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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

WASHINGTON, DEC. 3.

This day, at 12 o'clock, the President of the United States transmitted to both Houses of Congress, by the hands of his private Secretary, the following

MESSAGE:

Fellow citizens of the Senate and House of Representatives:

Many important subjects will claim your attention during the present session, of which I shall endeavor to give, in aid of your deliberations, a just idea in this communication. I undertake this duty with diffidence, from the vast extent of the interests on which I have to treat, and of their great importance to every portion of the Union. I enter on it with zeal, from a thorough conviction that there never was a period, since the establishment of our revolution, when, regarding the condition of the civilized world, and its bearing on us, there was greater necessity for devotion in the public servants to their respective duties, or for virtue, patriotism, and union, in our constituents.

Meeting in you a new Congress, I deem it proper to present this view of public affairs in greater detail than might otherwise be necessary. I do it, however, with peculiar satisfaction, from a knowledge that, in this respect, I shall comply more fully with the sound principles of our government. The people being with us exclusively the sovereign, it is indispensable that full information be laid before them on all important subjects, to enable them to exercise that high power with complete effect. If kept in the dark, they must be incompetent to it. We are all liable to error, and those who are engaged in the management of public affairs are more subject to excitement, and to be led astray by their particular interests and passions, than the great body of our constituents, who, being at home, in the pursuit of their ordinary avocations, are calm but deeply interested spectators of events, and of the conduct of those who are parties to them. To the people, every department of the government, and every individual in each, are responsible, and the more full their information, the better they can judge of the wisdom of the policy pursued, and of the conduct of each in regard to it. From their dispassionate judgment, much aid may always be obtained, while their approbation will form the greatest incentive, and most gratifying reward, for virtuous actions, and the dread of their censure the best security against the abuse of their confidence. Their interests, in all vital questions, are the same, and the bond by sentiment, as well as by interest, will be proportionably strengthened as they are better informed of the real state of public affairs, especially in difficult conjunctures. It is by such knowledge that local prejudices and jealousies are surmounted, and that a national policy, extending its fostering care and protection to all the great interests of our Union, is formed and steadily adhered to.

A precise knowledge of our relations with foreign powers, as respects our negotiations and transactions with each, is thought to be particularly necessary. Equally necessary is it, that we should form a just estimate of our resources, revenue, and progress in every kind of improvement connected with the national prosperity and public defence. It is by rendering justice to other nations, that we may expect it from them. It is by our ability to resent injuries, and redress wrongs, that we may avoid them.

The commissioners under the fifth article of the treaty of Ghent, having disagreed in their opinions respecting that portion of the boundary between the territories of the United States and Great Britain, the establishment of which had been submitted to them, have made their respective reports, in compliance with that article, that the same might be referred to the decision of a friendly power. It being manifested, however, that it would be difficult, if not impossible, for any power to perform that office, without great delay and much inconvenience to itself, a proposal has been made by this government, and acceded to by that of Great Britain, to endeavor to establish that boundary by amicable negotiation. It appearing from long experience, that no satisfactory arrangement could be formed of the commercial intercourse between the United States and the British colonies in this hemisphere, by legislative acts,

while each party pursued its own course, without agreement or concert with the other, a proposal has been made to the British government to regulate this commerce by treaty, as it has been to arrange in like manner, the just claim of the citizens of the United States inhabiting the states and territories bordering on the lakes and rivers which empty into the St. Lawrence, to the navigation of that river to the ocean. For these and other objects of high importance to the interests of both parties, a negotiation has been opened with the British government, which, it is hoped, will have a satisfactory result.

The commissioners under the sixth and seventh articles of the treaty of Ghent, having successfully closed their labors in relation to the sixth, have proceeded to the discharge of those relating to the seventh. Their progress in the extensive survey, required for the performance of their duties, justifies the presumption that it will be completed in the ensuing year.

The negotiation which had been long depending with the French government on several important subjects, and particularly for a just indemnity for losses sustained in the late wars by the citizens of the U. S. under unjustifiable seizures and confiscations of their property, has not, as yet, had the desired effect. As this claim rests on the same principle with others which have been admitted by the French government, it is not perceived on what just grounds it can be rejected. A minister will be immediately appointed to proceed to France, to resume the negotiations on this and other subjects that may arise between the two nations.

At the proposal of the Russian imperial government made thro' the minister of the emperor residing here, a full power and instructions have been transmitted to the minister of the U. S. at St. Petersburg, to arrange by amicable negotiation, the respective interests of the two nations on the northwest coasts of this continent. A similar proposition had been made by his imperial majesty to the government of G. B. which has likewise been acceded to. The government of the U. S. has been desirous, by this friendly proceeding, of manifesting the great value which they have invariably attached to the friendship of the emperor, and their solicitude to cultivate the best understanding with his government. In the discussion to which this interest has given rise, and in the arrangements by which they may terminate, the occasion has been deemed proper for asserting, as a principle in which the rights and interests of the U. S. are involved, that the American continent, by the free and independent conditions which they have assumed and maintained, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers.

Since the close of the last session of congress, the commissioners and arbitrators for ascertaining and determining the amount of indemnification which may be due to citizens of the U. S. under the decision of his imperial majesty the emperor of Russia, in conformity to the convention concluded at St. Petersburg on the 12th of July, 1822, have assembled in this city, and organized themselves as a board for the performance of the duties assigned to them by that treaty. The commission constituted under the 11th article of the treaty of 22d Feb. 1819, between the U. S. and Spain, is also in session here; and as the term of three years, limited by the treaty for the execution of the trust, will expire before the period of the next regular meeting of congress, the attention of the legislature will be drawn to the measures which may be necessary to accomplish the objects for which the commission was instituted.

In compliance with a resolution of the House of Representatives, adopted at their last session, instructions have been given to all the Ministers of the U. S. according to the powers of Europe and America, to propose the proscription of the African slave trade, by classing it under the denomination, and inflicting on its perpetrators the punishment, of piracy. Should this proposal be acceded to, it is not doubted that this odious and criminal practice will be promptly and entirely suppressed. It is certainly hoped that it will be acceded to, from a firm belief that it is the most effectual expedient that can be adopted for the purpose.

At the commencement of the recent war between France and Spain, it was declared by the French government that it would grant no commissions to privateers, and that neither the commerce of Spain herself, nor of neutral nations, should be molested by the naval force of France, except in the breach of a lawful blockade. This declaration, which appears to have been faithfully carried into effect, concurring with principles pro-

claimed and cherished by the U. States, from the first establishment of the independence, suggested the hope at the time had arrived when the proposal for adopting it as a permanent and variable rule in all future maritime war might meet the favorable consideration of the great European powers. Insults have accordingly been given to our ministers in France, Russia, and Great Britain, to make those proposals to their respective governments; and, when the friends of humanity reflect on the essential amelioration in the condition of the human race, which would result from the private war on the sea, and on the great facility by which it might be accomplished, requiring only the consent of a few sovereigns, an earnest hope is indulged that these overtures will meet with an attention, animated by the spirit in which they were made, and that they will ultimately be successful.

The ministers who were appointed to the Republics of Colombia and Buenos Ayres, during the last session of Congress, proceeded, shortly afterwards, to their destinations. Of their arrival there official intelligence has not yet been received. The minister appointed to the Republic of Chili will sail in a few days.

An early appointment will also be made to Mexico. A minister has been received from Colombia, and the other governments have been informed that ministers, or diplomatic agents of inferior grade, would be received from each accordingly as they might prefer the one or the other.

The minister appointed to Spain proceeded, soon after his appointment, for Cadix, the residence of the sovereign to whom he was accredited. In approaching that port, the frigate which conveyed him was warned off by the commander of the French squadron, by which it was blockaded, and not permitted to enter, although apprised, by the capt. of the frigate of the public character of the person whom he had on board, the landing of whom was the sole object of his proposed entry. This act being considered an infringement of the rights of ambassadors and of nations, will form a just cause of complaint to the government of France, against the officer by whom it was committed.

The actual condition of the public finances more than realizes the favorable anticipations that were entertained of it at the opening of the last session of Congress. On the first of January, there was a balance in the Treasury of four millions two hundred and thirty-seven thousand four hundred and twenty-seven dollars and fifty five cents. From that time to the thirtieth of September, the receipts amounted to upwards of sixteen millions one hundred thousand dollars, and the expenditures to eleven millions four hundred thousand dollars. During the fourth quarter of the year, it is estimated that the receipts will, at least, equal the expenditures, and that there will remain in the Treasury, on the first day of January next, a surplus of nearly nine millions of dollars.

On the first of January, 1825, a large amount of the war debt, and a part of the Revolutionary debt, become redeemable. Additional portions of the former will continue to become redeemable, annually, until the year 1835. It is believed, however, that if the U. States remain at peace, the whole of that debt may be redeemed by the ordinary revenue of those years during the period, under the provisions of the act of March 3d, 1817, creating the sinking fund, and in that case the only part of the debt, that will remain after the year 1835, will be seven millions of five per cent. stock subscribed to the Bank of the U. S. and the three per cent. Revolutionary debt, amounting to thirteen millions two hundred and ninety-six thousand and ninety-nine dollars and six cents, both of which are redeemable at the pleasure of the government.

The state of the army in its organization and discipline, has been gradually improving for several years, and has now attained a high degree of perfection. The Military disbursements have been regularly made, and the accounts regularly and promptly rendered for settlement. The supplies of various description have been of good quality, and regularly issued at all the posts. A system of economy and accountability has been introduced into every branch of the service, which admits of little additional improvement. This desirable state has been attained by the act reorganizing the staff of the army, passed on the fourteenth of April, eighteen hundred and eighteen.

The money appropriated for fortifications have been regularly and economically applied, and all the works advanced as rapidly as the amount appropriated would admit. Three important works will be completed in the course of this year; that is, Fort Washington, Fort Def-

ense, and the Fort at the Rigolets, in Louisiana.

The Board of Engineers, and the Topographical Corps, have been in constant and active service, in surveying the coast, and projecting the works necessary for its defence.

The Military Academy has attained a degree of perfection in its discipline and instruction, equal, as is believed, to any institution of its kind in any country.

The money appropriated for the use of the Ordnance Department, has been regularly and economically applied. The fabrication of arms at the national armories, and by contract with the Department, has been gradually improving in quality and cheapness. It is believed that their quality is now such, as to admit of but little improvement.

The completion of the Fortifications renders it necessary that there should be a suitable appropriation for the purpose of fabricating the cannon and carriages necessary for those works.

Under the appropriation of five thousand dollars, for exploring the Western waters, for the location of a site for a Western Armory, a commission was constituted, consisting of Col. M. Ree, Col. Lee, and Capt. Talcott, who have been engaged in exploring the country. They have not reported the result of their labors, but it is believed that they will be prepared to do it, at an early part of the session of Congress.

During the month of June last, General Ashby and his party who were trading under a licence from the government, were attacked by the Rickarees while peaceably trading with the Indians, at their request. Several of the party were killed and wounded and their property taken or destroyed.

Col. Leavenworth, who commanded Fort Atkinson at the Council Bluffs, the most western post, apprehending that the hostile spirit of the Rickarees would extend to other tribes in that quarter, and that thereby the lives of the traders on the Missouri, and the peace of the frontier would be endangered, took immediate measures to check the evil.

With a detachment of the regiment stationed at the Bluffs, he successfully attacked the Rickaree village, and it is hoped that such an impression has been made on them, as well as on the other tribes on the Missouri, as will prevent a recurrence of future hostility.

The report of the Secretary of War, which is herewith transmitted, will exhibit, in greater detail, the condition of the Department in its various branches, and the progress which has been made in its administration, during the three first quarters of the year.

I transmit a return of the militia of the several states according to the last reports which have been made by the proper officers in each, to the Department of War. By reference to this return, it will be seen that it is not complete, although great exertions have been made to make it so. As the defence, and even the liberties of the country must depend, in times of imminent danger, on the militia, it is of the highest importance that it be well organized, armed, and disciplined, throughout the Union. The report of the Secretary of War shews the progress made during the three first quarters of the present year, by the application of the fund appropriated for arming the militia. Much difficulty is found in distributing the arms according to the act of Congress providing for it, from the failure of the proper Departments in many of the States, to make regular returns. The act of May 12th, 1820, provides that the system of tactics and regulations of the various corps in the regular army, shall be extended to the militia. This act has been very imperfectly executed, from the want of uniformity in the organization of the militia, proceeding from the defects of the system itself, and especially in its application to that main arm of the public defence. It is thought that this important subject, in all its branches, merits the attention of Congress.

The report of the Secretary of the Navy, which is now communicated, furnishes an account of the administration of that Department, for the three first quarters of the present year, with the progress made in augmenting the navy, and the manner in which the vessels in commission have been employed.

The usual force has been maintained in the Mediterranean Sea, the Pacific Ocean, and along the Atlantic Coast, and has afforded the necessary protection to our commerce in those seas.

In the West Indies and the Gulf of Mexico, our naval force has been augmented, by the addition of several small vessels, provided for by the "act authorizing an additional naval force for the suppression of piracy," passed by Congress at their last session. That armament has been eminently successful in the accomplishment of its object. The piracies by which our commerce in the neighbor-

hood of the Island of Cuba had been afflicted, have been repressed, and the confidence of our merchants, in a great measure, restored.

The patriotic zeal and enterprise of Commodore Porter, to whom the command of the expedition was confided, has been fully seconded by the officers and men, under his command. And, in reflecting with high satisfaction, on the honorable manner in which they have sustained the reputation of their country and its navy, the sentiment is alloyed only by a concern, that, in the fulfilment of that arduous service, the diseases incident to the season, and to the climate in which it was discharged, have deprived the nation of many useful lives, and among them of several officers of great promise.

In the month of August, a very malignant fever made its appearance at Thompson's Island, which threatened the destruction of our station there. Many perished, and the commanding officer was severely attacked. Uncertain as to his fate, and knowing that most of the medical officers had been rendered incapable of discharging their duties, it was thought expedient to send to that post an officer of rank and experience, with several skilful surgeons, to ascertain the origin of the fever, and the probability of its recurrence there in future seasons; to furnish every assistance to those who were suffering, and if practicable to avoid the necessity of abandoning so important a station. Commodore Rodgers, with a promptitude which did him honor, cheerfully accepted that trust, and has discharged it in the manner anticipated from his skill and patriotism. Before his arrival, Commodore Porter, with the greater part of the squadron, had removed from the Island, and returned to the United States, in consequence of the prevailing sickness. Much useful information has however been obtained, as to the state of the Island, and great relief afforded to those who had been necessarily left there.

Although our expedition, co-operating with an invigorated administration of the government of the island of Cuba, and with the corresponding active exertions of a British naval force in the same seas, have almost entirely destroyed the unlicensed piracies from that island, the success of our exertions have not been equally effectual to suppress the same crime, under other pretences and colors, in the neighboring island of P. Rico. They have been committed there under the abusive issue of Sp. commissions. At an early period of the present year, remonstrances were made to the governor of that island, by an agent, who was sent for the purpose, against those outrages on the peaceful commerce of the U. States, of which many had occurred. The officer professing his want of authority to make satisfaction for our just complaints, answered only by a reference of them to the government of Spain. The minister of the U. S. to that court, was especially instructed to urge the necessity of the immediate and effectual interposition of that government, directing restitution and indemnity for wrongs already committed, and interdicting the repetition of them. The minister as has been seen, was debared access to the Spanish government, and, in the mean time, several new cases of flagrant outrage have occurred, and citizens of the U. S. in the island of Porto Rico, have suffered, and others been threatened with assassination, for asserting their unquestionable rights, even before the lawful tribunals of the country.

The usual orders have been given to all our public ships, to seize Am. vessels engaged in the slave trade, and bring them in for adjudication, and I have the gratification to state, that no one so employed has been discovered, and there is good reason to believe, that our flag is now seldom, if at all, disgraced by that traffic.

It is a source of great satisfaction, that we are always enabled to recur to the conduct of our navy with pride and commendation. As a means of national defence, it enjoys the public confidence, and is steadily assuming additional importance. It is submitted whether a more efficient and equally economical organization of it might not, in several respects be effected. It is supposed that higher grades than now exist by law, would be useful. They would afford well merited rewards to those who have long and faithfully served their country; present the best incentives to good conduct, and the best means of ensuring a proper discipline—destroy the inequality in that respect, between the military and naval services, and relieve our officers from many inconveniences and mortifications, which occur when our vessels meet those of other nations; ours being the only service in which such grades do not exist.

A report of the Postmaster General, which accompanies this communication, will shew the present state of the Post