

Is this the letter of a man or not? I do not appeal to the cowardly propagator of anonymous falsehoods, but to the public. What is there in it of vanity or servility? Do not these letters take for granted that I am a Democrat, though not a disturber of all government? And that what I am I shall remain, even though it be deemed a reasonable objection to my appointment? Is this, or is this not, adhering to my principle, whatever becomes of my interest?

Nor is it true that my address originated from any motive of revenge. Two years elapsed from the date of those letters, before I wrote anything on the politics of this country. Nor did I recollect them at the time. Nor do I see the objection to taking any fair means of improving my situation. This is a duty incumbent on every prudent man who has a family to raise and which I have already too much neglected from public motives; nor can any office to which I am eligible in this country, recompense me for the offers I rejected in its favor. But it is not in the power of promises or threats, of wealth or poverty, to extinguish the political enthusiasm which has actuated my conduct for these twenty years. The prudence of middle age and the claims of duty may make me cautious of sacrificing my interest, but they cannot induce me to sacrifice my principle.

Nor do I see any impropriety in making this request of Mr. Adams. At that time he had just entered into office. He was hardly in the infancy of political mistake; even those who doubted his capacity, thought well of his intentions. He had not at that time given the public to understand that he would bestow no office but under implicit conformity to his political opinions. He had not declared that "a republican government may mean anything;" he had not yet sanctioned the abolition of trial by jury in the alien law, or entrenched his public character behind the legal barriers of the sedition law. Nor were we yet saddled with the expense of a permanent navy, or threatened under his auspices with the existence of a standing army. Our credit was not yet reduced so low as to borrow money at eight per cent in time of peace, while the unnecessary violence of official expressions might justly provoke a war. Nor had the political acrimony which still poisons the pleasures of private society, been fostered by those who call themselves his friends and adherents; nor had the eminent services of Mr. Humphreys at that time received their reward. Mr. Adams had not yet projected his embassies to Prussia, Russia, and the Sublime Porte; nor had yet interfered, as President of the United States, to influence the decisions of a court of justice. A stretch of authority which the monarch of Great Britain would have shrunk from; an interference without precedent, against law and against mercy! This melancholy case of Jonathan Robbins, a native citizen of America, forcibly impressed by the British, and delivered up, with the advice of Mr. Adams, to the mock trial of a British court martial, had not yet astonished the republican citizens of this free