

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Ex-President John Quincy Adams in Pittsburgh in 1843, by John Quincy Adams and Wilson McCandless

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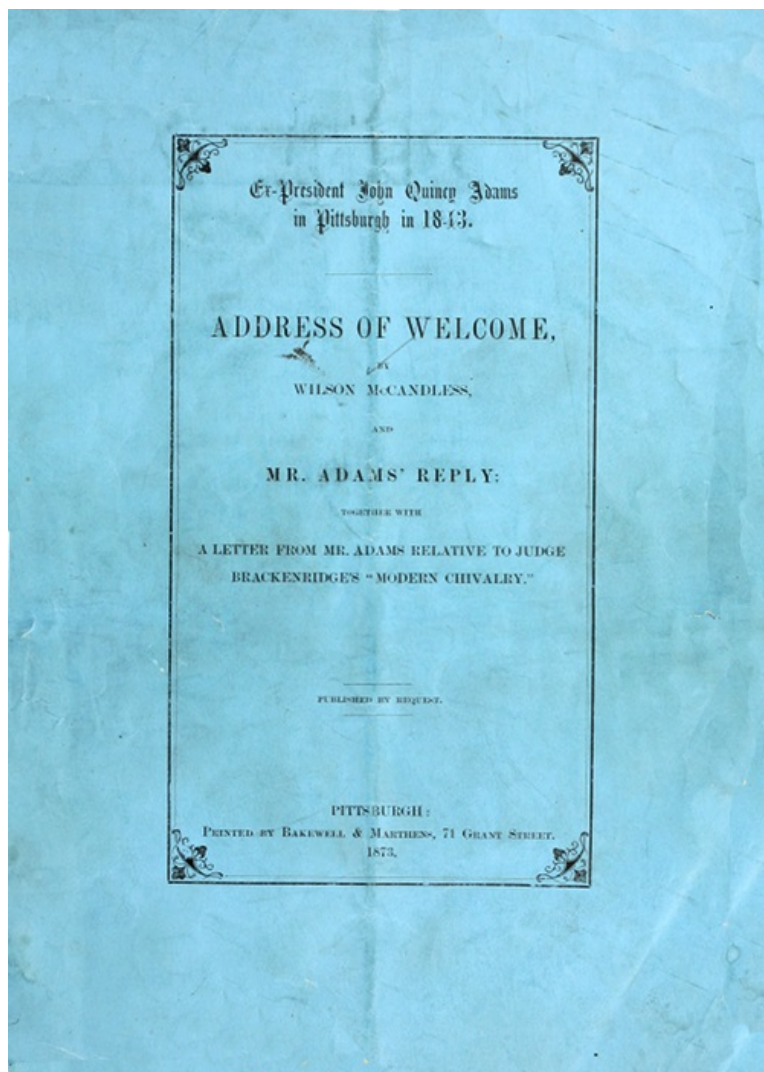
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK EX-PRESIDENT JOHN QUINCY ADAMS IN PITTSBURGH IN 1843 ***



ADDRESS OF WELCOME.

MR. ADAMS:

I have been deputed by my fellow-citizens, of *all parties*, to bid you a hearty welcome to this city. I have been directed, Sir, to tender to you the hospitalities of the people, and of the corporate authorities of this, and of our young, but flourishing, sister of Allegheny.

We have not strewed flowers in your path, nor erected triumphal arches at your approach, but greet you with the homage of grateful hearts, as evinced in this spontaneous outpouring of the people. Here, Sir, is the token of that universal regard in which you are held by the free citizens of this great country. And here, Sir, you have the reward for a long life of meritorious public service.

What can be more endearing to the heart of the patriot, than this exhibition of public sentiment; than this manifestation of love for your person, and admiration for your exalted talents and virtues. Like the son of Marcus Cato, you have been a foe to tyrants, and your country's friend, and that country now tenders to you the tribute of her affection and gratitude.

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You seem, Sir, "like the aged oak, standing alone on the plain, which time has spared a little longer, after all its cotemporaries have been levelled with the dust," but the people delight to gather round the venerable trunk, and dwell beneath the shadow of its yet green foliage.

Associated as you have been with the FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY, partaking largely of his confidence, and deeply imbued with the lofty patriotism of his character, it must be gratifying to you, to visit this, the theatre of his earliest achievements.

Here, standing on the portals of the Mississippi valley, his prophetic eye reaching far into futurity, he saw the materials for that great empire, with its teeming millions, that now revere and venerate his name. Here it was that Providence thrice spared his invaluable life. Once, on the Venango path, when the rifle of the warrior flashed in the pan. Again, when his frail raft gave way, and he was precipitated amid ice and snow, and the raging of the elements, into the rapid waters of the Allegheny. And again, on the shores of the Monongahela, when Braddock, and Halket, and Peyronney fell, by the deadly aim of the French and Indians. Two horses shot under him, his clothes perforated with bullets, himself a bright and shining mark, yet the leaden messengers were turned aside by an invisible Hand, and he was saved to lead the armies of his country to victory, and to lay deep that precious corner-stone of civil polity, that has no parallel in the history of the world.

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Here it was that in the wigwams, and partaking of the hospitality of King Shingiss and Queen Allaquippa, his heart imbibed that warm and active benevolence for the sons of the forest, that was so conspicuous in his subsequent administration of the government.

Here it was that the influence of his great NAME suppressed an insurrection that threatened to sap the foundation of our beautiful political edifice. And here, Sir, he has a monument in the affection of his countrymen more durable than brass or marble, and which will remain steadfast, as long as the rippling current of the Ohio flows on to the bosom of the Father of waters.

In 1798, the first armed vessel that ever floated on the western waters was constructed here under the direction of a Revolutionary officer. She was a row-galley, mounting a solitary gun, and was intended to protect our infant trade with that splendid domain afterwards acquired to the Union by the wisdom and foresight of your illustrious friend and cotemporary, MR. JEFFERSON.

The name of that vessel was the JOHN ADAMS, And, if tradition is to be credited, after performing duty here, she hoisted sails, entered the peaceful pursuits of commerce, crossed the Atlantic, passed the straits of Gibraltar, wended her way up the Mediterranean, threaded the Archipelago, and penetrated to the Dardanelles on the borders of Asia Minor; thus carrying on her prow into the very bosom of a despotic country, the name of one of the honored actors in the great struggle for Republican liberty.

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Look at the contrast now! Instead of the barge, and the row-galley, our skilful mechanics in 1843 completed, on the very bastions of old Fort Duquesne, an iron ship of war that is to carry on the Northern Lakes the stars and stripes of our beloved country—and a frigate is now in progress of construction, which with her "*iron sides*," is destined to defend the honor of the American name "in every sea under the whole heavens."

When your venerated Sire, with burning zeal, proclaimed independence *now*, independence

forever; when, with heroic and inflexible resolution, he signed his name to the great charter of our liberty, the place on which you now stand was a barren and unproductive forest. Now,

"As the swollen column of ascending smoke,"

so swells her grandeur. From a thousand chimneys are emitted the living evidences of her prosperity. The flaming fire, the busy hammer, the revolving roller, all give daily, hourly proof of her rapid advancement. Here the rough misshapen elements of nature are formed and moulded to suit the purposes of man. Here machines to mitigate the toil of the laborer, and to facilitate intercourse between the States, are made with a skill unsurpassed even by the old world. Here the anchor is forged to give security and protection to the weather-beaten mariner. Here the shovel and the mattock, the plough and the harrow, go forth to ease the labors of the husbandman. And here the naked are clothed and the hungry fed, by the evolution of machinery "and the potent agency of steam."

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To what are we indebted for all these blessings? Since the war of the Revolution, to that wise TARIFF policy by which you were regulated when at the head of the government, and as chairman of the Committee on Manufactures in the Congress of the United States. No base subserviency to Foreign Powers dictated your course, but a manly and determined support of the true interests of the country, by the protection of its industry, and by a proper reciprocity of countervailing restrictions.

We thank you, Sir—we thank you with the truest friendship and the deepest sincerity.

We honor you for the lustre you have shed on all the high places it has been your good fortune to occupy—we praise you for that sublimest virtue which shines in all your actions—we see in your brow that undaunted valor which renders you inexorably firm in the discharge of all your public duties, and in your eye "that inextinguishable spark, that fires the souls of patriots."

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Great and good Citizen! Venerable and Venerated Man! Panegyric or Eulogy, now, or hereafter, cannot add one cubit to your stature. Live on—live on, in honor and in glory—and when "this corruptible *does* put on incorruption, and this mortal, immortality," I pray God that it may be in the calm serenity of that summer's evening, when bonfires and illuminations light up the land, in commemoration of that glorious INDEPENDENCE, to the achievement of which your illustrious FATHER so largely, so eminently contributed.

MR. ADAMS' REPLY.

FELLOW-CITIZENS:

Before I attempt to address you, and to respond to the eloquent discourse pronounced under circumstances so un auspicious to eloquence, I must apologize for my appearance before you.

I had expected to have had the honor of meeting you on this day and at this time; and arrangements were made to render it convenient to yourselves, but it so happened that the bark on which we had taken our passage, as if anxious to arrive at the end of her voyage, and partaking of my feelings, arrived before the time, when your preparations to receive me were not completed. My appearance was, therefore, accidental and unexpected, and as my apology, I would remind you of the saying of the great Poet of Nature, Shakespeare, who says:

"Lovers break not hours,

Except it be to come before their time."

If the lover is privileged to "break hours" and "come before his time," I trust you will accept it as my excuse, and impute it to the ardor of a lover desiring to see the beloved of his soul.

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Fellow citizens! I had motives of the most cogent nature to inspire me with that feeling, in times past—I trust forever—when my position was anything but what I find it now—at a time when I was in a position of difficulty and danger, I had the gratification to receive testimonials of regard, respect and sympathy from the citizens of Pittsburgh, beyond what I received from any other portion of the United States, my own constituents and the city of Rochester alone excepted. I shall always entertain a feeling of gratitude, belonging to the nature of man, towards the citizens of Pittsburgh, for their attention and sympathy on that trying occasion. I had never flattered myself with the expectation or hope that it should be in my power to personally return them those

thanks which were due; but they were indelibly impressed upon my heart—and it is owing rather to accidental circumstances that I now enjoy that satisfaction.

During the last summer, I received an invitation to visit a western city, to perform an act solely connected with the promotion of science, and totally separated from politics—I came for the purpose of lending my aid to an object for the advancement and promotion of the happiness of man on earth—for the advancement of knowledge, for which I hope all parties are equally zealous—the laying of the corner-stone for an Astronomical Observatory at Cincinnati. I accepted it, and scarcely had it become publicly known, till I saw in the public papers a call from some of my personal friends in this city, to visit and be received by them on my way to or from the point of my destination. This reached my ears as coming from personal friends; by personal friends I mean those who, during a long life, have approved of my political course and actions. Of personal friends, strictly speaking, I have but few among your number—there are few in your city with whom I have had the honor of a personal acquaintance. For this expression of confidence and this invitation, I felt that gratitude was due from me.

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But scarcely was that invitation consummated till a still more comprehensive one, from the citizens of all the political parties, was given to me. This was an honor which has never been extended to me before, and I am not aware that it has been to any other—it forms an epoch in our history's history, and if in any thing I can foresee the voice of posterity, it is in that!

In compliance with these invitations, and particularly the last, I now appear before you. I had intended to advert to some topics of general interest, and to the principles which have governed my course of conduct heretofore, but leaving them to the judgment of all, and avoiding any thing calculated to offend any;—but time will not allow, and the circumstances are such that I cannot think of detaining you here. I must therefore request you simply to receive the effusions of gratitude from my breast, applied to each and every one of you. I hope you will consider those remarks which I intended to have made, as indicative of the desire which I felt to repay you in some manner for your attentions towards me; and I trust that the blessings of a bounteous Providence may rest upon you individually, and that the almighty Ruler of the Universe may render your course, as a community, glorious and happy hereafter, as it has been honorable heretofore!

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CORRESPONDENCE.

PITTSBURGH, March 29, 1847.

HON. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS,

Washington City, D. C.,

DEAR SIR: A day or two after I had the honor of addressing you at the instance of the citizens of Pittsburgh and Allegheny, I met you at the hospitable table of Col. Robinson. To me, and to all around, the conversation was most entertaining. All the leading incidents connected with the history of Western Pennsylvania, from the Whiskey Insurrection down, seemed to be as familiar to you as to any native to the "manor born." I recollect well your inquiries relating to the honored widow of the author of "Modern Chivalry," and how animated you were in speaking of Captain Farrago and Teague O'Regan. Cervantes would have laughed and rejoiced at your association of these western heroes with his own, and the author felt complimented with your favorable criticism of a work which he never expected to reach a second edition.

Perusing a reprint of the work this evening, it occurred to me that you might be amused in reading it, and I have therefore taken the liberty of enclosing it.

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Trusting that your health is much improved and that it will continue so,

I have the honor to be,

with the most profound regard,

your obedient servant,

WILSON McCANDLESS

WILSON McCANDLESS, ESQ.,

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

DEAR SIR: I cannot lose a moment before acknowledging the receipt of your letter of the 29th ult., and of the valuable present which accompanies it—the two volumes of the new edition of Judge H. H. Brackenridge's "Modern Chivalry, or the Adventures of Captain Farrago and Teague O'Regan." My visit to Pittsburgh in 1843, and my intercourse with yourself, with the citizens of that place and Allegheny, at that time, afford me some of the most pleasing recollections of my life, grateful recollections of my obligations to yourself and them.

I had read the first part of Modern Chivalry and formed a pleasant acquaintance with Captain Farrago and his man Teague, at their first appearance more than half a century since, and they had then excited much of my attention as illustrations of life and manners peculiar to the times and localities, not entirely effaced when I became more familiarly acquainted with them, by this visit to the latter.

Captain Farrago and Teague O'Regan are legitimate descendants, on one side from the La Mancha and his squire Sancho, on the other, from Sir Hudibras and his man Ralph, and if not primitive conceptions themselves, are at least as lineal in their descent as the pious Æneas from the impetuous and vindictive son of Pelias.

The reappearance of this work, as a second edition, since the author's death, more than half a century after its first publication, well warrants the prediction that it will last beyond the period fixed by the ancient statutes, for the canonization of poets, a full century. I shall read it over again, I have no doubt, with a refreshing revival of the pleasure with which I greeted it on its first appearance; and if this expression of my opinion can give any satisfaction to the remaining relatives of Judge Brackenridge, or to yourself, it is entirely at your disposal, being with a vivid sense and grateful remembrance of your kindness, and that of my fellow-citizens of Pittsburgh and Allegheny,

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Your friend and obedient servant,

J. Q. ADAMS.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK EX-PRESIDENT JOHN QUINCY ADAMS IN
PITTSBURGH IN 1843 ***

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