

ABIGAIL ADAMS Becoming a First Lady

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF ELECTION RESULTS

To John Adams

Quincy Feb^{ry} 8 1797

“The Sun is drest in Brightest Beams
To Give thy Honours to the Day”

And may it prove an auspicious prelude to each ensuing Season. You have this Day to declare Yourself Head of A Nation. And now O Lord my God thou hast made thy servant Ruler over the people. give unto him an understanding Heart, that he may know how to go out, and come in before this great people, that he may discern between good and bad, for who is able to judge this, thy so great People? were the Words of a Royal Sovereign, and not less applicable to him who is invested with the Chief Majestracy of a Nation, tho he wear not a Crown, or the Robes of Royalty.

My Thoughts, and My Meditations are with you, tho personally absent, and My petitions to Heaven are that the things which make for Peace, may not be hidden from your Eyes. My feelings are not those of Pride, or ostentation upon the occasion they are solemnized by a sense of the obligations, the important Trusts and Numerous Duties connected with it. that you may be enabled to Discharge them with Honour to yourself, with justice and impartiality to Your Country, and with satisfaction to this Great People Shall be The Daily prayer of your
A Adam

ON THE FAREWELL ADDRESS TO THE SENATE

To John Adams

My Dearest Friend

Quincy March 12th 1797

After a week of anxious expectation, I received by last Thursday's post, a packet containing three News papers, a pamphlet,

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two excellent Letters from our dear Sons, and fourteen lines from a hand, from which I was desirous of receiving, fourteen times as much. Unreasonable do you exclaim! Publick Buisness, publick cares, allow'd, but there is a kind of communication and intercourse which is a relieaf to the burdend mind, at least I conceive so.

I have read the address, the answer, and the reply. Upon reading the first period in the address, it struck me as obscure owing to the length of the period. I read it a second time. The Sense was clear but some how, it did not Seem what I wanted to have it; I attempted to, throw the Ideas into an other form, but could not Succeed, without weakening the force of expression or greatly lengthing the address. I therefore concluded that you had labourd yourself under the same difficulty. I made no remark upon it, but in my own mind, Three persons have since mentiond to me, the same thing, and one of them told me that he had himself been trying to place the Ideas of the first period in shorter Sentances, but met with the very obstical which I had myself before experienced. The address brought into view a Number of home Truths. Evident to Some, unseen by others. As the Sentiments of the writer are known to me, I trace their meaning, end and aim, and pronounce them all wise, just, and Good. The answer of the Senate is Manly, dignified, affectionate and cordial. The Reply will tend to strengthen the bond of union. The whole is calculated to remove the film from the Eyes of those who are disposed to see. I have heard but one remark, and that was from Jarvis. He was glad to see you come out so fully and declare that the Senate were equal to the defence and preservation of the constitution, and that it needed not a more permanent counsel. With mischievous men, no honest man would hold communion: but with Men who have been mislead, and who possess integrity of Heart, every good Man would be desirous of standing fair. To the latter the conduct of H n has been misterious, and they are ready to think that the *President* is a more impartial Man than they were taught to believe, and that the opposition and Secret machinations and intrigues of a certain Character arose altogether from knowing that the Man whom a majority of the people wishd to succeed the President was too independent in his Sentiments to receive controul. They conclude that they have been mistaken in him.

I see by the paper received last Evening that the Senate are notified to convene, by which I judge there are Subjects of

consequence to be imparted. Are there any official accounts of the reception of Pinckny by the Directory? Such reports are in circulation. I am pleasd to find Mr. Murray appointed as the successor of our Son. I do not know where a properer person could have been found. Russel the printer is an abominable Blunderer; he is not fit to publish State papers. No less than three blunders has he made in publishing the address to the Senate and in the Reply to their answer as you will see by reading it. My mind has ever been interested in publick affairs. I now find, that my Heart and Soul are, for all that I hold dearest on Earth is embarked on the wide ocean, and in a hazardous voyage. May the experience, wisdom and prudence of the helmsman conduct the vessel in Safety. I am as ever a fellow passenger.

Abigail Adams

JOINING JOHN IN PHILADELPHIA

To John Adams

My Dearest Friend

Quincy April 17th. 1797

Tho I have not heard from you since I wrote you last, and have nothing new to say, unless it be a resital of my own perplexities, out of which I must get by myself, Yet a few lines will assure you that I am getting forward as fast as possible with my affairs, and prepairing to sit out on my journey. The weather has been as uncommonly cold and Stormy for the week just past as it was Hot for two days the week before. We have a snow storm, of some inches depth, which has lain for three days. It has retarded our Buisness on the farm and chilld our exertions. The sudden changes have confind Your mother and brought on one of her old Lung complaints. The good old Lady is sure she shall dye now her physician and Nurse is about to leave her, but she judges with me, that all ought to be forsaken for the Husband. It is an additional care and anxiety for me. I shall provide for her comfort every thing necessary before I leave her. Mary Smith is yet living. Of how uncertain a duration are all our worldly possessions and Earthly comforts? If we could not look for brighter Scenes and fairer prospects, who could wish to remain the victims of pain and sorrow? Mr. Otis has lost his son George with a dropsy in his Head.

I have just been reading Chief Justice Elsworths Charge to the Grand jury at New York! Did the good gentleman never write before? Can it be genuine? The language is stiffer than his person. I find it difficult to pick out his meaning in many sentences. I am sorry it was ever publishd. How I run on. The Federilist say there is but one blot in your Character. The Chronical has undertaken to praise and the Jacobins to speak well. The Snare will not hold. Action will soon break it. Critical are the Times. May you get valiently through them.

Yours for ever,

A Adams

JOINING THE PRESIDENT

To Mary Smith Cranch

MY DEAR SISTER:

Philadelphia, May 16, 1797

Most cordially welcome to me was your kind Letter of May the 4th, yet I have not found time since my arrival to thank you for it, or even to write a Line to any Friend. My Journey was as pleasent as my thoughts upon what was past, and my anticipations of what was to come would permit it to be. We reachd East Chester on thursday noon and found Mrs. Smith and Children well. My reflections upon prospects there, took from me all appetite to food, and depresst my spirits, before too low. The Col gone a journey, I knew not where, I could not converse with her. I saw her Heart too full. Such is the folly and madness of speculation and extravagance. To her no blame is due. Educated in different Habits, she never enjoyd a life of dissipation. The Boys are fine Lads. I wish they were at Hingham under your care. I tarried one day & a half, and then went into N York. Charles lives prettily but frugally. He has a Lovely Babe and a discreet woman I think for his wife, quite different from many of the Family. A Number of Ladies and Gentlemen visited me there. On Monday, the 8 of May, we left N York to persue our journey. On Wednesday morning about 25 miles from Town, I was met by my Friend who clameing his own, I quitted my own carriage, and took my seat by his side. We rode on to Bristol, where I had previously engaged a dinner, and there upon the Banks of the Deleware, we spent the day, getting into the city at sun set. I found my Family of do-mesticks had arrived on Saturday without meeting any

accident, which was very fortunate, for 40 miles through the Jerseys was the worst Roads I ever travell'd. The soil is all clay. The heavy rains & the constant run of six stages daily, had so cut them up, that the whole was like a ploughd feild, in furroughs of 2 feet in depth, and was very dangerous. To me you may well suppose such roads were more peculiarly distressing. They were so much so, as to confine me to my Room & Bed the greater part of Two days. By some applications I have in a great Measure recoverd, tho I am still a sufferer.

Yesterday being Monday, from 12 to half past two I received visits, 32 Ladies and near as many Gentlemen. I shall have the same ceremony to pass through to day, and the rest part of the week. As I am not prepar'd with furniture for a Regular drawing Room, I shall not commence one I believe, as the Summer is to near at hand, and my Health very precarious. At the Winter Sessions I shall begin. Mrs. Tufts once stiled my situation, splendid misery. She was not far from Truth. To day the President meets both Houses at 12 to deliver His speech. I will inclose it to you. I should like to learn the comments upon it, with a veiw to discover the Temper and Sentiments of the publick mind. We are indeed as Milton expresses it, "Thrown on perillous Times."

We have Letters from the Minister at the Hague as late as 23 Feb'ry. I will send you in my next some extracts from them. They are in the same strain of information and intelligence with the former. The decission as it respected the Election here, was well assertaind in France & England & Holland, and it had its influence upon all those powers.

I pray you to Remember me affectionatly to all my Friends & Neighbours. I rejoyce in your unanimity as it respect Mr. Whitney, who you know is the Man of my choice, without any prejudice or dissafection to Mr. Flint. The union was however unexpected but not the less agreeable. The hour approaches to dress for the morning. My Love to Cousin Betsy. I wish she could run in as formerly. I do not however dispair of seeing her Here some future day.

I can say nothing to you of future prospects of returning to my own dear Home. That must be governd by circumstances. My pens are so bad I know not whether you can read. I am most affec'ly

Your Sister

A. ADAMS

Evening 8 oclock

The day is past, and a fatiguing one it has been. The Ladies of

Foreign Ministers and the Ministers, with our own Secretaries & Ladies have visited me to day, and add to them, the whole Levee to day of senate & house. Strangers &c making near one Hundred asked permission to visit me, so that from half past 12 till near 4, I was rising up & sitting down. Mr. A will never be too big to have his Friends.