

A

L E T T E R

FROM

Robert Goodloe Harper,

OF

SOUTH-CAROLINA,

TO HIS

Constituents,

PROVIDENCE:

PRINTED BY JOHN CARTER,

1801.

L E T T E R

FROM

JOHN C. BERRY

TO

SOUTH-CAROLINA

TO THE

Legislature

PROVIDENCE

Printed by JOHN C. BERRY

A

LETTER, &c.

WASHINGTON, *March* 5, 1801.

IT remains for me now, my dear Sir, to present you with a general view of our public affairs and political situation, at this most important period; a period at which the effect on our government of a change of administration is for the first time to be tried.

This change took place yesterday, at 12 o'clock, when Mr. Jefferson, the new President, took the oath of office, in presence of the Senate, which met pursuant to a summons from his predecessor, of such members of the late House of Representatives as were still in the city, and of a numerous concourse of spectators. The whole ceremony was conducted with the utmost propriety. As on the part of those who had supported the new President in the election, there was no unbecoming exultation; so his opposers manifested by their behaviour a cheerful acquiescence in the decision of the majority. They attended the ceremony; and after it concluded, they paid a visit to the President, to express their respect for him as the chief magistrate of the nation, and their readiness to support him in the proper exercise of his authority. The speech which he delivered, previous to taking the oath, was well calculated to inspire these sentiments, and to afford the hope of such an administration as may conduce to his own glory and the public good. Before the evening, all was quiet as if no change had taken place.

Should Mr. Jefferson conduct the government on rational principles, and with steadiness, vigour and prudence, his elevation will prove a public blessing. The fear that he might not, was a sufficient reason for opposing his election; the hope that he may, ought to ensure him a candid and liberal conduct, and a rational confidence, on the part of those who have prided themselves in the appellation of friends to the government. They are called on to show, that their attachment to it was an attachment to principles, and not to men; that they are ready to extend to lesser errors and mistakes that indulgence which they claimed for themselves, but never experienced; and that should they be compelled, ultimately, to oppose the administration, by its adopting systems and principles essentially hostile to the public good, they will commence their opposition with reluctance, support it with energy, conduct it with candour, dignity and effect: that they will not sully the fair reputation which they have obtained, nor dishonour the noble principles on which they have acted, by resorting to those factious and profligate arts which have been employed against themselves: that their appeal shall be made to the sense, the patriotism and the virtue of the nation, not to its passions, its follies, or its vices; and supported by truth and fair argument, not by slander, misrepresentation and falsehood; and that relying on their known and acknowledged superiority in talents, services, knowledge and character, they will always spurn the little arts, whereby inferior men sometimes obtain success.

This will be the conduct of those, for whom their attachment to the union, and their support of the federal government, have justly obtained the appellation of FEDERAL REPUBLICANS, or FEDERALISTS; of those by whom the affairs of the United States have been hitherto conducted: of the friends and associates of Washington, the supporters of Adams, the authors of the federal government itself, and of that system of domestic and foreign policy whereby this nation has been conducted, with unexampled rapidity, in the course of honour, prosperity and happiness. Their views were as noble and elevated as their plans were enlarged; and though their measures and their principles may be for a time decried and misunderstood, they must, ultimately, be adopted and pursued, with, perhaps, some small variations, by whoever administers the government of a great and extended nation. Their opposers, in the triumph of a momentary success, have proclaimed that "the fun of federalism has set forever." But this is a mistake. It may set, but like the glorious and beneficent orb to which it is so aptly compared, it will set to rise again. The mists of democracy may obscure it for a moment, but they cannot tarnish its lustre, much less extinguish its light. It may set; but the benighted nation, after tossing for a while in the disturbed and fleeting dreams of fancied good, will wake to mourn its absence, and sigh for its return. It will return; the nation shall hail its approach, and rejoice in the brightness of its course; while its genial ray shall call forth in abundance, and ripen the fruits of virtue, liberty and happiness. Names may change; the men who hold the reins may be different; the denominations of parties may be altered or forgotten; but the principles on which the Federalists have acted must be adopted, their plans must be substantially pursued, or the government must fall to pieces; for those narrow maxims, which apply properly to small communities, and on which speculative men sometimes found their theories, will ever prove, in practice, wholly inadequate to the government of a great nation.

These are the men, my dear Sir, whose system I adopted, from the first moment when my entrance into public life gave me the inclination and the means to enquire minutely into the public affairs of this country; with whom it is my pride and my boast to have stood; with whom I wish to fall, if fall they must; and with whom alone I wish to rise. They will enjoy the secret and sweet satisfaction of knowing that their names will be remembered with affectionate respect, and their services with gratitude, when all the calumnies wherewith they have been assailed, for the purpose of driving them from power, shall have been buried in oblivion; and that their country in the mean time will reap a rich harvest of prosperity and honour, from the seeds which their labours have sown; happy if no reverse of system, or consequent reverse of fortune, should furnish it with cause for regretting their absence. How far this is probable, will best be determined from a review of their leading principles, and of the effects which they have already produced.

The leading principle of their system, as to foreign nations, has been, to preserve peace and amity with all, by a conduct just, liberal and fair, towards all; but to grant particular privileges to none, and to submit to indignities from none; to rely, for the protection of our rights and honour, not on the friendship, the justice or the forbearance of other governments, but on our own strength and resources, and to employ vigorous means for calling forth those resources, and preparing them for exertion in time of need; in fine, to hold the olive branch in one hand, and the sword in the other; to employ peaceable means for attaining our just objects, while peaceable means could afford rational hopes of success; and to shew ourselves ready to resort to force, should those hopes be found fallacious.

Regulating its conduct by these maxims, the government of the United States, under the direction of the federalists, with Washington, and afterwards Adams, at their head, has preserved the nation in peace, through the most general and the most furious war that has afflicted the world in modern times. To understand fully the difficulties of this task, it must be recollected, that the war raged with great violence in the West-Indies, where we carry on a most extensive commerce, and that the chief parties in it, both there and in Europe, were France and England, the two greatest trading and maritime powers in the world, and those with which we had the most extensive connexions, both commercial and political: one perpetually demanding what could not be granted without exciting the jealousy, and perhaps infringing the rights of the other; each endeavouring to draw us, by indirect means, into the quarrel; one in order to make use of us, and the other to plunder us; and each committing, from time to time, aggressions on our trade, which our honour and our interest forbore us to submit to, their pride and resentment prevented them from atoning for, and perhaps their policy withheld them from restraining.

Between these two dangerous shoals, the vessel of the state has been safely steered, by its federal pilots. When Britain refused to comply with our just claims under former treaties, and her recent depredations became intolerable, they made one last and solemn appeal to her interest, policy and justice, by the peaceable mean of a particular embassy; and they prepared for other steps, should this mean prove abortive. The attempt succeeded; a fair accommodation took place; and the peace of the country was preserved, without the sacrifice of its honour or its essential interests. The posts which Britain had detained were given up: she agreed to make compensation for illegal spoliations on our trade; we agreed to compensate her subjects for the losses which they might have sustained, by the interference of our government between them and their debtors; as fair a mode as could be devised, for settling the amount of these mutual claims, was fixed on; and the trade between the two nations was placed on a footing as favourable as we had reason to expect, and equally advantageous to both. Thus a good understanding, highly useful to both parties, was established; and although the treaty has met with some interruptions, in some parts of its execution, they have not been of a nature to endanger our peace or our honour.

The difficulty of effecting this adjustment was greatly increased by the artful endeavours of France to defeat it; by her incessant demand of privileges, the granting of which must instantly have embroiled us with Britain; by the passions, the resentments, the prejudices, which the conduct of Britain herself had excited or revived; by the haughtiness of that power, the strong prejudices of some individuals who possessed great influence in her affairs, and the jealousy which she entertained of our prepossessions in favour of her enemy; and more than all, by the loud, clamorous and indefatigable exertions of a numerous and powerful party among ourselves, acting, from whatever motives, in full concert with France, eager for a quarrel with Britain, and employing all the means which the existing circumstances afforded, in thwarting and embarrassing our government, in all its measures for the preservation of peace.

We all recollect the conduct of this party, both in and out of Congress; with what violence they opposed the proclamation of neutrality; with what bitterness they inveighed against the extraordinary mission; what measures of hostility they proposed and supported; how they stigmatized, as pusillanimity and national degradation, every attempt to conciliate previous to an appeal to force; and with what violence they attacked the public and pri-

vate characters of those who were considered as the friends and promoters of the conciliatory system.

All these difficulties, however, were surmounted by the federal administration; and the peace of the nation was preserved, without an abandonment of its rights, its interest, or its honour.

When France, in her turn, provoked by the failure of her attempt to embroil us with Britain, and to gain, under the name and pretence of an alliance, the disposal of our resources; and encouraged by the conduct of a powerful party in this country, which seemed devoted to her interests, began to maltreat and insult us; to pillage universally our property on the ocean, and to enact laws, the execution whereof was equivalent to a direct war on our commerce; the same system was pursued towards her; with this single difference, that the government persisted longer in the attempt to obtain justice by amicable means, than it had seemed disposed to do with respect to Britain. When one minister was rejected, a solemn embassy composed of three was sent. It was not till this embassy also was rejected, with circumstances the most insulting, as well as the most alarming, that an appeal was at length made to arms. When made, it was made with energy. Vigorous preparations by sea, for the protection of our trade; vigorous preparations by land for repelling invasion, if it should be attempted, and for preventing the attempt by shewing ourselves prepared for it; extensive and well digested measures of finance, to support these exertions, and to sustain public credit amid the shocks to which, by such a state of things, it might be exposed; the pride, the patriotism, and the public spirit of the nation animated and roused; such were the measures by which the federal administration repelled the aggressions, braved the menaces, and prepared to meet the hostility of a power, at whose feet the whole of Europe, one nation only excepted, was crouching and trembling. These measures, which were adopted amidst all the opposition that narrow views, party prejudices, French partiality, selfish timidity, and short sighted avarice could give, soon produced their desired effect. France, finding that we could neither be seduced nor terrified; that we were determined to resist, and prepared to resist with effect, gave up, or at least suspended her hostile plans, smoothed her brow, and extended the olive branch. She now courted that negotiation which she had so lately repelled. She talked no more of douceurs, of loans, or of acknowledgments for passages in the President's speech. She invited us to treat on those equal and honourable terms, which nations who respect each other always admit; and the federal government, adhering always to its pacific system, accepted the invitation. A negotiation was commenced, and has at length terminated in such a treaty, as we have thought it for our honour and interest to ratify. I say terminated, because although the treaty be ratified on our part, subject to certain conditions, there is no doubt of these conditions being acceded to by France.

Thus, with France also, peace, after some small interruption, arising from her unjust and violent conduct, has been restored, the honour of the nation has been vindicated, and its rights have been asserted and protected. This has been effected by the measures of the federalists, who, as soon as they saw the end attained for which those measures were adopted, gradually gave them up; beginning with such as involved the greatest expence to the nation. Thus the army was disbanded last spring, as soon as the situation of France, and the views of her government, had become such, as to render it highly improbable that she would attempt an attack on us at home. Thus the direct tax was abandoned, when the productiveness of our other sources of revenue, the diminution of our expences by the disbandment of the army, and the probability of a further decrease of expence by the restoration

of peace, had afforded solid grounds for believing that it was no longer necessary. Thus the President has been authorized to lay up the greater part of the navy, and thereby to reduce very much its expences, as soon as the accommodation with France, being completed, shall render a smaller maritime force sufficient for the protection of our trade.

To establish a navy, and thereby to place the nation in a state of security against the violence and rapacity of other powers, in the present, and still more in future wars, being a part of the system of the federalists, they retained a portion of our vessels in actual service; ordered such as were least valuable to be sold, the rest to be laid up and preserved for future use, and made provision for the gradual building and equipment of others of greater force.

So far as to France and England—the two nations with whom we had the most difficult part to act, on account of our relations to each of them, of their power, and of their animosity to each other. With Spain too we had a territorial dispute, which, though of less magnitude, involved important interests, and might have produced very disagreeable effects. This dispute the federal administration has adjusted, on terms equally honourable and advantageous for the nation. The territory which we claimed was given up to us, and the disputed line was settled, so as to remove all cause of future contention.

Such are the maxims which have guided the foreign policy of the federalists, and such the complete success wherewith they have conducted our concerns with other nations.

In the management of our domestic affairs, their system has been, in the first place, to support vigorously the independence and authority of the federal government; which alone is capable of ensuring our safety from abroad, by opposing to foreign nations the barrier of our united strength, and of maintaining our peace at home, by checking the ambition, and repressing the passions of the several states, and balancing their forces, so as to prevent the greater from overpowering and subduing the lesser. They well knew that this government, being under the necessity of laying and collecting considerable taxes, of raising and supporting armies and fleets, of maintaining numerous officers, and of carrying on all those expensive operations which its superintendance of our general affairs require, and from which the state governments are wholly exempt, is far more likely than those governments to incur unpopularity, to become subject to the imputation of extravagance, oppression and ambitious views, and to be deprived of the public confidence. They well knew that this government, being removed at a greater distance than the state governments from the people, was more apt to be viewed with jealousy, and considered as a foreign government; and that there never would be wanting ambitious and restless men, who, failing to obtain that share of influence in the federal government, or those honours and employments under it, to which they might think themselves entitled, would take refuge in the state governments, and avail themselves of all those circumstances to render the federal government odious, to excite against it the public resentment, and even to over-rule and controul it by means of the state governments. Well knowing this, the federalists considered it as a principle of the utmost importance, for the preservation of the federal government, to render it as independent as possible of state influence; to give it a movement of its own, and complete power to enforce its own laws; to resist state encroachments; and to restrain the state governments within their just and proper bounds. In every struggle between the federal and the state governments, they considered the latter as possessing infinitely the greatest natural strength; and therefore thought it their duty to take part with the former, in order to preserve the balance.

As to the federal government itself, their second great maxim was, to support the executive power, against the encroachments, the ambition, and the superior strength, of the popular branch. The power of a popular assembly being little suspected by the people, is always little watched; and as no one member is to bear the blame of any excesses which the whole body may commit, its power is but little restrained by personal responsibility and a regard to character; and of course is very likely to be abused. Hence has resulted in every age and nation, where the form of government admitted popular assemblies, a constant effort, on the part of those assemblies, to get all power into their own hands, and to exercise it according to their own passions and caprice. This has every where produced the necessity of checking the power of those assemblies, by confining it wholly to legislation, by dividing that power between two Houses, and by giving the judicial and executive powers to persons independent of the legislature. This has been done by our constitution; which gives the executive power to the President, a single magistrate; places the judicial power in the courts; and divides the legislative power between the Senate and House of Representatives. This House of Representatives, being the most numerous and the most popular body, is subject to the same passions and dispositions which popular bodies ever feel, and consequently, has a perpetual tendency to encroach on the executive powers, and to direct and controul the President in the exercise of his authority. As the President, being a single magistrate, is much more apt to be suspected and viewed with a jealous eye, than this popular assembly, which the people consider as nearer to themselves and more under their controul, he would have the people against him in these contests, and must finally submit absolutely to the controul of the house, were there not always some members of it, whose just way of thinking and regard to the constitution induce them to oppose the improper enterprises of their own body, and defend the executive power against its perpetual attacks. This was the conduct of the federalists. Knowing the executive power to be absolutely essential for preserving the due balance of the constitution, and for conducting the affairs of the nation with prudence, steadiness and success; and knowing it also to be, in itself, much weaker than its antagonist, they made themselves its defenders, and by their perseverance and talents have thus far succeeded in preserving to it the weight and authority designed for it by the constitution.

It was a third maxim in the system of the federalists, to give liberal, not large compensations to men in office; well knowing that in a country where there are but few fortunes, and where almost every man of talents and character depends on his industry for supporting and providing for his family, the contrary system has a constant and powerful tendency, to throw the most important offices into the hands of unworthy or unqualified persons, who either neglect or mismanage the public business, or resort to dishonest means for supplying the deficiencies in their regular compensation. Nothing is more true, than that men of talents and character will not long leave their homes and devote their time to the public service, unless they are at least supported decently; and that if we wish for able and faithful services, we must pay their price. This the federal government has never done. The first offices under it do not receive enough to support them and their families in a proper manner. Hence the difficulty which has been constantly experienced, in finding men of high character and qualifications to fill those offices. The secretary of state for instance, or the secretary of the treasury, receives but little more from his office than half as much as a lawyer of talents can derive from his practice, with half the labour and confinement. The federalists have constantly endeavoured to re-

medy this abuse. They have done something, but never were able to do enough. The expence is constantly made an objection; but it is a most futile objection. To compensate liberally, and even handsomely, all the principal officers of the government, would require an additional expence of perhaps thirty thousand dollars annually; which is less than a man without talents, in one of those offices, may waste, or lose through mismanagement, in a month.

Thus far of the principles of the government itself. As to the administration of the government, the federalists laid it down as the corner stone of their system, to support, cherish and invigorate commerce, as the best, and indeed the only effectual means of promoting agriculture, and every other branch of industry. Commerce is as necessary to the farmer as rain or manure. Commerce supplies markets; and every farmer knows that the more and better markets there are, the higher he can sell his produce; and the cheaper he can purchase his goods, the more agriculture will flourish, and the country thrive. The more ships and merchants we have, the more buyers will there be for our crops, and the better price we shall get. Ships and commerce make large towns; and the more large towns we have, the more demand there will be for provisions, and the higher will be their price. Increase the market and the demand, and you increase the price of produce and the profits of labour; and with them the general industry and prosperity of the country. Diminish the market and the demand, and you check industry, and discourage agriculture; and if you entirely take away the market, every man will content himself with raising as much as he can consume at home, agriculture and every species of improvement decline, and we gradually fall into poverty, indolence and wretchedness. These are truths which every farmer knows, though some who call themselves statesmen seem not to be apprized of them.

There is another powerful reason for the encouragement of commerce. It affords us almost the whole of our revenue, and affords it in a way which renders the collection easy and cheap, and almost prevents the payment from being felt. The impost duties, or duties on goods imported, yield a clear revenue, at this moment, of nearly nine millions of dollars. The direct tax amounted to but two millions; and yet I will venture to say, that the direct tax has been more felt in the payment, and has occasioned more trouble in the collection, than the impost. I much doubt whether the still tax, which yields hardly 400,000 dols. has not given as much trouble as the impost; and it certainly has produced more uneasiness.

Surely that branch of industry which so greatly promotes all the rest, and furnishes besides almost the whole of our revenue, deserves the fostering care of government. To estimate rightly the importance of commerce, we must consider what our condition would be, if we were deprived of markets for the sale of our produce, and called on, at the same time, for a direct tax of six or seven millions of dollars. How should we find money to pay it?

It is equally important in another point of view. A large and most important part of our country depends on commerce wholly for its wealth, and in a great degree for its subsistence. I speak of the eastern states, which constitute one third of the union. A vast proportion of their property consists in ships; and great numbers of their people are merchants or sailors. Should the protection of the government be withheld from commerce, these people would be deprived, almost entirely, of all benefit from the union; and it cannot be conceived that they would long live under a government, by which their interests should be sacrificed or neglected, in a point so essential.

Various measures were adopted by the federalists, for the encouragement of commerce; among which were the establishment and encouragement of banks; the encouragement of insurance offices; the institution of equal and permanent regulations respecting trade; the allowance of drawbacks; the establishment of a uniform system of bankruptcy; the formation of com-

mercial treaties with foreign nations; the sending of ministers and consuls into the various commercial countries of Europe, for watching over our commercial interests, and protecting and assisting our trading citizens; the erection of light-houses; the fortification of ports; and some others of less moment: but the great and efficacious measure, without which all the others would have been unavailing, was the establishment of a naval force for the protection of our trade at sea. The true and only method of promoting industry, is to protect property, and secure to every man the fruit of his labour. As no farmer would raise a crop, if his neighbour, being stronger than he, might come and take it from him; so no merchant will build a ship, or purchase a cargo, to send to sea, if it is exposed to the grasp of every plunderer. It was therefore a leading object in the system of the federalists, to establish a navy. Their exertions in this respect have been too much embarrassed and impeded, by the constant opposition of the other party, to be carried as far as they ought to have gone; but under all the difficulties thrown in their way, they have produced most important and beneficial effects.

The next great object in the plan of the federalists, the next, I mean, in importance, though the first in point of time, was the establishment of a solid and extensive system of revenue, whereby the interest of the public debt might be punctually paid, the principal gradually discharged, public credit thus firmly established, the support of government fully provided for, and ample means of defence furnished against the time of need. They knew that we, like other nations, must be exposed to wars; and that wars cannot be carried on without public credit, nor public credit created or supported without solid revenues. The great bulk of this revenue they chose to draw from duties on imports, because in that way it is most easily collected, and paid with most ease and convenience by the people. Some portion they thought it prudent to derive from internal sources, because in the case of a war, our revenue from commerce might be endangered and impaired; and they well knew that occasions might occur, which would render it necessary to call on the country for considerable aids, by way of direct tax. For such occasions they reserved that resource. For their ordinary and permanent revenue, therefore, they carried the duties on imports as far as consisted with safety from smuggling; and established several internal taxes, such as those of stills and distilled spirits, riding carriages, auctions, retailers' licenses, sugar refiners, and stamps; from which a safe and valuable revenue is drawn.

To enforce the execution of the laws with rigour, and yet with mildness, was also a principle adopted and pursued by the federalists; for they knew that force displayed in due season, and with energy and promptness, will often put an end to opposition, and preclude the necessity of rigour. When you are known to be strong, you may pardon; if thought to be weak, you are compelled to punish. When, therefore, an insurrection was excited, of an alarming appearance, and having undoubtedly for its secret object the overthrow of the government, a force so great as to preclude all hope of successful resistance, was called out to suppress it; and pardon, at the same time, was offered to those who would return to their duty. This had the desired effect. The insurrection was suppressed without bloodshed, and the country was saved from a civil war. A similar conduct on a subsequent occasion of less magnitude, produced the same effect.

It was likewise a leading principle of their policy, to employ a strong regular force for repelling the hostile spirit of the savages, and protecting the frontiers; and at the same time to treat those savages with mildness and justice, so as to inspire them with affection and confidence, as well as with dread. The successful termination of the Indian war, the perfect peace and security of the frontiers, the peaceable conduct of the Indians, and the readiness with which they accede to our reasonable demands, attest the wisdom of this policy.

The effect of this political system, in the preservation of peace with foreign powers, without a sacrifice of honour or an abandonment of material interest, has already been noticed. Its operation on our domestic affairs will be found no less happy. To judge properly of this operation, we must compare the present period with that when the federalists took the management of the government; our situation now, with our situation then; what they had to do, with what they have done.

With the assistance of some few individuals, who then professed, but, from various causes, have since abandoned their principles; and against the opposition of those who, with very few exceptions, have continued to oppose them ever since; the federalists succeeded in framing the government, and procuring its adoption. With Washington at their head, they took, from the beginning, the lead in its administration, and began the foundation of their political system.

They found the country without a shilling of permanent revenue; without a system of finance; burthened with a debt from the war, which on liquidation was found to amount to seventy-six and half millions of dollars; and without money in the treasury sufficient for the ordinary expences of government. The funds which they were able to derive from the old government, for the payment of this debt, amounted to no more than half a million of dollars. Public credit was so completely annihilated, that the securities of the government were sold at two shillings in the pound. Such was the depressed and languishing state of commerce, that even in the year 1790, more than a year after the government had gone into operation, we possessed less than four hundred and fifty thousand tons of shipping, and our exports of foreign commodities brought into our country for re-exportation, fell short of two millions of dollars in value. Our agriculture partook of its general depression to so great a degree, that the value of our exports, in our own produce, hardly exceeded, in the same year, fourteen millions of dollars.

In this state of things the federalists commenced their operations. The constitution was agreed to by the convention in September 1787. It was not till the summer of 1789, that the ratification of nine states having been obtained, and a President elected, the new Congress was able to meet and do business. Some time was necessarily consumed in providing for objects of immediate necessity, and devising plans, for future adoption. Still more was required for giving effect to those plans when matured and adopted. It was not till the year 1790, therefore, that the political system of the federalists can be said to have commenced. From that time they have retained the government in their hands till March 4, 1801, a period of little more than 12 years. In what period what have they effected? let facts answer the question.

In 1790, our shipping amounted to barely four hundred and fifty thousand tons. In the beginning of 1800, the latest period to which the returns have been collected, it amounted to nine hundred and thirty-nine thousand tons, notwithstanding all the interruptions to which our commerce has unavoidably been exposed by the war, which has raged throughout almost the whole of this period. This increase has been gradual and progressive, not sudden and instantaneous; from which we may safely conclude, that it must go on, should the same system which has produced it be hereafter pursued.

In 1790, our exportation of foreign commodities, brought into our country for re-exportation, which constitutes our carrying trade, amounted to something less than two millions of dollars in value. Under the protecting hand of the federal administration, it gradually and constantly increased; and in 1800 it exceeded thirty-nine millions.

This vast and unexampled increase, which the protecting system of the federalists has given to commerce, has been attended by a similar increase in our agricultural products: which proves the wisdom and solidity of their maxim, "that the best method of promoting agriculture, is to protect and encourage commerce." In 1790, our exports of our own produce barely exceeded fourteen millions of dollars. In 1800, they amounted to upwards of thirty-one millions eight hundred thousand dollars: more than double.

In 1790, we had a debt of seventy-six millions of dollars transmitted to us from the old confederation, without a shilling of revenue to pay the principal or interest, or even to defray the most necessary expences of government. This heavy debt, the price of our independence, the federalists have liquidated, and provided for. They have punctually paid the interest, discharged a considerable part of the principal, and established permanent and solid revenues, whereby the interest will be regularly paid, the amount of principal gradually reduced, and the whole debt extinguished in about twenty-four years. An idea of the magnitude and difficulty of these operations, may be formed from the sum required, and actually paid, for the interest of this debt, previous to the year 1800. This sum amounts to upwards of twenty-three and a half millions of dollars. In addition to this enormous sum, the payment of which was absolutely necessary, the federal administration had been under the necessity, prior to the year 1800, of paying upwards of five hundred thousand dollars, for incidental claims arising under the old government, but not included in the amount of liquidated debt; one hundred and sixty-four thousand for debts due to foreign officers, who served with us in the war; one hundred and sixty-nine thousand for certain parts of the old debt which were not funded, and are not included in the above amount; nine hundred and eight thousand for pensions to invalid soldiers, who served in the war; three hundred and forty-seven thousand for the erection and support of light-houses for the security of trade; for the protection of our coasts and cities by the fortification of ports and harbours, five hundred and forty-six thousand; one hundred and ninety-six thousand, for making and preserving peace within the Indian tribes; one million two hundred and fifty thousand, for suppressing two insurrections in Pennsylvania; one million six hundred and eighty-two thousand, for redeeming our citizens in captivity among the Algerines, and for making and preserving peace with them and the other Barbary powers; two hundred and thirty-nine thousand, for establishing boundary lines between us and Spain and Britain, and carrying into effect our treaties with those nations; and one hundred and thirty-four thousand for the census taken pursuant to the constitution. In addition to these heavy expences, which were indispensable, and which amount together to five millions nine hundred and thirty-nine thousand dollars; the support of the civil government, in all its various branches and departments, had required, from the time of its establishment to the beginning of 1800, the sum of four millions two hundred and sixty-five thousand dollars, the Indian war, which the federal government had been compelled to maintain on the frontiers, had occasioned an additional expence of at least five millions; the military establishment, including this sum of five millions, the purchase of arms and military stores, and all the additional expence of our preparations for defence against France, had cost thirteen millions eighty-three thousand dollars; our negotiations and intercourse with foreign nations, including the missions to France, which were very expensive, the extraordinary mission to England, and the maintenance of all our ministers abroad, had cost seven hundred and fifty-nine thousand dollars; and lesser expences, for a variety of incidental objects, amounting in the whole to a very considerable sum, had been necessarily incurred.

All these heavy demands have been met and answered by the federalists, in the course of their short administration; and although, at first, before their system of revenue had come into effective operation, they were under the necessity of contracting a new debt, for immediate purposes, they have long since extinguished not only that new debt, but a very considerable part of the old one, and have provided the means of annual payments, capable of extinguishing the whole within a reasonable time.

It is true that their preparations for defence against France, by sea and land, compelled them to employ in that way a surplus of revenue, which would otherwise have been applied to the extinguishment of former debts; and even obliged them to contract a new one of six millions and a half of

dollars. But for this debt they have purchased the safety and honour of the nation, the protection of its trade, and respect to its rights in time to come.— Surely if the purchase had stopped here, it would yet have been a cheap one; but it did not stop here. With that sum the federalists have purchased, in addition, not only a large quantity of arms, and of military and naval stores for future use, but also a navy, consisting of 39 vessels of various size and force, mounting upwards of 870 guns, and manned with upwards of 7000 seamen and marines. They have also made considerable progress in the establishment of navy-yards, docks and wharves, and in preparation for building 6 seventy-fours. This very valuable public property, the instrument of our present security, and the sure presage of our future greatness, the federalists have obtained for their country, by contracting a debt very inconsiderable in itself, and the means of readily extinguishing which they have also provided.

Now have they effected all this? By means of a revenue derived from commerce, which their protection and encouragement of commerce has enabled it to afford; a revenue which is paid without being felt; which bears equally and most lightly on every class and every individual of the community; which imposes a less burden on the people of the United States than those of any other nation bear; and which, being bottomed on the consumption of the country, must increase gradually, but permanently, with its increasing population and wealth.

The increase of this revenue hitherto is at once the most flattering and the most solid proof, of the wisdom of that political system which they have devised and established.

The impost and tonnage duties, which form the great mass of this revenue, were laid in the year 1789, but were not raised to near their present rate till about 1794. In 1797, some augmentations were made, which have produced their effect on the receipts into the treasury; and in 1799 further augmentations, to the estimated amount of about nine hundred thousand dollars, took place. But this last augmentation has not yet been felt in the receipts. Taking therefore the amount of these duties in 1795, when the first augmentations had existed long enough to produce their full effect, and comparing it with their product in 1800, when the effect of the last augmentation had not yet been felt, we shall find that they have increased from five millions five hundred and eighty-eight thousand dollars, their amount in 1795, to eight millions eight hundred and forty-seven thousand, which they yielded in 1800. After making full allowance for the augmentation of duty which took place in 1787, this gives a clear natural increase in this revenue, of fifty per cent. in five years; which is ten per cent. annual increase on the whole amount of each year's product. In 1799 this revenue suffered a considerable depression; because in that year the effects of former depredations on our commerce were most strongly felt, and the benefits arising from our navy and other defensive measures had not yet been experienced. The revenue, therefore, sunk in 1799, from seven millions four hundred and thirty thousand. But in 1800, when our defensive measures, and especially the protection afforded to our commerce by the navy, had produced their full effect, the revenue rose suddenly to 8,800,000 dollars.

This progressive and solid increase of our revenue for five years, which has not been confined to the impost and tonnage duties, but has extended itself to the stamps, the still-tax, the postage of letters,* and every other branch of the taxes, enables us to calculate, with great certainty, the future amount of income which we may expect, if our affairs be well conducted; and by comparing it with the probable amount of our expenditure, to form a just idea of the power and resources which the government may possess in time to come.

* (Note by the author.) The increase of this revenue is very remarkable, and affords perhaps a stronger indication than any other of the prosperous state of the country; since the number of letters sent by the mail must always depend on the number and extent of those communications which arise out of business. In 1797 the clear revenue from the post-office, over and above all the expenses of the establishment, amounted to 46,000 dollars. In 1798, to 57,000. In 1799, to 63,000, and in 1800, to 80,000! I have not by me the post-office returns previous to 1797; but, as nearly as I recollect, the product never exceeded 53,000.

Our revenue for the present year, supposing the product of the duties to be only as large as it was in the last, will amount to something more than nine millions eight hundred thousand dollars; exclusive of payments on account of the direct tax; from which three hundred and eighty-one thousand dollars were received last year, and a much greater sum may be expected in the present year. Of this total amount, eight millions eight hundred and forty-seven thousand dollars are derived from the impost and tonnage duties; eight hundred and sixteen thousand from the internal duties, on distilled spirits and stills, auctions, retailers' licenses, riding carriages, refined sugar, and stamps; eighty thousand from the postage of letters; and the rest from several smaller sources of revenue. If to this we add six hundred thousand dollars for receipts from the direct tax, which may be safely relied on, as the whole amount is two millions, and no more than three hundred and eighty thousand have been yet received; and add also nine hundred thousand for the augmentations made on the impost duties in 1799, it gives us a revenue for the present year of eleven millions three hundred thousand dollars, exclusive of any increase in the product of the present duties.

But if we suppose those duties to increase in the present year, at the same progressive rate as for the last five years, the increase will amount to nearly one million; which, added to the former amount, gives a revenue of at least twelve millions for the present year.

To this sum we must add about 2,000,000, which remain as a surplus from the last year; a surplus occasioned by the vast increase in the product of the duties between the last and the preceding year. Our funds for the present year, therefore, are about 14,000,000 dolls. Let us see what are to be our expences.

The expences arise in the first place from our debt; in the second, from the support of our civil, military and naval establishments; in the third, from our intercourse with foreign nations; and in the fourth, from various incidental and contingent charges, which must always be expected to occur in conducting the affairs of a great nation.

The expences, arising from our debt, consist in the payment of the interest, and in annual payments for the gradual extinguishment of the principal; and they amount, for the present year, to about six millions one hundred and forty-three thousand dollars. Of this sum about three millions four hundred and seventy-six thousand dollars are for the six per cent. stock, and include not only the interest, but two per cent. on the amount of the principal, which is annually paid for its extinguishment. These six per cents constitute the great mass of our debt. A considerable part of them, formerly called the deferred debt, did not bear interest till the present year. Nearly one million go to the foreign debt; part for interest, and part for the discharge of the principal. Something more than six hundred and six thousand are for the three per cent. four and a half and five and a half per cent. debts, the interest only of which is paid; 574,000 are for the interest of the debt contracted by the preparations against France; and the rest for the principal and interest of sums formerly borrowed from the banks.

The sum appropriated in the present year for the support of the civil government, in all its branches and departments, including intercourse with foreign nations, and every incidental charge connected with the civil establishment, amounts to about one million one hundred and fifty-three thousand dollars. Those for the military establishment, including the Indian department, four hundred thousand dollars for the fabrication of cannon and small arms, and the purchase of ammunition; two hundred thousand for the fortification of ports and harbours; and ninety-three thousand for pensions to invalid soldiers; amount to two millions and sixty-three thousand. Those for the navy, including the support of the marine corps, five hundred thousand dollars for completing navy yards, docks and wharves, and finishing the six seventy-fours; twenty thousand for the erection of marine barracks; and seventy-five thousand for the maintenance of French prisoners; amount to three millions and forty-two thousand. The

reduction of the navy, however, to a peace establishment, will diminish this branch of expence about one million; so that we may take two millions for the navy expences for the present year.

These various sums taken together, amount to eleven millions three hundred and fifty-nine thousand dollars. Deduct this sum from fourteen millions, the amount of our income for this year; and it leaves a clear balance of two millions six hundred and forty-one thousand dollars.

Such is the inheritance which the federalists transmit to their successors: peace abroad; order and a well established government at home; a national character exalted; public credit firmly established; a respectable and increasing navy; and decreasing debt; a prosperous agriculture; a flourishing commerce; an augmenting revenue not felt by the people; and a balance in the treasury to the amount of two millions and a half of dollars.

The amount of revenue will be diminished after the present and the next year, by the deduction of receipts from the direct tax; the whole of which, or very nearly the whole, will then have been collected: but this deduction will be more than compensated, by the gradual increase in the product of the duties. For the last five years this increase, in the impost and tonnage duties, has been at something more than the rate of ten per cent. each year, on the product of the former year. As those duties produced eight millions eight hundred thousand dollars last year; they must, at that rate of increase, produce about nine millions and a half in the present year, exclusive of the augmentations laid on them in 1799.—If we add only five hundred thousand dollars for the amount of those augmentations, and they were estimated, on solid principles, at nine hundred thousand, we shall have at least ten millions for the whole product in this year. Supposing this to increase for the next five years only six per cent. annually, instead of ten, and we shall have next year ten millions six hundred thousand dollars; in the year after, eleven millions three hundred thousand; and in the year 1805 thirteen millions. If we suppose, as we are justified by experience in doing, that the other branches of our revenue, which now produce about one million, will increase in nearly the same proportion, they will, in 1805, produce about fourteen hundred thousand dollars; which added to the impost and tonnage duties, will give us, in that year, a clear solid and constantly increasing income of more than fourteen millions of dollars.

Our expences on account of our debt will be increased after the present year; because greater payments for the principal of the foreign debt will then become due. The payments on account of that debt, including principal and interest, which are only nine hundred and ninety-five thousand dollars this year, will, in the next, be one million nine hundred thousand; and in the year following, namely, 1803, will amount to two millions six hundred and forty-one thousand. The surplus for the present year, however, and the increase for future years, will be sufficient to meet those large payments; more especially as our expences in the military and naval departments may be diminished after the present year, by the amount of several items which will not be hereafter necessary. Of this nature are seventy-five thousand dollars for French prisoners; twenty thousand for marine barracks; two hundred thousand for fortifications; four hundred thousand for fabrication of arms, and five hundred thousand for completing the six seventy-fours; the objects of most of which appropriations will be accomplished or removed, and the rest may be deferred until the payments on the foreign debt are effected. After the year 1803 those payments gradually diminish, till 1809, when they will wholly cease by the final extinguishment of the foreign debt. Thus an annual sum of about a million and a half, which will be required on an average for the payment of the foreign debt, will be set free, and added to the surplus of revenue, at the disposal of the government.

That surplus, calculating, as we may safely do, on the permanent and progressive increase of the revenue, will then amount to at least three millions annually; which may be employed in the extinguishment of those

parts of our debt which are not in a course of discharge by annual payments; in building a powerful navy; in providing completely for the protection of our cities and coasts, by the fortification of our ports and harbours; in bringing the various parts of our country nearer to each other, by means of roads and bridges; in opening its inland water communication by canals; in the erecting and endowments of institutions for education; and, in fine, in all those public undertakings by which a wise and foreseeing government knows how to promote the public happiness and prosperity; to strengthen, enrich and embellish a country.

And when the injustice of other governments shall force us into war, this revenue may be employed in paying the interest, and gradually discharging the principal, of loans to carry it on; so as to avoid the necessity of laying taxes on the people.

The pensions to invalid soldiers who served during the war, now amount to ninety-three thousand dollars annually. As those pensions must gradually fall in, by death of the pensioners, the whole sum will gradually be set free, and will be added to the above mentioned surplus of revenue.

The greater part of the six per cent. stock, which now requires, for payments of principal and interest, three millions four hundred and sixty-seven thousand dollars annually, will be paid off in the year 1819, and the whole of it in 1824. This large sum will then be added to the surplus revenue.

The federalists also, by their vigorous prosecution and successful termination of the war with the north-western Indians, obtained for the United States upwards of ten millions of acres of land; a great part of which is very valuable. They offer it for sale at two dollars the acre; and though the sales yet have not been very considerable, there is a fair prospect of their becoming constantly more and more so, from whence a very important addition to the surplus of revenue may be annually expected.

Thus you see, my dear Sir, that the men who have hitherto conducted the affairs of this government, have left an easy task to their successors. Every thing has been done to their hands, and in spite of their constant and violent opposition. They have no taxes to lay, no systems to establish, no plans to devise, no difficult negotiations to conduct: all that is required of them is to preserve things in their present state, to keep up the fences which have been made on the farm, to prevent the buildings which have been erected from falling down, through want of repair; to keep the fields from being over run by briars and weeds. In this respect their task is easy. In another it is hard indeed—for should they by their rashness, their feebleness, or their folly, destroy the fair fabric of national happiness which their predecessors have erected; should they embroil the nation unnecessarily with its neighbours, or suffer to fall into ruin those domestic establishments, which have bestowed on it such unexampled prosperity; the day of account and retribution will soon come, and a dreadful day it will be.

Such have been the principles and measures of the federalists, such their political system, and such its results. By those results they wish to be judged. In that book, which their principles led them to venerate, it is written, that a tree shall be judged by its fruits. By their fruits let them be judged, and they do not fear the decision. For me, my dear Sir, in this last and concluding act of my public life, in thus giving to my constituents a full and fair account of the manner in which I have discharged the trust reposed in me by them, it is my second cause of satisfaction to have stood with these men, to have embraced their principles, and supported, as far as I was able, their political system. My first is, to have discharged, in singleness of heart, and according to my best judgment, the duty which I owed to my country and to you. It only remains for me now, to express again my heart-felt thanks for the early favour extended to me by those who were lately my constituents, and will always be remembered as my friends, for their kind indulgence and continued confidence; and to bid them a last and affectionate adieu.

ROBERT G. HARPER.