

# MARYLAND GAZETTE---EXTRA.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1815.

From the Federal Gazette.

The length of the following communication and the late hour at which it was received, prevented its insertion in the Gazette of this day. The following handbill was industriously circulated yesterday morning (Sunday) from the office of the Patriot, and even posted up at the Coffee House. The object was to attract a crowd, excite curiosity, and create an impression that the letter contained something of great importance, and very improper. We republish the handbill and letter, to show that it is neither important nor improper. Let it speak for itself. When it is read we request the reader's attention to a few remarks, which we shall subjoin.

Patriot Office, Sept. 9, 1815.

## PRECIOUS LETTER!

A correspondent has transmitted to us the following Letter from ROBERT GOODLOE HARPER, to GEORGE BAER, of Frederick. The original, which appears never to have been sealed, and therefore to have been sent by some confidential person, who unluckily dropped it, is in the possession of the Editors of the Baltimore Patriot, and may be seen by any respectable federalist or republican calling at their office.

From this extraordinary letter, the people of Maryland will perceive the sort of man that the state executive has appointed their major general. They will see in Mr. Harper the most decided advocate of the British claims and conduct during the late war, and the equally decided enemy of some of his country's dearest interests and rights; of those rights and interests for the support of which the blood of many of our bravest and best citizens freely flowed. Yet this is the man who holds the most important military command in the state, and who is, if federalists succeed at the October elections, to be elected to a seat in the Senate of the United States.

Here is the champion of that infernal British system, by which free American seamen have been tied up to the yard arms of British men of war, lashed till their backs streamed in torrents of blood, to compel them to fight against their own country.

## THE LETTER.

Baltimore, Oct. 10th, 1814.

"I congratulate you, most sincerely, my dear sir, on the good news contained in your letter, which is still more gratifying from the knowledge, that we have done so well in the other counties. You will have seen the returns from them before this reaches you. We have two thirds of the house of delegates, and a majority of more than 20 on joint ballot.—*Laus Deo.*"

"The object of our commissioners, in sending home the Adams, I have no doubt is to obtain new instructions. From the Regent's proclamation, recalling British subjects, his speech to parliament, and the address of the house of commons to him, I think it clear that the British government have taken their stand on this ground; that as we began the war to drive them from their doctrine of perpetual allegiance, (a) and their RIGHT of impressment, they must have those points settled before they lay down their arms, and will not be content with our merely waving our CLAIMS. (b) To this effect I presume their commissioners were instructed. Ours had no instructions to do more than wave those claims. Even to that extent ours were not authorised to go, to

[till] our government was informed, by the arrival of the French frigate "Olivier," of the dethronement of Buonaparte.—Till then, they had no intention to make peace, but then they saw that the game was over, and accordingly by the return of that vessel sent instructions to the commissioners to wave the whole claim about impressment in hopes that they might get off on those terms. They have learnt by this arrival, I believe, that more is necessary and they must do it. It will be a bitter pill for Mr. Madison to acknowledge the British RIGHT OF IMPRESSMENT, and their doctrine of perpetual allegiance; BUT HE MUST SWALLOW IT. He will squal (squall) and kick and make very faces, BUT DOWN IT MUST GO. The thing is RIGHT IN ITSELF, and though disgraceful to him, not in the least dishonorable to the nation. The British doctrine on the subject of impressment and allegiance is CLEAR and UNDENIABLE, nor would it ever have been denied by our government had they not been seeking a pretext for quarrel with Great Britain. To compel them now to "eat their words is an act of RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE at WHICH ALL MEN OF SENSE AND HONOUR MUST REJOICE. d

"I am, My Dear Sir,  
Very truly  
Your friend and Servt.  
ROB. G. HARPER.

Geo. Baer, Esq."

Notes by the Editors of the Patriot.

a This assertion is not true; we began the war for no such purpose. b They were content with our waving our claims, & with waving many of their claims too. Here is a pretty American; talking about the most important rights of his country as mere claims, and about the most crying oppression of Great-Britain as her right!

c A base calumny; our government, and our commissioners, were always anxious to make peace.

d That is, Mr. Harper, the republicans are fools and rascals.

Our first remark on this subject is, that the letter appears manifestly never to have been sent to Mr. Baer, or any other person. It is stated in the hand-bill never to have been sealed; from which the editor infers that it was sent by some private hand; as if a letter was ever sent unsealed, even by a private hand. But there was a fact apparent on the letter itself, and consequently known to the editor and suppressed by him, from which it appears most undeniably that this letter was never sent at all; consequently that it remained in the pocket of the writer, until it was stolen from thence with his pocket-book, at the theatre, in the beginning of last winter.—This is the circumstance—

The letter is directed on the back in the usual way, to "Mr. Charles A. Cox, Richmond, Virginia." This direction, being discovered by the writer to be a mistake, is crossed with a pen, but in such a manner as to leave it perfectly legible. In that state it now remains, and no other direction is added. The letter being thus rendered unfit to be sent, was withheld by the writer, and put into his pocket-book. It was stolen from thence by a pick-pocket, and after being reserved ten months, now appears in the hands of the editor of the Patriot. How he came by it, and what the nature of his connexion with the pick-pocket is, remains for him to explain.

As to the letter itself we next remark, that the sentiments which

it conveys, rightly understood, are perfectly correct, and have always been publicly maintained by Mr. Harper, and we believe by a very great majority of the men of sense and information in this country.—We say, "rightly understood," because those sentiments may be misunderstood, from the general manner in which they are expressed; and we understand that efforts are made by the democrats to misrepresent them. Indeed this misrepresentation is the very object for which the letter has been retained and published, and by which some impression is expected to be produced. We allude to that part of the letter which speaks of the British doctrine of perpetual allegiance, and their right of impressment.

This "right of impressment," means their right to impress their own subjects on board of our merchant ships, on the high seas or in their own ports. This is all that they ever claimed. Although they frequently impressed native Americans, they always expressly disclaimed any right to do it, and declared that when it was done it was by mistake. They frequently offered to adopt any practicable regulations for preventing such mistakes. Why these offers were constantly refused, let those decide who are well acquainted with the political events of the last ten or twelve years.

As to the right of taking their own sailors from our ships of war, even when deserters from their navy, they formally and expressly disavowed it, in the case of the Chesapeake, and made a satisfactory reparation for the outrage committed on that vessel.

The British "right of impressment" therefore, of which the letter speaks, is the right which they claimed, to take their own subjects, from our merchant ships, on the high seas; not the abuse which they sometimes committed and always disavowed, of impressing our native citizens. This is the right which Mr. Harper declares in the letter to be undeniable, and which he says ought to be admitted.

As to any right to impress native American citizens, if the British had claimed it, or if without claiming it they had countenanced such outrages in their officers by refusing to release such American citizens when impressed, either through real or pretended mistake, it is perfectly well known that Mr. Harper has at all times publicly maintained, that such a pretension ought to be resisted by this country, at every hazard and to every extremity.

The ground which he took in the affair of the Chesapeake is also perfectly well known. He always maintained that if the British government should avow and sanction that act of their officer, and thus assert a right to search our public ships, under any pretext whatsoever, this pretension ought to be resisted to the last extremity.

But as to the right claimed by the democratic party in this country, and asserted by the democratic administration, to shelter British sailors, in our private ships, from the claims of their own government, by the aid of our naturalization laws, Mr. Harper has always denied it; has always considered it as a claim utterly untenable and unfounded, which had no connection with either the honour or the interest of this country, and would never have been got up, had not a pretext been sought for a quarrel with England.

Our duty of protection is confined to our native citizens; we mean of

protection on the ocean in merchant ships; for our territory and our public ships protect all who remain in either of them. We may give foreigners what privileges we please within our territory and while they remain there our territory protects them. If they choose to quit our territory and our public ships, and thus throw themselves in the way of their former sovereigns, with whose rights over them we have no right to interfere, they must take the consequences. We have no right to withdraw them from the power of their original sovereigns, because we have no right to interfere between a foreign power and its subjects, either in the single case of their taking refuge in our country, or on board of our public ships. No nation has or can have such a right of interference, which is wholly inconsistent with the allegiance due all governments. No government ever did or we presume ever will acknowledge such a right in any other government; and we hope and believe that it will never be acknowledged by the government of this country.

When we naturalize foreigners, we remove from them the disabilities of alienage. This we have a right to do. But we do not and cannot exempt them from their allegiance to their own government, for this plain reason, that we have no right to interfere between any government and its subjects, further than to protect them while they are in our territory or our ships of war, where their own government cannot come.

This is the doctrine which Mr. Harper is known to have always maintained, and this is what he means by saying in the letter in question, that the British doctrine of perpetual allegiance is undeniable. It is indeed the doctrine of all nations, and of common sense, the doctrine on which this country must and will insist hereafter, when its solid and lasting interests shall have triumphed over the temporary views and party projects of the moment.

As to the rest of this letter, in which Mr. H. states shortly his opinion concerning the real motives and objects of the late war against Great Britain, it contains simply the same doctrine which he has always and most publicly inculcated, and which he has supported by proofs and arguments hitherto unanswered, and we may therefore presume considered by the democrats as unanswered. He first publicly stated these opinions in his speech at Georgetown in June, 1813. In January 1814, he stated them again in his speech at Annapolis at greater length, and with his proofs and reasons at large.

They were again noted, more concisely, but very strongly in his letter to a member of Congress.—To none of these publications has an answer been attempted, and it is not a little characteristic of the democratic party, that after having so long submitted in silence to these imputations, because the proofs in support of them were felt to be unanswerable, they should now exclaim against them, as new and extraordinary accusations.

One remark more, and we are done. When the British instead of defending their own territory invaded ours; when the question no longer was about the motives or policy of the war on the part of the democratic party and administration, but about defending the country against hostile attack, and inroads admitted to be unjust and degrading; how did Mr. Harper act? Let those answer who witnessed his conduct.

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explaining that he who runs may err, and that they are ashamed enough to report, a sufficient number of votes in Maryland, to secure a majority in the Senate. (See last page.)