

idea of separation at a time when it is certain that he had set his heart on separation, and had formed a settled plan of independence. The disclosure of his real sentiments and designs, through the capture and publication of his secret correspondence, scattered dismay among those whom he had been luring to the brink of civil war by his professions of moderation. That there should have been a necessity for resorting to such acts, we must repeat, proves that there did not exist among the people in general a sense of such oppression as alone, we should say, can warrant any one in enticing a community into revolution and civil war. It tends to show that the catastrophe was not inevitable, but was brought on by the scheming activity of a comparatively small group of violent and ambitious men, combined perhaps with the interest of traders galled by the pestilent restrictions on trade. We also see in Adams's diary the bacchanalian element of the revolution in some force. In the evening at Mr. Mifflin's 'there was an elegant supper and we drank sentiments till eleven o'clock. Lee and Harrison were very high. Lee had dined with Mr. Dickinson and drank Burgundy the whole afternoon.' In such councils it was resolved that, to avenge a paltry blunder committed by a particular British minister, the grand and beneficent unity of the Anglo-Saxon race should be dissolved, perhaps for ever. It would be well if, when civil war impends, patriots could be made to drink water. The man who burns like Camille Desmoulins 'to embrace liberty, though it were on a heap of corpses,' if he is not mad or desperately wicked, is probably drunk. The revolution over, however, John Adams stands in history a strong, upright, and conscientious servant of the State, rugged and gnarled as an old oak, but not less firmly rooted in his patriotism or less steadfast in resisting the adverse gales, from whatever quarter they might blow, whether from that of extreme federalism and fond attachment to England, or from that of extreme democracy and the subserviency of sham sansculottism to France. By his defence of Preston and the soldiers he had given noble proof of his antipathy to mob violence as well as of his humanity. To the yoke of the Caucus his neck was never bowed. Nor, though a republican, was he a demagogue, or even an extreme democrat. He firmly believed, as his biographer truly says, in government by a class duly qualified by intelligence and public virtue: of all aristocracies the most offensive to St. Just, who thought it the height of impiety in any one to pretend to intelligence or virtue, but especially to virtue, in presence of the divine people. In his suggestion for the regulations of the president's household Adams even shows a tendency to surround republican authority with a good deal of state. Hamilton in the present day would be utterly impossible as an American politician. Only one degree less impossible would be John Adams.