

ther directly or indirectly, of the letter and conversation alluded to in the said declaration, until they saw them made public in the newspapers. At the same time, they do not mean either to imply any assent to the construction put on private correspondence which the Congress have thought proper to publish, or to intimate a belief that any person could have been authorised to hold the conversation to which the said declaration of the Congress alludes; nor do they, on the other hand, mean to enter into an explanation of the conduct of a gentleman whose abilities and integrity require no vindication from them. But they think proper, in justice to that gentleman, as well as to themselves, and the commission with which they are charged, to say, that in the many conversations which he has had with them upon the measures adopted to restore the peace of these colonies, the principle of all his reasonings seemed to be, that the offers of Great Britain were obviously adapted to promote and establish the liberties, peace, opulence, increase, security, and permanent happiness of the inhabitants of this continent, and that those blessings, in an equal degree, were not to be expected from any other connexion or mode of government whatever. When, therefore, the King's commissioners transmitted to the Congress the acts of Parliament to exempt the colonies for ever from British taxation, and to secure their charters and established governments, and when they added, that they were authorised and desirous to restore peace, to revive free intercourse and mutual affection, to preserve the value and promote the credit of the paper circulation, to give satisfaction and security for ever on the subject of the military establishments, and to extend every freedom to trade, they felt that they were enabled to stipulate, and had offered not only every thing that is or can be proposed by the French alliance, but also many advantages to this continent which can never, by any possibility, be derived from that unnatural connexion. And they remain astonished at the calamities in which the unhappy people of these colonies continue to be involved, from the blind deference which their leaders profess towards a power that has ever shown itself an enemy to all civil and religious liberty, and whose offers, his Majesty's commissioners must repeat, whatever may be the pretended date and present form of them, were made only in consequence of the plan of accommodation previously concerted in Great Britain, and with a view to prevent the reconciliation proposed, and to prolong this destructive war.

This assertion is made on the credit of the following facts:

It is well known to this whole continent, that public intimation of the conciliatory propositions on the part of Great Britain was given to the British Parliament, and consequently to the whole world, in the month of November last; and reasons for delaying those propositions, till after the recess for the holidays, were at the same time given to the House of Commons.

It is equally well known, that the preliminaries of a French treaty, with which Mr. Simeon Deane first went to sea in the frigate called *Le Belle Poule*, did not bear date earlier than the 16th of December.

It cannot be a secret to the Congress that those preliminaries led to a treaty of commerce only, and were transmitted to America in that inconclusive form, because the concessions made by France, on the one hand, were so unsatisfactory and the conditions required of America, on the other, so exceptionable, that the commissioners of the Congress did not think proper to proceed until they should be specially authorised.

Mr. Simeon Deane, after having been some weeks at sea, was obliged to put back into one of the French ports, and returned to Paris. In the mean time the Parliament had met again on the 20th of January, and the propositions to be made, though not formally stated till the 17th of February, were occasionally, during the whole interval, a subject of discussion, in all the preparatory debates upon the state of the nation. It was during this interval, and not before, that France, being informed of the liberal and extensive nature of the intended offers, thought it expedient, for the purpose of prolonging the war, and of making these colonies the instruments of her ambition, to new model and enlarge her proposals.

Still, however, the full powers are not pretended to have been given to Mons. Girard before the 30th of January. And what-

ever time the treaties, thus notoriously flowing from the generous measures of Great Britain, may have been stated by the French ministers, either in fact or by collusion, for the purpose of giving an uncandid interpretation to the proceedings of the British parliament, whatever too may have been the dates of the dispatches which accompanied those treaties, it is well known that neither treaties, nor letters notifying treaties, were sent from France before the 8th of March.

When these particulars, together with all the other circumstances attending the conduct of the French court towards these colonies, during the years 1775, 1776, and 1777, most of which must be well known to the American Congress, are duly considered, the designs of France, the ungenerous motives of her policy, and the degree of faith due to her professions, will become too obvious to need any farther illustration.

And his Majesty's commissioners thought, and still think themselves entitled to expect that the General Congress should not, on the ground of such treaties, even if the constitution under which they act had authorised them, assume the decisive part which they have taken without previously consulting the assemblies of their different provinces, and making their constituents acquainted with all the facts, upon which a true judgment might be formed.

CARLISLE.
H. CLINTON.
Wm. EDEN.

NEW YORK,
Aug. 26, 1778.

Then follows the requisition of the commissioners, in which they join the commander in chief of the British forces in America, for the fulfilment of the convention of Saratoga, upon which Congress resolved as follows, viz.

IN CONGRESS, September 4, 1778.

WHEREAS Congress did, on the 8th day of January 1778, resolve, "That the embarkation of Lieut. General Burgoyne, and the troops under his command, be suspended until a distinct and explicit ratification of the convention of Saratoga shall be properly notified by the court of Great Britain to Congress.

Resolved, that no ratification of the convention of Saratoga, which may be tendered in consequence of powers which may reach that case by construction and implication, or which may subject whatever is transacted relative to it to the future approbation or disapprobation of the parliament of Great Britain, can be accepted by Congress.

Published by order of Congress.

CHARLES THOMSON, Sec.

WILLIAMSBURG, October 2, 1778.

To Mr. ALEXANDER PURDIE.

SIR,

"FROM your known attachment to the liberties of America, I cannot debar myself the pleasure of communicating the following important intelligence. On board the British navy, in America, near half their men have died by sickness. In Philadelphia and New York, provisions of all kinds are very scarce, and excessive dear. Many Hessians have been found murdered in the streets (as is supposed) by the British soldiers. Every precaution imaginable is used to prevent the calamitous situation of those towns from transpiring. No person is allowed to pass from thence, without first obtaining a passport from the commanding officer.

In Ireland, the inhabitants are almost unanimous in favour of the Americans. They have not only formed themselves into independent companies, and denied the exportation of provisions, but have actually entered into a resolution to have no commercial intercourse with Great Britain, unless her parliament should grant them a free trade; and as this just and equitable demand has been over ruled, by a majority of ministerial dependents, since I left that kingdom, and as there are, by computation, at least ten thousand mechanicks out of employ, and on the verge of famine, I hourly expect to hear of a revolt taking place in that part of the British empire.

In England, the eyes of the nation are open. They acknowledge publicly that a conquest over America is altogether impracticable, and therefore recommend it as the only sure alternative; that a peace be concluded instantly, acknowledging them free