



Ours are the plans of fair delightful peace,
Unwar'd by party rage, to live like Brothers.

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TO THE REPUBLICANS OF THE U. STATES.

FELLOW-CITIZENS,

An interesting crisis has taken place in the affairs of your country. The war which during many years has agitated the nations of Europe, has at length extended its baneful effects to us. In the course of an arduous contest, France has acquired the absolute dominion of the European continent, while G. Britain has maintained an universal ascendancy upon the ocean—Impregnable and invulnerable to each other by the operations of an ordinary warfare, the high contending powers have been driven to a conflict of policy rather than of arms. England on the one hand resolved to interdict the furnishing supplies to France and her dependencies; While France on the other, determined to assail the commerce of her rival, which she perceived to be the foundation of her power, and the sinews of her maritime greatness. A contest so desperate in its nature, so peculiar in its character, has interrupted or destroyed the intercourse of nations. Laws that have followed the footsteps of civilization, principles rendered venerable by their justice and antiquity; rules which during centuries had established and confirmed the relative rights and duties of neutrals & belligerents, have been openly disregarded. The moral code of nations sternly prostrated, and every privilege of independent states subverted by the arbitrary will of despotism and by the power of the sword.

Far distant from the dreadful scenes of contention and of blood, pursuing an equitable and peaceful policy; reposing itself upon the wisdom, justice and impartiality of its measures, our administration fondly hoped, that the distant tempest would not approach, or but slightly affect our shores. Extending our national hospitality to every people; rendering equal justice to all; conferring on none a privilege or favor that has been denied to another; considering them alike as friends in PEACE, and enemies alone in WAR, it was the only wish of our government to afford security to the citizen, and to protect him in those useful pursuits of agriculture, commerce and industry, which are equally essential to subsistence and to happiness.

The farewell advice of the great and excellent WASHINGTON should be deeply impressed upon our minds. "OBSERVE," said that enlightened patriot, "good faith and justice towards all nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all; religion and morality enjoin this conduct, & can it be that good policy does not equally enjoin it? It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and at no distant period a GREAT NATION, to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example, of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence. Who can doubt that in the course of time and things, the fruits of such a plan would richly repay any temporary advantages which might be lost by a steady adherence to it? Can it be that Providence has not connected the permanent felicity of a nation with its virtue? The experiment, at least, is recommended by every sentiment which ennobles human nature. Alas! it is rendered impossible by its vices.

"The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign nations, is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop.

"Europe has a set of primary interests, which to us have none

or a very remote relation. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves, by artificial ties, in the ordinary combinations and collisions of her enemies.

"Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. If we remain one people, under an efficient government, the period is not far off, when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality, we may at any time resolve upon, to be scrupulously respected; when belligerent nations under the impossibility of making acquisitions upon us, will not slightly hazard the giving us provocation; when we may choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel.

"Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the trials of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor or caprice?"

Such was the sage advice afforded by the man who has been distinguished by the name of father of his country, upon the eve of his retiring, for ever, from public life. We cannot doubt the sagacity of his judgment nor question the disinterested purity of his intentions. Such also has been the outline of the system pursued by our republican administration with undeviating firmness and fidelity.

At the commencement of the war, which, with a transient intermission, has so long ravaged the finest countries of Europe, the government of the United States, determined to adopt and maintain a rigid system of neutrality. At an early period of the contest, Great-Britain, calculating upon the formidable strength of the coalition, openly avowed a war of conquest and extermination. On the 8th of June, 1793, she issued her celebrated orders in council, declaring, among other infractions of the right of neutral commerce, that it should be lawful to seize and detain all vessels, laden in whole or in part with corn or meal destined to any port in France, or to any place occupied by the French armies. Notwithstanding the rigor and injustice of this interdict; and notwithstanding the rapacity and spoliations of the belligerents, captures during the first war were comparatively less frequent. Our differences were submitted to negotiation and settled by treaties. Commerce, though greatly harassed, continued to flourish and remained a source of national revenue as well as individual emolument.

The peace of Amiens, which had promised to restore repose to the world, was of but short duration. In the year 1802, hostility became renewed with equal asperity and vigor. From that period until after 1805, American commerce continued with but little variation upon the footing of the former war. A change in the Ministry took place. Former Ministers were considered to have been too favorable to the United States. A spirit of jealousy was indulged against our trade. We were accused with having fraudulently covered enemy's property, and of being the mere carriers of an enemy's commerce. A system of severe commercial restriction was, under that pretext, meditated and avowed by the present cabinet.

While the court and cabinet of Great-Britain, regardless of every consideration of national right, had thus determined to restrain the commerce of the United States.—The decisive victory at Jena conferred upon their warlike rival, the absolute dominion of the continent.—On the 21st Nov, 1806, at Berlin, the capital of conquered Prussia,

an imperial decree was passed, declaring the British islands in a state of blockade, and prohibiting commerce and correspondence with them. This decree, however, was a subject of explanation, and remained for a considerable period unexecuted, or but partially enforced against the United States. On the 7th of January, 1807, the cabinet of England issued retaliating orders, and on the 11th Nov. following, proclaimed those decisive and arbitrary orders of her privy council, by which all trade, directly from America, to every port and country of Europe at war with Great-Britain, or from which the British flag is excluded, is totally prohibited. This prohibition included every part of the continent of Europe, with the single and precarious exception of the "barren kingdom of Sweden."

The United States indeed, were permitted to export their own produce, directly to Sweden alone; but in every other case our cargoes were ordered to be first landed in a British port, a British permission for exportation to be obtained, and British duties to be paid. These new orders, by the confession of an English writer, were of a description to produce a revolution in the whole commerce of the world, and a total derangement of those neutral rights and relations by which civilized nations have hitherto been connected.

The orders of the British privy council were immediately followed by the countervailing regulations passed at Milan, Dec. 17, 1807. By the decree of Milan, every vessel which has been resisted by an English ship, or which has submitted to make a voyage to England, or has paid any duty to the English government, is declared *denationalized*, to have forfeited the rights of her flag, and to be deemed and taken for British property.

Every vessel of whatever nation she may be, or whatever description her cargo may be, which is cleared out in the harbors of England or in English colonies, or in places in possession of English troops, or steering her course to England, English colonies, or to places in possession of the English troops, shall be considered good and lawful prize. The Milan decree was enforced by a proclamation of the King of Spain, dated from Aranjuez, the 3d January last.

You will readily perceive that adverse orders and decrees so comprehensive in their extent, produced of necessity the total annihilation of commerce. We were the only neutral nation that aspired to commercial eminence; it was perfectly understood and must have been contemplated by the belligerents, that these decrees and orders should be, and were principally directed against us. There scarcely remained a port in the world to which a cargo could be shipped, or a spot upon the ocean that could be navigated with safety.

With the single exception of that of Sweden, the whole sea coast of continental Europe, from the Archipelago to the farthest extremity of Norway, was in the possession of France or of her allies. If we destined a vessel to the continent, we violated the orders of the privy council; if we sent a ship to an English port, we infringed the Berlin decree; if the vessel was bound to Great-Britain, in the first instance, with the view of landing her cargo and paying the duties there, and thence proceeding to the continent, we contravened the decree of Milan.—There was no escape from capture and from condemnation. The direct operation and manifest intention of the British orders were to abrogate every ancient principle

that had been settled by the law of nations; to render American commerce dependent upon the mandate of her privy council, to impose a tax and create a revenue from our trade. We could not submit to these innovations without consenting to become the tributaries of England. The decrees of France on the other hand, being equally an infraction of the laws of nations, sought the destruction of a commerce which her enemy had resolved to abridge, or regulate it in such a manner as to render it subservient to its own resources. In a state of affairs thus desperate and humiliating, a continuance of our commerce would have amounted to a surrender of our independent rights, equally degrading and ruinous. Such an acquiescence could neither have been reconciled with the duties of our government, the dignity of the nation, the interest of our citizens in general, or even with those of the merchant in particular.

From the stern and arbitrary regulations of the cabinets of Europe, we direct the attention of a moment to the conduct of belligerent cruisers on the coast of the U. S. Our West-India trade had long been infested by the privateers of New-Province, and in proportion to their means by those of the French. But with respect to the English, to retrospect no farther back than 1804, detachments from their regular navy were stationed along our shore. Our principal seaports were closely blockaded, our vessels watched and intercepted, our native as well as our lawfully naturalized seamen impressed by violence, and the whole of our commerce subjected to their abuse. Not contented with attacking private vessels, they fired at the revenue cutter stationed at N. York, and commanded by Capt. Brewster, within our own waters and acknowledged jurisdiction. On the 26th of April, 1806, the murder of Pearce was perpetrated within the limits of the harbor of New-York. To injure the feelings and prostrate the dignity of the country, the offender, Capt. Whitby of the *Leander*, instead of being punished, is stated to have been elevated to a superior command. On the 22d of June, 1807, our national frigate, the *Chesapeake*, unprepared for an attack, her commander believing his country to remain in a state of peace, relying upon the inviolability of our jurisdiction and the protection of our laws, was forcibly attacked by the *Leopard* ship of war, commanded by Capt. Humphries, under the superior direction of the British Admiral Berkeley, several of our fellow-citizens killed, and some of her seamen, proved to be Americans, impressed by violence. Such has been, and such exists the state of our affairs. Atrocious injuries have been aggravated by marked and repeated indignities. Each belligerent without exception or distinction, had determined that our commerce should be its victim, but England in particular, exulting in the strength of her navy, openly discarded every semblance of equity and every appearance of moderation. She blockaded our harbors—She captured our merchant ships—She attacked a national vessel—She impressed and impresses our native mariners, and by the tenor of her conduct evinces obdurate and unrelenting hostility.

The concerns of our country had arrived to an unexampled crisis. It was necessary to determine upon peace or war. The latter was to be sustained with fortitude, if rendered inevitable.—The former unquestionably preferable, if possible to preserve it, by policy, by the force of reason, or even by moderate sacrifices.—Government was compelled to elect

between its pacific and neutral system, and an immediate recurrence to hostility. It has studied to preserve the liberties and cherish the interests of our country. Commerce rigorously interdicted by foreigners could not have been pursued with advantage to any class of our citizens. An equal and impartial intercourse with the powers at war, was sternly prohibited by all; a partial intercourse with one, must have immediately terminated in an open rupture with the others.

Fellow-citizens! Our Fathers and our elder Brothers would not submit to taxation by the British Parliament. In justice to their memories, to our cause and to our nation, we cannot submit to commercial taxation by an English privy council.

Fellow-citizens! We are now a respectable, and in the language of Washington, will shortly be a great nation. We have received the inestimable and dear bought prize of independence, we now enjoy its blessings, and shall we not preserve them?

Fellow-citizens! Our fathers & our elder brothers were strictly virtuous. They voluntarily abandoned the bosoms of their families and every profitable pursuit of life. They cheerfully encountered the dangers and hardships of a dreadful and procrastinated war, and shall not we, enjoying a free and fruitful country, endure a temporary suspension of trade, which, with ordinary fortitude, must bring our enemies to terms? Have we in a few years been rendered so degenerate? Do we value the inestimable blessings of freedom and independence? Can we expect to retain those blessings, if we cease to strive for, and deserve them?

We entertain no partiality, we cherish no preference; we indulge neither causeless prejudices nor partial affection towards France or England. Each of those powers has deeply injured us, they have equally violated the laws and invaded the sovereign rights of the nation. As it is our duty, so let it be our determined resolution, to resist the injurious decrees of the one, with as much energy as the arbitrary orders of the other. The interests & the honor of our country demand this course.

Fellow-citizens! Our national character and our public interests are at stake. If we surrender now we may yield forever. This is the proud and decisive moment, in which we must determine the question, whether we can maintain our real independence? Such is the hapless condition of society in that quarter of the globe, that the nations of Europe will be constantly warring against each other. Our country is too important to remain unnoticed. We must determine to maintain our neutral stand at present, or remain exposed to their intrigues and attempts to involve us in their incessant struggles, forever. Should they succeed, their attempts will be perpetually renewed—if they fail, their present privations and disappointments will deter them from similar endeavors in future times. In maintaining our own, we are in fact contending for the neutral and commercial rights of every people. Our own posterity will bless, and future nations regard us, with approbation and applause.

But indulging a more limited and interested view of this important subject. Disregarding for a moment the dignity of our nation, the honor of our flag, the permanent rights of commerce, our substantial interests and future security. What, we may enquire, would have been our present condition, if the government of our country had adopted any different plan? Could we in any case of

gal, amounting to about 20,000 in Drummond succeeds to the command in chief here."

A letter received in New-York from Barracoa, via Havanna, 12d of Sept. says, "A vessel ed here this morning from St. brings advices that the intents of St. Thomas are evacuated the Island, on account of scarcity of provisions, from a commercial yanne, to another in ed 11th of Sept. rived here yesterday."