

# THE MINERVA.

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## Other Suppressed Documents.

(CONTINUED FROM OUR LAST.)

of a letter from Mr. Armstrong to Mr. Madison—March 15, 1808.

In my last letter the substance of the declaration made by the emperor, viz. that no time was lost in communicating the operation of the decree of 1806, without infringing the principles of the decrees, he would immediately make exception. No time was lost in communicating this declaration to me, and I was in point out the means it required, and that they should be immediately submitted to his majesty. Little as I liked the declaration, and much as I doubted the sincerity of the declaration out of which it grew, I refused any agency of mine in respect to much of the American property seized in the ports of France as should be within this new rule. I accordingly wrote a note (a copy of which is subjoined to this letter) pointing out in a few words the error to which that rule would apply. It was put into the emperor's hand by the Count de Benvenuto, who, though six days have elapsed, has not yet received an answer.

Following document from Mr. Madison.

Mr. Armstrong, proves that our government were resolved to give up all claims for unjust decrees of France so far as they related to land: that Mr. Madison chose to overlook the captures in the West Indies, and in his own letter of May 22d, 1807: though Bonaparte had expressly avowed to extend the decree of Berlin to American commerce, Mr. Madison chose to under the original plan confined to seizures in port; and that all we wished was, France should so modify her decrees, as to cut us off from all trade with the continent, provided they would permit us to navigate the ocean. This hint is said to have reached the imperial ear, and that he consented to modify, not his Berlin decree, but the decree of Milan, which rendered a forcible boarding by a British cruizer, a cause of condemnation—Generous! Thy bounty is equal to thy moderation! No doubt Mr. Madison will thank the emperor for his favor, and as before, the Berlin decree as a just and lawful measure.

The emperor's understanding of his Berlin decree, and its original plan, see Armstrong's letter published in the documents, p. 20, in which he says, "that the application of that decree to us was the result of general expressions of the article," and the emperor's decision, that it should be to us, was the declaration of an antecedent positive disposition.

of a letter from Mr. Madison to Mr. Armstrong.

MAY 2, 1808.  
Allow the paragraph ending with the words "will be immediately taken." The repeal of her decrees is the more to be expected, above all, if Great Britain should be likely to repeal hers, as the plan of the original decree at Berlin did not extend to a municipal operation for an entire year, notwithstanding the illiberal order of Jan. 1807, & as a return to that restricted scope of her plans, so immaterially diminish its operation to the British commerce; that operation be completely in the power of France, and so little in her power on the high sea. But although we cannot, if right, demand of France more than a repeal of so many of her decrees as violates the freedom of the sea, and a great point will be gained by the repeal of that part of them, yet as it may be the effect of inducing a repeal of the illegal system of the British government, which may seek pretexts, to plead a necessity for counteracting the unprecedented and formidable mode of warfare practised against us, it will be desirable, that as little as possible should be left, for this reason, to the tranquil enjoyment of our commercial rights."

Following frank, and open letter from Mr. Armstrong to Pinckney proves that all hopes of operating on France, either through her weakness or wisdom, were wholly vain, and that France has become convinced, that words, and words only are the weapons we can employ."

too severe from a friend—"And you then die Caesar." Have the federalists been unjust in ascribing this promoting character to the government, or do its own officers dare tell it so? Yet the officer still holds his place.

of a letter from Mr. Armstrong to Mr. Pinkney.

PARIS, 26th June, 1808.

St. Michael arrived at L'Orient, on

the 1st inst. and the government messenger at Paris on the 8th; a passport for the vessel to Falmouth, thence to L'Orient again, was immediately requested, but one in the form could not be granted but by order of the emperor, and this was not given till the 18th; these circumstances will account for the long detention of your dispatches. We have reason to regret that the views of our government, founded on the justice and wisdom of the belligerent powers, are so little likely to succeed. Attempts of this character made here (and they have not been unfrequent) have hitherto done no good. Nay, the repetition of these may be fairly presumed to have done mischief, inasmuch as it has tended to establish a creed, that words in some form or other, are the ONLY MEANS we have to employ. The French council of prizes, which is (I am told) as like the English court of admiralty, as one egg is like another, has lately begun a career of condemnation. Between the 1st and 15th inst. five cases have been decided, and I am assured that orders have been received from Bayonne, for condemning all American cases en bloc [in mass.] What has suspended the axe since the 15th, we can but conjecture. It may be presumed that the reflections of the Spanish Junta, on the political and other relations subsisting between Spain and the United States, through the medium of the colonies may have produced the pause. That it is not owing to a conquest which good principles have obtained over bad ones, is certain. Are things any better your side the channel?"

The following letters from Gen. Armstrong prove his sense of the folly and inutility, the incompetency and fruitlessness of our Embargo. He recommends vigorous measures against France—the reasons he assigns, his conviction, that we can do much against France, and the belief entertained by France, that we dare not do any thing against her, while they prove, that France knew our rulers, and had pledged from them, of which he was ignorant, prove a private good understanding with France, through some other channel than that of our accredited Minister.

Extract of a letter from Mr. Armstrong to Mr. Madison.

30th August, 1808.  
"We have somewhat overrated our means of coercion of the two great belligerents to a course of justice. The embargo is a measure calculated above any other, to keep us whole, and keep us in peace, but beyond this, you must not count upon it. Here it is not felt, and in England (in the midst of the more recent and interesting events of the day) it is forgotten. I hope that unless France shall do us justice, we shall raise the embargo, and make, in its stead the experiment of an armed commerce. Should she adhere to her wicked and foolish measures, we ought not to content ourselves with doing this. There is much, very much, besides, that we can do, and we ought not omit doing all we can, because it is believed here that we cannot do much, and even that we will not do what we have the power of doing."

Letter from Mr. Pinkney to Mr. Madison.

FEBRUARY 2, 1808.  
"Sir, I had an interview this morning with Mr. Canning, at his own request. One object of the interview related to the Message of the President of the 27th of October last, of which a newspaper copy had been received from Mr. Erskine. A call for a copy of this message was expected in parliament, and Mr. C. wished to be in a situation to produce it. I could not assist him, and I suppose the newspaper copy will be considered sufficient."

"As soon as this subject was disposed of, Mr. C. observed, that he had requested to see me principally for the purpose of conversing with me privately, and extra-officially upon the duty proposed to be laid in consequence of the late blockading orders, upon cotton intended for re-exportation to enemy ports upon the Continent. The very few occasional remarks which I had made upon this subject at our last interview (already mentioned in my letter of the 15th) had led him to suppose that it was only to this mode of excluding our cotton from France, that the U. States would be likely to object. And if their object could be accomplished in another way, the measure would cease to be offensive. Having admitted (what indeed was sufficiently obvious before) that they looked to the intended duty upon cotton as a complete prohibition—he said that if it would be more acceptable to the U. States that the form of the proceeding should be changed so as to leave the exclusion of cotton from the Continent, to the mere effect of the blockade, their desire to consult the feelings and wishes, in whatever did not entirely counteract the great end of the measure, would dispose them to adopt such a modification of their plan. In the course of his explanations upon this point, he introduced professions of good will towards our country; of regret that France had imposed upon them the necessity of resorting to a step which might

be supposed to press with severity upon our interests, and of an anxious desire, that a return to a system of equity and moderation on the part of her enemies, would speedily enable Great Britain to abandon (as she would in that case certainly do) the whole of the recent Orders in Council. He stated that it was peculiarly important towards the first effect of the orders (of which it was the object to compel France to relieve the commerce of the world from the oppression of her late deceives) that considerable supplies of cotton should not be introduced into the Continent—that it had been hoped and believed, that the United States would not receive as harsh or unfriendly a constrained attempt by Great Britain to prevent such supplies from being received by the other parties to the war, especially as it was certain that Great Britain could herself consume the whole of the cotton which we were in the habit of sending abroad, and that they had preferred the imposition of a duty upon cotton, to a direct prohibition through the operation of the blockade, because it was consistent with those various and extensive modifications of the blockade, to which they had been led, not merely by views of advantage to themselves, but by respect for the feelings and convenience of other nations, and particularly of America. In fine he wished to know my private opinion before the subject came before the Parliament, whether an alteration in this respect from a prohibitory duty, to an absolute interdict, would be likely to be acceptable to us. I replied in as conciliatory a manner as I could, but as soon as I had understood that a duty was to be proposed on re-exported cotton, I had been disposed to take for granted that the object was not revenue but prohibition.

"That whether the object were the one or the other, it was as he knew, my opinion, that the United States would hold that object, as well as the means and the whole system connected with them to be utterly inadmissible, and that I did not feel myself authorized to say to which of the causes he had suggested my government would give the preference, or that it would feel any preference for either. Mr. C. at length asked me if I should think it worth while to consult my government on this subject, observing at the same time, that he would not "wish it to be done if there was the least danger of giving offence, and assuring me that what he had said proceeded from motives the most amicable and respectful towards us." He added that upon reflection this would be the most convenient mode, as it would now give them a good deal of trouble to accommodate their plan, as prepared for Parliament, to a change of so much importance, in season to be acted upon.

"I answered in substance, (as I saw it was his wish) that I could mention what had passed to you. And that I did not doubt, that the motives of this proposal, whatever might be thought of the proposal itself, would be acceptable to the President. He requested me to say to you that although the necessary bills would be proposed and would pass in Parliament, according to their first project of a duty, yet that the alteration above suggested would be adopted, whenever it should be known that it would be a grievance to us.

"I must not trouble you with any reflections upon this conversation, but it is my duty to say, that although Mr. C.'s manner was extremely conciliatory, not a word escaped him to encourage a hope, that the orders in Council would be in any degree abandoned, or that I should gain any thing by urging a reconsideration of them. I threw out some intimations with that tendency, but soon perceived that it could not be useful to follow them up. I have the honor to be, &c.

## Foreign News.

By the Batavian, at New York.

NEW-YORK, March 15.  
By the arrival of the brig Batavian, in 60 days from Rochelle, the editors of the New-York Gazette, have received from an intelligent passenger the following important particulars: The letter bag not being delivered last night, deprives them of the news in detail, the loose papers having been taken by the British officers. The miraculous escape and singularly chequered passage of the Batavian is staged under our marine head.

Joseph Bonaparte was again crowned king at Madrid about the 8th of December.—And the Emperor had addressed a proclamation to the Spaniards, saying, that the Almighty had given him the power to rule Spain, and that if the Spaniards did not comply their blood should pay for their disobedience. That if they would not accept of his brother as king, he would take the throne himself, and give him another kingdom. In this proclamation he offers a pardon to all Spanish officers (except about four whom he names) that would lay down their arms. But we are happy to learn that not one of them chose to accept of this offer.

We further learn, that the troops which Bonaparte took into Spain consisted principally

of Germans, Poles and Hollanders, who marched reluctantly into the country—and that Bonaparte was very suspicious of Austria.

Bonaparte had left Madrid, and it was reported that he was on the frontiers of Portugal.

News was received at Rochelle, on the 12th January, that there had been an engagement in Spain, which was said, to have taken place about the 13th December, and it was reported that 15,000 of the English had been killed, and 15,000 taken prisoners. This story, however, say the passengers in the Batavian, was not even believed in France. It is certain that the account was not confirmed on the 14th (two days after) when the vessel sailed.

In the course of a few days, colonial produce had risen 15 per cent. at Bordeaux, in consequence of accounts received from America.

On the 14th January, the day the Batavian sailed, there were at anchor in Rochelle harbour, 4 ships of the line and 2 frigates, with troops on board, ready for sea, destined for Martinique; but they were blockaded by a force nearly as formidable. They were however determined to slip out the first opportunity.

American vessels could not clear out of France without giving bonds not to break the American Embargo!

The British officers of the Comet frigate, (mentioned in our marine department) informed a friend of ours, that off Rochefort, he read a London paper of the 12th January, in which it was stated, that sir Arthur Wellesley's expedition to Spain was abandoned. That an expedition of 12 sail of the line and 4 frigates, were fitting out at Portsmouth for Buenos Ayres—that Ferrol had been taken by the French the beginning of January.—That the British troops at Corunna were about to strike the guns and abandon the place—that the British army was retiring towards Vigo, where were 50 transports and 4 frigates to convey them home—and that the Spanish coast was lined with French troops.

The Comet, spoke a cutter in the channel, and was informed, that Admiral Mitchell had fallen in with the TOULON FLEET, took two ships of the line, and sunk two others.

The above is given as we received it.—it is confused, and somewhat contradictory—if a conclusion may be drawn, it is, that Bonaparte has seen more trouble in Spain than he anticipated.

MARCH 17.

We also understand, from the passengers in the Batavian, that the bulletins from the Grand army in Spain, were considered by the enlightened part of the nation, as mere fabrications, intended to amuse the ignorant. It was known at Rochelle, that the French army made three distinct attacks on Madrid, and suffered immense loss before it surrendered. The roads from Spain into France, were continually crowded with waggons of sick and wounded, on their return; and it was believed, that Bonaparte had not lost less than 100,000 men since he commenced hostilities against Spain. So unpopular was the present war in France, & such was the general distress, that the best informed people were seriously apprehensive of another revolution.

It must be extremely mortifying to every American, and must rouse the enmity of every man who has the least pretensions to American feelings, to hear of the cruelties practised upon our fellow citizens in France, whom chance has thrown upon her shores.

We learn from capt. Lindsay who came home passenger in the Batavian, (and we have heard it before) that the crews of all American vessels detained in France are imprisoned, and are released only on condition of their entering on board French ships of war. We have seen a letter from a young gentleman of this city, who went out chief mate of the ship Holland Trader, capt. Sinclair. He states, that he was still in prison at Rochefort, and allowed nothing to subsist on but bread and water!

It will recur to our readers that captain Sinclair the commander of the Holland Trader, was also imprisoned in France; and that he made his escape in disguise, got on board the ship Bordeaux, and arrived sometime since at Philadelphia—and it is a pleasing reflection, that he is now with his family, in this city—for his escape had so incensed the French, that immediately after it was discovered that he had gone off, twelve thousand francs reward was offered by the government for his apprehension!

It was mentioned in yesterday's Gazette, that dispatches were received in the Batavian, from Mr. Armstrong for our government. These dispatches were entrusted to the care of capt. Bunker, a passenger in the Batavian—entrusted by whom? They were handed to capt. B. by the infamous capt. Haley, on the 21st December, with this particular injunction, that if the vessel on board of which he took his passage, was captured by a British cruizer, he must sink or destroy the dispatches, to prevent their falling into the hands of the English.