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TO THE PUBLIC.

No person can be more averse to complaints against the officers of government than myself; but, having received from one of them the greatest piece of injustice, that will probably be recorded in the annals of the present administration; I should consider myself highly criminal indeed, in the eyes of the Public, were I to remain silent.

On the 8th of January 1800, I was appointed a Purser in the navy of the United States, by Benj. Stoddert, Esq. the then Secretary of the Navy, and was ordered by him to join the armed brig Richmond, at New-York, under the command of Capt. Richard Law, jun.—as will appear from the following letter:—

"Navy Department, 8th Jan. 1800. SIR—You are hereby appointed a Purser in the Navy.

You will repair immediately to New-York, and place yourself under the command of Capt. Law, of the Richmond.

Your pay and emoluments commence from this day.

I am, sir, your most obedient servant,

(SIGNED) BENJAMIN STODDERT.

Mr. Thomas Stanford.

The Richmond returned from her cruise in 1801—and I repaired to Washington and settled my accounts with the accountant of the Navy.

On the 11th day of 1801, Congress passed a law reducing the number of vessels, and limiting the number of some of the officers, to be retained in service: among those, whose number was not limited by that act, were Purfers. Some short time after the rising of Congress, a squadron was ordered to be got ready for the Mediterranean, to check the insolence of the Tripolians: I embraced that opportunity to express my wishes, to the then acting Secretary of the Navy (Gen. S. Smith) of being continued in the service of my country, and received from him the following letter of selection and retention—

"Navy Department, 2d June 1801. SIR,

I have the pleasure to inform you that the President has selected you as one of the Purfers authorized to be retained in service on the peace establishment.

You will repair to Philadelphia, and place yourself under the command of Lieut. John Shaw, of the George Washington.

Accept the assurances of my respect and esteem.

For Henry Dearborn acting secretary of the navy.

(Signed) S. SMITH."

Mr. Thomas Stanford, Purser.

Immediately on the receipt of the foregoing letter, I applied to Gen. Smith for a warrant, which (by the absence of the President from the seat of government in 1802, and the secretary at that time having no blanks signed) I had never received. Previous to leaving the United States, a warrant as Purser, signed by Mr. Jefferson, was forwarded on to me.

I must here observe, that I was the first Purser who received a letter of selection and retention on the peace establishment; for although there were four others in the Mediterranean Squadron, and the peace establishment law took place previous to their being arranged, yet they only received letters merely attaching them to their respective vessels.

On my return to the United States it was intimated to me by a friend, that he understood I was to be discharged under the peace establishment law; of this, however, I took but little notice, knowing that I had already been retained on that very law, and imagining that if ever I was

discharged, it would happen only as the consequence of a subsequent act of Congress that might possibly take place to that purport—posterior in date to any law then existing; or by impeachment for malconduct—which I with sufficient confidence supposed not probable;—or else from abuse of power in the head of the navy department—which at that time I was by no means disposed to think likely:—not many days however had elapsed before I was honored with a letter from the Hon. Rob. Smith, in the following words.

"Navy Department, 21st May, 1802. SIR,

As you are not to be retained in the navy, it may be acceptable to you to have early information, that after settling your accounts you will be no longer considered as holding the warrant of Purser: But you will be permitted to retire from the service under the peace establishment law.

I am with respect, sir, your most obedient servant.

(Signed) R. SMITH."

Mr. Thomas Stanford.

Being at a loss how to account for such profligate and extraordinary conduct, I tent him the following answer—

"Washington, June 10th 1802.

The Hon. Rob. Smith, Secretary of the Navy.

SIR,

It was with much surprize that I this day received your letter under date of the 21st ult. informing me that 'as I was not to be retained in the navy, I was, after settling my accounts as Purser, permitted to retire from the service under the peace establishment law.' I have therefore to request, that you will inform me, whether I am to consider it as a discharge from the service, and if a discharge, the cause or causes thereof; or whether I am to consider it only as a permission to resign.—As I know of no part of my conduct since my retention in service to justify the former, so, I know of no reason why I should perform the latter. My request therefore is founded on a sacred duty which I owe to my character—that I may satisfy my friends why I was discharged—after having received the following notice from the then secretary of the navy, to which I beg leave to refer you, (here I inserted the letter from Gen. Smith of the 2d June 1801, before recited.)

The circumstance of my being selected by the President to be retained as a Purser, under the act providing for a naval peace establishment, &c. I presume you were unacquainted with at the date of your letter, or, I apprehend it never would have been written. It may be said that many purfers who have been continued in service since that law passed are now discharged, but I have been recently informed, sir, that my case is materially different from theirs—they never having been selected under the peace establishment law, or at least, never having been officially notified thereof.

With respect, I have the honor to be, sir,

Your very obedient servant,

THOMAS STANFORD."

I waited several days, without again hearing from him, and, at length tired out by his silence, I resolved to wait on him in person. At our interview he informed me that 'he did not wish me to consider his letter as a discharge it being written merely for the sake of formality.'

* Mr. Isaac Garretson late Purser of the frigate President, received a letter of discharge, soon after his return from the Mediterranean; it was, I am informed, an exact copy of the one received by me; some few days after his receipt, a gentleman high in office interferred with the

that he had not as yet determined on discharging or retaining me in service; but believed he would not discharge me, he would conclude on it, however, in the course of the day; for if, agreeable to arrangements he had made, I could be retained, it should be done; that he actually was entirely ignorant of Gen. Smith's letter of selection and retention at the time of writing his; but that he had a right to discharge me even without four months extra pay as allowed by Congress, to officers discharged under the peace establishment law.† This I did not dispute his inclination to do; for what will not a man do, whose actions, when in power, notoriously evince a corruption of honorable and impartial principles! But to discharge me without cause, or the least plausible pretext was so unaccountable, that I almost doubted if the honorable gentleman's mental faculties were not deranged, by the same law under which he wished to derange me.

So far as my discharge related to pecuniary affairs, I felt but little interested; but it was necessary that my friends, being acquainted with my retention should know the cause of my dismissal from service: I therefore requested of him such a testimonial (in the event of my discharge being determined on) as would remove any unfavourable impressions which might, and in all probability would, operate on the minds of those who were unacquainted with the whole affair; he assured me that he would; and on the next morning returned me the letter I had written him on the 10th ult. with the following endorsement:—

"At the request of Mr. Stanford, and for the information of his friends, I take pleasure in declaring that his dismissal from the navy service, did not result from any consideration of personal demerit on his part—that his commanding officers and all others that have communicated with me on the subject, have spoken of him in terms of high commendation. It would have been agreeable to me to have retained him in the navy, had the peace establishment law authorized a sufficient number of Purfers to justify it.

(Signed) R. SMITH.

Navy Department, June 22d 1802.

The foregoing is a plain statement of facts as they actually occurred—the truth of which the secretary of the navy cannot, nor will not, I presume, pretend to deny; I shall therefore conclude, without any further comment; leaving the public to judge of the unjustifiable conduct towards me as they may see proper.

THOMAS STANFORD.

Washington, July 16th 1802.

Secretary of the navy for his—the consequence was, that when Mr. G. next met with the secretary and informed him that he had received such a letter of discharge, the secretary pretended some ignorance of its being sent, said that he never intended to discharge him, and requested Mr. G. to give him up the letter, which was accordingly done, and Mr. Garretson is now considered a retained Purser—though his name does not appear on the printed list containing the names of retained Purfers, communicated to Congress, by the President of the United States, at their last session.

† Yesterday I effected a final settlement of my Accounts (for the George Washington) with the accountant of the navy: and received, from Mr. Smith, a warrant on the Treasurer for the balance due me: including the four months pay in consideration of his discharging me under the peace establishment law.

‡ The printers in the United States willing to hold up to just censure, the improper conduct of men high in office, will please to give the foregoing a place in their papers.

REFLECTIONS

LATE EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCE.

Bonaparte's procuring himself to be elected Consul for life, is another event deeply interesting to France, and to the whole civilized world. This measure he has timed with the same prudence that has marked his conduct in so many other instances. At the conclusion of a Peace with all the great powers of Europe, which he has either beaten or frightened into terms the most advantageous to France, after a long and bloody contest, which had ruined the commerce—destroyed the navy—deranged the manufactures of their country—the French people on a sudden find their ports liberated—the freedom of the seas restored—commerce reviving—the arts encouraged—security of person and property at home—respect and influence abroad—public and private credit established—their government feared, and their nation aggrandized. This view breaking on them, like the beams of the sun, on a weather-beaten crew, after a long and stormy night, naturally excited to the highest degree their admiration of those singular talents, courage and address, which guided them to victory, and afterwards to peace. Availing himself of the moment of enthusiasm, excited by this change of circumstances, Bonaparte presents himself before the French nation as the candidate for a Consulship, durante vita, for a perpetual Dictatorship.

That he will succeed in this measure, who can doubt? Possessing power more absolute than any of the Grand Monarchs, who will dare to resist his wishes, or oppose his ambition? We may therefore let it down as an event already decided, that Buonaparte will be First Consul of France for life. Were he responsible to the legislature for his conduct—were he liable to impeachment and dismissal from office in case of malconduct, the measure we are now contemplating would perhaps be a fortunate one for France.—Or if in the subsequent part of his administration he follows the example of our Washington, and with powers the most absolute, combines moderation, justice, and true patriotism, he may yet become a blessing to his country and the world: but as power without responsibility, in the course of a few years is apt to corrupt the heart, there is great danger that the Hero of Italy may become a tyrant and a scourge. Contrary, however, to the usual experience of human nature, should he continue just, moderate and prudent, notwithstanding his elevation, so long as his life should be continued, France will be exempt from revolutionary horrors: yet so many sources of discontent will long continue in that country—so many disappointed candidates for places of honor and profit—so many of the ancient noblesse, who will indignantly brook the possession of supreme authority by an obscure Corsican, while (as they believe) the legitimate heirs to the French throne are in exile and poverty—so many thorough-going Jacobins anxious to renew their old trade of proscription and pillage, will still there remain, that the chances against the life of the First Consul are many and great. His sacred band—his corps d'honneur, or Pretorian Guards, may for a while inspire terror and preserve his life; but at some unguarded moment, at some favorable opportunity, he may feel the assassin's dagger or drink the poisoned bowl. If religious fanaticism raised its murderous arm against the greatest and the best of the whole line of French Princes—if a Chastel and a Ravillac, could the one attempt and the other accomplish the death of such a mon-