

28 JEFFERSON AND HIS COLLEAGUES

Such was the programme of humdrum economy which President Jefferson laid before Congress. After the exciting campaign of 1800, when the public was assured that the forces of Darkness and Light were locked in deadly combat for the soul of the nation, this tame programme seemed like an anticlimax. But those who knew Thomas Jefferson learned to discount the vagaries to which he gave expression in conversation. As John Quincy Adams once remarked after listening to Jefferson's brilliant table talk, "Mr. Jefferson loves to excite wonder." Yet Thomas Jefferson, philosopher, was a very different person from Thomas Jefferson, practical politician. Paradoxical as it may seem, the new President, of all men of his day, was the least likely to undertake revolutionary policies; and it was just this acquaintance with Jefferson's mental habits which led his inveterate enemy, Alexander Hamilton, to advise his party associates to elect Jefferson rather than Burr.

The President broke with precedent, however, in one small particular. He was resolved not to follow the practice of his Federalist predecessors and address Congress in person. The President's speech to the two houses in joint session savored too much of a speech from the throne; it was a symptom of the