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Political.

MR. PICKERING'S ADDRESS

TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.
No. IX.

My last address I remarked that Mr. Jefferson, when he wrote his Notes on Virginia, did not imagine the people's faith and patience would be so far as to sacrifice to the Will of their rulers, such obvious and important interests in their commerce and navigation, and continue their admiration of their destroyers. Nobody, I think, could have believed it possible. The fact alone could render it credible.

After manifesting his own opinion, that it would be unwise to abandon the ocean, he said, "The Atlantic is not a mere sea, but the actual basis of our countrymen attach them to commerce. They will exercise it for themselves. Yet at the close of the year 1807, he had acquired the confidence of the mass of the nation to such a degree, that he ventured on the experiment of abandoning the ocean," under the disguise of an EMBARGO; a name familiar for a temporary suspension of commercial navigation, for some defined and temporary cause or object. But the act imposing the embargo was without limitation, and without an adequate cause or object. The reasons he assigned to congress were so flimsy, the documents he communicated so insufficient, that, if the effect of oversteering confidence, and the force of party, were not known, it would seem impossible that congress should have sanctioned the measure. As the people, however, suffering the loss of trade, might be less tractable than congress, it was deemed necessary to wrap up the project in mystery. Hence it was, that part of the documents were withdrawn, and returned to Mr. Jefferson, as he had requested; and kept secret until the country was completely saddled with the embargo, and in effect to this day. For though at length they were again communicated and published, yet it was with a mass of other papers, and without any indication that they had been originally offered (what no one not in the secret would suspect) part of the grounds for the embargo. These papers I shall publish, when I come to investigate the real motives of Mr. Jefferson in recommending that measure.

he experienced occasional opposition. Some of his projects were too preposterous, or impracticable, to be maintained by his friends. And although he succeeded in getting his gun-boats built; yet as soon as he ceased to be president, they went out of fashion. It was discovered that this favourite scheme, for general defence, was defective and contemptible, if not impracticable. And in the first session of congress under his successor, (June 1809) a committee of the senate reported a bill for selling the gun-boats, with the reservation of a small number for particular situations. If the bill had become a law, and they had then been sold, it is possible they might have fetched a tenth part of what they had cost the United States; in the last years of Mr. Jefferson's presidency. In this gun-boat project we see one display of that gentleman's wisdom and economy. In the bill miscarried, and the cause of its failure seemed to be this: As soon as it was known abroad that the gun boat system was no longer favored by the administration; if it were not even a subject of derision with one or more of its members, as well as in congress; and that a committee of the senate had reported a bill for selling this "species of naval armament," the editors of newspapers renewed their attack upon them with upbraiding ridicule. The pride of the government was touched; perhaps Mr. Jefferson had interfered; or some of his friends for him: to save his feelings. Be this as it may the bill was postponed; and the gun-boats remain unsold: although excepting twenty four at New-Orleans, they were absolutely useless, were rapidly decaying and were soon to become of no value. For the secretary of the navy reported, (and the report was laid before the senate with the bill to authorise the sale,) that "if a gun boat is suffered to lie in port for one year, without giving her any kind of repair, she will probably be found, at the end of that year, wholly unworthy of being repaired."—I take it for granted, that (with the exception of the few at New Orleans) the gun boats were not repaired within that year, nor since; and of consequence, that they are now worthless.

In the same report, the secretary of the navy gave his "estimate of the annual expense of taking care of the gun-boats laid up" (and all but those at New Orleans were laid up) amounting to fifty-four thousand seven hundred and nine dollars; excluding ten thousand dollars from the estimate for annual repairs: because I presume no repairs of those "laid up" have been made. Thus have one million and some hundred thousands of dollars been sacrificed to Mr. Jefferson's views and whims. And even the little savings which might have been made two years ago, have been prevented by a tenderness for his reputation, or the pride of those who co-operated with him in the original project.

But there is more economy in this business yet to be displayed. In another report, made three days after the former, the secretary of the navy states the comparative expences of building gun-boats and frigates; by which it appears, that the former would cost-gun for gun, more than twice as much as the latter.—For instance, that a frigate mounting 56 guns (42 pound carronades and 24 pound long cannon) would cost 221,000 dollars; and 19 gun-boats, carrying each two guns, 228,000 dollars; and that the building of 25 gun-boats, carrying each one gun, would cost 25,500 dollars; that to fight 56 guns on board of 28 gun-boats, would require 1260 men; and to fight 56 guns in 56 gun boats, would require 2520 men; and that these 2520 men on board frigates, each mounting 56 guns, and each requiring 420 men, can fight 336 guns, consisting of 42 pound carronades and 24 pound long cannon—(that is, the 2520 men would man and fight six frigates of 56 guns each.) He concludes his comparison with this further statement: "that the difference between the annual expence of fighting 56 guns on board a frigate, and 28 gun boats carrying 56 guns (two to each boat) is 207,600, dollars; and that the difference in the annual expence of fighting 56 guns on board a frigate, and 56 gun-boats carrying each one gun, is 535,200 dollars." That is above half a million of dollars more, for 56 gun-boats carrying each one gun, kept in service one year, than it would to maintain a frigate, for the same time, carrying the same number of guns! Who now will call in question the wisdom and economy of Mr. Jefferson's plans? But the gun-boats might, "if properly stationed," that is, in the smooth water of land locked harbors, afford some aid in defending such ports; they could not protect our commerce in the open sea, even on our own coast: ships of the line and frigates could do both—and gun boats had the preference if

* In the senate on a question for putting some of the frigates in commission for service, General Smith, advocated the measure, partly on this ground, That seamen would not incline to serve in the gun-boats; but when insisted for the frigates they might be transferred from them to the gun-boats! On this kidnapping idea sea faring men will be the best commentators.

† There is one fact connected with the gun boat business which is little known; and as it was intended to form a part of that system of defence, it may not be uninteresting.

There is, near the entrance of the Chesapeake Bay, a space of some miles in extent called the middle ground, where the water is of sufficient depth for gun boats, but too shallow for ships of war. Mr. Jefferson's project was, to form, on some part of this shoal, an Asylum for this favourite "species of naval armament." This was to be accomplished by encompassing a part of the shoal with mounds of rocks, to be trans-

This plan of gun-boats, instead of ships of the line and frigates, is perfectly consistent with, and a confirmation of the opinion extensively entertained—that Mr. Jefferson and his chief supporters are not friends, if they are not enemies to the foreign commerce of the United States, as connected with their navigation, and that they are alike enemies to an efficient navy. Of these things I am sensible that many of my fellow citizens will need no new evidence. For the information of others—instead of more details, at this time—I submit the open avowal of a distinguished member of congress from Virginia, during the last session. It furnishes the key to open to us the plan of the administration and its prime or confidential supporters; and will aid us in accounting for their conduct in relation to foreign powers, to France in particular.

As Mr. Pickens (Mr. Jefferson's son-in-law) in the last session of Congress, said of the Bank of the United States, that its fate was to be decided on party principles: so his colleague spoke of our government itself: That "it was a government of party: that they were obliged to have recourse to such measures as would enable them to retain their places: that they never would go to war for the rights of the ocean: commerce never would be protected by force; not even if there was a blockading fleet at the mouth of each of our harbors: and government [the party now in power and administering the government] never would risk a war until our resources were sufficient to defray the expences without creating burthens to make them unjustular."

This avowal was made to another member of Congress, who at my request, while the declaration was fresh in his memory, committed it to writing. I have not now room for comments upon it—if it does not speak a language too plain to require any.

TIMOTHY PICKERING.

ported and thrown in until their ridges should rise fairly above water. On these ridges (I do not know whether in the form of a square or circle) were to be raised walls of masonry, I think twelve feet high, and of a thickness (I suppose) sufficient to resist the battering of cannon, as well as of the sea. By an opening left in one of the sides, the gun-boats were to enter. And this opening was to be guarded by so running the two parts of the side, as to overlap, leaving a space between for the gun boats to pass in and out. With this most ingenious project Mr. Jefferson was so delighted, that, embracing in his glowing imagination the time of its execution, he exclaimed with transport—"Then let a British ship of war show her nose if she dare!"

It may occur to some to ask, why this Wet-Dock (as well as the Dry Dock) was not proposed to Congress. Unfortunately—or fortunately—Mr. Jefferson happened to meet with a man of common sense and experience, a practical philosopher—to whom the scheme was communicated. This gentleman, in the first place endeavoured (though in vain) to convince Mr. Jefferson that the proposed foundation of his wall would not resist the rolling of the Atlantic waves. But when he told him that the sand of the middle ground occasionally shifted; and that if his mounds of rocks resisted the force of the sea, they would cause an island to be formed; and that the entrance into his dock (or pound) would be choked up—Mr. Jefferson gave way: and the project was abandoned.

The first intimation of this project was given to me by a friend of Mr. Jefferson, who heard him utter the stout defiance of the British navy; and the details of it by a gentleman with whom Mr. Jefferson conferred on the subject, and who made the objections above stated.

NEW-HAVEN, (CON.) May 7.

PATRIOTIC RESOLUTIONS.

On Saturday last the citizens of the town of New-Haven, agreeable to legal warning, assembled for the purpose of taking into consideration the embarrassments to which they are subjected by the operation of the Non-Intercourse Law, passed at the late session of Congress: and after having maturely deliberated on the subject, passed the following Resolutions by an almost unanimous vote:

Resolved as the sense of this Meeting, That permanent, durable laws prohibiting the citizens of this country from trading to foreign nations, are an infraction of the Constitution of the United States.

Resolved, That prohibitions of foreign trade are partial and unjust in their operation; as they peculiarly injure the merchants, who have vested their property in shipping; whose habits of business are formed, and cannot be easily changed; and who have engaged in a lawful occupation, in confidence that they should enjoy the same freedom and protection in their employment, as every other class of citizens. Equally partial and unjust are such prohibitions as they affect commercial towns, and commercial states, whose interest is primarily affected, and most sensibly injured.

Resolved, That laws restraining our trade to foreign countries are extremely prejudicial to the agricultural interest; in preventing the exportation of surplus productions, and circumscribing the markets, & that they discourage industry, and diminish the value of lands and labour.

Resolved, That the Non-Importation Law is not within the legislative powers of the national government; the power of prohibiting for an un-

limited time the trade of our citizens to foreign countries, not being included in the power to regulate that trade, and not having been surrendered by this state to the United States.

Resolved, That the Non-Importation Law is unconstitutional, and repugnant to the genius of our laws, as well as to the spirit of a free government; as the bonds required, and the penalties annexed to a breach of the law, are unreasonable and excessive.

Resolved, That the bonds required, of merchants, by the non-importation act to enable them to land their goods, are not only excessive, in their amount; but they are calculated to operate as a pledge to bind the merchant to his good behavior to government; & by placing him in the power of administration, to make him subservient to their views.

Resolved, That the Non-Importation Law is unconstitutional, and repugnant to the genius of our laws, as well as to the spirit of a free government; as the bonds required, and the penalties annexed to a breach of the law, are unreasonable and excessive.

Resolved, That the frequent alterations of the laws respecting trade serve to embarrass, and often to ensnare the honest merchant. The embargo restrained exportation, but permitted importation—the order of things is now reversed—exportation is permitted and importation restrained: This versatility in the measures of government while it manifests want of system, perplexes the merchant, disturbs every regular plan of business, confounds all calculation; and by rendering that unlawful to day which was yesterday lawful, tends to ensnare the most cautious men, and subject them to losses and embarrassments which no wisdom can foresee or prevent.

Resolved, That a law which permits exportation, without the right to import, aims a fatal blow at an active commerce; as it prevents a return freight in our ships, without which trade cannot be lucrative or worth prosecuting; and the present law, by prohibiting the importation of property purchased before the law was passed, is peculiarly injurious and oppressive, and especially to the merchants in New-Haven.

Resolved, That the course of measures pursued by our government, for a number of years past, alarms us with the apprehension that such measures are intended to depress or destroy the active commerce of the Eastern and middle States; and thus to impair their strength, & diminish their importance. Nor are we less apprehensive that this policy aims gradually to introduce into this country, the system which prevails on the Continent of Europe. Against such projects, it is our duty to remonstrate with firmness; and to express our deliberate belief, that evils of this serious magnitude, will in this section of the country, meet with the most determined resistance.

Resolved, That a perseverance in interdicting importations from Great Britain instead of inducing the administrations of that country to revoke their orders, will probably issue in measures which will subject our trade to new embarrassments, by giving rise to a circuitous trade which make British ships the carriers of our productions, and by increasing the expences of freight, lessen the value of our exports. To this we may add, that such a trade, or any measure which should multiply the difficulties of exchanging productions, would increase the practice of smuggling, which not only defrauds the revenue, but begets a pernicious habit of evading the laws.

Resolved, That a commerce "embarrassed by too much regulation," and restriction, is destructive to morality, to fair dealing, and to that respect for law which constitutes the peace and order of society, and the best security of a free government. It removes the business from the upright merchant, who respects the law and his oath; and thus throws it into the hands of unprincipled men, who disregard both. It multiplies spies and informers; it engenders distrust among citizens; it offers a premium for the encouragement of fraud and perjury; it creates litigation; it generates contempt for government.

Resolved, That a free trade to the British dominions is particularly advantageous to the United States; as those countries want many of our productions, while our citizens need many of the productions and manufactures of the British dominions, which they furnish in great abundance, and on the best terms: some of which are essential to our own manufactures.

Resolved, That the attempt to influence the measures of foreign governments by prohibiting a commercial intercourse with their subjects, is both inefficient, and mischievous; because no nation is sufficiently dependent on the trade of the United States, to be compelled by the want of them, to change a course of measures deemed essential to its safety or interest; mischievous, because such interruption of our foreign trade checks domestic industry and enterprise, im-

(Concluded in the fourth page.)