

# *New Letters of Abigail Adams*

## PART II, 1798-1801

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Philadelphia, Jan'y 5th, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

I received your kind Letter of December and was surprized to find that my Letter should convey the first intelligence of the death of Mr. & Mrs. Hall to Mr. & Mrs. Black, as their Brother assured me he had written three weeks before.<sup>1</sup> I told him I would take charge of any Letter from him, and could nearly vouch for its going safely.

I was much dissatisfied when Mrs. Brisler sought the Child so earnestly and could not find it, and thought it my duty to inform Mrs. Black of it, as I did immediately upon his [Mr. Black's brother] sending the child to me.<sup>2</sup> My own conclusions were that it was at Nurse with some person, and in some place that he did not chuse my people should see. However this may be, the Nurse who brought the child and whom I saw Nurse it in my Chamber whilst she stay'd, is a very decent, respectable, healthy looking woman, above the common level of such persons here.

I have already written Mrs. Black my opinion of her and her replies to such questions as I put to her; I shall send some of my people to see the child as you say, when they are not expected, and I will have it brought me as often as once a Month, and I will let the Nurse know, that the Child has relatives who are much interested for it, and design to take it in the Spring, if the Child lives untill the Spring. The sooner Mr. Black comes for it, the better, for this city is a very unhealthy place for children.

<sup>1</sup> See footnote 3 to the letter of November 15, 1797.

<sup>2</sup> Ann (or Anna) Hall, the orphan niece of Moses Black, of Quincy, and a distant relative of John Adams. "Moses Black's will left \$1000 each to Anna Black Lamb and Mrs. Roxanna Blake and all his real estate in Quincy to his wife 'provided that if my said wife marry again, that I give and devise one-half of said Quincy real estate to Anna Hall.'" Daniel Munro Wilson, *Where American Independence Began*, Boston and New York, 1902, pp. 187-8. The interest of Mrs. John Adams in this infant Hall orphan probably sprang from the fact that some time after the death of the father of President John Adams, his widow married a "Mr. Hall." On the death of her second husband, Mrs. Susanna (Boylston) [Adams] Hall seems to have made her home with Mrs. Richard Cranch, probably because of the prolonged absence of John and Abigail Adams from Braintree, or Quincy. Both Abigail Adams and Mary Cranch were devoted to the aged mother of John Adams. She died on April 21, 1797. *Columbian Centinel*, May 3, 1797.

As soon as Mrs. Brisler is well enough she will go with Betsy, and see the Baby. Mrs. Brisler has had one of her old ill turns, but is better.

I expect that your next Letter will bring me tidings of Abbe's death. I look upon it [as] a release to Pheby, but I am fully sensible her days of usefulness are nearly over and what is to be done with her I cannot tell.<sup>3</sup> For this winter she must remain where she is, but there is no reason that the whole of the House should be devoted to her as it is in a manner, for no other person will occupy it, who will give any thing for it, whilst she resides there, and she must have somebody to look after her. 12 or 13 years she has lived there, and never paid a sou. More than that she has lately received as much as her House rent from me, and as long as I am able I shall be willing to do for her, but I think some new plan must be struck out for her.

I received Letters from Sister Peabody yesterday for myself and Mrs. Smith. She thinks Mr. Atwood ought to have some acknowledgment made to him for his trouble. She says Charles left a New Watch worth 20 dollars.<sup>4</sup> Suppose that should be given him, but I know not who has a right to do it. To Miss Sarah Atwood she also thinks some Handsome present ought to be made. Query who ought to make these presents? She ought to have what is reasonable and proper & handsome considering all circumstances, but the situation of Charles Family is well known. They are not in independant circumstances. I would not have them however receive from Strangers obligations which should be thought the Family ought to reward. Sister Peabody has twice written me upon this subject. She says Charles left in money about 40 dollars with which she has paid all extra Charges. His Cloaths which were given him by Mr. Atwood I think ought all to return to Mr. Atwood. He was his appretence [*sic*] and Mr. Atwood received from him all the service of his time &c. He treated him like a child in his sickness, and I shall ever esteem & respect the Family for it. I wish you would consult Dr. [Cotton] Tufts and Mr. [Richard] Cranch upon it. I will be at the expence of a Ring for Mrs. Atwood such as Cousin Betsy Smith has for Mrs. Rogers.<sup>5</sup> Pray inquire of her and get her to have one made with Charles Name & present it to Mrs. Atwood for me, and I will pay for it.

<sup>3</sup> Abbe is probably Mrs. Joseph Field, to whom a daughter was born in 1752, and Phebe is probably Phebe Trask, who married Henry Field in April, 1767. See the letter of June 4, 1798.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Smith, son of that William Smith who was the brother of Mrs. John Adams, died in 1797. See footnote 5 to the letter of November 15, 1797. Charles Smith was apprenticed to Mr. Atwood.

<sup>5</sup> This person has not been identified.

I do not want this known however beyond ourselves. Tis true he was my Nephew, but not the only relative I had or have who stands in need of pecuniary assistance. Marys sickness was much longer and more expensive. That, too, ought to be considered.

I wish you would write me fully upon the subject and whether you have had any Letters from William since the death of his Brother.

The News from abroad of the Peace made by the Emperor with the Directory of France (to call it a Republick would be a subversion of terms) is an Event big with consequences.<sup>6</sup> The treatment of our envoys, as rumoured, for the Executive has not received any communication from them since their arrival in France, excites however unpleasant sensations, for the insolent proposition & threat sent to Switserland a Nutral power shows us that tyrants stick at nothing.<sup>7</sup> The threatened invasion of England I do not much credit. They may be mad enough however to attempt it, for I believe they fear nothing so much as disbanding there [*sic*] Armies.

Our American Minister in England is making a Tour of it, so that at this most critical moment the Government is indebted to News Paper intelligence for all they have.<sup>8</sup> "I never left my post a moment but upon business for my Country during the whole war," crys—you know who.<sup>9</sup> But my paper is full, and the post will be gone. Adieu my dear Sister.

Affectionatly your[s]

[A.] Adams

<sup>6</sup> On April 18 and October 17, 1797, Francis II, Holy Roman Emperor—Francis I, Emperor of Austria, after 1806—first dealt with the government of revolutionary France by authorizing the signing of the treaties of Leoben and Campo Formio, the most important articles of which provided for the cession to France of the Belgian Provinces and the left bank of the Rhine. This left England standing alone as the only nation at war with the victorious French—a fact of great significance for the future.

<sup>7</sup> The "ancient inviolability" of the neutrality of the Swiss Confederation is a journalistic myth, dating approximately from 1914. As early as 1792 a French army entered the territory of Geneva, in order to "coöperate" with the "democratic" party of that city. On December 15, 1797, a French force seized Basle, and on March 6, 1798, the troops of Bonaparte captured Berne, the treasure of which, £800,000, was taken in order to provide pay for the conqueror's army. To "compensate" the plundered Swiss, the new "Helvetic Republic, one and indivisible," was proclaimed at Aarau. C. A. Fyfe, *A History of Modern Europe*, vol. 1, New York, 1881, pp. 151-3.

<sup>8</sup> Rufus King (1755-1827) was born in Maine, and settled in New York City in 1786, having married the only daughter of a wealthy merchant there. Serving as American minister to England from 1796 to 1803, King is said to have been "one of the most effective representatives the United States has ever had at London." Channing, *History of the United States*, vol. 4, p. 353.

<sup>9</sup> John Adams spent his summers on his farm at Quincy, Massachusetts. In 1798 Mrs. Adams was seriously ill, and the President of the United States stayed away from the seat of government at Philadelphia from midsummer to November, and at a most critical time, when relations with France were strained to the breaking-point.

Philadelphia, Janry 20, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

I do not know whether there is any getting over the Rivers. The Eastern Mail due yesterday is not arrived. The Ice has been broken up for two or three days past. Mr. B. Beals who has been here more than a week, talked of leaving the city yesterday.<sup>1</sup> I have given him a little matter address to Cousin Betsy. It is a small Box of the size of a little platè. In it you will find a shawl handkerchief which is for you and tho almost the only covering worn by our Ladies here, in the winter, you will think it more proper for April or May. My sattin fur Cloak is almost singular.

I wrote to Mrs. Black yesterday and shall certainly be very attentive to the Child. It grows finely.

We had some snow at the same time you had, but a much less quantity. We have had some very fine weather this Month, and it still continues. I wish our political Horizon look[ed] as bright as our Natural one does, but we have a dark prospect. I am at a loss to know how the people who were formerly so much alive to the usurpation of one Nation can crouch so tamely to a much more dangerous and dareing one, to one which aims not only at our independance and libety [*sic*] but a total annihilation of the Christian Religion, whose Laws, all which they have, are those of Draco, who are Robbers, Murderers, Scoffers, back-biters.<sup>2</sup> In short no crime however black or Horrid to which they have not become familiar. America must be punished, punished for having amongst her legislatures Men who sanction these crimes, who justify France in all her measures, and who would rejoice to see fire, sword and Massacre carried into the Island of Great Britain untill she became as miserable, as France is wretched.

O My Native State, wash ye, make yourselves clean from these abominations. You are Guilty of sending three such Men, V[arnu]m, F[ree-ma]n, S[kinn]er.<sup>3</sup> Not a single state but what has some, Conneticut ex-

<sup>1</sup> Beals or Beal. Probably the captain of the frigate mentioned in the letter of May 29, 1798, plying between Philadelphia and Boston. See the letters of February 6, March 5, and June 13, 1798.

<sup>2</sup> Draco, or Dracon, an Athenian legislator who formulated the first code of laws for Athens, about 624 B.C. Because of the number of offences to which his code affixed the penalty of death, it was often said to have been "written in blood."

<sup>3</sup> See the letters of May 24 and June 3, 1797. Varnum favored national defence through the militia as against a standing army, opposed building the *Constitution* and other naval vessels, and denounced what he called the personal extravagance of President John Adams. Varnum was Speaker of the House of Representatives (1807-1811).

cepted, tho many of them would not go all lengths. Virginia has but two Federilists, North Carolina but one. Can we expect such measures to be adopted as the safety and security of the Country require? Every Man who sees the danger may toil & toil; like Syssaphass [Sisyphus], (I believe the Name is misspelt) the weight recoils. We have Letters from Mr. Murry.<sup>4</sup> A few lines from Mr. Marshall to him informs him: that the envoys were not received, and he did not believe they would be.<sup>5</sup> They dare not write, knowing that every word would be inspected. They have not been permitted to hold any society or converse with any citizen. In short they have been in a mere Bastile. We are in daily expectation of their return.

I expected from what you last wrote to hear of Abbes death. Pheby will be surrounded as long as there is any thing to eat or drink, and I suppose she will think [it] very hard to be obliged to alter her mode of living. But tho I am willing to assist towards her mantanance, I do not like to support all she may keep with her, and her whole income would not find her wood. Untill Spring it would be best she should remain where she is. I would have Mr. Porter let her have a Bushel of corn. The money I sent, you will lay out for wood or otherways as you think best. It would not do for me to order her any more wood but I would buy for her. That is an article she must have. Pray order her some when she wants and I will pay for it. The negro woman who lives with her should be obliged to find some, for she pays no rent. You will be so good as to let me know how she is.

Mrs. Smith is still at East Chester, waiting & expecting! I have just had a line from Sister Peabody of Jan'ry 5th. All well.

I could very easily forgive Mr. [Peter] Whitney, and should still like him for our minister. I am sorry he was not better advised. I suppose Mr. [Anthony] Wibird will not think of removeing now there is a female in the House. I do not know but Mr. Wibird himself may go and do likewise.<sup>6</sup> Remember me affectinatly [*sic*] to all our dear Friends.

Ever your affectionate Sister  
Abigail Adams

<sup>4</sup> William Vans Murray (1760-1803), of Maryland, was a member of the House of Representatives (1791-1797), and a loyal Federalist and close adviser of Washington, who sent him as minister to the Netherlands in February, 1797. For some time Vans Murray was the sole official channel of communication between the French Directory and the government of the United States.

<sup>5</sup> C. C. Pinckney, John Marshall, and Elbridge Gerry were appointed envoys-extraordinary to France by John Adams in the spring of 1797—the "XYZ Mission."

<sup>6</sup> See footnote 5 to the letter of May 16, 1797.

Philadelphia, Febry [1-5], 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

Your kind Letter of Jan'ry 14th I received last week. I shall not be dissatisfied with Mr. Whitney if the people are disposed to give him a call, but far otherways. I shall rejoice in the prospect of having so virtuous and sensible a Gentleman settled with us, to whom I doubt not, years will teach more knowledge of the word.

I can understand you well, tho you do not speak plain. I know you think that there may be allowd a greater latitude of thought and action at the Bar than in the pulpit. I allow it, and yet each Character be perfectly honourable & virtuous.

You ask me, What has Cox done that he is dismiss.<sup>1</sup> I answer a Man of his Character ought not to have been employd where he was. At the Time the British were in [possession *cancelled*] this State, Mr. Cox then a young man, went from this city and joind them, and as a Guide led them into this city with a chaplet of ever Greens round his Head. When this Government was about to be establisht, he turnd about, and possessing some talants became a warm advocate for the Federal Government. He possess[es] specious talants. He got Col[onel] Hamilton to appoint him first Clerk in His office whilst he was Secretary of the treasury. In this office he continued till it is said Hamilton found him very troublesome to him, and not wanting to have him an Enemy, he contrived to get the office of Commisisoner [*sic*] of the Revenue created, and Cox appointed to it. When Hamilton resignd, Cox expected to be appointed in his Room but finding Mr. Wolcot prefered befor him, he was much mortified.<sup>2</sup> And at the late Election for President, he became a writer in the papers and in pamphlets against the administration of Washington and a Partizen for Jefferson. But no sooner was the Election determined, than Sycophant like he was, worshiping the rising Sun outwardly, whilst secretly he was opposing and thwarting every measure recommended by the President for the defence of the Country. But

<sup>1</sup> Tench Coxe (1755-1824), of Pennsylvania, was the author of an able pamphlet, *An Examination of the Constitution of the United States* (1788), which marked him as an active Federalist. Coxe was made Assistant Secretary of the Treasury in 1789, and became Commissioner of the Revenue in 1792. Adams removed him in December, 1797; whereupon Coxe promptly went over to the "Republicans" and helped in the defeat of Adams in 1800, by publishing a letter which Adams indiscreetly wrote to him in 1792, blaming Hamilton for the appointment of Thomas Pinckney as minister to England. Hamilton struck back at Adams with his notorious election letter of 1800.

<sup>2</sup> Although John Adams gave no official reason for removing Coxe, it was commonly believed that his Secretary of the Treasury, Oliver Wolcott, Jr., persuaded him to take this step, even though Wolcott was a creature of Hamilton, and disloyal to Adams.

this was not all. He was constantly opposing and obstructing the Secretary of the Treasury in his department. A Man of no sincerity of views or conduct, a Changling as the Wind blow, & a Jacobin in Heart.

You will see by the papers I send you the debate continued by Congress for 15 days and yet undetermined, upon the foreign intercourse Bill.<sup>3</sup> These debates will be a clue to unfold to you the full system of the Minority, which is to usurp the Executive Authority into their own Hands. You will see much said about the Patronage of the President and his determination to appoint none to office, as they say, who do not think exactly with him. This is not true in its full extent. Lamb the Collector was not dismissed from office for his Jacobin sentiments, but for his Peculation, Jarvis for Peculation, Cox for opposing the Government in its operations.<sup>4</sup> The P[resident] has said, and he still says, he will appoint to office merit, virtue & Talents, and when Jacobins possess these, they will stand a chance, but it will ever be an additional recommendation that they are Friends to order and Government. President Washington had reason to Rue the day that he departed from this Rule, but at the commencement of the Government, when parties were not so high, and the Country not in danger from foreign factions, it was thought it would tend to cement the government. But the Ethiopien [*sic*] could not Change his Skin, and the Spots of the Leopard have been constantly visible, tho sometimes shaded.<sup>5</sup> I cannot think [the] Virgin[i]a

<sup>3</sup> Much of the time of the Second Session of the Fifth Congress (November 13, 1797–July 16, 1798) was consumed in the House of Representatives by the impeachment of Senator Blount, of Tennessee; consequences of the feud between Griswold, of Connecticut, and Lyon, of Vermont; and a long debate on what was called the Foreign Intercourse Bill—"A Bill Providing the Means of Intercourse between the United States and Foreign Nations." When Robert G. Harper, of South Carolina, brought this bill to the floor of the House, he caused an explosion of oratory which sputtered for weeks. The bill was designed to establish the diplomatic and consular service by means of amending the acts of July 1, 1790, and February 9, 1793. The opponents of the Federalists attacked it on principle, and also because the son of the President was minister to Berlin, and the unpopular William Loughton Smith, of South Carolina, had been appointed minister to Spain and Portugal on July 10, 1797. The opposition to the bill was led by John Nicholas (1756–1819), member of the House from Virginia. The Senate finally passed this bill as it came up from the House on March 13, 1798. *Annals of the Fifth Congress*, p. 521.

<sup>4</sup> John Lamb (1735–1800), a native of New York, became prosperous as a wine merchant and served with credit during the Revolution. In 1784 the New York Legislature, of which he was a member, appointed him Collector of the Customs of the port of New York. Washington renewed this appointment in 1789. In 1797 a shortage in the accounts of Lamb's deputy, a former criminal, forced Lamb to resign his office; he sold his lands to cover the lost funds, and died in poverty. For William Jarvis and Tench Coxe, see footnote 6 to the letter of June 3, 1797, and footnotes 1 and 2 above.

<sup>5</sup> "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." *Jeremiah*, XIII, 23.

declamation will make many converts, for how stupid would that man be thought in private Life who should put the care and oversight of his affairs into the Hands of such persons as he knew would counteract all his instruction, and destroy all his property?<sup>6</sup>

Vague and contradictory accounts are in circulation respecting our Envoys. One thing is certain. No official communication has been received from them, from whence I judge they do not think it safe to make any. Bache is in tribulation. He publishd last Saturday an attack upon the Secretary of State for receiving as he said 5 dollors for a pasport which should have been deliverd Gratis. One Dr. Reynolds appears to have been at the bottom of the buisness, an Irish scape Gallows who fled here from the justice of his country charged as he was with treason against it, and a reward of a hundred Guineys was offerd for him by the British Government. A person wholly unknown to the Secretary but one of Baches slanderers and employd by him as it is said to write libels. I hope the Rascals will be persued, to the extent of the Law.<sup>7</sup>

It is time to leave politicks for my paper is already full. We had a very heavy storm last week and it looks more like winter now than since I have been here.

Mr. Greenleaf has been sick, but I believe he is quite recoverd. I hear

<sup>6</sup> What Mrs. Adams called the "Virginia declamation" were the long and formidable speeches in which John Nicholas, of Virginia, attacked the Foreign Intercourse Bill. Nicholas used three chief arguments in opposing this bill:

1. He hoped "to bring back" the consular and diplomatic service to the "simple" days of 1789.
2. He accused John Adams of filling up appointments to the foreign service with his partisan supporters, that is, with Federalists.
3. He thought that the United States would be better off if it were to have no ministers at all!

Nicholas was a crank, and consequently one of the very first American "isolationists"—"Mr. Nicholas considered the subject of this bill as one of the most important that could come before the Legislature, for he attributed all our misfortunes to this source. He thought we ought to have no political connexion with Europe, but be considered, in relation to that continent, as mere buyers and venders [*sic*] of their manufactures." *Annals of the Fifth Congress*, p. 922.

In 1803 Nicholas removed to Ontario County, New York, and died destitute in 1819.

<sup>7</sup> On November 12, 1796, Thomas Witherspoon, a Scottish merchant, got a passport in Philadelphia, for which he gave one of the clerks of Timothy Pickering a gratuity of five dollars, in silver. Over a year later, Bache published the story of this transaction in the *Aurora* of January 24, 1798. Pickering dismissed both his first and second clerk, and wrote to the *Aurora*. Bache gave Dr. James Reynolds as the source of his information, possibly the same James W. Reynolds whose so-called wife, Maria Lewis, blackmailed Alexander Hamilton in 1791 and 1792. Maria Lewis sometimes called herself the wife of Jacob Clingman, a confederate of Reynolds. Charles W. Upham, *The Life of Timothy Pickering*, Boston, 1873, vol. 3, pp. 308-12.



of him frequently and I am told that no comfort or convenience is wanting but that of Liberty, that unfortunately there is but too much company, for I have been Credibly informd that as many as two Hundred Heads of Families and persons formerly in good circumstances are now in confinement. Mr. Greenleaf expects soon to be liberated by a Law of this State which is now before the Legislature.<sup>8</sup>

I had Letters from Mrs. Smith last week, the col[onel] was not returnd, nor do I much believe that he will. I believe I mentiond to you to get Sister Smith to knit me some Stockings, but I wholly forget whether I sent any money either to buy cotton or pay her.<sup>9</sup>

I wish you would mention to Mrs. Black to make a cap for the Baby and inclose it to me. It will have a good Effect I know in fixing in the mind of the Nurse a Certainty that it has Relations who attend to it. I inquired of the Nurse if it was well provided fir [*sic*]. She said it had sufficient for the present, and she always brings it clean and well enough drest. I know it will give you pleasure to learn that Mr. & Mrs. [J. Q.] Adams had arrived safe at Hamburgh in October & left it for Berlin on the 2d of Nov'br. We learn this from Mr. Murry by a Letter of Novbr 7th.<sup>10</sup> We have not received any letters of a later date than Sep'br. We are all at present in the enjoyment of Health. Mrs. Cushing came in last Evening in the sisterly manner & past the Evening with me. With Mrs. Otis and her I could fancy myself at Quincy.<sup>11</sup>

I bear my drawing Rooms, sometimes crowded, better than I expected, tho I always feel the Effects of the lights the next day.

My affectionate Regards to all Friends young or old from your  
Sister

A. ADAMS

P.S.

Pray let me hear from Polly. I am very uneasy about her.

Just as I had written the last sentance yours of 20th was brought me. Alass poor Polly. My Heart aches for her. I shall dread to hear again. If she wants wine pray send from my cellar as much as she may have

<sup>8</sup> James Greenleaf was discharged from bankruptcy in 1798, under "one of the earliest American bankruptcy laws . . . that of Maryland." Channing, *History of the United States*, vol. 5, p. 193.

<sup>9</sup> "Mrs. Smith" is Abigail (Adams) Smith, wife of Colonel William Stephens Smith. "Sister Smith" is Martha (White) Smith, wife of William Smith, the Boston merchant, brother of Mrs. John Adams.

<sup>10</sup> For William Vans Murray, see footnote 4 to the letter of January 20, 1798.

<sup>11</sup> For Mrs. Justice William Cushing, see footnote 10 to the letter of January 24, 1789. Mrs. Samuel Allyne Otis was the wife of the Secretary of the Senate, 1789-1814.

need of. They cannot buy such. If she lives do go & see her again. I wish I could do her any good. I really Loved her.<sup>12</sup> The post will be gone.

Yours

A. A.

Philadelphia, Feb'ry 6th, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

I was very anxious to receive a Letter from you this morning, and Betsy was wishing yet dreading to hear from her sister. That she yet lives, is some hope for to build upon. Mr. Brisler has just brought your Letter from the office dated 29th Jan'ry. I believe I have written you every week, but fancy the Ice may have prevented the post from arriving. I wish Polly was where you could often see her. I have a great opinion of cabbage leaves. I would apply them to her feet, to her neck & to her Head. You know how opprest she always was at her Lungs if any thing ailed her. I want to be doing something for her. Tell her I am very anxious for her and hope she may yet recover. But great care and tenderness is necessary or she will be lost. Pray take care. But why should I ask what I am sure is always done. Pray tell Mr. Cranch to take great care of himself, and, my dear Sister, my cellar is always open to you. Do not let so good a man want wine to make his Heart glad, when you know where it can be had with a hearty welcome. I have written to Dr. Tufts to get my Room & chamber new painted and that as soon as it can be done in March the closset floor & the entrys and stairs. They will have time then to dry sufficiently. I had a letter on Saturday from Mrs. Smith. The Col[onel] returnd last week and has notified his Credittors to meet him in order to adjust with them his affairs.<sup>1</sup> I cannot suppose that he has it in his power to satisfy the demands they have, but if he can settle so as to be able to do any buisness in future it will be a great relief to my mind as well as to hers. But I am affraid of vissions, of Ideal Schemes &c. At any rate I am glad he has returnd. It really seemd to me at times, as if Mrs. Smith would lose

<sup>12</sup> Probably Mary Carter Smith, niece of Mrs. Adams, who died on April 28, 1798. See footnote 1 to the letter of May 7, 1798.

<sup>1</sup>Colonel William Stephens Smith, the son-in-law of John Adams, had plunged heavily into speculation in western lands on his return from London to the United States in 1788. As late as 1812, however, he was living on a farm, "Smith Valley," which he owned in Lebanon, Madison County, New York. From there he was elected as a Federalist to the Thirteenth Congress (1813-1815).

herself. She has sometimes written me that existence was a burden to her; and that she was little short of distraction. I have been more distressed for her than I have been ready to own. You know she always kept every thing to herself that she could, but she writes in better spirits, and is at least relieved from that worst of States, I think, a constant anxious expectation, and anticipation.

I have had Letters from my sons abroad to October. They were then well, but none since they left London. I hope they are safe at Berlin long before this time. You saw a Letter or rather an extract of a Letter in the *Centinal* from [J.Q.A. *cancelled*] dated as if written at Paris about a fortnight since in order the better to disguise the source.<sup>2</sup> It is probable you may see publishd from Fenno's paper some observations upon the operation of the French constitution as exemplified in the transactions of the 4 Sep'br by the same hand.<sup>3</sup>

You complain of always having a share of Rhumatism. That is just my case. I have it floting about, sometimes in my head, Breast, Stomack &c, but if I can keep of fever I can Parry it so as not to be confined. Dr. [Benjamin] Rush is for calling it Gout, but I will not believe a word of all that, for Rhumatism I have had ever since I was a Child. When I feel any thing like fever, nitre in powder of about 6 Grains with a 6 part of a Grain of tarter Emetic & a 6 part of a Grain of Calomil in each taking 3 powders in a day, generally relieves me.

Inclosed is a ten dollor Bill out of which be so good as to give two to the widow Green, Mr. Pratts Mother, and to pay Sister Smith for the stockings knit, and supply her with Cotton. Buy Pheby a load of wood if necessary. I know you Love to be my almoner. I wish it was in my power to do more abundantly. If there is any thing in the way of oranges, Milk, Bisquit &c, which will be for Pollys comfort do be so kind as to procure it for her and send to her for me.

I hope captain & Mrs. Beal are recoverd and that Mr. & Mrs. Black are well. I pray you to remember me to Brother Adams & Family when

<sup>2</sup> See the *Columbian Centinel*, January 27, 1798, for the "Copy of a Letter" dated "Paris, September 21, 1797," in which J. Q. Adams stated that he saw no prospect of success for the "X.Y.Z. Mission" because the new revolution in Paris, by expelling two Directors and one-half of the legislative body, had driven the moderate men from power.

<sup>3</sup> John Fenno's *Gazette of the United States*, an organ of the Federalists. Mrs. Adams refers to the *coup d'etat* of September 4, 1798, the 18th Fructidor, when the three Republican directors, Barras, Rewbel, and La Révellière, defeated their colleagues, Barthélemy and Carnot. See footnote 4 to the letter of April 13, 1798.

you see them. My Love to Mrs. Norton, to Mrs. Greenleaf, & respects to Mrs. Welch.<sup>4</sup> From your ever

Affectionate Sister

ABIGAIL ADAMS

When you see Mrs. Pope, ask her about the Butter, the quantity & price. I should wish to pay for it, as well as two or three of her Cheses.

Philadelphia, Feb'y 15, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

I have not received a Line from you since the last of Jan'ry. Betsy is much distrest to hear from her sister and I am not a little anxious. I hoped the tuesday post as usual would have given me some information. I must attribute it to the weather. For, my dear Sister, write me a line every post if only to tell me how you all are. You will see much to your mortification, that Congress have been fitting [fighting], not the French, but the Lyon, not the Noble British Lyon, but but [*sic*] the beastly transported Lyon.<sup>1</sup> I am of the Quakers mind whom Peter Porcupine quotes. Speaking of the Irish, he says, "There is no mediocrity, or medium of Character in these people: they are either the most noble, brave, generous and best Bred: or the most ruffian like dirty and blackgaurd of all the creation." What a picture will these 14teen days make upon our Journals?! Yet are the supporters of Lyon alone to blame: *the Gentlemen* the real federilist would have expeld him instantly, and if it were possible a federilist could be found thus to have degraded himself, he would not have cost the Country 14 days debate, besides the infamy and disgrace of sitting again there.<sup>2</sup> I inclose you a paper containing a speach or two upon the subject. The Brute has not been in the house

<sup>4</sup> For Captain Beal, see footnote 1 to the letter of January 20, 1798; for Mr. and Mrs. Black, footnote 3 to the letter of December 22, 1799. "Brother Adams" is Peter Boylston Adams, younger brother of the President. Peter Boylston Adams (1738-1823) had four children by Mary Crosby: Mary (March 4, 1769), Boylston (April 24, 1771), Ann (April 19, 1773), and Susanna (August 11, 1777). The others are Mrs. Elizabeth (Cranch) Norton, wife of the Reverend Jacob Norton; Mrs. Lucy (Cranch) Greenleaf, wife of John Greenleaf; and the wife of Dr. Thomas Welsh, of Quincy.

<sup>1</sup> Matthew Lyon (1750-1822) was born in County Wicklow, Ireland, and came to America in 1765, settling in Vermont. He was elected to the House of Representatives in 1797, and was mercilessly lampooned as an ignoramus by the Federalist press. On January 30, 1798, in the House of Representatives, he spat in the face of Roger Griswold, of Connecticut, who had derided his military record.

<sup>2</sup> On February 12, 1798, a resolution for Lyon's expulsion was lost in the House, having received a majority, but not the requisite two-thirds vote.

for several days, but he is unfeeling enough to go again, and if he does, I have my apprehensions of something still more unpleasant.<sup>3</sup>

These Philadelphians are a strange set of people, making pretensions to give Laws of politeness and propriety to the union. They have the least feeling of real genuine politeness of any people with whom I am acquainted. As an instance of it, they are about to celebrate, not the Birth day of the first Majestrate of the union as such, but of General Washingtons Birth day, and have had the politeness to send invitations to the President, Lady and family to attend it. The President of the United States to attend the celebration of the birth day in his publick Character of a private Citizen! For in no other light can General Washington be now considerd, how ever Good, how ever great his Character, which no person more respects than his Successor. But how could the President appear at their Ball and assembly, but in a secondary Character, when invited there, to be held up in that light by all foreign Nations. But these people look not beyond their own important selves. I do not know when my feelings of contempt have been more calld forth, in answer to the invitation. The President returnd for answer, "that he had received the card of invitation, and took the earliest opportunity to inform them, that he declined accepting it."—That the Virginians should celebrate the day is natural & proper if they please, and so may any others who chuse. But the propriety of doing it in the Capital in the *Metropolis* of America as these Proud Phylidelhians have publickly named it, and inviting the Head of the Nation to come and do it too, in my view is ludicrous [*sic*] beyond compare. I however bite my Lips, and say nothing, but I wanted to vent my indignation upon paper. You must not however expose it, nor me. It will be call'd pride, it will be calld mortification. I despise them both, as it respects myself, but as it respects the Character I hold—I will not knowingly degrade it—

Let me know whether a Letter coverd to Mr. Cranch for Dr. Tufts has reachd you safely. We are all as well as usual. The Baby was here on Sunday and is very well.<sup>4</sup> Remember me kindly to all Friends.

Your ever affectionate Sister

A. ADAMS

<sup>3</sup> On the very day Mrs. Adams wrote this letter, Roger Griswold beat Lyon with his cane, while the latter defended himself with the fire-tongs. Both encounters took place before the House had actually been called to order.

<sup>4</sup> The infant orphan daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Hall. See the letters of December 12 and 26, 1797.

Philadelphia, Feb'yry 21, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

I received your kind Letter of Feb'yry 9th and was quite rejoiced to hear that Mrs. Baxter was like to do well, when I feard to open the Letter least it should inform me of her death.<sup>1</sup> I have been Confined with a cold like the influenza for several days past. I have dreaded least it should prove one of my Feb'yry attacks. It came on with a very soar Throat and hoarsness and terminated in sneezing. It has made me quite sick. I have not been out of my Room since Saturday. I hope however it is going of. I have a company of 33 to dine with me tomorrow, Eleven of whom are Ladies, and Louisa is in much trouble on account of being obliged to act as Principle tomorrow.<sup>2</sup> She would have had me sent [*sic*] cards of apology to defer it, but I could not consent, as most of the Ladies are well known to her, and it is good sometimes to oblige young people to come forward and exert themselves. Amongst the Ladies is Mrs. Law, the Granddaughter of Mrs. Washington, who lives in the city of Washington. She is a very pleasing, agreeable Lady, and I loved her for the kind and affectionate manner in which she spoke of Mr. & Mrs. Cranch and Betsy Elliot, whose absence she says they all regret.<sup>3</sup>

I have some expectation of seeing your son here in a few days. I hear he is comeing upon Mr. Greenleaf[']s affairs. Mr. Morris deliverd himself to his bail and went to Jail last week.<sup>4</sup> If ever said Mrs. Law, I had felt a disposition to extravagance, I should have been cured by a visit to Mrs. Morris. Two years ago, Mrs. Morris was a remarkable well looking

<sup>1</sup> Probably the wife of that Thompson Baxter mentioned in the letter of January 7, 1800.

<sup>2</sup> Louisa, the daughter of William Smith, the brother of Mrs. John Adams. This Louisa was the favorite niece and lived with Mr. and Mrs. Adams for many years.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Law (1756-1834) was born in Cambridge, England, and died in Washington, D. C. On March 20, 1796, Law married Eliza Parke Custis, step-granddaughter (and adopted child) of George Washington. This marriage ended in a Vermont divorce, Law distributing gifts of imported English china among his friends by way of celebrating his release. Law was the son of the Bishop of Carlisle and the brother of Lord Ellenborough. He made a fortune in India, most of which he invested in real estate in the District of Columbia, and lost. He was eccentric and dictatorial, and given to writing poetry. For his strange character and checkered career, see Charles Moore, *The Family Life of George Washington*, Boston and New York, 1926, chapter 10; and, also, Allen C. Clark, *Greenleaf and Law in the Federal City*, Washington, 1901, pp. 219-44. Betsy, or Elizabeth Eliot, is probably one of the five daughters of Samuel Eliot, a prosperous merchant of Boston, grandfather of Charles William Eliot, President of Harvard.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Morris (1734-1806), the financier, was finally arrested for debt in February, 1798, when he was taken to Prune Street, the debtors' prison in Philadelphia, where he remained for three years, six months, and ten days.

woman, Maria, my companion, gay and blith as a bird, blooming as a rose in June.<sup>5</sup> I went to visit Mrs. Morris, & met her without knowing her, so altered that I was shockd. Maria pale, wan, dejected & spiritless. Such is the change. Here I cannot refrain quoting a passage which struck me in reading it, as applicable not only to that Family, but to one with which I am more closely connected.<sup>6</sup>

"The man who loses his whole fortune, yet possesses firmness, Philosophy, a disdain of ambition and an accommodation to circumstances, is less an object of contemplative pity, than the person who without one real deprivation, one actual Evil is [first?], or is suddenly forced to recognise the fallacy of a Cherished and darling hope. All speculative wealth has a shallow foundation, but that its foundation has always been shallow is no mitigation of dissapointment, to him who had only viewed it in its superstructure, nor is its downfall less terrible to its visionary elevator because others had seen it from the beginning as a folly or Chimera: Its dissolution should be estimated, not by its romance in the unimpassioned examination of a rational looker on but by its believed promise of felicity to its credulous projector."

I am sometimes ready to exclaim when I see one bubble bursting after another, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

You write me that I have amused and entertaind you by my communications. I am sure I must mortify you by a detail of some late proceedings in congress. You must have heard of the spitting animal.<sup>7</sup> This act so low, vulgar and base, which having been committed, could only have [been] dignifiedly resented, by the expulsion of the Beast, has been spun out, made the object of party, and renderd thus the disgrace of the National legislature, by an unfortunate clause in the Constitution which gives the power into the hands of the minority, requiring two thirds to concur in an expulsion of a member. The circumstances were so fully proved of Lyons being the base agressor, that as Gentleman I could not have belived they could have got one third of the members to have consented to his continuence with them. But you will learn the state of the buisness from the documents I send you. I know not where it will end. In the mean time the buisness of the Nation is neglected, to the great mortification of the federalists.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Morris married Mary White, of Maryland, called "Maria," daughter of Colonel Thomas White and sister of William White (1748-1836), first Protestant Episcopal Bishop of Pennsylvania.

<sup>6</sup> Mrs. Adams was apparently thinking of her sense of disappointment with her son-in-law, Colonel William Stephens Smith, and her son, Charles Adams.

<sup>7</sup> Matthew Lyon of Vermont. See footnote 1 to the letter of February 15, 1798.

You will have received before this my Letters, which contain a reply to some of your queries.

I want to say a word to you by way of advise. The Farm which has been disposed of, I hope may prove a relief to Mr. Cranch as well as an advantage to him and that the income from the money if vested in publick Securities will yeald you more real profit than the Land, yet that was solid money fleeting. My request is that the sum during Brothers Life may not be broken in upon with an Idea of assisting Children. They are young and can better bear hardships and care, than those who are advanced in Life. I hope therefore nothing will lead to a dispartion of the capital, tho you have as deserving children as any person need desire. I repeat pray do not let the bank be touchd. I have seen too many instances of parents dependant upon Children. Tho there are instances which do honour to humane nature, there are more which disgrace it.

As to the Carpet you speak of, you may use it, and when I return I will let you know whether I will part with it. Adieu my dear Sister.

Most affectionatly your[s]

A. ADAMS

Philadelphia, Feb'ry 28th, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

I have this moment received your kind Letter of Feb'ry 18th, prevented by the bad Roads from reaching [me] sooner, and I have got now to be as anxious and as solisitious for the arrival of the Eastern post, as I used to be at Quincy for the arrival of the Southern. I thank you for all your communications. I saw the centinal last Saturday and thought I knew my own Letter, but did not know whether it was an extract from one to you, or to Mr. Smith, to whom I sometimes freely scribe.<sup>1</sup> In my last I believe I gave you some account of the intended

<sup>1</sup> *Columbian Centinel*, February 17, 1798. The letter to which Mrs. Adams refers was apparently prepared for the *Centinel* by Richard Cranch from information he obtained from the letters Mrs. Adams wrote to his wife. The letter is as follows:

"A writer in the *Chronicle* of yesterday, under the signature of Plain Truth asserts 'that the President of the United States received dispatches from France a month ago, notwithstanding which the most profound secrecy has been maintained on this all-important subject.' Under this assertion, the writer proceeds to abuse the President and deceive the public. To prevent this incendiary from deceiving the public, you may from good authority declare the assertion of Plain Truth, to be without the least foundation. By letters from Philadelphia to the 6th February, not a word at that time had been received by the Executive from our envoys at Paris. Letters had been received from Mr. King as late as October, and from Mr. Murray, at the Hague, to the 10th November. Those gentlemen at that time were as much in the dark with respect to our Envoys, as we are here. The character of the President for patriotism and integrity is too firmly fixed with every true American, to be injured in the least by the abuse of such a vile incendiary as Plain Truth.

February 16.

A CORRESPONDENT."



Birth Night Ball, & the Presidents reply, which on the morning of the day, appeard in Baches paper, to my no small surprize, tho I cannot say I was sorry to see it. It was however accompanied by insolence and abuse, and fully shews the temper of even those who were the Managers of the Birth Night Ball, not of *the President* of the United States, but of a private citizen. The publication had however a direct contrary effect to what was intended. It threw a Gloom & damp upon the whole proceeding. Every one was inquiring the why? & the Wherefore? Many who had subscribed upon the Faith that the President was going, refused afterwards to attend, amongst whom in justice to him I must say was the Vice President, who declared himself shockd with the impropriety of the thing when he first heard of the Proposal, but was led to lend his Name because he would not give offence. This is certain he did not go, and I have my my [*sic*] information so direct that I know what his opinion was. Yet these very persons who sit the matter on foot are now endeavouring to make it believed that he was the first mover in order to give offence to the President—give the d[evil] his due, but lay no more than he deserves to his Charge.<sup>2</sup> I have been informd that of 150 who subscribed 15 only were present of Ladies, and they have been so mortified that not a word has been publishd in their News papers respecting it. I hope in time they will learn how to appreciate themselves as a Nation. They have had, & now have a Head, who will not knowingly Prostrate their dignity & character, neither to foreign Nations, nor the American People.

My dear Sister your son has been with us ever since he came, which is a week tomorrow.<sup>3</sup> Next to my own children I love those of my sister. He is very well and says Mrs. Cranch and the Children are so. But he will write you himself.

Tell Mrs. Black I shall see the Baby tomorrow.<sup>4</sup> I had a Bonnet made for it which I gave it a fortnight ago. I think it wants a dimity Cloak which I will get for it. I will write her the result of my conference with the Nurse.

I shall take Cousin Betsy in hand shortly.<sup>5</sup> At present I fear the post

<sup>2</sup> If Adams was not quite tactful about the "Birth-night Ball" for Washington on February 22, 1798, Jefferson was not quite frank. He wrote privately of this tempest in a teapot: "The late birth-night certainly has sewn tares among the exclusive federalists." Morison, *H. G. Otis*, vol. 1, p. 133.

<sup>3</sup> William Cranch (1769-1855), son of Richard Cranch (1726-1811), husband of Mary (Smith) Cranch (1741-1811).

<sup>4</sup> See the letters of December 12 and 26, 1797.

<sup>5</sup> See footnote 4 to the letter of December 15, 1788.

will go out without my Letter if I do not immediatly close after presenting my kind regards to all Friends from

Your ever affectionate Sister

A. ADAMS

Philadelphia, March 3d, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

To communicate pleasure, is reflecting happiness. The Secretary of State came smiling in my Room yesterday [upon which *cancelled*] I said to him, I know you have got dispatches, upon which he took from his pocket two Letters from my dear son at Berlin.<sup>1</sup> Tho they were publick Letters and upon publick buisness, they informd us of his safe arrival at Berlin on the 7th of Nov'br, 4 days from Hamburg. On the 10th he had an audience of the Prussian Minister. The King was informd of his arrival, and directed his Ministure [*sic*] to assure Mr. Adams, that he received with great satisfaction this mark of attention from the United States and that he regreetedly [*sic*] exceedingly that his extreem illness renderd it impossible for him to give him the first Audience.

"On the 17th Mr. Adams writes, The King of Prussia died yesterday morning at 9 o'clock at Potsdam. He was immediatly succeeded by his son Frederic William the 3d. My Credentials cannot now be presented. I must request New ones to the Present King may be forwarded as soon as possible."<sup>2</sup>

I hope the mission begun so contrary to his wishes and so injurious to his Private interest, will become more auspicious. He had made his arrangement for going to Lisbon, hired a house there, taken and paid his passage, when he received news that he must go to Berlin—and this without any additional allowence, and only half the sum allowd for the outfit of a minister going from this Country, tho his expences must amount to the same.

I received, he observes, an office, tho no promotion, at once invidious in appearance and oppressive in reality, but I have done. My Country has every claim upon me. If her Service were [really *cancelled*] merely a Bed of Roses, it would not be a worthy incitement to ambition.

<sup>1</sup> Timothy Pickering (1745–1829), bringing letters from John Quincy Adams, minister to the Court of Prussia. For portions of the texts of these letters from Prussia, see *The Writings of John Quincy Adams, 1779–1823*, W. C. Ford, Editor, New York, 1913–1917, vol. 2, February 8, 1797—April 14, 1801.

<sup>2</sup> Frederick William II (1786–1797), nephew of Frederick the Great, and Frederick William III (1797–1840).

I inclose you an other paper upon the Foreign intercourse Bill.<sup>3</sup> A stranger would be ready to suppose that The President, instead of having appointed only one single Minister since he came into office (the Envoys excepted, who were only for a particular object,) that [*sic*] he had Nominated an incredible Number and increased or wanted to increase their Salleries. The House of Rep's have not by the constitution any right to judge of the propriety of of [*sic*] sending foreign Ministers, nor the courts to which they shall be sent, nor the Grades. The Constitution has given that power solely to the President as it has to the House of Reps the granting of Money. As well might the President assume to himself the disposal of Money, unappropriated. Yet have they according to calculation expended as much Money by the length of the debate as would pay the salleries of all our Ministers for two years to come.

Mr. Otis & Mr. Harper have very abley replied to Mr. Gallitin whose speaches I will send you as soon as they are printed.<sup>4</sup>

Your Son is well and talks of returning the beginning of the week.

I would have my stockings kept till I return.

I had Letters from Mrs. Smith. She was well. My Love to Mrs. Norton, Greenleaf & their Families. Poor Suky Warner.<sup>5</sup> I am grieved for her. I am, my dear Sister, with unalterable affection,

Your Sister

A. ADAMS

Philadelphia, March 5th, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

I received on Saturday Evening the 3d March your kind Letter of 25 Feb'ry. You estimate much too highly the little services I am able to render to my Friends, and you depreciate the value of your own, the benifit of which I have too often experienced to sit [a *cancelled*] lightly [value upon *cancelled*] by them, for whilst you visit the widow,

<sup>3</sup> See footnote 3 to the letter of February 1-5, 1798, and the postscript to the letter of March 5, 1798.

<sup>4</sup> Abraham Alfonse Albert Gallatin (1761-1849), of Pennsylvania, Secretary of the Treasury (1801-1814), was one of the leaders of the opponents of the Federalists in the House of Representatives in 1798. Harrison Gray Otis, son of the Secretary of the Senate, was a member of the House from Massachusetts, and Robert Goodloe Harper (1765-1825) was a member of the House from South Carolina.

<sup>5</sup> Susannah Warner, daughter of that Mrs. Warner, of Gloucester, who became the second wife of Dr. Cotton Tufts, died at Weymouth on April 7, 1798, aged twenty-two. *Columbian Centinel*, April 28, 1798.

the orphan, the sick, and console them by your presense, enliven them by your conversation & prescribe for their necessities, you prove that it is possible to be very benevolent and Charitable tho with small pecuniary means. When you do all the good in your power, you enjoy all the happiness the practise of virtue can bestow, and long may you receive the Reward.

Your son has been with us near a fortnight. I feel very loth to part with him. He must leave us, he says, tomorrow. I believe he has just received Letters from Mrs. Cranch. I will stop and ask him how she is.

I have read Nancys Letter. She and the Children are both well. It is dated the 27 Feb'ry. She is very anxious for her Brother, which is very natural.<sup>1</sup> I know not how she could be otherways, for tho unfortunate bevelence [*sic*] has been a striking trait in his Character—Mr. and Mrs. Law have been three weeks in this city.<sup>2</sup> You know he married Miss Custos, who seems to inherit all the benevolence of her Grandmother. She is a charming woman. The more I see of her the more amiable she appears. She is to spend the day with me tomorrow, in the family way, for which she seems to be found [*sic*]. I loved her the more for the friendly manner in which she expresses her Regard for your son and for Mrs. Cranch and Betsy Eliot who she says, she misses very much. Mrs. Law is so easy, so tranquil, so unaffected, that her first appearence preposses[es] you in her favour, so different from most of the formal Ladies of this city. Yet there is sociality enough here amongst some of them. I always however sit it down when I meet with it, that N. England comes in for some share of it. I have visited sometimes & sit half an hour in company in some families with whose reception and manners I have been particularly gratified [with *cancelled*]. Upon making inquiries of my intellin-genser, Dr. [Benjamin] Rush, who knows everybody and their connections, I discover that Grandfather or Mother or some relative originated from N. England. Two Nations are not more different than the N. Englanders and many Natives of this city. I must not however be too local. Which has the preference I have not said—

You will learn that at length dispatches have arrived from our com-missioners, but with them, no prospect of success. We have letters to the 9 Janry. I inclose you the paper which contains the message from the President with the Letter to both Houses of Congress. We shall now see how the American pulse beat. I fear we shall be driven to War,

<sup>1</sup> Anna (Nancy) Greenleaf, wife of William Cranch, mentioned above, and sister of James Greenleaf, the speculator in land and the partner of Robert Morris.

<sup>2</sup> See footnote 3 to the letter of February 21, 1798.

[to *cancelled*] but to *defend* ourselves is our duty. War the French have made upon us a long time.<sup>3</sup>

I cannot learn what is become of Mr. Beal. Is he not yet got to Quincy?

Let Mrs. Black know that the Nurse and Baby were with me yesterday. It had had a bad cold but was better. We put on the cap and it lookd very pretty. I gave the Nurse the 5 dollors sent by Mrs. Black for which she was very thankfull, and says Mrs. Black may assure herself that she shall take the best care of the child. She told our people Mrs. Brisler and Betsy, that Mr. Black complaind a good deal of the expence, but she could not keep it for less. She had to give at the rate of 15 dollors pr cord for wood, which I know to be true, and that she could not do any other buisness than look after the two Children. She seems to think that carrying the Children by water when the weather becomes pleasent will be less fatigue to them than by land, but this for a future days consideration. Louisa desires the letter to her sister may be sent to her if she is gone to Atkinson [New Hampshire].<sup>4</sup> Thank Mr. Cranch for his kind Letter. I would have the floor painted in the kitchin & the stairs a plain yellow unless the floor is too thin. I believe it is much worn, the closset too. The best time for painting is when there can be time enough for it to dry without any persons treading upon it, and that makes me earnest to have it done quite early, and with boild oil. I should be glad [if] Mr. Billings would new lay the wall against the Garden as soon as the frost is out the Ground. Be so good as to desire Mr. Porter to lay in a load of Charcoal. Dr. Tufts will give him money to pay for it. We cannot do without it when we are there. I hope too he will get wood enough home. I must get you to have an Eye to the painting or I fear it will not be done to my mind. As soon as the season will permit I would have persons enough employd to compleat what is to be done. And my strawberry bed Stutson [Stetson] must attend to very soon in the Spring. I should not like any other person should [*sic*] touch it. As to the rest of the Garden, I must look to Tirril to do it, I suppose. But more of this an other time. I had rather prepare to come Home than to go from it. Adieu, my dear Sister,

Most affectionately your[s]

A. ADAMS

<sup>3</sup> The American commissioners to France in the "XYZ Affair": John Marshall, Charles C. Pinckney, and Elbridge Gerry. See Schouler, *History of the United States*, vol. 1, pp. 386-97.

<sup>4</sup> Atkinson, New Hampshire, a village about three miles northwest of Haverhill, Massachusetts, where Mrs. Adams's sister, the former Mrs. John Shaw, resided with her second husband, the Reverend Stephen Peabody. See footnote 3 to the letter of August 9, 1789.

Foreign intercourse the Question upon Nicolas motion was taken to day & regected by the 52 Gentlemen. 44 in favour of it. 3 federilist absent.<sup>5</sup>

Philadelphia, March 13th, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

I received on Saturday your favour of March 3d. The reason why Letters are longer from hence to Quincy than to Boston, is owing to their making up the Mail but once a week for Quincy, whereas they make them up twice for Boston; Mr. [William] Cranch did not leave us untill Wednesday Morning the Roads were so bad: I do not perceive any alteration in him, except that he has caught some of the Southern Complexion; none of their Manners: his principles were too well fixd to be easily altered. He went twice with us to meeting to hear Dr. [Samuel] Blair and said it was quite a Feast to him to go again to publick worship.<sup>1</sup> Mr. [James] Greenleafs situation worried him, and I am fearful that his 3 or 4 years labour, has been toil and trouble, without any gain; or that he will finally lose what is due to him. This for a young Man just sitting out in Life is a very hard lesson but he has too feeling a Heart to deal with people embarressd in their circumstances. He found [Robert] Morris in Jail, and if he sufferd he could not say: you must pay me. What distress, what Ruin, have these immense speculators involved themselves, their families, their connections, and thousands of others in? What is past cannot be remedied. We seldom learn experience untill we get too old to use it, or we grow callous to the misfortunes of the world by Reiterated abuse.

And Nature, as it grows again towards Earth  
Is fashioned for the journey, dull and Heavy.<sup>2</sup>

What an alteration of honour has desperate want made!  
What viler thing upon the Earth than Friends  
Who can bring noblest minds to basest ends!<sup>3</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Actually, the House of Representatives, on Monday, March 5, 1798, rejected the Nicholas Amendment by a vote of 52 to 48. *Annals of the Fifth Congress*, p. 1234, and *Columbian Centinel*, March 17, 1798. This Nicholas Amendment would have limited the salaries of ministers to London, Paris, and Madrid to \$9000 a year, and the salaries of all other ministers to \$4500 a year. The second proposal, of course, was an oblique blow at John Quincy Adams, who had been transferred from the Netherlands, or the Batavian Republic, to Berlin for the purpose of negotiating a new treaty with Prussia to replace the one of 1784.

<sup>1</sup> See the letter of July 6, 1797.

<sup>2</sup> *Timon of Athens*, Act II, Scene 2, lines 227-8.

<sup>3</sup> *Timon of Athens*, Act IV, Scene 3, lines 470-1.

I have been led into these reflections in contemplating the unhappy situation of Mr. Morris, Nicolson & others. You can scarcely form an Idea of the great Change which has taken place in this city in the course of 5 years, and a greater still awaits it.<sup>4</sup>

I am sorry to learn that Cousin Betsy has a Cough. Let her not neglect it. She should get some of Church's Cough drops.<sup>5</sup> This climate tho subject to great Changes, is very little subject to Coughs. The Air is not half so keen in the coldest weather.

I expect your next Letter will bear me the melancholy tidings of Suky Warners death. She has been vibrating upon a thread for several years. Tell Cousin Betsy if her cough does not soon mend, to lose a few ounces of Blood. She can spair it well, and it may prevent dangerous consequences.

I cannot say what Congress mean to do. The dispatches are but just decypherd. Whether the President will think proper to make any further communications is more than he himself can yet determine, but it must strike every Body, that every thing which might endanger our Envoys, who are still in Paris, for any thing to the contrary which we know, must and will be kept Private, clamour who will. Enough is already known to excite wrath and indignation agains[t] a Government who refuses even to receive Messengers specially appointed. "Peter [Porcupine] says, All men now agree that Congress ought to do something, and that immediatly, and if they do not, they may expect to bring on themselves all the odium attachd to such indecisive measures, I had almost said Criminal—every one knows that the Snail like mode of proceeding which we have long beheld is not the fault of the President. He has taken care that his Character, either as an American, or as the Chief Majestrate of America, shall not suffer, let the result be what it may. The Senate are ready to support him:—"

Peter says many good things, and he is the only thorn in Baches side. He [Bache] is really affraid to encounter him [Peter], but he [Peter] frequently injures the cause he means to advocate for want of prudence

<sup>4</sup> For the North American Land Company of Robert Morris, John Nicholson, and James Greenleaf, see footnote 6 to the letter of June 25, 1795. See, also, Clark, *Greenleaf and Law in the Federal City*.

<sup>5</sup> "Church's Cough Drops are prepared and sold (only) by the inventor and sole proprietor, Dr. James Church, at his Medicine Store, No. 1 South Third-street, next the Market, Philadelphia; and by appointment, at New-York, by Messrs. Staples & Co., 169 Pearl-street, and Miss Wedman, 112 William-street.

"Dr. Church may be consulted every day, at his office, 158 South Front-street, Philadelphia." *Gazette of the United States*, January 9, 1798.

and discretion. I have a great curiosity to see the Creature. There is a strange mixture in him. He can write very handsomely, and he can descend & be as low, and vulgar as a fish woman.

I had Letters last Evening from Mrs. Smith. She is well, and writes in rather better spirits, at least with more calmness and composure. Inclosed is a Letter which she sent me for Mrs. Guile.

My Love to Mrs. Norton, Greenleaf, and to the Dr. and Mrs. Tufts. Tell them I sincerely sympathize with them under their affliction. Mrs. Otis desires to be remembered to you. They always dine with us on Sundays. The Judge and Mrs. Cushing have promised to call and see you on their return. Mrs. Cushing can tell you all about us. Inclosed is a ten dollar Bill. Will you be so good as to tell Mr. Porter to lay in a load of Charcoal and call upon you for the pay. Half a load will answer, but sometimes we could not get a part. I would rather he should take a whole load. And I would wish you to get me garden seeds. I speak in time, but a Letter does not reach you in a week. Will you ask Mr. Porter whether the young man who worked with him last year Soal is to be had this. If so he had better engage him for Nine Months. I do not conjecture when we shall get away, but you know I love to have every thing done in season. I am afraid the President will be overwhelmed. Buisness thickens upon him. Officering all the frigates, contemplating what can be done at this critical period, *knowing what he thinks ought to be done*, yet not certain whether the people are sufficiently determined to second the Government, is a situation very painfull as well as responsible—All Good people ought to pray Heartily for him and for our Country—Good Dr. Blair prays “that he may hear a voice saying unto him this is the path, go thou in it.”

I thought I was just going to finish upon the opposite side, but here I am half way down the other. I must however bid you adieu to write to my sons by a vessel which is this week to sail for Hamburg.<sup>6</sup> I am, my dear Sister,

Affectionatly your[s]

A. ADAMS

Philadelphia, March 14th, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

Yesterday dispatches were received from Mr. King up to the 9th Jan'y.<sup>1</sup> In a post scrip he says, I have just learnt that Mr. Adams has

<sup>6</sup> John Quincy Adams and Thomas Boylston Adams (1772-1832).

<sup>1</sup> See footnote 8 to the letter of January 5, 1798.



been received by the new King notwithstanding his commission was to his Father. This is civil and will enable him to proceed with buisness.<sup>2</sup> I received a Letter from Dr. Tufts yesterday that allarmd me. I thought I inclosed him some Bills. I might, as I wrote you the same time [have] put them into yours, for the Dr. in a post scrip says that you had written him that you had them. When the Dr. writes to me inclose his Letters in yours, for as those are *held sacred* now by a promise not to open them, I shall receive them, in a way I wish. The Dr. and I have some buisness transaction [*sic*] which are between ourselves.<sup>3</sup>

Nothing new transpires but what your Boston papers have; warm words in congress must be apprehended, whilst some are for going shares with France submitting intirely to her will and quietly disposed to receive every lash she pleases to inflict. Northern Blood boils, and I do not know what will take place. I hope they will be cooler to day, but Giles has just opend his batteries.<sup>4</sup>

Pray, is Betsy going to steal a wedding upon us? She inquires the fashions. They are as various as the Changes of the moon. The young Ladies generally have their Hair all in Curls over their heads, and then put a Ribbon, Beads, Bugles or a Band of some kind through the fore part of the Hair to which they attach feathers. The Band is put upon Ribbon, sometimes on wire. Frequently two are worn which cross each other. They tye behind [under *cancelled*] over the hind Hair & then a small Bunch of Hair turns up behind in which a small comb is fixd and the ends of the hind Hair fall Back again in curls. The Gounds [*sic*] are made to have only one side come forward and that is confind with a belt round the waist. The waist made plain. Some sleeves are drawn in diamonds, some [Robbins *cancelled*] Robins drawn up & down with bobbin in 5 or 6 rows.<sup>5</sup> In short a drawing room frequently exhibits a specimin of Grecian, Turkish, French and English fashion at the same time, with ease, Beauty and Elegance equal to any court—What a medley are my Letters. I had yesterday to visit me after the Presidents Levee, the Kings of 3 Indian Nations. One of them after sitting a little while rose and adrest me. He said he had been to visit his Father, and

<sup>2</sup> See the letter of March 3, 1798.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Adams refers to her having angrily forbidden her husband to open any more letters addressed to her. See the letters of November 15 and December 26, 1797.

<sup>4</sup> William Branch Giles (1762-1830), member of the House of Representatives from Virginia from 1790 to October 2, 1798, when he resigned.

<sup>5</sup> "Robin," a variant of "robing," a trimming on clothing: 1748, Richardson, *Clarissa Harlowe*; *Oxford English Dictionary*.

he thought his duty but in part fulfilld, untill he had visited allso his Mother, and he prayd the great spirit to keep and preserve them. They all came and shook me by the Hand, and then took some cake and wine with me. There were nine of them. One of them spoke English well. They then made their bow and withdrew, much more civil than the Beast of Vermont.<sup>6</sup> Adieu, my dear Sister.

I am most affectionatly your[s]

A. ADAMS

[Philadelphia], March 20th, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

I write you a few Lines this mor'g just to inclose to you the Newspaper of yesterday which contains an important Message from the President. It is a very painfull thing to him that he cannot communicate to the publick dispatches in which they are so much interested, but we have not any assurance that the Envoys have left Paris and who can say that in this critical state of things their dispatches ought to be publick? Our foreign Ministers can never be safe, or they will cease to be usefull to us abroad, if their communications are all to be communicated. This was not the case during our revolution. Under the old Congress, dispatches were never made publick. I expect the President will be represented as declaring War, by taking off the restriction which prevented Merchantmen from Arming.<sup>1</sup> It was always doubtfull in his mind, whether he had a Right to prevent them, but the former President had issued such a prohibition, and he thought it best at that time to continue it. You see by the papers that Bache has begun his old bilingsgate again, because Mr. J. Q. Adams is directed to renew the treaty with Sweeden which is now just expiring, and for which not a single sixpence will be allowd him as the King of Sweeden will empower his Minister at Berlin to renew it there. Dr. Franklin made the treaty in Paris with the Sweedish minister, and the President made the Treaty with Prussia in Holland, yet this lying wretch of a Bache reports that no treaties were ever made without going to the courts to negotiate them, unless

<sup>6</sup> Matthew Lyon. See footnote 1 to the letter of February 15, 1798.

<sup>1</sup> See Schouler, *History of the United States*, vol. 1, p. 395. On March 27, 1798, however, as the result of a conference attended by the "Republican" members of the Congress, Richard Sprigg, Jr., member of the House of Representatives from Maryland, offered three insidious resolutions: the first against war with the French Republic, the second against the arming of merchant vessels, and a third in favor of protection for the seacoast of the United States.

the power where they were made, were concernd in them, and says it is all a job in order to give Mr. [John Quincy] Adams a new outfit & additional sallery at every Court. But there is no end to their audaciousness, and you will see that French emissaries are in every corner of the union sowing and spreading their Sedition. We have *renewed information* that their System is, to calumniate the President, his family, his administration, untill they oblige him to resign, and then they will Reign triumphant, *headed by the Man of the People*. It behoves every pen and press to counteract them, but our Countrymen in general are not awake to their danger. We are come now to a crissis too important to be languid, too dangerous to slumber—unless we are determind to submit to the fraternal embrace, which is sure and certain destruction as the poisoned shirt of Danarius.<sup>2</sup> Adieu my dear Sister. I intended only a line but I have run to a great length. We have had snow and rain for three days. What has been your Weather? Love and a kind remembrance to all Friends from

Your ever affectionate Sister  
ABIGAIL ADAMS

Philadelphia, March 27, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

I received yesterday your kind Letter of March 19th, I expect a Letter every week if you have nothing else to say, but as Sterne observes, "how the Shadows Lengthen, as the Sun declines." And this may be applied to the Moral as well as the Natural [world *cancelled*] System. As we descend the Hill of Life, our gay and vissonary prospect vanish, and what gilded our Meridian days, our *Zenith of Life*, as the Shadows lengthen, we see through a different medium and may justly estimate many of our persuits, as vanity and vexation of spirit.

"But theres a Brighter world on high" which opens to us prospects more permanant, and pleasures more durable. To that let us aspire in the sure and certain hope, that by a patient Continuence in the path of Religion and Virtue, we shall assuredly reap, if we faint not, the happy fruits of a glorious immortality.

When I took my pen this morning, with the rising Sun, I did not think of moralizing thus, but the visions of the Night had left an impression upon my mind, and those visions were occasiond by reflections

<sup>2</sup> Dejanira, the wife of Hercules, whom Nessus, the Centaur, tried to kidnap. Dejanira prepared the shirt which caused the death of her husband, after which she hanged herself.

upon the dangerous and Hazardous situation into which our Country is brought, by that demoralizing, wicked and abandoned Nation, or Government of France. When no sacrifice on their part was required, when justice and Equity is all we wanted, when two repeated offers of accommodation have been generously offerd to them, they turn a Deaf Ear and refuse to listen either [*sic*] to the voice of Reason, or the call of Honor; but answer only by renewed insults and more audacious plunder. In this situation our Country is calld upon to put themselves in a *state of defence*, and to take measures to protect themselves by Sea. This is calld a declaration of war on the part of the President, by those who would gladly see their Government prostrate, Religion banishd and I do not know if I should judge too hardly if I said our Country Shared by France. That war will not be the consequence of the conduct of France towards us is more than I can say; it certainly leads to it, as the most probable Event. But the President did not make our difficulties, nor has the Government. No Nation has more strictly adhered to neutrality, none sufferd so much, none [*bore cancelled*] bourn with more patience the spoiling of their Property.

Union is what we want, but that will not be easily [*be cancelled*] obtaind. It is difficult to make the people see their danger, untill it is at their doors, or rouse untill their country is invaded. The Senate are strong. They are much more united in their measures than the House. There is an attempt in this city to get a petition signed to congress declaring their determination not to go to war with France, and they hope to sit this measure in operation through the different States. Is it possible that any person can suppose this Country wish for war by which nothing is to be obtaind, much to be expended and hazarded, in preference to Peace? *But in self defence* we may be involved in war; and for that we ought to be prepared, and that is what the President means. What benifit can war be to him? He has no ambition for military Glory. He cannot add by war, to his peace, comfort or happiness. It must accumulate upon him an additional load of care, toil, trouble, malice, hatred, and I dare say Revenge. But for all this he will not sacrifice the honor and independance of his Country to any Nation, and if in support of that, we are involved in war, we must & we ought to meet it, with firmness, with Resolution & with union of Sentiment.

I shall sigh for my retirement at Peace Feild, before I shall reach it.<sup>1</sup> If I can leave here in May, I shall be content, but I cannot say posi-

<sup>1</sup> "Peace Field," an old name for the Adams Mansion in Quincy.

tively. The Roads will not be tolerable untill then; I should like to have what I proposed done as soon in the season as it can be with advantage.

The President says you may keep a Cow at the Farm through the season.

I had a Letter from your son two days after he got home. He found little William had been dangerously sick with a fever, but he was on the recovery. And he mourned the loss of a very valuable Friend a Mr. Deakins who dyed in his absence, a Man possessd of a most estimable Character in whom he says he had found an other Father.<sup>2</sup> Mr. and Mrs. [Thomas] Law returnd last week.<sup>3</sup> I really think she is a truly worthy woman.

I inclose to you a News paper because it contains a speech of Mr. Reads [Reed] upon the foreign intercourse Bill.<sup>4</sup> It contains as much good sense and is more to the point than the three & four hours Harangues of some others. Mr. Read very seldom speaks.

What, have I got so near the End of my paper before I was aware. I have more to say yet, but Louisa warns me to Breakfast, and I bid you adieu for the Present.

Affectionatly your[s]

A. ADAMS

[Philadelphia], March 31, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

I write you a few lines this morning merely to inclose a Letter which I will thank you to cover and forward to Atkinson [New Hampshire]. I have not time to write this morning to Atkinson. Inclosed I sent you a specimin of the Manners, Religion & politeness of one of the 44 Gentlemen, who can come and Eat of my Bread, & drink of my wine, one whom the Virginians consider as a Paragon of politeness, whom they have plumed themselves upon as a promising [young *cancelled*] Man, and a man of Property, one of their best speakers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>2</sup> William Deakins, Jr., was the eldest of the three sons of William Deakins, Sr., of Prince George County, Maryland, himself a son of John Deakins, who came to the United States in the seventeenth century. William Deakins, Jr., and his brothers, Francis and Leonard, all became residents of Georgetown some time before the Revolution. See Clark, *Greenleaf and Law in the Federal City*.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas and Eliza Parke (Custis) Law. See footnote 3 to the letter of February 21, 1798.

<sup>4</sup> John Reed (1751-1831), of West Bridgewater, Yale, 1772, Federalist member of the House of Representatives (1795-1801).

<sup>1</sup> Possibly William Branch Giles (1762-1830), of Virginia, an active opponent of the Federalists; or probably John Nicholas (1756-1819), of Virginia, who harangued the House of Representatives for several weeks against the pending Foreign Intercourse Bill. See the following letter.

I know not what can excite their wrath to such a degree, but that they think there is yet some Religion left in the Country, and that the people will have some respect to it, & to those Rulers who acknowledge an over over[sic] Ruling Providence. Bache you see is striving to render the Proclamation Ridiculous and with his Atheistical doctrines spreading French principles far and wide.<sup>2</sup> But I trust and hope we may as a people be of that happy Number, whose God is the Lord, and never [get cancelled] forget that it is Righteousness which exalteth a Nation, whilst Sin is their Reproach. Adieu, my dear Sister,

Affectionately yours

A. A[DAMS]

[Philadelphia], April 4, 1798

DEAR SISTER:

The eastern post will go out this morning and I take my pen to thank you for your Letters of the 20 & 26th of March. We had received intelligence of the wisdom of Roxbury & Milton, their petitions having reachd their Representatives in Congress.<sup>1</sup> The reply to them may be found in the dispatches of our Envoys yesterday communicated to congress.<sup>2</sup> The publick exegiency of our Country, and the real in some,

<sup>2</sup> Proclamation for a national fast, March 23, 1798. See Adams, *Works*, vol. 9, pp. 169-70. The fast was set for May 9, 1798.

<sup>1</sup> On March 20, 1798, at a town meeting in Roxbury, Massachusetts, a petition to Congress was prepared, and voted, against the arming of merchant vessels, as likely to bring on war with France. On March 22, Milton followed suit, in a town meeting at which Seth Sumner was chosen moderator. If merchant vessels were to be armed, it was argued, this measure should be taken by an act of Congress, not by executive order. See the Milton Records (1775-1808), pp. 301-303, and the Roxbury Records. See, also, the reports of these town meetings and letters in regard to them in the *Columbian Centinel*, March 24, 1798; the *Independent Chronicle and Universal Advertiser*, March 19-22 and March 22-26, 1798; and the *Massachusetts Mercury*, March 23, 1798. J. B. Varnum presented the Milton petition in the House of Representatives on April 2, 1798. *Annals of the Fifth Congress*, Washington, 1851, vol. 2, p. 1367. On April 13, Varnum presented a similar petition from Cambridge, and on April 23, two others, from the towns of Harvard and Lexington. *Annals of the Fifth Congress*, vol. 2, pp. 1414 and 1522. When Mr. Dana objected to the petition of Cambridge being referred to the Committee of the Whole, the question was put, and he was defeated by a vote of 38 to 35.

The Roxbury Records are locked up in the vaults of the Liberty Mutual Insurance Company, Boston. The editor wishes to thank Mr. George G. Wolkins, of the Massachusetts Historical Society, for having called his attention to microfilms of these records in the Boston Public Library.

<sup>2</sup> As a result of a resolution of the House of Representatives, April 2, 1798, John Adams, on April 3, transmitted to Congress the dispatches from "the envoys extraordinary of the United States to the French Republic" with the request that they might "be considered in confidence." On April 5, the House voted to print twelve hundred copies of these dispatches. *Annals of the Fifth Congress*, vol. 2, pp. 1374-8. Adams withheld only the names and descriptions of Talleyrand's unofficial agents, Hottinguer, Bellamy, and Hauteval, who, in the deciphered dispatches, were designated as "X," "Y," and "Z."

and the Pretended unbelief of others, produced a torpor, and an indision which call'd for Conviction & proof as strong as holy writ, that all, and more than was exprest, in the Presidents last message, was necessary to be done to put our Country on its gaurd and to inspire them with a determind resolution to preserve their Rights, their freedom and independance, all of which are attack'd by the most base, profligate and abandoned Culprits which were ever permitted to scourge the Nations of the Earth; The Algerines lose all their venality & tyranny when Compared to them.<sup>3</sup>

The Proofs of this will now be laid before the publick as soon as they can be printed. Out of fears for the safety of our Envoy's they would not have yet been published, if the House of Reps. had not call'd for them. Gallitan, the sly, the artfull, the insidious Gallitan knew better than to join in the call.<sup>4</sup> Giles was heard to say to his Friends in the House, You are doing wrong to call for those dispatches.<sup>5</sup> They will injure us. These Men knew that the President would not have exprest himself in such strong terms in his Message, if he had not possesst convincing Evidence, and tho they lie to the publick, they believed all that was asserted in his Message, "that all hopes of accommodation was at an End." I have never seen the dispatches, but I have learnt from the Members who yesterday visited me, what I had before suspected, that Tallyrand & the Directory would have been bought. The wretches even stipulated a certain sum to be paid them for the Presidents saying in his speech at the opening of the summer session, "that we ought to show France that we were not a degraded People." They wanted to prove him deficient in knowledge, a false man, by making us tributary to them and that by the consent of the of the [*sic*] very ministers he had sent to negotiate with them. But I will not mutilate further what I have only learnt by incorrect details. As soon as the dispatches are publish'd I

<sup>3</sup> From one point of view, the American outcry against the French proposal that the "XYZ" commissioners should grease the palms of the Directory in 1798 was odd. As early as 1784 Adams, from London, had thought that the only way to deal with the Corsairs of the Barbary Coast (Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli, and Morocco) was to buy them off. In 1786, a treaty was concluded with the ruler of Morocco providing for the annual payment of American tribute. On April 10, 1792, Washington submitted to the Senate a treaty, according to which the sum of \$40,000 was to be given to the pirates of Algiers to keep them quiet. Adams continued the policy of paying blackmail to the pirates of the Mediterranean. Jefferson put an end to the practice in 1805. See Channing, *History of the United States*, vol. 4, pp. 44 and 264-9.

<sup>4</sup> See footnote 4 to the letter of March 3, 1798.

<sup>5</sup> See footnote 4 to the letter of March 14, 1798.

will send them to you. The Jacobins in Senate & House were struck dumb, and open not their mouths, not having their cue, not having received their lessons from those emissaries [which they make; which Tallirand *cancelled*] which Tallyrand made no secret of telling our Envoys are spread all over our Country; and from whence they drew their information. I believe T[alleyra]n[d] is not too scrupelous to take a *fee*. We are ensnared. We shall be destroyed unless the snare is broken, and that speedily. Thus you see Town meetings can judge!

I was much shockd yesterday at reading in the Paper [of yesterday *cancelled*] the death of Mrs. Quincy.<sup>6</sup> I had only heard by way of Mrs. [Samuel Allyne] Otis the day before, that she was unwell. What was her complaint? It must have been sudden I think, or you would have mentiond it. The Glory of the family is departed. Mrs. Quincy was in all respects the first Character in it. I mourn with all her Friends most sincerely, for by them her loss must be deplored. Mrs. Gill is an other of my Friends & connections whose loss I lament.<sup>7</sup> She was however at an age when we could not expect her much longer continuence. Yet I feel these ligaments giving way one after an other. I feel their loss to society and the warning voice to myself, "This Lifes a dream, an empty Show."

How is your weather? Last week we had three or four days when we were obliged to sit with our windows open, and for these three days past we have had a voilent east storm of wind and Rain. We had sallid, and the Trees in our Yard are budding & would have Blossomd in a few days. The Roads had got tolerably good so that I just began to ride out of Town but this great rain will spoil them again.

If we have many troubles we have also many blessings, amongst which & not the least I consider Health. Both the President & I have enjoyd our Health better this winter & spring than usual, but the constant care, application and anxiety will wear out the firmest constitution.

I received Cousin Betsys Letter and shall write to her soon.

Your truly affectionate Sister

ABIGAIL ADAMS

<sup>6</sup> Mrs. Abigail Quincy, widow of Josiah Quincy, Jr. (1744-1775). See the *Columbian Centinel*, March 28, 1798. Mrs. Quincy was the daughter of William Phillips (1722-1804), and sister of Lieutenant-Governor William Phillips (1750-1827), benefactor of Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts.

<sup>7</sup> Mrs. Rebecca Gill, wife of Lieutenant-Governor Moses Gill, of Massachusetts, died at Princeton, Worcester County, at the age of sixty-nine, on March 19, 1798. *Columbian Centinel*, March 24, 1798.



I send you a pamphlet just publishd, said to be written by a Mr. Hopkinson, a young Lawyer, whose father was a judge & Author of the battle of the Kegs.<sup>8</sup>

[Philadelphia], April 7th, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

The Senate on thursday voted to have the dispatches from our Envoys made publick, and orderd them Printed, but not the instructions. I hope however that those too, will be published: The People will then be convinced that every word Containd in the Presidents Message of the 19 of March can be justified both by the instructions given, and by the dispatches received, and that what Jugurtha said of Rome is literally applicable [*sic*] to France.<sup>1</sup> When the Instructions were read in the House, the words of Milton might have been applied to the Jaco[bins]

Abash'd the devil stood  
And saw virtue in her own shape  
How Lovely.<sup>2</sup>

Not one of the clan have dared to say, that they themselves would have been willing to have conceded more; or that more could have been granted "consistant with the Maxims, for which our Country has contended at every hazard: and which constitutes the basis of our National Sovereignty."<sup>3</sup> Some of those who have been voters, more than speakers

<sup>8</sup> Francis Hopkinson (1737-1791), of Philadelphia, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, published in 1778 "The Battle of the Kegs," which celebrated the first attempt to employ mines in warfare, and is the best known of all his works. His son was Joseph Hopkinson (1770-1842), congressman and jurist, and author of "Hail Columbia." See the letter of April 26, 1798.

<sup>1</sup> Having successfully bribed a majority of the Roman Senate to approve of his process of disposing of his cousins (and rivals) by murder, Jugurtha, King of Numidia, the bastard grandson of Masinissa, observed that "Everything was for sale at Rome." "As he was leaving Rome, he is said to have exclaimed at last, after frequently looking back on it in silence: 'that it was a venal city, and would quickly perish if it could only find a purchaser.'" Sallust, *The Jugurthine War*, Chapters 20, 28, and 35.

<sup>2</sup> . . . abasht the Devil stood,  
And felt how awful goodness is, and saw  
Vertue in her shape how lovly, saw, and pin'd  
His loss; but chiefly to find here observd  
His lustre visibly impar'd; yet seemd  
Undaunted. *Paradise Lost*, Book 4, lines 846-851.

<sup>3</sup> "Message to Both Houses of Congress; Transmitting Despatches from France," March 19, 1798: ". . . consistently with maxims for which our country has contended at every hazard, and which constitute the basis of our national sovereignty." Adams, *Works*, vol. 9, p. 157.

came forward and declared their intire satisfaction in the conduct of the President and their conviction of his sincere desire to preserve Peace, their astonishment at the profligate demands of France, and an abhorrence of her conduct. These are some of those who have been decived [*sic*] and declare so, but their is yet a Number of a different sort, those whom the French boast of as their Partizens who will not leave them, very wicked Men, who tho now convicted will only shift their ground, retreat for a little while seeing the current without doors sits so strongly against them, but return to the Charge again, as soon as their plans are concerted and matured. It is however come to such a crissis, that they will be adjudged Traitors to their Country. I shall not be able to send you the dispatches untill tuesday next. In the mean time I inclose you Fennos paper, which will give you a few of the out lines. If the communications should have the happy effect which present appearences lead me to hope, that of uniting the people of our Country, I shall not regret that they were calld for. Out of apprehension what might prove the result of such communications to our Envoys, if they still remain in Paris, the President forbore to communicate them and in his Message was as explicit as was necessary for those who reposed confidence in him. But such lies and falshoods were continually circulated, and base and incendiary Letters sent to the house addrest to him, that I really have been allarmd for his Personal safety tho I have never before exprest it. With this temper in a city like this, materials for a Mob might be brought together in 10 minuts. When the Language in Baches paper has been of the most insolent and abusive kind, when Language in the House of Rep's has corresponded with it, and anathamas have been thunderd out by Members without doors, and a call upon the people to Humble themselves before their Maker, treated with open contempt and Ridicule, had I not cause for allarm? But that which was meant for evil, I hope may terminate in Good.

I am not [without *cancelled*] without many fears for our Envoys. The wretches may imprison them and since they avow Algiers for their pattern, oblige us to Ransome them at an enornus price; They are like the three Children in the Furnace.<sup>4</sup> I wish they may have as safe a deliverence. But none of these fears should transpire. Poor Mrs. [Elbridge] Gerry with such a family as she has, may be very miserable with the apprehension if she should know that it is feard they will not be permitted to leave France.

<sup>4</sup> Children of Israel: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. *Daniel*, III, 12-30.

Let Mrs. Black know that my Little Ward has quite recovered from the small pox. I expect it here tomorrow.

I have received cousins Letter and have answered it by a little Box which is to be put on Board a vessel going to Boston committed to the care of Mr. Smith & address to him. I shall say more to her when I write to her upon the Subject.

I know not when I shall see you, but I exhort the Members to dispatch business so as to rise in May. I hope their will subsist more harmony & union, peace and good will in the House than has appeared this Session. May the people be united now they have before them such proof of the base views and designs of France to Plunder us of all we hold dear & valuable, our Religion, our Liberty, our Government and our Property.

My kind Regards to Mr. Cranch, to Mrs. Welch, to Sister [Mrs. William] Smith, and all others who interest themselves in the happiness of your

Ever affectionate Sister  
ABIGAIL ADAMS

Philadelphia, April 13, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

I inclose a Letter to Cousin Betsy, who has been very frank with me upon the subject of her approaching connection. I hope they will live to enjoy mutual happiness.

I believe I have been deficient in not mentioning to you that Mr. [James] Greenleaf was liberated from Prison on Saturday week. I have not seen him. Mr. [Samuel B.] Malcomb was present at Court and heard the examination. He returned quite charmed with Mr. Greenleaf's manners and deportment, though not so with the counsel against him, who he said used Mr. Greenleaf in a very ungentle manner but still Mr. G[reenleaf] did not forget what belonged to himself, by which means he obtained many advocates.<sup>1</sup>

I know my dear Sister you will rejoice that I can hear from my Children publicly, that is officially, though I have not received any Private Letters. Mr. King writes that he has put on board a vessel bound to Liverpool Letters from Mr. Adams to his Family.<sup>2</sup> That vessel I presume waits to

<sup>1</sup> See footnote 6 to the letter of June 25, 1795, and footnote 7 to the letter of February 1-5, 1798.

<sup>2</sup> See footnote 8 to the letter of January 5, 1798.

sail under the convoy granted. The Secretary of State has received by the British packet duplicates of Letters from Mr. Adams at Berlin dated 6 December in which he writes that he was received by the New King of Prussia on the 5th of December, that the King had waved [*sic*] the common usage with respect to him, considering the distance of the United States, and received him. Upon presenting his Credentials, he assured the King that he had no doubt that new ones would be sent him, and that he doubted not he should be warranted by his Government in assuring him of the interest the United Stat[e]s take in his welfare and prosperity, and that he should but fulfill their wishes by reiterating to him the sentiments of Friendship and good will which he had in Charge to express to his Royal Father and Predecessor. To which his Majesty answered, that he was much gratified by the mark of attention which the United States had shown to the Government, and wished to assure him of his recipriocal [*sic*] good will, and good wishes for their happiness and prosperity, that the similarity of the commercial interests of the two Countries renderd the connection between them important, and might be productive of mutual benefit. On the same Evening Mr. Adams had an Audience of the Queen Mother.<sup>3</sup>

This is rather different from the treatment which our Envoys meet with from the 5 Kings in France.<sup>4</sup> The publick opinion is changeing here very fast, and the people begin to see who have been their firm unshaken Friends, steady to their interests and defenders of their Rights and Liberties. The Merchants of this city have had a meeting to prepare an address of thanks to the President for his firm and steady conduct as it respects their interests. I am told that the French Cockade so frequent in the streets here, is not now to be seen, and the Common People say if J[efferso]n had been our President, and Madison & Burr our Negotiators, we should all have been sold to the French—It is evident that the whole dependance of the French is the devisiion amongst ourselves. Their making such a Noise & pretending to be very wroth at the Presidents speech, is designd only to effect a Change in the chief Majestracy. They dare not openly avow it, but the declaration that all vessels should be subject to capture which had passports on board signd with the Presidents signature is one amongst the many personal insults offerd, but they have sprung a mine now which will blow them up. They have discovered

<sup>3</sup> Louisa of Hesse-Darmstadt, second wife and widow of Frederick William II, King of Prussia (1786-1797).

<sup>4</sup> Barras, Rewbel, La Révellière, Merlin, and François made up the French Directory as of October, 1797. See footnote 3 to the letter of February 6, 1798.

a greedy appetite to swallow us all up, to make us like the Hollanders, to cut us up like a capon, and deal us out like true Gamesters.

I sent and bought Kings Pantheon as soon as I found myself foild in my recollection.<sup>5</sup>

I shall write to your son tomorrow. I have not heard lately from him.

I don't care whether Mrs. Pope puts me down any butter, if she will only let me have fresh when I come home. I could never find any body who would take the pains which she does, and make so good Butter in the heat of summer.

My Love to Mrs. Norton & Greenleaf. To each I have sent a simplicity [sic] cap.<sup>6</sup> Respects to Mr. Cranch & Mrs. Welch, from

Your truly affectionate Sister  
ABIGAIL ADAMS

Philadelphia, April 21, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

I believe I have not written to you before this week. I have been much engaged in writing to my Children, from whom I have had the pleasure of receiving Letters last Saturday, and again this day. My Letters, of the last week were Decbr. 28th, giving me an account of the various disasters which befell them. J. Q. A. writes thus. "I saild with my little Family from London to Hamburgh, which place we reached after a stormy, but not a long passage. From Hamburgh we proceeded heither by—Land I was going to say; but it is rather an ocean of a different description, or what Milton would call, 'a windy Sea of Land,' that is about 200 miles of continual sand banks, converted by the wetness of the season into bogs of mud.<sup>1</sup> We reachd Berlin on the 7 of last Month, and three days after began my severest affliction. My Wife and Brother one after the other were seized with violent and dangerous illnesses. At a Tavern—in a strange Country—unacquainted with any humane Being in it, and Ignorant of the Language in a great measure, you can judge what we all sufferd. Mrs. Adams was so ill for ten days that I could

<sup>5</sup> *An Alphabetical List of the Subscribers to the King's Theatre, Pantheon: with references to their different boxes . . .*, London, 1791; or *Description of the Allegory, printed for the curtain of the King's Theatre, Pantheon*, London, 1791.

<sup>6</sup> A small, plain cap, worn either in the house or out of doors, under large hats. These caps were ironed flat, and were used indoors on informal occasions.

<sup>1</sup> So on this windie Sea of Land, the Fiend  
Walk'd up and down alone bent on his prey.

*Paradise Lost*: Book 3, lines 440-1.

scarcely leave her Bedside for a moment, and Thomas seized with an allarming inflamatory soar Throat & high fever, threatned with an attack of the Rheumatism at the same time. In the midst of our mischances we had the good fortune to find a good Physician, an Englishman who has for many years been settled in this Country. My Wife & Brother, thanks be to God, are now quite recoverd." Thomas delicately explains the sickness of Mrs. Adams, in the following manner. "The extraordinary exertion and fatigue of our voyage and journey proved too much for the delicate constitution of Mrs. Adams, and since our arrival she has undergone severe illness, illness of such a nature as an experienced Matron would easily divine upon calculation and comparison of dates, but which a young Batchelor knows not how to describe, but by the use of terms which practise very properly renders familiar only to professionals.—I conceive that you take my meaning, notwithstanding the veil of Mystery which is thrown over it."—Thomas then goes on to say, that they were "obliged to pass a Month at a publick Hotel before appartments could be found for their accommodation. We are at length settled in a snug family way, tho in point of lodgings we are misirably provided. It is the fashion here for two or three Families to dwell under the same Roof, and tho the houses are large, they are not sufficiently so to accommodate completely the numbers that usually inhabit them." He then proceeds to give an account of the city, and of the King & Queen &c. The King has a very amiable Character. The Perusal of the Letters would give you pleasure, but I do not yet know how to spair them. To day I received an other Letter of 31 of Jan'ry in which he acknowledges receiving Letters from me written in November & December, which is some satisfaction. These Letters are full of information, but it would be spoiling them to curtail them. One Anecdote I will however copy.—"The Great and important object which now raises the most voilent discussions at Paris, relates to the seizure of *certain cloaks* at Lyons, which were Embroidering for the Costume dress of the Legislatures. It appears they were Casimiers of English manufacture, purchased at Sedan and sent to Lyons, to have the appearance of proceeding from the National Looms—But under the late decree of the Directory, commanding the seizure as contraband of all goods of English manufacture; the *Costume cloaks* themselves were laid hold of and subjected to the common destiny—as soon as the counsel of 500 heard the fate of their *Embroidered* Cloaks they took fire, and sent a Message to the Directory complaining of the outrage offerd to the Legislative Body

by the minister of police, intimating that they expected him to be punished, and insisting upon having their *precious Cloaks* delivered up to their committee of Inspectors. The Directory answer that the committee shall have the Cloaks, but that the Embroidering is not finished, and that without an explanatory Law, the Cloaks must be delivered in their incomplete state. The counsel then with no little Indignation pass an explanatory Law, declaring that they will have their Cloaks with all *the Embroidery* or not at all. And thus ends the momentous affair, which at least serves to shew the condition of their National Manufactures, and at the same time the means used to give them a colour of Prosperity. At the same time the great expedition to conquer and ruin England and give a directory to the Republic of Albion is going on with great ardour."

The state of our own internal affairs were a better prospect, as it respects union and dispatch in Buisness. The people who can see and judge for themselves are disposed to do right, but the Ethiopian cannot Change his skin, and the Emissaries were never busier or more active than the vile junto are at present.<sup>2</sup> Bache has the malice & falshood of Satin, and his vile partner the Chronical is equally as bad.<sup>3</sup> But the wretched will provoke to measures which will silence them e'er long. An abused and insulted publick cannot tolerate them much longer. In short they are so criminal that they ought to be Presented by the grand jurors.—I have not a doubt that a late writer in the Chronical under the signature of a Republican has been in concert with the vile liar (Findley who during this session has written a Letter full of falshoods as may be proved from the journals of the Senate, from the treasury Books). This writer has been replied to by one under the signature of Marcus in the Centinal. Republican says the President & his son have received 80,000 dollars in two years. Every one knows from every Almanack and Registure that the sallery for President & Vice President has been the same from the commencement of the Government to this day; and the Man who dare say that a sou more has been received is a Liar, and is calld upon for his proof. Mr. J. Q. Adams has received exactly the same with other Ministers of the same Rank from this Country, a sallery of 4500 as minister Resident, an outfit of that sum when he left the Country. But when his destination was changed, he received only half the sum he would have done if he had gone from this Country. As minister Plenipotentiary, he has 9000 dollars pr year, but was only

<sup>2</sup> See footnote 5 to the letter of February [1-5], 1798.

<sup>3</sup> The *Independent Chronicle and Universal Advertiser*, of Boston, published by Thomas Adams.

allowd half that sum as his outfit. He never received a copper in consequence of his having been appointed to Lisbon, because he did not go tho he had been at the expence of hiring a House there, & actually sent his Books there & paid his own passage, when he received orders to go to Berlin, so that he was actually a looser. Yet these wretches thus deceive the people. These are facts. Let them bring proof to the contrary. Let them go to the treasury Books & they will see how they are abused. I inclose that wicked old Findleys Letter.<sup>4</sup> Their system is evident in every part of the union. Perdition catch them. We had as good have no devil if he does not claim his own. Forgive me if I have been Rash. My indignation is excited at these Hypocrits.

Yours

A. A[DAMS]

Philadelphia, 22 April, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

By the post of yesterday I received yours of April 15. As the post will now go more frequently I hope you will get Letters more regularly.

It was very unfortunate for Mrs. Porter, to have Mr. Sole taken sick the very day after he came, and the more so because she is now encumberd with more buisness. I have written the Dr. [Cotton Tufts] that I think it would be best to through [throw] two Chambers into one and to have access to it from without by stairs, which Chamber may hold all the Books in regular order, and be a pleasant Room for the President to do buisness in, as we are so confind in the House. There are in the granery some Book Shelves which may be made to answer in addition to those we have, and may be new painted. I mean to have the whole executed without Mr. Adams knowing any thing of the accommodation untill he sees it. And when the building is finishd for the Book Room, I must request Brother Cranch to see the putting [them *cancelled*] the Books up in order. The Room now used for the Books will serve Mrs. Porter for a Lodging Room.

<sup>4</sup> In the spring of 1798, there occurred a most unbecoming controversy as to just how much money in salaries and allowances John Adams and John Quincy Adams were drawing from the federal government. William Findley (1741-1821), a "Republican" member of the House of Representatives from Pennsylvania, seems to have begun it with the letter which Abigail Adams enclosed in her letter to her sister. The controversy was continued in Boston in the pages of the *Independent Chronicle and Universal Advertiser*, published by one Thomas Adams, and the *Columbian Centinel*, published by Benjamin Russell. A "Republican" repeated the charges of Findley in the *Chronicle*; and "Marcus," "Philo-Marcus," and "Detector et Flagellator" defended John Adams and his son in the pages of the *Centinel*. See the *Columbian Centinel* for March 21 and 31, April 4, 11, and 14, 1798.



The Gentlemen say they will let me go home early in June, but it is difficult to keep the good men together. There are now absent nine Federal Senators from some excuse or other, some for a fortnight, some for three weeks, and some for the remainder of the session [which *cancelled*]. I think it difficult to excuse [them *cancelled*] absence at so Critical a period. The Antis all stick by. Tho the Senate are strong, yet they appear to be weak from the absence of so many federal men. In the House they are become so strong, as to do Buisness by a considerable Majority. The Jesuit Gallatin<sup>1</sup> is as subtle and as artfull and designing as ever, but meets with a more decided opposition, and the Party, tho many of them as wicked as ever, are much weakned by some whose consciences will not let them go all lengths with them. As the French have boasted of having more influence in the United States, than our own Government, the Men who now espouse their cause against their own Country, and justify their measures, ought to be carefully markd. They ought to be brought into open light. Addresses from the Merchants, Traders & Underwriters [have *cancelled*] have been presented and signd by more than 500 of Men, of the greatest Property here in this city, highly approveing the measures of the Executive. A similar one from the Grand Jurors, one from York Town, and yesterday, one from the Mayor, Aldermen & common counsel of the city, a very firm and manly address. Others are comeing from N[ew] York, from Baltimore, and I presume Boston will be no longer behind than time to consult upon the measure. They must in this way shew the haughty Tyrants, that we are not that divided people we have appeard to be; their vile Emissaries make all our trouble, and all our difficulty. A Report is in circulation that our Envoys left Paris for London on the 16 Feb'ry but nothing has been received from them here later than Jan'ry 8th tho many Rumour'd accounts of dispatches, has been circulated.

I would recommend to my countrymen the judicious observation of Mr. Burk, who says, "A Great State is too much envied, too much dreaded, to find safety in humiliation. To be secure, it must be respected. Power and Eminence, and consideration are things not to be begged. They must be commanded and they who supplicate mercy from others, can never hope from [for] justice through themselves. . . . Often has a Man lost his all because he would not submit to hazard all in defending it."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See footnote 4 to the letter of March 3, 1798.

<sup>2</sup> *Burke: Selected Works*, E. J. Payne, Editor, Oxford, 1892, "Letters on the Regicide Peace," pp. 11-12: Letter I (1796).

See the opinion of the French minister at Berlin upon our Naval defence. Mr. Adams writes, "I have had some conversation with the French Minister here concerning the New law against Neutral navigation which he admitted as contrary to the Law of Nations.<sup>3</sup> But he says it is only a necessary Retaliation against the English, and if the Neutral Nations will suffer the English to [seize] all their vessels, the French must do the same. I told him without being disposed to justify or apologize for the Predatory practise of England, which I utterly detested, I must say they never had been carried to an extent any thing resembling this regulation—that besides England was now making indemnification for many of the depredations committed under colour of her Authority, that if the Principle of Retaliation alledged as a warrant for this new measure on the part of France were founded there could never be any such thing as Neutrality in any maritime [*sic*] war, for that it would require every Neutral power to make war upon the first instance of improper capture of a vessel under her flag.—No said he, that is not necessary, but the Neutral powers should shew a firm countenance, and determined resolution to maintain its [*sic*] Rights and send all its commerce under convoy.—I askd him what a power was to do that had no ships of war to give as convoys?—He said *they must raise* sufficient for the purpose." This you see is the opinion of even a French Minister. Yet no longer ago than fryday, our House of Rep's sit till near 8 oclock combatting Gallatins motion, that the President should be restricted from useing the ships built & to be built as convoys in time of Peace, thinking, I presume, as he could not prevent their being built, he would Defeat the use of them at this present time, as France had not declared war, and it was not probable we should. The Federilists cast out the motion by 50 to 34.<sup>4</sup>

I believe I have wearied you with politicks. I wrote Mrs. Black last week, and in hopes that she might get the Letter sooner inclosed it to Mr. Smith, who when it arrives may be absent, which I regret. Please to tell her that I received her Letter of the 16 yesterday, that since I

<sup>3</sup> See the *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, Philadelphia, 1874, vol. 1, pp. 214-5. The diary of John Quincy Adams, as published, contains no entry covering this conversation. In 1798, the French minister to Berlin was Antoine-Bernard Caillard (1737-1807), who served under both Louis XVI and the Republic! Adams first met Caillard in St. Petersburg, when he (Adams) was serving as the secretary (1781-1783) to Francis Dana, American minister to Russia. Caillard persuaded Prussia to acknowledge the Rhine as the eastern boundary of the French Republic.

<sup>4</sup> For the warlike measures adopted by the Congress against France in the spring of 1798, see Schouler, *History of the United States*, vol. 1, pp. 397-401.

took the child from Mr. Black, he nor his Housekeeper have not been near it, that they retained all the Cloaths which the child had except what it had on, and those which Mrs. Black sent it. I knew it must have more clouts or it could not go the journey, never having had more than 8. I have therefore got some diaper and made 13 for it, a couple of yellow flannel coats & two calico slips, all of which we have made and if Mr. Black does not think proper to give up the other things, I will see that the Baby shall have every necessary article. I shall be answerable to the Nurse for its Board, but they made the poor thing sick by taking it out in the Evening and giving it Rum, the Nurse says to make it sleep. It was more uneasy and gave her more trouble than when it was sick with the small Pox. I was quite unhappy about it. It is better now, and I expect to see it to day. I believe I should have lost it, if they had kept it a week, and gone on in the way they began.—I shall rejoice when I hear it is safe with its *Patron* and *Benefactress*—Let me know when the Box for Cousin Betsy arrives. Has Mrs. Norton been unwell? I hope it is not *her old sickness*—My Love to her. When she is Blessd with a daughter I shall think she deserves well of her Country, and need no further aid it with Recruits. I quite long to see you all. I do hope the buildings will be all finished so that Mrs. Porter may be able to remove into them when we come. I should like to have the kitchin floor & stairs painted, and the Chamber floor where the Girls used to sleep. I hope particular attention will be paid to the chimney peice in the parlour to get the smoak off[f], that it may dry.

I inclose 5 dollors. Will you be so good as to get something of the value of a couple of dollors & present to Mrs. Porter. Perhaps a new Bonnet might be acceptable. I will not confine you to two dollors. Please to pay Sister Smith as she knits & keep her supplied with cotton. I will put ten dollors instead of 5 in, that you may draw upon it for a load of wood to Pheby if she wants or Bread corn.

I sent to get an other of Mr. Harpers Books to send to the Library, but tho two thousand were Printed they are all gone. A new Edition is coming out.<sup>5</sup> I am, my dear Sister, most affectionatly

Your Sister

A. ADAMS

Mrs. Otis, who with her Family always dine with us on Sundays, desires to be rememberd to you. We live like Sisters.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Goodloe Harper (1765-1825), of Virginia, published in 1797 his *Observations on the Dispute Between the United States and France*, which attracted great attention at home and in Europe, and ran through many editions. Harper was an able and ardent Federalist.

My dear Sister the Aniversary of this day awakens all my feelings—  
Is poor Suky yet living?<sup>6</sup>

[Get some thing of two dollors value for Mrs. Norton *cancelled*.]

The Baby has been to see me to day. It grows very fast since it had the small pox. I dont think it half so pretty since, as it was before. Yesterday the nurse went to Mr. Blacks, and they sent it what things it had. They had got over their anger, but said they would take it away at the end of a fortnight, but I do not believe them. My pens are very bad but I cannot copy my scrawls.

[Philadelphia], April 26, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

I inclose to you a National Song composed by this same Mr. Hopkinson.<sup>1</sup> French Tunes have for a long time usurped an uncontrouled sway. Since the Change in the publick opinion respecting France, the people began to lose the relish for them, and what had been harmony, now becomes discord. Accordingly their had been for several Evenings at the Theatre something like disorder, one party crying out for the Presidents March and Yankee Doodle, whilst Ciera was vociferated from the other.<sup>2</sup> It was hisst off repeatedly. The Managers were blamed. Their excuse was that they had not any words to the Presidents March—Mr. Hopkinson accordingly composed these to the tune. Last Eve'ng they were sung for the first time. I had a Great curiosity to see for myself the Effect. I got Mr. Otis to take a Box, and silently went off with Mr. and Mrs. Otis, Mr. & Mrs. Buck to the play, where I had only once been this winter.<sup>3</sup> I meant now to be perfectly in cogg, so did not sit in what is

<sup>6</sup> The mother of John Adams, Susanna (Boylston) [Adams] Hall (1709–1797), had died just one year before. "Suky" is Susannah Warner, daughter of the second wife of Dr. Cotton Tufts. See footnote 5 to the letter of March 3, 1798.

<sup>1</sup> "Hail Columbia," composed by Joseph Hopkinson (1770–1842), at the request of a young actor and singer of his acquaintance, Gilbert Fox (1776–1807), who was born in England and settled in Philadelphia. Fox was not only a singer, but an actor and an engraver of some note. Years afterward, Hopkinson wrote that Fox had asked him for the song on Saturday, that he had composed it on Sunday, and that it was first sung on Monday evening. April 25, 1798, however, fell on Wednesday, not on Monday.

<sup>2</sup> "Ça ira," the first popular song of the French Revolution, was sung in 1789 by the insurgents as they marched to Versailles. The music was extremely popular under the name, "Carillon National," which was a great favorite with Marie Antoinette. The words were suggested to Ladré, a street-singer, by Lafayette, who remembered hearing Franklin say, when asked for news at various stages of the American Revolution: "*Ça ira, Ça ira.*"

<sup>3</sup> The scene was the New Theatre in Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, and the companions of Mrs. Adams were Samuel Allyne Otis, Secretary of the Senate from 1789 to 1814, and

call'd the Presidents Box. After the Principle Peice was perfor[m]d, Mr. Fox came upon the stage, to sing the song. He was welcomed by applause. The House was very full, and at every Choruss, the most unbounded applause ensued. In short it was enough to stund [*sic*] one. They had the song repeated—After this Rossina was acted.<sup>4</sup> When Fox came upon the state [*sic*] after the Curtain dropt, to announce the Peice for fryday, they call'd again for the song, and made him repeat it to the fourth time. And the last time, the whole [Gallery *cancelled*] Audience broke forth in the Chorus whilst the thunder from their Hands was incessant, and at the close they rose, gave 3 Huzzas, that you might have heard a mile—My Head aches in consequence of it. The Managers have requested the President to attend the Theater, and twesday next he goes. A number of the inhabitants have made the same request, and now is the proper time to gratify them. Their have been six differents [*sic*] addresses presented from this city alone; all expressive of the Approbation of the measures of the Executive. Yet dairingly do the vile incendiaries keep up in Baches paper the most wicked and base, voilent & caluminiating abuse—It was formerly considerd as level'd against the Government, but now it is contrary to their declared sentiments daily manifested, so that it insults the Majesty of the Sovereign People. But nothing will have an Effect untill congress pass a Sedition Bill, which I presume they will do before they rise<sup>5</sup>—Not a paper from Bache press issues nor from Adams Chronical, but what might have been [prevented *cancelled*] prosecuted as libels upon the President and Congress. [They *cancelled*] For a long time they seem as if they were now desperate—The wrath of the public ought to fall upon their devoted Heads.

I shall send a paper or two because your Boston papers cannot take

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Daniel Buck (1753–1816), Federalist member of the House of Representatives from Virginia (1795–1797), and their wives.

<sup>4</sup> What Mrs. Adams calls “the principal piece” was “The Italian Monk,” a play in three acts, interspersed with songs, and presented for the second time in America. This was followed by “More Sack,” an epilogue in the character of Sir John Falstaff, to be spoken by Mr. Warren. Then Gilbert Fox sang “Hail Columbia” to the tune of the “President’s March,” “accompanied by the full band and a grand chorus.” This was encored four times. The evening concluded with a favorite comic opera, in two acts, “not acted these two years,” called “Rosina.” See the *Gazette of the United States and Philadelphia Daily Advertiser*, April 25 and 26, 1798.

<sup>5</sup> For the texts, and the unpopular results of the Naturalization Act (June 18, 1798), the Alien Act (June 25, 1798), the Alien Enemies Act (July 6, 1798), and the Sedition Act (July 14, 1798), see Henry S. Commager, *Documents of American History*, New York, 1934, pp. 175–8. Pickering pressed for the full enforcement of these ill-advised laws, and to the detriment of Adams.

in one half of what these contain. Mr. Otis's Letter is a very judicious, sensible, patriotic composition, and does him great honour.<sup>6</sup>

You may rely upon it from me, that not a single line from our Envoys have been received but what has been communicated, and nothing has been received from them since the last communication.

I received your Letter of the 20 this day. I am very sorry the closet should be omitted because it wanted painting very much and does not easily dry. I wrote to the Dr. [Cotton Tufts] and proposed having the outside of the house new painted, and the Garden fence also which never was more than primed, but I would not put too many Irons at once in the fire.

If you have got Cousin Betsys Box or she has, as I see the vessel is arrived, you will then find what a drapery dress is, and the Young Lady will teach how it is to be put on. A Cap for you should be made as you usually wear yours, and as I wear mine, of handsome muslin with a pleated border or a lace—I wear no other but upon publick Evenings when I wear a Crape dress cap.

I do not wear the drapery dress myself as I consider it too youthfull for me. I have both sides alike, but they both come forward upon the top & then fall away and are worn with a coat or the Apron lose.

Will you desire Mr. Porter to get some slips of the Quince Tree and sit out in the lower garden.

Adieu my dear Sister. My pen, I think, is scarcely ever dry.

Yours in Love, affection

ABIGAIL ADAMS

P.S. Since writing the above the song is printed. Bache says this morning among other impudence that the excellent Lady of the Excellent President, was present, and shed Tears of sensibility upon the occasion. That was a lie. However I should not have been asshamed if it had been so. I laughed at one scene which was playd, [to] be sure, untill the tears ran down, I believe. But the song by the manner in which it is received, is death to their Party. The House was really crowded, and by the most respectable people in the city.

<sup>6</sup> *Letter to General Heath* (1798). The Roxbury town meeting was "warned" on Monday, March 19, for Tuesday, March 20, 1798. General William Heath (1737-1814), a farmer of Roxbury and a veteran of the Revolution, acted as chairman of the meeting. According to the town records, 113 voted in the affirmative on the motion to petition Congress against permitting merchant vessels to arm in their defence. According to General Heath, only four voted in the negative. On Wednesday, March 21, General Heath wrote to Harrison Gray Otis, whose district included the town of Roxbury. Otis answered him on Friday, March 30, and his letter was published and circulated widely. See Morison, *H. G. Otis*, vol. 1, pp. 68-71 and 88-9. See also, the *Columbian Centinel*, March 24, 1798, for a letter, signed "Norfolk," attacking this town meeting and General Heath.

Philadelphia, 28 April, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

I have just received yours of the 23 April and I sit down to answer your inquiries respecting the building. I wrote to Dr. Tufts my Ideas upon it. I should think the East Chambers the best for a Library and I do not see any inconvenience from having the Stairs to it without doors like going into a store, as Mr. Tufts Store is built. I pray neither the Dr. or Mr. Black when he comes will say any thing about the Building. I mean to have it all done snug, and the Library removed if I can before I come, and I pray the Dr. to inform me of the cost, which I design to secure monthly from my expences here. I know the President will be glad when it is done, but he can never bear to trouble himself about any thing of the kind, and he has no taste for it, and he has too many publick cares to think of his own affairs.

You mention Betsys [*sic*] Shaws illness. I did not know she had been sick, except the beginning of the winter. I am allarmd for her.<sup>1</sup>

The papers are at the bottom of the Box sent to Cousin Betsy. I see by the papers that the vessel is arrived. If she is not at home you may open the Box. I never received the Letter in which the Dr. mentions having inclosed the plan. Tell the Dr. if four or 5 Hunderd dollors will meet the object, I will remit the remainder to him as he shall have occasion.

The Child is very well. Let Mrs. Black know. The weather yesterday was very Hot and is like to be so to day. I had a very full Drawing Room last evening. I must close them in May. I cannot have them in Hot weather. I went yesterday to return some visits, and where ever I past, I received a marked notice of Bows & *the Friends* in the Street *in their way* noticed me. I thought nothing of it, untill my attention was caught by a Bunch of Tradesmen they lookt like, who at the corners of the Street saluted me as I past with their Hats—In short we are now wonderfully popular except with Bache & Co who in his paper calls the President old, querilous, Bald, blind, crippled, Toothless Adams. Thus in Scripture was the Prophet mocked, and tho no Bears may devour the wretch, the wrath of an insulted people will by & by break upon him.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Probably Elizabeth Quincy Shaw (1780-1798), daughter of Elizabeth (Smith) [Shaw] Peabody.

<sup>2</sup> "And he [Elisha] went up from thence unto Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.

And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them." 2 *Kings*, II, 23-4.

I have not time to add more than my Love and Regards to all Friends from your

Affectionate Sister

A. ADAMS

Philadelphia, May 7th, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

Mr. [Moses] Black got here on thursday night. I was rejoiced to see him. It seemd next to being at home. I yesterday received your Letter of April 29th. I had heard before both of Sukys death and my dear little Mary's.<sup>1</sup> I felt hers the more sensibly, because she was more endeared to me from having been more with me than either of the other Children. My Heart is grieved for Mr. and Mrs. [William] Smith who for this Month Past have seen one continued scene of affliction from the [frequent *cancelled*] repeated Bereavements of Friends, and Relatives. If any thing can effectually wean & detach us from this world, it is the loss of those who render Life pleasant and agreeable to us. Yet we are apt to cling closer to those which remain, and Even what are call'd Mrs. Thrails [Thrale] three warnings in her Dialogue between Death and Man, are insufficient too frequently to find us ready to depart, loss of Limbs, loss of Sight & loss of Hearing.<sup>2</sup> I recollect my Mother[-in-law] once said to me after she was Eighty four years old, I *really believe* if I was now sick, I should want to get well again. So strong a principle is the Love of Life. If it was not for the sure and certain hope of a superiour state of existance beyond this transitory scene of Noise, Bustle, pain & anxiety—we should be of all Beings the most misirable. The Present state of the world exhibits in the Revolution of France one of the most astonishing spectacles ever [exhibited *cancelled*] acted upon the stage to scourge the Nations of the Earth. Voltair[e] Predicted that Popery should be over-turnd by Atheism.—What is to be our future Lot, and Destiny, remains to be unfolded. I hope we may still Continue to be “that happy people saved of the Lord.” That we were sinking into a state of Langour, of Supineness, of Effimancy & Luxury is but too evident from our stand-

<sup>1</sup> Mary Carter Smith, daughter of “William Smith, Esq., Merchant,” niece of Mrs. Adams, died at the age of seven. See the *Columbian Centinel*, April 28, 1798. The *Boston Directory* (1798) lists “William Smith, merchant, No. 53 State Street, house Court Street.”

<sup>2</sup> “The Three Warnings. A Tale” is a sprightly poem, in the style of Swift, by Hester Lynch (Salisbury) [Thrale] Piozzi (1741–1821), in which Death, having been persuaded by a young bridegroom to call for him later on in life, pays his second visit only to find the lover of years past lame, deaf, and blind, and no longer unwilling to die. *Autobiography: Letters and Literary Remains*, Boston, 1861, pp. 247–9.



ing in need of such severe & repeated scourging to arouse us to a sense of Danger, and to compell us to rise in defence of our Religion, our Liberties & independance. We are to day at 12 oclock to have a moveing and stricking spectacle, no less than between 7 & 8 Hundred young Men from 18 to 23 in a Body to present an address. Upon this occasion the President puts on his uniform, and the whole House will be thrown open to receive them. A number of Ladies will be present upon the occasion with me. The address and replie will appear in the paper and I will send it to you.<sup>3</sup>

I was pleasd with Mr. Nortons choice of a Text for the subject of his Fast sermon. Peter [Porcupine] I see in his paper of Saturday has been thinking upon the same subject, *that Man is* a very extraordinary [Man cancelled] creature. When he pleases he writes admirably, and is the greatest scourge of the french Faction which they have in the Country. His shafts are always tipt with wit, and his humour is such as frequently to excite more of good than ill.

I inclose to you a number of Letters from my sons; Some I have sent for Mrs. Johnson to read, who has not yet received any Letters.<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Johnson in her last Letter writes me, that Mr. Johnson had invited Mr. Cranch to come to George Town and take an office vacant by the death of a Mr. Cook, a Nephew of Mr. Johnsons. She says Mr. Johnson had put all his Papers into Mr. Cranchs Hands. I hope Mr. Cranch will find in Mr. Johnson an alleviation for the loss of Mr. Deakings.<sup>5</sup> Has he written you any thing upon the subject? Mr. Greenleaf has liberty to go out daily, which he does. He may be attended by an officer, and I believe he is, but his confinement is not close as it was. I have ever been an advocate for his intentions, but it is very hard for those who are smarting under the presure of a loss of all they possesst, and that without the least benefit [*sic*] derived from him, to be reduced with their Families from affluence, to poverty and indigence, to refrain from bitter reflections, and imputations inconsistant with candour and a confidence in the integrity of his heart. I never knew untill this week, that our Friend Mr. Smith of Boston was a looser by him to the amount [of] Eighteen thousand dollors. Do not however mention it to Mr. Smith, as he never hinted the thing himself to me—What a Besom of destruction is this Spirit of Speculation.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Of Adams's answers to addresses from different parts of the United States (1797-1801), fifty-six are printed in *Works*, vol. 9, pp. 180-236; for this reply, see pp. 187-9.

<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Joshua Johnson, of Maryland, mother of Louisa Catherine, wife of John Quincy Adams.

<sup>5</sup> See footnote 2 to the letter of March 27, 1798.

<sup>6</sup> See Clark, *Greenleaf and Law in the Federal City*, p. 195; and the letter of June 1, 1798.

I hope our people will proceed with the buildings as tho I was to be at Quincy the beginning of June. I regret as the Roof is raised that the building was not continued the whole length of it, but the Dr. [Cotton Tufts] did not think of so extensive a plan, any more than I did at first, and the plan which he writes that he inclosed to me never came to Hand—Let me know how it progresses. Have you got the Box I sent to Betsy? The weather has been as Hot for this fortnight past as it was last year in June. The Country looks delightfull. I ride almost every day and enjoy it. I fear we shall be detaind here much longer than I wish. I would have the building painted a Stone colour, and I hope the Dr. poor man if he is able will have the out side of the House painted over white as it now is, but it wants a new coat—I wish the Dr. would try calomil upon himself. I have a great opinion of its efficacy. Return me the Letters as soon as you have read them. Love & respects to all inquiring Friends from your

Affectionate Sister

A. ADAMS

Philadelphia, May 10th, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

Rumour at a distance magnifies and seldom reports truth. I have not written you a word upon a subject which I know would have made you at least very uneasy. About three weeks ago, a Letter was sent, or rather brought here of a Sunday Evening by two young women of the City, one of whom said passing the House a few days before She took up a paper in a small alley which runs between our house & our Neighbours. It was wet by lying at the Edge of a gutter which passes through the passage. The Girl, finding it in this way opend the Letter, and read it, but being allarmd at the contents, knew not what to do. Her mother, who was absent at the Time, returning & finding what she had done, directed the Girl to bring it herself, & relate the circumstances. The purport of the Letters [*sic*] was to inform the President that the French people who were in this city had formed a conspiracy with some unsuspected Americans, on the Evening of the day appointed for the fast to sit fire to the City in various parts, and to Massacre the inhabitants, intreating the President not to neglect the information & the warning given, tho by an anonymous Hand, signd a Real tho heretofore a misguided American. The President conceived it to be an incendiary Letter written to allarm & distress the inhabitants. An other Letter of the same purport was sent ten days after, thrust under the door of Mr. Otis's

office. These with some Rumours of combinations got abroad, and the Mayor,<sup>1</sup> Aldermen &c kept some persons upon the watch through all parts of the city, & the Governour gave orders privately to have a troop of Horse in case of need.<sup>2</sup> The Young Men of the city as I wrote you on Monday to the amount of near Eleven Hundred came at 12 oclock in procession two and two. There were assembled upon the occasion it is said ten thousand Persons. This street as wide or wider than State Street in Boston, was full as far as we could see up & down. One might have walkd upon their Heads, besides the houses window & even tops of Houses. In great order & decorum the Young Men with each a black cockade marchd through the Multitude and all of them enterd the House preceeded by their committe. When a Young Gentleman by the Name of Hare, a Nephew of Mrs. Bingham's, read the address, the President received them in his Levee Room drest in his uniform, and as usual upon such occasions, read his answer to them, after which they all retired.<sup>3</sup> The Multitude gave three Cheers, & followd them to the State House Yard, where the answer to the address was again read by the Chairman of the committe, with acclamations. They then closed the scene by singing the new song, which at 12 oclock at night was sung by them under our windows, they having dinned together or rather a part of them.<sup>4</sup> This scene burnt in the Hearts of some Jacobins and they determined eitheid, to terrify, or Bully the young men out of their Patriotism. Baches publishd some saussy peices, the young men resented and he would have felt the effects of their resentment if some cooler Heads had not interposed. Yesterday was observed with much solemnity.<sup>5</sup> The meeting Houses & churches were fill'd. About four oclock as

<sup>1</sup> Hilary Baker, mayor of Philadelphia at this time, died in office of yellow fever on September 25, 1798. For a description of the circumstances in which this mysterious letter of warning as to arson and murder was found, see Morison, *H. G. Otis*, vol. 1, pp. 110-111, where the source of information is given as "General Correspondence of John Adams, 1797-1798," pp. 173 and 175, in the Adams Manuscripts, which are locked up in the Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Mifflin (1744-1800), merchant, member of the Continental Congress, and soldier of the Revolution, served three terms as governor of Pennsylvania (1790-1799). His wife, Sarah Morris, was described by John Adams as "a charming Quaker girl."

<sup>3</sup> The famous Mrs. William Bingham, one of the daughters of Thomas Willing (1731-1821), Philadelphia banker, who was at one time a partner of Robert Morris. Willing's thirteen children made up a numerous and influential clan in Philadelphia. This nephew of Mrs. Bingham was Robert Hare (1781-1858), distinguished chemist, the son of Robert and Margaret (Willing) Hare. See Morison, *H. G. Otis*, pp. 133-6.

<sup>4</sup> "Hail Columbia." See the letter of April 26, 1798.

<sup>5</sup> Wednesday, May 9, 1798, was observed as "A Day of Public Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer, throughout the United States." *Columbian Centinel*, May 9, 1798; Adams, *Works*, vol. 9, pp. 169-70; and footnote 2 to the letter of March 31, 1798.

is usual the State House Yard, which is used for a walk, was very full of the inhabitants, when about 30 fellows, some with snow Balls in their Hats, & some with tri-coulour'd cockades enterd and attempted to seize upon the Hats of the Young Men to tear out their cockades. A scuffel ensued when the Young Men became conquerors, and some of these tri coulour'd cockades were trampled in the dust. One fellow was taken, and committed to Jail, but this was sufficient to allarm the inhabitants, and there were every where large collections of people. The light Horse were call'd out & patrol'd the streets all Night. A gaurd was placed before this House, tho through the whole of the Proceedings, and amidst all the collection, the Presidents name was not once mention'd, nor any one grievence complain'd of, but a foreign attempt to try their strength & to Awe the inhabitants if possible was no doubt at the bottom. Congress are upon an Allien Bill.<sup>6</sup> This Bache is cursing & abusing daily. If that fellow & his Agents Chronical, and all is not surpressed, we shall come to a civil war. I hope the Gen'll Court of our State, will take the Subject up & if they have not a strong Sediton Bill, make one—Before I close this I shall send to the post office.

Quincy address and a Letter from Brother Cranch, News papers but not a line from my sister. Well, I trust the next post will bring me some.

I must now close my Letter or the post will be gone. The Nurse & childern and Nabby Hunt are all going on Board this morning. Nabby holds me to my word that I would let her go home this spring, no difficulty or uneasiness on either part. She is wrong for herself. I have given her a dollor pr week ever since she has been with me, paid her doctor, and she is now going to ——. She will find the difference. I suppose she thinks she may get a Husband at home. Here there is no chance.

Your ever affectionate

A. ADAMS

Mr. Black was here & well to day.

Philadelphia, May 13, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

I write you a few lines by Mr. Black altho I know the post will go quicker. I hope to get Letters to day from Quincy. Now a week since I heard. We are thank God all well. The President is most worn down. I

<sup>6</sup> The Alien Act, and the Alien Enemies Act, passed June 25 and July 6, 1798. Commager, *Documents of American History*, pp. 176-7.

tell the Gentlemen if they do not give him a respite soon, it will be too much for him. The Numerous addresses which pour in daily in abundance give him much additional writing. They are however a gratefull and pleasing testimony of the satisfaction of the publick mind, assurances to support the Government, notwithstanding the pains which has been taken to poison it.

I send you my dear Sister a peice of Muslin for two Crowns of caps. It must be done up with great care. It is calld Deca Muslin.<sup>1</sup> It does not look well to tell the price of any thing which is for a present, but that you may know its real value, I will tell you that it was six dollors pr yd. It is accompanied by a peice for a Border which to get the blew out you must put in vinigar & water. I have also sent you a narrow lace for to put on them. If you put a double Border there will be enough for only one. Let me know, because when I find a pretty Edging I will send you enough for the other. You will want to run the lace upon a narrow peice of Muslin. Ladies of your age wear such fine Muslin, with white Ribbons made like the dress close caps, with a little Hair seen at the Ears. I have not time to add more, than

Yours,

A. A[DAMS]

Philadelphia, May 13, 1798

MY DEAR NEICE:<sup>1</sup>

If I have not written to you my dear Neice it is not because I have not frequently thought of you. Through the winter, your good Mother has often informd me of your welfare and that your little Girl was well. I have sent by Mr. Black a little token of my Remembrance to her, not because I thought you had not pretty things in Boston, but merely that she might have a slip of my giving her. If she is in short coats, and what I

<sup>1</sup> "Imported (via New York) on the ship Hero, from Madras and Calcutta, and for sale by the subscriber, at No. 61 Chestnut Street . . . the following articles . . . Dacca worked muslins . . . Mull Mull handkerchiefs . . . Samuel Wilson." *Gazette of the United States*, January 16, 1798. "Dacca muslin is an exceedingly filmy and fragile textile, manufactured at Dacca, in Bengal, and much used by women for dresses and by men for neckerchiefs in England about 100 years ago. The Dacca Muslin now employed resembles the modern Madras Muslin, and is used for curtains." S.F.A. Caulfield, *Dictionary of Needlework*, London, 1885.

<sup>1</sup> This letter was addressed to Mrs. Lucy (Cranch) Greenleaf (1767-1846), wife of her cousin, John Greenleaf, who was the brother of James Greenleaf of the North American Land Company.

send would make two, with the addition of half a yd more, pray inform me and I will procure it. Mr. Black goes from hence this morning. It has been a Great pleasure for me to see him, both as a Friend and Neighbour. I hope he will get the little orphan safe Home. It will not then suffer for those it has lost.<sup>2</sup>

I mourn with you & with all who knew, your Faithfull, Learned, good and Benevolent Pastor, your loss.<sup>3</sup> Many of my Friends and acquaintance are gone, since I left Home, tho only six months since. My Love to Mrs. [William] Smith when you see her. I most sincerely sympathize with her, under the repeated shocks she has sustaind. My dear little Mary is amongst the number of those I shall miss, when I return, which I hope I may be able to, in the month of June.<sup>4</sup> My kind regards to Mr. [John] Greenleaf.

From your affectionate Aunt

ABIGAIL ADAMS

Your uncle & Louisa desire to be rememberd.

Philadelphia, May 18, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

What, no Letters from Quincy, has been repeated every day for a week upon the return of every messenger from the post office. I was hunting up my pen this morning & going to sit down and inquire whether my dear sister was sick when yours of May 10th was brought me. You can hardly judge how impatient I feel if I do not hear once a week. But have you not received a Letter from me inclosing a Bill of Laiding of the Box which was adress to Mr. Smith & which Bill I desired you to forward to him? I sent such a one to you before the vessel saild. Pray have it inquired for. Two of Mrs. Goulds daughters who was formerly of Boston went in this vessel. Mrs. Gould must be known to Mr. [William] Smith. The address arrived last week and Mr. Black carries the answer to it & placed his name to it here. He intended reaching Quincy this day. He can tell you all about us, and about Philadelphia & the spirit of the times. I am rejoiced to see that the pople [*sic*] are roused to a sense of their danger, and to a determination to support their Rights. The Good

<sup>2</sup> See the letters of December 12 and 26, 1797.

<sup>3</sup> Probably the Reverend John Clarke (1755-1798), who died suddenly on April 2, 1798. See footnote 2 to the letter of June 27, 1798.

<sup>4</sup> See footnote 1 to the letter of May 7, 1798.

sense & property of the Country must be in its support. They cannot suppose that their President can have any object in view for himself or Family, from the whole course & tenor of his Life, incompatible with the honour, dignity and independance of his Country. He has his all at Stake, & more than any other individual, because of his high responsibility. The numerous addresses do honour to our Country, tho they load the President with constant application to his pen, as he answers all of them and by this means has an opportunity of diffusing his own sentiments, more extensively & probably where they will be more read and attended to than they would have been through any other channel. His manner of Receiving the youth of this city and his replie to them, I am told has attachd them so much to him, that a word to them from him upon any subject will not fail of [his *cancelled*] its influence. Of this he had a trial this week, upon a trivial subject, it is true, but it was one which might have had consequences. But his opinion signified to one of the Committe instantly was complied with—A Bill has been before the House empowering the President to receive voluntary Choirs [Corps, *see below*] in case of need. Varnum and Gallitin have opposed it vehemently. It was yesterday carried by a Great Majority in the House.<sup>1</sup>

I am equally anxious with Col. Daws for the fate of our Envoys.<sup>2</sup> With the best intentions I fear they have been too believing, and submitted to more humiliation than their country required of them, by remaining after the last decree of the Directory. I send you the last dispatches—and I sometimes add a news paper, supposing it contains more than you can get otherways. I long for the time to come when I may sit my face Northward. I have not received any account of the Dr. [Cotton Tufts] receiving a Bill of a hundred dollors sent I believe in my last Letter to him. He mentions having received the Letter to you, so I presume he got it. I hope he will be able to write me soon. The President received a Letter from him this week. I pray Heaven to prolong his usefull Life.

Return the Letters from my Children, as soon as you can. I inclose you one from your son, and one from my Friend Mrs. Johnson, which you will be so good as to return me.<sup>3</sup> I have but little time to write now as the post will go out at 12 oclock, but I congratulate you upon a brighter

<sup>1</sup> See the Act of May 28, 1798. Schouler, *History of the United States*, vol. 1, p. 397, note 3.

<sup>2</sup> Probably Thomas Dawes, father of Harrison Dawes (1794–1835), who married Lucy Greenleaf, the daughter of Lucy Cranch and John Greenleaf.

<sup>3</sup> See footnote 4 to the letter of May 7, 1798.

prospect for him. I have bespoken for Mrs. Cranch the kind and Material regard of Mrs. Johnson, and told her, that like her own daughter she had been seperated from all her natural connections. I have written to Mr. Cranch & his uncle has written the Letter he requested for Mr. Carrol.<sup>4</sup> I am anxious for Betsy Shaw. A change of Air might serve her. She is [in] too high & keen a situation, I fear, for the State of her Lungs.<sup>5</sup> My Love to Mrs. Black. I long to hear she has got her little Girl.

Most affectionately your Sister

ABIGAIL ADAMS

Philadelphia, May 20th, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

I was sorry to read to day in the Centinal of the 16th an account said to be written by a member of congress to his Friend in Conneticut [an account *cancelled*] so contrary to truth. If the writer had said the State House Yard or Gardens, instead of the Presidents House, he would have written the Truth, but most assuredly there was no appearence of any persons round this House, or near it, untill the Gaurd of light Horse came. You will hear many a Goblin story I doubt not, but you may rest assured we are not ourselves apprehensive.<sup>1</sup> The arduous and attentions of the Citizens is so great, that if a House takes fire a gaurd [*sic*] is placed round us. On the Evening the allarm was, you will recollect that I wrote you a great concourse of persons were assembled in the street before our doors, but it was not untill the affray took place in the State House Yard that the light Horse were call'd out, or that any persons assembled here, & then they were citizens I believe from the orderly behaviour & silence which was preserved.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel Carroll, of Duddington, a large holder of land in the District of Columbia, and a nephew of Daniel Carroll (1730-1796), one of the commissioners of the Federal City, that is, Washington, D.C., until his resignation in 1795. Clark, *Greenleaf and Law in the Federal City*.

<sup>5</sup> Probably Elizabeth Quincy Shaw (1780-1798), daughter of Elizabeth (Smith) [Shaw] Peabody. See footnote 1 to the letter of April 28, 1798.

<sup>1</sup> As an instance of the touchiness of Adams and his wife in regard to trifling errors in the newspapers, see the *Columbian Centinel* for May 16, 1798: "May 7, 1798. This day at 12 o'clock, the Young Men of this city assembled at the *Merchant's Coffee House*, from whence they marched in a body, attended by an immense concourse of their fellow-citizens, forming a body of upwards of 1200, bearing the American Standard, and wearing the American cockade, to the house of the President of the *United States*, where they presented to him their address." The correction offered by Mrs. Adams is of no importance.



I also see a Letter from Mr. Bourn in the paper respecting our Envoys.<sup>2</sup> Government have not received any such account, altho there are letters from Mr. Murrey [*sic*] & Mr. King<sup>3</sup>—I cannot however take it upon me to deny the fact, tho I think it the worst News we could hear, because suppose it true, I believe it only calculated to deceive and amuse us, the more effectually to devour us. When I hear of an order to stop all depredations upon our commerce and to restore what has been unjustly robd from us, then shall I believe that they consider our Friendship of some use and value to them, not that they are acting from Principles of equity or justice, whilst they are dealing such vengeance to other Nations. If they approach a step towards us, it is because there is some formidable combination taking place with some other powers against them,—I hope it will not damp the ardour of Patriotism which is just rousing from its stupour. The best negotiators we can possibly have, are our addressers pledging their Lives and fortunes. Our Preliminaries are fortifications, Armed vessels and voluntary [*Choirs cancelled*] Corps.

21 May, [1798]

Upon a further attention to the Letter of Mr. Bourn I find not the least inducement to believe that it refers to any thing of a later date than the dispatches received by [the] Government dated in Febry. There are letters from Mr. Murrey [*sic*] ten days later and no mention is made of any such event or expectation; that Spain & other powers

<sup>2</sup> In the *Columbian Centinel*, May 16, 1798, the following letter and editorial note appeared:

Amsterdam, March 20, 1798.

Mr. Benjamin Russell,  
Boston.

Sir,

I avail myself of the first opportunity to acquaint you that the ship *America*, Capt. Henshaw, from New-York, lately brought in here by a French cruiser, has been immediately released by the Consul of that nation; and I am happy to add, that every thing will be done here to support and protect the intercourse with the United States.

My letters by the last mail from Paris mention, that our Envoys had lately have [*sic*] several conferences with the Minister of Foreign Affairs—result not known.—

I am, your obedt. servt.

Sylvanus Bourne.

Another letter from the above gentleman says, that Mr. Gerry had informed him, that the Envoys had had three conferences [*sic*] with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and that the negotiation appeared to be in good train.

<sup>3</sup> For Rufus King, see footnote 8 to the letter of January 5, 1798. For William Vans Murray, American minister to the Netherlands and envoy to France (1799–1800), see footnote 4 to the letter of January 20, 1798.

appear to be assumeing more spirit is true. Hear before you blame, is a good maxim, but it seems as if our Envoys were of the bird or cat kind to be fasinated [with the *cancelled*] by the serpents of France. They know not to what a pitch the pulse of their countrymen Beat.

I am very sorry Mr. Cabbot [*sic*] declined accepting the Secretaryship of the Navey.<sup>4</sup> No body but himself doubts his ability to have executed the trust well. On such occasions as the present, every hand should be put to the plough. I fear congress will continue to sit far into the Month of June. I think sometimes if they do not rise & give [their *cancelled*] the President a respite, they will have Jefferson sooner than they wish.

I never saw Mr. Adams look so pale, and he falls away, but I dare not tell him so. His spirits are however [are *cancelled*] good, but he wants a ramble in the clear air of the Country, and a new Scene. I stand it, better and have my Health better this Spring, tho an ill turn of a day or two at a time, is scarcely worth mentioning when compared to the weeks of confinement I have experienced.

You mentiond in your Letter that Dr. Tufts wanted only 200 hundred dollors. I did not know whether you meant in addition to what I had sent. I however inclose one which you will deliver to him; if another is wanted I can send it the begining of June. I dont know how I shall send a trunk to Boston. There are so many French Privateers cruizing that I dare not venture.

You must write to me once a week certainly, no matter whether you have a subject of more concequence than our mere domestick affairs. How does the building go on? Have you seen it lately? I hope the Book Room will be large enough and that it will be pleasant. My best regards to Dr. Tufts, who I hope is better. I think [it *cancelled*] his disorder Rhumatick. I am very anxious for Betsy Shaw. When do you expect Cousin Betsy back? Have you not got the Box yet? Captain Bradford of the schooner *Sally* was the vessel by which it went. I sent you the Bill of laiding with a request that you would forward it to Mr. Smith. Love to all Friends from

Yourve er affectionate Sister

A. ADAMS

Write as soon as you receive this & send your Letter to Boston if not post day. We get news papers in 5 days now.

<sup>4</sup>George Cabot (1752-1823), who, weary of politics, resigned his seat in the Senate in May, 1796, retired to private life, and refused an appointment as the first Secretary of the Navy in 1798.

Philadelphia, May 26, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

Yours of the 18 I received on thursday 23, and I rejoice to hear Mr. Black got home so soon, as I think he could dissipate your anxiety on our account. I may be too confident, but I do not feel as if any body wanted to hurt or injure us. Bearing neither malice or ill will towards any one, not even the most deluded, I cannot be particularly apprehensive. I wish the Laws of our Country were competent to punish the stirrer up of sedition, the writer and Printer of base and unfounded calumny. This would contribute as much to the Peace and harmony of our Country as any measure, and in times like the present, a more carefull and attentive watch ought to be kept over foreigners. This will be done in future if the Alien Bill passes, without being curtaild & clipt untill it is made nearly useless.<sup>1</sup> The Volunteer Corps which are forming not only of young Men, but others will keep in check these people, I trust. Amongst the many addresses have you particularly noticed one from the state of N[ew] Jersey with the Govr. at their head, as commander in chief?<sup>2</sup> It is from all the officers, and they are not vain and empty tenders, for a deputation from their Body is coming to Present the address on Monday next, and to tender their services as a volunteer Corps. I wish with you that I could see as great a Change for the better in Morals as in politicks, but it is a part of Religion as well as morality, to do justly and to love mercy and a man can not be an honest & Zealous promoter of the Principles of a True Government, without possessing that Good will towards man which leads to the Love of God, and respect for the Deity; so that a proper appreciation of our Rights & Duties as Citizens, it is a prelude to [of *cancelled*] a respect for Religion, and its institutions. To destroy and undermine Religion has been the cheif engine in the accomplishment of this mighty Revolution throughout Europe. We have felt no small share of the balefull influence of the Age of Reason, but to have a thorough Idea of the deep laid system, you must read a work lately publishd calld proofs of a conspiracy against all the Religions and Governments of Europe, by John Robison, Professor of

<sup>1</sup> See footnote 6 to the letter of May 10, 1798.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Howell (1754-1802), soldier of the Revolution, Governor of New Jersey (1793-1801). Howell helped suppress the "Whiskey Insurrection," wrote the popular song, "Dash to the Mountains, Jersey Bell," and was described as "The soul of honor, friend of human kind."

Natural Philosophy in the university of Edinburgh.<sup>3</sup> This Book I have sent to Dr. Belknap with a request that if he possesst a Copy, that he would send it to Mr. Cranch.<sup>4</sup> If he has not, he will lend it to him. You will read the Book with astonishment. What led me to send the Book at this Time, was from a Letter from my son at Berlin, who I know from his manner of writing had not seen the Book. It was first publishd last Sep'br in Edinburgh. In his Letter he mentions a society calld a *Theo Philanthropick*,<sup>5</sup> and describes it as a [mixture of cancelled] a [sic] Theological & political mixture of deism, morality and Anti-Christianity—that to propagate these doctrines, persons had been sent lately to Hamburgh; and that *Dupont de Nemours* was talkd of as coming out to America to establish such societies here.<sup>6</sup>

I have made the extract from his Letter at length, and sent it to Dr. Belknap together with Robisons work, which fully unfolds the whole scheme, and displays the effects of the Principles in the Revolutions in Europe to their full extent. I thought I could not do a better service than to put our Countrymen upon their Gaurd. The son of this Dupont [Victor Du Pont] has just arrived in this city from Charlstown, S[outh] C[arolina], where he was Consul. He is now sent here in order to super-

<sup>3</sup> John Robison (1739-1805), "one of the greatest mathematical philosophers of his age," was graduated from the University of Glasgow, where he later lectured on chemistry. He served in Canada with Wolfe, and became professor of Natural Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh in 1773, and first general secretary of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1783. He was a copious contributor to the *Encyclopadia Britannica*. Although James Watt, the engineer, said of him: "He was a man of the clearest head and the most science of anybody I have ever known," Robison, who was himself a Freemason, published what has been called "a lasting monument of fatuous credulity"—*Proofs of a Conspiracy against all the Religions and Governments of Europe, carried on in the secret meetings of Freemasons, Illuminati, and Reading Societies*, Edinburgh, 1797. A fourth edition of this book appeared in London and New York in 1798. This was the absurd book which Mrs. Adams was reading. It was Robison who passed on to posterity the famous story of General Wolfe's having quoted Gray's *Elegy* from memory the night before his death at the capture of Quebec.

<sup>4</sup> Jeremy Belknap (1744-1798), Congregational clergyman, author of the *History of New Hampshire*, 1784-1792, and the *American Biography*, 1794-1798, and founder of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>5</sup> Theophilanthropy, a system of Deism based on a belief in the existence of God and in the immortality of the soul, which appeared in France in 1796 and died out about 1801. *Oxford English Dictionary*. "Larévellière de Lépeaux enjoys the distinction of having invented a new religion of his own; but 'Theophilanthropy' ('a kind of hotch-potch of Rousseau, Voltaire, Socrates, Seneca, and Fénelon') soon outlived an ephemeral popularity." J. R. Moreton Macdonald, *A History of France*, New York, 1915, vol. 3, p. 75.

<sup>6</sup> Pierre Samuel Dupont de Nemours, who was born at Paris in 1739, and died near Wilmington, Delaware, in 1817, was a French political economist and politician, a friend of Thomas Jefferson, and the founder of the Dupont Family in the United States.

ceed Le Tomb [Joseph Philippe Létombe], as consul-general.<sup>7</sup> He told a Gentleman who mentiond it at the drawing Room last Evening that his Father was gone to Hamburgh in order to embark for America, which corresponds with the account given by Mr. [J. Q.] A.—and he added that he found the spirit of the times such, that he should be very sorry to have his Father come out. The intention was that he should have come out to accompany the Marquiss La Fayette & Family. By this means you see, he would naturally have been cordially & kindly received, and have crept unsuspected into the Bosoms of Americans, untill he had bit like a Serpent and stung like an Adder.<sup>8</sup> Was there ever a more basely designing and insidious people? Burk was right, when he described the French republick to be [founded *cancelled*] founded upon Regicide, Jacobinism and Atheism, and that it had joint to those Principles: a body of systamatick manners, which secured their operation.<sup>9</sup>

Robisons Book will shew you how much the corruption of manners has aided in the destruction of all Religious and moral Principles. All the new institutions strike at the root of our social nature. Mr. Burk goes on to observe in his Letters upon the Regicide Directory, “that other Legislators knowing that marriage is the origin of all Relations, and concequently the first Element of all duties, have endeavoured by every Art to make it sacred.” The following observation ought to be [indelliably *cancelled*] indelibly [*sic*] written upon every mind. “The Christian Religion by confining it to pairs and by rendering that Relation indissoluable, has by these two things, done more towards the peace, happiness, settlement and civilization of the world, than by any other part in this whole scheme of divine wisdom.”<sup>10</sup>

I objected to the answer to the Boston address upon the same Principle you mention.<sup>11</sup> I did get an alteration in it, but between ourselves, I think the address itself as indifferent as most any one which has been sent. But this is confidential.

Inclosed is a Letter [from *cancelled*] for Mr. Black, which I return as he requested. I hear nothing yet of the Box sent for Cousin Betsy. I hope it is not lost.

<sup>7</sup> In 1798, Talleyrand replaced Joseph Philippe Létombe as consul-general at Philadelphia with Victor Marie du Pont (1767–1827). See footnote 1 to the letter of July 17, 1798.

<sup>8</sup> “At the last it [wine] biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.” *Proverbs*, XXIII, 32.

<sup>9</sup> *Burke: Selected Works*, “Letters on the Regicide Peace,” pp. 70–2, Letter I.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74, Letter I.

<sup>11</sup> Adams, *Works*, vol. 9, p. 189.

We have had some delightfull rains these two days past. I want to escape the cage & fly to Quincy but know not when to say it will be. I am, my dear Sister,

Affectionatly yours

A. ADAMS

P.S. Louisa desires me to inquire when you expect her sister back. My Letters to you are first thoughts, without correction.

[Philadelphia], 29th May, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

I just write you a line to day, to tell you we are well, and to inclose Letters from my Family. We have not any thing new since I wrote you last, except a fine rain, which is truly a blessing, for the Grass and Grain were in a suffering condition, and the dust so intollerable as to render riding very dissagreeable. I am to drink tea on Board the Frigate *United States* this afternoon if the weather permits—On Saturday the Captain hopes to go out—I was glad to see by the papers of yesterday that Captain Beals was arrived. I should have been sorry if he had lost his place on Board the Frigate.<sup>1</sup>

I inclose to you a paper containing a number of addresses and answers. I think [Benjamin] Russel might enlarge his paper and take some of them in, that the knowledge of the prevailing spirit & sentiments might be diffused, especially as not a Jacobin paper publishes one of them, but an Insolent impudent thing of 14 or 15 Grenadeers with a St. Domingo captain at their head, has found its way into all there papers.<sup>2</sup> But

<sup>1</sup> This frigate of 44 guns was one of those designed by Joshua Humphreys expressly to outclass the existing type of frigate in the British and French navies. It was built in 1798, and became famous. In 1799, Chief Justice Ellsworth and Governor Davie boarded her at Newport, Rhode Island, at the command of John Adams, and, after a prosperous voyage across the Atlantic, entered the Tagus on one of the last days of November. The two commissioners landed finally near La Coruña, from which place they pushed on to Paris to join Vans Murray. On October 25, 1812, the *United States* engaged and captured the 44-gun British frigate *Macedonian*, and brought ship and crew into Boston Harbor. See Channing, *History of the United States*, vol. 4, pp. 205-6 and 476-7.

<sup>2</sup> After the completion of the ratification of Jay's Treaty in 1796, the United States extended *de facto* recognition to the quasi-independent government of Toussaint L'Ouverture, the Negro chieftain who had dispossessed French authority in Santo Domingo. The ports of that island were excepted from the non-intercourse law against France until June 26, 1799. The British used the ports of Santo Domingo for their naval patrol of the West Indies, where their search and seizure of American ships added fuel to the flames of sympathy for France in the United States. See [John] Russell's *Commercial Gazette*, May 28, 1798; the *Massachusetts Spy and Worcester Gazette*, May 30, 1798; Charles R. King, *The Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, New York, 1894-1900, vol. 2, p. 285, and Appendix 2, pp. 616-634; and S. F. Bemis, *A Diplomatic History of the United States*, New York, 1942.

Russels paper is pretty much like what Peter [Porcupine] says the N[ew] York papers have been of late, "not worth a curse." The Mercury might like to publish some of them.<sup>3</sup> How does the Farm look, says the President? Oh that I could see it, and ramble over it. Does not Sister Cranch say a word about it? Have you heard lately from Atkinson [New Hampshire]? Poor little Caroline has got the Ague & fever.<sup>4</sup>

Yours affecly

A. ADAMS

Philadelphia, June 1, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

I was indeed greatly afflicted by the contents of your last Letter. I received it yesterday, and having a large party of Ladies and Gentlemen to dine, I felt but Little spirit to receive or entertain them. I did not communicate it to the President untill the Evening, when he insisted upon it, that I had some dissagreeable News which had affected my spirits. Least [*sic*] he should suppose it greater, or of a different kind, I told him. He most sincerely participates with the distresst family. It hurts him, as you know all, & every thing which afflicts his Friends, does. I have all anxiety for our worthy Friend Mr. Smith, least he should be materially affected by it. His loss by Mr. Greenleaf was very heavey.<sup>1</sup> Like his Father, he is the Friend in secreet, as well as openly, and his own troubles he surpresses. I fear Mr. J. Q. A. must be a sufferer. I know he left his little all in the Drs. [Thomas Welsh's] Hands. He has since his absence directed his Brother Charles to draw upon him for a sum, I do not exactly know how much, & vest it in real estate; This he did, but afterwards was prevaild upon to let it go, & what security he now has I know not. Knowing the Family difficulties, and that it is a [difficult *cancelled*] hard thing to keep clear of them, I got some knowledge from a Quarter which I dared not disclose, that the Property was in Jeopardy. I then wrote to Mr. J. Q. A., advising him to employ Dr. Tufts in future as his Agent. He then wrote me that he had written Dr. Welch to lay out his

<sup>3</sup> *The Massachusetts Mercury*, published in Boston. Benjamin Russell, Federalist publisher of the *Columbian Centinel*. See footnote 8 to the letter of June 3, 1797.

<sup>4</sup> Caroline Amelia Smith, daughter of Abigail Adams and Colonel William Stephens Smith.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Adams refers to financial losses resulting from the speculations of James Greenleaf. "Mr. Smith" is not her brother, William Smith, but probably that "William Smith, Esq." who was elected one of the selectmen of Boston, standing third in the poll of seven victors, on Monday, May 14, 1798. See [John] Russell's *Commercial Gazette*, May 17, 1798.

Property in a freehold in Boston; I know not what to do.<sup>2</sup> I believe I had better write to Charles, and if I find he has the property secure, to hold it untill he can hear from his Brother.

The longer we live in the world, the more do troubles thicken upon us, yet we hug the fleeting shadow. Have you heard from Haverhill, or rather Atkinson? I am anxious for Betsy Q[uiincy] Shaw. I think a change of air might be good for her.

I am glad to learn that the buisness goes on so rapidly at Quincy. I do expect to see it, the beginning of July, I fear not sooner. Pray desire Mrs. Porter not to use the Bacon, but to have Beef procured. I found so much difficulty to get any good when I was at home [that was good *cancelled*] that I should be loth not to have enough. In about 6 days I will remit what the Dr. wants. I should like to know that what I sent to you for the Dr. had arrived safe. I have not learnt how Mrs. Blacks little Girl got to Quincy. I think Nabby Hunt was a foolish Girl to go home and relinquish a dollor pr week which I have given her ever since I first hired her, for a very easy kind of Buisness, and go home to Poverty. I did not send her away, for Nabby was a solid honest Girl. But for the buisness, I have got a much better one. Let me know how far the building is compleated. I hope it will all be finishd before I get home and all the workmen gone. If you think the walls will not be sufficiently dry for papering, that can be omitted untill an other season. With the kindest Regard for all our dear Friends and a sympathy in their troubles I am, my dear Sister,

Your ever affectionate

A. ADAMS

Mrs. Brisler is much afflicted at the death of her Mother. The answer to the Quincy address tho short was from the Heart.<sup>3</sup>

Philadelphia, Monday, June 4, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

I received on Saturday yours of May 28th. I wrote you on Saturday previous to my receiving yours. I am very sorry if the Box I sent should be lost. It was a square Box covered with canvass, the same you sent my cap in last summer, addrest to Mr. Smith—The dress in it together with the handkerchief, Ruffels &c was of 30 dollors value. I intended it for Betsys wedding dress. The vessels Name the *Sally & Polly*, Cap. Brad-

<sup>2</sup> For Dr. Thomas Welsh, see Adams, *Works*, vol. 9, pp. 571-2.

<sup>3</sup> Adams, *Works*, vol. 9, p. 197.



ford. I was rejoiced to learn that Mrs. Blacks little Girl was safely arrived. She is not very fair, nor do I think her so pretty as she was when younger, but she was tanded with the water no doubt. I did not have any conversation with Mr. Black respecting Mr. Whitman.<sup>1</sup> I thought as he had been so constant and determined in his opposition, that it would be to no purpose, and if the thing cannot work its own cure I do not believe persuasion will. A prudent, discreet conduct on the part of Mr. Whitman will have the greatest effect. Yet we must suppose that Mr. Whitman has his feelings, & that he cannot go to Mr. Blacks without a new invitation after having been so much opposed by him. I think the first step should be taken by those in opposition towards Mr. Whitman, unless affliction assails any of them. Then the man should forget his feelings, and the true spirit of Christianity induce him to do good even to those who have despihtfully used him. When Mr. Black lost his Brother & Sister Mr. Whitman should have visited them—then was the time for him to have won them. Mr. Black has a tender feeling Heart, all alive to distress, and actively benevolent.—I will however when I return use my good offices to unite them.

I have not heard from your son nor from Mrs. [Joshua] Johnson since I wrote you last. Mr. Johnson, I understand, has suffered very much since the war, between France & England, and he is obliged to attend very closely to his affairs here, where he had large sums oweing to him.

Dr. [Thomas] Welch and Family are never out of my mind. I know not what to say to them by way of comfort or consolation. I have written to Mr. [William] Smith asking his opinion of sending Thomas to Berlin to Mr. [John Quincy] Adams in lieu of T[homas] B[oyleston] Adams, who is determined to return home this fall, and who begs me to send some body in his Room.<sup>2</sup> Thomas is a solid Lad, Loves Mr. Adams, was brought up with him, and it will be a living for him for a year or two, and prepare him for future buisness, and I should suppose that the proposal would be agreable to him at this time, when he must be dejected with his Fathers situation. I would have him go to Hamburgh, and from thence he may soon proceed to Berlin. I would have him go directly after taking his degree.

We are distrest at the stay of our Envoys, who seem to be in a delirium. They will assuredly suffer in some way or other, if the knowledge of the

<sup>1</sup> Kilborn Whitman declined the position as assistant to the Reverend Anthony Wibird. See the letter of December 26, 1797.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Welch, Harvard, 1798, son of Dr. Thomas Welsh.

dispatches arrives there, and the consequent temper of the People [*sic*] reaches, before their orders arrive for coming away. My only hope is that the winds of Heaven were propitious in carrying their orders to them. But my astonishment is, that after the decree past the Directory for seizing all Neutrals who should have any kind of British Manufacture on Board, 24 hours should not have past before passports had been demanded. They ought not to have hesitated a moment what part to have acted. Do not however repeat these censures from me. They may be ascribed to a *higher* source. But I greatly fear the delay occasioned by the *obstinacy of one Man*.<sup>3</sup> You will hear reports, I suppose, but they shall not come from me, nor will I give Ear to them, until more solid proof, more demonstration, obliges me too—The News Papers say that dispatches have arrived from our Envoys to the 4 April. It is not so. Those are dispatches from Mr. King, & from Mr. Adams but not a line to [the] Government since those which have been made publick from our Envoys in France. There is a private Letter from Mr. Pinckney to Mr. King, which Mr. King has sent a copy of, but it is not publick, but a private Letter from one Gentleman to another. By some means or other this has leaked out—and given rise to the report of publick dispatches.

I think our next accounts from England must be highly important. God Grant the fate of Pharoah [*sic*] & his Hoast, to those who attempt to cross the channel. England is the only Barrier between France & universal domination. There I trust is some true Religion, & piety, some respect to Law & Government, some Rational Liberty, Benevolence & Philanthropy, for whose sake I hope & trust the Nation will be saved.

Braintree address is received, and answerd. So is Cambridge & Medford, which last is an admirable one. Who drew it? It is out of the common stile. It is designed by some Gentlemen to collect them all together & publish them in a vol'm. I pray you present my kind and affectionate Regards to all my Friends. How many of my acquaintance I shall miss when I return! Mrs. Field is relieved from the infirmities under which she suffered, and having acted well, very well, her part in Life, will, I doubt not, have her reward. As a Neighbour I loved, valued & esteemed her, & all who belonged to her, as I have fully proved by my

<sup>3</sup> Elbridge Gerry, who, as a member of the famous "XYZ Mission," remained in France when Charles Cotesworth Pinckney left Paris and Marshall decided to return to the United States. Talleyrand had persuaded Gerry that France would declare war if he left, but Gerry refused to negotiate alone without further power. See "Message of John Adams to Congress": *Columbian Centinel, Extraordinary*, April 16, 1798.

connection with so many Branches of her Family. Considering her Education few women have exhibited more Prudence, industry, patience under trying afflictions, equanimity of temper, and indeed every christian virtue. I [have *cancelled*] experienced her kindness from my first becoming her Neighbour, when I was young and unexperienced. Her [kindness *cancelled*] Benevolence was always manifested without any boast or expectation of reward. I never wanted help, either in sickness or Health, when some of her Family was not ready to afford it, and that long before [she *cancelled*] I was in a station to do more for them than others. I shall ever revere her memory.<sup>4</sup>

How is Brother Adams, Suky & Boylstone?<sup>5</sup> Not a word of them, or from them have I heard but by Mr. Black. Mr. Adams wrote to his Brother & told him he must write him word about his Farm and Town affairs, but he has not. You say we must not sit our Faces towards you this Month. I fear it. I do not expect to get from here untill the last of June. I hope all will be accomplishd then.

My Love to Mrs. Black, & kind Regards to Dr. Welch & Family. I would write if I knew what to say.

I do not hear from Haverhill, Atkinson [New Hampshire] I mean. The Children write to their Parents which Letters I forward; but not a line to me. Louissa is quite out of Patience with Betsy.<sup>6</sup> She has had but one Letter from her since she left Quincy. My Paper says, leave off.

Yours as ever

A. ADAMS

Philadelphia, June 8th, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

I received yours of June the first. I am quite delighted at the account you give of the season, and the appearence of vegetation. I was out yesterday at a Farm of Judge Peters calld, Belmont.<sup>1</sup> It is in all its Glory. I have been twice there, when I lived at Bush Hill, but he has

<sup>4</sup> This Mrs. Field was probably one of the forebears of that John Quincy Adams Field who flourished in Quincy during the nineteenth century, and possibly, therefore, connected by marriage with the tribe of Adams. See footnote 3 to the letter of January 5, 1798.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Boylston Adams, only surviving brother of the President, and two of his four children, Susanna and Boylston.

<sup>6</sup> Louisa Smith, the devoted niece who made her home with John and Abigail Adams, and her sister Elizabeth.

<sup>1</sup> Richard Peters (1744-1828), lawyer, soldier of the Revolution, judge, and farmer, lived at "Belmont," near Philadelphia. Washington appointed Peters to the federal bench in 1792. Judge Peters, an authority on maritime jurisprudence, married Sarah Robinson, by whom he had six children.

improved both the House and Gardens since. After being six Months in a city, you can hardly conceive the delight one feels at entering a wilderness of sweets. The Grass, the Grain, the profusion of Beautiful flowers, Jasmine, Hyacinths & Roses, all in full Bloom, climbing around the windows & Piazzas and Porticos of the neat building, formed such a pleasing contrast to the bare brick Buildings and the throng of conechigo Waggons which are ranged in rows through our street, that it appeared a mere Paridice to me.<sup>2</sup> The House is an ancient building with a Hall through it, like Jeffries at Milton which opens into the Garden.<sup>3</sup> In front is a lawn and from the House there is a view of the Noble Hudson [*sic*: Delaware], and at the foot of the Hill much nearer flows the Schuylkil. After walking in the Garden we returned and found the table spread with 6 or 8 quarts of the large Hudson Strawberry, gathered fresh from the vines with a proportionable quantity of cream, wine & sugar. Our taste and smell were both regaled, whilst ease, sociability and good humour enhanced the pleasure of the repast. The Judge is an old Friend and acquaintance of the President from the first Congress & served with him as one of the Board of war. Mrs. Peters has all that ease and affability, united to good sense and fine spirits which render her manner truly pleasing. They have a number of children, 2 Grown son[s] & a daughter with 3 younger. They reside in the city during the winter.

You will learn with pleasure that the Bill for calling of all intercourse with France past the Senate by 18 to 4. There are 10 Members absent most of whom, I believe all, would have joined the Majority. Mr. Fosters Resolutions will be taken up this day, the amount of which will be to declare our Treaty with France no longer binding. You will see them in your papers.<sup>4</sup>

Addresses increase until the President can find scarcely any thing new to say. He has however [one] in answer to the old Colony.

His old Friend W[arren] did not sign it. His son has. I received a kind of an apology in a Letter from her, "He addresses none but the Supreme Being." But he wishes well to the Government and the Administrator of it. Her Letter was that of an old Friend.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> "Conechigo waggons" may possibly mean garbage wagons. See *Webster's New International Dictionary*: "Connach, *v.t.* to spoil, to waste. *Scot.*"

<sup>3</sup> John Jeffries (1745-1819). See footnote 1 to the letter of August 29, 1790.

<sup>4</sup> Dwight Foster (1757-1823), Federalist representative and Senator from Massachusetts. At this time Mr. Foster was a member of the House of Representatives.

<sup>5</sup> James Warren (1726-1808), Massachusetts political leader, was born at Plymouth, graduated from Harvard in 1744, and settled as a merchant and gentleman-farmer in his native town. He was the husband of Mercy (Otis) Warren (1728-1814), the historian, by whom he had five sons.

We have just got a Pamphlet from France, abusive as Thom. Paines against Washington, part Prose & part Poetry, the very language of their Party here, the very words of Bache & Volney in some parts of it.<sup>6</sup> But the time is past for their currency here. When I read it I said to Louissa, this is the production of that unhangd Rascal Church.<sup>7</sup> You must know that there were such complaints made from Portugal of him & his conduct had been so base & enimical to his Country, that one of the first acts of the Presidents, was to displace him. This you may be sure, excites all his vengeance, tho he disguises it. Genl. W[ashington] used sometimes to give a man an office of whom he was *affraid*. This was the case with Governour Morris & Church, but it has ended as all the appointments have, which were made with a *conciliatory view*.<sup>8</sup> Neither Love or fear will prompt the Present Commander in chief to give an office to an undeserving Character knowingly. [Many *cancelled*] Some no doubt, will prove unworthy of their trust.

People are not sufficiently on their guard with respect to recommendations, and by them alone can the President judge of a very great proportion of those whom he appoints to office. It was Gen'l W[ashington]'s wish to make Friends of foes, and he aimed at converting over those who were luke warm. You did not hear at that day so much Noise of *Executive Patronage*. The reason the Reason [*sic*] is evident. Lambs Services, Munroes, Randolph, Church & Morris, with many others of similar sentiments, shared the loaves and fishes. A different conduct is now observed and wisdom taught by experience.<sup>9</sup>

[I do not *cancelled*] Mr. Johnson went from Cambridge in the vacancy to visit his parents, and they have concluded that he should finish his Education at Annapolis college. It is not well judged I think, and I

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Paine (1737-1809), in his *Letter to George Washington*, 1796, accused the President of bad faith and indifference to him. Paine helped organize the Theophilanthropists. See footnote 5 to the letter of May 26, 1798. Comte Constantin François de Chassebœuf de Volney (1757-1820), was a French scholar and author. He travelled in Syria and Egypt (1783-1787) and in the United States—was a member of the Constituent Assembly, and was ennobled by Bonaparte and by Louis XVIII.

<sup>7</sup> Edward Church, the brother of the notorious Benjamin Church, who was born in 1734 and died some time after 1776. See footnote 5 to the letter of September 1, 1789.

<sup>8</sup> Gouverneur Morris (1752-1816), of New York, was named as minister to France by President Washington early in 1792. The nomination was fought bitterly in the Senate because of the aristocratic views of Morris, and his very bad manners. He was confirmed by 16 to 11, and was very successful in Paris—the only minister who refused to leave the capital during the Reign of Terror.

<sup>9</sup> For John Lamb (1735-1800), see footnote 4 to the letter of February 1-5, 1798.

have ventured to express such a sentiment. I have not heard since I wrote you from Mrs. Johnson or your son.<sup>10</sup>

Mrs. Otis desires to be kindly remembered to you. She is distressed for Mrs. Welch & Family. She knows how to sympathize, and really does.

You must let me know how things go on. Take particular care of the Letter inclosed for Dr. Tufts. I have just sent a trunk on Board [with *cancelled*] a vessel for Boston and hope it will not be long before I shall follow; The Rumour of yesterday ends in vapour but tho' not true, I hope I hope [*sic*] it will be soon. Church as I conjectured, is said to be the writer of this base libel. It is an abuse upon the President for his speeches to Congress, of which you see Tallyrand says the Directory complain. Poor wretches. I suppose they want him to cringe, but he is made of the oak instead of the willow. He may be torn up by the Roots, or break, but he will never bend.<sup>11</sup>

Yours

A. ADAMS

Quincy—I mean Philadelphia—June 13th, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

But I was thinking so much of Quincy, that I mechanically dated from thence; When I sent Letters for Louissa, Mrs. Brisler & c by yesterday's Mail, I could not get time to add a line of my own, being engaged in writing to Berlin by the British packet. Since my last to you, I have received a Letter from Mrs. Johnson inclosing Letters to her, both from Mr. & Mrs. A[dams], at which I rejoiced. She has thought [it] hard that, I should hear so much oftner from our Children than she should, but Mr. Adams writes duplicates, & by different ways. I dared not venture to send you the Letters as I should have liked to, but I thought it would be a breach of confidence, and I have returned them to Mrs. Johnson—I copied a part of Louissa's Letter. Her first date is 17th of Jan'y, when she says Mr. Adams returned from Court, and found her writing to her Friends, but threw her into great agitation, by telling her that she must be presented to Court on the next day, and that her Cloaths were not any of them ready. To use her own words, "You know Mamma *my Partiality for Great Companies* and will therefore

<sup>10</sup> "Mr. Johnson" was a son of Joshua Johnson, of Maryland, and a brother of Mrs. John Quincy Adams.

<sup>11</sup> See La Fontaine, *Fables*, Book 1, Fable 22: "Le Chêne et le Roseau." The fable refers not to a willow, but to a reed, which obliged the wind by bending, when the unpliant oak was torn up by the roots!

readily conceive what I felt at the thought of going into a society so intirely strange to me, that I had never even seen the Lady who was to present me. However I got ready and went & considering all things, got through this dissagreable buisness pretty well. But from that day to this the first of Feb'ry we have not been permitted to spend an evening at home, which is so extremely unpleasent to me, that I am obliged to pretend sickness, to avoid it. The King and Queen are both young, and I think the Queen one of the most beautifull women I ever saw. She is now pregnant with her fourth child, and is but just 21 years old. She goes into company, and dances from 6 in the Evening untill 6 in the morning, notwithstanding her situation. The Courts are twice a week, one of which is a Ball & the other a card party. The Etiquet and usage of the Court, require all Ministers & their Ladies to attend, so that I am obliged to make one in this *Elegant Mob*. On every Monday Evening I am obliged to pay my respects to the Princess Henry, a Great Aunt of the Kings, where I am necessitated to sit 2 or 3 hours at whist. Once a fortnight we are obligated to visit Prince Ferdinand, who is Great Uncle to the King.<sup>1</sup> The Princess is an old Lady who has been very Handsome. She is remarkable kind to me, and has interested [me very *cancelled*] herself very much about my Health. Her sister, some years Younger than herself, is the most Elegant woman I ever beheld. She has been pleasd to take such a fancy to me, as to make me sit down with her, at her work table, and talks whole evenings with me. I was invited to a Ball the other Evening, and she undertook to find me partners.

Yet after all this, my dear Mamma, I do not think I am calculated for a Court. To a Child Educated like yours, for domestick society, such a round of constant dissipation, makes me wish I was once more among my beloved Friends."

Mr. J. Q. Adams in his Letter to Mrs. [Joshua] Johnson expresses himself thus: "Since the recovery of Mrs. Adams, she has been presented at Court, and to the Several Princesses, belonging to it. Her Personal appearence, as well as her manners & deportment, which are such unequivocal indications of her Character and disposition, have been every where pleasing."

Thus you see, my dear Sister, I have been amused, and entertaind like a partial fond mother and knowing how much you interest yourself in my pleasures I have communicated them to you. I now inclose

<sup>1</sup> Princess Henry was the wife of Henry of Hohenzollern, the second of the three younger brothers of Frederick the Great (1740-1786). Henry died in 1802. Ferdinand of Hohenzollern, who died in 1813, was the youngest brother of Frederick the Great.

to you what will be more interesting to you, a Letter received from your son. If he does not get time to write so often to you, as you wish you will learn how he has been employd.

I yesterday received Letters both from Mr. and Mrs. [Stephen] Peabody. The account she gives me of Betsy are [*sic*] painfull and allarming. I hope she too, will not be added to the Number who fall victims to the slow underminer, a consumption, yet the constant fever is very like it. Few instances occur here, and a cough is rare, oweing, I believe, to the less keen air. Disorders here are more sudden, and inflamitory.

Letters from Mr. Murrey to the 12 of April, in which he says, "Switzerland is broken down after a most bloody conflict with the army of Bernes in which seven thousand, including women, who fought bravely, have fallen on the side of the Swiss Army. That Bern was aristocratic was the Pretence."<sup>2</sup>

In this Letter he says, "I learn that France will treat with Mr. Gerry *alone*. The other two will *be orderd* away." Can it be possible, can it be believed that Talleyrand has thus deluded and facinated Mr. Gerry, that he should dare to take upon him such a responsibility? I cannot credit it, yet I know the sin which most easily besets him is obstinacy, and, a mistaken policy. You may easily suppose how distrest the President is at this conduct, and the more so, because he thought Gerry would certainly not go wrong, and he *acted* his own judgment, *against his counsellors*, "who have been truer prophets than they wish themselves." Gerry means the Good of his Country, he means the Peace of it, but he should consider, it must not be purchased by national disgrace & dishonour. If he stays behind, he is a ruind Man, in the estimation of his Countrymen. This is all between ourselves. You will be particularly reserved upon this subject. I would not be the mean's of hurting Mrs. Gerrys feelings, or even of judeing [*sic*] hardly an old and steady Friend, for whom I am really distrest.

Adieu my dear Sister. Tomorrow I promise myself a Letter from you. We have abundance of wet weather. How is the season with you? Has Mrs. Porter got help? I wish if she has, that she would whiten me a cotton sheet or two & some towels which are in a trunk in the Garret. Let me know when you think all things will be in readiness? I shall not leave here till after the 4 July. We shall be overwhelmed with Military

<sup>2</sup> William Vans Murray was stationed at The Hague as United States minister to the Batavian Republic from June 7, 1797, until he went into France in February, 1800. For Bonaparte's conquest of Switzerland, see letters of January 5 and May 20, 1798.



Parade on that day. Love, affection &c &c where ever due. The President will put young Beals name on the list.<sup>3</sup> If he applies to Capt. Sever & gets an approbation from him, the President will appoint him.

Yours as ever

A. ADAMS

Quincy [Philadelphia], 19 June, 1798<sup>4</sup>

MY DEAR SISTER:

I expected to have heard from you on Saturday, but no Letter came and on Wednesday but still no Letter. I was dissatisfied, but knowing your many avocations I concluded it must arise from thence, I hope not from sickness, tho you wrote me you was not well. I who have more leisure, and no care of Family affairs but my orders can, and do devote almost every morning in writing to some Friend or other. You will hear before this reaches you of the arrival of Mr. Marshall at N[ew] York. Mr. Pinckney is gone to the South of France with a persuit for the Health of a daughter suposed in a consumption. Mr. Gerry stays untill he hears from our Government, which as appears to me, is a very wrong step.<sup>2</sup> The Government you will be informd received last week an other dispatch of a Letter from Talleyrand, and a very lengthy reply by our Envoys, which being in a press copy & part cypher, two copies being to be prepared of it, could not be got ready in one or two days. In the meantime Talleyrand [by the *cancelled*] had sent out to Bache his Letter for to be publishd here, & without the replie of our Envoys. This he exultingly gave to the publick on Saturday. It really appears a very fortunate circumstance that, our government, should have received tho by an other conveyance the dispatches about the same time, and so soon be able to counteract the villany intended by Talleyrand. It has an other good effect, that of convincing the most unbelieving of the close connection between the Infernals of France & those in our own Bosoms. And in any other Country Bache & all his papers would have been seazd and ought to be here, but congress are dilly dallying about passing a Bill enabling the President to seize suspicious persons, and their papers. We shall be favourd soon I suppose with the pamphlet written by the Clerk in Talleyrands office—All this however works for good, and will tend to work out our salvation I hope.

<sup>3</sup> Probably Richard Beal, who was third lieutenant of the *Constitution*. *Columbian Centinel*, May 26, 1798.

<sup>1</sup> See the letter of June 13, 1798.

<sup>2</sup> See Channing, *History of the United States*, vol. 4, pp. 187-8.

I will send the papers as soon as publishd. In the mean time I send you some pamphlets to be distributed for the publick Benifit, and send one in my Name to Mrs. Webb with my compliments.

We are all well but a servant who has been voilently attackd with an inflamitory Soar Throat, & very dangerously sick for several days. We hope he has past the worst. The season has not yet been uncommonly Hot, [The *cancelled*] I am weary of conjectures, so shall say nothing of when it is probable Congress will rise. I believe they will decarle [*sic*] war against the French first.

Mr. Marshalls arrival will hasten the buisness—O Mr. Gerry! Mr. Gerry, that you had but been wise enough & resolute enough to have come too.

Mrs. Malony got home yesterday morning, in six days. I have not seen her. I have only heard that she is come.

With a kind remembrance to all Friend[s]

Yours

A. A[DAMS]

Philadelphia, June 23d, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

The weather has been so oppressively Hot for this week, and the streets of the City so nausious that I expect the concequences which must follow. They already begin. Complaints of the Bowels are frequent & an inflamitory soar throat. Frederick has got below after 5 bleedings, Blistering &c. Becky is now sick with it. Hers is less upon her throat, more in her Bowels, not much fever. I hope hers will not prove very Bad. Several of the rest of us have had a touch. It comes with a stiffness & pain in the neck & back part of the Head. In some parts of the city the old fever is making its appearence.<sup>1</sup> Congress are anxious to rise, but will not sooner than they did last year, I fear. O how much precious time did they waste this winter in that dirty affair of Lyons, and disputing whether Mr. Smith & J. Q. A. should be ministers Resident, or Plenipos, with which they had no buisness, any more than who should be of the Directory in France.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Yellow fever, or *maladie de Siam*. See College of Physicians of Philadelphia, *Facts and Observations Relative to the Nature and Origin of the Pestilential Fever which Prevalled in the City of Philadelphia in 1793, 1797, and 1798*, Philadelphia, 1799.

<sup>2</sup> For the feud between Matthew Lyon and Roger Griswold, see the letter of February 15, 1798. John Quincy Adams was American minister to Prussia. "Mr. Smith" is William Loughton Smith (1758–1812), of South Carolina, son of a rich merchant, educated in Eng-

I have put under cover to Mr. Cranch a Letter for William Shaw, supposing he might be at Quincy & the papers and handkerchiefs are for him. You will send them if he is gone home.<sup>3</sup> You will find in them what Mr. Marshal brings and the state in which things are in France.

I received your Letters of the 10 & 15th. The President is delighted with your account of the clover and Barley Fields. He most sincerely pines after them, but he is tied to his table 9 Hours of the day. Some of the addressers complain that his answers are too short. They do not consider nor know how numerous they are, or what other buisness there is to attend to. Some fore noons he is calld from his Room 20 times in the course of it, to different persons, besides the hours devoted to the Ministers of the different departments, the investigation necessary to be made of those persons who apply for offices or are recommended, the weighting the merrits, and pretentions of different Canditates [*sic*] for the same office &c &c &c. His Eyes, which you know used to be very troublesome to him, are quite well, and he is enabled to read and write with ease to himself, which is a great favour.

I am glad you have got the Box. Betsy did not say to me that she was going to be married directly, but she wrote what I took to be her determination soon. Poor dear Betsy Shaw, must she too follow our dear Mary, Charles and Suky Warner?<sup>4</sup> My heart aches for our sister. I know not how she will sustain the shock. I think our physicians are too fearfull of Bleeding in early complaints of the Lungs.

I shall be satisfied with the kitchen floor as it is. I hope all will be done by the beginning of July, for I shall want all the Room I can find and, more than all. I do expect Mrs. Smith will come with me to make her Children a visit. As I have sent the papers I need say nothing about politicks. Our Legislature have done nobly in Massa[chusetts]. What Life & vigor does a good Patriot give to a whole state when placed at the

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land and Geneva. Smith was the author, in 1792, of a pamphlet (*The Politicks and Views of a Certain Party, Displayed*) attacking Jefferson, which is usually attributed to Alexander Hamilton. In 1794 he was burned in effigy in Charleston, in company with images of Benedict Arnold and the Devil! Although Hamilton and Washington felt that Smith's personal unpopularity debarred him from conspicuous appointment, John Adams made him minister to Portugal, July 10, 1797. Jefferson relieved him on September 9, 1801.

<sup>3</sup> William Smith Shaw (1778-1826), Harvard, 1798, became secretary to his uncle by marriage, John Adams, after his graduation. Adams, *Works*, vol. 9, p. 45.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Smith, who died in 1797, and Mary Carter Smith, who died in April, 1798, aged seven, were children of William Smith, the brother of Abigail Adams. Susannah Warner, who died in April, 1798, was the daughter of Mrs. Susannah Warner, of Gloucester, the second wife of Dr. Cotton Tufts.

Head of it.<sup>5</sup> I wish our Legislature would set the example & make a sedition act, to hold in order the base Newspaper calumniators. In this State, you could not get a verdict, if a prosecution was to be commenced.

My pen is bad. I know not whether you can read it. And the damp air spoils the paper.

I am in haste. The post will leave me before I assure you of what my Sister knows and believes, that I am allways her

Affectionate Sister

A. ADAMS

Philadelphia, June 25, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

I write you a few lines to day, but the weather is so Hot and close, and the flies so tormenting that I can not have any comfort. The mornings instead of being pleasent as with you, are stagnant. Not a leaf stirs till nine or ten oclock. I get up & drop into my chair; without spirits or vigor, breath a sigh for Quincy, and regreet that necessity obliges us to remain here. It grows sickly, the city noisome. My Family are thanks to God, recoverd from their illness, and no New one taken down. We have began the use of the cold Bath, and hope it will in some measure compensate for want of a braceing Air. The largness and light of our Rooms are a great comfort and the Nights are yet tolerable, and I have freed myself for the season of any more drawing Rooms. Dinners I cannot.

I send you the last dispatch which has yet got printed. I expect Congress will decare [*sic*] war before they Rise. They are impatient now to rise, but will not be permitted to untill several more important Bills are matured and past. You will see by the paper inclosed the reception give to Genll. Marshall.<sup>1</sup> He is deserving of it all. I cannot but feel hurt for Mrs. Gerry. O that [*he cancelled*] Mr. Gerry had, but have thought with his Employer and with his Colleagues. They would all have been here long before this time. We must wait the Event. You will find that in the toast Given at the dinner to Mr. Marshal no notice or mention [was made] of Mr. Gerry.

<sup>5</sup> Increase Sumner (1746-1799) was elected Governor of Massachusetts in 1797, 1798, and 1799. He died in office at the beginning of his third term. See the letter of December 4, 1799.

<sup>1</sup> On June 18, 1798, John Marshall arrived at New York on the *Alexander Hamilton*, after a voyage of fifty-three days from Bordeaux. "General" Marshall entered Philadelphia in triumph on June 25, 1798. A. J. Beveridge, *John Marshall*, Boston, 1916, vol. 2, pp. 343-5.

I had a Letter from Mrs. [William Stephens] Smith on Saturday. She desires to be rememberd to you and all her Friends. She was in N[ew] York on a visit to Col. Smiths Mother, who had been sick. Caroline was better. I want to hear of Betsy Shaw every week, but alas I fear she is too far gone to receive any comfort from hearing of her. I send a handkerchief to old Mrs. Welch with my respects, and a little bit of Muslin for Sister Smith a couple of caps. How does she do?

Inclosed is a Book for Mrs. Porter. Do you get Peters paper Regularly?<sup>2</sup> I am, my dear Sister,

Affectionatly yours

A. ADAMS

The President received last week a polite and Friendly Letter from Genll. Washington inviting us to make a visit to Mount Vernon when Congress rises.

One of the handkerchiefs for my dear Sister Cranch. [*Written on the outside of the letter.*]

Philadelphia, June 27th, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

The reflections which this morning have occupied my mind previous to taking my pen, have been of a solemn & melancholy Nature. Wherefore O Lord art thou thus contending with thy people, that one prop after an other is taken from them? The Sudden death of Dr. Belknap has filld my Heart with Sorrow.<sup>1</sup> Following so soon after Dr. Clark, and I presume from the account in the paper, in as sudden a manner, calls upon us to make the inquiry, and that with suitable Humiliation, why at this season of uncommon danger to the Religion of the Gospel of Christ, we are deprived of its ablest supporters and defenders?<sup>2</sup> Why when our Country is in danger from within & from without, its steadiest

<sup>2</sup> William Cobbett's *Porcupine's Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, which advocated alliance with England, war against France, and perdition for "Republicans."

<sup>1</sup> Jeremy Belknap, pastor of the church in Federal Street, died suddenly in Boston on June 20, 1798. See *1 Coll. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, vol. 6, 1799, pp. x-xviii (from the *Columbian Centinel* of June 25, 1798), and *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, vol. 66, pp. 96-106: Samuel A. Eliot, "Jeremy Belknap: A Paper in Recognition of the One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the Massachusetts Historical Society."

<sup>2</sup> John Clarke (1755-1798), pastor of the First Church in Boston, suffered a stroke of apoplexy in the pulpit on the afternoon of Sunday, April 1, and died the following day. See the letter of April 3, 1790. Oddly enough, Clarke was the fourth pastor of the First Church to suffer this fate: John Norton (1663), John Oxenbridge (1674), and Thomas Foxcroft (1769), having experienced a similar misfortune. See *1 Coll. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, vol. 6, pp. iii-ix.

friends in the midst of their days, and in the height of their usefulness should so awefully be snatchd from us?—Two of our ablest divines, men of distinguished learning, industry, integrity, virtue & Patriotism, are releasd from their Labours, [and *cancelled*] but their works will survive them. Dr. Belknap was engaged in a very usefull & Labourious work, that of his American Biography, the 2d volm of which is now at the press, and as he wrote me on the 14 of this Month will be out in July. In the course of the last month I had exchanged several Letters with him, and I had undertaken to get a subscription paper filld for him. On Monday I closed a packet to him, little thinking that he had fled to the world of spirits. His stile of writing was plain, simple and clear. I recollect with pleasure the only time I ever heard him preach. It was at the Accademy meeting at Hingham, a sermon well worthy publication. His late Fast sermon he sent me, and as I had been, I hardly know how, drawn into a correspondence with him, I had contemplated with pleasure, a more intimate acquaintance with him upon my return to Massachusetts, but of this, and many other, Scources [*sic*], I have been deprived in the short space of seven Months absence. But his examples & his Precepts will not I hope be lost. To use his own words, “It is impossible to conceive how much good may be done by our example. It may do good after we are Dead. The Remembrance of what we have been, and what we have done, may long outlive us,—and unborn Posterity may be the better for it.”

He must have left a very distresst family I think. Tell Mr. & Mrs. Black, that I am a sincere mourner [with them *cancelled*], and sympathizer with them. The President mourns his loss, not less than I do. He was one of his best Friends. He mourns not only for himself, but for his Countrys loss, and for Society in General. My path to Massachusetts is spread with sorrow, and coverd with mourning. The death of so many of my friends, the distress of Dr. Welch and Family, the prospect of an other melancholy Scene at Atkinson [New Hampshire] together with the dark & thick cloud which hangs ready to Burst upon our Country, all combine to wound and distress me. The dark side of the picture is a deep shade.

I would not however forget the Blessing which remain, nor be ungratefull for what of Good is yet continued to me—nor [forget *cancelled*] be unmindfull that I hold all by a frail tenure.

I cannot commence any other subject, but Subscribe your ever

Affectionate Sister

A. ADAMS

[Philadelphia], July 3d, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

The extreem heat of yesterday & the no less prospect of it this day, is beyond any thing I ever experienced in my Life. The Glasses were at 90 in the Shade Yesterday. Tomorrow will be the 4 July, when if possible I must see thousands. I know not how it will be possible to get through. Live here I cannot an other week unless a Change takes place in the weather. You had as good be in an oven the bricks are so Hot. I can only say to you that yesterday the President Nominated Gen'll. Washington to be commander in chief of the Army to be raised, and as soon as the Senate pass upon it, the Secretary of War will be sent express to announce it to him.<sup>1</sup> His Country calls. No Man can do so much for it in that Line. "The knowledge that he lives" is a Bulwark. It will unite all Parties in the Country. It will give weight, force and energy to the People, & it will dismay our Enemies.—I cannot think that he will decline the station.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Soper from Braintree was here yesterday, & he disclosed my whole secret about my building. The President had a hearty laugh & says he is sorry it was not carried clear along. He is affraid it is upon too small a Scale, so tell the Dr. [Cotton Tufts] we shall not incur any blame.

I inclose you the paper of this day. You will see how Politicks are. Tis so Hot I cannot think or write more than

Yours as ever

A. ADAMS

Philadelphia, Monday, July 9th, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

I have not a Letter from you to day. I hope however to hear from you by the next post, but if you have had weather like what we experienced

<sup>1</sup> James McHenry (1753-1816), the fourth choice for the post, succeeded Timothy Pickering as Secretary of War in January, 1796. Adams forced his resignation from the Cabinet in May, 1800. See the letter of July 17, 1798.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Adams is quoting from one of sixteen toasts drunk at the "sumptuous dinner" at the "Concert Hall" in Boston, in celebration of George Washington's birthday, in 1798. Most of the officers of the state were present, and General Benjamin Lincoln presided. The second toast, that to George Washington, reads as follows:

"May his name be still a rampart, and the knowledge that he lives, a bulwark against all open and secret enemies of our country." The third toast was drunk to President Adams, with a proper verbal tribute. The fourth toast was drunk to Vice-President Jefferson—but without comment. "Nineteen Volunteer" toasts followed. Apparently the number of formal toasts at the time—usually sixteen—was determined by the number of states then in the Union. *Columbian Centinel*, February 24, 1798.

here for three days, I do not wonder that you could not write. We have had ever since the 4 July very comfortable days and nights, frequent showers, no hard or severe thunder, a prospect of a fine season. This morning I have to congratulate you upon the first Gallic trophy to the Arms of the United States. Captain Decateur in the Delaware has captured a 12 Gun Privateer & 70 Men, which he has brought in.<sup>1</sup> She had taken a ship two days before bound [for *cancelled*] from this port for Liverpool. The Men she put on board a vessel bound for Boston. So stupid will the merchants here be, as still to send their vessels out unarm'd. The French Man thought himself attack'd by an English ship of war, but upon finding that it was an American, he ask'd the Captain if America was at war with their Nation? No, replied the captain, but you are with mine. O, says the frenchman, I have a commission for what I do. And so, replied captain Decateur, have I. When he saw the American flag hoisted over his, he stormed and swore at a terrible rate. Mon Dieu, I had rather see my ship sunk, blown up in the Air. The captain told him, he would soon put him below with the Men if he did not conduct himself properly. I rejoice to see the spirit & Bravery of my Native State. Let the vipers cease to hiss. They will be destroy'd with their own poison. Bache is in duress here, & Burk in N[ew] York.<sup>2</sup> I inclose to you the daring outrage which call'd for the Arm of Government.

This mornings Centinal announces the death of Sheriff Thayer.<sup>3</sup> What was his disease? Quite a middle aged Man. Was it an Apoplexy

<sup>1</sup> Stephen Decatur, Sr., (1752-1808), naval officer, and son of a French seaman of the same name, was commissioned captain in the United States Navy on May 11, 1798, at the outbreak of hostilities with France. He put to sea in the *Delaware*, and in July captured the French privateer, *Le Croyable*, renamed *Retaliation*, the first prize of the war, and of the new American Navy. He was the father of the more famous Stephen Decatur (1779-1820).

<sup>2</sup> *Gazette of the United States*, July 7, 1798: "We are credibly informed that John D. Burk and Dr. James Smith have been arrested in New-York, for a most infamous libel against the President of the United States, published in the *Time-Piece*. Their bail are Colonel [Henry] Rutgers, Aaron Burr and Peter R. Livingston."

John Daly Burk (1775-1808), dramatist, was born in Ireland and came to America in 1796, evidently as a political refugee. He was among the earliest to put an American battle scene on the stage, in *Bunker Hill, or the Death of General Warren*, produced first at the Haymarket Theatre, Boston, February 17, 1797. One character refers to nightingales singing in Boston! President Adams saw the play in New York, and said to the manager: "My friend, General Warren, was a scholar and a gentleman, but your author has made him a bully and a blackguard." For a short time Burk was the publisher of the *Time-Piece*, in New York City. He was killed in a duel with a Frenchman at Petersburg, Virginia.

<sup>3</sup> Atherton Thayer, Sheriff of Norfolk County, died at Braintree at the age of thirty-three. *Columbian Centinel*, July 4, 1798.



[sic] or fever? I have been affraid to hear from you, least you should be the bearer of the death of Mrs. Lincoln, who I heard was dangerously sick with a Billious fever. Not seeing her death in the paper of to day I am led to believe & hope that she is upon the recovery. I had a Letter from Sister [Stephen] Peabody stating according to my request Betsys [Elizabeth Quincy Shaw (1780-1798)] case from its commencement, which I consulted Dr. [Benjamin] Rush upon. He is of opinion that she has an abscess forming in her side, that a fatal mistake was made at the commencement of her disorder in neglecting to Bleed and Blister, which might in a few days at that time have relieved her. The Man, whom I had, seizd voilently with an inflamitory Soar throat, was Bled 5 times & 60 oz of Blood taken from him. He was below stairs in a fortnight and tho pale, is very well and able now to perform his duty, picking up fast. The Dr. does not like to advise without being able to see the particuliar state in which Betsy is, but as her circumstances are described, he thinks he should take 4 oz of Blood from her, & keep Blisters upon her side, as soon as one heald put on an other. Give her gentle exercise and vegatable food. But she may be too far gone for all this. I fear from the Numbness, the cough, the waisting & the Night Sweats, that her doom is fixed [and cancelled]. I hope, my dear Sister, that my friends will conquer the aversion to the Lancet, which I believe is not used sufficiently early in inflamitory diseases. But this climate calls for it more than ours. Consumptions are not common here.

Congress are going on very well at the Eleventh hour. Tho timid they will do all but one thing before they rise. That however would save them much trouble. Why, when we have the thing, should we boggle at the Name—The Secretary of War went express this morning to Mount Vernon—I hope and trust that the Gen'll will not refuse an appointment made, it is true, without his knowledge or consent. It was one of those strokes which the Prospect and Exigency of the times required, and which the President determined upon without consultation. It however meets with universal approbation and will concenter more Hearts than any other possible appointment. "His Name a Host, & the Knowledge that he lives a Bulwark."<sup>4</sup>

I wish you would tell Dr. Tufts that I would have a table made for Mrs. Porter, and half a dozen chair[s] if she wants them.

Yours, ever yours

A. ADAMS

<sup>4</sup> See footnote 2 to the letter of July 3, 1798.

Philadelphia, July 12, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

By Mrs. Otis, who leaves here this week, I send a waistcoat Pattern for William Shaw, which I designd should have reachd him before commencement. I send it to you because I presume he will be at Quincy. If you will get it made for him you may charge it to me. The stripes should go round the body. I have put some lining in. The waistcoat should be lined throughout. I hope he will be attentive to arrange all the Books up in the Book Room & to replace all he pulls down. Order strick order, & method will be required of him in the place designd for him. Every Letter & paper are placed in Alphabetical order in desks & places designd for them, and every different department relative to War office, Marine office, Secretary & Treasury office distinct, so that no trouble occurs in searching for papers.<sup>1</sup>

I do not expect to leave here in ten days, as the Senate must set after the House rise.

Yours affectionately

A. A[DAMS]

Philadelphia, July 13, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

I begin my Letter by saying that Mr. Cranch was so much better on the 7th, the date of Mrs. Johnsons last Letter, as to conclude to go to the Court the next day. I would not make a long preparation to allarm or distress you, or write you a word upon the subject untill Mrs. Johnsons 2d Letter came, for I would not have you feel as I did, upon reading the first part of hers of the 4 of July, upon any account. I veryly thought I should drop it before I found out the cause. To save a long detail I inclose you her Letters tho there are several confidential communications in them which you will not permit to go out of your Hands. Perhaps you may have received a Letter from Nancy with more particulars. I know when Mr. [William] Cranch was here, he gave me some account of the Party quarrels and animosities, but said he had been happy enough to keep clear of them.

You will learn by Mrs. [Joshua] Johnsons Letter that in taking Mr. Cooks buisness, he [William Cranch] was engaged for Mr. Cooks clients, and Mr. [James] Ray being one of them, he was also engaged in his buisness. This it seems was the cause of [Captain William Mayne]

<sup>1</sup> William Smith Shaw (1778-1826), nephew of Abigail Adams. See footnote 3 to the letter of June 23, 1798.

Duncansons animosity against him. Duncanson is a Scotchman who had held a command in the East Indies and came over to this country when Mr. [Thomas] Law did.<sup>1</sup> I saw them both frequently at Col. [William Stephens] Smiths in N[ew] York the summer I made a visit there. Ray is an Englishman. The dispute between them is concerning a vessel which they fitted out for the East Indies coverd as American Property, but which was taken by the English upon suspicion that she belonged to British subjects, and Ray pleads that tho a partner, he became so after the vessel was purchasd. Duncanson thinks himself cheated by Law & Ray, and has been hardly used as dispassionate people say. But the quarrel has arrived at such a pitch as to throw all George Town into two strong Parties. Property in the federal city, in different parts of it, is an other Source of contention. I really pittty Mrs. Johnson, who is come into the very heart of contention, and will judge of All America, I fear, from what she sees & hears round her. The warm interest she has taken in behalf of Mr. Cranch, who is indeed the much injured Man, makes her too deeply interested as a Partisan with the Ray, & Law, people.

I was surprizd to find Mr. Dalton becomeing Bail for Duncanson, but suspect he had a family reason for it.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, intemperate and

<sup>1</sup> For the complicated and unfortunate business and legal relations of these men, see W. B. Bryan, *A History of the National Capital*, 1914-16, vol. 1, *passim*. Most of the trouble sprang from James Greenleaf's operations in real estate in the District of Columbia. George Washington expressed his disapproval of Greenleaf's methods in a personal letter to Daniel Carroll, one of the commissioners of the District. Washington observed that the price Greenleaf offered the commissioners for land was too low, and that Greenleaf was obviously planning to obtain a monopoly of the land and make an "immense" profit. When James Greenleaf went bankrupt, William Cranch, his lawyer and brother-in-law, was appointed his trustee. Captain William Mayne Duncanson, James Ray, his partner in the commission business, and Thomas Law were all Englishmen who had come to the United States in 1794 and invested heavily in Greenleaf's scheme to "promote" the District of Columbia. Thomas Law was the only investor who was shrewd enough to obtain mortgages from the North American Land Company for the purchases which he made. When Greenleaf failed, all the other investors were in the hopeless position of "general unsecured creditors." Bryan, *National Capital*, vol. 1, p. 245. Lawsuits over Greenleaf's operations went on for fifteen years, including an appeal to the United States Supreme Court. For Thomas Law, see footnote 3 to the letter of February 21, 1798. See also, Clark, *Greenleaf and Law in the Federal City*.

<sup>2</sup> Tristram Dalton (1738-1817), of Newbury, former Federalist Senator from Massachusetts (1789-1791), inherited large means, most of which he lost speculating in real estate in the District of Columbia. As early as 1793 he helped to found a mercantile establishment in Washington: Lear & Company, the partners of which were Tobias Lear, former secretary to George Washington, James Greenleaf, and himself. After this company failed, Adams appointed Dalton to succeed William Cranch as one of the commissioners of the District of Columbia. President Jefferson made Tobias Lear the United States commercial agent at Santo Domingo. Bryan, *National Capital*, vol. 1, pp. 221 and 415.

unjustifiable as Duncanson was towards Mr. Cranch he is said to be much injured, and kept out of money due to him, by his opponents, but he should have waited until the Law decided. A responsible Bondsman is no disgrace to the injured Party, and I cannot see it in the light which it appeared to Mrs. Johnson when in her warmth & agitation she wrote first. You will see there were heavy Bonds required.

I could not know the state of things to my satisfaction, until I sent for Mr. Stoddard the Secretary of the Navy, who is a man of great modesty, worth and integrity.<sup>3</sup> He came from George Town and he conversed freely upon the subject with me, giving me the true state of the Parties. He spoke in high terms of the fair & honorable Character which Mr. Cranch sustained, and particularly of his Prudence in keeping himself clear of party animosities.—I found that he himself and two others were the only persons who had not taken their sides. I have just been writing to Mr. Cranch. Mr. Greenleaf came in great distress to me yesterday, having got by Rumour a report of the Matter. He talked like a friend, and felt like a Brother.—He looks very well and so does his dear Nancy.<sup>4</sup>

I received a Letter from you this day. Congress will rise on Monday next. The House I mean, the Senate will yet remain in session. The appointment of officers cannot be made without them. I mean Gen'l officers and the Secretary of War cannot get back until next week from Mount Vernon. The President would not nominate any other officer until he received an answer from Gen'l Washington. Return my Letters as soon [as] you have read them. The weather is now delightful. I find that it was as hot at N[ew] York & Baltimore & Boston as here. I thought it would have killed me, for I was not well and the heat added to the pressure of my complaints. We were happily relieved on Tuesday afternoon by Rain and Wind, since which the weather has been agreeable. I long however to see my friends. *Those which remain* to me, should be doubly dear and precious. O that I could slide along to them, unnoticed and without parade.

I presume William [Smith] Shaw will be with you. I have sent him a white waistcoat pattern by Mrs. Otis. You will take charge & have it

<sup>3</sup> Benjamin Stoddert (1751–1813), of Maryland, was the first Secretary of the Navy, George Cabot (1752–1823), of Salem, Massachusetts, having refused Adams's appointment of him to the post in 1798. See footnote 4 to the letter of May 20, 1798.

<sup>4</sup> Anna (Nancy) Greenleaf, wife of William Cranch, who was the nephew of Mrs. Adams, was the favorite sister of James Greenleaf, promoter of the North American Land Company.

made. I set my Heart upon going to commencement this year; but the publick would not let me.

I have heard from Atkinson [New Hampshire], but I get no comfort or consolation. That poor Girl has in my mind been sacrificed by a wrong management by her Physicians in the first instance. If she had been early Bled, she might have been saved. At least that is my sentiment, tho I would distress her mother by saying so. I think there is no doubt that an abscess is forming in her Side.

I shall want you to procure me some stores. I will give you notice and send you money for the purpose.

I am, my dear Sister,

Affectionatly your[s]

ABIGAIL ADAMS

P.S. Thank you for Nancys Letter. Tis a very good one. In the first instance Mrs. [Joshua] Johnson attended from my recommendation, but both Mr. & Mrs. [William] C[ranch] require only to be known to be loved.

Philadelphia, July 17th, 1798

MY DEAR SISTER:

I had a Letter yesterday from Mrs. [Joshua] Johnson of the 12 July, in which she says Mr. Cranch had just returnd from the Court to which he went, the Judge being indisposed; that his wounds were getting well fast, and that he did not suffer any inconvenience except a headache, by his ride, that he had written to you a full account of the whole buisness. Congress rose yesterday. The House. The Senate are obliged to sit a few days longer. Mr. McHenry is not yet returnd from Mount Vernon—He is expected to day. I hope we shall be able to leave here next week, but I cannot possitively say. We do not design that it shall be known here the day we are to sit out. We wish to avoid military Parade. We get no News from abroad, and Mr. Gerrys stay [puts *cancelled*] is a plausible pretence for the Jacobins to circulate Lies and falshoods in abundance. Le Tomb [Joseph Philippe Létombe] has circulated the report, that Mr. G[erry] was received and was negotiating & that a French minister might daily be expected here—If one should

come, he will not find America a resting place, 24 hours, but I have not any Idea of such an Event.<sup>1</sup>

I wrote you in my last that I should want some stores, a couple pound Hyson Tea, ditto souchong, Hundred Brown Sugar, several dozens Hard Bread, half Hundred coffe, Gallon of Brandy, Quarter pd Nutmegs, pd cinnamon, Mustard, Pepper, 2 oz Maize [mace], half pd Cloves—I want also for one Bed a Bed tick. It is for a common one. Mrs. Porter can tell you. I think I must have a couple of Bedsteads. I shall have 4 Men Servants. I would have them saking bottoms. Would it not be best to get them of Bedlow? I have Bedsteads enough out in the Grainary chamber, but they are such lumber that I do not know if any thing could be done with them. If they could I should not regret their being cut for the purpose. They put up with screws which screws are in the store closet some of them & some of them over the Top of the Granary chamber window. If any of them should be put up, I shall want some straw Beds to be made to put upon them before the others are laid on. I also wish you to purchase me a peice of Russia sheeting and sit Nabby to make it. I have not half sheeting enough for these People which is stout. I also want you to get me a peice of the plain Russia towelling. The sheeting & toweling take a receipt for as thus, “for the use of the Household of the President of the U S.”—I also

<sup>1</sup> S. E. Morison, “Du Pont, Talleyrand, and the French Spoliations,” *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, vol. 49, pp. 63-79, has proved, with documents found in the French Archives, that peace between the United States and France in 1798 was maintained chiefly by the decisive influence of Talleyrand, who learned from Victor Marie du Pont (1767-1827), French consul at Charleston, and elder son of Pierre Samuel Dupont de Nemours (1739-1817), that the Directory had over-estimated the strength of sympathy for France in the United States. Having been refused his exequatur at Philadelphia by John Adams when he was appointed consul-general to succeed Joseph Philippe Létombe, Victor du Pont had a long talk with Thomas Jefferson on May 31, 1798, and then sailed for France on June 7, on the *Benjamin Franklin*. He reached Bordeaux on July 3, and forwarded a long report to Talleyrand on July 21. Talleyrand sent a copy of this report to the Directory on July 27. The decree ending depredations on American commerce was published July 31, 1798. Although Pickering denied the sincerity of France in reporting to the Senate on January 31, 1799, Adams based his spectacular change of policy a few weeks later on this very decree, taking his hint from Richard Codman, a Boston speculator who was living in Paris at the time. After talking with young Victor du Pont, Talleyrand warned the Directory that for France to go to war with the United States would be merely to fall into the Anglo-Federalist trap.

By the time Davie, Ellsworth, and Vans Murray, minister to the Netherlands, presented their credentials at the Tuileries on March 8, 1800, Bonaparte, by the revolution of the 18th Brumaire (November 9, 1799), had overthrown the Directory, and had made himself First Consul, assisted by Cambacérès and Lebrun, and Talleyrand was entrenched as foreign minister of the Consulate. After long bickering, peace between the United States and France was signed at Mortefontaine, September 30-October 1, 1800.

want some Tea pots & a coffe pot or two, some tea spoons for the kitchin. Any thing which you may think I want beside you will be so good as to provide. I inclose you a Bill of an Hundred dollors. It runs in my mind that I want some yellow dishes & plates, some kitchin knives & forks, half dozen pd spermciti candles, flask sweet oil. I have a small field Bedstead in the Garret which might be put either in the little Chamber or the one Mrs. Porter used to occupy. It wants a little mending if I remember right.

I have put things down just as I have thought of them and without much order.

Mr. McHenry is just returnd and brought with him Genll Washingtons acceptance of his appointment, but the Printers without any Authority have published that he was expected to come on to Philadelphia, whereas no such thing is at present intended. The present operations necessary can be carried on by communicating with him and by other and younger officers, who will this day be nominated.<sup>2</sup> As Congress would not proceed to a declaration of war, they must be answerable for the concequences. With a kind remembrance to all Friends, and in the hope of seeing you 'e'er long I am sincerely and affectionatly

Your Sister

ABIGAIL ADAMS<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In organizing an army for the proposed war with France in 1798, President Adams induced George Washington to accept the command of it, and was persuaded, much against his will, to make Hamilton Inspector-General. Henry Lee was placed at the head of the brigadiers. For Adjutant-General, Adams picked his son-in-law, Colonel William Stephens Smith, a brave and able veteran of the Revolution, but Pickering, the Secretary of State, "lobbied so effectively against Smith that he received only five votes." At Washington's suggestion, Smith was made the colonel of a regiment. Channing, *History of the United States*, vol. 4, pp. 191-4, and *Annals of the Fifth Congress*, vol. 1, p. 623. For a defense of the innocence of Hamilton in this intrigue and for an explanation of the motives of Pickering, see S. F. Bemis, *The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy*, vol. 2, New York, 1927; Henry J. Ford, "Timothy Pickering," p. 236. When, in December, 1800, Adams nominated his son-in-law, Smith, to be Surveyor of the Port of New York, "Hamilton successfully exerted his influence in favour of confirmation by the Senate."

<sup>3</sup> The gap of almost fifteen months which follows, except for one letter, is explained by the fact that in the summer of 1798 Mrs. Adams was taken seriously ill at Quincy and did not return to Philadelphia until the autumn of 1799. The letter of January 17, 1799, which follows, probably was written during a visit with her daughter, Mrs. William Stephens Smith, in New York. Most unfortunately for himself and the duties of his office, President Adams was absent from the seat of government from mid-summer until November, 1798. Channing, *History of the United States*, vol. 4, p. 194.

[New York?], Janry. 17, 1799

MY DEAR SISTER:

I received your kind Letter of Janry and intended writing you yesterday, but I know not how it is, I have less time for writing than formerly. I believe it is partly oweing to my not being able to improve the morning as I used to. When I can sleep I indulge myself more—as it is not light enough to see to write till after seven oclock. Our Weather is too warm. We shall have a sickly spring. Colds are very common. Poor little Caroline has been threatned with the Quincy or Hives. She is very sick now but I hope not dangerous. It is a very allarming complaint.<sup>1</sup>

I am rejoiced to learn that we shall once more be a setled people. Any thing I have is at your service. I inclose you ten dollors towards purchasing a Gown for Mr. Whitney as my part.<sup>2</sup>

I know you will rejoice that I have heard from Mr. [J. Q.] Adams, tho the Letter is four Months old. It is dated at Dresden 7th Sep'br when he was about returning to Berlin. He says he was quite recoverd & Mrs. Adams's health much mended.

Do you want to see a specimin of Virgin[i]a Democracy, politeness, *independance*, Respect for Authority couchd in language decent, polite and Manly? Read the inclosed from litterally a Beardless Boy, a child in voice and face, the most purile figure you ever saw for his age, which is said to be 26. Let the public judge.<sup>3</sup>

I can only add my Love to all Friends from your

Truly affectionate

A. A[DAMS]

Sunday eveng, Brookfield, October 13, 1799

MY DEAR SISTER:

I got to Westown [Weston] on Wednesday by four oclock and was met two miles from Town by Mrs. Otis, accompanied by Mrs. Marshall, who insisted upon my putting up with them.<sup>1</sup> I accordingly went,

<sup>1</sup> Caroline Amelia Smith, daughter of Abigail Adams and Colonel William Stephens Smith.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Whitney (1770-1843), who became the assistant to Anthony Wibird, minister at Quincy.

<sup>3</sup> Early in 1799 John Randolph of Roanoke (1773-1833), a noisy disciple of the philosophers of the French Revolution, became a candidate for the House of Representatives.

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Thomas Marshall (1718-1800) commanded the Tenth Massachusetts Regiment at Saratoga in 1777. Son of Captain Christopher Marshall, an officer in the British service, he was a merchant-tailor in State Street, Boston, before the Revolution. He purchased the confiscated estate of a Tory at Weston, where he died on November 18, 1800. The Marshall house was moved in 1882 from Highland Street to Church Street, where it



and was very kindly and hospitably received by the Col. and his Family. The old Gentleman who is now more than 80 years, still retains much of the fire and sprightliness of youth. He is very infirm in health, but delights in the company and society of his Friends and acquaintance. Mrs. Marshall you know. She is a charming woman; and strives to render the Col. comfortable and happy. Thursday was so rainy, that we could not go out of the House. On Friday morning we set out, and got on 27 miles to Peases, which being a neat good house, and good Beds, we put up for the night, and yesterday proceeded to this place, where it has been my lot oftner to keep Sabbath, than in any other Town upon the Road.<sup>2</sup> We have rendered it more agreeable to day, by attending public worship, and hearing two good sermons, and some delightfull singing. Tomorrow we hope to reach Springfield, and get along by degrees, but the young Farmer whom James has founded by giving him grain, is very lame, and unpleasent travelling with. I heard of the President, who got to East Chester on Monday last, almost sick with a voilent cold.<sup>3</sup> I am very anxious about him. I pray you to write me how Brother Cranchs [cold] is. Direct your letters to me at East Chester. Write by Brisler, who will call upon me. Remember me kindly to all Friends.

Your affectionate Sister

A. ADAMS

East Chester, [New York], October 20th, 1799

MY DEAR SISTER:

I reachd this place yesterday morning and found Mrs. Smith and Caroline very well. Mrs. [Charles] Adams and her two little Girls have been here three weeks. N[ew] York still distresst with the fever. Tho many of the inhabitants have returnd to the city, yet several of them

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now stands. Appletons' *Cyclopaedia of American History*; Francis S. Drake, *Dictionary of American Biography*, Boston, 1872, p. 600; *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the Revolutionary War*, Boston, 1902, vol. 10, p. 265; and Daniel S. Lamson, *History of the Town of Weston, Massachusetts: 1630-1890*, Boston, 1913, p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> For Captain Levi Pease and his inn, see footnote 2 to the letter of October 5, 1797.

<sup>3</sup> Colonel William Stephens Smith had two homes in New York. On March 25, 1795, he bought the eastern section of the Van Zandt farm, a tract of twenty-three acres lying between the East River and the Boston Post Road, on Manhattan Island, extending north and south between what are now East 58th and 62nd Streets, New York City. This was his winter home. He spent the summers in East Chester, Westchester County, where he bought the property known as the Vincent Halsey house, three miles from what is now New Rochelle. Roof, *Colonel Smith and Lady*, pp. 226-7.

have fallen since, and from the return of so many persons, new cases have been increased.

I found a Letter from the President, who writes, that he was oppresst with one of his old heavey colds—that he could get but a small Room & Bed Room at Trentown [New Jersey] for his accomodation, that the fever still was so bad in Philadelphia that it would not be thought prudent to attempt going in untill the Black frosts of Novbr came—I found here old Mrs. Smith & Nancy just returned from Baltimore. They past through the city of Philadelphia. They said that tho it was Evening when they got there, yet they would not have remaind a Night, for the smell of the city was so offensive that they could not endure it—They therefore procured a carriage & got 5 miles out. I left Mr. Otis and Family at a neat Inn about 7 miles from hence. Mrs. Smith is gone out this morning to see if she can procure lodgings for them in this place—We had a very agreeable journey save that young Farmer proved so lame as to oblige me to hire an other horse, and have him led on.

I am desirious to hear from you. A Letter directed to East Chester to the care of the post master New Rochell will reach me. I mentiond to Mr. Beal that I would have the garret entry painted & the back stairs. I would have them done before he leaves the House. The kitchin floor stands in need of painting. I think it will be best to do it, even tho I should make the alteration in the kitchin which I contemplate. You must write a word about the cellar unless the Letters come immediatly to me.

Remember me to all our Friends. Mrs. [William Stephens] Smith & Caroline & Mrs. [Charles] Adams desire to be rememberd to you. Louissa will write for herself.

Your affectionate Sister

A. ADAMS

East Chester, October 31, 1799

MY DEAR SISTER:

I received your Letter on Saturday the 26th by Brisler, who with his family arrived here in safety. John was taken with the Mumps the day before. He was not so sick, as to prevent their proceeding to cross the Ferry—I have not heard of him since, but expect to, this day. Louissa has had the Mumps, so as to be swelld up to her Eyes. They have been a week upon her, and are not yet gone. Caroline was seizd last week with the worst inflamation in her Eyes that I have ever seen a child have. It threw her into a fever. She has been blisterd for it, and

kept without light, which she could not bear a Ray of. It seems to be going of, but is still bad. Mrs. Smith had designd to go on to Philadelphia with me, and remain untill the Col. got into his winter quarters in the Jersies, and then go to him and pass the winter with him. It was my intention to have gone from hence on Monday the 4th of November, but I fear Caroline will detain me longer. The President is still at Trenton. We keep up a communication by the post at [New] Rochell, which is three miles from hence; and there I requested you to direct a Letter for me, but after this week I think you may address them to Philadelphia. Mr. & Mrs. Atkinson calld with Nancy Storer to see us this morning on their way to N[ew] York, all well, and yesterday I met Col. & Mrs. Morton, Mrs. Quincys Brother, returning.<sup>1</sup> Mrs. [Charles] Adams and Nancy Smith went in on Tuesday. I expect they will return on Saturday to take in the children. Tell Mrs. Norton I should like to present my Granddaughters to her sons; They are sprightly lively children. Susan is very forward and intelligent for three years, and would stand all day to hear you read stories, which she will catch at a few times repeating, and has got all goody Goose stories by Heart as her uncle J. Q. Adams did Giles Ginger Bread.<sup>2</sup> She tells me all her Letters and would read in a month if she had a good school. Abbe went alone at nine months, and is very pretty, more so than Susan, having the advantage of sprightly Eyes. Both have fine complexions.<sup>3</sup> But I cannot look upon them my dear Sister with that Joy which you do upon yours. They make my Heart ache, and what is worse, I have not any prospect of their being better off. But shall we receive Good, and not Evil? Yet it is a trial of the worst kind. Any calamity inflicted by the hand of Providence, it would become me in silence to submit to, but when I behold misiry and distress, disgrace and poverty, brought upon a Family by intemperence, my heart bleads at every pore.

When I get to Philadelphia I will write to Mr. [William] Cranch, and enjoin it upon Thomas [B. Adams] to do so. He will rise superiour to

<sup>1</sup> Eliza Susan Morton, daughter of John Morton, merchant, of New York, was the wife of Josiah Quincy (1772-1864). Nancy Storer was the daughter of Charles Storer, private secretary, at one time, to John Adams. Adams, *Works*, vol. 8, p. 310.

<sup>2</sup> *The Renowned History of Giles Gingerbread: A Little Boy who Lived upon Learning.* This book for children, attributed both to John Newbury and Giles Jones, appeared about 1765. *Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, 1940, vol. 2, p. 561.

<sup>3</sup> Susanna Boylston (1796-1846) and Abigail Louisa (1798-1838), daughters of Charles (1770-1800) and Sarah (Smith) Adams (1769-1828). Charles Adams died of drink on November 30, 1800.

his troubles. He has no vices to disgrace himself and Family. His misfortunes have arisen from trusting to the honesty of others.<sup>4</sup>

I am exceedingly anxious for my dear son abroad. The last accounts from him lead us to fear, that the next will bring us an account of the death of his wife. He too, had been sick of an intermitting fever. Where is the situation in Life which exempts us from trouble? Who of us pass through the world with our path strewn with flowers, without encountering the thorns? In what ever state we are, we shall find a mixture of good and evil, and we must learn to receive these vicissitudes of life, so as not to be unduly exalted by the one, or depressed by the other. No cup so bitter, but what some cordial drops are mingled by a kind Providence, who knows how as Sterne says, to "temper the wind to the Shorn Lamb."<sup>5</sup>—But I shall insensibly run into moralizing.

You mention a pr of stockings. I left a pr for you. Betsy might [have] put them into the black trunk in the entry. You will look there for them. With a kind remembrance to all our Friends and Neighbours, I am, my dear Sister,

Your truly affectionate

A. ADAMS

When you write let me know how Pheby does.

[East Chester, New York, November 1-3, 1799]<sup>1</sup>

MY DEAR SISTER:

Tomorrow morning I expect to leave this place, and proceed on my way to Philadelphia, where I hope soon to hear from you. Frank and family had arrived before Brisler. They had only ten days passage.

Our Envoys, I presume, are ready to sail.<sup>2</sup> The P[resident] writes me,

<sup>4</sup> On January 19, 1799, the *Columbian Centinel* of Boston announced: "Thomas B. Adams, third son of our beloved President has arrived at New York from Europe." William Cranch was the lawyer of James Greenleaf, of the North American Land Company, speculator in real estate in Washington, D.C.

<sup>5</sup> "But, 'God tempers the wind,' said Maria, 'to the shorn lamb.'" This is an ancient French proverb which Laurence Sterne made famous in *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy*. See the section called "Maria."

<sup>1</sup> Endorsed by Mrs. Cranch: "Received November 9, 1799." See the following letter.

<sup>2</sup> On February 18, 1799, Adams startled Congress and the country, and infuriated the Hamiltonians, by nominating William Vans Murray as minister to France. A committee of five from the Senate waited on Adams to persuade him to withdraw the nomination. Adams suggested a commission of three, two actually residing in the United States and not to depart until the requisite assurances were received from France. He nominated three men on February 25, 1799. Ultimately, Chief Justice Oliver Ellsworth (1745-1807) and William Richardson Davie (1756-1820) joined Vans Murray in Paris. Adams, *Works*, vol. 9, pp. 161-3, and Channing, *History of the United States*, vol. 4, pp. 203-6. Ellsworth and Davie sailed from Newport, Rhode Island, on the frigate *United States* on November 3, 1799.

that he hopes they are gone that there may no longer be room for impertinent paragraphs, fabricated by busy bodies who are forever meddling with things they understand not. I inclose you a Letter from William [Steuben Smith] to me. Be cautious however in your communications as the source will be traced. I request Mr. [Richard] Cranch to have the inclosed communication publishd, taken from the N[ew] York commercial advertizer of Nov'br 2d in the centinal, or J[ohn] Russels paper.<sup>3</sup> I also inclose a paper which contains an answer to Coopers address.<sup>4</sup> If it has not been republished in our papers, it ought to be. If you could send it to Mr. Gardner [of] Milton he will see that it is done. The writer is T[homas] B[oyleston] A[dams] as I have good reason to believe.

Mrs. [William Stephens] Smith goes on with me. My Love and regards to all Friends. Mrs. [Charles] Adams and children went to N[ew] York to day. She had been in part of the last week. She returned last Evening, and went again this morning.

I read in the centinal [of] the death of Lilly Field.<sup>5</sup> What was her sickness? The quitting of Mrs. Foster was the ruin of that poor Girl. Adieu, your ever

Affectionate Sister

A. ADAMS

Philadelphia, Novbr. 15, 1799

MY DEAR SISTER:

I wrote to you twice from East Chester.<sup>1</sup> I left there the day I proposed, and had a fine passage across the North River. It was quite calm

<sup>3</sup>[John] Russell's *Commercial Gazette*.

<sup>4</sup>Thomas Cooper (1759-1839), agitator, scientist, and educator, was born in Westminster, England, and entered Oxford in 1779. He became a friend of Joseph Priestley, and, consequently, a Unitarian and a revolutionist. He visited Paris in 1792, and then settled at Northumberland, Pennsylvania, in 1794, where he practised law and served unofficially as a physician. On June 29, 1799, Cooper published in the *Sunbury and Northumberland Gazette* a blast against the administration of John Adams, attacking the arrogance of the executive; the "seizure" of the power to make treaties; and the Alien and Sedition Laws. See Thomas Cooper, *Political Essays Originally Inserted in the Northumberland Gazette*, Northumberland, 1799; second edition, Philadelphia, 1800. Pickering called this outburst to the attention of President Adams on August 1, 1799. Adams, *Works*, vol. 9, pp. 5-7. See, also, Dumas Malone, *The Public Life of Thomas Cooper, 1783-1839*, New Haven, 1926.

<sup>5</sup>Lilley Field died at Quincy, aged fourteen. *Columbian Centinel*, October 23, 1799.

<sup>1</sup>Mrs. Adams wrote not twice, but three times from East Chester. "The President of the United States has taken his residence at Philadelphia." *Columbian Centinel*, November 9, 1799.

& not cold. We proceeded on our journey to Newark the same day, and there finding that we could go to Brunswick as conveniently by travelling through Springfield and Scotch Plain to Plainfield, the place where Col. [William Stephens] Smith is Encampd with three Regiments, we parted with Mr. & Mrs. [Samuel Allyne] Otis, and took different directions. We reachd Plainfield about 4 oclock, and found all hands, officers and Men busily employd in cutting down Trees & building log houses for winter quarters.

We took a walk through the encampment, and then went to a House which the Col. had provided for us, where we lodgd. The next morning he accompanied us to Brunswick, where the President met us. We tarried all Night, and then sat out in [the] morning for Trenton, 32 miles, which we reachd by four oclock, and the next day proceeded to this place, but were overtaken by rain, and rode 18 miles in it. We were met about four mils out of Town by the Light Horse escorted in &c.

Ever since I have been *sitting up*—receiving visitors—which prevents me going even to take a ride—which I want for exercise—The show will be pretty well over by the next week, and then I must sit out to return them all—Drawing Rooms will not commence untill after Congress meet. News we have none but what you get first from Boston. I have not a line from any one but you since I left home and that by Mr. Brisler. I quite want to hear from you; I wrote to you twice from East Chester.

I have seen by the papers the honorable testimony of respect and Regard paid to the Birth day in Quincy, as well as in other parts of Massachuset<sup>s</sup><sup>2</sup>—The citizens of N[ew] York and this place were not in a situation to do it, if they had been disposed. The inhabitants were not returnd to their abodes who had been driven from them by the pestilence. I suppose they will, as they did last year give a Ball and Supper, when the winter commences after [the *cancelled*] Congress meet, and the Ladies have settled the fashions which are now canvessd, and adjusting from some late importations. Amongst the Ladies presented to me the Countess de Tilly has been of the Number, by the Appelation of Madam de Tilly. She has all the appearence and dress of a Real French woman, Rouged up to the Ears: Mrs. Bingham did not appear to feel any embarresment at introducing her, tho I cannot say she did not creat one

<sup>2</sup> The birthday of John Adams, who was born on October 19, 1735. See the letter of November 21, 1800.

in me; for I really felt a reluctance at addressing her.<sup>3</sup> So I talked to her mother and sister, and as there was much other company present I easily past her over. Mrs. Black will have a curiosity to know something of the fashions. I have heard of once a Man & twice a child, and the Ladies caps are an exact copy of the Baby caps—those which are made with drawings, and drawn with a bobbin to a point, a quarter and Nail deep, a lace upon the border, a bow upon the point, three bows behind and one before, the Hair a little drest at the side & a few curls upon the forehead, the cap to lie flat upon the head.<sup>4</sup> Some tye them under the chin. Gown waists, half a yd in length. Morning dress a Gown very narrow just to reach the bottom of the skirt, a Narrow frill of half a Nail pleated round the bottom—buttond with an oval shirt button down before, two rows of the same down the back, over which a cord is crossd—the sleeves short but with cuffs pleated, buttons upon them corded in the same Manner, two large buttons on the hips—A dress Gown, made with a long train behind coming only half way down the coat before. A Muslin coat of the same with a small flounce at bottom—So much for fashions, already exhibited.

I requested you to take charge of my pork for Bacon, but left you not the means. Inclosed is a five dollors Bill to get salt peter and Molasses.

Pray write. We all send Love, Regards &c to all friends, Neighbours &c &c.

Ever your affectionate Sister

A. A[DAMS]

Philadelphia, Novbr 26, 1799

MY DEAR SISTER:

Your kind Letter reachd me on the 20th. I began to feel very impatient to hear from you: Your Letter afforded me much pleasure: I rejoice

<sup>3</sup>The worst scandal of the "Republican Court" at Philadelphia during 1799 was the clandestine marriage, on April 11, of fifteen-year-old Maria Matilda Bingham, second daughter of Anne (Willing), daughter of Thomas Willing, and William Bingham, a rich banker, to Jacques-Pierre-Alexandre, Comte de Tilly (1764-1816). Tilly, a handsome and profligate Frenchman, and a poet and author, was born at Le Mans and was, at one time, a page to Marie Antoinette. Fleeing from France after the storming of the Tuileries, August 10, 1792, he wandered through England, the United States, and Germany. In 1797, he turned up in the United States, and, after his marriage to Maria, the Bingham had to buy him off with a cash settlement and an annuity, and put a bill of divorce through the Pennsylvania legislature. In 1807, Tilly returned to France, where he led a disorderly life, committing suicide at Brussels as the result of a scandal at cards. For the subsequent career of Maria, see Morison, *Harrison Gray Otis*, pp. 137-9. For Comte de Tilly, see *Memoirs of the Comte Alexandre de Tilly*, New York, 1932; and Havelock Ellis, *From Rousseau to Proust*, Boston and New York, 1935, pp. 193-251.

<sup>4</sup>A nail measures two and one-quarter inches.

that so worthy and amiable a Man as Mr. Kendall allways appeard to me, is like to be so soon, and agreably settled.<sup>1</sup> I would willingly exchange all the discourses I have heard here since I came and all I shall be like to hear, for the one half which even chance offers us at Quincy. I do not believe that a people are ever made better by always hearing of the terrors of the Lord. Gloom is no part of my Religion. To maintan [*sic*] a conscience void of offence, as far as is consistant with the imperfect State we are in, both towards God and Man, is one article of my Faith, and to do good as I have opportunity, and according to my means I would wish to make the Rule of my practise. [To *cancelled*] Do justly, walk Humbly and to Love mercy—are duties enjoind upon every Christian, and if we can attain to those graces, we may cheerfully look for our recompence and reward, where it is promised to us.<sup>2</sup>

Shall we be so happy at Quincy as to settle a Gentleman of Mr. [Peter] Whitneys talents? I most sincerely hope we may; but fear that so good a choice is not reserved for us.

I saw in Rusels paper the answer to Cooper.<sup>3</sup> I found I was Mistaken in the writer. It was not the person [Thomas Boylston Adams] I conjectured, nor is it known by him, who it was. Cooper has lately appeard in the *Aurora*, and in his former Mad democratic Stile, abused the President, and I presume subjected himself to the penalty of the Sedition act. The greater part of [our *cancelled*] the abuse leveld at the Government is from foreigners. Every Jacobin paper in the United States is Edited by a Foreigner, and John Fenno is become a coppiest of them. What a disgrace to our Country.

<sup>1</sup> Probably James Kendall, Harvard, 1796; S.T.D., 1825; died in 1859.

<sup>2</sup> "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" *Micah*, VI, 8.

<sup>3</sup> For the answer to Thomas Cooper's attack on the administration of John Adams, see *J. Russell's Gazette*, November 18 and 21, 1799, in which "A True American" points out the constitutional power of the executive branch to negotiate treaties, and defends the exclusion from the United States of aliens from Europe, both "Aristocrats" and "Democrats." The author of this answer observes that, according to British law of the time, no subject of Great Britain was permitted to renounce his status to become a citizen of the United States—or of any other country. In May, 1800, Cooper was convicted under the Sedition Law, and sentenced to serve six months in prison and pay a fine of four hundred dollars. Throughout the rest of his life he sought the repayment of this fine, which, after his death, was refunded to his heirs, with interest. From 1821 to 1834 Cooper was president of the University of South Carolina. In his later years, this rebel supported the Bank of the United States against Andrew Jackson, defended slavery, and argued for nullification of the federal tariff acts. See Malone, *Thomas Cooper*. See, also, the letter of November 1-3, 1799.



On thursday next [the *cancelled*] four of our N[ew] England States keep thanksgiving. I would not suffer the day to pass without noticing it here by the Symbols of the festival as commemorated by us. I have invited a chosen set to dine upon that day, and whilst we share in & are plentifully supplied with the good things of this world, I hope we shall not be unmindfull of the many blessing[s] of the past year, which we have abundant cause to be thankful for.

Thomas has had a Letter from your son. He appears I think much more tranquil in mind, and is quite witty in his Letter.

There is a Letter from Mr. Pitcarn in Hamburgh to Thomas [Boylston Adams] dated in Sepbr, in which he says that he heard from Mr. [John Quincy] Adams three days before, and that he was well. He makes no mention of Mrs. Adams. He would I think, if she had not recoverd or was so dangerous as she had been represented.

Mrs. Smith and Louissa desire to be rememberd to you and all our Friends. I do not get a line from Sister [Mrs. Stephen Peabody] or the Children. Mrs. Smith is anxious to hear from them. William [Smith Shaw] is well. Thomas will get into buisness in time I hope. He is very attentive to his office.

Next week Congress meet. I expect it will be a stormy Session. Electionering is already began. There will be more things aimed at than will be carried either by Jacobins or Federalists—but the Jacobins are always more subtle and industerous than there opponents.

My Love to Mrs. Norton and Greenleaf.<sup>4</sup> I hope if my Health remains to be with you early again in the Spring. My best regards and the Presidents to Mr. [Richard] Cranch. Accept the affectionate Regard and Love of

Your Sister  
A. A[DAMS]

Philadelphia, December 4th, 1799

MY DEAR SISTER:

Mrs. Smith, Louissa, Mrs. Otis, [Dr.] Rush, Peters & a number of young Ladies are just gone to Congress to hear the speech which is deliverd at 12 oclock to day.<sup>1</sup> I should have liked well enough to have

<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Cranch, wife of the Reverend Jacob Norton, and Lucy Cranch, wife of John Greenleaf, the daughters of Richard and Mary (Smith) Cranch.

<sup>1</sup> See "Speech to Both Houses of Congress," December 3, 1799, in Adams, *Works*, vol. 9, pp. 136-40. Mrs. Adams probably dated her letter incorrectly.

been of the Party, but it would not have been proper. You will see it, as soon as you will get the Letter, I presume. Some people will not be pleased, I suppose, because it will not disclose enough about the mission to France. Others will Growl, because war is not waged against England, in words at least. They will grumble at all events, and under all circumstances, and so let them. But their brightest, best, and most peaceful days they now see: Such at least are my predictions.

I have to request you, my dear Sister, to look in my large Hair cloaths Trunk which stands in the Garret for my white Lutestring Gown & coat which is trimd with silver, and for a Napkin in which is a plain Muslin Gown Embrodered with silk, which belongs to Mrs. [William Stephens] Smith. Indeed all that is pind in the Napkin belongs to Mrs. Smith. These dresses I request you to have done up in the safest manner and take them to Mr. [William] Smiths, with a request to send them to me if possible by some private conveyance; I sent Betsy [Howard] yesterday to my Trunk to get them and found to my great mortification that she had omitted to put them up, or rather, that she had by mistake put up what I did not want in lieu of them. Mrs. Smith is more disappointed than I am, as she wants hers more; If they should not be in that trunk they must be in the imperial.<sup>2</sup> I had depended upon mine for fryday Evening next and as they wanted a little alteration, I discovered that they were missing, by sending to my Trunk for them. It is like there will be persons comeing on from Boston who will in the course of the winter take them on for me. Gen'll Lincoln designs to come about Christmass but that may be uncertain.<sup>3</sup> I will trust to Mr. Smith[']s care to convey them for me. Sew them in a coars cloth as well as a Napkin, and I will give who ever brings them safe, as many good dinners as they will Eat.

I should certainly use some Red Broad cloth if I could come at it, for red cloth Cloaks are all the mode, trim'd with white furs. This is much more rational than to wear only a shawl in winter. I wish any thing would persuade the Ladies that muslin is not a proper winter dress. So far as example goes, I shall bring in the use of silks. At my Age I think I am priviledged to sit a fashion. The real truth is that Muslin is new every time it is clean, & new trimmed, so that it is, they

<sup>2</sup> A luggage case for the top of a coach.

<sup>3</sup> Benjamin Lincoln (1733-1810), of Hingham, who suppressed Shays's Rebellion in 1787, and was Collector of the Port of Boston (1789-1809). See the letters of July 9, 1798, and January 28, 1800.

say, upon a principle of oconomy they use it, fewer changes being required.

I have not had a Letter from you for some time. I communicated to the President Mr. J[oseph] Cranchs Letter and he gave it to the Secretary of War to see what can be done. I shall ask the Secretary soon respecting it, and then will write you.<sup>4</sup>

I learn from some of the Essex leaders that Judge [Francis] Dana is to be sit up for Governour. He will make a very able one. The Bench will also lose a learned Judge. I Question however whether Judge Dana is sufficiently popular for that place. He wants the amiable & concilitating [*sic*] manners of Sumner.<sup>5</sup> Alass I know not where, is to be found all the qualities which he possess'd, concentered in any person who will be held up as a canditate [*sic*].

Mr. Sheaf the member from Portsmouth will be like to come soon. He will call at Mr. Storer's no doubt, and I have been thinking if you was to buy me a small trunk just large enough to hold the articles whether Mr. Sheaf would not take charge of it for me, & bring it within the carriage.<sup>6</sup> The sooner you can get the things to Town the better. Mrs. Smith is very well and sends her duty to you. So does Mr. [John] Adams, Mr. [William Smith] Shaw & Louissa [Smith]. The City is now said to be very healthy. The Members of both houses have been punctual to a day, a sufficient Number to make both houses. I inclose the Speech.<sup>7</sup> With hopes of hearing from you this week I close, adding Love to Mrs. Norton & Greenleaf.

Affectionatly your Sister

A. ADAMS

Please to send all you find in the Napkin belonging to Mrs. Smith.

Philadelphia, December 11, 1799

MY DEAR SISTER:

I received this week your Letters of Novbr 24th and 28th, and this morning yours of Decbr. 3d, the contents of which gave me much

<sup>4</sup> James McHenry, third Secretary of War. See footnote 1 to the letter of July 3, 1798.

<sup>5</sup> See footnote 5 to the letter of June 23, 1798.

<sup>6</sup> James Sheafe (1755-1829), Harvard, 1774, merchant of Portsmouth, and Federalist representative and Senator from New Hampshire (1799-1802). "Mr. Storer" is probably Charles Storer, who was at one time private secretary to Mr. Adams. Adams, *Works*, vol. 8, p. 310.

<sup>7</sup> See Adams, *Works*, vol. 9, pp. 136-40.

pleasure. It will be a real subject of rejoicing to me, if we obtain Mr. [Peter] Whitney for our pastor. It will greatly add to the pleasure I anticipate upon my return to Quincy to find that we are in possession of a Gentleman of Mr. Whitney's known and acknowledged talents, so well adapted to the profession he has chosen. I hope that no root of bitterness will spring up, to injure his usefulness, or to impede his settlement.

The season continues remarkable mild, but the late rains have prevented my riding more than through the city to return visits, of which I have a more than ordinary share, many persons visiting me now who never did before. They think, I suppose, that as it is the last season Congress will sit in this city, they will not be wanting in attention—I sometimes walk for exercise and make some visits in that way. I yesterday made one in this way to Mrs. Morris, which to both of us was painful.<sup>1</sup> I had not seen her since the very great reverse of her circumstances. She received me with all that dignity of manners for which she more than any Lady I ever saw, is distinguished. I called rather at an improper hour, (having been detained from going sooner by visitors). She was in a small neat Room and at dinner with her daughter & youngest son, who is with a merchant, and on whose account she said, she always dined at one o'clock, but instead of refusing herself, she rose and met me at the door. Her feelings were evidently strongly excited. She endeavoured to smile away the Melancholy which was evident upon her whole countenance, and entered into conversation. When I left her, I requested her to come and take Tea with me. I took her by the Hand. She said she did not visit, but she would not refuse herself the pleasure of coming some day when I was alone. She then turned from me, and the tears burst forth. I most sincerely felt for her.

I have sent to Mrs. Black and Suky Adams a model of the New fashioned cap.<sup>2</sup> They are not such as you or I should wear. If I thought Mrs. Norton and Greenleaf would like them I would send each of them one. With the Hair dressed as I have directed they look very pretty.

The politician[s] have before this, got the speech which Duane says, in his paper, was as anxiously expected, and sought for, as a speech is, from the tyrant of Britain. It has been received here, with more applause & approbation than any speech which the President has ever before delivered, and what is very surprising and remarkable, the answer

<sup>1</sup> Mary (White) Morris, wife of Robert Morris (1734-1806).

<sup>2</sup> Susanna (born 1777), daughter of Peter Boylston Adams (1738-1823), sole surviving brother of John Adams.

to it by the House past unanimously without a motion for altering but one sentence, which motion did not obtain. The answer was draughted by Mr. [John] Marshall, and contains so full and unqualified an approbation of the Measures of the President in his late Mission, as not only gives him sincere pleasure, but the unanimity [*sic*] with which it past the whole House, being the first instance of the kind is a proof that the Measure meets the wishes of the people at large.<sup>3</sup> The documents upon which the measure was founded I inclose to you in the paper. What would the people of this Country have said, if the President had neglected to meet the advances of France, and have sufferd himself to have been governd by a spirit of personal resentment because he had been ill used, and abused by some of their Rulers. Would such conduct have become the Head of a Great Nation? Should France conduct [herself] dishonorably, we shall not be to blame; and the President will have the satisfaction of knowing: that he has done every thing Encumbent upon him to preserve Peace and restore harmony. The replie of the Senate cold and Languid, fully discovers in what school they have imbibed their sentiments. The committe chosen to draught the replie, were known to be some of the most opposed to the Mission. There is a man in the cabinet, whose manners are forbidding, whose temper is sour and whose resentments are implacable, who neverless [*sic*] would like to dictate every Measure. He has to deal with *one*, who knows full well their respective departments—and who chuses to feel quite independant, and to act so too, but for this He is abused. But I am mistaken if this dictator does not get himself ensnared in his own toil. He would not now remain in office, if the President possesst such kind of resentments as I hear from various quarters, he permits himself to utter—From this fountain have flowed all the unpopularity of the Mission to France, which some of the federalists have been so deluded as to swallow large draughts off.<sup>4</sup>

Thomas [Boylston Adams] keeps so constantly at his office that I see him only at meal times. He sends his Respects. As to William [Smith Shaw], we have rubd of [*sic*] so many of his peculiarities that he has scarcly one left for us to laugh at. He is a good creature. I heard yesterday from Mr. [William] Cranch and Family. They were all well. Mr.

<sup>3</sup> For the acknowledgment of Adams, see Adams, *Works*, vol. 9, pp. 141-2.

<sup>4</sup> Timothy Pickering, having bitterly opposed the President's policy of peace with France, was summarily dismissed by Adams on May 12, 1800. Adams, *Works*, vol. 9, p. 55. Peace with France was concluded at Mortefontaine, September 30-October 1, 1800, and was, with the exception of one article, accepted by the Senate. See *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, vol. 44 (1911), pp. 377-429: Brooks Adams, "The Convention of 1800 with France."

Wainright has been there, and will see you as soon as he returns. Mrs. [William Stephens] Smith sends her Love. My paper reminds me to close. I will write to Dr. [Cotton] Tufts by the next Mail. Love &c

Your affectionate

A. A[DAMS]

Philadelphia, Sunday Eve'ng, Decbr. 22, 1799

MY DEAR SISTER:

I wrote to you the day after we received the account of the death of Gen'l Washington.<sup>1</sup> This Event so important to our Country at this period, will be universally deplored. No Man ever lived, more deservedly beloved and Respected. The praise and I may say addulation which followed his administration for several years, never made him forget that he was a Man, subject to the weakness and frailty attached to humane Nature. He never grew giddy, but ever mantaind a modest diffidence of his own talents, and if that was an error, it was of the amiable and engaging kind, tho it might lead sometimes to a want of decisions in some great Emergencys. Possesst of power, posest of an extensive influence, he never used it but for the benifit of his Country. Witness his retirement to private Life when Peace closed the scenes of War; When call'd by the unanimous suffrages of the People to the chief Majestracy of the Nation, he acquitted himself to the satisfaction and applause of all Good Men. When assailed by faction, when reviled by Party, he sufferd with dignity, and Retired from his exalted station with a Character which malice could not wound, nor envy tarnish. If we look through the whole tennor of his Life, History will not produce to us a Parrallel. Heaven has seen fit to take him from us. Our Mourning is sincere, in the midst of which, we ought not to lose sight of the Blessings we have enjoy'd and still partake of, that he was spared to us, untill he saw a successor filling his place, persueing the same system which he had adopted, and that in times which have been equally dangerous and Critical. It becomes not me to say more upon this Head.

I inclose to you a News paper which contains all that has yet been done in commemoration of the late dispensation. Tomorrow the Senate come in a Body with a sympathetic address, and on thursday a Eulogy is to be deliverd by Genll. Lee, in the Dutch Church in this city, to which we are all invited.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> George Washington died on Saturday, December 14, 1799. The letter to which Mrs. Adams refers was lost in the mail. See the letter of January 7, 1800.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Lee (1756-1818), "Light-Horse Harry" of Virginia, soldier of the Revolution, Governor of Virginia (1792-1795), and father of Robert E. Lee. In 1799 Lee entered

Monday, [December] 23, [1799]

Company coming in last Evening, I was prevented finishing my Letter. This morning I received yours of December 15. It is unhappy that what is liked by one should for that very reason, be the object of aversion to another, but when a spirit of private animosity is permitted to influence the mind, it always produces an illiberal conduct. The two B[lack]'s who are now opposed to Mr. Whitney, are pretty nearly upon a footing in point of talants and capacity, taking into view the comparative advantages they have had.<sup>3</sup> But their influence will not be very extensive. I am sorry you had such a cold time in looking for my Gown. I shall not have occasion now for any thing but Black, untill Spring. Then I shall put on half mourning. I shall be glad to have it, if it can be conveniently sent. Mrs. Smith wants her white, as she will after a certain period appear in white trimd with black. At Present the whole Family are in full mourning.

I hope Mrs. Black has received her Cap safe. Mr. Wainright did not go so soon as I expected, and Betsy Howard got a Mr. Whitney, with whom she was acquainted, to take it. It was to be left at Mr. Lambs.

Mrs. Smith has worked you a Crown of a Cap & Band, which I request you to accept of. I will send a Border the next time I write.

We all desire to be kindly rememberd to all Friends.

Your affectionate Sister

A. ADAMS

I send a paper containing the speech of Mr. Hopkins[on] upon the trial of Peter Porcupine for defamation. The Jury brought in five thousand dollors damages and the court confirmed the verdict.<sup>4</sup>

Congress, and drew up the resolutions offered by John Marshall on the death of Washington. These contained the famous description of Washington as "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen." Lee repeated the words in his memorial oration to the Congress in Philadelphia on December 26, 1799.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. and Mrs. Moses Black, of Quincy, who tried to prevent the appointment of the Reverend Peter Whitney as assistant to the Reverend Anthony Wibird in the parish. See footnote 5 to the letter of May 16, 1797, and footnote 3 to the letter of November 15, 1797.

<sup>4</sup> During the yellow-fever epidemic of 1797, Dr. Benjamin Rush treated his patients with violent purges and copious bleeding, and William Cobbett, on politico-medical grounds, made a terrific onslaught on him. Rush sued for libel, and, after a delay of two years, the case came to trial, and Cobbett was ordered to pay \$5000. Rush was libelled, and deserved to be libelled, but the trial was unfair. Joseph Hopkinson, author of "Hail Columbia," represented Rush in court. Cobbett retreated to New York, where he published a new paper, the *Rush-Light*, in which (February 28, 1800), he described Dr. Rush's system as "one of the great discoveries . . . which have contributed to the depopulation of the earth." Adams thought of deporting Cobbett under the Alien Act, but Cobbett returned to England in June, 1800.

Philadelphia, December 30th, 1799

MY DEAR SISTER:

I received your Letter of the 23d this morning. I should be glad you would inform me from time to time the state Mrs. Mears is in. I have told Mrs. Brisler that she was ill, but as [she *cancelled*] it can not be of any service to Mrs. Mears, I think best not to let her know of her relapse tho I fear it will finally be fatal to Mrs. Mears—Mrs. Brisler would so distress herself as very probably to bring on her fits and render her wholly useless in the Family.<sup>1</sup>

I think every days experience must convince the people of the propriety of sending the Envoys at the time they went. After the President had received the Letter from Tallyrand containing the assurances from the Directory which he requir'd, he would not allow it, to be made a question whether they should proceed tho he knew certain persons set their faces against it as far as they dared. Gen'l. Hamilton made no secret of his opinion. He made the P[resident] a visit at Trenton, and was perfectly sanguine in the opinion that the Stateholder would be reinstated before Christmass and Louis the 18th upon the Throne of France<sup>2</sup>. I should as soon expect, replied the P[resident], that the sun, moon & stars will fall from their orbits, as events of that kind take place in any such period, but suppose such an event possible, can it be any injury to our Country to have envoys there? It will be only necessary for them to wait for new commissions. And if France is disposed to accommodate our differences, will she be less so under a Royall than a Directorial Government? Have not the Directory Humbled themselves to us more than to any Nation or Power in contest with her? If she proves faithless, if she will not receive our Envoys, does the disgrace fall upon her, or upon us? We shall not be worse off than at Present. The people of our own Country will be satisfied that every honorable method has been try'd to accommodate our differences. At the period the envoys went, France was loosing ground. She was defeated, and the combined powers appeard to be carrying victory with them. If they had been detained untill now, how mean and despicable should we have appeard? Reports have been circulated that the British Minister remonstrated: However

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Mears was a sister of the wife of John Briesler, major-domo to John Adams. See the letter of January 7, 1800.

<sup>2</sup> It was fifteen years before Louis XVIII entered Paris. William V (1748-1802), Stadholder of the Netherlands (1751-1795), never regained his position. Louis Bonaparte was King of Holland from 1806 to 1810, when Holland was incorporated with France as an integral part of the empire. The son of William V became William I, King of the Netherlands, in 1815.



dissagreeable the measure might be to him, he is too old a minister, and understands the nature of his Mission too well, to have ventured upon any such step. As an independant Nation, no other has a Right to complain, or dictate to us, with whom we shall form connections, provided those connections are not contrary to treaties already made.

Last frydays drawing Room was the most crowded of any I ever had. Upwards of a hundred Ladies, and near as many Gentlemen attended, all in mourning. The Ladies Grief did not deprive them of taste in ornamenting their white dresses: 2 yds of Black mode in length, of the narrow kind pleated upon one shoulder, crossd the Back in the form of a Military sash tyed at the side, crossd the peticoat & hung to the bottom of it, were worn by many. Others wore black Epulets of Black silk trimd with fring[e] upon each shoulder, black Ribbon in points upon the Gown & coat some plain Ribbon, some black Snail &c.<sup>3</sup> Their caps were crape with black plumes or black flowers. Black Gloves & fans. The Gentlemen all in Black. The Ladies many of them wanted me to fix the time for wearing mourning, but I declined, and left them to Govern themselves by the periods prescribed by the Gentlemen. The assembly Room is burnt down, and they have not any place to display their gay attire but the drawing Room and private parties, and as they expect it will be the last winter they will have the opportunity, they intended shining.

Mr. [William Smith] Shaw is gone to Mount Vernon the Bearer of Letters from the President & the Resolutions of congress, to Mrs. Washington. It was thought most respectfull to send a special Messenger. He sit out last Saturday. I wrote to your son by him, and he will be able on his return to give a particuliar account of their health and welfare. I expect he will be absent 10 days.

Tuesday, [December] 31 [1799]

We have a report here that the plague is in Boston, brought by a ship from the Levant. I hope it is without foundation, but let me know the Truth. The weather here has been so mild, foggy, and thawey that colds universally prevail. Dr. Rush says there is a procession fever. I do not wonder at it, for the processions was an hour and quarter from congress Hall to the churrrch & an hour & half in church. The Gentlemen say they walkd over shoes in Mud. I went at Eleven & did not get home till 20 minuts before four oclock. I then had to dress and sit

<sup>3</sup> "Snail," obsolete for "chenille," in use from 1741 to 1773: *Oxford English Dictionary*.

down to dinner with 30 Gentlemen & Ladies. I went to Bed the moment the company left me, which was not till nine o'clock. I felt sick enough & expected to pay for my exertions, but the next morning I was quite smart, and went through the drawing Room ceremonies in the Evening. You [will *cancelled*] may be assured that my Health is much firmer than the last winter. I was at the Theater last night to hear the Monody performd—I think sufficient has been done to express the gratefull feelings of a people towards the Character of even a Washington. The danger is, least the enthusiastic disposition of some should proceed too far. Some things are requested of the P[resident] which really appear improper, and may tend to turn what is design'd as respect, into Ridicule. He will withstand it if he can without giving umbrage to the Representatives *of the People*. If the thing is done, you will know what it is.

I inclose the Border I promised, and am

Your affectionate Sister

A. ADAMS

Philadelphia, Janry 7th, 1800

MY DEAR SISTER:

I know not what could have become of a Letter written to you upon the 18 of December, that upon the 30th you should not have received it.<sup>1</sup> I have written you more than once since that period, but do not recollect the dates. I forget whether it was before or since then, that I inclosed to you a crown of a Cap & Band. Since that, I have sent the Border and a Cap for Mrs. Norton, which I think you could not yet have got. I have not learnt whether Mrs. Black has got my Letter & the cap sent to her by a Mr. Whitney. I should greatly regret that any obstical should prevent the settlement of Mr. Whitney with us. I would most certainly accommodate him if it was in my power, but my sons whole Library is at the House in which Mr. Clark lives, beside some cumbersome furniture which I have not yet any place for.

Thom[p]son Baxter once offerd his House and place to the President for a thousand pounds. That is a large sum for a Clergyman, yet if it could be had for that, would it not prove much Cheeper than building? 40 acres of land belongd to it. The poor old incumbent might be had into the Bargain I suppose. But who knows but if Mr. Whitney could

<sup>1</sup> See the letter of December 22, 1799.

get the place, and marry a woman kind and attentive to the old Gentleman who would clean & brush him up, but that it might prove advantageous to them. I only suggest the Idea. I received my Gown & Mrs. [William Stephens] Smith[s] safe, by Mr. Sheaff [James Sheafe] yesterday.<sup>2</sup> I thank you for your care & Mr. & Mrs. [William] Smith for theres.

Our Boston Printers are great blunderers. In the answer to the Senates address of condolance, they make him say a *Trojan* instead of [Traygain cancelled] "Trajan found a Pliny" and in an paper they say the Senate sent a Letter of condolance, whereas the truth is, the Senate came in a Body and presented the address, which address is said to have been drawn by Mr. Dexter, a New England Man certain.<sup>3</sup> No Southern Man quotes Scripture—Mr. [William Smith] Shaw returned yesterday from Mount Vernon. He was much gratified by his tour, tho regretted that he did not see Mrs. Washington. She strove the whole time he was there, which was two days, to get resolution sufficient to see him, but finally excused herself. She had the painfull task to perform, to bring her mind to comply with the request of Congress, which she has done in the handsomest manner possible in a Letter to the President which will this day be communicated to congress. She wrote me in replie to my Letter an answer repleat with a sense of my sympathy, and expressive of her own personal Grief and anguish of mind. Mr. [Tobias] Lear told Mr. Shaw that she had not been able to shed a tear since the Genlls. death, untill she received the Presidents and my Letters when she was two hours getting through them, tho they were not Lengthy<sup>4</sup>—On his return he visited your son, who he says, is in good Health & spirits, as is Mrs. [William] Cranch. Richard [1797-1824] he says is not well, tho not confined. Mr. Greenleaf was with them. I fear Mr. Greenleaf is not a wise counsellor. Mr. Cranch would, a year before he did, have taken the step of relinquishing his Property if it had not been for Mr. Greenleafs advice. He certainly would have been better off, as his friends say. I am glad he had resolution enough at last to decide for himself. I have just closed a Letter to Mrs. Cranch of West Point, having obtained a promise from the Secretary of War that he shall have a place at Harpers ferry which he expects will be vacant in

<sup>2</sup> See footnote 6 to the letter of December 4, 1799.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel Dexter (1761-1816), of Boston, Harvard, 1781, Federalist representative (1793-1795) and Senator (1799-1800) from Massachusetts. Adams appointed him Secretary of War, May 13, 1800; and Secretary of the Treasury, January 1, 1801.

<sup>4</sup> See footnote 8 to the letter of June 28, 1789, and Adams, *Works*, vol. 9, pp. 45 and 164-5.

the Spring and that in the mean time he shall be employd where he is.<sup>5</sup>

I made Mrs. Brisler happy yesterday by your Letter containing the information that Mrs. Mears was better. She had burried her in her own mind, and when I went to tell her, she was so overcome expecting the news was fatal that she shook so I thought she would have gone into fits. No two sisters were ever fonder of each other. I hope Mrs. Mears will recover.

Inclosed is Genll. Lees oration.<sup>6</sup> It is a handsome performance. I will send you the pamphlet when it is out. We have charming weather. Adieu my dear Sister. I am going to take Mrs. [Samuel Allyne] Otis out to Ride. She has been very unwell with one of her old hoars colds & coughs which still hangs about her.<sup>7</sup>

Philadelphia, Janry 28, 1800

MY DEAR SISTER:

I yesterday received your Letter of the 19th. I think you have testified your proportion of Respect in a handsome manner to the Memory of the good and virtuous Washington. That he ought to live in our Memories, and be transmitted to posterity as a Character truly worthy Imitation is Right, but some Eulogyst[s] have ascribed to him solely, what was the joint effort & concert of Many. To no one Man in America, belongs the Epithet of *Saviour* of his Country. That Washingtons Character, when we take into view, his Education, the place of his Birth, and the various scenes in which he was call'd to act, exhibits a

<sup>5</sup> In spite of the declaration of John Adams to the contrary (see the letter of July 12, 1789), no one can accuse him of not having done his utmost to further the interests of his children and his relatives. Two Cranch cousins are referred to in this letter: William Cranch (1769-1855), the son of the sister of Mrs. John Adams, and Joseph Cranch, the son of the Reverend John Cranch, who died in England in 1746, the year that Richard and his sister, Mary Cranch, emigrated to America in the *Wilmington*, landing in Boston on November 13, 1746. This Joseph Cranch was given a post at West Point, New York, as early as 1790 (see the letters of April 3, 21, and 28, 1790). Ten years later he was using his influence to get a place at Harpers Ferry. His Cousin William, son of Richard (who was a close friend of John Adams), was a classmate of John Quincy Adams at Harvard. Having studied law, he entered the employment of James Greenleaf, the promoter of Washington, D.C., in 1794, and married Greenleaf's sister in 1795. Having failed to obtain the clerkship of the Supreme Court (see the letter of January 30, 1800), William Cranch was, in December, 1800, made one of the commissioners of Washington by John Adams. Two months later, March 3, 1801, Adams appointed him assistant judge of the Circuit Court of the District of Columbia, where he sat for the extraordinary term of fifty-four years. For a cool account of the career of William Cranch, see Clark, *Greenleaf and Law in the Federal City*, pp. 47-66. For a sketch of the Cranch family, see the *New-England Historical and Genealogical Register*, vol. 27, pp. 40-1: "Richard Cranch and His Family."

<sup>6</sup> See footnote 2 to the letter of December 22, 1799.

<sup>7</sup> The remaining third of the page is cut off.

most uncommon assemblage of Modesty, Moderation, Magninimity, fortitud [sic], perseverance and disinterestedness, will be most readily allowed, but at no time, did the fate of America rest upon the Breath of even a Washington, and those who assert these things, are Ignorant of the spirit of their countrymen, and whilst they strive to exalt one character, degrade that of their Country. These reflections have arisen in my mind from reading Mr. Paynes oration,<sup>1</sup> and a Mad Rant of Bombast in a Boston centinal of a Mr. Messenger.<sup>2</sup> Judge [George Richards] Minots oration is exempt from these reflections. [It is the cool mild and cancelled] Wise and judicious observations upon his Character are those only which will out live the badges of mourning. Simple Truth is his best his greatest Eulogy. She alone can render his Fame immortal.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Mr. Payne's oration" refers to the Reverend Thomas Paine's "An Eulogy on the Life of General George Washington. Written at the Request of the Citizens of Newburyport, and Delivered at the First Presbyterian Meeting-House in that town, January 2, 1800," the first paragraph of which follows:

Americans, The saviour of your country has obtained his last victory. Having reached the summit of human perfection, he has quitted the region of human glory. Conqueror of Time, he has triumphed over mortality; Legate of Heaven, he has returned with the tidings of his mission; Father of his People, he has ascended to advocate their cause in the bosom of his God. Solemn, "as it were a pause in nature," was his transit to eternity; thronged by the shades of heroes, his approach to the confines of bliss; pæaned by the song of angels, his journey beyond the stars!

*Eulogies and Orations on the Life and Death of General George Washington*, Boston, 1800, p. 55.

This Reverend Thomas Paine is not to be confused with "Tom" Paine (1737-1809), who did not return from France until October, 1802.

<sup>2</sup> Rosewell Messinger (1776-1844). See his *An Oration, Delivered at Old York on the Death of George Washington*, Charlestown, Massachusetts, 1800. Messinger's oration fills twelve pages, and contains twenty-three paragraphs. The portions quoted below will explain the contempt of Mrs. Adams:

The sun of the firmament is not darkened! The foundations of the earth do not tremble! Rocks have not fallen to dust! The mountains have not melted away! But the veil of liberty's temple is rent in twain. Her spotless high-priest hath retired to rest, through the portals of everlasting fame.

If our tongue were an angels it would falter; if our hearts were marble they would bleed; if our eyes were flint they would swell with tears; if the world were a Zembla it would melt and mourn, for Washington is no more . . .

O, Adams, thy grief must pierce the centre of thy heart. More momentous than ever are the cares that devolve upon thee. The prophet with whom thou hast walked hand and hand, is now departed. Receive the mantle of thy brother. If the waters of death threaten to flood our country, divide them asunder; bid them roll on the right and the left, till they are lost in the desert. God will make thee Columbia's second Saviour . . .

Though they said he [Washington] was a God, he died as a man: let us not murmur, but rather wonder, that his great and immortal soul should be contented to reside in a human form so long.

<sup>3</sup> George Richards Minot (1752-1802), of Boston, jurist and historian, delivered a speech on the occasion of the death of Washington, a whole edition of which sold in one day.

The News from France, is not that the Royall Standard is raised, but that a Triumvirate exists—Buonaparta is an advenferous Man. He is upon a Pinacle and with one foot only. We are yet all together in the dark respecting his views. Time must develope them. But one volcano burst[s] forth after an other, and what current the lava will take, we must wait to learn.<sup>4</sup>

I send you the report upon citizen Randolphs Letter. The Young Man is like to cost the Country more money in the debate by the time it will take up, than all his services will be worth tho he lived to the age of an Antideluvian. I have not a doubt that it was all a contrived buisness, by the Antifeds to raise a ferment to spread amongst their constituents. See says the fly upon the wheel, what a dust I raise.<sup>5</sup>

I have had Letters from Berlin and the pleasure of hearing that both Mr. & Mrs. [J. Q.] Adams were in good health. The latest date to 30 October.

When I wrote you last, I had had a sleepless Night. I then have no spirits to spair—I have had a turn of loosing my sleep, but am not otherways sick. I have for the last three Night[s] been very fortunate. Genll. Lincoln is about to return home. By him I send a little packet which I request my sister to accept. Pray desire Mrs. Porter to look to the Beds frequently. I shall have much to request your care and attention to, as soon as you get through the ordination.<sup>6</sup> If the spring is not more of winter than the winter itself, I hope the Building will go up early in

<sup>4</sup> On October 8, 1799, Bonaparte returned unannounced from Egypt to France, landing at Fréjus. Effecting an alliance with two of the Directors, Emanuel Joseph Siéyès (1748–1836) and Pierre Roger Ducos (1747–1816), and enlisting the aid of his only able brother, Lucien (1775–1840), who was President of the Council of Five Hundred, Bonaparte overthrew the Directory on November 9 (18 Brumaire), and broke up the Council of Five Hundred on the following day. The Corsican became First Consul for a term of ten years, assisted by two other Consuls, Jean Jacques Régis Cambacérès (1753–1824) and Charles François Lebrun (1739–1824), both of whom were appointed by him and had only consultative powers. A “popular” vote of December 24, 1799, “ratified” the establishment of this disastrous dictatorship.

<sup>5</sup> Hardly had John Randolph of Roanoke (1773–1833) got himself elected to the House of Representatives when, in advocating the reduction of the Army, he referred to the regular soldiers as “mercenaries” and “ragamuffins.” After a couple of officers had tried to insult him, he wrote President Adams, demanding that notice be taken of this attack on the independence of the legislature. His letters were transmitted to the House (Adams, *Works*, vol. 9, pp. 46 and 165), and they led to a heated debate. The story of the fly upon the wheel comes from Aesop. See Francis Bacon, *Essays*: “Of Vain Glory”; and La Fontaine, *Fables*, Book 7, Fable 9: “Le Coche et la Mouche.”

<sup>6</sup> See footnote 3 to the letter of December 4, 1799. The “ordination” refers to the Reverend Peter Whitney, who became the assistant to Anthony Wibird, minister in Quincy, and was ordained on Wednesday, February 5, 1800. Whitney’s father, pastor at Northboro, delivered the ordination sermon. *Massachusetts Mercury*, February 11, 1800.

March. The doors which must be cut through the Room & chamber will require the Removal of all the furniture, and the painting of Both, which they now want. The glaseing of the front I would have done one of the first things—and the alteration in the kitchin which I contemplated I should like to have done, but the floor must be coverd, or painted again afterwards. When the new building goes up the kitchin will be so darkned that I must let the closset into it & take off a partition where the dressers now are. I think it would be best to run the partition along so as to take the Chamber door, the cellar & parlour door into the entry. This will make the kitchin much warmer & screne the [*cancelled*] kitchin from the view of the parlour. But more of this soon.

Mrs. [William Stephens] Smith is very unwell with a voilent cold, Soar Throat, & some fever. She has kept her Chamber ever since Saturday. I hope she is getting better—Caroline [Amelia] is well. The rest of us in pretty good Health—Adieu my dear Sister. I will write to Mrs. [Moses] Black soon.

Yours

A. A[DAMS]

Philadelphia, Jan'ry 30, 1800

MY DEAR SISTER:

I have only time this morning to write you a line, to inclose a Letter from Mrs. Brisler to her sister. It is company day. New Hampshire, Conneticut & Massachusetts delegation[s] dine with us to day: I am sure we have never had half so many Congress Ladies since I first came here. They do not expect any accommodations at the new city for them, and they seem determined to take their turn now. We have had large companies twice every week besides the drawing Rooms; and I have not got near through. Next week the Court & Bar are to dine with us. I have no time for work, and not much for writing. But I have much better health than last winter, or I could not get along. Congress have been for five or six days employd in discussing Randolphs folly. It is not yet finishd.<sup>1</sup>

The weather is now very cold. I hope it will be more moderate for ordination. Pray let me know how Pheby is this winter, and whether she is well supplied.

Love, Regard[s] & respects to all Friends from your

Affectionate Sister

A. A[DAMS]

<sup>1</sup>John Randolph's letter to John Adams. See footnote 5 to the letter of January 28, 1800.

Philadelphia, Feb'y 12th, 1800

MY DEAR SISTER:

I did not write to you the last week. I supposed you must be much occupied by the ordination, which I hope is happily over and that I may congratulate you as well as myself upon again having a settled Pastor, in whose society I promise myself much pleasure, please God to continue my Life. I cannot entertain you with any thing new. I have the pleasure of Mrs. Cushings company frequently. She will call and see you upon her return and tell you how we are. I have sent by her a little Jockey for my Little Thomas B[oylston] A[dams] Norton, which I hope will fit him, and of which I request his mammas acceptance.<sup>1</sup> Since I wrote you I have received a Letter from Sister [Stephen] Peabody, who I was rejoiced to learn, was well and in pretty good spirits. I have also had a Letter from your son, who writes like the Man of sense he always was. I ventured to mention him myself to Judge Patterson, and Judge Cushing has said every thing proper upon the occasion. Judge Chase, Mr. T[homas] B[oylston] A[dams] went himself to, and ask'd him if he had been informd that Mr. Cranch was a candidate for the office of Clerk to the Supreme Court.<sup>2</sup> Yes Sir, I do. Do you know his Character Sir? Yes Sir, I do. Then Sir, I have nothing further to add. Judge Cushing mentiond to Judge Chase that Mr. Cranch was a Nephew of mine, to which he replied, that Mrs. Adams wish should be his Law. This tho very polite in the Judge, I am far from wishing should influence him or any of the other Gentlemen. If I did not think Mr. Cranch a person well qualified for the office, I would not recomend him if he was

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Boylston Adams Norton was the son of Elizabeth Cranch and the Reverend Jacob Norton, and the grandson of Mrs. Richard Cranch. A "jockey" coat was an overcoat, especially one of broadcloth, with wide sleeves.

<sup>2</sup> William Paterson (1745-1806), William Cushing (1732-1810), and Samuel Chase (1741-1811), associate justices of the Supreme Court of the United States. See footnote 2 to the letter of November 21, 1800. The first clerk of the Supreme Court was John Tucker (1753-1825), Harvard, 1774, who served for one year. Samuel Bayard (1767-1840), of Philadelphia, Princeton, 1784, was the second clerk. Bayard resigned his office in 1800 rather than go to Washington, D.C. Elias Boudinot Caldwell, of New Jersey, Princeton, 1796, became the third clerk of the Supreme Court, and died at Washington in May, 1825. This Caldwell was the son of the Reverend James Caldwell (1734-1781), pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Elizabeth, New Jersey, and a militant clergyman during the Revolution. Although a chaplain, Caldwell carried arms, and rewards were offered by the British for his capture. This "soldier parson" was shot and killed by an American sentry, who was subsequently tried and hanged for murder. Charles Warren, *The Supreme Court in United States History*, Boston, 1935, vol. 1, p. 158n.; John W. Barber and Henry Howe, *Historical Collections of the State of New Jersey*, New York, 1844, p. 169; and *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, vol. 50 (1917), p. 118.



my own son. To Judge Washington no application from [an]y one of the Family has been made.<sup>3</sup> He holds his appointment as Judge from the President, and I had some scruples upon that account whether in point of delicacy I ought to say any thing to him. Judge Cushing advised that Mr. Cranch should himself write to the Judges, and I wrote to him requesting him to do so, and yesterday just before the Court rose having finished their Buisness, Mr. Cranch's Letters arrived and Mr. T. B. A. deliverd them. There is an other candidate who has made considerable interest belonging to New Jersey, the state in which Judge Paterson lives; so that I presume Judge Paterson will be silent, if Mr. Cranch should be nominated. The Gentlemans name is Colwill [Caldwell], whose father fell in Battle in the American Revolution. He is said to be a Gentleman of Merrit. A Gentleman applied yesterday morning to Judge Cushing in his behalf. The Judge replied that he could not give any encouragement, because he was interested for an other Gentleman. To this the Gentleman who applied, said that he had heard that there was an application from a Carpenter in the city of Washington. The Judge replied that Solomon who built the Temple might be as well calld a carpenter. The Gentleman who would have his vote had received a liberal Education, was regularly Bred to the Law, and had been several years a practitioner, early settled in Washington, had a fair and honorable Character, and tho he wishd well to the other Gentleman, he could not give him his interest. Thus the matter now stands. The result I presume my next Letter will inform you of.<sup>4</sup>

I want to hear from you. It is a long time now since I had that pleasure. Remember me kindly to all Friends.

Your ever affectionate Sister

A. A[DAMS]

<sup>3</sup> Bushrod Washington (1762-1829), nephew of George Washington, was confirmed as associate justice of the Supreme Court on December 20, 1798.

<sup>4</sup> Elias Boudinot Caldwell, of New Jersey, was the successful applicant for this position, and became third clerk of the Supreme Court in 1800. The slur in calling William Cranch a "carpenter" arose from the fact that he was confused with his cousin, Joseph Cranch, who, through the influence of Secretary of War Henry Knox, was appointed, in 1790, a supervisor of the construction which the federal government was carrying on at West Point, New York. See the letter of April 21, 1790.

Philadelphia, Febry 27th, [1800]

MY DEAR SISTER:

I have not written to you since I received your Letter giving me an account of the ordination, the fatigues of which I should have been glad to have shared with you, and I could not but blame myself, that I did not write to request Mrs. Porter to have open'd our House, and Stables, and to have accomodated as many persons as they could. It is now happily over and I congratulate the Town in having made so wise, and as I think, judicious a choice. The President frequently expresses his satisfaction that we are once more a settled people not as for a long time past, sheep without a shepard. I hope we shall live in union and harmony. The next thing will be the marriage of Mr. Whitney, I presume. If it were proper to wish a Gentlemans happiness defer'd, I should like to be at Quincy when the Lady is introduced as our Madam. For the last fortnight we have had delightfull weather through the whole of it. Clear sun shine, cold enough to be pleasent without being urksome, the snow all melted, the Rivers open and the weeping willow, which is a great ornament to this City, putting on its first appearence of veg[et]ation, a yellow aspect, which changes to a beautifull Green in a few week's and is the first Harbinger of that Season, in which all nature is renovated. This appearence as I ride out brings to my view the few weeks longer which I have to remain here, and then I shall bid, very probably a final adieu to this City. There is something always melancholy, in the Idea of leaving a place for the last time. It is like burying a Friend. I could have wished that the period of the first Election might have closed in this city; It is a very unpleasent thing to break up all the establishments, and remove to a place so little at present, and probably for years to come, so ill calculated for the residence of such a Body as Congress. The houses which are built are so distant, the streets so miry, and the markets so ill supplied.

In my last I wrote you that Mr. [Samuel] Bayard, the present Clerk of the Court, intended resigning this session, but there is a revision of the judiciary system contemplated. It will soon be reported to the House. If it should pass, many alterations will take place. This I believe was the reason of Mr. Bayards determining not to resign at present.<sup>1</sup> You will see Judge Cushing soon, if not before this reaches you, and he will inform you more than I can. The Judge & Mrs. Cushing left here near a fortnight ago, and have had fine weather ever since. I trust they have improved it.

<sup>1</sup> See footnote 2 to the letter of February 12, 1800.

On Saturday the 22d [of February] I went to hear Major [William] Jackson deliver his oration.<sup>2</sup> It was a very handsome one, and much better delivered than I had any Idea he could perform—It is not yet printed, but when it is, I think it will not suffer by any comparison with any I have yet Seen. Two months have chiefly been appropriated to funeral honours to the memory of Gen<sup>l</sup>. Washington. I know not that in any modern Times, either Kings or Princess have received equal honors. History does not record any so deserving or so meritorious [of cancelled]—

Mrs. [William Stephens] Smith I expect will leave me in a week or ten days. I expect a visit from Mrs. [Joshua] Johnson & her son, the middle of next month. Mrs. Black I hope has received a Letter I wrote to her inclosing the certificate of Ann Halls baptism.<sup>3</sup> I fear she thought me unmindfull of it, but I was not. It was owing to the sickness of Dr. Green that I could not sooner obtain it.<sup>4</sup> My Letter must have reached her about the same time that a renewal of her request did me.

How are all our Neighbours and Friends? I have inquired once or twice concerning Pheby. I hope she is comfortable in her marriage and well provided for. We all send Love, respect &c to all our Friends. I want to know how your cold is, and whether Mr. Cranch's is better. I have great cause for thankfulness. I know not when I have past a winter with so little sickness, or a Febr'y without being confined upon the Birthday of Gen<sup>l</sup>. Washington. Three years ago, I was well enough upon that day to celebrate it in Boston, but it has generally been a month of sickness to me. Except the loss of sleep which I have several times experienced, I have had more Health than for many years. I hope it may be continued to me, for without Health Life has few enjoyments.

Adieu my dear Sister. I would desire you to remember me to Miss Gannet, with whose increasing years I hope and trust wisdom, Prudence, and every female virtue will grow and increase. Where much is given, much is required. This should impress her mind and influence

<sup>2</sup> William Jackson (1759-1828), soldier and secretary, was born in England and brought up in South Carolina. From 1788 to 1791 he served as aide-de-camp to George Washington. He formed a business partnership with William Bingham, and married (1795) Elizabeth Willing, of Philadelphia, daughter of Thomas Willing, the president of the Bank of North America. Jackson's "Eulogium on the Character of General Washington" will be found in *Eulogies and Orations on the Life and Death of General Washington*, pp. 243-60.

<sup>3</sup> See footnote 2 to the letter of January 5, 1798.

<sup>4</sup> Ashbel Green (1762-1848), eighth president of Princeton, was assistant and then minister of the Second Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia from 1787 to 1812. From 1792 to 1800 he was chaplain to the Congress.

her conduct. She will I trust receive this as the admonition of a Friend. Let her think what she owes to one of the kindest [&] tenderest of Parents, and she can never wander from the path of Rectitude.<sup>5</sup> Once more I bid you adieu assuring you of the

Love and affection of  
A. ADAMS

Philadelphia, March 5, 1800

MY DEAR SISTER:

I received your Letter of Febry 23 and was glad to learn that you were well, for from not hearing from you from the time of ordination I was fearfull that the fatigue had made you sick. We have now arrived to the 5th of March with a small quantity of snow upon the ground and the weather mild. With you I suppose there is much more. Congress might easily accomplish the buisness necessary for the benifit of the Nation, but I must say their is a most shamefull waste of time. The Antifeds have brought before the House the delivering up to Justice, Thomas Nash, which in strict conformity with the Treaty with G[reat] Britain was done.<sup>1</sup> The Anti party have by every subterfuge, mean art & declamation wasted the time of the House upon that subject more than a week, and I dare answer will keep the buisness more than a week more before them. The Jacobins are a very wicked unprincipeld set of Beings. This whole affair is brought up not from a Love of Justice, or apprehension that a fellow creature was unjustly punished, but merely to hold out to their Party that the President had Encroached upon the Judiciary, and assumed an influence which was unconstitutional. The

<sup>5</sup> Miss Gannett was the daughter of Caleb Gannett. See footnote 5 to the letter of March 5, 1800.

<sup>1</sup> In February, 1800, the House of Representatives, under the goading of John Randolph of Roanoke, wasted a lot of time and breath over the case of a seaman, Jonathan Robbins, alias Thomas Nash, who was in jail at Charleston, South Carolina. Robbins was accused of murder and piracy on H.M.S. *Hermione*, and Admiral Sir Hyde Parker had sent a cutter to Charleston to carry him back to the West Indies for trial. Robbins first "confessed himself to be an Irishman," and then declared that he was a citizen of Danbury, Connecticut. The selectmen of Danbury denied this, under oath. Thomas Bee, judge of the district court of the United States for South Carolina, refused to surrender Robbins to the British on his own authority. When the case was referred to Pickering and Adams, Robbins was given up, according to the terms of Jay's Treaty: See the Boston *Independent Chronicle and Universal Advertiser*, February 17-27, 1800. John Marshall was the chief, and successful, defender of the action of Adams in the House of Representatives. See the letter of March 15-18, 1800. The French spy who befriended Nash, or Robbins, and who advised him to swear that he was an American citizen, was hanged at Kingston, Jamaica: *J. Russell's Gazette*, February 27, 1800.

whole correspondence is before the public and every candid person must see, that the delivering the Rascal up, was in conformity to the Treaty which is the Law of the Land, and the President is sworn to see the Laws executed. But Electionering purposes are answered by the gloss put upon the transaction by the Jacobins, which is carefully retailed in all the democratic papers. The replies and confutation of their arguments are carefully concealed from the party whom these people wish to lead blind fold. I have not a doubt but their will be a majority in the House who will approve the conduct of the Executive. One or two more Elections will be quite sufficient I believe to convince this people that no engine can be more fatally employed than frequent popular Elections, to corrupt and destroy the morals of the people—3 years are now past, and we have enjoyed as much peace, quiet, Security and happiness as any people can boast of in the same period of time, much more than for the three years which preceded. Our National Character has risen in the public estimation, and the public confidence has in no ways been diminished. Faction has not been so turbulent nor malice so active. The Electionering campaign I presume will bring all their forces into action.

I send you an oration of Major [William] Jacksons, with which I think you will be pleased<sup>2</sup>—And now as you observe, I hope the good mans spirit may rest in quiet, for America has testified her gratitude & her Grief in the fullest manner, and I firmly believe with more sincerity than any people ever before felt for any Man—But when the collection of Sermons, Eulogiums, Poems &c are collected, more than two thirds of them will be found to have originated in N[ew] England. From thence, did he derive his chief aid in War, and his chief and principle support, in the administration of the Government. At a late festival in Kentucky, amongst a number of Jacobin toasts is one to the memory of Genl. Washington to the year 1779 [1787], and no longer, by which they mean to cast a slur upon the whole of his administration of the Government. But Hence, wretches, to your native dens—the bogs of Ireland, the dens of Scotland, and the outcasts of Britain.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See footnote 2 to the letter of February 27, 1800.

<sup>3</sup> The festival to which Mrs. Adams refers was a barbecue held by the Jeffersonians at Thomas Stephenson's Spring on the North Elkhorn, in Fayette County, Kentucky, "in order to celebrate the recent successes of our allies the French." Sixteen toasts were "drank," of which the fourth, the ninth, and the fourteenth probably annoyed John Adams and his wife:

"Thomas Jefferson; the pride of republicans, and terror of aristocrats; may he be soon raised to the seat, to which his unfortunate country has been too long in elevating

Mrs. [William Stephens] Smith and my little Caroline [Amelia Smith] left me yesterday to go to Scotch Plain's. I was very loth they should go, but could detain them no longer. I hope Dr. [Cotton] Tufts will send us his performance. I dare say it was a very judicious one.<sup>4</sup> I have written to the Dr. I hope the Building will go on with all speed. Mr. Porter, the Dr. writes, inclines to leave us this spring. I had rather they should remain untill the fall of the year, but if he determines to go, can you think of a man and woman to take their place untill the fall? I hope to return by the time their year expires, or that at all events they will stay untill I do.

Louissa is very well and desires me to present her duty to you. Remember me affectionatly to all my Friends. I see by the late papers that Mr. Gannet is married again.<sup>5</sup> I hope Miss Gannet will strive to obtain and preserve the regard of her [step-] Mother, whose Character stands high and who will do justice to the charge she has taken upon her, from what I have heard of her.

Adieu my dear Sister. My best regards to Brother Cranch, in which I am always joind by the President.

Ever your affectionate Sister

A. ADAMS

Philadelphia, March 15, 1800

MY DEAR SISTER:

I find the best time for writing, is to rise about an hour earlier than the rest of the family; go into the Presidents Room, and apply myself to my pen. Now the weather grows warmer I can do it. His Room in

him."

"The memory of Gen. Washington, may his illustrious actions and services be faithfully recorded down to the year 1787, but no farther."

"The President of the U. States; may he soon retire to Quincy, by general consent, accompanied by his 'Defence of the American Constitutions.'"

In commenting on this "barbacue," John Ward Fenno wrote: "I would not be thought to magnify dangers, or exaggerate alarms. If the whole of this drunken Republic of Kentucky had avowed the above infamous sentiments on this occasion (as indeed they have very often done) instead of a crew whom perhaps a single work house or a single Jail will contain, I should still view them as contemptible, in respect of numbers or specific force." *Gazette of the United States*, March 3, 1800, quoting the *Kentucky Gazette*, "printed at Lexington, by one Bradford, whether a member of our illustrious family, or not, we cannot determine."

<sup>4</sup> Cotton Tufts, *Oration at Weymouth, February 22, 1800, on the Death of George Washington*, Boston, 1800. See also, Franklin B. Hough, *Washingtoniana: or Memorials of the Death of George Washington . . . with a List of Tracts and Volumes Printed upon the Occasion*, Roxbury, Massachusetts, 1865.

<sup>5</sup> Caleb Gannett, Esq., was married to Ruth Stiles, "daughter of the late President Stiles," January 19, 1800. *Massachusetts Mercury*, January 24, 1800.

which I now write has three larg[e] windows to the South. The sun visits it with his earliest beams at the East window, and Cheers it the whole day in winter. All my keeping Rooms are North, but my forenoons are generally spent in my own Chamber tho a dark one, and I often think of my sun shine Cottage at Quincy.

March 18th, [1800]

I was calld from writing on the 15 by a summons below stairs, and have not been able to reassume my pen untill this morning. Yesterday the 17th I received your kind Letter of March 9th. I hope Mr. Cranch will be able to obtain the appointment he has so much at Heart, but I know not what will be the result of the judiciary Bill which is not yet reported to the House. Congress seem loth to enter upon buisness of the most consequence. Some are for postponing this Bill untill the next Sessions, which has already Cost much time, and labour of the Committe. They will find themselves much less agreeably situated the next session I presume, besides its being a short one. But they have spent much time, and I fear always will upon very trifling buisness. Jacky Randolph & Thomas Nash, or [Jonathan] Robbins, have occupied a whole Month.<sup>1</sup>— But whilst there is so great a disposition in the House to let the Jacobins through [throw] obsticales in the way of every measure usefull and beneficial to the public, and prate whole days, least it should be said that they were affraid to contend with them, much time must & will be waisted.

I do not regret that my Nephew is dissapointed, if so he is. I am sure the family connexion could never have proved happy, however amiable Ann was, or is. She will be better the wife of any other Man. I never thought it a judicious connexion. Oil & water might as well mix, as the Fathers harmonize. Then Boylstone always despiced the ignorance, selfishness & want of Breeding in Beals, how was it possible for him to respect or treat him, as a son ought to treat a Father? Many other things I could add why it was unequal. Ann had been Educated in a different stile from what she might expect to live. I shall wish her joy more cordially the wife of Mr. Prince if they like, or any other man they chuse. I never want any nearer relationship than that of Neighbour or [even though] I know there was a time I might have had it.<sup>2</sup>

I communicated to the President Mr. [Peter] Whitneys desire, and the President says Mr. Whitney shall have the House and that it shall

<sup>1</sup> See footnote 1 to the letter of March 5, 1800.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Adams refers to the projected marriage between Boylston Adams (born 1771), son of her husband's brother, Peter Boylston Adams, and Ann Beal (born 1774), daughter of Abijah and Ann (Canterbury) Beal, of Weymouth.

be put into decent repair. I have directions to write to Dr. Tufts upon the subject. The House is to be painted, the Garden fence new sit, and every proper repair made to render it decent & comfortable—But I am at a loss to know what to do with Mr. [J. Q.] Adams's Books. The furniture belonging to me, I can take away as soon as I can get Room to place it at home, but as the rest part of the House wants the most done to it, that may be accomplishd first. Mr. Brisler would have his furniture which remains there removed to Mr. Mears's. Mrs. Mears knows what it is. I heard from Mrs. [William Stephens] Smith yesterday. She says, as her happiness did not consist in the size of the House in which she lived, it is not essentially diminishd by Removing, from that where she has past the winter to a Log Hut, that her disposition is accommodating, that she has always found that she can support herself against the *Present*, but that in anticipating the future she has much more anxiety. She says there are 13 Hundred Men all in Huts, but so perfectly quiet both by Night and day that no Noise but that of the drum & fife is heard amongst them.

I intend to propose to her passing the summer at Quincy with me. I have not mentiond it to her. I am sorry for the [distresses *cancelled*] misfortunes of my Neighbours, particularly so for Dr. Phipps, whose situation must be very distressing, with a large young family.<sup>3</sup> Present me kindly to Mr. & Mrs. Greenleaf when you see them. Their Brother James [Greenleaf] is here; and has been to see us a number of time. I saw him yesterday walking with Miss Allyne, as I was going to return some visits. She is a beautifull figure, and with the assistance of a little Rouge, a beautifull face, which however I think she does not need. He appears as easy, and looks as happy, as tho neither care or sorrow ever approachd his Heart.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Phipps, son of Samuel and Eleanor (Gardner) Phipps, was born at Cambridge on March 15, 1737/8, and died at Quincy on April 4, 1817. He was graduated at Harvard College in 1757, became a physician at Quincy, and married (1761) Mary Brackett, daughter of James and Abigail (Belcher) Brackett. Phipps was a prominent citizen, and seems to have been connected first with the First Church, and later with the Episcopal Church in Braintree. His eighth child, a son named Samuel, was born on May 13, 1801. Apparently Dr. Phipps was one of the unfortunate persons from New England who lost money through the speculations of James Greenleaf. Personal information supplied by the Reverend Frederick L. Weis, of Lancaster, Massachusetts, author of *The Ancestors and Descendants of John Phipps, of Sherborn, 1924*.

<sup>4</sup> After being discharged from bankruptcy, and having divorced his Dutch wife, Antonia Cornelia Albertine Schotten, James Greenleaf married, April 26, 1800, Ann Penn Allen, daughter and heirress of James Allen, the founder of Allentown, Pennsylvania, who was the son of William Allen, Chief Justice of the Province of Pennsylvania. Greenleaf, *Genealogy of the Greenleaf Family*, Boston, 1896, pp. 217-8. For reproductions of portraits of the two wives of James Greenleaf, see Clark, *Greenleaf and Law in the Federal City*, pp. 87 and 201.



Tell Miss Hazel that she is in so good Hands that I cannot think she wants any advise of mine, as I believe her to be modest, diffident & tractable. It was owing to a different opinion that I offerd to an other an admonition. The Lay Preacher of Pensilvana who has publishd a peice in Fennos Gazzet of the last week thinks there are some Ladies in this city, who stand in need of admonition, & I fully agree with him. His text was, "In like Manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel." He observes that where the semblance of modesty is wanting, there is strong ground to presume the absence of the virtue itself. What shall we say then? Is there virtue in the woman who artfully seeks to display the rich luxuriance of natur's Charms, at the hazard and expence of sporting with all claim to Chaste appearance?<sup>5</sup>

The stile of dress which the preacher attacks is really an outrage upon all decency. I will describe it as it has appeard even at the drawing Room—A sattin peticoat of certainly not more than three breadths gored at the top, nothing beneath but a chemise. Over this thin coat, a Muslin sometimes, sometimes a crape made so strait before as perfectly to show the whole form. The arm naked almost to the shoulder and without stays or Bodice. A tight girdle round the waist, and the "rich Luxuriance of natur's Charms" without a hankerchief fully displayd.

<sup>5</sup> The essay to which Mrs. Adams refers appeared in Fenno's *Gazette* for Saturday, March 15, 1800, and occupied a column and a half. In it "The Lay Preacher of Pennsylvania" denounces the notorious style of female dress under the Directory, as well as the habit of using rouge. The author took as his text part of verses 9 and 10 of the second chapter of the *First Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy*:

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."

Two samples will suffice to give the drift of this denunciation:

"It is a subject of no small astonishment, that modes and fashions should be so readily and indiscriminately adopted, without regard to their origin or use. A despicable courtesan, who commands the gallantries of a vitiated capital, is often known to lead one half the female world by her fantastic whimsies. Generated by the artifice or fancy of a wanton, to subserve the views of sensual conquest, a *new fashion* speedily obtains extensive currency, is transported to a distant land, and by a blind adoption, ensured by novelty, degrades the form and comeliness [*sic*] of virtue. It cannot but create surprise, that 'we are such stuff,' as to pride ourselves in habiliments, whose only excellence is recency of invention, and whose origin is from no higher source than a harlot's brain.

"... The mischiefs of *face painting* have been amply experienced, and its evil consequences have been repeatedly detailed, but the custom extends with an alarming progress. Still do the dupes of fashion continue this unseemly practice, by which the rosy cheek of health is wasted to the paleness of disease; and nature's fairest red is defiled or counterfeited, by a daubed covering of *rouge*. . . . And the world at once sets down a *painted woman* either as a hag, who thus seeks to conceal her deformity, or as a fool, sporting with real charms and sacrificing a rich possession."

The face, a la mode de Paris, Red as a Brick hearth. When this Lady has been led up to make her curtzey, which she does most gracefully, it is true, every Eye in the Room has been fixd upon her her [*sic*], and you might litterally see through her. But in this stile of dress, she has danced nor regarded the splitting out of her scanty coat, upon the occasion. I askd a young Gentleman, if Miss. — was at the dance last Evening. The replie was: yes, most wickedly. To do justice to the other Ladies, I cannot accuse them of such departures from female decorum, but they most of them wear their Cloaths too scant upon the body and too full upon the Bosom for my fancy. Not content with the *show which* nature bestows, they borrow from art, and litterally look like Nursing Mothers. To disguise the strait appearence of the Gowns before, those Aprons, which you say look like fig leaves, were adopted. The Mother of the Lady described & sister, being fine women and in the first Rank, are leaders of the fashion, but they show more of the [bosom] than the decent Matron, or the modest woman.<sup>6</sup>

I am glad to learn that Sister [Elizabeth] Peabody has recoverd her spirits. She must not be too hard upon Betsy nor forget that she herself was once young, and possesst a heart as liable to impressions, and as susceptible of the tender passions as any body I can recollect. Betsy has a heridatary spice of the Romantic in her constitution. Guide her right. Her heart is good. A cold youth, would be a frozen Age. If she has more pangs in concequence of her disposition she has more pleasures.<sup>7</sup> Adieu my dear Sister.

I must write to Dr. Tufts before the post goes out.

Affectionatly your Sister

A. A[DAMS]

[Philadelphia], March 22, 1800

MY DEAR SISTER:

I received your Letter yesterday. I know from what I saw and heard whilst I was at home that there was pains taken to make Mr. & Mrs. Porter uneasy, and that they were too apt to listen to stories which were

<sup>6</sup> Anne Willing, that is, Mrs. William Bingham, of "The Mansion House," Philadelphia, and her two daughters, Anne, who married Alexander Baring, of the celebrated family of London bankers, and Maria Matilda, divorced wife of the Comte de Tilly.

<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth Smith, one of the daughters of William Smith, the brother of Abigail Adams, Mrs. Cranch, and Mrs. Peabody (formerly Mrs. Shaw). Mrs. Peabody eked out the slender emoluments of her ministerial husband by taking college students and young relatives as paying guests.

in themselves Idle, and raised from Envy. Many would be glad to get into their hands such a charge as is left with Mr. & Mrs. Porter, who would not be so honest in their care and attention of our Property. I feel a safety in leaving my things to their care, because as I know it is their duty faithfully to fulfill the trust. I consider them conscientious people, and having a principle of honesty, that they will not betray the confidence reposed in them. I would have you say to them that I had much rather they should continue upon the place than make the exchange for any other persons, and the President would not have them go this season. If I remain through the winter at Quincy, I may not think it necessary to continue a Family through the winter, but in that case, I have mentioned my terms for Mr. Porter, which I think generous ones. As to any persons who may offer, I do not know any whom I should like. I cannot think of taking any person with Children, or who may be like to have any. I hope every exertion will be made by Mr. Bates to get forward the building, that it may be completed by the last of May at furthest.

I intended giving Mrs. Porter a Muff this winter. If she has not one, will you get one for her of about four dollars value and give it her in my Name. If Mr. Cary should come with flax be so good as to get me 30 weight. I inclose ten dollars for these purposes.

We have had two days severe rain. I hope it has not been snow with you. I must depend upon you to visit our House and with Mrs. Porter see the things removed, when the Carpenters begin to work; Mrs. Porter will want help. I understand Zube is with Mrs. Tufts. I presume it is only conditionally, for I expressly engaged her to return to me in the spring.

Do you know whether Mrs. Brigs, who lived with Mrs. Black, would go out again & what she is for a Cook? I must get a woman somewhere who will undertake that business. Do be upon the inquiry for me. I shall not encumber myself with Frank & family, nor shall I have more than three or four men servants this season.

Adieu my dear Sister. Send the inclosed Letter to [the *cancelled*] Dr. Tufts as soon as you can. With Love to you all, I am, my dear Sister,

Your affectionate

A. ADAMS

Philadelphia, April 7th, 1800

MY DEAR SISTER:

Yesterday Mr. Johnson and his Mamma [Mrs. Joshua Johnson] arrived here, in good Health. By her I heard from Mr. & Mrs. Cranch. She, poor thing, has had a mishap. I rather think it good than ill luck however, for it is sad slavery to have children as fast as she has. She has recoverd tho she is thin & weak. Your son is rising, Rising in his own estimation, which was the place where he most wanted it. He plead a cause, spoke three hours against Mr. Mason & an other Gentleman, and obtaind his cause.<sup>1</sup> He gaind much applause & Reputation, I am informd. Having broken the Ice, I hope he will gain courage and be yet successfull and prosperous. He has been born down by his circumstances, & deprest beyond measure. He is now rising above them, I hope.

The weather is remarkable fine. The verdure of the feilds and the bursting of the Buds, with the beautifull foilage [*sic*] of the weeping willow, which you have often heard me admire and which is the first tree to vegitate in the spring, all remind me of Quincy, my building, my Garden, &c. I would have gardning commence upon a large scale that we may be provided with vegatables sufficient for a large family. I know we want a skilfull gardner. Peas I would have put in & of the sort which Stutson [Stetson] procured of Major Millar. I am informd here of what is said to be a fact, that the Peas which are first planted bear much the longest and best, taking deeper Root into the Ground. I must request you to see Mr. Porter and desire him to have due attention by Stutson to all the vines &c which George planted last year.

I am dissappointed in not getting a Letter from you this morning. Monday usually brought me one. You will have received several from me all requesting your attention to something or other for me. I shall want you to see Bates & hurry him as much as possible. The painting must be done in the Room & chamber this Month. The closset in the keeping parlour wants it too, the floor I mean.

Major Tousard, the Gentleman you have seen with one Arm, requested me the other day to inquire if there was any Family in Quincy where Mrs. Tousard could be Boarded. He is going to superintend the fortifications at fort Independance, and wants to have Mrs. Tousard near him, where he can occasionally be with her. I thought of Capt. James Brackets. She is a pretty little woman, and received here into

<sup>1</sup> Probably Jonathan Mason, Jr., of Boston, who was appointed Senator from Massachusetts in the autumn of 1800. Mr. Mason went to Washington, D.C., as the legal representative of certain creditors of James Greenleaf in his disastrous speculations in real estate.

the first circles. She is an American, has no Family. He is much of a Gentleman. Will you inquire & write me by the first opportunity.<sup>2</sup>

I must close, not having more time this morning than to assure you of

My sincere affection

A. ADAMS

Philadelphia, April 15, 1800

MY DEAR SISTER:

I received a few lines from you yesterday in reple to Mr. Bates queries. I would have the Room above finishd off the same size with the lower Room, the North clossets to remain in the Room and chamber, the stairs to be one flight, a portico with a flat Top which I would have leaded, and a smilar [*sic*] one built over the front door of the House, the two trees cut down. But I do not wish to have the window to open to the floor, because the window in the other entry does not, and cannot easily be made to, and I wish to preserve as much uniformity in appearance as possible. The fence in front will be made to conform with the other, the side fence I would not have at present removed: I wish to have the length & Breadth of the Hearths as soon as may be, intending to get Marble cut for them as well as for the sides and front of the the chimney without. I would have a chimney made in the upper Chamber or Garret, windows to the North as well as South & 2 upon the side of the chimney if they can be admitted, and the chamber made as convenient & handsome as it will admit.

I hope workman [*sic*] will be employd so as to get along as fast as possible. I shall have many a schooling for the sound of the hammer &c and for not having the buisness finished sooner than I fear it will be accomplishd—the painting in the old part I hope will be done directly.

Mrs. Porter must have help. If Zuby chuses to stay & Mrs. [Cotton] Tufts to keep her, I certainly will not say a word. Mrs. Porter must look out & get other help—Mrs. [Joshua] Johnson desires to be remembered. I must send this directly to the post or miss it.

Yours

A. ADAMS

I am very well & sleep soundly—when I am not vexed.

<sup>2</sup> Anne Louis de Tousard (1749–1817), soldier, was born in Paris and served in America as an aide to Lafayette. In Santo Domingo, in 1788, Tousard married Maria Francisca Regina (Joubert) St. Martin, widow of a rich planter. In 1793 Tousard joined his wife and children in the United States, where his wife died in July, 1794. In 1795 he married Anna Maria Geddes. Reinstated in the United States Army, he became a colonel, and superintended the building of fortifications at West Point, New York; Newport, Rhode Island; and Fort Independence, Boston.

Philadelphia, April 17th, 1800

MY DEAR SISTER:

Inclosed is a Letter for the Doctor [Cotton Tufts]. As the contents are valuable you will be so kind as to deliver it yourself, and give me notice that you have received it and done so by the first post.

I shall want to hear very often from you and to know how our affairs progress. I am most anxious about the painting and having the Rooms of the old House in order. Mrs. Porter must have help. She will have such a family that she cannot do without. I would have Mrs. Burrel have some pots to lay me down some more butter. She has some which I desired her to put up for me last fall, but we are an Army of ourselves, and shall want a good deal. I am affraid I may not be in season to provide that article.

Please to tell Mrs. Porter that I have got a new Coachman and that James will not be with us this summer. I think I have a decent, civil, sober Man, and a Native American—A Cook I shall want, and she must be a woman. I will have no more men cooks. Richard has just got through the small pox, which he has had so favorable as to keep him but three days from his buisness.

We are all well. Congress think of rising by the middle of May. Our furniture must then all be packd and sent to the Federal city—but I mean to get out of the way of that.

Affectionatly your Sister  
ABIGAIL ADAMS

Philadelphia, April 24th, 1800

MY DEAR SISTER:

It is with great pleasure, my dear Sister, that I can say to you, your son has recoverd from a dangerous complaint, which threw us all here into great distress and anxiety upon his account. He returnd from Court sick. It proved to be a Billious Cholic. Mr. [Joshua] Johnson wrote Mrs. Johnson that he had been to see him, but that he was so ill that he could not be seen. The Children too were all sick, and she poor creature just recovering from a late illness so that it was a House of distress. You may be sure what we all sufferd untill the pleasing news of his restoration reachd us. I wrote to her, but have not yet received an answer. Mr. [James] Greenleaf also wrote & waitd only to hear to have sit off to her, if Mr. [William] Cranchs illness had required him. When I wrote last to you, I dared not hint the subject to you. To [be] so far distant and know that a dear child is ill, and that we cannot render any

aid to them is painfull in the extreem. Mrs. Johnson says he often rides late at Night in order to get back to his family. This he should avoid. I know his last years low spirits was in some measure occasiond by a slow aguish intermitting. He has lately obtaind a cause of considerable concequence in which he spoke near two hours, and did himself much honour. Mr. Mason too his opponent.<sup>1</sup> He will do very well if he will but think himself the most sensible & capable Man with whom he is acquainted. I think I can be reconciled to go to the city [Washington], if I can aid and serve him by any means. He has been cramped, hurt & wounded by his situation. Mrs. Johnson says Col. Forrest has been a very sincere Friend to him.<sup>2</sup>

April 26th, [1800]

Since writing the above I have heard twice from Washington. Mr. [James] Greenleaf, who lodges at the next door, sent me in a Letter to read from his sister. She writes Mr. Cranch had been very ill but was then so much recoverd as to have gone again to Court to finish his buisness there. Yesterday Mr. G[reenlea]f informd me that he had a Letter from Eliot who wrote him that Mr. Cranch was quite recoverd.

Mrs. [Joshua] Johnson is still with me. She will return next week, when I shall seriously sit about getting away. My last drawing Room is notified for the 2d of May. On thursday we had 28 young or rather unmarried Ladies and Gentlemen to dine with us. They were from Families with which our young people have been most intimate, and who had shewn them many attentions & civilities. Just before I rose from table, Thomas [Boylston Adams] came round to me and whisperd me, have you any objection to my having a dance this Evening? None in the world, provided it comes thus accidental. The company soon came up to the drawing Room to Tea, and in an hours time, the tables were removed, the lights light & the Room all in order. At 8 the dancing commenced. At 12, it finishd. More pleasure, ease and enjoyment I have rarely witnessd. The President went down about an hour & then retired. I tarried it out, but was obliged to go to Bed at 8 oclock last night in concequence. Several of the company declared that they should always remember the Evening as one of the pleasesst of their lives— Amongst the company was Miss B. M. with manners perfectly affable, polite and agreeable, without affectation, or any haughtyness of demeanour, but really fassinating. I could not but lament, that the un-

<sup>1</sup> See footnote 1 to the letter of April 7, 1800.

<sup>2</sup> Possibly Uriah Forrest, with whom John Adams was acquainted as early as 1797. See Adams, *Works*, vol. 8, p. 546.

coverd bosom should display, what ought to have been veild, or that the well turnd, and finely proportiond form, should not have been less conspicuous in the dance, from the thin drapery which coverd it.<sup>3</sup> I wishd that more had been left to the imagination, and less to the Eye. She dances elegantly. "Grace was in all her steps."<sup>4</sup> She is not yet 17, and tho she cannot be said to have regular features, she has fine teeth, and Eyes, and the winning graces, far superiour to inanimate symetry: I never could endure a clod, yet it has been my lot—to have met *with them*. In the first instanc[e] Education and example may do allmost any thing. In the last, who can make an impression. But wither runs my pen?

I must stop it to talk about domestic affairs. Has Mrs. Porter got any help? And do you know where I can get a steady body? A cook is of the most consequence. I must not have one who will be put out of humour by company comeing in unexpectedly. She must be willing upon washing & Ironing days to assist in the after part of the day to fold cloaths & to help Iron if necessary, to keep every thing clean and neat in her department. She will be assisted when necessary. If Mrs. Briggs will comply with these terms, and an other, which is indispensable, to have no concern or interference with Mrs. Porters Family, I shall like to have you engage her for me; With respect to the building, will you tell Mr. Bates that I think there ought to be a portico over the back entry door as well as front. It will serve to keep off the Rains & cold in winter—I am quite impatient to get a Letter from you—We have had such fine weather that I should suppose our people may go on rapidly. I left word for Mr. Beal to paint the floor of the chamber over the wash house & the stairs. If it was not done in the fall, I would have it done as soon as the Painters come. And pray, my Sister, tell them to lay out for Garden enough. Peas had best be bought for seed beside those which we have. I inclose you ten dollors to lay out such part as is necessary for

<sup>3</sup> "Miss B. M." was Betsy, or Elizabeth Mason, one of the five daughters and seven children of Jonathan Mason, Jr. (1756-1831), United States Senator from Massachusetts (1800-1803), and close friend and business associate of Harrison Gray Otis. Mason made a fortune in Boston real estate, and all his five daughters married well. Elizabeth became the wife of Samuel Dunn Parker on December 12, 1807. Her sisters, Susan, Anna, Miriam, and Mary, became Mrs. J. Collins Warren, Mrs. Patrick Grant, Mrs. David Sears, and Mrs. Samuel Parkman. See *Columbian Centinel*, November 5, 1831; Robert Grant, *Four-score: An Autobiography*, Boston and New York, 1934; *Boston Marriages: 1752-1809*, Boston, 1903, p. 266; and Abner Forbes, *Our First Men: A Calendar of Wealth, Fashion and Gentility . . .*, Boston, 1846, p. 34.

<sup>4</sup> Grace was in all her steps, Heav'n in her Eye,  
In every gesture dignitie and love.

*Paradise Lost*, Book 8, lines 488-9.



the Garden. Do not let my flowers be neglected. Pray, if you can, get me some sturston seed, double Larks spur and the Marble perue.<sup>5</sup>

Mr. Gore is here just arrived from England.<sup>6</sup> Our Envoys were not arrived at Paris when he le[ft] England. They were hastning on. Great Britain as surly as John Bull, tho he dare not Growl loud, hating our Prosperity most cordially, and swelling to see our Navy rising in power and respectability. We have quite as much to Gaurd against from that quarter, as from the Great nation [France].

Adieu my dear Sister. Let me hear from you as soon as you can.

Affectionatly yours

A. ADAMS

Philadelphia, [May 3d, 1800]

MY DEAR SISTER:

I think you have been exercised in deeds of Charity to that poor, forlorn Man who would once have said, is thy Servant a dog, that he should become a living prey to worms, or what is worse?<sup>1</sup> He is a most striking instance of Indolence, and having no stimulous to action? none of those tender endearing ties of wife, child, sister, or Brother, Indolence Created first an apathy, and apathy Crept on untill all that was estimable and praise worthy in Man, was sunk into torpor, like waters that stagnate when they cease to flow. [The very *cancelled*] It ought to be a warning to every man not to contract habits of sloth, and inaction, to consider that no Man liveth for himself. Mr. [Anthony] Wibird is punished in this Life, not for sins of commission but of omission. Talents have been committed to him, which from the same source of indo-

<sup>5</sup> Marvel of Peru, one of the popular names for *mirabilis jalapa*, commonly called "four o'clocks." See Miller, *Gardeners Dictionary*, Eighth Edition, London, 1768, and E.L.D. Seymour, *The Garden Encyclopedia*, New York, 1936, p. 782.

<sup>6</sup> Christopher Gore (1758-1827). He was graduated from Harvard in 1776, was appointed United States district attorney in 1789, and a commissioner under Jay's Treaty in 1796. Rufus King left him as *chargé d'affaires* in London in 1803. Gore was Governor of Massachusetts (1809-1810) and United States Senator (1814-1817). He was a Fellow of Harvard, and president of the Massachusetts Historical Society (1806-1818). Gore Hall, the Harvard College Library from 1841 to 1912, was named for him. See 3 *Coll. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, vol. 3, pp. 191-204. Oddly enough, no life of Gore is to be found in the great *Dictionary of American Biography*, nor was this oversight corrected in the first Supplement.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Adams seems to have made a conflation of two kings—Hazael, of the Old Testament, and Herod, of the New.

"And Hazael said, But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, The Lord hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria." 2 *Kings*, VIII, 13.

"And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him [Herod], because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost." *Acts*, XII, 23.

lence, have not been improved to the best use and advantage. For the Good he has done, may the Lord reward him, and for what he has neglected to do, pardon him. We all have much to be forgiven, and as we hope for mercy, so may we extend it to others.

But to quit moralizing—Last Eveng was my Last Drawing Room. Both Rooms were so crowded as to render the Air very oppressive. It was judged that about 200 Gentlemen & Ladies were present: We got through, some what fatigued you may easily suppose, but I got sleep, which I did not expect, and to day feel bright enough to dine between 20 & thirty persons. On thursday next will be the last dinner of a formal nature. Mrs. [Joshua] Johnson & son leave me on Monday. Mr. Cranch and family were well this week. I heard from him.—Yesterday I sent some Trunks on Board a vessel with my Hearths and Jams. When they arrive and are to be put up, I will thank Mr. [Richard] Cranch to be present with his advice. I would have the chimneys made to conform to them. I am much affraid of having the Chimneys contracted too small, which in a Room so large would look bad. I have mentioend to the Doctor [Cotton Tufts] the method in which I am told the Hearths & fronts must be put up. I will thank you when the Rooms new painted, are quite dry to have the furniture replaced. I expect to leave here the week after next. It will bring it near the last of May before I can get home, so that I hope there will be time enough for the paint to dry.

I will thankfully accept Mr. Blacks offer for Mr. [J. Q.] Adams's Books.

Congress persist in saying they shall rise the week after next. The weather is fine indeed, as growing and Luxurient a season as I ever knew. With Love regards &c

Affectionatly your Sister

A. ADAMS

Love to Mrs. Norton & thanks for her Letter.

[Philadelphia, May 5th, 1800]

MY DEAR SISTER:

After I had closed my Letter yesterday, I received yours of the 28th. The Garden seeds are in a small wooden Box in the garret Chamber over the best Chamber, made for the purpose of securing them from the mice. The Box is lockd and Mrs. Porter has the key, tho she may have forgotten it. It is a long Box unpainted.

I should like much to have a passage to the kitchin from the entry; My intention was to have a closset taken of where the dressers now are, & to have taken in the other closset into the kitchin. I care very little about the North window, which must be darkned by the other building, but as you observe a window may be made opposite. The cellar door might be removed if necessary, and my Liquors were removed, but that is not practicable at Present. If Mr. Cranch, Dr. Tufts or Mr. Bates can contrive such a communication, it would be very desirable.

Major Tousard was with Mrs. Tousard at the drawing Room, and he inquired of Louissa if there was any Prospect of procuring Lodgings. She is a little tight looking *fashionable* Native America, made french by her marriage. She is pretty & much younger than he is. She is a second wife, has not any children.<sup>1</sup>

You need not write to me after the present week. It is my present intention to leave here some time next week. I will give you notice—My Coachman is a stranger to the Roads. Richard I shall take with me—Mrs. [William Stephens] Smith goes on fryday to N[ew] York. I wish it was so, that we could be in company.

I shall have a very buisy week the next; It is the last time that I shall reside in this city, and as present appearences indicate, the last time I shall visit it; The people are led blind fold by those who will ride them without saddle, but well curbed and bitted. It is generally supposed that N[ew] York would be the balance in the [scaile, scale, *cancelled*] skaill, scaill, (is it right now? it does not look so). N[ew] York by an effort to bring into their assembly antifederal Men, will make also an antifederal ticket for President; and this will give all the power sought by that Party, which at the sacrifice of all that Good men hold dear and sacred, they are determined upon—To this purpose was Randolph[?]s Letter, Livingstones Resolutions, and Coopers libels—with all the host of Callenders lies.<sup>2</sup>—Much animosity is springing up between South & North & East;

<sup>1</sup> See footnote 2 to the letter of April 7, 1800.

<sup>2</sup> For Randolph's letter, see footnote 5 to the letter of January 28, 1800. Edward Livingston (1764-1836), while a member of the House of Representatives from New York in 1795, introduced a resolution calling for all the papers from the President concerning Jay's Treaty with England. Livingston settled in New Orleans in 1804. For Thomas Cooper, see footnote 3 to the letter of November 1-3, 1799, and footnote 2 to the letter of November 26, 1799. James Thomson Callender (1758-1803), political writer, was born in Scotland, and settled in Pennsylvania in 1796. His *History of the United States for 1796* forced Hamilton publicly to confess his adultery with the so-called Mrs. James W. Reynolds. Because of his notorious pamphlet, *The Prospect before Us*, 1800, containing criticism of John Adams, Callender was tried under the Sedition Law in May and June of that year, and fined two hundred dollars and sentenced to nine months' imprisonment. By 1802, Callender was attacking the private life of Thomas Jefferson.

A whole year we shall hear nothing else, but abuse and scandal, enough to ruin & corrupt the minds and morals of the best people in the world. Out of all this will arise, something which tho we may be no more, our Children may live to Rue—I hope we may be preserved from confusion, but it is much to be dreaded. Adieu, my dear Sister,

Affectionatly yours

A. ADAMS

Norwalk, State of Conneticut,  
Monday, 26 May, 1800

MY DEAR SISTER:

Detained here by a cold North east rain, I write to inform you I am thus far on my journey to Quincy 100 [and] 44 miles from Philadelphia, which I left this day week in the afternoon; I tarried one day in N[ew] York and have taken Little Susan [Adams] on with me. I went to the incampment upon Scotch Plains [New Jersey] and lodged one night in the Col's Log House, which I found quite a comfortable habitation. Mrs. Smith was there, tho she soon must quit it, as the Army is disbanded. I should have taken her with me, but she was not quite ready. I brought Caroline [Amelia Smith] on to her Grandmamma [Margaret (Stephens)] Smiths. She has taken a House at Newark in the Jersies. The Col. [William Stephens Smith] talks of going up with his Brother to the Miami. In that case Mrs. [Abigail (Adams)] Smith and Caroline will spend the summer with me, I was present at the Review of the Troops by Gen[er]al Hamilton, who had come on for the purpose.<sup>1</sup> They did great honor to their officers and to themselves. The Col. has been the Principle hand in forming and disciplining them. They need not be ashamed of appearing before regular troops. The officers & men Respect and Love him, and it is with much pain that they seperate. There is a very general feeling exprest for Col. Smiths situation, and a wish that he might receive some appointment. This is a very delicate subject. I hope however that he will get into some buisness. You may be sure that I have my feelings on this subject, and that they are not of the most consolatory kind. Every soul knows its own bitterness. I wish I had no other source of sorrow than that which I have just named—

<sup>1</sup> At the time of the danger of war with France, and following the passage of a law for raising a provisional army, Hamilton, at the suggestion of Washington, was appointed Inspector-General, with the rank of Major-General, by John Adams. He was commissioned July 25, 1798, after a long wrangle over precedence. See footnote 2 to the letter of July 17, 1798.

My mind is not in the most cheerfull state. Trials of various kinds seem to be reserved for our gray Hairs, for our declining years. Shall I receive good and not evil? I will not forget the blessings which sweeten Life. One of those is the prospect I have before me of meeting my dear sister soon, I hope in health and spirits. A strong immagination is said to be a refuge from sorrow, and a kindly solace for a feeling Heart. Upon this principle it was that Pope founded his observation, that "hope springs eternal in the human breast."<sup>2</sup>

My intention was to reach Home on fryday next [May 30], but the Election Storm as we term it with us, may continue and prevent my making the progress I hope to. I will request you to have the House open and aired, the Beds shook up. If there was time and a fine day, I should like to have them sun'd, as they have not been slept in for a long time. I have not heard from Philadelphia but once since I left it. I do not yet know whether the President has left it. I have heard of so many lies and falshoods propagated to answer electioneering purposes since I left Philadelphia and for the last three weeks that I was there, that I am disgusted with the world, and the chief of its inhabitants do not appear worth the trouble and pains they cost to save them from destruction— You see I am in an ill humour. When the rain subsides and the sun shines, it will dispell some of the gloom which hangs heavey at my heart. I heard a sermon yesterday upon the subject of Humility. I believe I do not yet possess enough of that negative quality to make me believe that I deserve all that can be inflicted upon me by the tongues of falshood— I must share in what is said reproachfull or malicious of my better half— yet I know his measures are all meant to promote the best interest of his Country—Sure I have enough of public and Private anxiety to humble a prouder Heart than mine. Adieu, my dear Sister, and believe me ever

Your affectionate Sister

[ABIGAIL ADAMS]<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Hope springs eternal in the human breast;  
Man never is, but always to be blessed.

*An Essay on Man*: Epistle I, lines 95-6.

<sup>3</sup> The gap of five months which follows is explained by Mrs. Adams's residence in Quincy. John Adams arrived in the District of Columbia on June 3, 1800. *Georgetown Centinel of Liberty*, June 6, 1800. See the following letter.

New Haven, Sunday, 2d Nov'br, [1800]

MY DEAR SISTER:

You will forgive me, my dear Sister, that I spared both you and myself the pain of a formal leave, and that I left you without bidding you an adieu. I never was so divided between duty, and affection, the desire I had to remain with you, and the necessity I was under to commence a long and tedious journey at this late season of the year. My Heart was rent with the distress situation of yourself and family; I could not be with you as I wished. I saw Mrs. [Moses] Black, and requested of her sisterly kindness and attention. I have no doubt of the fulfillment of her kind promise. To the great Physician both of body and soul I committed you and yours, and sit out with an anxious mind and heavy Heart. I reachd this place last Evening, and as usual put up at my old quarters, Mrs. Smiths, where I shall remain this day.<sup>1</sup> We got on without any accident and had a fair week for travelling. The weather to day is rainy, but promises to clear up. By Wednesday [November 5] I hope to reach New York and there to hear from you as my good Brother promised I should. The President left Philadelphia for Washington the day I left Quincy.<sup>2</sup>

Mrs. Smith desires to be affectionately rememberd to you. With Love to Mrs. Greenleaf and Norton I am

Your affectionate Sister

A. ADAMS

Philadelphia, Novbr. 10, 1800

MY DEAR SISTER:

I arrived in this City last Evening & came to the old House now occupied by Francis as a Hotel. Tho the furniture and arrangement of

<sup>1</sup> Probably Mrs. Margaret (Stephens) Smith, widow of John Smith, and mother of Colonel William Stephens Smith.

<sup>2</sup> President Adams left Philadelphia on May 27, 1800, accompanied by his secretary and nephew by marriage, William Smith Shaw. In a carriage drawn by four horses, he proceeded to Georgetown by way of Lancaster and York, Pennsylvania, and Frederick, Maryland. On June 3, 1800, he entered the District of Columbia, and was escorted to the Union Tavern, where he stayed over night. The next day he crossed the Rock Creek Bridge into Washington, inspected the White House and the Treasury Building, and put up at Tunnicliff's Hotel. Tristram Dalton made the speech of welcome in the capitol building on June 5, after which Adams dined with Joshua Johnson, the father of the wife of John Quincy Adams. On June 9, Adams went to "Mount Vernon" to call on the widow of Washington, and spent the next day there. On June 13 he left Washington for Quincy, by way of Baltimore. For full details of Adams's visit, see Bryan, *History of the National Capital*, vol. 1, pp. 347-50.

the House is changed I feel more at home here than I should any where else in the city, and when sitting with my son [Thomas Boylston Adams] & other friends who call to see me, I can scarcely persuade myself, that tomorrow I must quit it, for an unknown & an unseen abode.<sup>1</sup> My Journey has hetherto been as propitious as I could have expected at this season. Hearing by Louissa [Smith] & from my worthy Brother Cranch that you & yours were regaining your strength & gradually advancing I hope to Health, has given a new spring to my spirits, and I shall go on my way rejoicing. Mercy & judgment are the mingled cup allotted me. Shall I receive good and not evil? At N[ew] York I found my poor unhappy son [Charles Adams], for so I must still call him, laid upon a Bed of sickness, destitute of a home. The kindness of a friend afforded him an assylum. A distressing cough, an affection of the liver and a dropsy will soon terminate a Life, which might have been made valuable to himself and others. You will easily suppose that this scene was too powerfull and distressing to me. Sally [Sarah (Smith) Adams] was with him, but his Physician says, he is past recovery—I shall carry a melancholy report to the President, who, passing through New York without stoping, knew not his situation.<sup>2</sup>

I shall not say any thing to you upon political subjects, no not upon the little Gen'l[s] Letter but reserve it for a future Letter when I arrive at Washington and you have more health to laugh at the folly, and pitty the weakness, vanity and ambitious views of, as very a sparrow as Sterne commented upon, in his Sentimental Journey, or More describes in his fables.<sup>3</sup>

With my best wishes for your perfect restoration to Health and that of your Family, I am, my ever Dear Sister,

Your affectionate

A. ADAMS

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Adams refers to the residence in Philadelphia, which Washington and Adams had used as the Executive Mansion. The "unseen abode" is Washington, D.C., to which the capital of the United States was moved in the autumn of 1800.

<sup>2</sup> This was the last time which Mrs. Adams saw her son Charles, who died about three weeks later, on November 30, 1800.

<sup>3</sup> See Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy*: "The Passport: Versailles," for the sparrow which interrupted the "grave and learned Bevoriskius" in his "commentary upon the generations from Adam." "More" is Edward Moore (1712-1757), a popular author and playwright, whose *Fables for the Female Sex*, 1744, went through many editions. See *The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, 1940, vol. 2, p. 323. For the election pamphlet of "little" General Alexander Hamilton, see the following letter.

Thank Mr. [Richard] Cranch for his kind Letters & Mrs. [Moses] Black for her sisterly attention. Heaven reward her. May she never know the want of a Friend.

Washington, Nov'br 21, 1800

MY DEAR SISTER:

I arrived in this city on Sunday the 16th ult. Having lost my way in the woods on Saturday in going from Baltimore, we took the road to Frederick and got nine miles out of our road. You find nothing but a Forest & woods on the way, for 16 and 18 miles not a village. Here and there a thatched cottage without a single pane of glass, inhabited by Blacks. My intention was to have reached Washington on Saturday. Last winter there was a Gentleman and Lady in Philadelphia by the Name of Snowden whose hospitality I heard much of. They visited me and were invited to dine with us, but did not, as they left the city before the day for dinner. They belong to Maryland, and live on the road to this place 21 miles distant.<sup>1</sup> I was advised at Baltimore to make their House my stage for the night, the only Inn at which I could put up being 36 miles ride from Baltimore. Judge [Samuel] Chase who visited me, at Baltimore, gave Mr. T[homas Boylston] Adams a Letter to Major Snowden, but I who have never been accustomed to quarter myself and servants upon private houses, could not think of it, particularly as I expected the chariot & 5 more Horses with two servants to meet me.<sup>2</sup> I sit out early, intending to make my 36 miles if possible: no travelling however but by day light; We took a direction as we supposed right, but in the first turn, went wrong, and were wandering more than two hours in the woods in different paths, holding down & breaking bows of trees which we could not pass, untill we met a solitary black fellow with a

<sup>1</sup> Major Thomas Snowden, descendant of a Welshman who came to Maryland before 1675, married Ann Ridgely, and built for her a magnificent colonial manor-house which she named "Montpelier," after her birthplace in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. The house stands a short distance southeast of Laurel, Maryland, on the Great Northern and Southern Post Road which connects Annapolis and Washington. Major Snowden's house was a favorite stopping-place for George Washington on his trips north from "Mount Vernon" to New York, or to Philadelphia. J. D. Warfield, *The Founders of Anne Arundel and Howard Counties, Maryland*, Baltimore, 1905, pp. 362-3.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Chase (1741-1811), of Maryland, signer of the Declaration of Independence, was appointed to the Supreme Court on January 26, 1796, by George Washington. In March, 1804, he was impeached by the House of Representatives, but in June, 1805, in spite of secret, and improper, pressure by Jefferson, the effort to have him removed failed in the Senate, although 25 of the 34 members were of Jefferson's party.



horse and cart. We inquired of him our way, and he kindly offerd to conduct us, which he did two miles, and then gave us such a clue as led us out to the post road and the Inn, where we got some dinner. Soon after we left it, we met the chariot then 30 miles from Washington, and 20 from our destination. We road as fast as the roads would allow of, but the sun was near set when we came in sight of the Majors. I halted but could not get courage to go to his House with ten Horses and nine persons. I therefore orderd the coach man to proceed, and we drove rapidly on. We had got about a mile when we were stoped by the Major in full speed, who had learnt that I was coming on; & had kept watch for me, with his Horse at the door; as he was at a distance from the road. In the kindest, and politest manner he urged my return to his House, represented the danger of the road, and the impossibility of my being accomodated at any Inn I could reach: A mere hovel was all I should find. I plead my numbers. That was no objection. He could accomodate double the number. There was no saying nay and I returnd to a large, Handsome, Elegant House, where I was received with my Family, with what we might term true English Hospitality, Friendship without ostentation, and kindness without painfull ceremony. Mrs. Snowden is a charming woman of about 45. She has a lovely daughter of 16 & one of 6, a son whom I had seen often in Philadelphia and who had several times dinned with us. I need not add that they are all true federal Characters. Every attention possible was shown me and the next morning I took my departure, having shared in the common bounty of Major Snowdens hospitality, for which he is universally celebrated—I arrived about one oclock at this place known by the *name of the city*, and the Name is all that you can call so. As I expected to find it a new country, with Houses scatterd over a space of ten miles, and trees & stumps in plenty with, a castle of a House—so I found it—The Presidents House is in a beautifull situation in front of which is the Potomac with a view of Alexandr[i]a. The country around is romantic but a wild, a wilderness at present.

I have been to George Town and felt all that Mrs. [William] Cranch described when she was a resident there. It is the very dirtiest Hole I ever saw for a place of any trade, or respectability of inhabitants. It is only one mile from me but a quagmire after every rain. Here we are obliged to send daily for marketting; The capital is near two miles from us. As to roads we shall make them by the frequent passing before winter, but I am determind to be satisfied and content, to say nothing

of inconvenience &c. That must be a worse place than even George Town, that I would not reside in for three Months [in *cancelled*].

I found your dear son [William Cranch] here at the House to receive me. He is well and grows much like his Father. He dined with us on Sunday & yesterday, and yesterday I went to see Nancy and your dear little modest Boys. Richard is a fine Boy. William is more bashfull, and Nancy is a fat little doe. They are all pretty children, and Mrs. Cranch tho thin is handsomer than she was as a Girl.<sup>3</sup>

When I arrived here I found a Boston News paper, which contained the celebration of the Birthday [October 19] at Quincy. It was truly gratifying to find in a world of calumny and falshood, that a Prophet could meet with honour in his own native soil. I hope the benidiction prounounced upon those who are reviled and persecuted falsly, may be his, who conscious of his own pure views and intentions; walks steadfastly on, tho the shafts and arrows of dissappointed ambition are hurled at him from every quarter. The Letter of Hamilton, which you have no doubt seen, can never be answerd properly but by the person to whom it is adrest, because no one else knows all the circumstances, or can deny what he has published for facts; many of which are as grose lies as Duane has told in the Aurora—Such a replie may one day appear, when the [modern *cancelled*] Man may appear still more odious than he now does. I have heard from every quarter, but one voice. It is Hamilton has done his own buisness.<sup>4</sup> Pray can you inform me by whom those pas-

<sup>3</sup> Children of William and Nancy (Greenleaf) Cranch: William Greenleaf (1796-1872), Richard (1797-1824), and Anne Allen (1799-1822).

<sup>4</sup> On August 1 and October 1, 1800, Hamilton wrote to Adams asking for an explanation of rumors as to certain charges which the President was said to have brought against his character and conduct. Adams did not answer either letter. In October, Hamilton prepared his strange paper, "The Public Conduct and Character of John Adams, Esq., President of the United States," for circulation among leading Federalists: Hamilton, *Works*, vol. 6, pp. 391-444. Burr got hold of a copy of this untimely attack, and had it published. Hamilton put himself in the ridiculous position of telling Federalists that the best they could do was to vote for Adams, although he was not fit for the office of chief executive. Adams did not answer Hamilton until 1809, when he published eighteen letters in the *Boston Patriot*, the last one dated "June 10, 1809." Adams, *Works*, vol. 9, pp. 241-311.

For a remarkably charitable letter written by Adams on the subject of Hamilton, on December 3, 1800, see Adams, *Works*, vol. 9, p. 576: "This last pamphlet I regret more on account of its author than on my own, because I am confident it will do him more harm than me. I am not his enemy, and never was . . ." *et seq.* Yet as late as July 12, 1813, in writing to Jefferson, Adams was so bitter as to refer to Hamilton as "a bastard Bratt of a Scotch Pedlar." *Historical Magazine*, July, 1870, pp. 50-1. This last sentiment recalls the spirit in which John Quincy Adams refused to witness the granting of an honorary degree by Harvard to Andrew Jackson in 1833, a spirit which casts suspicion on many of the judgments in that son's famous *Memoirs*. Jefferson, it is interesting to remember, placed a bust of Hamilton in the hall of "Monticello."

sages were selected from Shakespear[e] which composed the Quincy toasts? The President says if his Friends intended to flatter him, they have succeeded, for he would not exchange the Quincy celebration for any other that he has heard off.<sup>5</sup>

My dear Sister the few lines in your own hand writing were a cordial to my spirits. I pray most sincerely for your perfect restoration to health and my dear Mrs. Norton. I have received all the kind Letters of my Brother Cranch and thank him for them. If my future peace & tranquility were all that I considered, a release from public life would be the most desirable event of it—I feel perfectly tranquil upon the subject, hoping and trusting that, the Being in whose Hands are the Hearts of all Men, will guide and direct our national counsels for the peace & prosperity of this great people.

Remember me affectionatly to all my Friend[s], never omitting Mrs. Black.

I have the pleasure to say we are all at present well, tho the news papers very kindly gave the President the Ague and fever. I am rejoiced that it was only in the paper that he had it.

This day the President meets the two Houses to deliver the speech. There has not been a House untill yesterday—We have had some very cold weather and we feel it keenly. This House is twice as large as our meeting House. I believe the great Hall is as Bigg. I am sure tis twice as long. Cut your coat according to your Cloth. But this House is built for ages to come. The establishment necessary is a tax which cannot be born by the present sallery: No body can form an Idea of it but those who come into it. I had much rather live in the house at Philadelphia. Not one room or chamber is finished of the whole. It is habitable by fires in

<sup>5</sup> An account of the celebration of the birthday of John Adams, at Quincy, October 19, 1800, appeared in the *Columbian Centinel* for Saturday, November 1, 1800. Moses Black was in the Chair, and there were sixteen toasts, in all. The second was drunk to the President, and the fifteenth to John Quincy Adams, "our Minister at Berlin." Only one of the passages to which Mrs. Adams refers comes from Shakespeare. Cardinal Wolsey's words to Henry VIII were quoted in offering the toast to the President:

. . . though perils did  
Abound as thick as thought could make 'em and  
Appear in forms more horrid—yet my duty,  
As doth a rock against the chiding flood,  
Should the approach of this wild river break  
And stand unshaken.

William Shakespeare and John Fletcher, *Henry VIII*, Act 3, Scene 2, lines 194-9. The first 203 lines of this scene are attributed to Shakespeare, rather than to Fletcher.

every part, thirteen of which we are obliged to keep daily, or sleep in wet & damp places.<sup>6</sup>

Yours as ever  
A. A[DAMS]

Washington, December 1st, 1800

MY DEAR SISTER:

I have written to you, my dear Sister, twice since my arrival here. I know not but one of the Letters was in the lost mail.<sup>1</sup> I miss your pen, which used to detail to me both public and private affairs. I have reason to bless God, that your Life is spared to your family, and Friends. I hope you will not be induced by any means to over exert yourself, or try your strength beyond its bearing, a relapse being often more fatal than an original disease. If you can recover your strength and appetite, I hope your Health will be benefitted. Poor Mrs. [Joshua] Johnsons eldest unmarried daughter has been sick ever since I came with the same kind of fever. She is much reduced, and her complaints have been very similar to those who have been sick with us. She has been twice bled. I am not however satisfied that it was the best practise; The fever has run to 21 days—We have hetherto [*sic*] been very well, untill last night Susan [Adams] was threatned with the Quincy, which allarmd me very much as she went well to bed. I was waked in the night by a strange noise. She sleeps in a little chamber near to mine. I went in, and found her labouring with that dreadfull hoars cough, and sound which indicated immediate medical aid. We sent for the Physician nearest to us, who gave her calomil, put her feet in warm water, and steamed her with warm vinigar. She puked, and that semd to relieve her. She has coughed all day, but not with so much hoarsness. I think she has woorms. I saw Mr. [William] Cranch on fryday. He is well. Little Nancy had a return of the Ague. Mr. [William] Cranch is going to remove to Capitol Hill, which will bring him half a mile nearer to me, and is I believe a much healthier spot.

My dear Sister, I beg you would not trouble yourself about my Bacon this year, only be so kind as to give the proper directions to Mr. &

<sup>6</sup> "Before I end my letter, I pray heaven to bestow the best of blessings on this house, and on all that shall hereafter inhabit it. May none but honest and wise men ever rule under this roof!" John to Abigail Adams, November 2, 1800: *Letters of John Adams, Addressed to his Wife*, Charles Francis Adams, Editor, Boston, 1841, vol. 2, p. 113.

<sup>1</sup> Of the two letters to which Mrs. Adams refers, only that of November 21 has been found.

Mrs. Porter. I was rejoiced to learn by your son in a Letter from his Father, that Mrs. [Jacob] Norton was on the recovery, and able to walk her Room. Poor creature. What has she not Suffered? I have not got a line from my much honord and respected Friend Dr. Tufts since I left home. I hope bad health is not the cause. Pray tell him I am only one hundred and 50 miles, further off than formerly, tho the winter communication is 14 days instead of 7.

As to politicks; they are at present such a mere turn penny, that I believe it is best to leave all calculations to those who daily occupy themselves with them, and say what from the Sincerity of my Heart I do: that I hope the termination of the present contests will be such as will be most productive of the Peace, Liberty and happiness of our common Country, let who will be at the Head of the Government.—

Inclosed are some Letter[s] which you will be so kind as to have delivered—

With the sincerest regard to all my Friends and my dear Sister, in particular, I am

Ever Yours

A. ADAMS

Washington, [Monday], 8 December, 1800

MY DEAR SISTER:

I know, my much loved Sister, that you will mingle in my sorrow, and weep with me over the Grave of a poor unhappy child who cannot now add an other pang to those which have peirced my Heart for several years past; Cut off in the midst of his days, his years are numberd and finished; I hope my supplications to heaven for him, that he might find mercy from his maker, may not have been in vain: His constitution was so shaken, that his disease was rapid, and through the last period of his Life dreadfully painfull and distressing; He bore with patience & submission his sufferings and heard the prayers for him with composure; His mind at times was much deranged thro his sufferings, and through a total want of rest; He finally expired without a groan on Sunday week. Mrs. [Margaret (Stephens)] Smith & Sally [Sarah (Smith) Adams] have had a distressing scene to pass through, yet I cannot be thankful enough that Mrs. Smith got home when she did, and that she took him into her care. She has a satisfaction in knowing that she spared no pains to render his last moments less distressing to his Parents and relatives than they could have been else where. I was satisfied I had

seen him for the last time when I left him. Three weeks only has he been really confined, but his constitution was broken down. Food has not been his sustenance, yet he did not look like an intemperate Man—He was bloted, but not red—He was no mans Enemy but his own—He was beloved, in spite of his Errors, and all spoke with grief and sorrow for his habits.<sup>1</sup>

Afflictions of this kind are a two Edged sword. The Scripture expresses it as a mitigation of sorrow [that *cancelled*] when we do not sorrow as those who have no hope—The Mercy of the almighty is not limited; To his sovereign will I desire humbly to submit.

Mr. [Richard] Cranch in the cover of his Letter refered me to one written to his son for the state of your Health. Mr. [William] Cranch did not get the Letter, so I have not heard, but I know I should see your own hand writing if you were able. I have not been well myself for the week past. I have been afflicted with a loss of voice & a sad cough—It is not worse—I hope [it] is going off. The President is well and has been so ever since we have been here. Your son [William Cranch] dinned with us yesterday. He and family were well—Pray remember me kindly to all our Friends and let me hear of or from you as often as possible. I am, my dear Sister,

Your truly affectionate but afflicted Sister

A. ADAMS

Washington, Janry 15, 1801

MY DEAR SISTER:

I received from you two kind Letters which I have not yet acknowledged; I am surprized to find that the frost & cold have not yet put a stop to the fever. I hope it will not be permitted to make a renewed visit, at the approach of the summer with a severity never before experienced in our healthy and delightfull village. I cannot say that I have enjoy'd so much health this winter as the last. I am very frequently shut up, tho but for a few days at a time; I fancy we have too much damp here for Rhumatick Constitutions, but my constitution appears to have sufferd severely from the Ague and fever, and to be much broken by repeated attacks of an intermitting kind. I patch up, but it is hard work. Heretofore I have had spirits which would surmount & rise above bodily

<sup>1</sup> Charles Adams (1770–1800) died in New York on Sunday, November 30, 1800. The death of this unhappy son is the conventional and dishonest excuse usually offered for the last-minute departure of John Adams from Washington at sunrise on March 4, 1801!

infirmity; whether they will be continued to me, I know not; I hope they may, for a groaning, whineing, complaining temper I deprecate.

I have no disposition to seclude myself from society, because I have met with unkind or ungratefull returns from some; I would strive to act my part well and [resign *cancelled*] Retire with that dignity which is unconscious of doing or wishing ill to any, with a temper disposed to forgive injuries, as I would myself hope to be forgiven, if any I have committed. I wish for the preservation of the Government, and a wise administration of it. In the best situation, with the wisest head and firmest Heart, it will be surrounded with perplexities, dangers and troubles, that are little conceived of by those into whose Hands it is like to fall. The President had frequently contemplated resigning: I thought it would be best for him to leave to the people to act for themselves, and take no responsibility upon himself. I do not regret that he has done so. He has had the pleasure of appointing your son to the office of commissioner for the city, in the place of Mr. Scott, who dyed a few weeks since, and tho this will be sit down by the Antis, as a promotion on account of Relationship, we care not now what they say.<sup>1</sup> The Senate had nothing to do with this appointment, and therefore could not quibble as they have done upon some former occasions. The principle proprietors in the city came forward in a recommendation of Mr. [William] Cranch to the President, and I trust the appointment will give general satisfaction—I think Mr. Cranch is rising fast and will be one of the first Men in the city in a short time—The duties of his office will be arduous, and delicate to give satisfaction to the contending interests, but I hope he will act impartially, tho it may sometimes be difficult to persuade interested people to believe that he is so. The sallary I think is sixteen hundred dollors a year.

I hope I shall return to Quincy sometime in Feb'ry but I own it is a mountain before me, so many horrid Rivers to cross and such Roads to traverse—my health very delicate.

I feel most sensibly for our dear Respected and venerable uncle.<sup>2</sup> I

<sup>1</sup> Gustavus Scott (1753–1800), of Maryland, lawyer and patriot, was appointed a commissioner for the Federal City by George Washington in 1794. He died at "Rock Hill," Washington, D. C., December 25, 1800. Adams appointed his wife's nephew, William Cranch, to the vacancy, and then, on February 27, 1800, placed him on the Circuit Court of the District of Columbia as junior assistant judge. Jefferson made Cranch chief judge of the Circuit Court in which office he served for fifty years, until his death, in 1855. See Clark, *Greenleaf and Law in the Federal City*, pp. 52–3.

<sup>2</sup> Norton Quincy (1716–1801), Harvard, 1736, the brother of Elizabeth (Quincy) Smith (1722–1775), the mother of Mrs. Richard Cranch, Mrs. John Adams, and Mrs. Stephen Peabody.

know not, nor do I think it possible to supply to him the loss he has sustaind. Tho Mrs. Pope's temper was not pleasant, she was attentive towards him, knew all his wants and wishes. She was prudent and saving of his interest, and had many excellent qualities. To a person of his years it is peculiarly urksome to have new faces, new habits, new fancies to conform to—It will probably shorten the period of his existence—but it would seem as if there remained but little desirable in this world to him—Yet we must live all the days of our appointed time, and when our change commeth, may it be happy to us.

I thank you, my dear Sister. I have not any thing yet to ask for. I rejoice you are in such health as to be able to assist your Friends, and I rejoice that our dear Mrs. [Jacob] Norton is spaired to her family and Friends. Surely we may judge of mercy as well as judgment.

We all send Love. The President has enjoyed very good health ever since he has been here, and hopes to be a good Farmer yet. He some times says he would go to the Bar again if he had the powers of speech, but of public Life he takes a final farewell.

Betsy Howard and her Lover have chosen to signilize their marriage by having it performed whilst in the Family of the President. I did not much oppose it, tho I thought they had better have waited untill they returnd, as I supposed it would subject them to reports wholly groundless & unfounded, but they, conscious of their innocence, disregarded such rumours and last Sunday Evening were married. Richard and Becky have not yet proposed a similar subject to me. I trust they think themselves young enough yet.

Adieu my dear Sister. It is my large dinner party to day and I must dress to sit at table as I have Ladies, tho I have not been below for three days. I make an exertion as it is the last time I expect the pleasure of dinning them.

Affectionatly your Sister  
ABIGAIL ADAMS

Washington, Febry. 7th, 1801

MY DEAR SISTER:

I suppose the reason why I have not had a Letter from you for a long time, arises from your expectation that I am upon my Journey; The Roads have been represented to me as so intolerable bad, and I know them to be so, that I have been prevaild upon to remain longer than I designd. I now think I shall stay untill after the 13th of Febry, the great



important day, which may in its consequences deside [*sic*] the fate of our Country.<sup>1</sup> I feel as it is so near at hand, as tho I could not quit the city untill I know what, or rather who is to be our future Ruler. Never were a people placed in more difficult circumstances than the virtuous part of our Countrymen are at the present Crisis. I have turnd, & turnd, and overturned in my mind at various times the merits & demerits of the two candidates. Long acquaintance, private friendship and the full belief that the private Character of one is much purer than the other, inclines me to him who has certainly from Age, succession and public employments the prior Right. Yet when I reflect upon the visonary system of Government which will undoubtedly be adopted, the Evils which must result from it to the Country, I am sometimes inclined to believe that, the more bold, daring and decisive Character would succeed in supporting the Government for a longer time.

A Sceptre, snatch'd with an unruly hand  
Must be as boistrously mantain'd as gain'd;  
And he that stands upon a slipp'ry place  
Makes nice of no vile hold to stay him up.<sup>2</sup>

What a lesson upon Elective Governments have we in our young Republic of 12 years old? What is the difference of Character between

<sup>1</sup> The whole number of electoral votes in 1801 was 138; necessary to the choice of a President, 70. Jefferson and Burr each had 73; therefore, the election went into the House of Representatives. The balloting continued from February 11 to 17, inclusive. Nine states were necessary to a choice. On the first ballot, Jefferson had 8, Burr 6, and two states were divided. On the thirty-sixth ballot, Jefferson received the vote of ten states and was declared elected President. On the decisive ballot, the states were divided as follows: Jefferson: New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, Georgia, Tennessee, Maryland, and Vermont; Burr: Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire. Delaware and South Carolina cast blanks. Matthew L. Davis, *Memoirs of Aaron Burr*, New York, 1837, vol. 2, pp. 73-4.

In writing to Elbridge Gerry from Washington, December 30, 1800, President Adams commented on the results of the election of that year as follows:

"Your anxiety for the issue of the election is, by this time, allayed. How mighty a power is the spirit of party! How decisive and unanimous it is! Seventy-three for Mr. Jefferson and seventy-three for Mr. Burr. May the peace and welfare of the country be promoted by this result! But I see not the way as yet. In the case of Mr. Jefferson, there is nothing wonderful; but Mr. Burr's good fortune surpasses all ordinary rules, and exceeds that of Bonaparte. All the old patriots, all the splendid talents, the long experience, both of federalists and antifederalists, must be subjected to the humiliation of seeing this dexterous gentleman rise, like a balloon, filled with inflammable air, over their heads. And this is not the worst. What a discouragement to all virtuous exertion, and what an encouragement to party intrigue, and corruption! What course is it we steer, and to what harbor are we bound? Say, man of wisdom and experience, for I am wholly at a loss." Adams, *Works*, vol. 9, pp. 577-8.

<sup>2</sup> *King John*, Act 3, Scene 4, lines 135-8.

a Prince of Wales, & a Burr? Have we any claim to the favour or protection of Providence, when we have against warning admonition and advise [*sic*] Chosen as our chief Majestrate a man who makes no pretensions to the belief of an all wise and suprem Governour of the World, ordering or directing or overruling the events which take place in it? I do not mean that he is an Atheist, for I do not think that he is—but he believes Religion only usefull ás it may be made a political Engine, and that the outward forms are only, as I once heard him express himself—mere [*Mumery cancelled*] Mummery. In short, he is not a believer in the Christian system—The other if he is more of a believer, has more to answer for, because he has grosely offended against those doctrines by his practise.

Such are the Men whom we are like to have as our Rulers. Whether they are given us in wrath to punish us for our sins and transgressions, the Events will disclose—But if ever we saw a day of darkness, I fear this is one which will be visible untill kindled into flame's.

My Health is better than it was the first part of the winter: I hope I shall be able to encounter this dreadfull journey, but it is very formidable to me, not only upon account of the Roads, but the Runs of water which have not any Bridges over them, and must be forded—Mr. and Mrs. [William] Cranch are very well and dinned with me last Sunday, as did William and Richard. To day the Judges and many others with the heads of departments & Ladies dine with me for the last time—My best Regards to all my Friends and acquiactance. With the hope of seeing them e'er long, I am,

Your truly affectionate Sister

A. ADAMS

Susan [Adams] sends her duty. She has had the hooping cough, but is getting better.

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