrs. Foster.

Your friend,

T. B. Adams.

Philadelphia, 15th Oct., 1801.

Dear William:—

I thank you for the pamphlet & newspaper. In return, I send you the New York L. J. Brutus—rather a repetition of what has been written on the same subject, than anything new. Oldschool & I disagree as to the author of Philalethes. I say the hand is not visible; but he thinks it is.

We have Duane again before the Circuit Court and he tried to manage his own cause; but before he had blundered & stumbled a great while—John Beckley took up the defence as a volunteer, and talked very bold. The trial is for damages, Levi Hollingsworth Plff—for a libel on his character. The same pitiful, mean & abject figure that Tom Cooper made, when he was tried under the Sedition law Duane now makes. His stile of argument was stupidly arrogant and if the Court had done their duty—they ought to have checked him in several of his remarks. The trial is not yet concluded.

I have something to send you by the first opportunity which I shall then direct you how to dispose of.

Mean time I am your friend,

T. B. Adams.

Philadelphia, 11th April, 1802.

Dear William:—

You apologize so handsomely in your letter of the 9th ult. for your long silence towards me, that I cannot find in my heart to retaliate; indeed I should do so much violence to myself, by an attempt to break off our correspondence that you may venture to assure yourself of its continuance. You gave me much information, which I could have learnt from nobody else, and I shall place my trust in you for future communications of a similar nature.

I have read the life of that Monster Fairbanks⁷⁹ and his prison confession, which discloses some facts, that explain to my satisfaction, the reason why his Counsel were so firmly persuaded of his innocence of the murder. Still I say, he suffered a righteous punishment, and the consciences of both jurors & judges are acquitted, in the sight of God & man, (or ought to be), of all imputation. He was convicted, by the evidence before the Court; and how could he be acquitted without a disclosure of the facts, which his narration has since brought to light, and which, if strictly true, rest alone on his own testimony leaving presumption still as strong as before, of his guilt. As to his life, I am no convert to the gorgeous decorations, & the tinsel splendor of a female biographer. *Hic jacet Jason; quiescat!*

You promise me some letters, which have been dedicated to my brother. Where & of what nature are they? I hope the good people of Suffolk will Senatorize him. Jo: Hall, Hem!

I have enquired of Dennie as to the charge against Walter & Welles for the Portfolio. He says, if any gentleman avers payment it is enough—the derangement of accounts before Dickens went away, is the general apology for all errors. I paid \$4.80 for Marsh's political work, you bought of Dickens, which is about

⁷⁹*Solemn declaration [with] account of life of Jason Fairbanks, Dedham, 1801. Sentenced to death for murder of Elizabeth Fales.*

what I owed you for some books you left me. As to the contested election, in Delaware, I know nothing about it. And now having touched upon all the business topics of your letter, let me have a little familiar chat with you about matters & things. I must premise that I am not yet fully recovered from an ugly fall or cast I got from a vile beast of a horse, last Monday. I wrote about it yesterday to my brother, a partial account, and for your amusement, I will detail the particulars. I rode out on Monday afternoon in company with Jo. Reed, on horseback, as far as Bush Hill; Rich. Peters & Lantzinger came after us in a Gigg; we stopped but a few minutes, and were coming away, when the horse I had rode out refused to bring me back, trying all he could to prevent my mounting. I succeeded however to get my foot in the stirrup and in passing my leg across the back of the horse, hit him with my spurr, in consequence of his sudden wheel; upon this he began to kick up; threw me out of seat, nearly on his neck and took me at full speed down hill, where he halted so suddenly as to throw me with great violence over his head. My left shoulder received the brunt of the blow and though my head struck the ground, my hat broke the force of it so much that I felt no hurt. All this happened in the twinkling of an eye, and no human skill could have avoided the accident. My companions, though terrified to a state of petrification, could not restrain their risibles, at the ridicule of the scene, which I believe was scarcely ever surpassed in Equestrian annals. The beast made so many efforts to get his rider off his back & threw himself into so many "postures most constrained" C. J. Ingersoll, that I have not been able to think of it since without laughing myself. When I recovered my breath, which was nearly gone, I got up, and after wincing & making wry faces for a short time, found that no fracture or dislocation had been made; I took a seat in the Gigg, was brought to town, put to bed; bled freely, dieted & am now so far recovered as to walk about

town, as usual, though a good deal reduced & debilitated by the regimen. I thank God it was no worse, for my life was in jeopardy, and for all the wealth of Golconda, I would not take the risk again. Now you have the adventure at full length, and if any of the good natured Philadelphians should tell a different story, you can set the thing to rights.

Monday, 13th April. I have just got your note of the 5th inst, and rejoyce to learn the triumph of Federalism, or Honesty-ism, call it what you will except Jacobinism, which as Burke defines it, is "the revolt of the enterprizing talents of a Country against its property." I hope that our native State will be brought back to right principles, and at some future day, assume a tone & speak a language that shall make old dominion tremble to its center. The gaiety of the Season is over here. I never knew more dissipation since the first winter that Congress was here; the Theatre has not been so well supported, as last year for want of an Actor in the first class of characters. Wood⁸⁰ takes the lead, and has become a very correct, graceful & judicious performer, but his voice he cannot conquer, and it will always be an impediment in his career. Cain never will be anything very great. He wants a Soul, poor fellow. The females, who are rising, on the town, (verily no bad meaning) are Miss Westray & Miss Arnold⁸¹ all the rest are formed, such as they must ever be, and we can only add, would they had been better! Merry is Merry still. By the bie, a little scandal here—It is whispered, that the young tragedian, C. J. I.⁸²—who has been on visiting terms

⁸⁰William B. Wood (1779-1861). In partnership with Wm. Warren he became manager of the Chestnut St. Theatre, Phila., 1810, a position he held for sixteen years. He married in 1804, Juliana Westray.

⁸¹Elizabeth Arnold, an English actress, married David Poe, Jr., a law student in Baltimore. He abandoned his profession for the stage and Mr. and Mrs. Poe acted together for several years. They died young leaving three children, the second of whom was Edgar Allan Poe.

⁸²Charles J. Ingersoll (1782-1862). The Queen, one of the characters in his tragedy *Edwy and Elgiva*, was taken by Mrs. Merry upon its first appearance in Phila., 5 Apr., 1801. She was known in England as Miss Brunton (1769-1808). She married Robert Merry and came to America, first appearing in Phila., 1796. Mr. Merry died in 1798. In 1806 she married Wm. Warren.

at Mrs. M-S apartments, ever since he made her his Queen, took it in his head, on a late visit to bolt up stairs without any previous ceremony, and finding Mrs. M alone, seated himself by her and shortly began a discourse, which we are to suppose was not familiar to that lady's ear, and which report says she undertook to tell [torn] was indelicate and improper for him to utter or for her to hear. The stripling quite undaunted at the rebuke, replied "—poh! You joke surely Mrs. M— You who are accustomed to the Stage, cannot entertain very strict notions of delicacy"—and in conformity with this opinion, was proceeding to further extremities, when Mrs. M—called in the assistance of her Chamber maid, bid her show Mr. I the door & told her in future to deny admittance to this young Hotspur. The story tells very much against the Author and in favor of the correct and dignified behavior of the Actress, who though disposed to labour in her vocation & "play the Queen," is that very lady still, whom Will: Shakespeare had in view when he wrote "There was a lady once, that would not be a queen, that would she not, for all the mud in Egypt."

Your friends are well. Wallace has received your hint and promised to send you his Reports; they are few & small. With best love to all friends I am

Your's

T. B. Adams.

Philadelphia 4th May 1802

Dear William

Your favor of the 23^d ult. accompanied by one for M^r Newman⁸³ I received a few days since, on my return from Chester Court; where I had been attending the Quarter Sessions of Delaware County, four days. A criminal cause of considerable importance, viz. an indictment for perjury was tried, and by invitation of the deputy Att^y Gen^l, I took part on the side of the prosecution. There was room for a defence

⁸³John Newman. See *Memorials of Wm. S. Shaw*, p. 151.

and two of our Philad^a lawyers were Counsel for the prisoner. I opened the cause on the part of the prosecution, stated the law and the facts we intended to prove. The examination of the witnesses lasted from 11 o'Clock in the forenoon 'till 11 at night, when the Court adjourned to the morning; the Counsel occupied the whole forenoon in speaking to the cause, and the jury went out between 1 & 2 o'Clock, where they remained until 10 o'Clock the next day, when they brought in a verdict of Guilty against the prisoner; whereupon his Counsel moved the Court for a new trial, on several grounds, the strongest of which was a flaw in the Indictment; and the Att^y Gen^l admitting the exception to be fatal, the verdict was set-aside by the Court; which will put the Commonwealth to the trouble of another trial, provided a bill should again be found. It was formerly much the practise of the City lawyers to frequent the County Courts, but since there are two or three lawyers settled in each County town few of our young men persevere in the custom. Indeed there are some reasons against it, almost conclusive, one of which is that during the first twelve or eighteen months, a man's expences will consume more than his earnings, besides the chance of losing business in the City. The benefits are, change of scene, wholesome air, exercise, &^{ca} and more frequent opportunities of speaking than there are to be found in the City. I intend going this Spring to two other Courts in our neighborhood.

M^r Joseph Hemphill, a member of Congress in our delegation, whose argument on the judiciary bill of this Session, obtained so much applause, has hitherto resided in the County of Delaware & frequented the Courts in his vicinity. He is a plain young man, both in dress & manners, but though he is usually considered as of the Society of friends, he is in reality of the Church of England. I saw & conversed with him often and am much gratified by his acquaintance, he purposes coming very shortly to establish himself in the

City, and I presume one of his inducements for so doing, is that our last gothick Legislature has so districted the State as to throw all the federal counties into a scale, with others, where Democracy is triumphant, whereby at the next election, unless a change of opinion be brought about in the meantime, every federalist will be excluded from the Representation.

Two of the Bankrupt Commissioners here are removed, viz, Hopkinson & Rich^d Peters, Jun^r, two others named in their stead: viz, Mahlon Dickerson a New Jersey, Jacobin lawyer, who is settled here and Thomas Lieper, an Irish tobacconist, & ignorance personified his chiefest merit. Peter Muhlenburg is to succeed George Lattimer in the Collector's Office and all the subordinate offices in that department will probably be new peopled. Thus you "see how we pippins swim."

I thank you for the pamphlets you sent me. Bronson has published all the debates in Senate on the Judiciary, and I will send one, to my Mother by the first opportunity, as I promised to do. The publisher has the conscience to ask a dollar for a single copy, in boards.----- I cannot divine who wrote the pamphlet on "the views of a certain party." It is a sensible work, but I agree with you, that I see no marks about it, of the hand to which it was ascribed. Some Northern-man, I think, must have done it.

You enquire who writes the *lounger* in the P. F.? I believe there are several writers, but they are all invisible. Some are the productions of ladies.

Sam Ewing who is now leaning in my window, sends his best regards to you. Did you notice, some time ago, a satire on some toasts which were drank at a feast given by R. Peale, in the Skeleton of the Mammoth? Ewing wrote it, at my instance, and it had a good effect.

With best love to all friends, I am, as ever

Your friend & serv^t

T. B. Adams

Philadelphia 13th June 1802.

Dear William

I received your short note, accompanying the Oration delivered by my brother,⁸⁴ before the Charitable Fire Association, and thank you for the promptness of your attention in transmitting it. The perusal of it was a rich repast, and though its merit did not surpass, it fully equalled my expectations.

I am yet to hear from you, *in answer* to some of my late communications. You have certainly lost that *kakoethes scribendi*, which was wont to beset you so easily. I remember to have predicted your recovery from the disorder at no very remote period, but you were then incredulous. You ought not however, wholly to relinquish the habit of writing to your friends, for they sensibly feel the loss of your once frequent addresses. I beg of you, if you can give me any *private* information, to impart it speedily. What have you done with the *charge*, & the last letter? My destiny is hard and somewhat peculiar. If constancy & perseverance ever deserved to triumph I think mine one of those cases, which has strong claims to favor and victory. God only knows when. *Nil desperandum*, is a good motto, in *some* cases, but *nil sperandum* is the destiny of a galley-slave. I know not which motto is most appropriate to me.

The newspapers will have informed you, that a work entitled the history of the Administration of John Adams,⁸⁵ and an account of the *suppression* of the same,⁸⁶ by Col. Burr are now selling at New York & at this place. I have submitted to the drudgery of wading

⁸⁴*Address to the Mass. Char. Fire Soc., May 28, 1802.* By J. Q. Adams, Bost., 1802.

⁸⁵*History of the Administration of John Adams.* By John Wood, N. Y., 1802.

⁸⁶The charges against Col. Burr are made in a pamphlet entitled, *Narrative of the Suppression by Col. Burr, of the History of the Administration of John Adams, written by John Wood, etc.* By A. Citizen of New York, N. Y., 1802. The writer of this pamphlet is said to have been James Cheetham, then editor of the *American Citizen*, N. Y. Soon after this publication appeared Wood answered the *Narrative* by a pamphlet entitled, *Correct statement of the various sources from which the History was compiled and the motives for its Suppression by Col. Burr.* By John Wood, N. Y., 1802.

through both of these productions, and I can aver, that I never met with so lame, bald & contemptible performances, on any subject. The Author, (if indeed he deserves the name of author who has ransacked the Jacobin journals for materials, and no other source, and then dignified them with the title history) was so well aware of the nothingness of his compilation, that he became the willing instrument of Col Burr who hired him to strangle his own bastard; but falling out, afterwards with his employer—he reveals the *murder*, which of course never took place, since the original history comes out at the same moment with the account of its death. Now this is a specimen of Irish logic, but the work was made to sell.

There are hundreds of libellous expressions & passages interspersed throughout, but what is a little singular is, that Col. Hamilton & General Pinckney are both extolled in character & person. Their Biography is taken from federal newspapers and interlarded, here and there, with an abusive or scandalous anecdote. The utmost malignity & scurrility of the writer is directed at John Adams, but there is no word of it that will be credited by a single human being. The newspaper of last night says, the noted John Wood, author, &c has *absconded*.

We have just entered upon Summer-weather here, and we shall have enough before it leaves us—apprehensions of yellow fever are stronger this year than ever, on account of the troops in the West Indies.

Friends here are well; remember me kindly to all.

Your's truly

T. B. Adams.

[June, 1802]

Dear William:—

I have done little else but scribble for three weeks past, either letters of business or friendship, and have not found time to write scarcely a line to you.

I made enquiry for Mr. Jenkins,⁸⁷ now Lord Hawkesbury's work, which you wrote for, but cannot procure it here. Yesterday I delivered to Mr. William Lee two of young Charles Jared Ingersoll's tragedy, one for you and one for my Mother. Dickens avers that he made up a complete sett of the Portfolio for Mr. Tom Johnson and sent it by the post, upon the first complaint made by him. I spoke to him about Mr. Mason also.

When you see Mr. Eben Gay, please to present him my best regards and assure him that I shall be always ready to reciprocate the kind of favor he conferred on me some weeks ago, whenever I have an opportunity.

It gives me pleasure to hear that you are so eligibly situated in Boston; since I removed my own office and lodgings, I also feel much better satisfied than before. Mr. & Mrs. Rutter often speak of you & desire to be remembered in my letters.

The family, in which I dwelt, is almost entirely dispersed—the lodgers I mean. Dennie lives out near the bettering house, which you know is close by the Hospital, at his printer's, and we see him but seldom. Pearce embarked on board a ship bound for Canton & a trading voyage, on Monday last, & I left the house nearly a fortnight ago.

You will have seen a partial report of the proceedings before the Circuit Court, in the case of Hollingsworth vs Duane⁸⁸—in the Portfolio. I know not who is the reporter, & I disavow it because you might mistake it for mine. The Sentence of the Court was highly dignified and indeed the whole conduct of the Judges during a long Session reflected great honor upon this newly organized tribunal. If you see the Gazette of the United States the Sentence must have met your eye. Duane's period is nearly expired.

⁸⁷Charles Jenkinson, *Ld. Hawkesbury*.

⁸⁸William Duane, of the *Aurora*, was sent to prison for thirty days, and damages of six hundred dollars laid against him for attacks upon Levi Hollingsworth, a Phila. merchant.

Your friends here are all well. Have you read Abraham Bishop's Oration? If not, get it. Thomas Paine is a fool to him in point of Demagogie.

I am,

Your's

T. B. Adams.

Remember me kindly to Mr. & Mrs. Foster.

Philadelphia, 28th June, 1802.

Dear William:—

I am desired by Mr. Reed to be instrumental in procuring your services, touching the enclosed draught or order; which when paid, you may remit, either directly to Reed, or to me, though, as I have no interest in the affair, I should not wish to be any way responsible, in case of failure or accident.

Your favor of the 23rd, with enclosures, has been in hand a few hours—and I have read the report of the Case,⁸⁹ which was tried in *Rogue* Island, since it came. I can find no language in which to express the emotions of indignation, rage & contempt, which were alternately excited by the perusal of it. While I was at Paris, I saw, at one of the small theatres, a representation of the "Revolutionary tribunal in the time of Robespierre" and the impression it made on my mind, was revived by almost every page of this Report. It is like no other thing, "that is in heaven above, in earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth." The howling wilderness does not contain more barbarous & savage ignorance than fell from the Prince of the Potowatomies, called the chief Justice of the Court of Com-Pleas for the County of Providence.

I will send you "the history," by the first opportunity; perhaps by water. Col. Burr, never contracted to pay \$1000 for its suppression. He may have offered to give something, which never was given, but

⁸⁹Reference probably to the Report of the case of John Dorrance against Arthur Fenner, tried in the Court of Common Pleas, Dec. 1801. See Providence Journal, 6 May, 1801.

the rivalship of Clinton, must have come out, at all events. The narrative was only a sort of warming pan to the history.

I am pleased to hear that J. Q. A. was the cause of the failure of the Statue to Washington, by substituting marble for bronze. I do not believe that he intended to defeat the plan, by this suggestion, but I am the better pleased on that account. I am so perfectly disgusted with every attempt, that has hitherto been made to do honor to the memory of Washington, in this Country, that I never will expend a single cent towards a project of this nature, with my own consent, hereafter. I should like very well to speak my thoughts of my Countrymen, with as much freedom as the vagrant Bülow. I would not tell lies as he does, but the truth, plain & unvarnished, is libel enough upon us, God knows. If you find anything attrabilious in this remark, charge it to the Report you sent me.

I have not time to say all I wish now. Did N— seem in usual spirits? What said she of the ---? I am sometimes half distracted at my cursed hard fate. But then again, I think it is unmanly; unphilosophical; weak; pertaining to human frailty; out of the reach of all which I ought to be; but which I am not; and I hope & trust in God I never shall be so long as I live.

In truth & Sincerity,

Your's

T. B. Adams.

Philadelphia, 6th January, 1803.

Dear William:—

I thank you for your favor of the 19th with an enclosure and receipt from Mr. Ritchie. The civil things you please to say, are passed to your credit in my book.

When I see Mr. Chauncey, I will remind him of his promise to you and if I can purchase the letters⁹⁰

⁹⁰Reference, without doubt, is to *Nine letters on the subject of Burr's political defection.* By J. Cheetham, N. Y., 1803.

to Col. Burr, will send them forward. I have never seen these letters, though so much has been said about them.

Your lamentations on the State of the union, are similar to those I make, and I believe, to bewail is all that's left us now. Egyptian darkness was not more visible, than that which reigns over the future destinies of America.

You have in some measure anticipated my request for information expressed in my last letter. I shall shortly ask your further services to convey a letter, which is yet to be written.

The Register of births exhibited by you, is lively and copious; all in the family-way too (as a punster may say). Alas! Much about the same time, something very similar occurred here; but I dare not relate it.

When the Oration is published, send me as many by water, as the Author can spare. I want some copies of the oration, delivered before the Charitables.

Wishing you many happy new years,

I am, dear William,

Your's
T. B. Adams.

Philadelphia, 31st August, 1803.

Dear William:—

Your favor of the 24th is before me and I most ardently hope the information respecting the prospect of my mother's recovery may not prove delusive. I expected a letter from my brother by this day's mail, but am disappointed. My suspense & anxiety have been extreme for ten days past, and nothing but your letter, which assures me, that my mother was considerably better, has relieved my distress. My brother's last letter left me hardly a ray of hope and I am yet fearful of having flattered myself too much, that I may still have a mother living. I would have instantly set out for Quincy, on the receipt of the first intelli-

gence of her dangerous state, but the crisis of her disorder seemed to be so near, that I had no expectation of being able to reach home before it should be too late. God grant, that my apprehensions may not be realized.

You may readily conceive how troubled my spirit has been, when in addition to the threatened calamity of my Mother's death, I had to encounter the impression of your's also; for having seen in the New England Repertory, the death of William Shaw, Esq'e of Quincy, announced without date or age, I believed for a short time, that you must be the person, as I could not recollect no other of that name in Quincy. I soon after the first panick, remembered, that a Mr. Shaw had bought the place of old Capt. Beale and of course concluded that he was the person, whose death was reported.

I thought that I had acknowledged the receipt of the note of hand against L't Cox. It came too late for me to take any steps to enforce payment—the Philadelphia frigate, having gone down the River, a few days before, with all the crew on board. Shall I retain or return the Note?

I thank you for your attention to my friend—in sending your file of the P. F. The punctuality, you have practised in forwarding my letters, has my thanks. I never doubted that you had always availed yourself of the best & safest conveyance.

Present me kindly to all—the Mail will close in a quarter of an hour, or I would write more largely.

Your's faithfully,

T. B. Adams.

Philadelphia, 13th October, 1803.

Dear William:—

I received your favor of the 3rd in due course with a letter from Washington for my brother. I have this moment taken from the Post Office a letter from him to me, written at New Arb, where he has been detained

by the illness of his wife, since Sunday the 9th inst. He expected however to be on his journey again on Wednesday, and hopes to be at Frankford, Friday or Saturday.

I will thank you to inform Mr. R. T. Paine that I have not been able to collect the draft he sent me, on account of the absence of the drawee. He was at Baltimore instead of Bristol, where Mr. Paine supposed he was when he sent me the order. I hope to send him the money ere long.

I have nothing new to add. As to our Elections here. I hope soon to be beyond the reach of all such damned beings as are chosen to office in this State. My Resolution is fixed for as Speedy a removal as practicable, from a place—But softly—I scorn to abuse Philadelphia—You need say nothing about my plan, unless you think proper. I have yet much to do before I can quit and therefore know not myself how soon it will be. I hope nevertheless before the first of December.

I am, dear William,

Your's sincerely,

T. B. Adams.

P. S. If you do not deliver the enclosed put it under a cover.

Quincy, 3rd August, 1806.

Dear William:—

I have received a letter from my friend Dr. Chapman,⁹¹ informing me of his intention to compile in a series of volumes the best of the modern Orations, both forensic and parliamentary with brief remarks illustrative of each case. He wishes to know if my father's library contains the speech of the late Lord Littleton on the Canada bill—Charles Townshend's on raising a Revenue in America, so highly praised by Burke—And the Speech of L'd Chatham wherein he makes the flourish about employing the Savages. For the supply

⁹¹Nathaniel Chapman (1730-1853), *Select Speeches* [Phila.] 1808.

of these documents he promises a set of his work, and he only waits my reply, to announce the contents of the first volume. Does your collection contain all or either of these Speeches, and would you undertake to transcribe & forward them for the sake of the Reward. If you know who owns a parliamentary Register in Boston, you can doubtless obtain the loan of it, and if you will search out the Specified harrangues and furnish me with them, I will undertake to get them copied.

The Dr. promises a prospectus of his work in a short time and asks what Speeches are in my father's collection, both foreign & American, which would suit him. You know what answer I must make to this enquiry better than I do. My belief is there are none, and if I were about to make such a compilation I should rather take my chance among your collection than any that I know of. Answer me speedily and send your letter by the Mail if no private opportunity offer tomorrow.

I suppose the fame of my Daughter⁹² has long since reached your ear and that you have given her all the celebrity that the Town Crier could have done in the same space of time. The Young Miss Abigail Adams is about as likely & promising a Maiden as any stirring. She has not yet been decorated with her best bib & tucker to be carried out to get a good name, nor will she be until the Mother is able to stand Sponser for her in person. The Grandparents are so earnest for the Christening, that I dont know whether they wont carry it out themselves. I am afraid of being tedious on this Subject, otherwise I could descant for a page or two in praise of my Daughter's genteel shapes—her jetty locks & darkling eyes—the perfect symmetry of her nose—just like her father's—her dimpled cheeks, plump as a partridge—her becoming forehead, neither rising too high nor yet too low compressed—the sweet-

⁹²Abigail Smith Adams, born July 27, 1806, died Feb. 4, 1845.

est mouth distilling nectar—In short, not to be tedious—the girl is well enough for aught I can see, but in no wise extraordinary.

With usual good will, truly yours,
T. B. Adams.

Quincy, February 10th, 1818.

Dear Sir:—

I am informed that my Nephew G. W. Adams⁹³ is to take his examination on Friday next, and as Bondsmen are required by the College Government, I should be glad if you will join with me in the Obligation, as I know of no one whom I can ask with equal freedom. As it will be necessary to go to Cambridge to sign the Bond, I can call for you on Saturday next and give you a seat with me, should your health admit of your going; but if you object to the measure or should you be unable to go, please to inform me by Mail.

I am very truly, Yours,

Thomas B. Adams.

P. S. I shall write to George to have a Bond drawn out which he may bring to Boston for signature.

Dear Shaw:—

You will oblige me by purchasing two Copies of "Buckingham's trial,"⁹⁴ and your Uncle wishes you to get the Review of Dr. Bancroft's Sermons,⁹⁵ published in some Christian Disciple or Register. Likewise to bring our North American Review, which will be out Tomorrow.

Truly Your's,

Thomas B. Adams.

Quincy, Jan'y 24th, 1823.

⁹³George Washington Adams (1801-1829) son of J. Q. Adams.

⁹⁴Massachusetts vs. Joseph T. Buckingham. *Trial on an indictment for a libel.* Bost., [18—].

⁹⁵*Sermons on doctrines of the Gospel.* By Aaron Bancroft, Worc., 1822. Review in *Christian Disciple.* Vol. 4, No. 3, May, June, 1822.

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