

John Adams to William Cunningham, 3 January 1809

Quincy, January 3, 1809

DEAR SIR, — I have your favours of December 17th and 21st. I hope you will not insinuate a comparison between John Quincy Adams and Coriolanus. Whatever injustice or ingratitude may be done him, he has none of the *Roman's* revenge, much less his treachery. Of Mrs. Warren's History I have nothing to say.¹ The Count De Vergennes was an accomplished gentleman and scholar, and a statesman of great experience in various diplomatic and other ministerial stations. In treating with other nations, he considered the interest of his own country, and left others to take care of theirs. His refinements were not invisible. His negotiations were very like those of the British cabinet with us at this day. All I have to say is, that all European cabinets and ministers are very much alike: and our only security against them is in our own fortitude, and the sense and integrity of our own ministers. Have *you* seen any wondrous skill in our foreign ambassadors for some years past?

I have sent to the Indian Queen the 2d and 3d volumes of a work which the English editor of the 2d edition calls a "History of Republics." It may be called *The American Boudoir*. What is a *boudoir*? It is a *pouting-room*. And what is a *pouting-room*? In many gentlemen's houses in France, there is an apartment, of an octagonal form, twelve or fifteen feet across, or thirty-six or forty-five feet round; and all the eight sides, as well as the ceiling overhead, are all of the most polished glass mirrors: so that, when a man stands in the centre of the room he sees himself in every direction multiplied into a row of selves, as far as the eye can reach. The humour of it is, that when the lady of the house is out of temper, when she is angry, or when she weeps without a cause, she may be locked up in this chamber to *pout*, and to see in every direction how beautiful she is. There are settees and chairs round the sides, and commonly a *bath* in the centre, which may be made hot or cold. So that persons may see themselves in every posture. Such a *boudoir* is the "Defence." Our states may see themselves in it, in every possible light, attitude, and movement. They may see all their beauties, and all their deformities. Happy they who are made cautious by others' dangers!

I return the editor's letter, which, with a thousand other things, concur to show that certain presses are under the control of an *aristocracy of bankers*, led by the nose by an *oligarchy of Shylocks*, all sycophants to Britain. A happy new year.

John Wood, *The Suppressed History of the Administration of John Adams . . .*, 1845

<http://books.google.com/books?id=xrjoaYA9e6gC&ots=5eLni6xgVq&dq=The%20Suppressed%20History%20of%20the%20Administration%20of%20John%20Adams&pg=PA356#v=onepage&q&f=false>

¹ Mercy Otis Warren, *History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution*, 1805.