

THE WORKS

OF

JOHN ADAMS.



John Adams

BOSTON

PUBLISHED BY CHARLES C. LITTLE & JAMES BROWN.

Adams, John, Pres. U.S.

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THE

WORKS

OF

JOHN ADAMS,

SECOND PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES:

WITH

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS,

BY

HIS GRANDSON

CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS.

VOL. II.

BOSTON:

CHARLES C. LITTLE AND JAMES BROWN.

1850.

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P R E F A C E.

A DIARY is the record in youth of a man's sentiments, in middle life, of his action, and of his recollections in age. To others, it can be interesting only if it have impressed upon it the stamp of strong individual character. But with this as a substratum, notices of striking scenes, of extraordinary events and noted contemporaries, may be superadded to form a memorial worth transmitting to posterity.

The fragments now published can scarcely be said to fill up this idea; yet, beginning as they do with the writer's entrance into responsible life, and extending through a large part of a great career, they may be considered as in a measure superseding the necessity of an elaborate biography. Perhaps the propriety of the insertion of so large a portion of the early entries may be questioned. The answer is, that they go far to effect the main object of showing character. The moral and meditative cast of the author's mind is thus laid open at an age when that of most men is yet slowly gaining maturity. The leading principle of his life may thus be easily traced by those fond of psychological investigations, from his first theological investigations, through his legal studies, and still more strikingly, his early practice, into the mental habits which formed the politician and the statesman. Incidental to this, and accessory to it, are the pictures of domestic life in New England during a period which has been somewhat overshadowed by the superior interest attaching to earlier and to later times. Puritan Massachusetts, whilst dropping much of her early religious bigotry,

was yet nursing in the French wars the stern qualities that carried her successfully through the fiery trial of the Revolution. She contained one, whilst Virginia furnished the other, of the two germs of public sentiment which have since spread extensively over this continent, and which bid fair yet to develop themselves indefinitely. To these two types of mind all classes of American opinion may be ultimately reduced. The state of society through which the first of these was evolved, until from a religious it took a political direction, and the influences through which the change was shaped, gain much illustration from the following pages.

The broken and partial nature of this Diary is the circumstance most to be regretted about it. As the time advances towards the most interesting events in the Revolution, the record becomes less and less satisfactory. It is a great disadvantage attending even the most regularly kept of such works, that just in proportion to the engrossing interest of the action in which the writer finds himself engaged, is the physical inability to command the leisure necessary to describe it. Thus it happens in the present case, that the sketches sometimes stop just when the reader would have them begin, and at other times no notice whatever is taken of events which are the most prominent in the life of the writer. Yet, after making all suitable deductions from the value of these papers on this account, it is believed that much is left richly to reward perusal, particularly since some of the most marked instances of deficiency are compensated for by resorting to the reminiscences of a later period. The passages from an autobiography are not indeed entitled to claim quite so high ground on the score of authority in matters of fact as the contemporaneous record, but they merit attention as well on account of the superior animation of the style as of the circumstance that they do supply some of the details that are wanting in the other. Even on the score of accuracy, the papers of other persons treating of the same events, which have since found their way to the light, go

a great way to establish the substantial truth of the narrative from memory. A good degree of credit may therefore be confidently assigned to it, even though we admit that it belongs to a different class of evidence. Whilst the editor has endeavored, so far as it may be done, to unite in the present volume, the substance of the Autobiography with the Diary, he has carefully tried to keep the two so distinct as to furnish to the critical reader every opportunity to distinguish the nature of the testimony. Twenty-five or thirty years can pass over the head of no man without affecting the exactness of his recollection of events. If we consider how small a share of the public documents now at the command of every one, was readily accessible, or was actually consulted in the year when the Autobiography was written, the wonder is rather at the tenacity than the failure of the writer's memory.

The editor has sought to avoid burdening the text with annotation. Yet so rapidly does time obliterate the traces of local names and history, and particularly after periods of civil convulsion, that occasional explanation seems required to smooth the way for the general reader. In performing this duty, it is always difficult to reach the golden mean, and particularly in American annals, where the extent to which an acquaintance with details can be presumed is so unsettled. Of late, the greatly increased attention paid to this subject tends to justify the inference that much may be taken for granted as now well understood. Yet the smallest examination of many of the popular works of the day will suffice to show that almost as much still remains to be elucidated. The omission to note the change wrought by the revolution in the classification of the social system has already done something to obscure the history of political opinion during the first stage of free government. Neither is the relative advance of the respective Colonies in the course of the struggle, or the nature of the difficulties peculiar to each, generally comprehended. To acquire right notions on these matters, it is necessary to ascend some distance for a

starting point. Every thing that can illustrate the state of opinion, of manners, and of habits, prior to the year 1776, is of some value to the right conception of what has happened since. Guided by this idea, the editor has taken the liberty, either to supply such explanatory matter as he deemed likely to be of use to the curious, or, where he did not, to indicate as briefly as possible the sources in which fuller information may be readily obtained.

It is proper, in cases of publication like this, to define the extent to which it has been carried. The editor has suppressed or altered nothing in the Diary, which might be considered as bearing either against the author himself, or against any other person, for that reason alone. Wherever any omission has been made, it has been from other motives than those of fear or favor. The main purpose has been to present to the public a fair and unbiased picture of the mind and heart of an individual, so far as this may be supposed to command any interest. To do this, it is as necessary to retain the favorable or unfavorable opinions expressed of men, including himself, as those of things or of events. No true, honestly written Diary can be regarded as in itself a correct general history. It is good always as biography, often as furnishing materials for history, and that just in proportion as it appears on its face never to have been written or prepared for publication. But if this be true, it is obviously perverting its character to attempt to make patchwork of it, by selecting to be seen only such passages as show a single side. Rather than this, it were wise not to publish at all. The effect is to make an opinion for the reader instead of allowing him to form one for himself, to control rather than to develop his judgment. In the present instance at least, the fact may be relied on, that no experiment of the kind has been tried. The reader is more likely to feel disposed to find fault with being supplied beyond his wants than with having less than he might get.

This volume embraces all of the Diary written prior to February, 1778, the period of the writer's first departure for Europe;

but that portion of the Autobiography covering his Congressional life is barely commenced. It likewise includes all the notes taken of debates in the Continental Congress which the editor has been able to find. The meagre and unsatisfactory nature of these would forbid their publication, if it were not for the circumstance that they constitute almost the sole remaining memorial of the kind that has come down to us. Imperfect as they are, it is believed that they will serve to throw some light upon the civil history, or that portion which is least understood, of the great contest.

For the purpose of clearly distinguishing the passages of the Autobiography from the Diary, they are, in all cases, marked with brackets at each end of the extract; and, when so brief as to be placed among the foot notes under the text, they are indicated by an asterisk, instead of the small numerals prefixed to the editor's explanations.

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D I A R Y .

THESE are loose fragments of journal in the hand-writing of JOHN ADAMS upon scraps of paper scarcely legible, from 18 November, 1755, to 20 November, 1761. They were effusions of mind, committed from time to time to paper, probably without the design of preserving them; self-examinations at once severe and stimulative; reflections upon others, sometimes, not less severe upon his friends; thoughts such as occur to all, some of which no other than an unsullied soul would commit to writing, mingled with conceptions at once comprehensive and profound.

J. Q. A.

1755. NOVEMBER 18. We had a very severe shock of an earthquake. It continued near four minutes. I then was at my father's in Braintree, and awoke out of my sleep in the midst of it. The house seemed to rock and reel and crack, as if it would fall in ruins about us. Chimneys were shattered by it within one mile of my father's house.¹ *

¹ This is the first entry, and is printed because it seems to have originated the plan of a Diary. It refers to one of the most memorable events of the kind which ever took place. The destruction of the city of Lisbon occurred on the first day of this month. Although less severe in its effects on this side of the Atlantic, it is yet remembered as the worst ever known in English America. "It seems to have been greater in Massachusetts than any other colony. In Boston, many chimneys and walls of houses were much shattered, but no house thrown down." The government noticed it by appointing a day of fasting and prayer.

* [In the public exercises at Commencement I was somewhat remarked as a respondent, and Mr. Maccarty, of Worcester, who was empowered by the selectmen of that town to procure them a Latin master for the grammar school, engaged me to undertake it. About three weeks after Commencement in 1755, when I was not yet twenty years of age, a horse was sent me from Worcester, and a man to attend me. We made the journey, about sixty miles, in one day, and I entered on my office.

For three months I boarded with one Greene, at the expense of the town, and by the arrangement of the selectmen. Here I found Morgan's Moral Philosopher, which I was informed had circulated with some freedom in that town, and that the principles of Deism had made considerable progress among persons in that and other towns in the county.]

1756. January 16. Reading Hutcheson's Introduction to Moral Philosophy. Dined with Major Chandler.*

18. Sunday. Heard Mr. Maccarty.¹

February 11. I am constantly forming, but never executing good resolutions. I take great pleasure in viewing and examining the magnificent prospects of Nature that lie before us in this town. If I cast my eyes one way, I am entertained with the savage, unsightly appearance of naked woods, and leafless forests. In another place a chain of broken and irregular mountains throws my mind into a pleasing kind of astonishment. But if I turn myself round, I perceive a wide, extensive tract before me made up of woods and meadows, wandering streams and barren plains, covered in various places by herds of grazing cattle and terminated by the distant view of the town.²

12. Thursday. Heard Mr. Welman preach the lecture, and drank tea with him at home; where he made this observation, namely, that "Dr. Mayhew was a smart man, but he embraced some doctrines not generally approved."³

13. Friday. Supped at Major Gardiner's, and engaged to keep school at Bristol, provided Worcester people at their ensuing March meeting should change this into a moving school,⁴ not otherwise. Major Greene this evening fell into some conversation with me about the Divinity and satisfaction of Jesus Christ. All the argument he advanced was, "that a mere crea-

¹ The Rev. Thaddeus Maccarty, pastor of the first parish of Worcester for thirty-seven years, and the person who engaged the writer to come to Worcester. In the Autobiography he is mentioned with respect and esteem. He had been driven from the town of Kingston a few years before this because he was suspected of liberality to Whitefield. *Coll. Mass. Hist. Society*, vol. xiii., p. 209.

² Worcester at this time contained a population certainly not exceeding 1500.

³ Rev. Jonathan Mayhew, afterwards the well known pastor of the West Church in Boston. Religious opinions had been for a long time the principal subject of difference among the people of Worcester, as indeed they were everywhere in Massachusetts. A few years before this, Mr. Maccarty and Mr. Mayhew had been brought into direct competition as candidates for settlement in the parish, and the former carried the day with only two votes dissenting.

⁴ "The instructor of those days was migratory, revolving in his circuit round a centre not then fixed to a particular location." *Lincoln's Worcester*, 297.

* [The family of the Chandlers were well-bred and agreeable people, and I as often visited them as my school and my studies in the lawyer's office would admit, especially Colonel Gardner Chandler, with whom I was the most intimate.]

The Chandlers exercised great influence in the county of Worcester until they took the side of government in the revolution, and lost their position.

ture or finite being could not make satisfaction to infinite justice for any crimes," and that "these things are very mysterious." Thus mystery is made a convenient cover for absurdity.

15. Sunday. Staid at home reading the Independent Whig.¹

Very often shepherds that are hired to take care of their masters' sheep go about their own concerns and leave the flock to the care of their dog. So bishops, who are appointed to oversee the flock of Christ, take the fees themselves but leave the drudgery to their dogs, that is, curates and understrappers.

16. Monday. We have the most moderate winter that ever was known in this country. For a long time together we have had serene and temperate weather, and all the roads perfectly settled and smooth like summer.

The Church of Rome has made it an article of faith that no man can be saved out of their church, and all other religious sects approach to this dreadful opinion in proportion to their ignorance, and the influence of ignorant or wicked priests.

Still reading the Independent Whig.

Oh! that I could wear out of my mind every mean and base affectation; conquer my natural pride and self-conceit; expect no more deference from my fellows than I deserve; acquire that meekness and humility which are the sure mark and characters of a great and generous soul; subdue every unworthy passion, and treat all men as I wish to be treated by all. How happy should I then be in the favor and good will of all honest men and the sure prospect of a happy immortality!

18. Wednesday. Spent an hour in the beginning of the evening at Major Gardiner's, where it was thought that the design of Christianity was not to make men good riddle-solvers, or good mystery-mongers, but good men, good magistrates, and good subjects, good husbands and good wives, good parents and good children, good masters and good servants. The following questions may be answered some time or other, namely, — Where do we find a precept in the Gospel requiring Ecclesiastical Synods? Convocations? Councils? Decrees? Creeds? Confessions?

¹ By Thomas Gordon, the Translator of Tacitus and author of Cato's Letters. His works have passed into oblivion, but at this period they were much read on account of their free and independent spirit. The Tacitus and Cato's Letters are placed by the side of Sidney and Locke and Bacon, in a special bequest of Josiah Quincy, Jun., to his son in his last will. "Memoir," &c., p. 350.

Oaths? Subscriptions? and whole cart-loads of other trumpery that we find religion encumbered with in these days?

19. Thursday. No man is entirely free from weakness and imperfection in this life. Men of the most exalted genius and active minds are generally most perfect slaves to the love of fame. They sometimes descend to as mean tricks and artifices in pursuit of honor or reputation as the miser descends to in pursuit of gold. The greatest men have been the most envious, malicious, and revengeful. The miser toils by night and day, fasts and watches, till he emaciates his body to fatten his purse and increase his coffers. The ambitious man rolls and tumbles in his bed, a stranger to refreshing sleep and repose, through anxiety about a preferment he has in view. The philosopher sweats and labors at his book, and ruminates in his closet, till his bearded and grim countenance exhibits the effigies of pale want and care and death, in quest of hard words, solemn nonsense, and ridiculous grimace. The gay gentleman rambles over half the globe, buys one thing and steals another, murders one man and disables another, and gets his own limbs and head broke for a few transitory flashes of happiness. Is this perfection, or downright madness and distraction?

20. Friday. Symptoms of snow. Writing Tillotson.¹

21. Saturday. Snow about ankle deep. I find, by repeated experiment and observation in my school, that human nature is more easily wrought upon and governed by promises, and encouragement, and praise, than by punishment, and threatening, and blame. But we must be cautious and sparing of our praise, lest it become too familiar and cheap, and so, contemptible; corporal as well as disgraceful punishments depress the spirits, but commendation enlivens and stimulates them to a noble ardor and emulation.

22. Sunday. Suppose a nation in some distant region should take the Bible for their only law-book, and every member should regulate his conduct by the precepts there exhibited! Every member would be obliged, in conscience, to temperance and frugality and industry; to justice and kindness and charity

¹ This means that the writer, who was at this time inclining to the ministry, was engaged in copying large extracts from the works of Tillotson. A volume still remains, written in a very minute hand, and filled with passages from the works of various authors.

towards his fellow men; and to piety, love, and reverence, towards Almighty God. In this commonwealth, no man would impair his health by gluttony, drunkenness, or lust; no man would sacrifice his most precious time to cards or any other trifling and mean amusement; no man would steal, or lie, or in any way defraud his neighbor, but would live in peace and good will with all men; no man would blaspheme his Maker or profane his worship; but a rational and manly, a sincere and unaffected piety and devotion would reign in all hearts. What a Utopia; what a Paradise would this region be! Heard Thayer all day. He preached well. Spent the evening at Colonel Chandler's, with Putnam, Gardiner, Thayer, the Doctor¹ and his lady, in conversation upon the present situation of public affairs, with a few observations concerning heroes and great commanders, — Alexander, Charles XII., Cromwell.

24. Tuesday. We are told that Demosthenes transcribed the history of Thucydides eight times, in order to imbibe and familiarize himself with the elegance and strength of his style. Will it not be worth while for a candidate for the ministry to transcribe Dr. Tillotson's works?

27. Friday. All day in high health and spirits. Writing Tillotson. That comet which appeared in 1682 is expected again this year; and we have intelligence that it has been seen about ten days since, near midnight, in the east. I find myself very much inclined to an unreasonable absence of mind, and to a morose and unsociable disposition; let it therefore be my constant endeavor to reform these great faults.

28. Saturday. Attended Mrs. Brown's funeral. Let this and every other instance of human frailty and mortality prompt me to endeavor after a temper of mind fit to undergo this great change.

1756. March 1. Monday. Wrote out Bolingbroke's Reflections on Exile.

2. Tuesday. Began this afternoon my third quarter.* The great and Almighty author of nature, who at first established

¹ Probably Dr. Willard, with whom he soon afterwards took up his abode.

* [Three months after this, (during the second quarter,) the Selectmen procured lodgings for me at Dr. Nahum Willard's. This physician had a large practice, a good reputation for skill, and a pretty library. Here were Dr. Cheyne's works, Sydenham, and others, and Van Swieten's Commentaries on Boerhaave. I read a good deal in these books and entertained many thoughts of becoming a physician and a surgeon.]

those rules which regulate the world, can as easily suspend those laws whenever his providence sees sufficient reason for such suspension. This can be no objection, then, to the miracles of Jesus Christ. Although some very thoughtful and contemplative men among the heathen attained a strong persuasion of the great principles of religion, yet the far greater number, having little time for speculation, gradually sunk into the grossest opinions and the grossest practices. These, therefore, could not be made to embrace the true religion till their attention was roused by some astonishing and miraculous appearances. The reasoning of philosophers, having nothing surprising in them, could not overcome the force of prejudice, custom, passion, and bigotry. But when wise and virtuous men, commissioned from heaven, by miracles awakened men's attention to their reasonings, the force of truth made its way with ease to their minds.

3. Wednesday. Natural philosophy is the art of deducing the general laws and properties of material substances from a series of analogous observations. The manner of reasoning in this art is not strictly demonstrative, and, by consequence, the knowledge hence acquired is not absolutely scientific, because the facts that we reason upon are perceived by sense, and not by the internal action of the mind contemplating its ideas. But these facts being presumed true in the form of axioms, subsequent reasonings about them may be in the strictest sense scientific. This art informs us in what manner bodies will influence us and each other in given circumstances, and so teaches us to avoid the noxious, and embrace the beneficial qualities of matter. By this art, too, many curious engines have been constructed to facilitate business, to avert impending calamities, and to procure desired advantages.

6. Saturday. Rose at half after four. Wrote Bolingbroke's letter on retirement and study.

7. Sunday. Heard Mr. Maccarty all day. Spent the evening and supped at Mr. Greene's with Thayer. Honesty, sincerity, and openness I esteem essential marks of a good mind. I am, therefore, of opinion that men ought, (after they have examined with unbiased judgments every system of religion, and chosen one system, on their own authority, for themselves,) to avow their opinions and defend them with boldness.

12. Friday. Laid a pair of gloves with Mrs. Willard* that she would not see me chew tobacco this month.

14. Sunday. Heard Mr. Maccarty, all day, upon Abraham's faith in offering up Isaac. Spent the evening very sociably at Mr. Putnam's. Several observations concerning Mr. Franklin,¹ of Philadelphia, a prodigious genius, cultivated with prodigious industry.

15. Monday. I sometimes in my sprightly moments consider myself, in my great chair at school, as some dictator at the head of a commonwealth. In this little state I can discover all the great geniuses, all the surprising actions and revolutions of the great world, in miniature. I have several renowned generals but three feet high, and several deep projecting politicians in petticoats. I have others catching and dissecting flies, accumulating remarkable pebbles, cockle shells, &c., with as ardent curiosity as any virtuoso in the Royal Society. Some rattle and thunder out A, B, C, with as much fire and impetuosity as Alexander fought, and very often sit down and cry as heartily upon being outspelt, as Cæsar did, when at Alexander's sepulchre he recollected that the Macedonian hero had conquered the world before his age. At one table sits Mr. Insipid, foppling² and fluttering, spinning his whirligig, or playing with his fingers, as gaily and wittily as any Frenchified coxcomb brandishes his cane or rattles his snuff-box. At another, sits the polemical divine, plodding and wrangling in his mind about "Adam's fall, in which we sinned all," as his Primer has it. In short, my little school, like the great world, is made up of kings, politicians, divines, L. D.'s, fops, buffoons, fiddlers, sycophants, fools, coxcombs, chimney sweepers, and every other character drawn in history, or seen in the world. Is it not, then, the highest pleasure, my friend, to preside in this little world, to bestow the proper applause upon virtuous and generous actions, to blame and punish every vicious and contracted trick, to wear out of the tender mind every thing that is mean and little, and fire the

¹ Benjamin Franklin, whose growing reputation in Europe, on account of his experiments in electricity, was coming back to increase his reputation at home.

² There is no such English word, but its meaning is clear enough.

* [The family of the Willards of Lancaster were often at Worcester, and I formed an acquaintance with them, especially Abel Willard, who had been one year with me at College, and had studied the law under Mr. Pratt in Boston. With him I lived in friendship.]

new-born soul with a noble ardor and emulation? The world affords no greater pleasure. Let others waste their bloom of life at the card or billiard table among rakes and fools, and when their minds are sufficiently fretted with losses, and inflamed by wine, ramble through the streets assaulting innocent people, breaking windows, or debauching young girls. I envy not their exalted happiness. I had rather sit in school and consider which of my pupils will turn out in his future life a hero, and which a rake, which a philosopher, and which a parasite, than change breasts with them, though possessed of twenty laced waistcoats and a thousand pounds a year. Methinks I hear you say, This is odd talk for John Adams! I'll tell you, then, the occasion of it. About four months since, a poor girl in this neighborhood, walking by the meeting-house upon some occasion in the evening, met a fine gentleman with laced hat and waistcoat, and a sword, who solicited her to turn aside with him into the horse stable. The girl relucted a little, upon which he gave her three guineas, and wished he might be damned if he did not have her in three months. Into the horse stable they went. The three guineas proved three farthings, and the girl proved with child, without a friend upon earth that will own her, or knowing the father of her three-farthing bastard.

17. Wednesday. A fine morning. Proceeded on my journey towards Braintree. Stopped to see Mr. Haven,¹ of Dedham, who told me, very civilly, he supposed I took my faith on trust from Dr. Mayhew, and added, that he believed the doctrine of the satisfaction of Jesus Christ to be essential to Christianity, and that he would not believe this satisfaction unless he believed the Divinity of Christ. Mr. Balch was there too, and observed, that he would not be a Christian if he did not believe the mysteries of the gospel; that he could bear with an Arminian, but when, with Dr. Mayhew, they denied the Divinity and satisfaction of Jesus Christ, he had no more to do with them; that he knew not what to make of Dr. Mayhew's two discourses upon the expected dissolution of all things. They gave him an idea of a cart whose wheels wanted greasing; it rumbled on in a hoarse, rough manner; there was a good deal of ingenious talk in them, but it

¹ The Reverend Jason Haven, then just ordained as pastor of the first parish in Dedham.

was thrown together in a jumbled, confused order. He believed the Doctor wrote them in a great panic. He added further that Arminians, however stiffly they maintain their opinions in health, always, he takes notice, retract when they come to die, and choose to die Calvinists. Set out for Braintree, and arrived about sunset.

21. Sunday. Vernal equinox. Spent the evening at Mr. Wibird's¹ with Messrs. Quincy,² Cranch,³ Savil, in conversation upon the present situation of public affairs. Mr. Quincy exerted his talents in a most eloquent harangue. Mr. Cranch quoted the Bishop of Quebec's letter⁴ concerning the French Missionaries among the Indians. Some, he says, are very good men.

24. Wednesday. Set out for Worcester; dined at Dedham, and rode from thence in the rain to Mendon. Supped and lodged at Josiah Adams's.

25. Thursday. Rode to Uxbridge; tarried at my uncle Webb's, and lodged with Mr. Nathan.⁵

26. Friday. Rode to Grafton; dined at Josiah Rawson's. He

¹ The Rev. Anthony Wibird, for forty-five years pastor of the first church in Braintree, had been settled the year before, February 5, 1755.

² Josiah Quincy, the elder, often mentioned in this Diary. In this year he retired from active business, and resided in Braintree from this time until his death in 1784. He was the friend and correspondent of many distinguished men of his times, several interesting letters from whom, addressed to him, are published in the Memoir of Josiah Quincy, Jun., by his son.

³ The late Judge Richard Cranch, had emigrated from Devonshire, in England, ten years before, in company with General Palmer, who had married his sister. He was now living in Braintree.

⁴ This letter was printed in the Boston Evening Post, of September 8, 1755. It seems to have been considered so important in its manifestation of the hostile spirit of the French Catholics, "the turbulent Gallicks" spoken of in the letter to Nathan Webb, as to have been issued in a separate sheet, and sold at a low price. The note appended to the advertisement in the Post reads as follows:—

"N. B. It ought to be read (for more reasons than one) by every intelligent man in North America."

The war between Great Britain and France was not formally declared until May of this year, 1756. But it had already been carried on in America for many months. The forcible removal of the French neutrals of Acadia, took place in 1755, a measure of grievous wrong, the true character of which haply might have been forgotten but for the immortality lately given to it by the verse of Longfellow.

⁵ This is the Nathan Webb to whom had been addressed, in the preceding month of October, that remarkable letter which will be found fully commented upon in the preceding volume. The journey on horseback to Worcester, spending three days on the way, is in some contrast with the habits of the present generation.

are cool and pleasant. But I have not improved my time properly. I have doted and sauntered away much of my time. This morning is very fine; the clear sky, the bright sun, the clean groves and grass, after so fine a rain, are very pleasant. But the books within this chamber have a much better title to my attention than any of the rural scenes and objects without it. I have been latterly too much in the world, and too little in this retreat. Abroad, my appetites are solicited, my passions inflamed, and my understanding too much perverted, to judge wisely of men or things; but in this retreat, when neither my senses, nor appetites, nor passions are excited, I am able to consider all things more coolly and sensibly. I was guilty of rash and profane swearing, of rash virulence against the characters of Goffe, J. Russell, lieutenant-governor, &c. Not but that there have been faults in their characters and conduct that every honest man ought to resent.

I have been interrupted from reading this Institute, ever since February. Amidst the dissipations of business, pleasure, conversation, intrigue, party, &c., what mortal can give attention to an old Latin Institute of the canon law? But it is certainly worth while to proceed and finish it, as I have already been two thirds through it.

August 1. Saturday. I am creating enemies in every quarter of the town. The Clarks hate;—Mother Hubbard, Thayer, Lamb, Tirrell, J. Brackett. This is multiplying and propagating enemies fast. I shall have the ill will of the whole town.

Daniel White. Moses Adams. This will not do.

Daniel Pratt *vs.* Thomas Colson. This action was brought by plaintiff against Colson as administrator on the estate of Mr. Bolter, for non-performance of a covenant of indenture. Pratt was a poor fatherless child, and his mother, unable to provide for him, bound him an apprentice to Mr. Bolter. He was then under ten years of age, and so was bound for eleven years and some odd months. In consideration of this very long and unusual term of apprenticeship, his master covenanted to teach him to read, write, and cipher, and to teach him the trade of a weaver. But we complain that he never taught us either to read, write, or cipher, or to weave. Call the proof.

The law, gentlemen, is extremely tender and indulgent to such actions as these. For such is the benignity and humanity of the English constitution, that all the weak and helpless and friendless part of our species are taken under its peculiar care and protection — women, children, and especially widows and fatherless children. And they have always, from the compassion of the law, peculiar privileges and indulgences allowed them. Therefore, as a poor, fatherless, and friendless child, the law would allow great indulgence and lenity to this plaintiff. But he is to be favored for another reason; because the English law greatly favors education. In every civilized country, some sort of education, some acquaintance with letters is necessary, that a man may fill any station whatever. In the countries of slavery and Romish superstition, the laity must not learn to read, lest they should detect the gross impostures of the priesthood, and shake off the yoke of bondage. But in Protestant countries, and especially in England and its colonies, freedom of inquiry is allowed to be not only the privilege, but the duty of every individual. We know it to be our duty to read, examine, and judge for ourselves, even of ourselves, what is right. No priest nor pope has any right to say what I shall believe, and I will not believe one word they say, if I think it is not founded in reason and in revelation. Now, how can I judge what my Bible justifies unless I can read my Bible?

The English constitution is founded, 'tis bottomed and grounded, on the knowledge and good sense of the people. The very ground of our liberties is the freedom of elections. Every man has in politics as well as religion, a right to think and speak and act for himself. No man, either king or subject, clergyman or layman, has any right to dictate to me the person I shall choose for my legislator and ruler. I must judge for myself. But how can I judge, how can any man judge, unless his mind has been opened and enlarged by reading? A man who can read will find in his Bible, in his common sermon books that common people have by them, and even in the almanac, and the newspapers, rules and observations that will enlarge his range of thought, and enable him the better to judge who has, and who has not that integrity of heart and that compass of knowledge and understanding which forms the statesman.

September 10. Thursday. Spent the evening at Zab's with the Parson.

Wibird. "I have seen a picture of Oliver Cromwell, with this motto under it:

' Careat successibus opto,¹
Quisquis ab eventu facta notanda putat.'

'I pray that he may want success who thinks that deeds are to be estimated from their event, their success.' Oliver was successful, but not prudent nor honest, nor laudable, nor imitable."

October 17. Saturday. Read in Institute and Lancelott. Began Lancelott's Institute last January, and have read no further than lib. 3, tit. 8, De Exceptionibus et Replicationibus.

October 18. Sunday. Arose at six. Read in Pope's Satires. Nil Admirari, &c. I last night read through both of Dr. Donne's Satires versified by Pope. Was most struck with these lines:

"Bear me, some god! Oh! quickly bear me hence,
To wholesome solitude, the nurse of sense,
Where contemplation prunes her ruffled wings,
And the free soul looks down to pity kings."

"Prayer." A posture; hands uplifted, and eyes. A very proper prayer for me to make when I am in Boston. "Solitude" is a personage in a clean, wholesome dress, the "nurse" and nourisher of sense. "Contemplation," a personage. "Prunes," picks, smooths. Is she an angel or a bird?—"ruffled," rumped, rugged, uneven, tumbled;—"free soul," not enslaved, unshackled, no bondage, no subjection; "looks down," pities George, Louis, Frederick, Philip, Charles, &c.

November 10. Tuesday. ² Another year is come round, and I can recollect still less reading than I could last November; the increase of my business within twelve months has been nothing; I drew fewer writs last October court than I drew the October court before, though I drew an uncommon number at both. Yet I have advanced a few steps; have procured my brother his office, abated Nathan Spear's writ, battled it with Captain

¹ Ovid's Heroids—Phyllis to Demophoon. l. 85.

² In the original is the following direction: "Turn back five leaves." The entry is made in the paper book which begins with the letter to Jonathan Sewall, and the reference is to the record of 14th November, 1760, p. 100.

I go upon the supposition that government is at an end. All distinctions are thrown down. All America is thrown into one mass. We must aim at the minutiae of rectitude.

Mr. Jay. Could I suppose that we came to frame an American constitution, instead of endeavoring to correct the faults in an old one — I can't yet think that all government is at an end. The measure of arbitrary power is not full, and I think it must run over, before we undertake to frame a new constitution.

To the virtue, spirit, and abilities of Virginia, we owe much. I should always, therefore, from inclination as well as justice, be for giving Virginia its full weight.

I am not clear that we ought not to be bound by a majority, though ever so small, but I only mentioned it as a matter of danger, worthy of consideration.¹

6. Tuesday. Went to Congress again; received by an express an intimation of the bombardment of Boston,² a confused account, but an alarming one indeed; God grant it may not be found true.

7. Wednesday. Went to Congress again, heard Mr. Duché read prayers; the collect for the day, the 7th of the month, was most admirably adapted, though this was accidental, or rather providential. A prayer which he gave us of his own composition was as pertinent, as affectionate, as sublime, as devout, as I ever heard offered up to Heaven.³ He filled every bosom present.⁴

¹ "The mode of voting in this Congress was first resolved upon; which was, that each Colony should have one voice; but, as this was objected to as unequal, an entry was made on the journals to prevent its being drawn into precedent in future." *Letter of Connecticut Delegates to Governor Trumbull*, 10 October, 1774.

² This rumor grew out of the seizure made by an armed force under orders from General Gage, of the gunpowder belonging to the Province, stored in Charlestown. See *Frothingham's History of the Siege of Boston*, p. 13.

³ The subsequent conduct of Mr. Duché did not prove him worthy of the commendation here awarded. In his letter to General Washington he most pointedly sneers at the New England delegates, to whom he was indebted for the distinction of being selected. Their motive is explained in Samuel Adams's letter to Dr. Joseph Warren, dated 9 September. See *Force's American Archives*, 1774, c. 802. *Sparks's Washington*, vol. v. p. 476.

⁴ This is more fully spoken of by the writer in a private letter to his wife, dated the 16th instant, of which, the following is the substance:—

"When the Congress first met, Mr. Cushing made a motion that it should be opened with prayer. It was opposed by Mr. Jay of New York, and Mr. Rut-

Dined with Mr. Miers Fisher, a young Quaker and a lawyer. We saw his library, which is clever. But this plain Friend and his plain though pretty wife, with her Thees and Thous, had provided us the most costly entertainment; ducks, hams, chickens, beef, pig, tarts, creams, custards, jellies, fools, trifles, floating islands, beer, porter, punch, wine, and a long &c. We had a large collection of lawyers at table; Mr. Andrew Allen, the Attorney-General, a Mr. Morris, the Prothonotary, Mr. Fisher, Mr. McKean, Mr. Rodney; besides these, we had Mr. Reed, Governor Hopkins, and Governor Ward. We had much conversation upon the practice of law in our different Provinces, but at last we got swallowed up in politics, and the great question of parliamentary jurisdiction. Mr. Allen asks me, from whence do you derive your laws? How do you entitle yourselves to English privileges? Is not Lord Mansfield on the side of power?

8. Thursday. Attended my duty on the committee all day,

ledge of South Carolina, because we were so divided in religious sentiments; some Episcopalians, some Quakers, some Anabaptists, some Presbyterians, and some Congregationalists, that we could not join in the same act of worship. Mr. Samuel Adams arose and said, 'he was no bigot, and could hear a prayer from a gentleman of piety and virtue, who was at the same time a friend to his country. He was a stranger in Philadelphia, but had heard that Mr. Duché (Dushay they pronounce it,) deserved that character, and therefore he moved that Mr. Duché, an episcopal clergyman, might be desired to read prayers to the Congress to-morrow morning.' The motion was seconded and passed in the affirmative. Mr. Randolph, our President, waited on Mr. Duché and received for answer that, if his health would permit, he certainly would. Accordingly, next morning he appeared with his clerk and in his pontificals, and read several prayers in the established form, and then read the collect for the seventh day of September, which was the thirty-fifth Psalm. You must remember, this was the next morning after we heard the horrible rumor of the cannonade of Boston. I never saw a greater effect upon an audience. It seemed as if Heaven had ordained that Psalm to be read on that morning.

"After this, Mr. Duché, unexpectedly to every body, struck out into an extemporary prayer, which filled the bosom of every man present. I must confess, I never heard a better prayer, or one so well pronounced. Episcopalian as he is, Dr. Cooper himself never prayed with such fervor, such ardor, such earnestness and pathos, and in language so elegant and sublime, for America, for the Congress, for the Province of Massachusetts Bay, and especially the town of Boston. It has had an excellent effect upon every body here. I must beg you to read that Psalm. If there was any faith in the sortes Virgilianæ, or sortes Homericæ, or especially the sortes Biblicæ, it would be thought providential.

"It will amuse your friends to read this letter and the thirty-fifth Psalm to them. Read it to your father and Mr. Wibird. I wonder what our Braintree churchmen would think of this. Mr. Duché is one of the most ingenious men, and best characters, and greatest orators in the episcopal order upon this continent; yet a zealous friend of liberty and his country."