

therefore the Alternatives were Embargo or War. He confessed that the people of this country were beginning to think the former alternative too passive, and would perhaps soon prefer the latter as even less injurious to the interests and more congenial with the spirit of a free people.

He declared to me that every opinion which he entertained respecting the best interests of his country led him to wish that a good understanding should take place between G. Britain and the United States, and that he thought that the obvious advantages which would thereby result to both countries were a sufficient pledge of the sincerity of his sentiments.

The reasons which induce me to believe that the views and determinations of this government, as described to me by Mr. Madison, are their real sentiments, and that they will pursue that course of conduct which they have marked out, arise from a mature consideration of the actual state of the affairs of this country, the particular situation of the government and ruling party, and from certain private but important communications which have been made to me by some of the members of the administration, who are sincerely desirous of a conciliation with G. Britain.

It is evident from every thing which has lately taken place in this country, that the people at large are desirous of having the Embargo removed; but it is also to be collected from the result of the elections throughout the U. S. that the present ruling party have a decided majority of the people with them, and as they have pledged themselves not to repeal it, while the restrictions upon the neutral rights continue in force by both belligerents, without substituting war measures, and as they themselves acknowledge that the ultimate and only effectual mode of resisting such warfare, if persisted in, is war, and that a permanent suspension of commerce would not properly be resistance, but submission; I cannot therefore conceive that it would be possible for them to retract their declarations, and indeed they would not have the power of continuing the embargo more than six months, and of course, therefore they must substitute war measures when it should be withdrawn, unless they were to abandon all the principles they have laid down, and to change all the resolutions which they have so unequivocally expressed.

It is true that they might possibly do so, if they found themselves pressed by the number & strength of their opponents, or by a change in the opinions of their Majority amongst the people; but it is plain from the decision in the House of Representatives in Congress, upon the resolutions proposed by the committee appointed to consider the subject of their Foreign relations, which was carried by a majority of 84 to 21, that they have not lost any ground in the present Congress, and the result of the elections for members of Congress, proves, that altho' they have lost some votes in the Eastern states, that they will have a great majority out of the whole number of the next Congress.

For these reasons I conclude that the government party could carry along with them the support of the people in the measures which they might resolve to take, and I have already explained, why I believe they will adopt the course of conduct which I have described in the foregoing part of this dispatch, arising out of the state of the country and their own particular situation, and I will therefore proceed to explain my private reasons for feeling confirmed in their opinions, and will have the honour of laying before you some important communications which were made to me by some of the members of this government, unofficially, but with a desire that they might produce a favourable effect towards a conciliation with Great Britain.

December 4th, 1809.

In the course of several private interviews which I had with Mr. Gallatin the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Smith, Secretary of the Navy, I have collected from them that their sentiments coincide with those of Mr. Madison, which I have detailed at some length in the preceding number of my dispatches, respecting the proper course of conduct which ought to be pursued by the United States, in their present situation, although they had differed as to the propriety of laying on the embargo, as a measure of defence, and had thought that it would have been better to have resorted to measures of a more decided nature at first, but that now they had no other means left, but to continue it for a short time longer, and then in the event of no change taking place in the conduct of the belligerents towards the United States, to endeavour to assert their rights against both powers: but that if either should relax in their aggressions, they said they would vote for taking part with that one against the other which should continue its aggressions.

Mr. Gallatin remarked to me, that the resolutions which were proposed by the committee of Foreign relations in their report to the House of Representatives, and which had already passed in the committee of the whole House, and would perhaps soon pass into a law, seemed to him to remove two very important grounds of difference with Great Britain, viz. the non-importation act, as applicable to her alone, and the President's proclamation, whereby the ships of Great Britain were excluded from the ports of the United States while those of France were permitted to enter, but now, by the non-intercourse law both powers were placed on the same footing; he did not pretend to say that this measure had been from any motives of concession to Great Britain; but as in fact those consequences followed, he conceived they might be considered as removing the two great obstacles to a conciliation. This he wished might be the case, as he intimated to me that such steps were about to be taken by Congress upon another very important subject of the differences between the two countries, as might have a further effect in leading to a favourable adjustment of them. He informed me, that a law was about to be proposed to Congress, and which he believed would pass, to interdict all American vessels from receiving on board any foreign seamen, under heavy penalties or forfeitures, and that already the ships of war of the United States had been ordered not to receive any, and to discharge such as were at that time on board. This subject is also alluded to by Mr. Giles, the Senator, in his speech, who is high in the confidence of the government, & it is said, is to be Mr. Madison's Secretary of State. Mr. Gallatin also said, that he knew that it was intended by the United States to abandon the attempt to carry on a trade

with the colonies of belligerents in time of war which was not allowed in time of peace, and trust to the being permitted by the French to carry on such trade in peace so as to entitle them to a continuance of it in time of war.

In this manner he observed all the points of differences between Great Britain and the United States might be smoothed away (was his expression) and that the United States would be willing to put the intercourse with Great Britain upon a perfect footing of reciprocity, and would either consent to the arrangement that the ships of both nations should pay the same duties reciprocally, or place each other simply upon the footing of the most favoured nation.

I have no doubt that these communications were made with a sincere desire that they might produce the effect of conciliation, because it is well known that Mr. Gallatin has long thought that the restrictive and jealous system of non-importation laws, extra duties, and other modes of checking a free trade with Great Britain have been erroneous and highly injurious to the interests of America; he informed me, distinctly, that he had always entertained that opinion, and that he had uniformly endeavoured to persuade the president to place the conduct of G. Britain and France towards the United States in a fair light before the public. He seemed to check himself at the moment he was speaking upon that subject, and I could not get him to express himself more distinctly, but I could clearly collect from the manner, and from some slight insinuations, that he thought the President had acted with partiality towards France. For he turned the conversation immediately upon the character of Mr. Madison, and said that he could not be accused of having such a bias towards France; and remarked that Mr. Madison was known to be an admirer of the British constitution, to be generally well disposed towards the nation, and to be entirely free from any enmity to its general prosperity. He appealed to me, whether I had not observed that he frequently spoke with approbation of its institutions, its energy & spirit, and that he was thoroughly well versed in its history, literature and arts.

These observations he made at that time for the purpose of contrasting the sentiments of Mr. Madison with those of the President, as he knew that I must have observed that Mr. Jefferson never spoke with approbation of any thing that was British and always took up French topics in his conversation, and always praised the people and country of France, and never lost an opportunity of shewing his dislike to Great Britain.

At the close of my interview with Mr. Gallatin, he said in a familiar way, "You see, sir, we could settle a treaty in my private room in two hours, which might perhaps be found to be as lasting as if it was bound up in all the formalities of a regular system; and might be found as reciprocally useful as a treaty consisting of twenty-four articles, in which the intricate points of intercourse might be in vain attempted to be reconciled to the opposite, and perhaps, jealous views of self-interest of the respective countries."

I have taken the liberty of detailing to you the substance of this unofficial conversation with Mr. Gallatin, in order to explain to you the grounds upon which I have formed my opinion that the members of the present government who it is expected will belong also to the next, would be desirous of settling the differences of the United States with Great Britain to enable them to extricate the country and themselves from the difficulties in which they are involved; for it is now, I believe, determined that Mr. Gallatin will accept his present office under Mr. Madison, which was at one time doubted. The character of Mr. Gallatin must be well known to you, to be held in the greatest respect in this country for his unrivalled talents as a financier and as a statesman. I cannot think be any reasonable doubt entertained that he is heartily opposed to French aggrandizement, and to the usurpations of Bonaparte. He was an enthusiast in favour of the French revolution, in the early period of it, but has long since abandoned the favourable opinion he had entertained respecting it, and has viewed the progress of France towards universal dominion with jealousy and regret.

How far the good will of this government and country towards Great Britain may be worth, in the estimation of his Majesty's government, the sacrifice of the orders in council and of the impression which they might be expected to make on France, it would be presumptuous in me to venture to calculate, but I am thoroughly persuaded that at THAT PRICE it might be obtained.

I have endeavoured, by the most strict and diligent enquiries into the views and strength of the federal party to ascertain to what extent they would be willing and able to resist the measures of the party in power, and how far they could carry the opinions of this country along with them in their attempts to remove the embargo, without recurring to hostilities against both Great Britain and France.

Upon a mature consideration of this subject I am persuaded that great as the desire is which generally prevails for the removal of the embargo, that the federalists would not venture to recommend that it should be withdrawn, without proposing some measures of greater energy as a substitute. Some have indeed hinted at the propriety of at once declaring war against France; but few, however, of those who have been most clamorous against the Embargo, have yet offered their opinions as to what course ought to be pursued, although all have declared against the submission to the restrictions upon their neutral rights.

When the small number of those who have pointed out the propriety of going to war with France, alone, is considered, even of the federal party, I cannot believe that such a measure would succeed.

All the leaders of the democratic party in Congress and out of it, declare that they only propose the continuance of the embargo for a short time, and that if the voice of the people at large is for more active resistance, that they shall be willing and ready to put forth the strength of the country for that purpose. These declarations are to be found in the speeches, some printed copies of which I have sent herewith; you will find, however, that in some of them a great stress is still laid upon the effects to be expected from the embargo in coercing the belligerents, particularly Great Britain, to relax in her restrictions, from the distress and inconvenience which is likely to be produced by the want of the produce of this country.

This reliance upon such consequences from the Embargo is greatly, indeed almost entirely dimin-

ished in the opinions of most people, and I conceive that the only reason why the ruling party wish it to be continued arises from a hope that time might afford them an opportunity of better judging of the probable issue of events in Europe, particularly of the success or failure of Bonaparte in Spain.

It may be doubted whether the privations and inconveniences produced by the Embargo in this country, will not compel the Congress to take some hostile measures, in order to have a pretext for its removal of so trifling a nature, however, as to leave it to the belligerents to overlook them, if they please, and to save the ruling party from the necessity of going into war measures of great expence and danger not only to their own popularity and power, but perhaps, even to the safety of the union. I propose to have the honour of offering some remarks upon this subject in the next number of my dispatches.

Washington, March 6, 1809.

Sir—Since the arrival in the Delaware river on the 10th instant of the American dispatch vessel the Union from England and France, I have had an interview with the President (Mr. Madison) and the Secretary of State (Mr. Robt. Smith) who expressed their sentiments to me very freely relative to the intelligence which was brought by that vessel.

The President observed that the alteration in his Majesty's Orders in Council by the recent Order which had been communicated by you to Mr. Pinkney, suspending "the operation of the acts as to any duties on exportation granted by the said acts as far as relates to Articles being the growth, produce, or manufacture of any country being in amity with his Majesty," &c. did not in fact remove the objections entertained by the United States against the orders in council in any degree worthy of notice. That they still violated the neutral rights of this country, as they made it necessary for American ships to pass through England, which was not only an infringement of the independence of the United States, but was completely destructive of their commerce, since the American vessels were prohibited from going to the continent after they had been forced to touch in England.

He remarked also upon the circumstance of Russia and Denmark being comprehended in the operation of the orders in council, which he said was assuming a new principle, as the orders had been hitherto rested upon the ground of a right of retaliation, whereas Russia and Denmark have never issued any decree violating neutral rights. He complained severely of this, and went over the same arguments upon these points which he had made use of while he was Secretary of State, and seemed to be greatly disappointed and vexed that no change in the relations of the United States with the belligerents seemed likely to take place before the meeting of the new Congress in May next, as he foresees the serious difficulties and embarrassments in which the United States will be then involved in determining upon the course of conduct which it will be expedient to pursue, as it is universally thought that the non-intercourse law cannot last longer than the next session of Congress, and it will become necessary at that time either to abandon all idea of resistance, or to determine to adopt measures of hostility against both belligerents, which could not be carried in the last Congress, and therefore are still less likely to be adopted in the new, which will consist of a larger number of members averse to such a desperate and unavailing course.

The Secretary of State (Mr. Robert Smith) repeated the sentiments which he had often expressed to me, when Secretary of the Navy, of regret that his Majesty's government seemed not to believe that the United States would resist the decrees of France. He thinks the correspondence between the American minister at Paris (General Armstrong) and the French government, prove the determination of this government, not to submit to them. He declared to me also that he knows that war would have been instantly declared against France, upon Great Britain's relaxing her orders, which he said were issued before the United States had an opportunity of ascertaining the illegal interpretation which France meant to put upon her decrees; he added, that he was convinced that even now measures of actual hostility would be adopted against France, without hesitation, should Great Britain relax in her orders so as to afford the United States an opportunity of doing so with honour; but that it would be impossible that they should single out France as an opponent, while Great Britain, contrary to her own declarations, enforced her orders before any acquiescence on the part of the United States in the French decrees had been proved.

He acknowledged that it might be difficult to bring on a state of actual hostility between this country and Great Britain upon the grounds of any subsisting differences, but that he was desirous that an amicable understanding should prevail between the two countries, which the present state of their relations would entirely prevent.

He added, that he was afraid the irritations which were likely to be produced by capture under his Majesty's orders in council might lead to serious consequences, which he said he should deprecate, as he was unwilling to see the United States thrown into an alliance which he thought already too powerful for the interests of the world. He did not pretend to entertain any partiality towards England, but considered that the interest of the U. States was the same at the present moment with that of Great Britain.

These sentiments, as expressed to me by Mr. Robert Smith are, I believe, very sincere. I have been much acquainted with him, and cannot think be mistaken in the opinion which I have formed of his disposition and feelings upon that subject.

Both the President and Secretary of State are, I understand, much offended at the appointment of Admiral Berkeley to a high command, pending the serious complaint preferred against him by the U. States; they have not mentioned the subject to me, as no authentic account of the fact has been yet received; but I expect to hear strong representations upon the subject, should it prove to be well founded.

As I have already had the honor to convey to you my sentiments upon the subject of the non-intercourse law, in several preceding numbers of my dispatches, as also upon the general aspect of affairs in this country, I will not trouble you with any further remarks, but beg leave to refer you to the enclosed extract from my No. 12. which was sent in his Majesty's packet with the mail of last month, as it contains my opinion upon those topics, which are unchanged.

This dispatch, as also my Nos. 14 and 15, will be carried to England in the American dispatch vessel Pacific, which will sail from hence in a few days with a messenger, Lieut. Read; another vessel is going at the same time to France, with a messenger and dispatches. Mr. Coles, the private secretary of the late President, is to be the bearer of them.

(Enclosure referred to in the above.)

Washington, 15th Feb. 1809.

As the ruling party perceive that it would not be in their power to carry the Eastern states along with them in a war with Great Britain, on the grounds of any subsisting differences between the two countries, they hope that the frequent captures of the vessels belonging to the Eastern states, which are likely to take place in consequence of his Majesty's orders in council continuing in operation, may excite irritation in the minds of the people of those states, and lead them to take a part in the next Congress in any measures which might be pointed against Great Britain.

I continue to be firmly persuaded that Mr. Madison, who has now been pronounced to be the next President, would most willingly seize the first opportunity of recommending to the next Congress to assert the neutral rights against France, should his Majesty deem it to be just or expedient to cause his orders in council to be withdrawn in consequence of a determination being evinced by the United States not to submit to the aggressions of France. And I conceive that it is not at all improbable that he might authorise Mr. Pinkney to make a communication to you to that effect, as he has frequently in conversation said to me, that no hesitation would be felt in this country of entering upon hostilities with France, if she did not recal her decrees, but he always added, that it was impossible the United States could take such a step while his Majesty's orders were in force, because their justification could only be attempted upon the grounds that the United States had acquiesced in the decrees of France, which he uniformly contends has never been the case.

It is evident to me that he will be supported in this sentiment by his own party in Congress, and in the country generally so far as to prevent his feeling himself compelled to single out France as an enemy, while his Majesty's orders in council continued in force; but I am perfectly confident that it would be impossible that they could bring on a war with England, unless it should be occasioned, as I have before mentioned, by an irritation produced in the minds of the people of the Eastern states, by the losses which might be sustained by them in their ships and commerce by captures under his Majesty's orders.

The weight and influence of the Eastern states has been sufficient to force the ruling party to abandon their favourite system of the Embargo, and that too without the "painful alternative" of President Jefferson of war being substituted; but I doubt extremely how far they could compel the Congress and President into a war with France, unless the United States could be called upon to assert its neutral rights by the temporary removal of his Majesty's orders in council to give them that opportunity.

It appears by the result of the state of the votes for the President and Vice President which was declared in the Senate yesterday, that Mr. Madison had 122 votes out of 175, and that all the votes, except three in the Southern and Western states were in his favour, besides Pennsylvania; and that two thirds of the votes of the state of New-York were given to him. He had also all the votes of Vermont, but that was in consequence of the votes being given by the legislature of that state, which happened to be democratic; besides having nine out of twelve votes of the state of Maryland.

This vast majority would enable the President elect and his party to resist the solicitation of the four Eastern states, should they urge the next Congress to single out France as an enemy, because the same power which has proved incompetent to enforce an illegal, oppressive and ruinous law, would still be sufficient to withstand a requisition to wage a war, which, however just, would not be likely to be attended with any profit or advantage.

It is true that a non-intercourse law may be considered by the eastern states as very objectionable, but as it would be rather a nominal prohibition than a rigorous enforcement, a resistance to it would be less likely to be made, and of less importance if it should take place.

The ultimate consequences of such differences and jealousies arising between the Eastern and Southern States, would inevitably tend to a dissolution of the union, which has been for some time talked of, and has of late, as I have heard, been seriously contemplated by many of the leading people in the Eastern division.

I will not however trouble you with any observations upon that important topic at present, but confine myself to the consequences of the measures about to be adopted in Congress, affecting his Majesty's interest.

Whatever may be the motives of the Congress for the passing a non-intercourse law with England and France, I conceive that great advantages may be reaped from it by England, as she has the command of the seas, and can procure through neutrals any of the produce of this country, besides the immense quantity which will be brought direct to G. Britain, under various pretences; whereas France will obtain but little, at a great expence and risk, and will only get that little in consequence of the high prices in their markets.

This measure will operate in so partial and discouraging a manner upon the eastern states, which are commercial, that it would not be submitted to very long, and its effects in preventing the introduction of British manufactures would be trifling, as they would be smuggled into the country with the greatest facility, since the people who alone could interfere with effect, would encourage such a traffic between his Majesty's dominions in Canada, and the adjacent territories of the U. S. and in various other ways.

Another advantage arising to G. B. from the non-intercourse law would be, that the interdiction of ships of war from entering the ports of the U. States would be general, instead of being directed solely against his Majesty's ships. The non-intercourse law would be also general, and the consequence would be, that his Majesty's subjects would be great quantity of goods into the U. S. but French subjects could not introduce any.