

Answer to the Mayor, Corporation and citizens of Alexandria, printed in The American Museum Vol 5. pages 433 January 1789-June 1789.

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ANSWER.

To the mayor, corporation, and citizens of Alexandria.

Gentlemen,

Although I ought not to conceal, yet I cannot describe the painful emotions which I felt in being called upon to determine whether I would accept or refuse the presidency of the united states. The unanimity in the choice, the opinion of my friends, communicated from different parts of Europe, as well as of America, the apparent wish of those who were not entirely satisfied with the constitution in its present form--and an ardent desire on my own part to be instrumental in connecting the good will of my countrymen towards each other--have induced an acceptance. Those who know me best (and you, my fellow citizens, are, from you situation, in that number) know better than any others, my love of retirement is so great, that no earthly consideration, short of a conviction of duty, could have prevailed upon me to depart from my resolution "never more to take any share in transactions of a public nature." For, at my age, and in my circumstances, what prospects or advantages could I propose to myself from embarking again on the tempestuous and uncertain ocean of public life?

I do not feel myself under the necessity of making public declarations, in order to convince you, gentlemen, of my attachment to yourselves, and regard for your interests--the whole tenor of my life has been open to your inspection; and my past actions, rather than my present declarations, must be the pledge of my future conduct.

In the mean time, I thank you most sincerely for the expressions of kindness contained in your valedictory address. It is true, just after having bade adieu to my domestic connexions, this tender proof of your friendship is but too well calculated, still further to awaken my sensibility, and increase my regret at parting from the enjoyment of private life.

All that now remains for me, is to commit myself and you to the protection of that beneficent Being, who, on a former occasion, hath happily brought us together, after a long and distressing separation--perhaps the same gracious providence will again indulge me. Unutterable sensations must then be left to more expressive silence; while from an aching heart, I bid you all, my affectionate friends, and kind neighbours, farewell!

George Washington.