

the fervor of our zeal, reason is in hazard of being lost;<sup>c</sup> for, as was elegantly expressed by a learned gentleman at the late trial, "the passions of man, nay, his very imaginations, are contagious." The pomp of funeral and the horrors of death have been so delineated, as to give a spring to our ideas and inspire a glow incompatible with sound deliberative judgment. In this situation, every passion has been alternately predominant. They have each in its turn subsided in degree, and then have sometimes given place to despondence, grief and sorrow. How careful should we be, that we do not mistake the impressions of gloom and melancholy for the dictates of reason and truth. How careful, lest, borne away by a torrent of passion, we make shipwreck of conscience.

Perhaps you may be told, gentlemen, as I remember it was said, at the late trial, that passions were like the flux and reflux of the sea, the highest tides always producing the lowest ebbs. But let it be noticed, that the tide, in our political ocean, has yet never turned; certainly the current has never set towards the opposite quarter. However similes may illustrate, they never go for proof; though, I believe it will be found, that if the tide of resentment has not risen of late, it has been because it had already reached the summit. In the same mode of phraseology, if so homely an expression may be used, perhaps, as the seamen say, it has been high-water slack; but I am satisfied that the current has not yet altered its course, in favor of the prisoners at the bar.

Many things yet exist sufficient to keep alive the glow of indignation. I have aimed at securing you against the catching flame. I have endeavored to discharge my duty

<sup>c</sup> Immediately after the occurrence, a print was published by Paul Revere, which was circulated through the country. It was very famous in that day, and there were few houses in which it was not an ornament. It gives a somewhat false idea of the scene it purports to represent. The soldiers are represented as drawn up in a line before the custom house (on which is a large sign containing the fancy title of Butchers' Hall), and at the bidding of their commander, deliberately firing at the inhabitants, several of whom fall dead in the street. (See Bibliography, *ante*, p. 418.)