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LETTER IV.

TO THE CITIZENS OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EMBARGO—and War with G. Britain.

FELLOW-CITIZENS,

The French Emperor, with his brother Emperor, Alexander of Russia, because the latter will not shut his ports against British commerce, the absolute exclusion of which from the European continent and from the United States he believed will ruin the finances of Great Britain, create discontent, and enable him to bring her under his yoke: is assembling an immense army in the North, in order to invade the Russian dominions. For this purpose he is withdrawing some of his troops from Spain, and certainly cannot send forth reinforcements. Besides, the extreme scarcity of grain and provisions in Spain, will render it difficult, if not impossible, to feed numerous armies. Under these circumstances nothing can be so important to Bonaparte as to cut off the vast supplies furnished by the United States to the British Spanish and Portuguese armies in Spain and Portugal, in addition to the hundreds and thousands of the Spanish and Portuguese inhabitants (men, women and children) in the seaports of those kingdoms; who for want of our usual supplies, may suffer extreme distress, or perish. It is in these fearful state of things that Mr. Madison recommends to Congress to lay a general embargo! He gives no reason for his recommendation; and he dare not give the true one. But no unbiassed mind can now doubt that the real motive is, to favor the views of the French Emperor. That distinguished members of Congress from Virginia, Mr. Randolph, told the House, when acting on the embargo bill, that "of his certain knowledge, the French minister Securier, ever since his arrival at the seat of government, at Washington, had been pressing our government to prohibit the exportation of our products to the Spanish peninsula—that is, to Spain and Portugal. And now, at a most critical time, it is done by this new embargo!—For God sake, my fellow-citizens pause and reflect! For your own interest and safety reflect! Can you doubt that the "hand of Napoleon is in this thing? Can you doubt that the "hand of Napoleon is in this thing?" Can you any longer doubt of the subserviency of your rulers to the French? The most ambitious conqueror, the most ruthless tyrant, that since the dark ages, has been let loose to scourge the world!

What is to succeed the embargo? War, "But we are unprepared? We have neither army or navy of any account!" True. But that will not prevent a war. Mr. Cheves, an honorable member from Carolina, has said—"The merchants must protect their own property—the government cannot protect them—In like manner, (as I said last year) the individual States must protect themselves: the national government cannot protect them."

But I have remarked, "That our rulers war is indispensable: because without war they cannot borrow money." It is more than a year since Congress (twisting the French knot about our necks) passed a law prohibiting all importations from the British dominions. Those importations used to be the great source of our revenue.—This is lost. The embargo cuts off all the rest.—The government propose to borrow, for the services of the present year, eleven millions of dollars. No man of common prudence will lend, unless funds are provided and pledged for the regular payment of the interest and the redemption of the principal. Excepting an inconsiderable sum (a few hundred thousand dollars) arising from the state of Western lands, the government have funds to pledge; all other revenues have been levied on commerce, which by their own measures are now to cease. A land Tax, Stamp Act, Excises and other internal taxes laid, because judged indispensably necessary under the federal administration of our general government, to sustain the heavy burthens thrown upon it, in providing for the payment of the large debts of our revolutionary war—an Indian war

which followed it, besides a multitude of other expenses, and finally a naval war with France, forced upon us by her injustice, enormous piracies, plundering and insults, to defend, in truth, the honour & the commerce of our country; the internal taxes, I say, which under the federal administration were laid for those indispensable purposes—were rendered odious to the people by the opposition and the arts of the party then a minority but which now rules the nation; and were a principal engine used by them to overturn that administration. Early after Mr. Jefferson obtained the President's chair, all those internal taxes were repealed: and their expected repeal and their actual repeal, procured for him a vast fund of popularity. With the same view he recommended the repeal of the duty on salt. The year before, Mr. Randolph moved for its repeal and failed. Yet no reason for its repeal existed in one case more than the other. Here you see the difference in influence of a man having an extensive patronage, in offices and other public benefits to bestow and of another man who had none.

Well, as the government by their own unwise and unwarrantable acts, have deprived themselves of commercial revenues, what is to be done? Money must be had. They would borrow: but folly only will induce any one to lend, without funds pledged to pay and redeem the principle and interests. In the time of peace they dare not lay internal taxes—it will hazard their popularity. They have found a remedy—They have made a law imposing land tax, a stamp act, excises, a salt tax &c. not to be levied on until war takes place. The sooner therefore a war takes place, the sooner they will obtain revenue: and the revenue may enable them to borrow money—To induce the people to take the bitter pill, they have sugared it over with a promise that these taxes shall be abolished in one year after the end of the war. Such men as are capable of reflection and calculation know that this will be impossible. The war once begun will continue if the PEOPLE will bear it, for many years—as long as the war between Bonaparte and G. Britain: and this will be at least as long as he lives; and he is now in the prime of life, and of ambition which nothing short of the conquest of the Globe will satisfy. During the war, with Great Britain, our commerce will be annihilated. No revenue then can be drawn from that source. By day taxes money must be raised to support the war, and to maintain your government at Washington for making laws pregnant with mischief, distress and ruin.

Such, fellow-citizens, is your prospect. I trust you will not endure it. The remedy is in your own hands. Cause your unwise and unfaithful rulers "to return to private life." This is a simple easy remedy—the remedy prescribed by the constitution of our Commonwealth.

Massachusetts is the most commercial state in the union. COMMERCE (in connection with the fisheries, and both with agriculture and the mechanic arts) in our life. We cannot exist, but in MISERY without COMMERCE, to give it SECURITY, and obtain from it a bountiful REVENUE, were primary objects in forming a national government. COMMERCE, with its revenue, was looked up to as the great cement of the union of the States. Let the national government destroy COMMERCE & the UNION will be DISSOLVED. Let us then hold fast our COMMERCE, that the Union may be preserved. We entered into a war with our parent country because of her commercial oppressions: and we declared ourselves independent, among other reasons, "because she had cut off our trade with all parts of the world." Our national rulers have for many years afflicted us with infinitely more grievous oppressions; and now for a second time have "cut off our trade with all parts of the world. This cannot be endured. The remedy, I repeat, is in your own hands. You have but to cause your officers and representatives who approve and support these destructive measures, "to return to private life." Do this and you will be saved. Your pending elections will seriously influence, perhaps decide, the great question of peace or war. Happily you will soon be rid of a chief ruler who for two years has dishonored you in the eyes of all our sister states. You remember the parable of Jotham, "when the trees went forth to anoint a king to reign over them." The fairest trees refused. This was not your

case. Neither the "Olive Tree" would have withheld from you his "fatness"—nor the "Fig Tree" his "sweetness," nor the "Vine" his generous juice "which cheereth God and man." Deceivers persuaded you to believe your present chief ruler possessed of all those excellent qualities: but experience has shewn him to be a miserable "bramble." Your choice has now fallen on one that will yield "the peaceable fruit of righteousness." But this goodly tree must be supported. Standing alone it cannot shelter you from the impending storm. To drop the figure—The welfare of the state—the restoration of commerce with all its attendant blessings, and the peace of the Union will depend on the men you choose in May, to present you in the General Court;—Heaven direct and bless your choice!

TIMOTHY PICKERING.

April 18, 1812.

Congress.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States.

I communicate to Congress, for their information, copies and extracts from the correspondence of the Secretary of State, and the Minister Plenipotentiary of the U. States at Paris. These documents will place before Congress the actual posture of our relations with France.

JAMES MADISON.

May 26, 1812.

CORRESPONDENCE.

LETTERS FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO MR. BARLOW.

Mr. Monroe, Secretary of State, to Mr. Barlow, Department of State, July 26, 1811.

SIR—It is the desire of the President that you should set out, without delay, for Paris, to commence the duties of the office of minister plenipotentiary to the Emperor of France, with which you are invested. A frigate, prepared for your accommodation, will receive you at Annapolis, and convey you to the most convenient port of that country. I enclose you a commission and letter of credence, with such other documents as are necessary to illustrate the subjects on which you will have to act.

With the ordinary duties of the office you are too well acquainted to require any comment on them in this letter—There are, however, some subjects of peculiar importance which will claim your attention immediately after your reception. On these it is proper that you should know distinctly the sentiments of the President.

The U. States have claims on France, which it is expected that her government will satisfy to their full extent, and without delay. These are founded partly on the late arrangement, by which the non-importation law of the 1st May 1810 was carried into effect against G. Britain, and partly on injuries to their commerce, committed on the high seas and in French ports.

To form a just estimate of the claims of the first class, it is necessary to examine minutely their nature and extent. The present is a proper time to make this examination and to press a compliance with the arrangement, in every circumstance, on its just principles, on the government of France. The President, conscious that the United States have performed every act that was stipulated on their part, with the most perfect good faith, expects a like performance on the part of France. He considers it peculiarly incumbent on him to request such explanations from her government as will dissipate all doubt of what he may expect from it in future, on this and every other question depending between the two nations.

By the act of May 1st, 1810, it was declared, that in case Great Britain or France should, before the third day of March, 1811, so revoke or modify her edicts as that they should cease to violate the neutral commerce of the United States, which fact the President should declare by proclamation; and if the other nation should not, within 3 months thereafter, revoke or modify its edicts in like manner, then the 3d, 4th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th and 18th sections of the act entitled "An act to interdict the commercial intercourse between the U. States and Great Britain and France," &c. should, from and after the expiration of three months from the date of the proclamation aforesaid, be revived, and have full force and effect, so far as relates to the dominions, colonies and dependencies, and to the articles the

growth, produce or manufacture of the dominions, colonies and dependencies, or the nation thus refusing or neglecting to revoke or modify its edicts in the manner aforesaid.

This act having been promulgated and made known to the governments of G. Britain and France, the Minister of the latter, by note, bearing date on the 5th August, 1810, addressed to the Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States at Paris, declared that the Decrees of Berlin and Milan were revoked, the revocation to take effect on the 1st of November following; but that this measure was adopted in compliance with the law of the 1st of May, 1810, to take advantage of the condition contained in it, and in full confidence that that condition would be enforced against Great Britain, if she did not revoke her orders in council, and renounce the new principal of blockade.

This declaration of the Emperor of France was considered a sufficient ground for the President to act on; it was explicit as to its object, and equally so as to its import. The Decrees of Berlin and Milan, which had violated our neutral rights, were said to be repealed, to take effect as a subsequent day, at no distant period; the interval apparently intended to allow full time for the communication of the measure to this government. The declaration had, too, all the formality which such an act could admit of, being through the official organ on both sides—from the French Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Minister Plenipotentiary of the U. States at Paris.

In consequence of this note, from the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, of the 5th of August, 1810, the President proceeded on the 2d Nov'r, following, to issue the proclamation enjoined by the act of the 1st of May, of the same year, to declare that all the restrictions imposed by it, should cease and be discontinued, in relation to France and her dependencies. And in confirmation of the proclamation of the President, the Congress did, on the 2d March, 1811, pass an act whereby the non-importation system provided for by the 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 18th sections of the act entitled "an act to interdict the commercial intercourse between the U. States and Great Britain and France and their dependencies," was declared to be in force against Great Britain, her colonies and dependencies, with a provision in favor of such vessel and merchandises as might be seized before it was known that Great Britain had revoked or modified her edicts, within the time and in the manner required by the said act, if such should be the case; and with a provision, also, in favor of any ships or cargoes owned wholly by citizens of the U. States, which had cleared out for the Cape of Good Hope, or for any other port beyond the same, prior to the 2d of Nov. 1810. Both of these provisions were, in strict justice and good faith, due to the parties to be affected by the law—they were also conformable to the spirit of the arrangement to execute which the law was passed. As Great Britain did not revoke or modify her edicts, in the manner proposed, the first provision had no effect.

I will now enquire whether France has performed her part of this arrangement.

It is understood that the blockade of the British Isles is revoked. The revocation having been officially declared, and no vessel trading to them having been condemned or taken on the high seas that we know, of it is fair to conclude that the measure is relinquished. It appears, too, that no American vessel has been condemned in France for having been visited at sea by an English ship, or for having been searched or carried into England or subjected to impositions there. On the sea, therefore, France is understood to have changed her system.

Although such is the light in which the conduct of France is viewed, in regard to the neutral commerce of the U. States, since the 1st of November last, it will nevertheless be proper for you to investigate fully the whole subject, and to see that nothing has been or shall be omitted on her part in future, which the U. States have a right to claim.

Your early and particular attention will be drawn to the great subject of the commercial relation which is to subsist in future between the United States and France. The President expects that the commerce of the U. States will be placed in the ports of France on such a footing as to afford to it a fair market, and to the industry and enterprize of their people a reasonable ex-