

# THE MINERVA.

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## FOREIGN.

### THE PRESENT POLITICS OF EUROPE.

From *the Weekly Messenger.*

Our readers will find under our foreign head some particulars of the progress which Bonaparte is making in Italy, not by arms, but by the cheaper methods of artifice & intrigue. It was plain from the first, that the sweeping title of the king of Italy was not worth anything; & the name continues every day empty; Sardinia is extinct; Genoa is incorporated; and Fucany and Naples, pushed upon their frontiers, can only hope to exist during the pleasure of the emperor. The pope, in his ecclesiastical domains, is a prisoner out upon bail, and must surrender himself and his territories upon the mandate of his master, whilst by the possession of Switzerland, and the great avenues of Italy, Austria is effectually cut off from all access to Venice.

The plea for the Genoese for incorporating themselves with France, is somewhat plausible. "Blockaded in our ports by the tyranny of the English, though neutrals, we are punished as enemies, & can no longer subsist by that commerce which is the only means of our support. When the strong oppress the weak, their only refuge is in the protection of the stronger. Excluded from the seas, we are desirous of a continental connection, and in uniting ourselves with France, we shall be secure as members of her empire, & partake of its glories and its destinies."

A national poll is then set on foot, and by a vote of the population, Genoa surrenders herself to France. Without any nice examination of arguments, Buonaparte accepts the surrender; a senate is convened, speeches and compliments are bandied on both sides, a constitution is forced out from his travelling port folio, the guns fire, the emperor is proclaimed, and the most commercial province of Italy, with the most impregnable city, and the population of a million, is assigned, & delivered up to France, in half an hour.

What impression is this likely to make upon the continent. Russia has never dissembled; she has sufficiently expressed her resentment on the old score, and now that Buonaparte has chalked on it, it is not likely to subside. The case of Austria, as we have observed, is not improved by this event. In addition to his measure of insult and encroachment, Buonaparte is certainly adding to his security; in case of a rupture he is saved the trouble of conquering Genoa; it is only to be feared that he may proceed far in this progress of peaceable acquisition, that there will not be room to make a stand in Italy or any where else.

In the event of a continental war, which is as certain as any thing of speculation can be, it naturally suggests to us here to take some view of the several powers.

The situation of the court of Vienna is strangely equivocal; its politics for this some time past have been mysterious; with the appearance of aversion to the British cause it is said by nice observers, to be on the eve of coalition, and with the show of friendship for France, it is believed that the sword is about to be drawn. The suspicious conduct of Austria has an excuse from her situation; the slightest movement of hostility brings an army upon her, the first onset of which she is unequal to resist. Unable, but by open and tedious

solicitation, to rouse the German states, she despairs of this assistance till too late, and surrounded by powers, who, though involved in a common interest to resist the encroachments of France, are yet willing to trundle to despotism to lengthen the span of their existence, or jealous of any confederacy by which Austria may profit, she hesitates even to negotiate for fear of detection, and is unripe for any independent or open action. That incomparable body of troops, which at the beginning of the late war, had given her the decided superiority, no longer exists in the same persons. If her troops have derived advantages from a long series of active services, these advantages were equally on the side of the enemy. Her armies have so often been beaten, that it is no wonder if a sort of weariness and despair have crept among them, after such an infinite train of unrewarded fatigues, when they have seen that so many valiant exploits have been

only productive of disaster. Many of her best generals have retired, or have been disgraced; her dominions, though large, are not equal to any extensive subsidies; her population, though numerous, is exhausted and dispersed. These circumstances have, probably, made her more dilatory and cautious than usual. Evidently, notwithstanding, Austria has a strength somewhat unaccountable and peculiar to herself. More deficient in pecuniary resources than any other great power in Europe, she is better able to subsist and do considerable things without them. By long habit, the whole state is formed to its necessities, and the subject is more ready to supply free quarters, and submit to military licence than any other. The country is abundantly fruitful in all its parts, and whilst the war is carried on near home, an arbitrary government, operating on so extensive an object, can hardly fail of such resources, as must serve an Austrian army; which is still paid, as Tacitus describes the troops of the ancient Germans to have been; "they have a plentiful table in lieu of pay."

Though slow in her operations, Austria makes amends by her perseverance; if she does not play the game with sufficient spirit, she never throws up her cards; and though by an error common to many courts, but particularly fatal to this, she is accustomed to interfere too much and too minutely in the operations of the campaign, there is reason to believe that the prudence of the Archduke, under whose guidance her armies at present are, has effectually cured her of this folly.

But by the celerity of the movements of France, advantages are gained over Austria before she can regulate her resources or muster her troops; but it has always been the design of Austria that the issue of the war should rather arise from the general result and concurrence of all the operations, gradually producing a solid though a slow advantage, than from the effect of a bold, quick, and masterly stroke.

Russia entirely governed by a pacific sovereign, and by aged, and therefore cautious ministers is wholly occupied in husbanding her resources, and bringing into account her vast extent of territory. The sphere of her ambition is not the south of Europe; her object of aggrandizement, if any, is on the side of the east. With regard to the European politics she proposes but one end—security; and therefore has not yet taken, nor will take any further part than what is necessary to this aim. It is thus that she has hitherto preferred counteraction to open force; but should Austria for self defence, be compelled to renew the war, Russia, from the same motive, though not in the same degree, will come forward to assist her. This assistance, however, will be limited by her original policy, and to her own immediate interest; she will not suffer Austria to be further weakened; but neither on the other hand will she attempt an extensive recovery of the former conquests of Buonaparte.

With regard to England, such an ally as this will be almost ineffectual.

Prussia, now on the edge of the French territory, with a ministry who already consider Buonaparte as more their master than their own sovereign, with the name of a French Ally, is almost as effectually a vice-royalty of France, as Holland itself.

In respect to the northern powers, Sweden appears rising to that degree of consequence and strength, as to be advancing into the station from which Prussia is rapidly receding. In any event of a shock to the French power, whether by defeat, or insurrection in some of the numerous provinces, the German powers would find a rallying post in Sweden, and she might again become as in the days of Gustavus. Denmark is not so lost to the state of its own interest as may at first sight appear. This state evidently only rests in her present torpor till the commencement of action by some great power. We shall resume the subject at a future time.

## COPY.

Of the South Carolina Insurance Company. CHARLESTON, 22d June, 1804. SIR,—I have the honour to inclose a memorial of the President and Directors

of the South Carolina Insurance Company, and of the merchants and others, interested in the commerce of the city of Charleston; and I am, Sir, Your most obedient servant,

THOMAS CORBETT,

President of the South Carolina Insurance Company.

The hon. JAMES MADISON, Secretary of state of the U. States of America.

To the honourable James Madison, Esq. Secretary of State of the United States.

The MEMORIAL of the President and Directors of the South Carolina Insurance Company, and of the merchants and others interested in the commerce of the city of Charleston,

Respectfully sheweth, THAT your memorialists are deeply affected by the recent capture at the very entrance of this port of the American ship *Two Friends* by a French privateer. This event has excited among all classes of citizens, the strongest sentiments; not only because the said ship was captured without any colour of pretence, within sight of land, but because she was our only regular London trader, and had on board a full supply of spring and summer goods. The distress and anxiety occasioned by these circumstances, are greatly enhanced from our having been hitherto deprived of our spring supplies, and from an anticipation of the consequences justly to be apprehended from a continuance of similar outrages. Should not the most prompt and effectual measures be adopted for the protection and security of our commercial interests

Your memorialists are authorized to add (although the fact be not detailed in the protest) that it appears from undoubted authority, that the magnitude of the prize was the sole inducement to the above mentioned capture, the captors having said that they would release the *Two Friends*, in the event of their falling in with any other valuable prize, which might be more worthy their notice.

This most extraordinary capture in direct violation of our treaty with France, (as appears by the accompanying documents) has already been followed by events no less alarming—our harbour being at this moment completely blocked up by three French privateers, (and more are daily expected) which examine all vessels coming in and going out of this port, and either detain or release them, according as their value excites the cupidity of the cruisers.

This degrading state of our harbour has necessarily raised the premium of insurance, thus forcing additional sums from the pockets of our citizens—has advanced the price of every commodity, & created a distressing stagnation of our exports; for the merchants not receiving their goods from abroad, are incapacitated from purchasing the produce of the country. Among these deplorable effects of the defenceless and humiliating condition of our commerce, may be moreover enumerated the immense loss of duties—those on the ship *Two Friends* alone, being estimated by the collector at 45,000 dollars.

Your memorialists have the best reasons for believing that this early success, experienced by these French privateers, will immediately allure others in swarms to our coasts and bar, to the total ruin of private mercantile concerns, and the most fatal derelictions of the publick revenue.

Your memorialists have no less ground for apprehending that British cruisers, availing themselves of the absence of domestic protection, will, under the colour of expelling the French, assume & occupy their ground, and either retain in the same degrading state harrassing our vessels by searches and detentions, or subject us to the disgraceful and mortifying obligations of gratitude, for alien succor and relief.

Your memorialists are the more alarmed at these depredations, because much valuable property is still expected this summer, from other quarters than London, and considerable importations will be looked for in the fall, for our winter supplies; and should there not be an early and effectual check to these aggressions; should our fall importations be also interrupted, the calamities last year, produced by the hurricane & other causes, in which this city has so largely participated, would be aggravated to such an extent, as to eventuate in general ruin—and these great alarms and ap-

prehensions of your memorialists, are heightened by the well known circumstance of many of the cruisers, which infest our shores, belonging to St. Jago de Cuba and Barracoa, in which receptacles our vessels and their cargoes with the knowledge of the government of Cuba, are instantly sold, without even the formality of a trial, or any condemnation whatever, thereby precluding every future probability of redress.

Your memorialists avail themselves of this occasion, to notice a late decision of the district court within this state, grounded on an act of Congress, whereby the territorial jurisdiction of the United States is limited to the short distance of three miles, or a marine league, from the coasts or shores, which, by the said court is construed to mean three miles from the land; consequently, the middle channel of our bar, being more than three miles distant from the nearest land, is pronounced by judicial authority to be without the jurisdiction of the United States! The very entrance of our harbour, in full sight of the city, where vessels are frequently obliged to anchor while waiting for tide, and with a pilot on board, is, by our own tribunals acknowledged to be without the protection of our government!!!

Your memorialists refrain from commenting on the pernicious effects of a system of policy so pregnant with dishonor and ruin to the trade and navigation of the Union at large, but more particularly to those of Charleston, from the geography of whole shores, and particular local situation of whose bar, and harbour, every vessel, in her ingress and egress is thus subjected to search, detention, or seizure—We content ourselves with a bare statement of the above grievance, superadded to so many others; not doubting that the President will take the same into consideration, and being duly impressed with the necessity of some early remedied arrangement, either of a legislative or diplomatic nature, will recur to such as may appear most conducive to the desired end.

Your memorialists having thus exhibited, but an imperfect view of their ruinous, unprotected, and degraded situation, rely with confidence on the prompt interposition of the President, to obtain by representations to the ministers of France, and of Spain, (in the event of the *Two Friends* being carried into a Spanish port) restitution of the said ship and her cargo, and to cause a stop to be put to similar spoliations. And your memorialists further most earnestly solicit some immediate and effectual naval protection for our harbour and shores, together with such other measures as the national councils, in their wisdom, may deem expedient, as well for prevention of the renewal of the outrages we have sustained, as for the permanent safety and protection of our commercial and navigating rights and interests.

Charleston, (S. C.) June 22.

## COPY.

Department of State, July 10, 1805.

SIR,—I have received your letter of the 22d ult. inclosing the memorial of the insurance company of which you are president, and of the merchants & others interested in the commerce of Charleston.

Having been before made acquainted by the collector of customs, with the circumstances of the capture of the *Two Friends*, I lost no time in stating to the French minister, who has replied, that the communication made to him respecting this affair, by the commissary of his nation at Charleston, had enabled him to anticipate my desires, by requesting the captain general of the French colonies, all of whom he had written respecting, to obtain satisfaction for this violation of the convention between France and the United States.

The observations contained in the memorial respecting the local situation, and the protection necessary for the port Charleston and the adjacent coast, have been weighed by the President, and connection with other information, to promote such measures as the nature of his function, the existing laws, and the public good, may be thought to admit as require. I have the honour to be, Sir, very respectfully, your most obedient servant.

JAMES MADISON.

THOMAS CORBETT, Esq.