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## Political.

### MR. PICKERING'S LETTERS.

PICKERING'S ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.

NO. VII.

*Beloved Citizens,*

Some unexpected avocations have prevented so early a continuation of my addresses as I had contemplated. I now resume the consideration of the subjects which I proposed to discuss. In my second number, in stating the most prominent evils which I glanced at the evils which have afflicted our country have been admitted, and I trust which you have long been amused with hopes of relief; but which remain unabated; or rather have become more aggravated. Are they remedied? I trust not; for the remedy is in your own hands. But to apply it with effect, you must know their cause. To this also I have adverted: viewing these evils as originating chiefly in the unprincipled ambition of a few men, with Mr. Jefferson at their head. It is necessary that you should understand his character, in order rightly to estimate his public measures, into an approbation of which a great portion of the citizens of the United States have been beguiled.

### THOMAS JEFFERSON.

When Mr. Jefferson entered on the presidency of the United States, he found them, by his own confession, "in the full tide of successful experiment." And you all know, that while the government was in his hands, this tide of national prosperity abated; and towards the close of his presidency, and in the two years which have followed under his successor (pursuing the same system) it has fallen to the lowest ebb. Such is the fact. The principal cause will be found in Mr. Jefferson's ill judged and deceitful policy; in which we are to expect no voluntary change under Mr. Madison, whose cordial co-operation with his predecessor, was a pledge (Mr. Jefferson said) that he would persevere in the same system.

I had contemplated giving a detail, in the order in which they took place, of the principal acts so far as known to me) of Mr. Jefferson's public life; on which might be formed a just estimate of his merit; & from which the sinister policy which has governed him would appear. I shall however, not confine myself to this course; but anticipate some facts and circumstances, as circumstances may direct.

Mr. Jefferson's first claim to distinction seems to have been founded on the Declaration of Independence, of which he is reputed to be the writer. So much applause, indeed, has been heaped upon him for his agency in that state paper, that more merit could hardly have been ascribed to him, if, instead of writing a declaration, he had been the author of the independence of the United States. The history of that declaration will show how slender is his claim to distinction for that performance.

The journals of congress present to us the following facts.

On the 7th of June 1776, "certain resolutions respecting independency were moved." They were considered the next day; and again on Monday the 10th. The first resolution was in these words: "That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and Independent States; that they are absolved from allegiance to the British crown; and that all political connexion between them and the state of Great Britain, and ought to be, totally dissolved." The further consideration of this resolution was postponed to the first day of July.—But that no time might be lost, in case the Congress should then agree to the resolution, it was now resolved that a committee should be appointed to prepare a declaration to the effect of that first resolution. And on the 11th of June the appointment was made. The members chosen were Mr. Jefferson, Mr. John Adams, Mr. Franklin, Mr. Sherman, and Mr. Robert R. Livingston. And Mr. Jefferson being the first on the list of the committee, was of course the chairman. A particular policy governed the choice. In the early period of our revolution, it was deemed expedient, in very important questions, that Virginia should take the lead. Virginia was then the largest and most populous of the Colonies. Perhaps, too, it was expected that her going before would powerfully influence her neighbours to follow in her track. There might be other reasons. Such, however, was the fact; as I was once assured by the late Mr. Samuel Adams (then a member from Massachusetts) with a significance of countenance, in making the remark, which distinguished that wily politician. It was, then, in pursuance of this policy, when the minds of the members of Congress, generally, were, by the actual state of things, and some previous proceedings, prepared for the Independence of the Colonies, that Richard Henry Lee of Virginia moved "the resolutions respecting Independency;" and by the like concert (as I have understood) John Adams of Massachusetts seconded them. Mr. Lee would, almost of course, have been the chairman of the committee, had not the dangerous sickness of some of his family called him home. In his absence, the choice fell on his colleague Mr. Jefferson.

It may seem too obvious to remark, that, as in ordinary cases, so especially on this great question, the committee met, conferred and freely communicated their ideas; some of them (as I have been informed) putting their thoughts on

paper. Thus furnished with the ideas and views of the members of the committee, Mr. Jefferson was charged with preparing a draught of the declaration. And on the 28th of June the committee reported a draught to congress. On the 1st July it was taken into consideration, in connexion with the resolution above recited.—July 2d the resolution was agreed to, and the declaration; and on the 4th of July agreed to a Declaration of Independence; after striking out about one third of the whole, as draughted by Mr. Jefferson, and making various amendments, and, among others, introducing, with a solemnity demanded by the occasion, their "appeal to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of their intentions;" and their "firm reliance on the protection of Divine providence."

I have called the declaration reported by the committee, "Mr. Jefferson's draught," because I have not learned that any material alterations were made in the committee; and because he so sensibly manifested his disappointment and chagrin at the great alterations made in congress. In a letter dated July 8, 1776, to an absent delegate, Mr. Jefferson says—"I enclose a copy of the declaration of independence as agreed to in the house [congress] and also as originally framed. You will judge whether it is better or worse for the critics." This letter, and "the copy of the declaration as originally framed," enclosed therein, both in the hand writing of Mr. Jefferson, I have seen and copied.

Seeing such great alterations in the original draught were thought necessary by congress, some may ask, how it happened that so respectable a committee should agree to report it? My answer must be conjectural: That the other members of the committee perceiving the chairman's fondness for his draught, consented to have it reported; relying on the necessary amendments in congress; and perhaps intending to suggest to some of their friends to move for such as they deemed expedient. Be this, however, as it may, the large alterations and amendments above mentioned were actually made. In fact, the materials of which a declaration of independence might be composed, were so abundant, the talent most requisite in the compiler, would be that of just discrimination, a correct judgment, to reject the minor considerations, and avoid drawing out too great a length such as were important; in order to present to the world, with dignity and force that great national act. And when we recollect the number of men eminently distinguished for talents, who were then members of congress, and know that so large a portion of Mr. Jefferson's draught was lopped off, expunged, altered and amended—the conclusion is, that the draught was sufficiently marked with imperfections. But in the parts retained, what new ideas are to be found? The natural and social rights of man displayed by eminent English authors, with whose writings the leading men of the day were conversant, and the rights of the colonists as Englishmen (and to maintain the latter, violated by the government of the parent state, was the sole cause and object of the resolution—) all these rights, I say, and their infringements, had been, for years, the subjects of conversation, of discussion in newspapers and pamphlets, and prominent in the general congresses of 1774 and 1775; as is manifested in their various resolutions, declarations, and eloquent letters and addresses. So that (as above suggested) the chief task of the compiler of the declaration of independence would consist in making, from these ample materials, a judicious and dignified selection.

The celebrated Mr. Locke had long before taught his countrymen, in England and her Colonies, what were their rights as men and as subjects: that when the latter, instead of protection in their rights, experienced oppression from their government they had a right to resist, to change its form, and introduce a new one.—And to the objection, that this principle would produce mischief, as often as a turbulent spirit should desire the alteration of the government, Mr. Locke answers—"Till the mischief be grown general, and the ill designs of the rulers become visible, or their attempts sensible to the greater part, the people who are more disposed to suffer than right themselves by resistance, are not apt to stir." And Mr. Jefferson, in the declaration of independence, copying Mr. Locke's principles and ideas, says, in the like case, that "prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established, should not be changed for light and transient causes: and accordingly, all experience has shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed."

Mr. Jefferson has never forgotten this idea, of the patient endurance with which a nation will submit to oppression, even from a government not long established; or he would not have ventured on the daring experiment of an unlimited embargo, and other similar oppressive, and ruinous measures. But he had also learned with what facility a nation might be deceived. And so conformable was Mr. Jefferson's practice to this idea, it was manifested in so many of his acts, that Deception may be considered as the operative principle of his administration.

### TIMOTHY PICKERING.

April 27, 1811.

From the Essex Register.

We see no necessity to say more of British affairs than regards the general state of the nation.—The Regency has been established without

any internal disquiet, and without a great change of measures.—The English do not refuse to confess the interruptions of commerce, but the public measures are uncontroverted by them. In Ireland the die seems to be cast, but it is still believed that the nation has power enough to overrule them. The enormous expenses of the nation have long been supported with a firmness which has exceeded calculation, and the British nation is still content of maintaining its national existence under its embarrassments. To what measures this nation may yet have recourse, is not to be judged from its present policy. Disappointed in all its attempts on the Continent, it is now, and by its vast naval power, to prevent the necessary commerce of the world, till it has the full share which its power and naval superiority may claim.—With our States, we see a disposition to maintain the appearance of negotiation, without any willingness to recal their orders in Council from any professions which have been made by the French. This gives the greatest uncertainty to our commercial prospects, and the utmost solicitude is discovered upon every report of dispatches from Europe. The British government has adopted every expedient to quiet the fears and to lessen the wants of their subjects, who suffer from the perplexed state of commerce. The general anxiety encourages the hope that a state of things which keeps the whole world in distress will not be of long duration. The highest duty belongs to the greatest danger; our country's good is our salvation.

Among the articles of military history it is said that every Marshal of France has in his division two thousand riflemen, well disciplined in the use of their rifles. And among the reports of the number of the French troops which had passed through Bayonne into Spain, is one which gives the infantry at 400 thousand, and the cavalry at 61 thousand, and not including the troops which have passed from the southern part of France into Spain by Catalonia. We have no test of these calculations.

The Russian empire has a full share of the work of civilizing mankind, as the very imperfect discoveries of the vast countries belonging to that empire and the present state of its population inform us. Zibolski tells us that it shares in the blessing of an increasing population.—The population reported in 1792 at 31 millions, in 1795 was reported at 36 millions, and in 1806 at 41 millions. It is now to comprehend thirty six provinces, besides 14 jurisdictions, and 4 territorial governments. These latter are: Georgia, the Don Cossacs, the Islands of Russia in the East Sea, and the American settlements. In reckoning these islands the Russians divide them into 4 classes. In the first are included 21 large, besides small Curle Islands between Kamschatka and Japan. In the second, the Aleutic Islands east of Kamschatka with Bearing and Copper Islands, nine in number, of which the largest is Unalashai having 14 settlements under the American company at Kadja, a straight at which in 1784 was a fort and settlement.—The Russians have settled in 4 places in America. In Easter Haven where they build their vessels, in Fort Alexander and Easter Redoubt, and in the New Russian and Simnash fort, and these settlements contain 400 persons subject to the American company at Kadja.

Extract of a letter from Dr. Logan to his friend in

"Accept my thanks for your polite and friendly letter.

"I am not surprised that some individuals express doubt, and hesitation, respecting the object of my late visit to England.—It is one of the curses arising from the violent spirit of party in our country, that the views and acts of individuals are too frequently attributed to the worst of motives by men of violent passions or contracted selfish minds.

"As to myself, I belong to no party but that of my country—whoever may be at the head of the government, I will not be a silent observer of passing events; but whenever the honour, peace or prosperity of my country is in danger, I will exert my endeavours to support her best interests.

"I was not satisfied with the administration of Mr. Adams, as disposed to involve us in a war with France, and necessarily throw us into the arms of Great Britain; at that period the most powerful nation in Europe. Nor am I now willing to sacrifice the peace of the United States to the colossal power of France; becoming the scourge and destroyer of the civilized world.

"Considering the bickerings and semi-state of warfare in which Great Britain and the United States have been engaged for several years; and viewing these two great nations drawn up in martial array, waiting for the signal to engage in a conflict, in which it is little matter for whom victory declares, as ruin and destruction must be the inevitable consequence to both parties (by the treachery and ambition of Bonaparte) I determined on a visit to England, to satisfy my own mind respecting the disposition of that nation towards the United States; and to remove, as far as it was in the power of a private individual, their prejudices against the people of the United States; excited by the representations of those who are enemies to the peace of both countries.

"I resided five months in England; travelled upwards of eleven hundred miles through the country—visited their principal sports, and manufacturing towns—was present at their great agricultural meetings—and was introduced to men of

the first characters, in and out of office. Whatever may be the sentiments of the interior cabinet, even the ministry in private conversation, and in parliament professed a desire to preserve peace with the United States.—And this sentiment was universal among every class of citizens with whom I conversed, and from whom, as a private American citizen, I received the most pointed civility and respect.

FROM THE MINERVA'S JOURNAL.  
Extract of a letter from a gentleman in Caracas,  
(Spanish Bled) to his friend in Philadelphia,  
dated

"The President of the United States, since he took office, a regular congress having met for the first time the 24th inst. and they are now busy planning a constitution and new laws. The people are at present very quiet, but perhaps it is a calm portending a storm. The day the congress met, a conspiracy was discovered and quashed, at the head of which was a hot-headed and weak young man, a brother-in-law of the President! The object of this rash plot was to excite the slaves and mulattoes to follow the example of their St. Domingo brethren. Yet they are printing here 'Paine's Rights of Man,' and 'Rousseau's Social Contract,' it appears to me with the object of getting their own throats cut.

"The Carraquean army has been completely foiled in its attempt on the city of Coro, and given it up as a bad job, for a time at least. What right they had to attack them, is more than I can conjecture. I am however of opinion that the revolution is by no means at an end. As yet no blood has been shed, but the people talk of sacrificing some unfortunate Spaniards who held a correspondence with the governor of Coro, and who were brought in prisoners a day or two ago.

"I am just returned from a trip of about 300 miles into the interior. I travelled on horse-back, and it was sometimes very disagreeable; sleeping frequently on the bare ground with only the sky for a covering, and this after one scanty meal in the day of Cassava bread and brown sugar, washed down with muddy water strongly flavoured with the dirt of Alligators and the slime of Water Snakes, of one of which I saw the skeleton, the monster being killed in the act of swallowing a deer at gulp. During the whole three weeks I was absent there was not a drop of rain fell, and yet the heat was by no means excessive. In fact, I returned from my tour with a sun burnt face, but an increased appetite. For the first three days travelling, the road leads over high hills, with narrow valleys between, which give rich crops of sugar and indigo, and on the rising grounds coffee. So happy is the climate, that, 60 miles from this, you see corn fields interspersed with the sugar cane and Cacao plant; and if they were in the hands of any other people, for instance, the English, French, Dutch, or Yankees, in every garden would be united all the European and Tropical fruits; yet, except musk and water-melons, which grow without any cultivation, no other fruit is to be met with in the country.

"After having travelled about 150 miles, we arrived at the Llanos, which are immense plains that stretch as far as the river Oroonoko, and in the rainy season afford pasture to great herds of cattle. Here nothing relieves the eye except now and then large tracts of palm trees growing so regularly, and of such equal height, that they appear as if planted by the hand of man. The extent of my journey was to a town called Calabozo, near to which runs the river Guarico, the only stream navigable even for canoes that I met with.

"The towns are very poorly built, having a dozen or two of tolerable houses, the remainder of the habitations being built of mud with roofs of palm leaves. Most of the towns have a grand church begun, which, for want of funds, is never above half finished. This appears to be generally the case in every Spanish town I have seen. The people are much intermixed with the Indians originally inhabiting the province, and are a very lazy and dissolute set of beings. In the best houses you see the young girls swinging all day in a hammock, smoking segars with the lighted end in the mouth! Charming creatures to choose a wife from! And yet some of them are pretty. Here is none of that generous hospitality you meet with at the Cape, nor have even the richest the least idea of what we call comfort. A hammock supplies the place of a chair, a sofa, or a bed, Hands were made before knives and forks; and who would use a dish, plate, jug, or wash-hand-bason, when one Calabash will serve all these purposes."

French privateers.—Perhaps among all the degrading circumstances to which the poor deluded people of America have of late submitted, there never was any thing which makes them look so truly contemptible as the French privateers now riding in our harbours. Bonaparte's slaves in France depressed as they are, would not submit to such a state of things.—They would not bear such insults and abuse, unless evened by arms. The conduct of the emperor and of his privateers, alias national vessels, outrages all decency, as well as all law both of God and man: and yet to this conduct we submit without a murmur, and without being compelled to it by any physical force;—we seem to consider the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance as orthodox when applied to his imperial majesty, and that to preach, or practise any other would be damnation.