

## Political.

### MR. PICKERING'S ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES. NO. XX. (Concluded.)

I have mentioned bribery as one of the means used by France to gain and establish an influence in the United States; and I have done it on the following grounds:

- The notorious profligacy of the French government (to say nothing of what existed under the former monarchy) evidenced, by its uniform conduct from an early period of our revolution. The official documents of our own government, under the hands of our envoys, Pinkney, Marshall and Gerry, attest that profligacy. Doubtless there are some persons who, to gain an important point, would offer a bribe, who would disdain to receive one. The government of France had no scruples of this sort. The Directory, by their minister of corruption Talleyrand, had the consummate baseness and impudence to demand of our Envoys a *douleur* (in English a bribe) of fifty thousand pounds sterling, (upwards of two hundred and twenty thousand dollars) for the pockets of four of them: the fifth Director, Merlin, who had held the office of Minister of Justice, being paid by the owners of privateers—[for being the minister of iniquity in directing the decisions of the prize courts, condemning American vessels and their cargoes.] And this bribe they were informed was only the customary tribute in diplomatic affairs! And even this *douleur* was not to procure the acknowledgment of our Envoys in the character of public ministers—but only permission for them to stay in Paris, where those insolent tyrants kept their court.
- The confidential friend and agent of Talleyrand told Mr. Gerry was just, and might always be relied on) in addition to the *douleur* of fifty thousand pounds, earnestly pressed for a loan to the French Republic of many millions of dollars—to have made which would have been a violation of our duty as a neutral nation—and urged various other unwarrantable and insolent demands of the French government; enforcing them by threats of its vengeance on failure of their compliance. Our Envoys remaining firm and invincible, the confidential agent said to them—“Perhaps you believe that in returning and exposing to your countrymen the unreasonableness of the demands of this government, you will unite them in resistance to those demands; you are mistaken: you ought to know that the diplomatic skill of France, and the means she possesses in your country are sufficient to enable her, with the aid of the French party in America, to throw the blame which will attend the rupture of the negotiations on the Federalists, as you term yourselves, but on the British party, as France terms you: and you may assure yourselves that this will be done.”
- The testimony of Fauchet, the minister of France to the United States, in his famous letter of October 31, 1794; the time of the great insurrection in the western part of Pennsylvania, familiarly known by the name of the Whiskey insurrection. Referring to certain overtures which had been made to him by one of the exclusive patriots, (whom he named) and which he had before communicated to his government, Fauchet says—“thus with some thousands of dollars the Republic could have decided on civil war or peace. Thus the consciences of the pretended patriots of America have already their price!”
- The notorious treachery of many officers civil and military of the countries which have been over-run by the arms of France; and whose treason can be ascribed to no cause but the distribution of French gold, or the delusive promises of elevation to higher employments and dignities, in the case of Godoy the Prince of Peace, who betrayed Spain into the hands of Bonaparte; or to both these causes. Accordingly the opinion is general that this sort of corruption has been the efficient pioneer to the French armies, and opened their way to conquest.
- The open avowal of the fact by a French agent, at the time that Adet (the successor of Fauchet) was the French minister in Philadelphia. This agent was Mr. Letombe, the consul general of the French Republic, a person well known to great numbers of my fellow citizens, as well as to Letombe had previously been French consul at Boston; had lived some years in the United States; and was doubtless much better informed concerning them than the minister Adet. Washington was then president of the United States; and probably Letombe perceived that the time had not arrived for France, by her intrigues and bribery to gain an effectual ascendancy in the councils of our nation. Letombe accordingly mentioned the fact in a tone of complaint and vexation. It was to a very intelligent and respectable gentleman of my acquaintance, to whom Letombe said, that Mr. Adet had foolishly thrown away a great deal of money in bribing members of congress; although they [Letombe and the minister] were put to much difficulty in raising it; and that they had, at a great loss to the French Republic in the negotiation, procured eighty or ninety thousand dollars at Boston.” I quote from my memorandum made at the time the information was given to me. Mr. Adet's mission to the U. States terminated near the close of the year 1796. Hence that time the French government has found great difficulty in procuring money. The plunder

of the world and the mines of Mexico and Peru have been open to them. Eighteen months ago I received satisfactory information that the Frenchman who was then Bonaparte's consul general in Philadelphia, had in the course of one year received about a million of dollars, for which the French government could have no legitimate use in the United States; because it then neither derived nor needed any supplies from the U. States.

The evidences of corruption, of falsehood, of hypocrisy and deceit, in the men whose official or personal means and influence have for many years given a direction to the public sentiment, and managed the affairs of the United States, it has been necessary to exhibit to the view of my fellow citizens: because the only hope of political salvation rested on the public conviction that those men did not deserve the confidence of the nation. This exposure was anticipated with regret; because, as I early remarked, “in exposing them I should unavoidably expose the nakedness of my country; when, if compatible with truth, I would infinitely rather speak the praises of both.”—More remains to be told.

TIMOTHY PICKERING.

July 29, 1811.

### Colvin against Robert Smith.

From the National Intelligencer.

TO THE PEOPLE OF THE U. STATES.

[CONCLUDED.]

My confidence in Mr. Smith had long been shaken: and about the period he left the department of state it was altogether annihilated. I still “endeavored to respect him;” but I could not—the immediate cause of it was this; on going out of office he said to me—“Mr. Colvin, I give you my honor that they will turn you out of place: they will invent against you some scandalous story, and make it a pretext for your expulsion: I therefore advise you immediately to ask leave of absence, go off to New-York, and set up a paper. The public will think you can say a great deal about the president, and every body will take your paper.” This declaration, expressed with great earnestness, made me uneasy; but Mr. S. had scarcely left the city, when I had occasioned to learn that there was no intention of dismissing me, and that Mr. Smith's intelligence was false. I then began to perceive the cunning of his advice: it was, that by taking such a rash step under the influence of fear, I should lose my post, be placed in a hostile attitude with respect to the government, he would be safe, and I might be ruined. This insidious counsel, given with great artfulness and with apparent sincerity, was, I have since thought, very cruel in Mr. Smith. Just such another attempt did I consider the letter from him of the 1st ult., which I have inserted. Under all the circumstances, having taken two days to deliberate, I resolved to answer him in a style that should impress him with an idea of my friendliness and yet should contain no expression of approbation of his pamphlet, nor of his conduct in relation to it: Agreeably to this determination I wrote him on the 5th of July the following answer:

Washington City, July 5th, 1811.

SIR—I received your letter of the first of this month on the 3d, by a private hand, and cordially thank you for the proof which it contains of the continuance of your favor and friendship.

I substitute as I am of property, and of the means of current support for Mrs. Colvin and myself, (apart from my salary in the clerkship which I at present enjoy,) my first intention has been to glide into practice here, if possible, before I abdicate my place in the department of State: But I candidly confess, that to remain in this city, or in my present situation, is merely a matter of convenience, very repugnant to my feelings, and will in the sequel, I am apprehensive, not be very conducive to the advancement of my fortune. If, therefore, I could, in any certain way, assure myself of a decent subsistence for a year or two in Baltimore, I would most cheerfully repair thither and venture my future prosperity on the success of my professional exertions. In that event, the offer of your occasional instruction, and the use of your law library would be extremely useful to me.

In order to ascertain the fact, whether I can procure for myself such current support in the city of Baltimore for a year or two, until I can get into a lucrative practice of the law there, I will, on Saturday the 13th of this month, go thither, with the intention of remaining there on Sunday and returning to Washington on Monday. On Sunday, the 14th, therefore, if you can conveniently be at home, I will do myself the honor to call upon you.

It is hardly necessary to assure you, that I have no concern in the strictures upon your late pamphlet, now going on in the National Intelligencer. On the contrary, I, yesterday morning at our breakfast-table, told Mr. Gales that the writer of those strictures was mistaken when he asserted that the late Secretary of State had handed to the press a paragraph announcing his nomination to the Russian mission; that the assertion was untrue in two particulars: 1st. That the late Secretary did not hand it to the press; and, 2d. That the paragraph did not announce the nomination, (which, as you were on the spot, would imply an acceptance,) but merely stated the offer of the embassy. I moreover observed, that I did not believe that you came into office by means of intrigue.

The defence of Mr. Madison in the National Intelligencer, is at once passionate and feeble; and sanctions doctrines which, if criticised by an able hand, would tend to destroy him with the people.

It is believed that Mr. Pinkney will be brought into the administration as Attorney-General; and that Mr. Rodney will succeed Judge Chase on the bench.

I will thank you for a pamphlet copy of your Address to the people, to be transmitted to me by mail, with one end open, like a newspaper, which lessens the postage.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Very respectfully,

Your very ob. servant,

J. B. COLVIN.

Hon. Robert Smith.

On any other occasion than that of dealing with a man who was acting a double part with me, I admit it would have been wrong to have written in such a way as I did to Mr. Smith: But, in addition to my other reasons, I was curious to learn Mr. Smith's real political intentions. My letter to him, nevertheless, is chiefly justified by facts. I did tell Mr. Gales what is therein stated, and told no lie, for Mr. Smith had not the vile merit of procuring his place by intrigue, nor did he write the paragraph announcing the offer of the Russian embassy: I wrote it myself, and handed it to the press; and I did it to lessen the anguish of Mr. Smith's mortification. I always thought the review in the National Intelligencer feeble and passionate, and some of its doctrines are contrary to my political creed.—As to the information in the article about Messrs. Pinkney and Rodney, it was the current conversation of the city, and I was, therefore, telling no secret.

On Saturday, the 13th of July, I proceeded to Baltimore; from the time of my writing to Mr. Smith until my departure from Washington, my conversation was in general, calculated to conceal my real sentiments; and many were of opinion that I was going to Baltimore to take a stand in Mr. Smith's behalf. This course was necessary to preserve me from being betrayed by informers. Mr. Rounsavell, one of the editors of the *Alexandria Herald*, was the only person to whom I fully revealed the real motive of my journey. He was in Washington the evening before my departure: he had formerly lived with me; I knew him to be discreet and a man of probity, and I could therefore confide in him.

On my arrival in Baltimore, on Saturday evening, I saw some editors of newspapers, and I found them and the whole city in a high fever from the publication of Mr. Smith's pamphlet. I said nothing to awake their suspicions that evening, and the next morning I waited on Mr. Smith. Our interview did not continue more than fifteen minutes, and would not have continued half that time, if he had not pressed me to stay after I had risen to go.—He touched the subject of his pamphlet—of the approaching presidential election—stated his opinions on that subject, &c. He spoke to me of my removing to Baltimore to practice the law. I now peremptorily declined the proposition, and stated several reasons in support of my determination. As I rose to depart, he said to me, “Well, sir, whether you remove to Baltimore or remain at Washington, you are welcome to the use of my library: if at any time you want a law-book, you have nothing more to do than to write to me, and—I will send it round by water!” I could hardly help laughing aloud at the proposal. We parted in a very friendly way. It has been insinuated in the Baltimore prints that I solicited Mr. Smith for money. Nothing of that kind is true. The letter of mine here inserted is the only one I ever wrote to Mr. Smith after he went out of office, and I should not have written that, had he not written to me in the first instance. Before I left Baltimore, I told the editor of the *Whig* that Mr. Smith's pamphlet was full of errors and that I wrote the letters to Generals Armstrong and Turreau: I told the editor of the *Sun* that I thought I should answer the pamphlet under my own name; and several other of my acquaintances were by me informed in the same way. Immediately after my return to Washington, I received the following letter from the editor of the *Whig*. It shews that the alarm was taken at Baltimore, that I was menaced with abuse if I should utter any thing against Mr. Smith, and, that the editor of the *Whig* became the channel for conveying the menace under the mask of friendship. This was so much the more reprehensible in Mr. Irvine, as I had never done him the least injury: The letter also proves an indirect, if not a direct, connection between Mr. Smith and the editor of the *Whig*: And what will the world think of the one and of the other, when it is known that long ago they both had heard insinuated against me all the silly tales which the *Whig* has just revived, with embellishments; and that the one, notwithstanding, proposed to become my patron, and the other, in the language of friendship, solicited from me confidential communications of so private a nature that even his own partner was not to be entrusted with them? It must be confessed that their private sentiments do not correspond with their public declarations; or, that they have both been playing the knave with me. The latter is the point of view in which I have considered the letter of Mr. Smith and that of Mr. Irvine; and I have acted towards them accordingly. But it is time to insert the letter of the editor of the *Whig*, with my answer to it.

SIR,

Your frankness while here, in conversing on the late unfortunate dispute between Madison & Smith, induces me to be equally frank in mentioning what may be of use to yourself and the credit of the democratic party. As you were unreserved in speaking of the pamphlet of R. Smith and its objectionable features, I happened to talk of your remarks in a certain democratic company, where the “Address” and “Review” became subjects of free conversation. It was hinted to me by one of the gentlemen, privately, that he understood you had declared your intention of coming forth in your own name, against R. Smith in support of Madison, but that if you should, you were vulnerable; your conversations when *mellow*, in a particular house in Washington last season, (I know not whether he meant last summer or winter) had furnished ground for your discredit. I asked, how? And he replied, in a whisper, that on a certain occasion you had spoken in the most contemptuous style of Madison, and had affirmed that you knew, while certain measures were in operation for procuring his nomination or election,—[This part of the letter contains an allusion too execrable for insertion: the allusion was no doubt made to prevent the publication of the letter—the whole story is an invention].—Now, added he, triumphantly, while I sat motionless with astonishment, if Madison resorts to Colvin's testimony in one case, let him be prepared for recognizing it throughout. As for this matter I know nothing of its accuracy or inaccuracy—it is hearsay to me—but, as Paine says, “It would not tell well in history.” You are in possession of my motive for communicating it—without injunction or restraint.

I pray God we may have a full settlement with France; but, really, when I look at our spiritless behavior, I have doubts and fears. If Madison makes concessions to England and persuade the Senate to sanction them, we are undone. But, surely, he has too many warnings before him to allow him to swerve from the right tract. Should he deviate, however, it is not in the power (I hope) of coalitions between Virginia and Massachusetts or of bargains in Pennsylvania, to re-elect him. But, in all vicissitudes and shiftings of precedents and parties and parizans, our rule shall (I trust) be principles.—“Measures, not men;” or, if you will, “measures the standard of men.” I verily believe if England were revolutionized, or subjugated, we could enjoy more harmony on this side the water.

Should you write a line, when you have leisure, let it be endorsed (“Private.”) In that case, my partner would not open it, but deposit it in my “private” drawer, should I be out of town.

If not improper on your part, can you mention when Barlow departs for France?

Yours truly (and hastily)

Mr. COLVIN.

B. I.

Washington City, July 19th, 1811.

DEAR SIR,

I thank you for your friendly hint, under date of the 17th instant. Viewing it as genuine mark of sincere regard, it merits my warmest acknowledgements. Permit me, however, to assure you, that the burthen of the gentleman's whisper is untrue; and that whether “*mellow*” or unmellow, I never spoke of Mr. Madison with contempt, [&c. &c.] I have heard, to be sure, very vile tales repeated [&c. &c.] by men who ought to have had more delicacy; but I never believed them, and if I ever alluded to them it was for the purpose of reproaching them. I am against all coalitions, from any quarter, and would oppose them. Whatever I may do in the case of Mr. Smith, it will only be to promote the cause of truth. Perhaps it may be well for the republican party that I should be silent.—Mr. Barlow, I believe, will be off next week: but the precise day I cannot tell. Believe me yours, in great haste,

J. B. COLVIN.

I was neither duped by Mr. Smith nor intimidated by the artful menace of Mr. Irvine; but finding great prejudices, from groundless causes, prevailing at Baltimore, against the executive of the United States; having ascertained that Mr. Smith cherished and fomented those prejudices, and that his views of vengeance were not limited to the publication of his pamphlet, but extended into the next presidential election; and having been apprized that a new edition of Mr. Smith's address was printing off for circulation through the state of Maryland, by the federal party; I decided to come out before the public in my own name, and put down the pamphlet at once. I expected a storm would burst upon my head for my interference, but I did not think it would be so foul as it has been. I did, indeed, most seriously regret appearing against Mr. Smith; not so much on account of any extraordinary respect or gratitude I owed him, but because I was afflicted at being under the necessity of humbling a man who had once stood towards me, in the eye of the world, in the relation of a friend, and who had been first minister of state. But that regret is now banished from my breast; for Mr. Smith has, for seven days at least, remained a silent observer of the scurrilous career of the *Whig*, and has not checked it. It has been on his account that abuse has been heaped upon me in that newspaper, and his not arresting it at the outset, is proof to me that he sanctions it. I have borne as much as any man ought to bear. I will endure defamation of me from that quarter no longer in silence. No combination of wealth or family influence shall, with impunity, sacrifice me to cover their own