

LETTERS OF SAMUEL TAGGART
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS, 1803—1814

PART II, 1808—1814

WASHINGTON, January 2d, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * An affair of a singular nature was introduced into the House of Representatives on the 31st ult. John Randolph exhibited on the floor of the House what he called probable evidence against Gen. Wilkinson, that he was a pensioner of Spain, and an accomplice in the treasonable projects of Col. Burr, and brought in a resolution that the President be directed to institute an enquiry into his conduct, and further stated that there was a member in that House who could give testimony if called to his practices with Spain, alluding to Clark, the delegate from Orleans whom he named. Clark got up and stated in his place that while residing at Orleans in the capacity of Consul for the United States, he became acquainted with facts which he looked upon it his duty to communicate to the Government; and that he had repeatedly showed an inclination to communicate what he knew, but it had been treated with neglect, and that now what he knew must remain in his own breast until he was compelled by competent authority to communicate it. This operated like an electric shock and immediately stifled the eagerness manifested from all quarters of the House for the proposed enquiry, I believe for fear a great personage would be implicated.

Previous to this Wilkinson had sent a challenge to Randolph, which he declined, I believe, with some expressions of contempt, and Wilkinson had posted him as a prevaricating scoundrel and poltroon. Some suppose that the attack in the House grew out of the challenge, but those who had better opportu-

nities for information say that the challenge grew out of the meditated attack. Be that as it may, it was a very gross invasion of the priviledges of the House, and is not an attack on Randolph alone, but upon the national legislature. If the President is disposed to uphold military men who will dare in such a manner to insult a national representative and overawe the legislature, we are in a fair way to have a military government established.

One thing more and I will take leave of public affairs at this time. Mr. Rose, the long expected envoy from Britain is not taken by the French ship Patriot as has been reported. He has arrived at Norfolk and is on his way to this place and is expected this evening or tomorrow at farthest. I pray God his mission be attended with success. If it is not, I believe it will be our own blame.

In one thing further of a domestic nature I trust you will rejoyce with me. You are not unacquainted with my long and trying discouragements in Colraine in the ministry. I have the satisfaction to hear that this winter in my absence there is a more than usual attention to religion which appears to be growing. I have not heard of many particular instances, but a general inclination to hear which is great alteration in that place. One instance, however, gives me much satisfaction. One man who was perhaps the most influentially irreligious of any in the place, I mean Maj. Chandler, is a hopeful convert and gives, I understand, very striking evidences of a change of heart. This gives me much encouragement and makes me wish to be with them. My pulpit is supplied this winter by a man of singular and exemplary piety as well as extensive knowledge in divinity, but who had not the advantages of an early public education, who was licenced by the northern associates at the last meeting which took place since I left New England. His labours I understand are indefatigable and appear to be blessed. May the Lord arise and have mercy upon Zion. The gentleman's name who at present supplies my pulpit is Alexander. * * *

I rest Affectionately yours,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, JANUARY 19, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * You have no doubt heard of the caucusing for President. I hear of reports of caucus upon caucus from papers which are printed at a distance, but I cannot find any body here who will own that there has been one. I find, however, our Republicans who possess the exclusive right of giving us a President are not like to be united among themselves. So far as our present President possesses the right of nominating or the influence in appointing a successor, there is no doubt that all his influence will be thrown in the scale of Mr. Madison; and there is no doubt but the Vice-President Clinton is looking up, the infirmities of age to the contrary notwithstanding, but it is my opinion that Monroe is gaining ground. Those who wish to support Clinton for President have their eye on Monroe for Vice-President, in that case Clinton will serve as a stepping stone to help him in at the next election.

I mentioned in my last that of all those whose names are mentioned out of whom a selection can be made, considering Federalists out of the question, I should prefer Monroe. In this I shall state my reasons. Monroe has not drilled thro all the chicanes and hypocrisy of the present administration, so far as I can judge from such communications of his as have been communicated to Congress. I believe experience and residence abroad has cured him of his early French partialities, he is much more of a practical man, and should he be elected to the chair he will I think be a President of the United States and not the head of a faction. However respectable Madison may be as a gentleman he is a visionary, theoretic, closet politician and has been thoroughly versed in all the labyrinths of the present system. But I shall dismiss the future President for the present.

One of the most prominent measures since I wrote last has been the affairs of General Wilkinson. The House has passed Randolph's resolution requesting the President to make the enquiry, and a military court is now sitting; and I think such evidence is like to come to light, as whatever the President may think about upholding him out of gratitude for the part he

took relating to the affair of Coll. Burr, it is impossible that the nation can place any confidence in him.

With respect to the great question whether we are like to have peace or war, all still is doubt and uncertainty but I think the clamour does not seem to be quite so loud, and many begin to say they think we will have no war. I suppose because our embargo is like to bring all Europe at our feet.

Mr. Rose is at length here. He arrived in the night between Wednesday and Thursday of last week. On Saturday I understand he had his first interview with the President; on last Lord's day he was at church at the Capitol, but as I attended public worship at the Presbyterian meeting house I did not see him. I understand from those who have seen him that he appears to be a plain man, simple in his manners, without anything like pomp or parade about him. Whether a negotiation is like to commence or not nothing has as yet transpired. I understand neither Mr. Erskine, nor Mr. Rose express any dislike to our embargo; that the British nation so far from taking offence at it would rather hold out inducements to keep it on during the continuance of the war in Europe; that it does not injure them at all but will rather operate to their advantage, and to the disadvantage of their enemies; that they having the command of the ocean can easily supply their own colonies and compel the nations on the continent of Europe either to receive the commodities of the East and West Indies from them, or do without them altogether; that as it respects the articles of cotton, which is supposed to be all important to their manufacturers this can be easily replaced from the East Indies; that but one third of the cotton exported from the British settlements in the East Indies is brought to Great Britain, but the whole can be easily diverted into that channel, and the culture of that article can be extended in the east to answer any demand; and that as a year's stock for the manufactories is usually laid in before-hand, arrangements can be made for a supply before the want will be felt. But that the cotton manufactories of France which are fast rivalling those of Great Britain must fail as soon as the supply of that article by American shipping is cut off, and the French and Spanish islands having no other means of supply must soon be induced to surrender at dis-

cretion. Such I understand are British speculations on the embargo. If they are correct as I make no doubt they are, partially so at least, a little perseverance in this ruinous measure may settle the matter as to the exportation of cotton to Great Britain forever. But if the embargo is found to injure nobody but ourselves and our good friends the French, it may be an inducement to remove it.

* * *

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, January 27, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have thought for two or three days past I would stop writing to any of my correspondents, as all intelligence from the northern part of the Union seems for the present to be laid under an embargo; and I conclude it is equally probable southern news is embargoed in its progress to the north, thence northern mails will be due this evening; none having arrived from the northward of Philadelphia only such as were due on the 24th. * * * We have been I know not how many days, but I believe as many as five or six at least, debating upon a bill for new modelling the militia, and nothing is as yet decided and I know not when it will. I am not so sanguine as many about the efficiency of a militia in case of war, and I know not that I ever saw a militia law, either of the United States, or of any particular state, for which I could have given my suffrage, but of all militia laws which ever came to my knowledge, none of which I call good, this is incomparably the worst. If we had the Angel Gabriel himself, for President of the United States, I could hardly consent to vest him with the power contemplated in this bill. I shall mention only one principle, it contemplates dividing the militia of the United States into three classes called the minor, the junior, and the senior classes; the minor class to contain all liable to be enrolled by the present law who are under 21 years; the junior class to comprise all from 21 to 26 and the senior class from 26 to 45. The first and the last classes are not to be called out only in case of an insurrection or invasion

and are not to be liable to be marched out of their own state unless on extraordinary occasions, and then to march only into the next adjoining state; but the junior class are liable to be called into any part of the United States or the territories thereof, to Louisiana, New Orleans or Natchitoches at the pleasure of the President of the United States for one whole year. I do not expect the bill will pass. I believe the northern members will be generally against it without any respect to political party. * * *

I believe I mentioned in a former letter that I entertained no very sanguine hopes of a favourable issue of the present negotiations; that, whatever disposition was shown by Mr. Rose to conciliate would be counteracted by Turreau, aided by a certain hankering towards France occasioned partly by fear and partly by affection. I doubt whether Government in these circumstances possesses independence enough to make peace upon honourable terms. With the supreme power of the nation possessed neither of magnanimity to accede to an honourable peace, nor fortitude, or vigor sufficient to draw forth the resources of the nation in case of actual war, our situation is truly perilous. Every circumstance is laid hold of, and every act is used in those public vehicles of information which are devoted to the present administration to exasperate the public mind against the British nation; but little or no more efficient preparation is making for war than if we were in a state of profound peace, and if I may indulge my own conjecture even if the negotiation does break off, we will not have immediate war but things will remain for a time at least in the same situation in which we are now. I have no view that our Government is determined to declare war against Britain, nor do I think she will declare immediate war or commence immediate hostilities against us. I understand her ministers say she will take no offence at our embargo. As it will throw advantages in her hand which will far more than balance the inconveniences she would rather give a docent to continue it on account of the injury which it will do her enemies than wish us to open it. I think it probable then we will be permitted to worry on with our embargo till it is convenient for ourselves to lift it without any molestation from Great Britain. However

unjust her conduct may have been towards us, and there is some of it I don't pretend to justify compared with our conduct towards her, her conduct has been dignified. She has steadily pursued her own course without manifesting either irritation or intimidation at our scolding, our war speeches in Congress, our non-importation or our embargo, our wry faces, our raw head and bloody bone and all that.

The question about the next President and Vice President has been brought up in grand caucus and the votes have been to appearance almost unanimous for Mr. Madison but they were so only in appearance. It was a pretty general understanding among those who did not wish to support Madison not to attend the meeting. The meeting was notified by Bradley, a counter notification was posted up by J. Masters of New York requesting the Republicans not to attend, but one member out of 19 attended from New York and but nine out of 20 from Pennsylvania. The whole number of Senators and Representatives is 176. The three territorial delegates make 179, of this number 89 voted, 83 for Madison. Of the remaining 90, 13 were either absent from the city or unable by sickness to attend. About half of these who might have attended if they chose, voted for Madison. I have no opinion of this mode of influencing the public mind. I believe it to be an infraction of one import[ant] provision of the Constitution. In Virginia they have had a legislative caucus upon the same subject, the result is 134 for Madison and 57 for Monroe. This however is but a very imperfect index of what may be the state of the public mind when the election does actually take place.

I believe a serious attempt is about to be made to remove the seat of Government back to the City of Philadelphia, and abandon the City Washington and all the public buildings which have put the nation to such an immense expense. I rather think a majority will be found in favour of it. Altho' I think I could spend the next session more agreeably in Philadelphia than here, yet I have several strong objections against the measure in my own mind which must be removed before I can vote for it. I very much question the constitutional right of Congress to effect the removal by a legislative act as the permanent seat of Government when once fix't,

assumed the nature of a constitutional provision, but constitutions nowadays are only words upon paper which cannot stand against the voice of the sovereign people.

I hope the attack upon the judiciary, because Judge Marshal did not hang Aaron Burr contrary to law, will be passed the present session. In Pennsylvania the House of Representatives was equally divided, and the question consequently lost. In Virginia after a lengthy and able debate it past the House of Representatives but was lost in the Senate. In Congress it has been introduced into the Senate and a resolution for that purpose laid upon the table but it has not as yet been taken up and it is thought will not. Perhaps by another session the passions may become a little more cool, and the judiciary may escape. I am in good health but the hand of death is like to make an inroad upon us. Mr. Darby of New Jersey and Mr. Crowninshield of Mass'tts both lie at the point of death. I should not be surprised that they be both dead before tomorrow morning. Darby is in the last stage of a quick consumption. Crowninshield has a blood vessel broke while in the House on the 8th inst. He for several days past fails so fast that it is thought he cannot last more than a day or two. They are both in the prime of life probably under forty. Darby leaves a wife but no children, he is a very inoffensive man, by profession a Baptist; Crowninshield has three children which by his death will become orphans. *Sic transit gloria mundi*. It has constantly been the lot at every session to bury one or more. * * *

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

January 28, 1808.

* * * It has leaked out this morning on what authority I know not that Mr. Rose's mission is at an end and he is taking his leave. This is precisely what I expected. The true state of the case is that I believe our Government dare not enter into a treaty with Britain however advantageous, but it won't do to proclaim that to the nation. It is well known to be an opinion prevalent at headquarters that Britain must fall, at least be compelled to accede to such terms as Bonaparte will

be pleased to dictate. Under this impression it is no doubt deemed proper to keep on good terms with the strongest party and with the magnanimity of the ass in the fable, kick the sick and dying lion. *O tempora O mores*. The only consolation is the Lord reigns. Adieu untill I hear from you.

Yours, &c.

S. T.

WASHINGTON, February 4, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * The great question of peace or war is involved in as much uncertainty as ever. Some days the political pendulum beats up to a war heat. The next day perhaps the vibration may faintly move in favour of peace. If our prowess is to be measured by high sounding words no nation was ever more valiant. Our embargo is about to starve the British Islands and even all Europe into such terms as to bring them, and if they dare to grumble at our starving them we are to take Canada and Nova Scotia. There is one weapon, how powerful it may prove I pretend not to say in the use of which we are dexterous, that is scolding. Two or three days ago there was news of the appearance of a British fleet on our coasts and we scolded at it. If we hear of preparation making for war in Nova Scotia or Canada we scold at it and the late British retaliating decrees have been a fruitful theme for scolding, with respect to preparation for hostilities we seem to act upon a plan different from most other nations. I believe the general custom of nations is when war is apprehended to make some preparation for it.

Our plan seems to be to reverse this order, i. e., plunge into war first and then prepare for it afterwards. Several plans of preparation have been introduced. We have bills upon our table for raising an additional number of seamen to man our gunboats, to add to the peace establishment, to raise some regiments on a war establishment, and to empower the President to raise a provisional army in case of actual war; but all these measures are stationary, and I fear we will be plunged into a war while wholly unprepared.

As one instance of the timidity and wavering of our counsels a bill was introduced into the House sometime ago to raise I think 1250 additional seamen to man those gunboats which were already built. This was pushed so hard that it was obvious to all it was an executive measure. The usual course of bills is after they are read the first and second time they are referred to a committee of the whole and ordered to be printed and to be taken up either the next or some more distant day. But this was urged as of the utmost necessity to be pressed immediately. A number who had no idea of opposing the bill barely wished it to be put off to the next day that it might take the usual course and be printed but this could not be obtained. It was without printing urged thro a committee of the whole and passed to be engrossed for a third reading and the only reason why it was not read a third time was that an adjournment was called for. Next morning the chairman of the committee which brought in the bill, of his own accord moved to postpone it and have it printed. This was about ten days ago and the subject has not been called up since.

Concerning the negotiation with Mr. Rose the British envoy extraordinary nothing has as yet transpired which can be depended upon. As long ago as Friday the 29th ult. it was suggested and the suggestion gained credit that the negotiation was about at an end and Mr. Rose was soon to take his leave. This was in the first instance said to come from a source which entitled it to credit. But on endeavouring to trace the report I could find no foundation for it. Yesterday I found that a gentleman who had been at Mr. Erskine's the evening before had by some means, I suppose by some inference, drawn from an expression of Mr. Erskine's, gathered that there was not any apprehension of an immediate rupture. Today that impression particularly this evening's seems to have acquired a little additional strength. I have heard this evening, whether the report be true I know not, that the President has said today that he sees nothing at present but that a settlement may be effected. Straws and feathers sometimes show how the wind blows.

Duane who has used all the art he possesses to blow up the

flames of discord between the United States and Great Britain has, it is said, published three papers without throwing out a single reflection against Great Britain and he has published some paragraphs in relation to the late outrageous conduct of France towards neutrals without attempting either to palliate them or to charge them upon Great Britain. The same has been observed in Smith's paper printed in the city. Whatever may be the success of Mr. Rose's mission I believe him to be well qualified for what he has undertaken. He is said to be a man of superior talents. He is a plain man without any pomp and parade and of the most fascinating manners; he is said by those who have had more opportunity of acquaintance with him than I have to be one of the most pleasing and instructive men in conversation they ever knew. I have seen enough of him to know him to converse with great facility and that there is nothing like hauteur about him, whether he is *fortiter in re* or not his *suaviter in modo* must make some impression. * * *

Another thing which agitated Congress for a few days has been a proposition for abandoning Washington and removing the Government to Philadelphia. A vote was taken on the subject to-day which tho it was not on the main question of remove or not will I believe settle it for the present session. The vote was a tolerable close one, 61 to 63, of the absentees four were reckoned with the minority and two with the majority which would have left it to be untied by the speaker. By absentees I don't mean such as were out of the city but such as happened to be absent from their seats when the vote was taken. Much is to be said for and against the measure and I do think that the Government will not continue here long but at the same time I rather dread the consequences of a removal. * *

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, February 28, 1808.

DEAR SIR:

* * * Here I am a silent, and sometimes perhaps almost a sullen spectator of what is going on, and as I do not place

much confidence in the administration can do little else than vote against almost every measure which is brought to view.

Concerning the state of the negotiation with Mr. Rose I can say nothing with certainty only that I believe it is suspended for the present. Despatches have been sent to Europe both by Mr. Rose and by our Government, the former in the British packet and the latter in an American vessel. Special messengers are sent by our Government to London and Paris. Mr. Nourse, son of the Register of the Treasury is gone to London and a Mr. Lewis whom I do not know is gone to Paris. The cloud seems I think to grow thicker and thicker. Despatches which have been communicated to Congress have been received both from London and Paris. They however communicate no new facts, but what had long before been detailed in the paper. The one consists only of a representation made to the French Government by Gen. Armstrong on the affair of the American ship *Horizon* which was wrecked on the coast of France, the other communication to the Government on the subject of the late decrees. Altho' these despatches are not to be published yet I am under no restrictions about publishing their contents so far as I can recollect them but I have not time nor do I deem them of much importance. I suppose a thousand or more misrepresentations will in that way be handed out to the public which might be obviated by publishing the despatches themselves. Mr. Pinkney's despatches which consist almost entirely of his own reasoning on the British decree, are themselves sufficiently calculated to meet the hostile feelings of those who are wishing to precipitate the country into a war with Britain, will probably become five fold more so when they come to the publick sublimated thro the democratic quills of some of our members of Congress.

We have for a considerable time past been in a state of apathy about our preparations for war which I suspect was occasioned by a piece of etiquette between the Executive and the House. I believe the President's wish to have been that Congress should have raised an army, &c. without any recommendation from him so that in case they were not needed, and the measure should prove unpopular that he might in his usual way shrink from the responsibility and throw it

upon Congress; and a large proportion of the members of Congress reasoned thus, that if there was any information about the state of the nation which rendered such a measure necessary, the Executive possessed it, that it was his duty to communicate that information to the Legislature, and that if he would either come forward and on his own responsibility say that an augmentation of the military force was necessary and to what amount, or would make such a statement of facts to the nation that such augmentation was necessary, they would vote to raise them but they would not vote to raise any additional troops unless they knew that the Executive wanted them. It was the wish of some of our cabinet folks (by the way the cabinet is pretty miserably served this session with Dawson at the head) to pass the bill, without any such communication, but as there were some doubts about carrying the measure, they did not press it. We have at length had a communication from the President backed with another from our most sapient Secretary at War, recommending the immediate raising of an additional force of 6000 men and an organization of 24,000 volunteers and a continuance of the law empowering the drafting 100,000 militia which expires in April next. * * * In Saturday's Senate Mr. Gardenier of New York in a pretty severe phillippic, a stile of which he is a perfect master, arraigned the administration in pretty peremptory terms. On Monday the attack was retorted by two or three in succession with the most virulent personal abuse; Gardenier challenged one of the speakers Mr. G. W. Campbell and yesterday morning was appointed for a meeting without the bounds of the District. The affair had taken air and a crowd repaired to the spot. The magistracy of the District I understand also interposed, and I heard last evening they had entered into a recognizance to keep the peace and I hoped the affair was over, but the reports of yesterday have been so various and contradictory that it is impossible to tell what to believe. I understand however this morning that the parties have not returned or that they are still absent. If that is true probably they have still sought the fatal meeting. This I think an awful example to the nation, and I dread to hear that one or both have fallen. Gardenier has a family

consisting of a wife and three small children; Campbell is a single man. As soon as I know the issue I shall write again. Write me often enough to let me know that you received my letters. I rest

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, March 21, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * As to conjectures about the negotiation I am sure the public must be tired reading them in the public prints and I have been fairly tired writing them to my correspondents. But it is now got beyond conjecture the die is cast, the negotiation is at an end and nothing is done; all diplomatic correspondence closed on Friday evening last by Mr. Rose's answer to a note of Mr. Madison's in which was contained a refusal to comply with the requisitions of our Government. The whole of the proceedings in relation to the negotiations, including the treaty signed in Great Britain which Jefferson in his great wisdom sent back with the whole of the correspondence on the subject both in Europe and America is, I understand to be laid before Congress in a day or two, or as soon as copies can be prepared for that purpose. This will be I suppose pretty voluminous.

I understand that the point on which the negotiation finally stopp'd was the President's proclamation interdicting British ships from American waters. Mr. Rose insisted this proclamation should be rescinded as a basis of negotiation. This on the part of our Government was refused. I cannot but think that the demand was a reasonable one. * * *

As soon as the British Government was apprised of the outrage on the *Chesapeake* and even before our Minister in London had become acquainted with it in any other way, that Government frankly disavowed it, and nothing hindered an immediate settlement only the absurd instructions of our Government coupling that with the long contested subject of the impressment of seamen; and when no farther progress could be made in negotiation owing to causes, for which the

American and not the British Government was answerable a special envoy was sent here for the express purpose. On the other hand while our Government has on every occasion showed the utmost complaisance to Britain's inveterate enemy, we have been constantly in the habit of irritating and provoking her. It is supposable that while on almost every occasion the most entire subserviency has been shown to the view of France that with these impressions the Government would act fairly and impartially in a treaty with Britain.

* * * I have for years been of the opinion that one day or another we must be chained to the triumphal car of Napoleon. I think the period is rapidly approaching. Not that I believe that a majority in Congress intend any such thing. I believe that could their eyes be opened to view the precipice to which they are hastening they would shrink from it with horror; but a great majority receive all their impressions from the Executive with the same facility that the wax receives them from the seal. * * * Rarely ever did prince rule more absolutely than T. J. He can manage everything in the national legislature by his rod, and I hesitate not to add that rarely ever was there a man whose popularity has proved and is like to prove a greater curse to his country. Are the people of these States doomed to be led blindfold as sheep to the slaughter? Is there any hopes that they will get their eyes opened to their true friends and their true int'rest? The only thing under Providence which will save our nation from ruin is the corrective which the people hold in their own hands on the ensuing congressional and presidential elections.
* * *

It is a little remarkable that early in the morning after the negotiation was finally closed, despatches were received from Europe by the British Minister which were deemed of that importance, that instead of waiting for the mail of the next day they were conveyed from Baltimore in the night at the expense of 50 dollars. They contain the King's speech at the opening of Parliament. * * *

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, April 4, 1808.

DEAR SIR

* * * Exclusive of war speeches we have passed an act for building additional litter of gunboats; we have appropriated one million of dollars for fortifications; we have laid an embargo; we have prolonged the act empowering the President to call out 100,000 militia and we are now about to pass an act to raise 6000 additional troops. The capacity of our Government either to make peace or prepare for war does not appear the most brilliant, but if we are to be the victims of a childish wavering and temporizing policy, no doubt the hand of Providence is in it for it is one of the judgments threatened to a sinful nation that God will give children to be their princes and strangers to rule over them.

I believe I mentioned in my last the breaking off of the negotiations with the grounds of it. As was then conjectured, i. e., Mr. Rose insisted on the rescinding of the President's proclamation interdicting British ships from American[waters]; what was then a matter of common report proves to be a matter of fact. I shall endeavour to transmit you a copy of the documents which have been published on that subject. Mr. Madison's reply to Mr. Rose's first note, which you will observe by the date has been long enough in composing, is celebrated here as a masterpiece of diplomatic writing. He certainly displays a considerable degree of industry and ingenuity, but in my opinion he introduces much extraneous matter in order to defend a proposition untenable. It is an unpopular doctrine here but I cannot believe but Mr. Rose's demand was a reasonable one. If ever the expiring of that proclamation was justifiable, it was justifiable on the presumption that the attack on the *Chesapeake* was an authorized act of the British Government. As soon as this act was disavowed by the British Government, which was done promptly and without delay as soon as it was heard of, and an informal correspondence entered into between Mr. Canning and Mr. Monroe on the subject, I believe it was near six weeks before the latter received any official instructions on the subject. The reasons on which the proclamation was issued ceased. To persist in adhering to the proclamation even after the faith of the nation was

pledged by her Ambassador to make adequate reparation, showed rather a spirit of suspicion than a sincere desire of conciliation. I am perhaps too apt to be suspicious, yet I cannot but suspect that the reasons publicly assigned for the breaking off of the treaty are not the true ones. Should we accommodate our differences with Great Britain we must, it is thought, offend France. [Our] Government has no view of going to war with England unless she shall be the assailant, and it is thought that pressed as she is with the war in Europe, will not attack us but will prefer her present situation to an open rupture with the United States, and by keeping her at bay by throwing obstacles in the way of an accommodation, it is thought we may avoid a war with France. This suspicion is rather strengthened than otherwise by despatches lately communicated.

In addition to the documents in relation to the affair of the *Chesapeake*, others very voluminous have been communicated, the reading of the whole took up six days. They are ordered to be printed but it is a work of time as I conclude the whole will make a volume of six or seven hundred pages. They come in bundles marked Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

No. 1 contained the *Chesapeake* papers herewith transmitted.

No. 2 contained the correspondence of Mr. Monroe, both with the British and the American Government, and their communications with him which took place previous to the mission of Mr. Pinkney.

No. 3 contained the correspondence during the joint mission of Monroe and Pinkney, comprising the instructions of our Government containing the outlines of a treaty. Correspondence with the British commissioners on the subject of a treaty, the treaty itself which was signed at London Dec. 31, 1806 which was afterwards returned without being submitted to the Senate. An elucidation of the treaty by Mess. Monroe and Pinkney giving reasons of their signing it sent over with the treaty, and the objections to it by the American Government when it was sent back, with the instructions to our ministers to recommence a negotiation in order to obtain certain alterations and improvements.

No. 4 contained an unofficial elucidation of the treaty

written by Mr. Monroe since his arrival in the United States in which he endeavoured to obviate the objections of the American Government, or rather of Mr. Madison against the treaty to vindicate his own and his colleague's conduct in signing it, and to show that it would have been both for the honour and int'rest of the United States to have acceded to it.

No. 5 contains some papers, some of them pretty much like garbled extracts upon our relations with France. Mr. Monroe's elucidation is an important state paper. He discovers both great abilities and candor, and his reasoning is I think conclusive. It is reported that it was with great reluctance that it was submitted to the Legislature and directed to be published, and that the only reason why it was at length submitted that its publication could not be prevented, for if it had not been published in this way Monroe would have published it himself, and a neglect or a refusal on the part of the Government to suppress it would have operated like Sullivan's suppression of Col. Pickering's letter.

What is not a little remarkable that Mr. Monroe's conduct throughout the negotiation appears ostensibly at least to be universally approved of by persons of every political description. So far as I can judge, I think he has acquitted himself as an able, faithful and industrious negotiator. If our affairs at home had been conducted with the same ability, candor and impartiality with which he conducted our affairs abroad, much of our present distress might have been saved. So far as I can judge from hearing the treaty read once, I believe it to be a good one, as good a one as we had reason to expect and much better than we have now any chance to obtain. The great objection to it was that it contained no article expressly stipulating against the impressment of British seamen on board American vessels, but there was an informal arrangement on that subject by which it was mutually understood, that altho the principle was not expressly relinquished the practice would be suspended, or at least so modified as to give no just cause of offence. This arrangement Mr. Monroe thinks would have been equally satisfactory to the United States with an express stipulation by treaty, and would in its operation have been so much more advantageous

to Great Britain than the mode of impressment, that she would in a little time have been induced to have relinquished the principle altogether.

Our Government rather chose to put all to the hazard. The treaty happened to be set back in a most inauspicious moment for recommencing negotiation in order to obtain alterations and amendments. The ministry under whose auspices it had been negotiated were now no longer in power, and their successors, however disposed to be on friendly terms, were probably less disposed than their predecessors to make concessions to the United States. They however showed no reluctance to ratifying the treaty on condition it had been ratified by the United States, but absolutely refused to enter into any new negotiation on points already settled by treaty; and when they found it would not be ratified by the United States showed as little reluctance in disannulling it all together.

Such was the situation of our affairs with Great Britain when the unfortunate affair of the *Cheaspeake* happened. Indeed there seems to be a certain kind of fatality attending all our affairs with Great Britain. Towards the close of the year 1805 during the Pitt administration, Great Britain made serious depredations on our commerce under pretence of reducing the limits of the colonial system. These depredations threw the mercantile part of the country into a flame, and loaded the table of Congress with remonstrances and memorials from almost the whole of the trading part of the continent. These give rise to the deliberations in Congress which issued in the famous non-importation law. Before this law passed and long before it was known in Europe the ministry was changed, the practice complained of principally discontinued and a disposition manifested to be on friendly terms with the United States. The non-importation law therefore has been productive of nothing but mischief. * * *

By the time you have read thus far, you will think if not say that my letter is long enough, but as I give you my word that it is the last long letter I shall write to you during the present session of Congress I trust you will bear with me a little longer, while I give you a sketch of the proceedings on some late despatches received both from France and Great

Britain. These were received the week before last, those from Great Britain three or four days before those from France. On the 30th ult they were communicated to Congress with closed doors. Exclusive of Erskine's and Champagny's letters, which are now before the public and will probably meet your eye before this reaches you, they consisted of an extract of a letter from Mr. Pinkney at London of Jan 26., two letters from Gen. Armstrong at Paris one of the 27 December the other of Jan. 22. Advantage was taken of the circumstances of the doors being closed to call for a second reading of the confidential parts of the former communications which took up the day. Next day, the 31, Randolph introduced a resolution for taking off the injunction of secrecy and publishing the despatches. It is not considered that the President has a right to impose silence upon the House. Notwithstanding a communication is made confidentially, it lays within the discretion of the House to keep on, or remove the injunction of secrecy. Tho anxious for the publication of part of the despatches, as Randolph's resolution at first embraced the whole, I did not vote for it partly because altho it may come within the constitutional powers of the House to publish a message of the President, yet it rather infringes on a point of delicacy to publish one which he declares to be confidential, and partly because to me there is an impropriety in publishing the letters of foreign ministers, as it may involve them in serious inconveniences with the governments where they reside. Altho' in this case the publication of Mr. Pinkney's letter could do no harm. It merely related a conversation with Mr. Canning which as to matter, and manner was mild and conciliating, yet the letters of Gen. Armstrong particularly his letter of the 27 of December was of such a nature, that were it published and conveyed back to the court of Napoleon in such a Government as that of France, I should not be answerable for his personal safety.

This resolution was afterwards limited to part of the documents, and altho two days were spent on the subject and great ingenuity discovered by Randolph, no vote could be obtained so much as to consider a motion for publishing any part of them. In the evening of the first instant, I believe

a grand consultation was held on the subject, and I suppose a deputation consisting of some, both of the Senate and House of Representatives, who stood high in point of executive confidence, or who in the Randolphian stile are called pages of the water closet waited on the President to consult him on the subject. Next morning he sent a message taking off his veto from the publication of Mr. Erskine's and Mr. Champagny's letters which are now before the public. 'I thought the matter would have ended here, but Randolph had not done. He wished to publish the journal of our proceedings while in secret session, altho' I could see no earthly purpose which could be answered by it only to let the world see with what facility the majority yielded to presidential impulse, for after the veto was taken off the vote to publish passed unanimously. This brought on such a scene of wrangling, for I cannot call it debate, with such fluttering and such wincing as was truly laughable, until at last a vote was obtained to publish the journal by a majority of 71 to 40 much contrary to my expectation.

I shall further trouble you with a remark or two to which I believe you will give entire credit. The proceedings of this session of Congress will not look well in history. It has indicated neither fortitude to prepare for war, nor magnanimity to make peace which might have been done with Britain I believe on honourable terms. Our proceedings have betrayed nothing but a want of system and imbecillity. This inconsistency and wavering policy, has evidently proceeded from the Executive for the House, or at least the majority appears to receive impressions from that source with the same facility that the wax receives them from the seal. At one time bills were brought in, one to raise an additional army, and another to raise a provisional army in case of immediate apprehensions of an invasion. These bills were suffered to sleep, altho' they were without doubt secretly countenanced by the Executive, yet he did not wish to appear to countenance the measure openly because in case the measure should prove to be either unpopular, or unnecessary, the responsibility could then be thrown off himself to Congress, but the House showed an unwillingness to act without something more

explicit from the Executive. At one time it was stated that he wished to be empowered to employ 1272 additional seamen, and a bill was introduced and progressing for that purpose when it was arrested by a declaration of the President thro' the medium of the Secretary of the Navy, that he did not wish to be empowered to employ any more seamen. At length the President comes forward on his own responsibility and asks for 6000 additional troops, and that a corps of 24,000 volunteers might be raised trained and disciplined. A bill to raise the 6000 men soon passed the Senate. It has been altered, new modelled, committed and recommitted in our House and it is now for the third time got to the third reading and I suppose will pass today. I understand that in private conversation the President said three or four weeks ago he expected it would be necessary to raise as many as 20,000. A few days ago he said he should not want more than 6000, and he did not know as it would be necessary to raise any, on what new light I know not. * * *

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, November 17, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * You will see by the President's message that he is determined to continue the embargo. Indeed I believe much darkness and uncertainty prevails in the cabinet about what measures are proper to be pursued. The embargo, that sovrein panacea, which was to operate a perfect remedy for all our grievances and bring all Europe to our feet, has after an experiment of almost eleven months completely failed of producing any one of the effects contemplated. It has neither coerced France nor England, nor starved the West Indies. Great Britain has refused to rescind her orders of council on condition of opening the embargo as it respects her while the French decrees are in force, and to a similar proposal made to France as well as to a remonstrance on the subject of sinking or burning our vessels on the high seas, (for it appears that such a remonstrance has been made) she has not deigned to make any answer at all.

The documents on this subject are now publishing partially in the papers, and members of Congress will I presume in two or three days have it in their power to distribute them in pamphlets. It appears that we have quite overrated our consequence as it respects European nations. We are rapidly teaching them to do without us, and if our present system continues they will soon do all but forget that there is such a country as the United States on the globe. Some expression in Mr. Canning's last letter to Mr. Pinkney have not a little nettled our Democrats, and indeed tho couched in terms of the utmost politeness are rather tantalizing. They consider the embargo a domestic municipal regulation of the United States with which they have no right to interfere nor make any complaints, and accordingly have made none; and altho' they would be extremely glad to see it removed and the usual mutual intercourse between the countries restored, yet they cannot bring into their calculation the idea of its being a measure of coercion; and that they would feel happy in its removal in order that our own citizens may be relieved from the inconveniences they suffer from it, yet that removal is not to be effected by any concessions on their part. As it respects France honoured as she is by the British fleet it is not felt at all, and the removal of it is an object of no consequence as during the existence of the present system no trade could be had to her which is our situation at the opening of Congress; a situation truly embarrassing but which has been brought about by our own folly and imbecillity, by our disposition to flatter and cringe to one foreign nation, and bully and provoke another. I believe our Government begins to become sensible at length that cringing and fawning, or anything short of absolute and entire submission will not do, and that whatever may be their own feelings, perhaps they think is a measure for which the country is not yet fully ripe, and I believe they know not what to do. * * *

Yours affect'ly,

S. TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, December 2, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * The repeal of the embargo laws has been under debate in the Senate for nearly two weeks and no decision of the question has as yet taken place. Our House has refused to take up the subject in a direct manner on Mr. Chittenden's resolution, but we have taken up Campbell's report which I transmitted to you some time ago. A desultory and irregular debate has taken place on the first resolution which really means nothing, and the only opposition to it in the House was because it meant nothing, but speakers entered into the whole subject.

Mr. Quincy led the way in a speech of an hour and a half long in which he attacked the embargo system in front and rear, and endeavoured to show that the first resolution was in direct hostility both to the principles of the report itself and to our practice for the last 12 months, for by our shutting up ourselves by the embargo we had in fact submitted to the mandates both of Great Britain and France. France said we should not trade to Great Britain, and Great Britain said we should not trade to France. * * *

Mr. Masters in the most direct terms arraigned the conduct of the administration for not making a peace or affecting an accommodation with Britain when it was in their power. Among the speakers on the other side Mr. Bacon took as much pains to render himself conspicuous as any one. The resolution was passed and the following resolutions were voted in committee of the whole without debate. I think however they will not pass the House without a lengthy debate. I believe senatorial eloquence has been exerted to the utmost in that House, but it is said that a more luminous argument has been made by no one, than by Mr. Pickering. His speech is not yet published. Mr. Quincy's I expect will be published today in the *National Intelligencer*, and tomorrow in the *Federalist*.

But all these debates will amount to nothing unless it be to make some impression on the public mind. The majority

is I have every reason to believe predetermined to prosecute the plan on which they have set out, regardless of consequences.

* * *

The ground on which many built, and I believe Jefferson himself, that Britain must soon fall or at least be compelled to relinquish the unequal contest, and submit to such terms as might be dictated by the Conqueror, and that in that way we should be freed from the shackles which crippled our commerce has also failed. Great Britain now evidently stands firmer than she has for many years. * * *

The great bugbear now resorted to in order to frighten the public mind into an acquiescence is that we have no choice only an embargo, non-intercourse, &c., and war with both France and Great Britain, for I observe "Bony" is not so great a favourite as formerly. He rather slights our proffered friendship and all our cringing and submission has not been found sufficient to soften the obdurate heart of the tyrant, &c. Perhaps he is not quite so much an object of terror as he has been, that also may have some influence. Without a spirit of hostility against Britain being lessened, a portion of it is transferred to the Emperor.

But this cry of war with both nations on a repeal of the embargo is nothing but a hum[bug] any more than the hue and cry about tribute taxation, &c., &c., in consequence of the British orders of council. As it respects a war with France, we are but little removed from that state now; she either takes, confiscates, or burns our vessels when they are in her power, there is but little if any more she could do in case of actual war, and it might put it out of her power to ruin us by her intrigues. * * * But I shall say no more on this theme only to notice a satirical remark of John Randolph, on the much boasted free and liberal offers of our Government to repeal the embargo laws on the repeal of the decrees. We had, he said, like Jack in the tale of a tub, hung ourselves up on a hook and had humbly applied to both the belligerents to cut us down, and they had refused and had left us to get down the best way we could. * * *

Yours affect'ly,

SAMUEL TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, December 8, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * The debate on Campbell's resolutions has now been protracted for nine days and is not yet closed. When it will close I know not as I expect a number are yet prepared to speak. It is thought that Mr. Key will occupy the floor today when we will most probably have a very able speech.

* * *

We have a wonderful notion of terrifying our adversaries. The non-importation, the proclamation of the President, and the embargo were all for the purpose of inspiring terror, and should the non-intercourse also be held up *in terrorem* what can withstand it? The only way to make a medicine work is to keep increasing the dose. Could Bonaparte, Talleyrand, Canning and a few more of that description of folks be transported into our galleries for a few days to hear our war speeches and D[avid] R. W[illiams] even threatening to cut off his own head in defence of his country, I think they must be frightened into an acquiescing in all our demands. But ridicule apart, I think the administration of which the majority in Congress are the mere obsequious tools are reserving themselves for events: I need say nothing to you to strengthen an impression that for years past they have been actuated by a spirit of unreasonable hostility against Great Britain, and of an attachment bordering upon infatuation to France notwithstanding all the parade of impartiality; but of late the insults and outrages of France have been so glaring as to be no longer concealed from the people, therefore something like the appearance of a hostile attitude must be assumed. * * *

Much is said about the Spirit of '76 and the energy of our Government. Alas the Spirit of '76 was buried on the 4th of March 1801, and I have told a number of our Democrats not to invoke the Spirit of '76 for the purpose of carrying into effect embargo laws, for it would prove like Owen Glendower's calling spirits from the vasty deep, where the only difficulty was they would not come when he called. The Spirit of '76 would scorn to be employed in such a system of meanness and oppression, and it is a miserable energy which a government possesses when it is exerted solely and only for

the oppression of our citizens. How long the patience of the public will hold out I know not. I think the hardy sons of the north are as yet hardly ripe for submission to a military despotism. I look forward with horror at the consequences to be apprehended from a perseverance in the present measures. Still [our] Government is infatuated with the belief that the measures of government are popular. Of this the late elections are taken for conclusive evidence. * * *

Yours affect'ly,

S: TAGGART.

N. B. A curious letter said to be written by L. Sawyer of North Carolina to his constituents develops the substance of the President's confidential communications. It has got into the public prints, and probably will in that way meet your eye, the correctness of his sketch probably will not be disputed, at least I have no view of disputing it. The writer is now sick at Philadelphia. Were he a Federalist perhaps an attempt would be made to expel him. I have heard the subject discoursed of among Democrats. The conclusion appears to be that it would be giving both him and his letter too much consequence to take any notice of it. This conclusion I believe to be a correct one. It first appeared in a Virginia paper, at least I first saw it there, but I know not but it was first printed in a hand bill.

December 8, Afternoon.

As I expected Mr. Key delivered a most eloquent speech of an hour and a half. He was followed by some speakers from the *dis minorum gentium*, viz, Mr. Roger Nelson, Mr. Lyon and Mr. Desha, the two latter from Kentucky, when the House adjourned without taking the question. Mr. Pickering's speech has not yet come to my hand. I shall probably be able to forward it tomorrow.

WASHINGTON, December 10, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * Before this arrives you will be able to judge more correctly of the operations of the embargo than when you

wrote last. In my first letter after the laws passed I suggested in pretty strong terms perhaps too strong that it was a measure first arranged at Paris. To corroborate this impression a vessel has since arrived at New York from Amsterdam which mentioned that it was publicly talked of at Amsterdam as intelligence received from Paris, that as soon as the *Revenge* arrived in the United States an embargo would be laid and so strong was the impression that immediately sugar arose from 13 to 19\$ per. cwt., and coffee from 21 to 27 stivers pr. lb. The *Revenge* arrived on the second day after Dr. Bullus arrived with despatches for the Government. The President's message was sent and could the majority have gained precisely their wishes the embargo would have passed the same day.

Exclusive of a supplementary embargo law which passed on Saturday the most important business which occupied the attention of the House during the last week has been Randolph's resolution tending to criminate Gen. Wilkinson. What he laid before the House as the grounds on which he wished for the proposed enquiry into the conduct of the General, is now in the public prints and will probably meet your eye before this will reach you. This proposition has occasioned much squirming and wincing in the House, and there seems to be a manifest disposition to stifle the enquiry. So exceedingly squeamish are we just at this moment lest we should overleap the bounds prescribed by the Constitution, that it has been found out as a rare discovery that the House of Representatives has no right to interfere either directly or indirectly with the conduct of a military officer. I expect the enquiry will be stifled and nothing will be done. It is said the President has ordered an enquiry and that three inferior officers, colonels and majors are to meet tomorrow to commence it. It is said the information communicated by Randolph contains no sort of evidence on which to ground an enquiry, of this when you see it you will judge for yourself.

On this subject Mr. Rowan of Kentucky who is a sensible, bold, independent man took a decided part. He was not in the House when the subject was first under discussion, but the last day he observed that should the enquiry be prosecuted to affect an host of evidence might be procured and he pledged

himself to direct to the particular sources from which it was to be delivered. As for the insinuations which had been thrown out on that floor that the attacks upon Wilkinson were occasioned by a friendship for Burr, he despised them, let them come from what quarters they would. The part he had acted and the pains he had taken to counteract that conspiracy in Kentucky were well known, and it was well known that he had refused a very tempting fee when offered to him to induce him to undertake in his cause as a lawyer. Let those, says he, who are so liberal in throwing aspersions on others come forward and say as much. I believe however nothing will be done to any effect. The spot where the shoe pinches is a great personage it is feared will be implicated. It is suggested not only that Wilkinson has sold himself to the Spaniards long since, and has been regularly pensioned by them but that the fact has been long known at Headquarters, but at all events he must be prepared. * * * *

Some most scurrilous attempts have been made in other government papers in which Duane has led the way to excite personal prejudices against the expected envoy [Mr. Rose]. But I understand Mr. Monroe gives him a very high character as a gentleman of splendid talents, inflexible integrity, perfectly well acquainted with business, of mild, polished and conciliating manners, and as coming out with a sincere desire to accommodate matters in dispute. If he comes purposed to make, or accede to such proposals as these perhaps they may be acceded to, i. e., if you will make a humble acknowledgement for the outrage on the *Chesapeake*, and give up Berkeley and Humphreys to be punished without bringing into the account the outrageous and insulting provocations on our part which led to the outrage on our part; if you will permit us the unrestrained liberty of the seas without embarrassing us with search either for goods, contraband or seamen; if you will permit us the privilege of decoying your seamen into our service by encouraging desertion, and otherwise abandoning their country; and then permit our flag to protect them against your claims, then we may possibly permit Bonaparte to accomplish your destruction without our interfering any farther than aims from the natural result of our claims,

especially if in addition to this you permit us the exclusive trade to your Islands, and of dispersing the produce thereof to all the world. If Mr. Rose is prepared to accede to these terms, or something similar, our doughty gunboat warriors will condescend to be at peace. * * *

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, December 19, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * The great question on Campbell's resolutions was decided Saturday. It was frittered away into a great variety of parts on which questions were taken separately. The largest minority on any one question was I believe 36. On the final question 34, three Federalists were absent, Messrs. VanDyke, Goldsborough and Livermore, the two former not in the city, and the latter returned before the question was taken. One or two others were absent who would have voted in the minority.

New York Democrats seem to be pretty much shaken. Messrs. Van Cortlandt, Masters, Harris, Russell, Swart, Wilson, Mumford, and Thompson who are considered as Democrats, voted with the minority, and Riker would have done the same had he been present but he was necessarily absent on account of indisposition. Mass'tts Democrats keep firm to their ranks. I left the house about 12 o'clock Saturday night which was before a question on the third resolution which was said to be passed unanimously was taken. Had I been present I should have voted against it as it is pretty much a principle with me to vote against all defensive measures and preparations whatsoever, until I am convinced that they are to be employed for some other purpose than for the enforcement of embargo laws. The debate on these resolutions was protracted for three weeks, and when the question was taken it was pressed. A number of other members intended to have spoken on the subject which were prevented by a determination to press the question, all attempts to obtain an adjournment were abortive.

I very seldom speak in the House but this was one of those important subjects on which I could not reconcile it to my own feelings, nor to the duty which I owed to my constituents, to remain in silence. At every time in which there was a vacancy from the Tuesday morning of the last week I was attempting to take the floor, but did not obtain the wished for opportunity until Saturday two o'clock P. M. I occupied it until within a few minutes of four. My subject was so congenial to my feeling that I spoke with great facility and found no occasion to resort to my minutes. Some of the leading majority men saw fit to compliment me as delivering the best speech delivered on our side of the question. This however I considered as a compliment which I by no means merited. My observations such as they were will be published in due time. It will be a pretty long speech at least. I thought it my duty to use pretty plain language. * * * *

As to what concerns the business of the Post Road I have not as yet had the opportunity of consulting the Connecticut delegation. I shall do it perhaps this evening. The manner of originating applications for Post Roads is either by petitions from persons interested in the road, or by resolution moved by a member in his place. In either case the subject is referred to the committee on Post Office and Post Roads, and in either case it is necessary for some member to attend to it and advocate the application before the committee. If the committee report favourably unless the whole bill should sink as has been the case for two years, there will be no difficulty in its passing the House. Should the report of the committee be unfavourable it will then be very difficult to revive it in the House so as that it will be sanctioned. * * *

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, December 30, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * I know not whether it was before or since I wrote last, that the Senate passed Giles's famous supplementary embargo bill. This is such a curiosity as I believe never before appeared in any country claiming the character of Free.

I shall not attempt to analyze it. I have but one sentiment or feeling about it and that is indignation. * * *

There seems for some days past, I particularly observed it yesterday, considerable fluttering among the troops of the Palace. I think I never saw before such evident apprehension entertained of the influence of so small a majority. There is evidently a flinching among the New York Democrats, I suppose from the decided character which the politics of the state is assuming. When the non-intercourse resolutions were passed eight Republicans so called voted against them, a ninth who would have voted the same way was absent by indisposition, only five of their whole representation voted in favour of them. I thought our Massachusetts' Demo's would go thro thick and thin to all lengths, but yesterday I observed a fluttering among them.

A bill was called up for discussion one of the principal provisions of which was to call home all American vessels which had sailed prior to the law laying an embargo on penalty of these being denationalized and forever hereafter loosing the benefit of the American flag. Six months was allowed for such as were in the Atlantic ports of Europe, Africa or South America and 18 months for such as were beyond the Cape of Good Hope, or Cape Horn. A number took the alarm because it might hold up the idea to the northern states that the embargo would probably continue for six or eighteen months and the section was stricken out by a large majority. Soon as if repenting what had been suddenly done a motion was made to reconsider the vote for striking out the section. This brought on a debate which continued to a late hour when the House adjourned without taking any question.

I don't at all think this to be the important event foretold in the Prophecy altho it is something like a literal fulfilment of it namely, Tidings out of the north trouble them. The state of affairs in the northern states begin to create an alarm, not so much I believe for the public good as for the popularity of the party in power. The last elections in Vermont have an importance attached to them as indicating a rapid change in the public sentiment, and it is pretty well ascertained that were the elections in Massachusetts to take place now, the

principal part of our Democrats elect would have the leave of their constituents to enjoy dignified retirement. Some despatches have I believe been received by our Democrats urging on them the necessity of changing their line of conduct. A letter to that effect has I understand been received from John Quincy Adams stating that it will not do to pass the supplementary embargo law; that we have embargo laws enough already and more than can be carried into effect; that the system must be abandoned. I had thought that the supplementary law would pass by a sweeping majority but I begin to think that it will meet with more opposition than I contemplated, and now the great desideratum of many is to get a hole by which they may make an honourable retreat after scourging the nation with their folly for more than a year. The study will be to fall upon something else that would get a little revenge upon Great Britain.

So sick I believe are many of the courses they have pursued, which they have found attended with so many more difficulties than they contemplated, that even a semblance of yielding, or a partial yielding on the part of Great Britain would be eagerly laid hold of as affording opportunities for a retreat. I have heard, by the by, for the truth of it I do not vouch that a deputation has waited on the President, (Senator Robinson of Vermont is the only name I have heard mentioned) and stated to him that a longer persistence in the embargo system would ruin the party in power, that it would presently array ten states at least against the administration. The President could not believe it but still believes not only in the wisdom but the popularity of the measure. * * *

I rest yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, January 7th, 1809.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * On Thursday last precisely at 11 o'clock the House of Representatives commenced a session which closed Friday morning half past six, duration nineteen hours and a half. The subject before the House, was the bill from the Senate for the more effectual enforcing the embargo. * * *

Mr. Macon made a pretty long speech in favour of the embargo system generally without saying a single word upon the bill. Eppes asserted, I don't say proved, in a speech of considerable length that all the principles contained in that bill were already recognized in our revenue laws. In this he was answered by Dana. The sapient Smilie politely and charitably stated that all the opposition to the embargo originated with old Tories, British partizans, and persons corrupted by British gold. Several others denied in general terms that the bill was liable to the objection taken against it. So far as my memory serves me this is the full amount of all the arguments used by the friends of the measure. On account of the pressing of the question to a decision at that sitting, a number in the minority were precluded from speaking. It was not suffered to pass altogether without debate until that bill was called up.

Mr. Elliott has spoken very little during the session. On the various discussions of it he spoke not less than seven hours, nearly four of which was at once during the night sitting in which he brought a number of unpleasant truths to view. He was several times called to order and was once stopped in some observations he was about to make. He entered at large into the different mode in which our Government had managed their disputes with Great Britain and France, and the glaring partiality discovered towards the latter, taking the public official documents for his text. He appeared to have pretty thoroly attended to his subject.

* * * Today amendments made in the House of Representatives have been agreed to in the Senate and it wants nothing but the President's signature to make it a law which it will without doubt obtain. But altho it becomes a law, I believe it never can nor never will be carried into effect, and I hardly think it is really believed that it will. Should an attempt be seriously made to carry it into effect among our hardy New Englanders I dread the consequences. * * * Should there be a summer session which I believe is a thing determined we will get rid of the embargo and poor embargo, the only brat of the kind which ever lived to commence the second year of its age, begins to loose ground and I am in hopes

the bantling may be abandoned before we are more than $\frac{3}{4}$ ruined. What will follow I know not. The revolution in Spain will not and is not viewed as a matter of indifference as it relates to our proceedings. Should the Spaniards be subdued as I fear and as many predict with confidence, and as I believe there in the majority, who are perhaps not a very great number who are thoro'ly initiated into the views of the Cabinet devoutly wish, it will do to assume a bolder tone against England, but should Bonaparte be worsted in his views upon Spain which I hope and pray, this will be a lesson of caution.

There is considerable trouble in the Democratic camp here from Massachusetts. Notwithstanding their protest modest or otherwise against the resolves of the Mass'tts Legislature, there is evidently a fluttering among them said to be occasioned by a letter from John Q. Adams. Should the minority be powerful in next Congress I have no doubt Cook will join it. Bacon begins to flutter I am not out of hopes of him. The majority can boast of few abler men than Bacon, but he begins to become resty and unmanageable. On the late embargo question a number besides Bacon were with difficulty drilled into the ranks, Cook absconded from the question, Varnum will die in the last ditch of democracy, Cutt's politics are fixed by his connection with Madison, Seaver's understanding qualifies him to be a Democratic drudge and nothing else.

Yours,

S. TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, February 12, 1809.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * Before this reaches you, you will have heard that we have got thro counting the votes and announcing to the nation the election of President and Vice-president made last winter at Bradley's caucus. James the first of America will take possession of the throne the fourth of March. Whether I shall stay to attend the coronation I am undetermined. It will depend pretty much on the manner in which I can be accommodated with a passage home on that day. I think Friend James will have rather a troublesome reign. Who

will succeed him as Prime Minister is unknown as yet. The names of W. B. Giles, James Monroe, and John Q. Adams have been mentioned in outdoor conversation.

You will hear before this reaches you of the movement which has been in our House squinting towards a repeal of the embargo. The movement in the eastern states created a little alarm, but I believe the present calm begins to be construed into an acquiescence. The original proposition submitted to the House was to repeal the embargo and substitute *letters of marque*. The first part was carried in committee of the whole by a large majority, and the last negatived by a nearly similar majority. This was in committee of the whole. This alarmed some who had been most active in the hue and cry about war, or embargo. Several caucuses were held and I believe some intimations of executive pleasure received, and on Thursday last after a lengthy debate a vote was carried by a majority of ten to recommit the whole subject to the committee on foreign relations. The vote stood 65 to 55 so that you see the embargo is losing ground. * * *

The bill goes to exclude all armed ships of belligerent nations from our waters and to prohibit all intercourse with France and Great Britain and their dependencies after May 20th, and to a repeal of the embargo as it respects other nations on the 4th of March. It also contains a provision for its own repeal, and the repeal of the embargo, as it respects these nations or either of them on a revocation of their orders and decrees affecting neutral commerce. The only advantage I can see in it should it be carried into complete effect is that it will relieve the coasting trade in part from the intolerable oppression under which it now labours, as it goes to repeal in part the intolerable provisions of the last bill, as it respects coasting vessels, with the exception of those parts which lie on our southern and northern frontier.

I know not but the discussion of this bill may bring me again on the floor, many parts of it are more absurd and more impracticable than the embargo itself. I have expressed my sentiments on it very freely. I have told a number of its friends, that the manner in which they are serving their country by this bill brings to my mind a story I have heard of

a man, who once out of curiosity went to attend a Methodist camp meeting where they carried on very high in their mode of religion. He was asked on his return what he thought of their proceedings he answered, "Why, Why they serve the Lord just as if the Devil was in them." * * * There is considerable shrinking and shivering among our Mass'tts and New York Demos, as you will find by the state of the votes. Bacon who is unquestionably the best of our Demos. is I believe pretty well turned about. Certain it is that he is no longer manageable in the ranks, and is said to be on the point of being denounced. Cook is quite turned about but that is nothing strange, he may turn two or three times more before the close of the session. Ilsley is fairly frightened out of his course. Mr. Barker feels such qualms lately that he happens to be absent on most questions. Cutts is in a pretty sad predicament. By adhering to his party, he makes as great a sacrifice of interest as any man in the House, but notwithstanding this and I believe some pretty severe qualms of conscience besides still adheres. Varnum I believe also is full of fear and trembling. Seaver, Dean and Green go smoothly on in their course. Unless it is these almost all the northern Democrats, with a few exceptions north of New Jersey and two from that state, are giving way; I make no doubt should the present bill ever pass, which will be against a powerful opposition, it will not last longer than the spring session. Probably some who are in favour of a general repeal of the embargo will vote for this bill thinking it to be better than nothing, and that it is all that can be obtained during the present session.

Yours Affect'ly,
SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, February 19, 1809.

MY DEAR SIR:

I sent you a few days ago a paper containing a copy of the bill of 17 sections introduced into the House by Nicholas as a substitute for the contemplated repeal of the embargo and the *letters of marque*. I shall in this give you a short sketch of the proceedings on this bill so far as we have gone, we have

already spent four days in discussion of it in committee of the whole, and this evening it was reported to the House where it must again pass thro the mill, and the several motions to amend be again discussed and probably decided by yeas and nays. Mr. D. R. Williams moved to strike out all the sections of the bill which relate to the non-intercourse, and in place of it substitute a heavy discriminating duty, and instead of a partial, an entire repeal of the embargo. This motion was lost by a majority of 14 or 15. Mr. Williams is a great embargo man, but he finds it must be given up and he is not for doing it partially. In this I think he is correct as also in his ideas of the non-intercourse as vexatious and impracticable. Mr. Clopton moved to strike out all those parts of the bill which went to a repeal of any part of the embargo, he was for embargo and non-intercourse both. Only 25 rose in favour of his motion. I was out when it was taken. Mr. Milnor, Pennsylvania, moved to insert an entire, instead of a partial repeal of the embargo, his motion was lost by a majority of 4 53-57. I suppose all these amendments will be again urged in the House in what way, whim or caprice, will finally dispose the House to decide ultimately is uncertain today. Varnum the speaker took the floor in committee of the whole and advocated an entire repeal agreeable to Mr. Milnor's motion.

When long debates are going on many members are out of the House, and frequently in committee of the whole especially questions are taken when it is not expected and they are absent from their seats. It is thought that if the members had all been in their seats when Mr. Milnor's motion was put it would have carried. * * * Considerable dependence is laid upon the Virginia elections. For years past, I believe as many as six or seven, Federalism has made no exertion in that state. A plan of exertion has been laid in Richmond which extends to all quarters of the state and it is expected that at least half of the new delegation will be either Federal, or anti-administration Democrats.* * *

Madison our new President it is thought is cautiously reserving himself for events. It is said that he takes very little part in the affairs of the Cabinet and that in many cases he is hardly consulted. Some of the warmest Jeffersonians

are beginning to be jealous of him and to call him a trimmer. I was pleased with an observation made the other day by Mr. Taylor of South Carolina who is unquestionably superior to any other man from that state, he hoped he said, Mr. Madison would practice upon Mr. Jefferson's theory, i. e., We are all Federalists, we were all Republicans. The theory he said was unquestionably a good one altho he could not say that Mr. Jefferson has practiced on it himself. * * *

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

February 28, 1809.

* * * I know not whether I mentioned this fact in any of my letters. It is well known to those who read the public documents that in none of them have we any precise account of the proposals the President directed to be made to the French Government as an inducement to procure the repeal of the obnoxious decrees. An impression has gone out that the information is in the secret documents. This is not the fact, in no document public or confidential, laid before Congress is there contained any information of the proposals Gen'l Armstrong was directed to make to the French Government.

The following has come to my knowledge since I wrote last. As long ago as August last the President commissioned a certain Mr. Short formerly Chargé d' affaires, and for a time resident minister at Madrid, Minister Plenipo. to the Court of St. Petersburg. Mr. Short has not been in the United States for near 20 years, has resided the principal part of the time in France and is become a mere Frenchman. Hitherto the United States have never had any minister in Russia, and no possible reason can be assigned for sending one now unless it be to concoct measures in behalf of the United States with Alexander and Napoleon for humbling Great Britain. This appointment altho made last August was never communicated to the Senate until last week. The Senate much to their honour unanimously non-concurred it. The bill mentioned in my last passed by a majority of 81-40. I did not vote on the question the amendments made by the House have been

agreed to by the Senate. It now wants only the President's signature.

WASHINGTON, May 30, 1809.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * We have passed one bill with a view to liberate certain descriptions of foreign vessels from some particular hardships to which they are subjected by a construction given to the non-intercourse law; another bill has been this day reported purporting an entire repeal of the embargo laws, and adapting the non-intercourse to the circumstances which have occurred by the settlement with England, which I suppose will be passed in a few days.

Randolph observed the other day, that he had been complained of the last session; that he opposed every measure proposed by the majority but submitted no project of his own, and that he intended to atone for that omission by submitting projects enough. He has hitherto kept his word, and a great part of the time during the period which has elapsed has been spent in debates upon either one proposition or another submitted by him.

The proposition which has been the most largely debated, and which is still under discussion, is a resolution purporting a declaration that the promptitude and candor with which the Executive had met the overtures of Great Britain towards an accommodation met the approbation of the House. It is astonishing what a wincing this has occasioned, almost every shift has been resorted to to evade the question. It has been said that every member of the House approves of the President's conduct but that the expression of any opinion by the House on the subject is improper, that the practice of passing a formal vote of approbation of what we approve will be a fair precedent for passing a vote of disapprobation of what we dislike. It has been attempted to prevent the question from being called up and it was called up by only a small majority. Bacon has offered an amendment to Randolph's original resolution to the following effect, and that this gives farther evidence of a spirit of conciliation on the part of our Government which has at no time been interrupted: Randolph objected against

Bacon's amendment because he said it was not true in fact and went on to show at great length that the spirit manifested heretofore both by the Government and in both houses of Congress was not a spirit of accommodation but hostility, and had it not been arrested in its course towards the close of the last session all hopes of an accommodation would have been foreclosed. * * * The true state of the case is, that altho' no one as yet ventures publicly to express a sentiment of disapprobation of the conduct of the President, yet our war whoop men do not cordially approve of it. Their object was to fight and not to treat with Britain. Some of the higher toned of the Democratic papers proceed so far as to say there ought never to be peace with Britain until it was connected with the general peace of Europe, i. e., until she was humbled under the feet of Bonaparte. In general, however, a most guarded silence is observed in the Democratic papers about Mr. Madison, as much as if there was no such personage in existence, and all the praise of the happy turn which our affairs has taken is given to Jefferson and his embargo. Should one of the leading Democratic papers but sound the tocsin of denunciation against Mr. Madison I make no doubt but the whole kennel of the small fry editors would immediately set abarking. * * *

Yours affect.

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, January 2, 1810.

MY DEAR SIR:

By the mail of today I received your letter of the 25th ult. I am now at my seat in the House which is now in session by candle light.

Giles' resolutions, which without doubt you have seen, have been discussed in the House of Representatives. This is the 10th day they have been passed in committee of the whole and the question debated now in the House is about postponing them indefinitely, and the determination is to take that question this evening, accordingly all motions for an adjournment are negatived.

I cannot put this letter into the mail this evening. I shall be able probably tomorrow morning by way of postscript to inform you of the result of the question. The debate has been very animated and some as able speeches as I have ever heard have been delivered against the resolutions. I have not spoken on the subject. I have some thoughts of speaking upon the main question shall the resolutions pass, altho it is very difficult now the ground has been so often gone over, to suggest anything new. There is no doubt it is the intention of a party to precipitate the country into a war. In this particular Giles acts honestly, he avows his intention and is using every act in his power to effect his object. * * *

What I am going to add, altho not so strictly confidential but you may communicate it among your friends, but as I cannot vouch for the correctness I should not wish it to get in to a very public channel; but I was informed yesterday by a gentleman who told me that he had means to penetrate into the secrets of the Cabinet that they did not know of, that before the commencement of the session matters were all cut and dried in the Cabinet and it was concluded that the war scheme would carry in Congress, would carry without a single dissenting voice; but that the course the debate had taken and the manner in which Giles' resolutions have been opposed in the House of Representatives had filled them with the utmost consternation and they know not what to do. Besides this they are divided, and something approaching very near to enmity subsists between Mr. G[iles] and Mr. S[mith].

It is understood that some high toned war measures were debated in the Cabinet, which were to have been proposed to Congress this day, but when the question came to be decided the Cabinet were divided two by two. This referred the decision to the President's casting vote, but that he declined to decide. I do not state this as certainly correct. But this I believe that Gallatin and Hamilton, the Secretary of the Navy, have set up a strenuous opposition against all war measures; Gallatin so much so that if they take place he has signified a determination to resign his office. Perhaps disappointment may operate partially in that business. He

expected the Department of State in preference to Smith, merely on the score of talents. There is no comparison, Giles opposed him. He and Giles are not upon terms any more than him and Smith. Besides Gallatin is an old fox; he perceives that if the war scheme is not now, it soon will become popular and he is probably reserving himself for events. Should he resign his office he will no doubt join the opposition, and will be a potent adversary to the administration. Upon the whole, my dear sir, we are in a most critical situation.

Altho' I cannot join in the cry of perfidy against the British Government for not ratifying Mr. Erskine's arrangement, because there cannot be a doubt but it was made wholly without authority, still it was I believe a most unfortunate circumstance to both countries or on the part of the British Government a piece of bad policy, as it would eventually have secured all or nearly all they could have obtained by a formal ratification of their three conditions, and it must have either compelled France to have rescinded her decrees, or have brought the United States and France into collision.

* * *

Yours affectionately,

SAMUEL TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, January 26, 1810.

MY DEAR SIR:

I received yours of the 17th instant by the mail yesterday.

* * *

I should have sent you the "Spirit of Seventy Six," the editorial department of which is managed with great ability, but I spoke to the editor today and he was unwilling to furnish it on any other terms than subscription for a year, which your letter did not authorize me to engage. You will find in the [National] Intelligencer of today an excellent speech of Mr. Pitkins which will be concluded in the next, which was quite as much admired here as Mr. Dana's.

My speech will reach you before this, altho' it is most wretchedly printed, and contains nearly forty typographical errors, but will perhaps serve for an answer to some of your queries more fully than I could give in a letter.

Much has been said about the absconding of the famous insult offered by Mr. Jackson to Mr. Smith, and 5000 dollars have been offered for apprehending the runaway without success. I understand by letters received this evening by my chum that it has not taken the way of New England at least, that neither Republicans nor Federalists have been able to apprehend the little runaway urchin, and that he has conceal'd himself so completely beneath the folds of the documents that they cant get an eye upon him. What my views are of this famous insult you will find explained so fully in my speech that it is needless to say anything on that subject; but there was one view of the subject which might have been taken, which as I was against the resolutions was not so proper for me, and it was not that I heard assumed on the floor by any of its friends, i. e., Mr. Jackson was an obstinate boor of an Englishman who would do as he pleased, and would not suffer his Government to be accused of bad faith without endeavouring to repel the insinuation and this was insulting. But a greater insult still was that the British Minister should out-write the American Secretary. Had they been permitted to exchange two or three letters more he would have written him down, and what could have been more insulting to the American Government.

I have somewhere read an anecdote whether true or false I know not, but it equally answers my present purpose. It related to the noted French Protestant minister in Holland, Peter Turien, and Morris Boyle. Boyle had published something supposed and perhaps really of an irreligious tendency. Turien applied to the Burgomaster of Amsterdam to silence Boyle from writing, and in the meantime he would answer him. It is true the uncourtly Dutchmen would not comply with his request. They were willing that Boyle and he should measure their quills together and refused to interpose.

But our Government seems to have borrowed a precedent from this or something like it. First Jackson is silenced from writing, and then Secretary Smith writes a long answer and sends it in the form of a letter to Mr. Pinkney. Perhaps I may have given you a clue to find the insult. Our Government

being so ready to take fire at the suspicion of an insinuation of the shadow of an insult, is almost enough to make one believe that they know the fact to be true, that Erskine had no instructions and were for that reason so ready to suspect Jackson of insinuating it.

This circumstance reminds me of a little story of a French captain in the revolutionary war, whose name was Nudang. He had killed his friend in a duel or otherwise in his own country, and was on that account ill at ease in his mind. He was one evening alarmed with the voice of some bullfrogs and imagined he heard his name repeated. He was startled and asked what made the noise, when answered that it was the bullfrogs, "How the d—l", says he "do you frogs know my name is Nudang?"

But a word about Mr. Erskine's arrangement. Altho' unauthorized yet as the British government would have obtained substantially all which they could have obtained had the three conditions been ratified, I have thought that good policy might have led to the ratification. It is now tolerably well ascertained that the disavowal turned ultimately on a mere point of honour. The clause put in by the Secretary into the correspondence on the affair of the *Chesapeake*, that a farther punishment of the officers would have been more for his Majesty's honour, was considered as an affront and upset the whole business.

With respect to peace or war, I can give you little information only that I think the war spirit is abated. * * * Col. Troup told us yesterday that the landed interest which was the principal interest of our country were not going to war for the mercantile interest, they had magnanimously offered that once and the mercantile interest would not go with them, and they would not make the offer again. But they would go to war for the country's honour meaning I suppose for the insult offered to Robert Smith. If this war could be so confined between Mr. Smith and Mr. Jackson I should be willing that they should both retrieve their honour, and I should not be so anxious about the success, as according to the laws of chivalry the honour of the country would be saved whatever became of Mr. Secretary Smith; but to involve

the two nations in a war on this point of honour I think would be carrying quixotism too far. * * *

We have had a long discussion upon the new commercial restriction bill, or American navigation act, commonly known by the name of Macon's Bill as he was the chairman of the committee who reported it. It at length passed to be engrossed for a third reading yesterday, and it is to be read a third time tomorrow. The vote for engrossing was carried by a majority of 17, 55-72. Two Federalists were absent by indisposition one by accident. Mr. Pickman who was against the bill and five Federalists voted for it viz., Gardenier, Key, Swoope, Mr. McBride and Stanly, two fled the question viz., Mr. Lyon and Ross of Pennsylvania. Had they remained in their seats it would have made no difference in the state of the vote as one would have voted for and the other against it. Had the Federalists been all present and all voted against it, it would have been a close vote. Probably the vote on its final passage will not vary much from the vote on engrossing, tho I heard of one viz., Mr. Swoope expressing doubts still. I have rarely seen such a discordancy of opinions upon almost any subject. Some voted for it because they thought it would keep us out of war, at least keep off the adoption of more violent measures, others I believe because they could not carry anything more hostile but in hopes that Great Britain may retaliate in such a way as to make a war popular. * * *

Gallatin I am persuaded has great influence in Congress, and whatever may be his motives, I believe the country to be indebted to him for checking that war spirit which at the commencement of the session might have been easily fanned up into a flame.

A resolution passed the House of Representatives on motion of Mr. Whitman Dec. 6, to call upon the Department of State for information about the various captures by different nations since the year 1806. This information is communicated but said to be incomplete. These reports contain no list of captures and condemnations by our great enemy England, who has had tenfold the opportunity to injure us that all alternatives combined have had. It only said in general terms that several captures have been made on various

pretences but they have had no official information. There is a report of about 50 captures by Danes, the poor Danes for whom we have expressed so much sympathy; about 20 condemnations there remained as partly cleared and partly undecided; 48 condemnations have taken place in the French prize court besides burnings at sea, captures of whom are no official returns, and sequestrations almost without number; still it is England who is our only enemy. A valuable ship belonging to Gen. Smith and Co. of Baltimore has been taken on a voyage from Batavia to Japan. She must have been taken as a Dutch vessel sailing under Dutch colours, because the ships of no other nation are allowed to trade to Japan, and it is probable the property was Dutch. This however will be considered as an item to swell up the list of British enormities. * * *

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, February 5, 1810.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * After the passage of the famous American Navigation Act, alias Macon's absurd foolish bill, the principal subject which has engaged the attention of the House has been the annual appropriation bill. This is a subject which in general creates no discussion. But two items in the estimate for the expenses of foreign intercourse called forth considerable discussion. One that it provided for a Minister to Madrid to the Court of King Joseph; no doubt in favour of this appropriation it was urged that altho the affairs of Spain were unsettled and there was no view of sending a Minister there at present, yet should there in the course of a few months be a settled government, such as was acknowledged by the civilized world, it might be wise to send a Minister there, and the President ought to be furnished with the means. On the other hand it was urged that under the head of contingencies for foreign intercourse he was already furnished with the means of sending a Minister on any emergency wherever the good of the country required it, but that if we made specific appropriation it was in fact telling the President that he ought in the opinion of this

House to send a Minister to Madrid, and that it was not left merely to his own discretion for him to act on his own responsibility. The appropriation was struck out but straws show which way the wind blows. The construction given to the Constitution relating to foreign intercourse is this, the President may send a Minister where he pleases and he is furnished with the means to advance the outfit out of the contingencies of foreign intercourse, but he may be obliged to recall him in two ways, by the Senate refusing to concur in the appointment as in the case of Mr. Short, or by the Legislature refusing to make an appropriation for his continuance.

The mission to Russia was freely commented upon and an attempt made to strike that item out of the appropriation. This was unsuccessful.

Macon's bill has not yet passed the Senate, nor has there been any discussion on it which can ascertain its fate. Some think it will pass others that it will not. It is certain that it will not pass without opposition. I asked Mr. German, a pretty highly toned Democratic Senator from New York, two or three days ago when their House would take the subject up. He said he did not know, for his part he would be glad it was laid up in a dry dock, and he added some observations which I thought just. He said he would wish to see a system adopted on which the nations of Europe could not retaliate in any other way than by a direct act of hostility, but that they, particularly Great Briatin, could retaliate on the provisions of this bill should it become a law, in such a manner as to render it ruinous to the United States, and yet we have no pretence to complain of it as an act of hostility. Whether the intention of the movers of this measure is peace or war, the bill is I think nearly equally impolitic. If either the intention or expectation is war nothing can be more impolitic than to throw the property of the United States afloat on the ocean, without a single gun to protect it as contemplated by this bill. If our expectation is peace I think it is high time we had done with this everlasting system of irritation, this scolding paper warfare. * * *

Yours affectionately,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, February 12, 1810.

The newly made Dutchess, of——the family of Napoleon is now in the City with her hopeful offspring, whether to familiarize the citizens of America with the view of their future sovereign or for some other cause, I cannot tell, but yesterday a number of carriages were seen standing at the door said to belong to the heads of department and other gentlemen some of Congress who came to pay their respects. Altho' she is domesticated under the same roof with myself, at least in the same block of buildings, I have not as yet done myself the honour of waiting upon her. Altho' she was undoubtedly the lawful wife of Jerome Bonaparte yet by accepting the title of Dutchess, the usual stile of a French king's mistress, it can be considered in no other light than as consenting to be considered in the rank of a mistress and can be viewed in no other light. I could wish that both she and her offspring were safe in West-phalia. Various reports are in circulation about a projected alliance with France. I can't believe they are all true but certain it is that not only Democratic papers, but some members of Congress begin to speak openly in favour of such a measure. Not any however who can be supposed in the secrets of the Cabinet, or who have ever been guilty of being at the bottom of the powder plot. Whether they blunder out their own crude notions or are employed by others to feel the pulse of the public, time must unfold. I hope the spring elections to the northward may speak a language which cannot be misunderstood.

Yours,
S. T.

WASHINGTON, March 8, 1810.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * I have observed for about a week past something like a revival of the war spirit in Congress. I thought in the first place that it was only the ebullition of a day but I find it still keeps up. The cause I can only conjecture but I have hit upon the following. A rumour has been circulated grounded on a communication received by an arrival at St. Sebastians,

that Bonaparte, or at least his organ the Minister of the Interior, in a communication to the Legislature had stated that there was a prospect of an immediate adjustment of all existing difficulties with the United States. * * * The whole exposé of the French Minister of the Interior is now published from a Paris paper. It is very lengthy and every word which it contains about American affairs is comprised in this single sentence. Our relations with the United States are suspended, but being formed by mutual wants they will soon resume their course. * * *

For something more than a week past the war spirit, which had in a good measure subsided has appeared in some measure to revive. Conjecture has with me been busily engaged to find out the cause, and has hit upon the three following and you may take which ever you think most probable, or you may form another. Mine are, 1, the probable disappointment in the case of Macon's bill, *ergo.*, some measure more hostile must be substituted because something must be done; 2, the gladdening news of a hopeful accommodation with France so that in that event we will have to fight England alone; or 3, a message of the Governor of Canada to the Legislature in which he states that the most critical eye can see nothing insulting in Jackson's correspondence, and that whether we have peace or war depends upon the forbearance of His Majesty, and urges the Canadians to make vigorous preparations for defence.

For the last two days and at several times before we have been engaged upon a bill which was originally no more than a prolongation of the law for the detachment of 100,000 militia, but has now assumed a new shape and becomes if it passes a foundation for a standing army in disguise. A proposition as great as can be obtained on these terms of the 100,000 is to consist of volunteers, who are to engage to serve for a time not exceeding nine months after arriving at the place of rendezvous. This armament supposing it to be raised and embodied and never wanted, will cost about \$100,000 at least, probably a million and a half. I think however that very few volunteers will be raised under the act. I believe very few of the hardy yeomanry of New England will be willing to volunteer in a wild goose chase to Canada for nine months after arriving at the

place or rendezvous at five dollars per month, and no other bounty than their muskets and accoutrements when discharged. * * *

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, April 27, 1810.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * The session of Congress will close on Tuesday next or May 1st, which perhaps is almost the only thing they will have done in a session of 156 days, which will meet the general approbation of the nation; but in separating they will have the consent of all political parties in the nation.

* * * A more completely divided, bewildered disorganized set of men hardly exists. It is difficult on any question to say where the majority is. The Cabinet is I believe equally bewildered with Congress; the Senate and the House of Representatives act in such entire harmony that when the one says I will the other says I wont. No majority in one House can calculate on a majority in the other, nor do I believe the President has really any majority that he can calculate upon either. There is I believe this difference between the last and present President. Jefferson by a system of intrigue and low cunning managed the party. M[adison] is a mere puppet or a cypher managed by some chiefs of the faction who are behind the curtain. Altho' this state of things can be productive of no good to the nation it prevents much mischief.

Our Demos have found something of a check in the minority and a still more powerful one in the Senate. Some of our members are almost weeping over the embargo, non-intercourse, &c. they want something to carry home to their constituents but I believe we shall adjourn and go home and leave no embargo, no non-intercourse, in fine no commercial restrictions of any kind and no additional duties.

Macon's bill No. 2 is like to meet in the Senate with the fate of the first, and the volunteer army bill will get its quietus in the same way. About thirty members of our House and perhaps about an equal proportion in the Senate would be willing to take measures which would inevitably plunge the nation in a

war. Because France burns our ships, confiscates our property, and imprisons our seamen they want to fight Great Britain; and now notwithstanding all the enormities of France advocate as the only proper course, the removal of all restrictions with regard to France, and the adoption of strong hostile measures against England, which they say will enable us to settle with Bonaparte on favourable terms, and will soon compel Great Britain to accede to such terms as we are pleased to dictate. * * * But I shall dwell no longer on this topic.

Enclosed I send you a subscription paper for a work which I began many years ago, but which I have finished during the leisure hours which have been afforded me at Washington by my public employment. * * * I have been strongly urged not to defer the publication. I have accordingly issued proposals. Whether this is any more worthy of the public eye than anything I have heretofore published is not for me to say but it is certainly one on which I have bestowed more time and attention. * * *

Yours affect'ly,

S. TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, December 17, 1810.

MY DEAR SIR:

Since I arrived here which was on the 5th instant I have heard very little from New England. * * * You have seen the President's message, and have read his proclamation opening the intercourse with France. This proclamation appeared to me to be premature at the time it was issued, but when I came to view the documents on which it was founded there appeared to be even less grounds for its issuing than I had suspected. So far from receiving any assurance that the sequestered property would be restored or even made a subject for future negotiation, Gen. Armstrong was in effect told in so many words, that there was no such intention to restore it. It had been taken by way of reprisal and the law of reprisal must govern. Besides the repeal of the decree itself was to be suspended on a contingency that both the French and American Government must be persuaded at the time would not happen, i. e., Great Britain was not only to withdraw her orders in

council but to announce her proclamation blockades, yet on this contingent repeal, without any prospect of a relinquishment of the property within Bonaparte's grasp. The President issues his proclamation and if these blockades are not relinquished, an object which was never contemplated at the time the non-intercourse law was passed, the non-intercourse so far as respects Great Britain is to be renewed on the 2d of February next, and even should everything wished for respecting blockades be conceded, the relinquishment of the principle of the impressment of British seamen on board American merchant vessels can be brought in as another very convenient demand.

The occupation of West Florida by the United States will be also another very convenient ground of quarrel with Great Britain. It is well known that the American Executive set up a claim to the territory between the river Perdido and the Mississippi included in the purchase of Louisiana. It is equally well known that neither France nor Spain acceded to that claim of the United States, that the French Government declared that it was neither included in the cession of France to Spain, by the Treaty of St Ildefonso, nor in the cession of Louisiana to the United States by France. When the United States attempted to purchase that territory from France, and for that purpose appropriated \$2,000,000 in secret session, it was a virtual if not explicit relinquishment of that claim. This proved abortive and Spain has been since in the quiet possession, but probably that which gives the United States a more colourable title at this time is that Spain was then the ally of France and the enemy of England. Now the tables are turned. Spain is the enemy of France and the ally of England.

* * *

My book is in the press and progresses slowly. I expect it will be published in the spring probably as soon as April. I am desirous of collecting the subscription papers. If you can enclose the one in your hand to me in this place it will perhaps be as easy a way as you can send it. I rest

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, January 14, 1811.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * The whole system of non-importation, non-intercourse, embargo, Jackson's insult, &c. &c. all proceeds from the same root. A sample of this impartiality I shall state in an expression I heard fall from a man who is a member of Congress, and who in the direction of letters addressed to him has Honorable prefixed to his name says, "I always have hated the British nation. I hope I shall eternally hate them, should I ever have any children the first thing I would teach them would be to hate them."

My ideas of the Florida business I gave you in my last. You no doubt know before this that we have been in secret session. We have spent seven days during the last and preceding weeks immured in conclave within the gloomy stone walls of the Capitol. Were the padlock off my lips I could unfold a tale which would be far from having a tendency to dispel the gloom or to lessen the prospect of war. Should you hear in a short time of a project on foot for the forcible occupation not only of that part of West Florida west of the river Perdido, for which the United States has set up a kind of a claim, but of the whole of East and West Florida, it need not give you much surprise. * * *

The Bank of the United States I believe must come down. I thought until within a few days the charter would be renewed, but my opinion is altered. In addition to the individual distress which this will occasion it will embarrass the fiscal operations of the Government and deprive them of one great facility of obtaining loans.

A non-intercourse will I presume take place with Britain agreeable to the President's proclamation, and I understand a bill is ready to be reported to revive all the provisions of the famous Force Act to carry it into effect, which will cut up the little remains of our revenue by the roots. *Quem deus vult perdere presu dementat* should the destruction be confined to the administration. Amen. But I am fearful it will prove like the man's fever which when it went off carried the patient with it. But I shall say no more upon this disagreeable subject. I

have written more than I intended when I began altho' I have omitted several things which I intended to have mentioned.

I shall however add some religious intelligence of a pleasing nature. By the way, John Randolph has not appeared to take his seat in Congress during the present session. Passing thro' Philadelphia on my way to this place I called and spent an evening with the Rev. Dr. Alexander formerly of Virginia with whom I became acquainted when he made the tour of New England. He informed me that his congregation in Virginia was in the vicinity where Randolph resides, and his Meeting House about a mile distant. He had then a brother named Richard who was married. John resided with his brother and they improved their large estate in common. Richard Randolph is since deceased and John still continues to reside in the family with the widow. During his residence in Virginia and for several years after, John was one of the most open avowed infidels he ever knew, and none of the family or connections ever attended public worship of any kind. But of late, he has had this information from his successor who he represents as a very worthy man, there has been a hopeful revival of religion both in that congregation and others in the vicinity. Among others Richard Randolph's widow has been a subject, and has become hopefully pious and has joined in communion with the Presbyterian Church. The day in which she first joined in communion John attended meeting for the first time and was much affected, and has attended steadily ever since, and spends much of his time in conversing with the clergyman on religious subjects. He is outwardly much reformed, particularly with respect to profane swearing to which he was much addicted; and he professes to be convinced that there is some thing in religion which he had no idea of; that this effect was not confined to him but has had a powerful effect in checking infidelity in that quarter. * * *

Another reformation in a person of higher rank I have heard of, in a way which leaves me no room to scruple its truth, i. e., the Prince of Wales who probably either now is or will soon be the King of Great Britain. His notorious profligacy of manners has long been matter of sincere regret to all the serious people in the nation, but of late for nearly the last two years his

home instead of being a scene of riot and debauchery has become a house of prayer, and the friends of religion are his chosen companions. Common fame says he has turned Methodist, but in the Episcopal Church that is the cant name of all the distinguished friends of evangelical religion.

This information I had from the Rev. Mr. Lawrie of this city who had it by letter from his friends in Europe. In the midst of all the political troubles with which the world abounds, and with a full share of which we are at present threatened, religious prospects as it respects the church at large rather brighten. The Lord no doubt will carry on his own work.

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, February 4, 1811.

DEAR SIR:

* * * Concerning the decision which has taken place on the bank question in the House of Representatives I can give you no information. The subject is again taken up in the Senate, but the bill after having undergone all the cutting and carving the several tinkers will bestow upon it, will come out such a kind of thing as neither the stockholders would receive, nor the real friends of the bank vote for. If argument could have had any weight, enough was said on the subject to have convinced the most sceptical; but argument and eloquence are as much thrown away in the House of Representatives of the United States as it would be on the lofty pillars which surround the dome in which we assemble.

Some of the Democrats showd an independence on the question which did them honour. In that number I mention Mr. Fisk of New York and Mr. McKee of Kentucky. Mr. Sheffey in a speech of nearly two hours long argued the cause with sufficient ability to have convinced every member of the House, if reason or argument would have done it; and at the close told the House that his sentiments had been made upon an investigation of the subject, and that when he began the investigation he was strongly prejudiced against the bank. It is a matter of astonishment that every representative of the great commercial towns, with the exception of Mr. Quincy and

Mr. Pickman of Mass., voted for the indefinite postponement. But this may in some measure account for it; they are the representatives of a few popular demagogues who aided by the rabble carried the election. The substantial inhabitants in New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore, for either wealth or standing in society, are Federal.

The clamours however of those they consider as their real constituents begins to reach their ears. A deputation of five from the principal mechanics in Philadelphia, and all good and true Republicans is come on with a petition it is said forty yards in length full of signatures. I have not seen it because it was presented since the decision took place in the House of Representatives and it was therefore preferred to the Senate. The distresses of their constituents begin to make some of them uneasy, and it is said that the representatives from the city of New York have received some pretty broad hints that their persons would hardly be safe in the city.

Poor Mitchell acted a most contemptible part in the business. He was one of the committee of 17 to whom the business of the renewal of the charter was committed, and in committee voted in favour of the bank. During the time when the question was depending and before the decision, he had expressed his opinion perhaps a dozen different ways, and on the question for postponement he voted in the affirmative. Immediately after the vote was taken he went to Mr. Taylor of South Carolina, a gentleman who has lately exchanged a seat in our House for one in the Senate, and who is known to be in favour of the bank, and asked him if the subject would not be brought up in the Senate; he rather thought if a bill should pass the Senate he would vote for it when it came into the House of Representatives, he had not fully made up his mind. This however is nothing strange for Mitchell. I dont know as he ever made up his mind on anything. His vote is merely from the impulse of the moment and can never be calculated upon by his friends beforehand.

The interference of the State Legislatures had perhaps some influence. Virginia Legislature interfered. But it is said that state is likely to suffer severely from the dissolution of the bank, and that the people begin to speak pretty loud a language

different from that of their legislators. The motives of Pennsylvania Legislature are easily seen through. The mother bank can be chartered as a Bank of Pennsylvania and this will give that state an additional controul over the money transactions of the nation. The motive of the enlightened majority in the Legislature of Massachusetts if capable of being influenced by motives is only one, a blind devotion to the Executive of the United States.

It is said however and believed here that so far as it respects the President they are mistaken. He is individually in favour of the renewal of the charter. Had he possessed half the independence of an old clucking hen and only recommended the subject to Congress, it would have been renewed, but he was overawed by a powerful party against the bank and dared not recommend it. The truth is as a President he is but little better than a man of straw and has no independence in anything.

Concerning the non-intercourse that is now in operation agreeable to the President's proclamation, with all the evidence staring them in the face contained in the official communication from our Chargé d'affaires at Paris, the bill reported by Eppes will not be taken up at present; and I expect that a bill will be brought in this morning to suspend its operation under the proclamation and relieve the property from siezure which must now be daily coming in from Great Britain and her dependencies. Before the arrival of the news of the siezure and sequestration of the Orleans packet and the *Friendship*, there appeared to be an unexpected backwardness in calling it. Eppes gave notice that he would call it upon a certain day, when the day came he barely mentioned it but readily gave way to another subject.

Whether this arose from secret intimation that all was not right in our relations with France, or from a conviction that the country would not bear the enforcement of the monstrous provisions of that bill, I am unable to say. I believe however they did not very much like to meet a discussion on the subject. A motion was made on Saturday by Eppes to have the bill recommitted to the committee on foreign relations, when enquiry was made for what purpose, he declared it to be to pass a

short provision for the purpose of relieving the property of our merchants from seizure, as from the present complexion of our relations with France, it could not be deemed expedient to carry the non-intercourse into effect. Randolph moved to amend the motion of his colleague by adding that the committee be instructed to bring in a bill to repeal the law of the first of May, but under which the President's proclamation was issued. This brought on a debate which continued the whole day and the House adjourned at a late hour. Randolph's motion was negatived and Eppes' motion for the recommitment of the bill adopted. Some curious circumstances developed in the debate. Numbers appeared to be willing to go on with the rigorous execution of the non-intercourse system with all the evidence which we had staring us in the face of the non-revocation of the Berlin and Milan decrees. Indeed, they would not believe our own accredited agents who asserted that Bonaparte had not rescinded his Berlin and Milan decrees with perfect good faith. Such is the blindness and infatuation occasioned by party prejudices; hostility to England and devotion to France is the pole star which directs all their motions.

Mr. Burwell of Virginia who is one of the most sensible candid men of the party expressed himself with even more than his usual candor upon the occasion. He observed that it could be little less than infatuation to attempt to carry the non-intercourse into operation against England in the present state of our relations with France, when we had no evidence that the Berlin and Milan decrees were practically revoked. It must be confessed that for several years past Great Britain had showed no disposition to injure us, and had in fact done us very little injury, and that for himself he did not entertain a doubt but if the Berlin and Milan decrees were really and not merely nominally rescinded, a revocation of the orders in council would follow of course.

With respect to another thing mentioned in your letter my not more frequently occupying the floor I can give you the following reasons as it respects the present session. 1, Because speaking in the House is to me such an effort as I do not wish to make only when the occasion imperiously demands it. 2, Because speaking has no more effect upon the House than

water poured upon a rock. If ever there is a change of measures it must come thro' the people exercising the elective franchise. So long as the blindness of party prevails and the people consider all they have to do in elections is to select men to strengthen the hands of the present dominant party, there is little hope from Congress. 3, Because during the present session there have been but few subjects in debate except the bank one which I had not investigated so as to be able to do justice to it. The plan has gone silently on. But few subjects have been debated on the floor of great national importance. Had the non-intercourse been brought up, however, I was making preparation to go at large into the discussion of it, and intended a two or three hours' talk on the floor. I still design it should a discussion take place, but as it is not likely it will take place, I am throwing some of my remarks, particularly on the propriety of lugging in the blockade of May 1806, into the discussion with Great Britain at this time into the form of a newspaper essay which may possibly reach you. This single point if it was properly understood must sink the administration in the view of every man of candor in the nation. I have endeavoured to explain it from official documents. But my time is gone and before you read thus far your patience must be exhausted, I therefore subscribe

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, February 25, 1811.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * The United States Bank is gone its fate for the present session, and probably forever was decided either on the Wednesday or Thursday of last week in the Senate by the casting vote of the Vice-President. What the effects of it will be on the community I cannot tell, only one thing I shall remark generally. The more the country is oppressed by the absurd foolish proceedings of our own Government, and the more they are kicked and trod upon by Napoleon, the more do they appear to rise in their affection to both. In this respect we resemble what is said to be the conduct of a Russian wife; the more frequently and severely her husband beats her the

stronger does she suppose his affection to her. He has confiscated American property to the amount of from 20 to 50 millions of dollars. He has told the Americans that he cannot trust them, that they are without honour without energy and without honour. He has told us indeed that his decrees were repealed and would cease to have effect on the first of November. Still every American vessel that had arrived in the ports of France on the 25 of December, was put in sequestration and all which should arrive before the second day of February, would also be sequestrated until it was made manifest to his Imperial and Royal Majesty that we would cause our rights to be respected by England.

A bill for that purpose has been two days under discussion, not the long bill reported by Eppes some time ago consisting of 16 sections. The mammoth provisions of that bill were too much for democracy itself to swallow. The present bill is reduced to three sections; the first goes to release from the operation of the law all vessels which departed from a British port before the 2d of February; the second goes to empower the President, on condition of Great Britain revoking or modifying her edicts, to declare the fact by proclamation, when the operation of the law was to cease; the third was to revive certain sections of an old law.

This day and Saturday were spent in various modifications or attempts at modification; some intended to relax and others to make it more rigid, but the majority was stedfast against all alterations or variations from the report of the committee. I expected instead of writing to my friends we should have had to set it out. With this expectation I left the house about four o'clock, with a view to go to my lodging distant about half a mile to get some refreshment, and return with a view to take the floor to express my sentiments as soon as a favourable opportunity; but in the meantime Mr. Potter of Rhode Island moved an amendment to the bill, which brought their French feelings to the test. I not being in the House at the moment cannot tell so particularly what it was, but it related to making a demand upon Napoleon, not only for rescinding his decrees not only nominally, but in good faith and making compensation for spoliations. The friends of the bill were thunderstruck and

altho' previously determined to set out the night as the lamps were all put in order for the purpose, an adjournment was almost immediately obtained until tomorrow, and consequently I am at leisure this evening to write to my friends.

I suppose before another adjournment takes place the bill must be passed. I calculate to express my sentiments tomorrow. A caucus I suppose will be held tonight and the course to be pursued determined on. I don't believe that five men in the House believe the decrees to be efficiently repealed, yet because the President has not issued a counter proclamation, this of November the 2d is evidence which cannot be set aside even by mathematical demonstration, the motives for pressing this business in the present situation of our foreign relations.

Some will stick at nothing to show their devotedness to Napoleon and would even consent to declare war against England tomorrow. Others perhaps a greater number expect that the regency which is before this time appointed in England, will produce a revocation of the orders in council, and the law will consequently be inoperative against England but it will save the honour of the President, and that if England does not revoke her orders France will carry into complete effect the repeal of her decrees. I wish this may be the case but I have no expectation that either the [Milan] decrees or orders [in council] will be withdrawn at present, or not until the two nations are better disposed to make peace with each other; and that all our blustering will only tend to make us ridiculous and accumulate distresses upon our own country; but I fear that calamities more severe than ever we have yet experienced must be felt before a deluded gulled multitude will have their eyes opened. However, I try to comfort myself in this that Jehovah reigns, and neither the rage of democracy nor the tyranny of Napoleon will be permitted to proceed farther than is ultimately for his glory. My book printing is progressing slowly the publication is more tardy than I expected. * *

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

COLRAIN, April 23, 1811.

MY DEAR SIR:

I received yours of March 25th in due season. Having occasion to set out this morning to Northampton to attend the Supreme Court as a witness, I thought I would write a few lines to carry with me and either put it into the mail there or seek out a private conveyance. The printing of my book is finished, it was closed this day week. * * *

My ideas of the proceedings of the last session of Congress and of our foreign relations generally I have explained in the pamphlet I sent you which I trust you have received. This has drawn upon me as I expected a sufficient quantity of Democratic abuse. The difficulty is they know not how to evade the force of facts stated and they have no other resource left only to be angry at the writer.

What conclusion to draw about the present movements of the Government I know not. To suspect them of anything like an honest intention to accommodate matters with Great Britain would I fear be to hazard a conjecture without any foundation, but several things indicate as if the fact of another Erskine negotiation was to be acted over again. It is now pretty well ascertained that notwithstanding our progress in a system of irritation, Great Britain does not see fit to take it in so much dudgeon as to make war upon us, and it will not do for our Government to make war against her. The great object of our Government is to quarrel just as much with Great Britain as is absolutely necessary to keep out of a war with France. The perfidy of France in relation to the promised repeal of the decrees has been so notorious that it will not do to push the hostile system any farther at present.

It is now given out that as soon as the new British Minister arrives a negotiation will be commenced, and it is expected such proposals will be made as will be acceded to and Congress will be summoned to do away the present system.

The change in the Cabinet by the introduction of Mr. Monroe augurs something I cannot tell what, at least it is a triumph of the Gallatin over the Smith party. Smith and Gallatin I believe will not fully answer to the character once given by an Indian of two gubernatorial candidates in the

State of Connecticut. I think their names were Talcott & Woolcutt, one he said was a very honest man but little cunning, the other a very cunning man, but little honest. I suspect the portrait of the latter will do for Mons'r Gallatin, but not more than half of the other portrait will suit Bob Smith. The change however will do very well to pave the way for the farce of negotiation. Other things rather show this to be a measure contemplated. One is there seems to be at present no inclination of our Government strictly to execute the non-intercourse law. Bonds are merely taken to abide the decision of a court, for property coming in in violation of the law. But it is hardly thought that an attempt will ever be made to bring the causes before a court. I have also been credibly informed that some influential Democrats, such as cannot be supposed to be entire strangers to the secrets of the cabinet, begin to hold a language which altho Federalists well knew to be correct and sometimes ventured to hint at, but which a few months ago would have given a man the name of a British partizan, at least if not stigmatized him as corrupted with British gold, i. e., that it is impossible in the present state of things; that Great Britain should accede to the wishes of the United States particularly with regard to the blockades and the right of search for seamen; that she might just as well accede to such terms as Bonaparte would dictate at once; that within six months more than one half of her seamen would be on board American ships. I am likewise informed that for several weeks past the "National Intelligencer" has changed its tone, and the complexion of the late publication is calculated to prepare the public mind for an accommodation. These things induce me to expect that something like the farce of an accommodation will be commenced on the arrival of Mr. Foster. I know not whether he is a man of rank suited to the ideas of our rulers. They know him well as he has already resided a number of years in Washington in the character of Secretary of Legation. While residing in that capacity I have seen him often. He came to the country in 1804 and returned in company with Mr. Rose in 1808, and was thought by people acquainted with him to be a man of much more prominent talents than Mr. Erskine. In additon to this I find of late

that he is a son of the Dutchess of Devonshire which perhaps may give him some advantage as a man of rank. * * *

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, November 7, 1811.

MY DEAR SIR:

I arrived here the first instant without any remarkable occurrent on the road. Both Houses were organized on Monday, and the House of Representatives in particular was unusually full for the first day of the session. * * * Nothing has as yet been done only read the documents. Today it was moved to pass a resolution to appoint the standing committees but it was objected to and the appointment was postponed until tomorrow, because the Speaker being himself a new member and so many members of the House were new members, the Speaker cannot be supposed to have sufficient information to select proper characters to put on the several committees, because the business of the committees has not as yet been arranged in caucus. That will be done between this and Monday, when the names of the persons composing the several committees will appear upon the journal. There is little danger however that some of them can be worse arranged than last winter. Had the names of all the members been thrown promiscuously into a box, and been placed on the several committees as they were drawn out, some of them at least would have been more respectable chairmen than those placed in that situation by the Speaker. The business however itself of the Speaker selecting at pleasure the characters composing the several committees is in itself a monstrous feature in our Government. It depends upon nothing in the Constitution but has hitherto been the usage of the House. It is not so in the Senate there the committees are chosen by ballot. * * *

It has been extremely sickly in the city particularly in that part of it where the Capitol stands. Some apprehensions are entertained that it is as yet hardly safe residing here. But no new cases have appeared for two or three weeks excepting that

of Mr. Hamilton, Secretary of the Navy, and I understand that he is so far recovered as to be expected abroad in two or three days. The number of deaths has not been great compared with the number of the sick but many with whom I have been acquainted resemble walking ghosts and some are gone. For the two last sessions there has been no death among the members of Congress during the sessions, and but one that I know of during the recess, Mr. Cox of New Jersey. This is an event which never happened before and it will be strange if it should again. * * *

Yours affect'ly,
SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, November 30, 1811.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * You will have heard before this can reach you of the departure of Gov. Harrison's army in the Indian country. It is said to be even worse than represented in the printed accounts. Many men of considerable high standing in society have lost their lives, and Gov. Harrison with the shattered remains of his little army is obliged to consult his own safety by making the best of his way home. The question is what business had he there. The impression is that the whites were the aggressors. A fanatic who stiles himself a prophet has obtained an almost unlimited influence among the Indians. He is rather hostile to the whites particularly to these encroachments, and had manifested some uneasiness. The intention of this expedition was to chastise the prophet into submission, with that view the army marched within less than a mile of his town, so carelessly as to be surprised in the night when buried in sleep. The conflict was dreadful and by far the heaviest loss fell on the whites. This movement among the Indians is all charged to the influence of British agents perhaps without any foundation.

You will probably hear also before this reaches you of the affray at Savannah in which two French privateers were burnt. The affray began about some girls of bad fame. The French sailors being more accustomed to deeds of blood than the Americans, made use of deadly weapons and one or two Ameri-

cans were killed and some others mortally wounded. The citizens became exasperated and no doubt countenanced, and probably assisted in burning two privateers which had been in to refit and were just ready for sea. After repeated discharges of firearms on the part of the French they were overpowered and committed to prison. What will be the end of it I know not. Had such an outrage happened in the Northern States it would have been charged to an attempt of the Federalists to dissolve the union. I suppose however the government of the United States will make ample compensation to their good friends the French for the loss of the privateers.

For three days the House has been engaged in the discussion of a contested election between John P. Hungerford sitting member and John Taliaferro who contested the seat. The *prima facie* evidence rather went to show that Hungerford was unduly returned, but he said by obtaining a little time not more than six weeks, he could establish the validity of his election. The question was shall he have time. It was determined in the negative and he was expelled from his seat, and Taliaferro admitted. Without taking into view the matter of right there was something so glaringly partial and unjust in the manner in which the one was expelled and the other admitted that it ought to excite a blush on the cheeks of every man who voted for it. The Virginians were divided exclusive of the Federalists, Randolph, McCoy, Clopton, Hawes and Pleasants voted in favor of Hungerford. Gray would have voted in the same way had he been in the House, but some suspicions had gone out against Hungerford as if he had some leaning towards the sin of Federalism, and he had been very active and was the chairman of the grand committee called the Munroe committee which endeavoured to promote his election in opposition to Madison; Taliaferro had clearly the advantage of him in the point of art and management. I think it probable if Hungerford has any hankering after Federalism he will be confirmed in it by what has happened. He cannot certainly have a very high opinion of the fairness and impartiality with which the decision was made, and it probably will have some influence upon his friends as he is a man of great personal popularity in the part of the country where he lives.

Yesterday our grand committee on foreign relations made a report in part. After a long and laboured report in which they went on to curse the British by bill, book and candle, and roundly asserted the repeal and inoperations of the French decrees, they gave us a string of resolutions six in number of which, as nearly as I can recollect this is the substance. To fit out and man all the public ships of war; to allow the merchants to arm in defence of their lawful commerce; to immediately fill up the regiments of the present existing army and prolong the enlistments; to raise an additional army of 10,000 men enlisted for three years; to empower the President to accept of the services of 50,000 volunteers, and to empower him to detach any portion of the militia for such service as he might deem necessary; and by information received in an indirect way I understand, that if these measures are adopted by the House then if an accommodation does not take place within a limited time, i. e., if Great Britain does not fall down on her marrow bones and accede to all our demands, this preparation is to be used both for offensive and defensive measures. * * *

A bill fixing the apportionment of the representatives under the third census has passed the House of Representatives. It is still before the Senate. The ratio adopted is 37,000 the worst that could be devised for the northern section of the union, as it throws almost all the large fractions on a few of the northern states. I was with many others in favour of 35,000 and I believe if the vote had not passed before many had reflected on the consequences it would have carried. It is thought that the Senate will yet alter it and send back the bill. 37,000 gives a total of 170 Representatives; 35,000 would give 181, of the difference nine members would be added to the states north of the Potomac and only two to those south, viz., to the north Mass'tts, New York and Pennsylvania two each; New Hampshire, Vermont and Delaware one each; to the south Virginia, and Georgia one each. Huzza for the three fifths. I shall when I have time to make the calculation send the amount of Representatives added by this black representation. * * *

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, December 2, 1811.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * Some calculation about the amount of the slave representation you will find enclosed, they are I believe substantially accurate. The famous resolutions are now before the public being published in the "National Intelligencer" of Saturday. Some think they are rather manufactured for exportation than for home consumption being destined to go out to Europe in the *Hornet* to flatter France and terrify Britain. I believe the Federalists are determined to make no opposition to them and even to vote for some of them. Perhaps some of them will vote for all.

A very pretty communication has been made by Mons'r Gallatin to the committee of commerce and manufactures, on the subject of devising ways and means for carrying the non-importation against Great Britain into more complete effect. I hope it will be printed. I understand an order of the committee has been taken for that purpose, but I think it not improbable at a little caucussing between the time when the order was taken in committee, and the time in which the proposal was to have been made to the House today, the vote may be reconsidered or it may be overruled by the House so that the printing will be prevented.

I had a statement of these provisions from a very intelligent member of the committee, Mr. Tallmadge. I wish I could state the substance of them as he stated them to me and others. The provision to prevent the introduction of British goods from Canada by land into New York and Vermont, and on the sea coast by the way of Passamaquoddy on the northeast, and St. Marys on the frontier of Georgia. I do not recollect distinctly enough to state them but the provision for the prevention of the introduction of the produce of the British colonies by the way of St. Bartholomews is so pretty and ingenious that I could not forget it. He proposes in the first place that an American consul shall reside at St. Bartholomews, whose duty it shall be to give certificates of origin *a la mode de Francaise*, stating the place where the cargo on board was produced. These certificates taken in connection with the usual legal manifest of the cargo are to be considered as *prima facie* evidence. But in

addition to this the collectors shall appoint two men as tasters of the rum in particular, as that is the article which is principally expected to be introduced who are to declare upon oath their opinion of the original of the cargoes and as *de gustibus non est disputandum*, the oaths of these tasters, the mere pimps of the collector, are to overrule the usual evidence of the manifest and the certificate of the consul. Whether this provision will be adopted I know not. Some even of the Democrats do not hesitate to vent their indignation against it.

Mr. Tallman of Maine, I understand, says it is worse than the Boston Port Bill and that the people neither can or will submit to it. That it is in the first place to treat the merchants as a parcel of scoundrels and to make the collector who is interested in the condemnation and his pimp sole witnesses and even judge in their own cause. Mr. Tallman however is like to prove a very refractory Democrat. I question whether they get him to go easy in leading things. Several Federalists who have conferred with him consider him a pretty correct politician.

The committee of commerce and manufactures have as yet come to no decision on Mons'r Gallatin's communication. I understood Mons'r Gallatin gives it as his opinion that a perseverance in this system will be the salvation of the country, and obtain for us every thing we want. I am of a little of a different opinion from Monsieur. I am rather of the opinion that it would be a more important step towards the salvation of the country if such scoundrels as he is were expelled from all participation in and controul over the counsels of the nation forever. I can scarcely conceive of the situation of a nation more degraded (unless perhaps we except the French nation subject to the upstart Corsican tyrant) than to be obliged to submit to such infamous projects officially proposed, or perhaps rather imposed upon them by a rascally foreigner, an outcast and outlaw from his own country.

Such a direct attack upon the liberties of the people as was contained in a communication made last winter in relation to the framing of that infamous law, and that now made with relation to carrying it into execution would in many countries bring the mover to the block. The boldest and most profligate Minister who has been in England since the reign of Harry the

Eighth would not have dared to make the proposal. But we in this boasted free country, who from the height of our elevation look down on the inhabitants of all other nations as slaves, tamely listen to such degrading projects from foreign reptile without a single mark of disapprobation. His proposal of last winter it is true was not adopted. Whether it will be now I know not but our situation is sufficiently degraded in being compelled to listen to it. I believe there cannot be a doubt but this same crafty unprincipled Genevan is an important component part of the *primum mobile* which sets all this machine in motion which is degrading and ruining our country.

As I mentioned in my last whether we are to have war or peace I know not, but in all changes there is one object of which a certain class of politicians never loose sight, but step up to without finching, i. e., to destroy the political importance of the northern section of the Union. This can only be done permanently by destroying commerce. If this object is affected we may say with propriety that the northern states have done it for themselves. If the New England states and New York had been but united in defence of their own great intrests, the scheme would be relinquished. But instead of that their voice is completely neutralized, and while all ought to be united in defence of their great intrests in the national scale, one party employ themselves in singing hozannas to an administration which is marching up with a firm step to their ruin; and denouncing and endeavouring to bring down their opponents with the cry of Tory, British faction, British party, enemies to their country, &c., &c. Herein I believe they go beyond the wishes of the prime movers. They dont wish for one Federalist less or more in the northern states. They have artfully played off the parties one against the other, and as long as they can keep them so nearly balanced their point is gained. There is nothing they so much dread as union in the north by whatever name it is called, whether Federalism or Democracy.

But as they cannot have confidence that this discussion will be perpetual, they wish while it lasts to destroy commerce which when done will seal our insignificance in the political scale.

Our merchants and men of capital must either abandon the country and become landholders and slave-holders in the western or southern country, or they must vest their capital into manufactories; our sailors must be converted into cotton spinners; our laborers in various mechanic arts and our enterprising young men, but without fortunes to begin with must become literally heavers of wood and drawers of water to the wealthy. One part of the community, viz., a very few may arrive at the enviable situation of the rude magnificence of the ancient feudal barons, and the great body of the people be degraded to a situation but little different from that of slaves and vassals of feudal times; or but little above that of a West India or South Carolina negro.

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, December 14, 1811.

MY DEAR SIR:

As the proceedings of Congress are now assuming a complexion which must excite a considerable degree of public interest. I must trouble you with another letter altho I have not long since written twice. In my last I observed that the war resolutions of the committee of foreign relations had been called up and passed in committee of the whole with little or no discussion, and had been reported to the House, and the first resolutions acted upon and passed with only 11 dissentients. On Monday the subject was again called up, when the debate may be said to commence on the second resolution. Several members of the committee on foreign relations got up to explain what was the object of the committee or at least a majority of them. That their object was a preparation for war, and actual war if Great Britain did not speedily redress our wrongs; that before the rising of the present session of Congress it was their view that war should be declared, and that as the second resolution for raising the additional army went to test the principle, they should consider those who voted for that resolution as giving a pledge of concurrence in such ulterior measures as were necessary in that event.

Randolph has come forward in his strength against the resolutions and the war scheme generally, in a speech of some thing more than two hours which for eloquence and extensive information has been rarely surpassed. Several days have been spent in answering him altho he is still unanswered. We have had as is usual much war talk and much breath spent. Canada and Nova Scotia have been taken and British have been driven from the continent. It is true there have been some interruptions in this career of victory. Several members have come forward and declared that altho they would vote for the resolution, because they considered the country in a critical situation and that some cautionary preparations for war were necessary; yet they solemnly protested against the idea of being held by any pledge for ulterior measures by the vote which they should give. Some of them particularly, Mr. Nelson of Virginia, went at large into the consideration of the question of peace or war, of the probable consequences of war, of what we had to gain and what we had to loose by the measure, in a strain of eloquence which carried terror and dismay into the ranks of the war party.

Yesterday there was a pretty loud call for the question, and indisposition was manifested to resist all motion of adjournment till the question was taken. Two tryals for adjournment were unsuccessful; after the second tryal Randolph arose and observed that it was painful to him to be obliged to address the House at that late hour, and that altho he would endeavour to compress his observations as much as possible, they would nevertheless be very long and probably very tedious both to himself and the House. He was interrupted by another call for adjournment which was carried by a majority of one. I suppose they were a little frightened by the threatening of a long speech at that late hour. We will have Randolph's long speech to hear on Monday and another is expected from Mr. Sheffey.

The Federalists have as yet taken no part in this debate and intend to take none, and even to vote with them as far as they can without a sacrifice of principles. Some of the northern papers I find begin to censure this conduct in the Federalists, and perhaps you are of the number, but I am convinced more

and more every day that this is the correctest course. Experience has taught us that in all their attempts at debate for several years have tended only to consolidate the party. The cry of British party, and British influence has been managed with great adroitness and success. This has stript them of this weapon, and now they have not to plead either Federal opposition as an apology for the continuance of the restrictive system. Besides I know not but war itself would be less evil than the continuance of this restrictive system. This silence has carried dismay into their ranks. I never saw them apparently more disconcerted than at present. They appear to have lost all confidence in themselves and appear as if they could go neither backwards nor forwards. What will be the end of these things I know not. The most High rules. It is I believe found that the Cabinet, at least a majority of them, is not in favour of the war system. The apportionment bill yet hangs upon a disagreeing vote of the two Houses and it probably will be lost.

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, December 28, 1811.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * I shall now give you a sketch of what is going on about a next President. It is well understood that there was no cordiality subsisting between Mr. Monroe and the administration. Monroe has no doubt been bought into administration measures by the gift of the Department of State, and an encouragement probably supposed to amount to something like a promise of the Presidency after Madison has done with it, i. e., after another four years. Gen. Armstrong was also known to be disaffected. He was said and believed to be preparing a publication, and was said to express himself pretty freely in conversation. Silence is imposed both on his tongue and his pen, by the promise of being the next Vice-President, so old George Clinton has to go to the wall. Thus you see we can manufacture Presidents in the Cabinet and among their friends for several years to come. When the designating principle was introduced into the Constitution I

observed on the floor, when the subject was under debate in Congress, that it would reduce the election of President to a mere farce or system of intrigue. Whether these observations were prophetic or not they appear to be completely verified, and no doubt the system will be when a President has had the office as long as he wishes, to make it over to some one of his friends. But as mining and countermining are both the order of the day so there is so much of that, that Madison is trembling in the palace, and Monroe, Gallatin & Co. are trembling, perhaps not so much on account of the danger of the country as of their places.

All confidence seems to be at an end among our patriotic Republicans and no one knows who to trust. Suffice it to observe that a rival is likely to appear to dispute the possession of the palace with James Madison, which a day or two ago I heard characterized in this way in conversation. I perceive a star arising in the east, on which I shall fix my eyes for the direction of my conduct. How he meant the observation to apply I cannot tell as the conversation was not directed to me, and I did not hear the connection. The speaker was a conspicuous Virginian not a Federalist, and not a warm administration man. I need hardly inform you that the star is Dewitt Clinton. It is suggested that nothing but a coalition between the northern Federalists, particularly of Mass'tts and Connecticut is wanting to ensure his election; that that will ensure nearly or quite all the votes north of the Potomac. The co-operation of the Federalists in New York is calculated on as certain, and if a coalition takes place between the Smith party Maryland is carried. Federalists here reason in this way, the prospect of a Federal President nominally so is hopeless. Clinton is ambitious and is not really the man of their choice, but he is known to be an enemy to the anti-commercial system and wants nothing but to be put in a situation in which he can act to set it aside. Should he obtain the Presidency, to which it is pretty well ascertained he aspires, he will then have no ulterior object to excite his ambition and it is thought he will make a good President. If he comes in in part by Federal support he will be an impartial. At all events we shall get rid of this political, commercial incubus which is

sacrificing all the best intrests of our country. At least we find that it has already struck terror into the very centre of the palace, and all the thorogoing Democrats of the south are trembling for fear of the loss of Virginia influence.

It is generally thought that the only thing that will save the administration is the repeal or modification of the orders in council, which may lead to some accommodation with Britain; that if these orders are not withdrawn, that whether we have peace or the present quasi-state, or war, the administration must sink. To go to war they dare not. To continue at peace after all their blustering and swaggering without a repeal of the orders in council, will immediately turn all who have thought them sincere in their clamour for war against them.

To continue this present state of things they are persuaded will not be much longer borne. Poor fellows they are in a sad dilemma. After the means they have used in bringing the country into a scrape or even a situation of eminent peril, which has been so little promoted by the partial garbled, high coloured, and many of the false statements contained in messages and documents, wont you join me in pitying them? As their only forlorn hope arises from a repeal of the orders in council, every art is now used to impress a belief, that that is an event which will take place as soon as the Prince Regent comes into full royal power, the restrictions on the regency being to expire about the first of February.

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, December 30, 1811.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * I must again remind you that what I write consists of conjectures, in part at least, or as we say in N[ew] England guesses. All idea of war is abandoned and there is no doubt but the idea that has got hold of the friends of the administration is that there is no doubt but the orders in council are or will soon be withdrawn.

On Saturday evening I went to the Capitol to deposit some letters in the letter box. I sat down for a few minutes and

was joined by two of my Democratic brethren, and according to my usual custom when I was with them entered into a social chat. I asked one, a plain honest man from New Jersey the common question, "What news?" He replied, "None," or something to that purpose, then corrected himself; "I think we have good news from England. I hope we will have no war." It is expected the orders in council were about to be repealed. I asked him what was his authority. He replied not officially it is true, but we have account that they were become very unpopular and that many who advocated them heretofore were much opposed to them, and were very desirous that a repeal would take place and had no doubt upon the subject. I replied, "I want some better authority than mere extracts of letters from Liverpool," which is the great emporium of the American commerce, and who are no doubt sufferers by the stagnation, and sincerely wished them repealed, but they knew no more and perhaps not so much about the operation of the British Government then a member of the minority in Congress, quoting him to myself in particular, who merely stated an opinion from the impression of the moment upon the measures of our Cabinet which from a different impression I was obliged in two or three days to contradict. "The London Courier" is the Government paper, or if you please the "National Intelligencer" of Britain shows me some paragraphs from that paper to that effect, and altho they don't come in an official form I shall think them deserving of some credit; but a hundred extracts of letters from Liverpool I should not esteem worth a straw. I soon found my friend had not examined the subject to that extent. His impressions however came from headquarters.

A plan is prosecuted most industriously to have it believed in this country that Government has encouragement, that the repeal will take place, and I should not think strange if the extracts said to come from Liverpool are fabrications by Americans either there or here, to keep up the farce if possible until after the Presidential election is fixed. Another part of the plan, either Government or their agents have taken unwearied pains to induce American merchants, particularly Federal merchants who have influential acquaintance in

England, to urge the necessity of repealing or modifying the orders in council as the only means of avoiding a war between the two countries. Mr. Pinkney has been a faithful labourer in this business. These letters which are numerous have been sent from Charlestown, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, Boston and no doubt from other places all under the notion of private letters, yet all written by the indirect agency of Government.

This I state as more than conjecture it has become a fact of public notoriety. I had this information from a lawyer of high standing with whom I am in habits of intimacy. Indeed we are now inmates at the same family. He read law at the Temple in London. He had for his fellow student a gentleman now high in office in the British Government, who had since honoured him with his correspondence. It being known that he had many friends in England, he was applied to to write upon the subject of the orders in council, and had written to that gentleman before he knew anything of the plan which was organized, not suspecting himself to be employed by the Government, and that hundreds nay thousands of letters, were procured and sent in the same way.

What I add is a little more conjectural but I believe not altogether unfounded. I believe if the truth was known, a correspondence is carrying on with Mr. Foster of a very different complexion from the correspondence which has been published, and that he has been induced to write despatches to his Government as well as private letters to his influential friends which are numerous to the same effect, and I should not be surprised if an Erskine game was playing with him. Mr. Foster is a very pretty young gentleman. But his appearance it too much that of a boy for a Minister Plenipotentiary. He looks as if he was better calculated for a ball room or drawing room, than for a foreign minister. He is probably older but his appearance does not indicate more than 25.

The plan undoubtedly is to bluster and look, and talk big, and put on the appearance of energy by war speeches and armies upon paper; and to help the farce, state legislatures are passing war resolutions in the state legislatures echoing the proceeding of the general government, which no doubt are

carried thro by means of agents who have received their cue from the Cabinet, while it is probable that proposals sufficiently low and humiliating are made in private and transmitted by Mr. Foster. If these succeed and a modification is obtained, the appearance will be kept up here that it is our energy, our firmness, &c., &c., &c., which has intimidated the British Government and the popularity of the administration will be again raised.

They are no doubt playing a deep and desperate game. All is staked on a single throw. Should it be unsuccessful I believe the administration falls. But as I heard Mr. Sturgis observe the other day, The devil is always kind to his own, and he does not know but he is again about to help them at a dead lift.

Since I wrote sometime ago, at least during the last week, we have had a very thin House, not much business had been done of a national kind. We have however passed what is called a gagg rule, that is a rule which enables the majority to put a stop to debate by a call of the previous question, whenever the minority happens to say anything which the majority does not wish to hear. I believe however it will not have much effect this session, as I think they will use some caution in applying the rule, and the Federalists seem determined to answer them in the most mortifying of all ways, but one to which the gagg rule does not apply, i. e., by keeping profound silence. * * *

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

N. B. I find some strictures in the northern Federal papers upon Mr. Grundy of Tennessee. Mr. Grundy is the most dangerous man in Congress for the administration and perhaps no man defies them more. He is a man of whom you must form a very erroneous idea if you compare him to a northern Democrat. But he has taken up the idea once expressed by Quincy, that the administration can't be kicked into a war and he is trying to kick them into one. He told me a day or two ago that he had no expectation to effect it, but they should either fight or quit talking about it, or he would expose

them in their true colours. There is no doubt but so far as respects the state of Tennessee he can effect it, for he manages that state at pleasure.

WASHINGTON, January 20, 1812.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * With respect to public proceedings in Congress I need say little. I shall therefore confine my letter principally to things which you will not so readily find in the public journals.

We now want nothing to have an additional army of 25,000 regulars, only the men and money to pay them with and furnish the necessary supplies. But the enlistments will I presume not be completed in five years. It is ascertained that there are not blankets enough in market to afford 25,000 men one each, and on rapping at the door of the treasury, it sounds empty, empty, and the sources to replenish it are few and scant and daily diminishing; and to conduct us in that war, on which it is said we are about to engage, if our Secretary at War, who is the responsible war minister, possesses talents for the place he holds, he had a happy talent at concealing them. Perhaps he intends to bring them forward in time of need; he sees no use to impair them beforehand by too violent exercise with the internal situation of a country like the United States at present, with as I may say the whole head sick and the whole faint, with a cabinet weak, divided and without decision a Legislature without confidence in the Cabinet and split into twenty parties more or less.

Should it be our misfortune to be involved in war, which may Heaven prevent, it requires no spirit of prophecy to anticipate a war of defeat, disaster, mortification and disgrace. With respect to parties in the House of Representatives I can particularize four, altho' they may perhaps run into each other, i. e., one man may be attached to two or more of these parties, i. e., the war, the anti-war, the scarecrow and the anti-administration parties. By the war party I mean those who sincerely aim at war as the result of the present measures. By the anti-war I understand those who not only oppose war but all preparations for it. By the scarecrow which is the

Presidential party I understand those who vote for war measures without any sincere intention to go to war, but in hopes that Great Britian may be intimidated by the din of our preparations to relax her system so that they will eventually come off with flying colours. The anti-administration parties contain a part of all the other parties unless with the exception of the scarecrow party, and will I believe constitute a majority of the House, those whose ultimate object is real war; if they cannot obtain it I believe will be nearly all anti-administration men, and I have no doubt that a number perhaps not a small one, vote for war measures not so much with a view to actual war or with a view to intimidate Great Britain, as to throw an odium on the administration that they may be the more easily subverted.

These are not Federal intrigues. However respectable Federalists may be as upright and downright politicians, whenever they have attempted anything like intrigue they have proved themselves to be mere bunglers at the business. Intrigues are now in hands who understand the business better. Suffice it to say that Madison is rapidly sinking in popularity with all parties, and I very much doubt whether he has a majority in either House of Congress. Besides the powerful current from the north in favour of Dewit Clinton, I have lately heard from a source which I consider as entitled to credit, that opposition is powerful in Virginia particularly among the Democrats on the floor of Congress. Giles' hostility is well known and it is said that there has been a great coldness between Jefferson and him ever since the breach between him and Bob Smith. The Smith party is said to be very powerful in Virginia. Unless Great Britain should repeal her orders in council, and an impression should be made on the public mind in the United States that the repeal has been the fruit of intimidation carried by the din of our warlike preparations, an event of which the prospect is daily diminishing, I believe Madison's Presidential career will close with the 3d of March 1813.

With respect to the war fever generally it has its hot and cold fits, and it would seem as if the President wished to regulate its temperature as a physician would regulate the

fever of a man out of whom he expects to make a profitable job. After the passage of the army bill we had a long and perplexed discussion on a bill to empower the President to accept of the services of 50,000 volunteers. Had there been any one present who with the pencil of an Hogarth could have painted the confusion and embarrassment which attended the discussion, it would make an excellent historical painting to hand down to posterity. On the seventh and perhaps the most perplexed day of the discussion Madison, as it would seem thinking that the fever was likely to subside too much for his views, communicated to Congress the correspondence between Foster and Monroe which you will find in the papers probably before you receive this. The little angry message with which it was accompanied show'd the intention to be to raise a new incitement, altho' nothing is contained in the correspondence itself calculated to have that tendency but rather the contrary. But lest the incitement should prove too great, he the next day in order to throw on a little cold water sent the other correspondence relating to Indian hostilities, which he might just as well have sent the same day.

But that which will I think throw the greatest damp upon the war fever is a communication from Mr. Gallatin. On Saturday the first before the House adjourned, I met Mr. Gold of New York in one of our narrow walks, where there was but just room for two men to pass. He clapped his hand on my shoulder and observed in a low voice and rather with an air of pleasantry, "Well, Mr. Gallatin has hitherto kept the devil under a bushel, but now he is going to show him to us." I had then heard nothing and so did not understand what he meant, but I soon after understood that Gallatin's devil meant the budget explaining the ways and means necessary to be adopted to defray the expenses incurred, and about to be incurred.

Among the items recommended are doubling the duties on imports and tonnage, a restoration of the salt tax, a land tax of 2,600,000 dollars, a whiskey tax, a stamp tax and a loan of I know not how many millions. I think this will tend considerably the martial ardor of Congress. But they have already proceeded so far that unless Great Britain relaxes and

opens the door, retreat is difficult without manifest disgrace. I can compare them to nothing bearing a more striking resemblance than to an army marching thro a narrow defile between two inaccessible mountains, until at last they arrive at a spot where the mountains shut in close together and close the passage there they must stop. Should the war fever be cooled or cured by Gallatins' report, it would be much better than to have it quenched in the blood of our citizens under the frozen walls of Quebec.

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, January 22d, 1812.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * I shall be able to send you Mr. Cheves's speech on the naval question in a few days. He has done himself honor and deserved well of his country, but whatever he may be nominally he is in reality as high a toned Federalist as ever was Alexander Hamilton. He begins to manifest disgust and coldness towards the administration. The truth is I am apprehensive that Cheves, Grundy and a few others will in the end prove enemies more dangerous to the administration than all the Federal opposition could be. They are men of too much talent, honour and independence to keep up this system of political juggling; and they have access to a numerous class in the community from which all information derived from Federalists is excluded. A Federal speech in favour of the navy will be read by none but Federalists; but Cheves's speech will be read all over the United States.

With respect to the war fever altho it has its ups and downs, its hot and cold fits, yet in the main it is I believe cooling. Gallatin's financial report which you will probably see at large by the time this reaches you, worth well opinions seem to alter a little about the taking of Canada at least the facility with which the enterprise could be accomplished. It was asserted and believed that nothing more was wanting to induce the inhabitants of Canada to flock to the American standard than to display it in Canada. That begins to be considered as

incorrect and doubts are entertained about the practicability of taking Quebec.

Some of the members who are most in favour of war measures begin to find that their war votes displease their constituents and that they will be dropt at the next election. Some companies and one whole regiment who were forward in volunteering their services, when the President's message was published in November, are now beginning to fall off and say they had no idea of volunteering to march to Canada.

In the beginning of the session the Senate took the lead in war measures. Had a bill been first originated and passed in the House of Representatives, the number would I believe have been not more than 10,000. The Senate outstripped the House and I believe the views of the Executive and passed a bill for 25,000. Now the House is toiling and sweating at their war measures and the Senate is taking their ease.

The volunteer bill passed after a long discussion in a shape equally harmless and inefficient. The Senate have laid it up to reason and are in no haste to take it up.

Mr. Madison is met on the threshold in the Senate with his first nomination for a Majoral General in the new army, who is no less a personage than Gen. Dearborn more or less. An objection is made to his appointment until he shall relinquish the collectorship in Boston. One Senator observed to me that if the collectorship was relinquished he would have no objection against consenting to ratify the nomination for a Major General if he believed the law for raising the army was to be soon repealed. But while the Senate ought to be vigorous in forwarding all kinds of preparations for war, i. e., if we are really about to have war and ought to go to war.

They are setting on foot a mischievous enquiry about the state of our commerce with France now the Berlin and Milan decrees are repealed, and the result of the enquiry is like to be that such are the municipal regulations of France, that even if the orders in council were repealed we could have no trade only on terms which must prove absolutely ruinous to every one engaged in it; so that we have nothing to induce us to go to war but our sacred honour which must, to be sure, be a sufficient inducement not only to stop all commerce, but go to

war with the only nation with which we can trade on terms of reciprocity; because she will not by a repeal of her orders in council afford us liberty to trade with a nation who will not trade with us, only on such terms as are absolutely ruinous to every one who will be foolhardy enough to engage in it.

Such is the state of the war question at present. For example a gentleman in Maryland shipped 300 hogsheads of tobacco to France, 180 hogsheads were taken for the duty. Out of the remaining 120 the shipper had to pay the freight of the whole and all charges. The voyage brought him 900 dollars in debt over and above the loss of the whole cargo. * * *

Yours affect'ly,
SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, February 6, 1812.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * Our western brethren are all redhot for war, and are very ready to vote armies, appropriate money, invade Canada &c., &c., the very measure which will put our maritime frontier in the greatest hazard. But when any measure is proposed calculated to give any protection to our sea coast, this is all useless expense, hence they were all to a man opposed to any increase of the navy; and when a bill was before the House yesterday, to appropriate one million of the many which have been appropriated this session for the purpose of completing the fortifications, and establishing some companies of light artillery to be under the direction of the President for the purpose of aiding the fortifications in case of attack, this in the view of our wise western warriors was an expense entirely needless. Some of them altho' not all voted against it. I cannot but consider the war scheme as a matter of calculation with them. War which would bring distress and ruin incalculable upon the maritime frontier, so far from injuring the western states would probably add both to their wealth and population, by forcing the inhabitants from the maritime parts of the United States into the interior. The more distressing the war on the coast the more probable would it tend to enrich and populate the western states. * * *

Yours affect'ly,
SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, February 6, 1812.

[2d letter of this date]

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * You have doubtless heard of the fate of the navy in the House of Representatives. Mr. Cheves as well as some other of his Republican colleagues did themselves honour on that question. Mr. Cheves's speech in committee of the whole at the commencement of the discussion will be published in a pamphlet. I shall send you a copy as soon as it is out. * * * As it respects war there is scarce a day but we hear on the floor of the House something said about the war in which we are about to engage, i. e., when we are ready to make a rapid descent upon Canada. But I don't believe that there are now five persons in the House of Representatives who have any expectations of being actually engaged in war. The true state of the case is that the Cabinet never contemplated a state of actual war, and they begin to be sensible that all the resolutions and pledging of lives and fortunes, by state legislatures, to the contrary notwithstanding, the United States cannot be got into a war. Our yeomanry are too busy and too happy at home to embark in a wild goose chase to Canada unless they feel a greater cause of war than at present. Various things have contributed to damp their military ardor, but among others Gallatin's budget of ways and means has a conspicuous place.

You will not naturally suspect me of having a great predilection for Gallatin yet I think that in this instance rather [than] abuse him, they have been bawling for war even to hoarseness. Now when he shows them I presume less than half the annual expenses of actual war and finds it necessary to bring up the ghost of direct taxes, whisky taxes, carriage taxes, stamp taxes, &c., &c., instead of reflecting on their own folly, they turn about and scold Gallatin most unmercifully. But I am willing they should manage their own affairs in their own way. If they are able to crush Gallatin I have no objections. I believe him to be as a Frenchman would say *un franc scélérat*.

But altho' we still cry war no decisive step is to be taken before the arrival of the *Hornet*. The following is a conjecture of mine and it may be wholly unfounded. Some enquiries are

prosecuting as to the present state of our commercial relations with France, and the result is like to prove that from the present state of her municipal regulations a trade to that country would be worse than nothing even if the orders in council were repealed. I believe therefore there is considerable calculation made upon the news by the *Hornet* both from Great Britain and France. If our Ambassador Barlow succeeds in obtaining compensation or the promise of compensation for French spoliations, and in placing our trade with that country on a respectable footing of which there is as much prospect as that when the sky falls we shall catch larks, it will do to persevere in our hostile attitude against England, if she does not repeal her orders in council. If not it may serve to cover a retreat which I have some reason to believe is contemplated.

But in the meantime a report reached me last evening after the House adjourned, that a negotiation was now going on between Mr. Foster and our Government grounded on some new instructions he has received, and that there is a prospect of an amicable issue. A second report said that Foster had proposed an arrangement on the basis of the rejected Monroe treaty, and our Cabinet it was thought would accede to it. So much credit as this may I believe be attached to this rumour, that Mr. Monroe and Mr. Foster have been frequently closeted together of late, and that a great interchange of papers and documents has taken place between them, and that there have been two or three Cabinet councils within the last three or four days.

Altho' an arrangement agreeable to the stipulations of that treaty is quite as favourable as can be expected, yet after the contemptuous manner in which that treaty was rejected, and the many difficulties which have come upon the United States in consequence of that rejection, I see not very well how, they can accede to it now without proclaiming to the nation that they are responsible for all the difficulties which have taken place between us and Great Britain since the year 1806. Perhaps they may back out this way. Madison was then in a subordinate and less responsible situation. Monroe as the negotiator will be perfectly consistent in acceding to that treaty. Eustis and Hamilton are new men and not responsible

for the act of a former Cabinet, and Gallatin will be your humble servant. Thus they may perhaps make a scapegoat of Jefferson and leave him to bear all the sin.

But to devise ways and means for this retreat is none of my concern. The Presidential election must be provided for. What may be the extent of DeWitt's interest the little man at the palace is excessively alarmed. To war to dare not go. He is satisfied that the present state of things cannot be long continued. Either war or a continuance of the present system wont unhorse him. An accommodation, or an arrangement of some sort must be made to continue at least until the Presidential election is over. As soon as that is fixed agreeable to the wishes of his present little Majesty we can quarrel again. Pretences will never be wanting. At all events if an arrangement does take place I shall consider DeWitt Clinton as the efficient negotiator.

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, February 24, 1812.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * With respect to the assertion which I have often heard here, that the nation were eager for war and that nothing was wanting only for Congress to say the word and the great body of our yeomanry were ready to take the field, in this they reckon without their host and they begin to be sensible of it. Many no doubt resemble their Representatives in Congress, they like to talk about war. Words however are but wind. In actual war there must be men and money, and both dangers and perils must be encountered. With respect to men we have a considerable army on paper, but I believe our whole effective force of the 35,000 authorized by law including the peace establishment and the additional army, the whole number actually in service amounts to less than 5000 men. The true state of the case, our country does not afford a sufficient number of idle vagabonds to form such an army, and I hear of no companies or regiments of volunteers offering their services.

But I find many of our war hawks in and out of Congress, altho' they may relish war as a feast, yet do not love to pay the

reckoning. Gallatin's budget and Bacon's report which is a transcript of it is very chokey meat. I care not how much they pelt Gallatin I believe him to be a great rascal, but in this they abuse him. Borrow, say our wiseacres, but a system of taxation to pay the intrest on loans is necessary to enable us to borrow. I believe it will be found an experience that all the ordinary revenue that can be collected in time of war, and all the revenue derived from this system of taxation will be found little enough; and probably inadequate to defray the ordinary expenses of government, and the intrest of such loans as may be necessary without contributing a single cent to the current expenses of a war. We may calculate therefore on the contraction of a debt of \$100,000,000 at least to accummulate in a five years' war exclusive of the loss of lives and property, on a system of taxation the burden of which will increase in proportion to our growing inability to pay; a war which conducted by a Dearborn, an acquitted Wilkinson, a Secretary Eustis and *id genus omne* can be only a war of defeat and disgrace but where victory would be equally ruinous with defeat.

This week Bacon's report is laid over for discussion and will probably be taken up today. It will make some wry faces in Congress, but it will cause more when the tax gatherer calls at the doors of the people, or when cattle, and it may be farming utensils, or wearing apparel, go in the report. * * *

I have and do expect that some tale will be trumped up at Washington, and circulated for the purpose to supply the place of Pinkney's celebrated private letter two years ago, and the expected repeal of the orders in council which was to do away the non-importation of last year. I did not know but the rumoured negotiation with Foster was manufactured to serve that purpose, but as that time has vanished nothing is now more likely to answer the purpose than the fair words and more fair words received from Barlow, by the *Constitution* and the [*Wasp?*]

By the by I have heard this same Mons. Pinkney speak at the House to the great mortification of his friends and disappointment of all, his manner, talking, voice, gesture, articulation, and emphasis together was incomparably the worst I ever heard. Never did the wildest Methodist preacher appear more raving.

I did not tarry long enough to form an opinion of the argument, that was by two good judges said to be tolerable. During his address to the court I passed the outside of the building, the sound was much more like the howling of a wild beast or the cry of a certain well known animal wanting its mate, than that of a human being addressing an audience. This much for Mons. Pinkney. * * *

Yours affect'ly,
S. TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, March 10, 1812.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * A certain John Henry was employed by Gov. Craig as a spy during the winter and spring of 1809, when so much uneasiness was occasioned by the embargo, to sound the inclination of the people with respect to a dissolution of the Union and coalescing with Great Britain, in the event of a war between the two countries. His correspondence while in the employ of the British Government he has communicated to the President and it is by him laid before Congress. As I shall have it in my power in a day or two to send you a copy of the whole correspondence, I shall not attempt to anticipate it by a summary. Some biographical sketches of this same John Henry, the redoubtable hero of the tale, which has come to my hand in a way which I had no knowledge when the correspondence was first communicated, may not be unacceptable. It may serve as a key to explain the correspondence when it comes to your hand.

John Henry is a native of Ireland who came to this country as an adventurer some eighteen or 20 years ago, with the advantage of a handsome person, a good education and an easy insinuating address. In company with a man of the name of Myers, who came to this country with him he entered into a connection with the Potomac and Shenandoah Canal Company, in an engagement to build the locks. In this employment they continued together until the death of Myers. Neither of them being remarkable for economy Myers died poor and insolvent and Henry after his death, found himself so much in debt that he thought best to abscond, and went to the north and after-

wards some time about the year 1798 obtained a captain's commission in the army of the United States. By the advantages of a good suit of regimentals and his person and address, he was enabled to marry a lady of considerable fortune in Philadelphia, and during his connection with the army was stationed for a considerable time in Rhode Island where he was well known. While the company which he commanded was stationed there he resigned his commission and retired to Vermont where he applied himself to the profession of the law. His wife being dead and the property he had by her dissipated, he thought fit to decamp and go to Canada, where he went filled with contempt for the United States.

He was then unknown to Gov. Craig but after soliciting him by letter for nearly a year, he obtained the honourable appointment of a spy to the United States, and spent part of the winter and spring of 1809 in Boston. On his return to Canada in June 1809 he wished to be rewarded with an office with a handsome salary, which he did not obtain and went to Great Britain, and put in his claim to the merit of important services and a reward to Lord Liverpool, one of the present ministry of Great Britain, and was by him referred back to the Governor of Canada, successor to Sir James Craig, under whom he had served as a spy, being disappointed in the expected reward, and mortified at his disappointment and stung with resentment he made the disclosure to our Government.

The House of Representatives proceeded further than the Cabinet wished on this business. They would have been contented with merely publishing, and indeed the documents were half printed in the "National Intelligencer" before they were communicated to the House; but they not only ordered 5000 copies to be printed but referred it to the committee of foreign relations with power to send for persons and papers. On examination, however, it is found that one article in the agreement with Henry in order to obtain the disclosure is, that he is to be secured from all future examinations and trouble, and probably is well rewarded out of the 100,000 dollars secret service money, and to be effectually out of the reach of future examination, it is said he was to sail this day from New York for France in the *Wasp*.

Henry according to his own story has been twice a traitor, first in engaging as a spy for the purpose of dismembering the country to which he owed allegiance, being a citizen of the United States altho' a foreigner by birth, and secondly by turning traitor to his employers. The communication appears to be dated the 20th of February in Philadelphia, but information of it was communicated as long ago as Jan. 12, by Gov. Gerry of Mass'tts, and since some time in January it has been kept back until now, so that it might be brought forward in the proper time to affect the northern elections. After all I see nothing criminal in the conduct of Gov. Craig. * * *

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, March 13, 1812.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * Henry came from Europe last autumn in company with a Frenchman, or I believe as he calls himself, a Spaniard called Count de Crillon. They landed in Boston in the month of December and became known to Gov. Gerry who gave them a letter of introduction to the President of the United States. This was dated Jan. 11. With this they proceeded to Washington without delay, and were in Washington and it is believed all this business arranged in the course of that month. The introductory letter, ostensibly written and dated at Philadelphia Feb. 20 was written in Washington under the eye, if not by the pen of Mr. Monroe in the month of January.

During the journey Henry wherever he happened in mixed company at table or elsewhere, spoke in the highest terms of the British nation, the British Government and of the very ministry which he bespatters. It is currently reported, but for the truth of it I cannot vouch, that before he made the disclosure to our Government he offered his services to Mr. Foster, probably with a view to betray him but did not succeed. While in Georgetown the Count de Crillon executed a deed to him, in the office of a notary public, of landed property in France for a consideration of 400,000 franks, probably a mutual cheat or a farce mutually understood.

When Henry passed thro' Baltimore on his way to Washington he was destitute of money, but received 100 dollars there from a friend and correspondent in New York. On his return to Baltimore he called with a friend at a bank in that city, and produced a certificate from an officer of a bank in Washington that 48,000 dollars had been deposited in that bank to his credit. On the credit of this certificate the Cashier of the Bank in Baltimore gave him drafts on a bank in New York where his business lay. This disclosure was made in the month of January and was substantially known to some members of our House as early, at least it was known that some great secret was about to be communicated, but it was kept snug until the 9th of March, partly for the purpose of being in proper time to operate upon the spring elections, and partly for the purpose of giving Henry an opportunity of escaping.

The sailing of the *Wasp* was conducted very privately. It had nevertheless been rumoured for some time; no longer ago than the first instant a member of the Cabinet told a member of our House voluntarily and without being asked the question, that the rumor of the *Wasp* being about to sail for Europe was without foundation, that it was not the intention of Government to dispatch any vessel to Europe. The gentleman who gave this information is above the suspicion of stating anything knowing it to be incorrect. The inference is that the business was managed so secretly that eight days before she sailed it was unknown to some of the members of the Cabinet. I understand that the Cabinet did not harmonize in the manner of communicating this information to the public.

This may perhaps serve for one of the blackest chapters of political juggling; 48 or, as is generally believed, 50 thousand dollars to a villain for the purpose of securing Madison's reelection and keeping down the Federalists, at a moment when poverty and the most oppressive system of taxation is staring people in the face. There are various conjectures about the purpose of dispatching the *Wasp* at this time. Among others this is one, that propositions are transmitted thro' Mr. Foster to the British Government on which it is expected an accommodation will be effected. In the meantime it is calculated to raise the irritation and clamour for war to the highest possible

pitch, in order to impress the public mind with the idea that a relaxation on the part of Great Britain has been the effect of our energetic measures; others suppose it to be to impress Bonaparte more forcibly with the idea of our hostility to Britain that Barlow may be enabled to obtain more favourable terms from him. * * *

Yours affect'ly,
SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, March 21, 1812.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * My impression from comparing a variety of circumstances [of the Henry plot] was that the business was arranged about the latter end of January, and so I believe I wrote. It is now pretty well ascertained that the money was paid to Henry on the 10th of February. The warrants were drawn in favour of John Graham Esq., First Clerk in the Department of State, one for 49,000 dollars on the secret service fund of 100,000 dollars. It is observable that the money was paid 10 days before the appropriation was made, the other warrant was for 1,000 dollars on the contingent fund of the Department of State. Besides this Henry was to be screened from all future enquiry on the subject and to have a passage from France in a national ship, and the same day in which the disclosure was communicated to Congress, Henry sailed from New York in the *Wasp* 10 days after the business was all settled and the money paid. Henry is made to write from Philadelphia as if this was the first disclosure, and as if it was made of his own mere motion without either fee or reward. I have nothing farther to say of the turpitude of this business, it speaks loud enough for itself. * * *

I heard the embargo scheme was abandoned, that the caucus at Martling's which is the place of meeting for the Madisonians in the City of New York had taken pains to send a special messenger to warn the Government against adopting that measure as it would ruin the Madisonian interest in the state of New York. The truth is it begins to be ascertained that even if a declaration of war comes to be carried in the House of Representatives it would be lost in the Senate. The calcula-

tion is that there would be a division in the Senate 16 to 18, and as many as three or four of the 16 are considered as doubtful; and they think that it will be better not to bring forward a declaration of war than to bring forward one and not succeed. Poor Jimmy Madison has brought himself into a sad hobble.

There is not a doubt entertained but the great pole star in the view of which he shapes all his measures, is his re-election to the Presidency for the next four years. When he made his war message at the commencement of the session about armour and attitude and all that, it is pretty well understood that he did not mean war he meant only to bluster and talk about it. A number of his friends who themselves seriously intended war took him in earnest and urged on preparations even farther than he wished. Finding or at least beginning to suspect that he was not in earnest I believe serious thoughts began to be entertained of abandoning him. In order to secure the support of that party he is thought now to have come pretty much into their views, but what he has gained on the one hand he is likely to lose on the other, and in case of war he will it is thought lose New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and perhaps more. In a word peace or war. * * *

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, March 26, 1812.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * Yesterday we were employed a considerable part of the day in hearing Gov. Wright deliver a long speech on his extravagant bill for the recovery and indemnification of American seaman. A bill so extravagant that I hardly thought ten men in the House would vote for it. I say we, I did not hear the speech myself like many others I left my seat. When the House is not in session I employ much of my time in reading and writing. As the warm weather approaches I shall grow homesick. The season at present is very backward and cold for this climate.

You mention that you had not received a copy of Henry's precious documents. I sent it I believe on the 13th. Should

it have miscarried I could send another but I believe you have seen them all in the Hartford papers. I became more and more convinced that the whole is a forgery, but all the concern we have with Henry is as a witness and if he is a credible witness, and he must be viewed so by the administration, or they never would have given him 50,000 dollars for his deposition. His testimony is very honourable to the Federalists and but little so either to the Democrats or the administration. I have written a long letter to be spun out of nothing and shall close it by subscribing

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, April 16, 1812.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * As respects the proceedings of Congress we have passed an embargo law No. 2. This was published and the injunction of secrecy taken off yesterday. This is to stop exportations either by land or water to Canada. How many more of *id genus statutes* we will have I know not.

There is nothing now of any consequence in our secret proceedings since the injunction of secrecy has been taken off. We have passed the two embargo laws, and a law for varying the terms of enlistment from 5 years to 18 months on the same terms exclusive of the bounty on lands. Of late there has been an attempt made to obtain a recess for six or eight weeks, for a few days I was in hopes of its succeeding but the prospect is almost gone. The subject of a joint resolution has been referred to the Senate. The Senate has postponed the consideration of it until Monday next. Altho' a large majority of the House of Representatives voted for the joint resolutions of enquiry, yet they begin to be afraid that if Congress disperses and goes home it will tend to cause the war spirit to evaporate. I believe that will be the case, and for that reason I am in favour of the contemplated adjournment, but despairing of the question being carried I have asked and obtained leave of absence after the 27th instant. Not that I intend to leave the ground at that time if the session continues,

but I wish to be put in a capacity to settle my accounts and be at liberty to depart when I shall find it to be convenient. Some of the Federalists think it is best for us all to withdraw. * * *

I have heard today that a declaration of war was to be laid on the table on Monday. I do not vouch for the truth of the report. It is truly astonishing, if anything could create astonishment in these times, with what indifference men clothed with a little brief authority, will sport with the property, the happiness and the best interests of the millions. I have always considered a regard to the public good as a regard to the interest and happiness of those individuals of whom that public is composed, but the modern philosophy is a system of universal philanthropy and benevolence which is totally regardless of individual happiness. A great degree of that visionary regard for the public good regardless of individual rights, enters into the political views of the present day.

Our merchants have an immense property now in Great Britain, more in amount than would purchase every acre of land in Canada at a fair price, and which might have been imported in articles highly necessary in the contemplated war. The sacrifice of this is a matter of no consequence, and that which has been turned out of the country to evade the fangs of the embargo it would be more pleasing that it wont be all lost than otherwise.

Poor Madison I should be almost inclined to pity him had he not by his crooked insidious policy contributed so much to bring the country into its present situation. He was not originally in favour of actual war, i. e. a war of blows; he wanted to have a war of commercial restrictions and if possible destroy our commerce with Great Britain, but there was one pole star to which he directed the whole of the political course, i. e., his own re-election. He thought no doubt that the best way to secure this thing was by joining the war party. He has accordingly come into their views and is driven by them like chaff before the wind. The embargo I am led to believe was not a Presidential measure but was in some degree forced upon him by the committee of foreign relations, but in my opinion the way he has taken to save himself will ensure his destruction.

Dewitt's prospects are said to brighten. I have not time for details and it is believed that in case embargo should be followed with war it will loose him Virginia itself. * * *

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, April 26, 1812.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * I think not more than two or three at the most of the New York delegation can be wrought up to vote for war. New Jersey is tumbling and halting and with the boisterous D. R. Williams is thought to be shivering in the wind. Certain it is that since his last return from South Carolina his proceedings have been much more moderate and gentleman like than at the commencement of the session. No man shows more disgust than he at the failure of the question for a recess.

The affairs of our nation are now managed in rather a singular way. You will say of this I have not the means of knowing. I grant it but as a New England man I have the privilege of guessing and I believe my guess to be not far from the truth. A junto composed of some 5, 6, 7, 8, or 10 in both Houses but particularly of the House of Representatives manage the affairs of the nation at pleasure. Since I have had any experience in public life I have generally found that the President had it in his power to command a majority in both Houses. It is so now nominally, and indeed at any time a President would find himself in an awkward situation to know a majority in Congress was against him; but our friend Madison never was remarkable for firmness or for having a decided opinion of his own. At present his all in all is his next election. This violent party has obtained a complete ascendancy over him. If they have any favourite measure in view and find it difficult to command a majority of the House of Representatives in favour of it, they have nothing to do but in the first place to cram it down the President's throat and get him to recommend it to Congress and then there will be weak men enough to make a majority.

Apropos of the state of New York. It so happens that that state is likely to suffer much more under the operation of the

embargo than any of the other states. During the winter vast quantities of wheat were conveyed from the interior to Troy, Albany and other towns on the Hudson and was there purchased at a high price on account of the state of the European market. This could not be transported to New York for exportation on account of the ice on the Hudson which continued later than usual. The embargo has arrested it in the hands of these purchasers many of whom had expended their all, and all the accommodation they could obtain at banks and hundreds if not thousands must be eventually ruined. A number of petitions have been sent on for relief either by a repeal or modification of the embargo law. These petitions occasioned considerable debate and at last were disposed of in a manner which adds insult to injury, i. e., the consideration of them was postponed until the 20th of July next.

This will not have much of a tendency to calm the feelings of men already in a state of irritation. A Col. Selden, an influential Madisonian was one of the bearers of the petitions. He had a conference with Mr. Monroe and some others of the heads of departments. They told him a number of things about the fate of the petitions which they probably knew at the time and which he soon found out afterwards not to be founded upon fact. When he saw the fate of the petitions he became extremely indignant, and among other things observed that if there was a single Madisonian left in the state of New York after his return, he would recommend him to be sent on to Washington with a petition. Much depends upon the part which New York will take. Should she assume anything like a united, firm and decided tone she would stagger the advocates for war.

One particular more I intended to have mentioned for which I have hardly left room. I understand Mr. Foster has made a communication to our Government on the subject of seamen which rather puzzles them. They have made no communication on the subject but it has leaked out. He has called for a list of the names of all the native American seamen impressed or not, who are now on board British ships of war, and has pledged himself as soon as possible after such a list is

made out and authenticated, they shall all be discharged on condition the United States will restore all British seamen on board American ships of war.

Yours affect'ly

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, May 9th, 1812.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * On Tuesday of this week we had some very certain precursors of war, i. e., if war ever comes in a number of war speeches, which were delivered on the occasion of the reference of a petition from Albany with upwards of 800 signers composed of all the principal characters of every political description. Mr. Bleecker a very respectable member of Congress from Albany and who has personally a large share of the esteem of all parties, said a number of things which were hard of digestion. He told them that his constituents and the people of New York generally could not, nor would not submit much longer to have their dearest rights trifled with in the manner proposed in the disposal of that petition; that it would not be many weeks before they would speak in thunder, such as that House would be obliged to hear, that he hailed the approach of the auspicious moment which would put an end to a system of theory and experiment which had disgraced and almost ruined the country for the last seven years, and the evils it has inflicted on our bleeding country would recoil upon their authors. It produced a number of replies which tho' sufficiently indignant were less so than I expected.

Bleecker's character and manners are well calculated to give weight to them. He is a young man perhaps not more than 30, of fine talents and amiable manners and equally the friend of religion and sound policy. Perhaps no one speech ever made in Congress has given rise to more serious reflections in the majority. The same observation from Mr. Quincy would have excited tenfold indignation and had little or no effect. The consideration of the petition was however postponed until the 4th of July.

The House is very thin at present and there appears no disposition to press business. On Thursday the House ad-

journed not to meet again until Monday. The reason assigned was the indisposition of the Speaker. An unusual quantity of common legislative business has been dispatched, and were there a disposition to apply seriously to business the table might be cleared of all the business on it in two weeks; and the principal part of that business might without any special injury to the nation be postponed not only indefinitely, as our phrase is when we lay up business for the session, but *ad infinitum*, but there is a disposition to treat it very economically so that it may last until they are ready to bring forward their ulterior measures.

I expect the members which are now absent will principally return and that during the course of the next month the House will be much fuller than it is now. I think if a declaration of war should be brought forward, it is incumbent on every man to be at his post; for that reason I have not availed myself of the leave of absence I have had since the 27th ult. because I could not think of going home and returning, altho' so far as respects the business which has been transacted for the last three or four weeks I might as well have been at home as here, but I cannot reconcile it to a sense of duty to absent myself should so important a measure as a declaration of war be brought forward. * * *

One circumstance I had like to have forgotten to mention. Mr. Pope of Kentucky laid a resolution yesterday on the table of the Senate for a repeal of the non-importation, lay and prefaced it with a preamble stating as a reason the want of good faith in the French Emperor in not performing his promise in relation to the promise of the repeal of the Berlin and Milan decrees. There has as yet been no discussion on it nor can be according to the rules of the Senate the same day it is presented, but it will be printed and come before the public. I have heard of little said on it by Democrats of our House only one who said he thought it was premature before the arrival of the *Hornet*. But when Government finds it impracticable to make war, if they should so find it, I think it not improbable if that should be the door by which they will attempt to back out, it is not impossible but some indirect assurance is that by taking such a step as a preliminary, a door

may be opened for an accommodation with Great Britain. Whether that is the case or not, I think after an experiment has been unsuccessfully made for eighteen months to drive them out of their orders in council by endeavouring to cram a lie down their throats, in asserting the repeal of the Berlin and Milan decrees while everybody knew the contrary, it would be well enough to vary the experiment and try what could be effected by telling the truth.

The report is here that the President has ordered the American troops to evacuate Amelia Island and East Florida. Whether true or false I know not. I believe that expedition has been conducted in such a way that the Government can either acknowledge or disavow authorizing the expedition as circumstances should render expedient.

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, May 9, 1812.

DEAR SIR:

After I had sealed up the letter of this date I went to the Capitol and examined the list of the patentees who had obtained patents for their several inventions which was published last winter. I found that a patent for an improvement in the mode of rectifying spirits was granted to Osborn Parsons of Hudson, State of New York, dated June 23, 1808. The means of rectifying are not stated in the list but I presume that is the patent alluded to.

You mention in your letter your opinion that the tide begins to turn, i. e., the tide of Democracy. I hope that may prove the case here. I begin to learn that the war party is rather losing ground. If all the members were at their posts it is not certain that it could be carried. If it is ascertained that it cannot be carried, it will not be attempted. Some are getting off on the subject which I had not suspected. I have heard it hinted today that were the Virginia delegations all present a majority would be against war. Brackenridge, Baker, Lewis and Wilson are Federalists; Gray, Randolph, and Sheffey quids; and Talliaferro, Burwell, Smith, Nelson and Clay Democrats, some suppose will all be against a war.

Perhaps there are not so many who can be depended upon. Some doubts are entertained whether D. R. Williams will give his vote in favour of war. Certain it is that since he returned to Congress the last time he has been much more moderate than at the early part of the session.

I am, &c.

S. TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, May 13, 1812.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have just time to write a very hasty line to apprise you that the crisis so much talked of during the present session is now drawing nigh. I have received information from a quarter the correctness, of which I cannot question, that a proposition for declaring war against Great Britain will be submitted to the House of Representatives early in the next week probably Monday. As it is anticipated that the proposition will be made and decided with closed doors, and probably with very little debate, I am solicitous before the padlock is put upon my tongue and my pen, to inform my friends what is to be expected if it is insisted upon as is expected, that all is to be transacted with closed doors.

I believe it will not be the policy of the Federalists to say a single word in debate; a decision took place yesterday which precludes the freedom of debate altogether, indeed if it is rigidly carried into effect Congress will scarcely deserve the name of a deliberative assembly, and the people of the United States will not deserve the name of a free people. It has been an argument whereby many have controlled themselves against the apprehensions of war, that Congress could not be so mad as to declare war in the present situation of the country.

* * * It cannot be concealed that a rapid change in public opinion is taking place. This is not confined to the north and east but is rapidly extending to the south and west. I am doubtful whether there is so much as one state in the union where a majority can be found in favour of the frantic measures of the present Congress; but I believe that if they were assured that 19 in 20 of the people of the United States were opposed to these measures, they would go on regardless

of consequences. They are not without some plain presentiments of an approaching downfall. Some, and those of no ordinary standing with the party, have given pretty broad hints of this. They have said that they had power to make war, and would make it and let their successors the Federalists make peace in the best manner they could. * * *

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, May 17, 1812.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * It will be seven calendar months tomorrow since I dined at your house. I left my own the 22d, left Greenfield the 23rd, and was at your house the 24th of October and at present see nothing but the probability of being here to celebrate the 4th of July * * * Two or three days ago a Federal gentleman with whom I am now an inmate informed me that he rode in a hack with two of our distinguished war men, and he remonstrated against the war and observed that the country was unprepared and asked them why they could not defer it until another year, and in the meantime go on with their preparations, repeal the non-importation and bring some money into the treasury, and if no adjustment of our difficulties could be obtained they would be better prepared to go to war. One of them replied, before that time we will be all out of power. No, we will make the war and leave the Federalists to carry it on and make peace in the best way they can * * *

The long looked for *Hornet* has at length arrived, and brings as I expected no news of any favourable arrangement with France. Barlow's two or three treaties which he was on the point of concluding, turns out to be like the story of the three black crows, to be no treaty at all. What effect it will have upon Congressional deliberations I know not. Some are so valiant as to be for declaring war against both nations, a measure which may be considered as topping the climax of folly, others are for persisting in the hostile attitude against England and declaring war and leaving our affairs with France to take care of themselves. Others and perhaps not the

smallest number altho' they consider that something must be done to save their honour, yet they dont know very well what. I believe it will be found more difficult for them to agree in anything. * * * You have no doubt heard of the Presidential caucus nomination. Several of the voters have but little confidence in its effect. It was the effect of a sudden compromise; they felt the necessity of uniting in some body and they could agree on no one else. About one half of them would have taken as much satisfaction in depositing his remains by those of the late President as they did in nominating him for President. Gerry seems to be dished even by his political friends. * * *

Yours affectionately,
SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, JUNE 5th, 1812.

MY DEAR SIR:

Movements here are so slow that I have not yet been able to procure the copy of the patent you mentioned nor have I been able to ascertain until this day whether I could procure it or not. Finding I could not go there in office hours which interfere with those of the House being in session, I wrote to Dr. Thornton several days ago but did not receive any answer. As the House did not sit today I called at the office and found Thornton with my letter under his eye just beginning an answer. He informed me that a copy of Parsons' patent would be furnished as soon as it could be made out which I suppose will not be very soon, as he would make a good afterpiece to the comedy of *Much Ado about Nothing*. He further informed me that Parsons was not an honest man, that he was not the inventor and that the same invention had been previously patented, and that Parsons' patent was obtained by fraud. The name of the original patentee is a hard Dutch name which I forgot, but I shall obtain it and send or bring that and the copy. He wishes for the name of the person who acts either as agent for or as a purchaser under Parsons who applied to you.

Now for public affairs and I shall without hesitation divulge the great secret which every person here almost knew

but from which the injunction has not been yet taken off, that a majority in Congress has been mad enough to vote a declaration of war against Great Britain. The vote on the final question was taken on Thursday the 4th. The minority used every exertion to have the doors opened but in vain, when they could not effect this they were silent and refused to say a single word in debate. Had the question been debated openly and fairly, the discussion probably would have been a long one and so many petitions would have come in from all quarters, that they would not have dared to proceed.

I intended to have addressed the House two or probably three hours. I intended to publish my sentiments; I believe I shall do it in the form of a speech which I intended to have delivered. I expect there will be several publications. I believe the Federalists contemplate a joint publication signed with all their names. The object was to publish a manifesto stating the grounds and reasons of a declaration of war, and suppress all debate so that nothing might appear before the public in the form of argument, especially as coming from Congress against it. In this it is probable they will be disappointed.

I shall now give you some account of the state of the votes. The House had become pretty full before the question was taken. 128 members were present besides the Speaker, four have arrived since. But seven living members are now absent, 9 seats are vacant one by death and another by resignation. The votes stood 49 to 79, majority 30, the four who have arrived since had they been here would probably have ranked two and two, 51 to 81 so the majority would not have been varied. New Hampshire 3 affirmative, 2 negative; affirmative Dinsmore, Hall and Harper; negative Sullivan and Bartlett. Vermont, Chittenden only in the negative. Mass'tts 6 affirmative, negative 8; members absent, affirmative Richardson, Seaver, Turner, Green, Widgery and Carr who arrived the day before to take the place of Gannett; negative Brigham, Ely, Quincy, Reed, Taggart, Tallman, Wheaton, White; Bacon, Cutts and Bigelow absent. Rhode Island and Connecticut unanimous in the negative. New York 3 in the affirmative, 11 in the negative; three members absent,

affirmative Sage, Pond and Avery; Avery arrived about an hour before the question was taken. Bigelow of Mass'tts arrived the next day; he was detained 5 days on a water passage from Providence to New York which was the reason why he was belated. On the negative in New York were Emott, Fitch, Gold, Bleecker, Federalists, and Mitchell, Tracy, Stowe, Metcalf, Sammons, Cook, and Van Cortlandt; absent, Paulding of the City of New York, Peter B. Porter and Livingston who has accepted a Col.'s commission in the new army and two or three days before resigned his seat. New Jersey divided, 2 in the affirmative; 4 in the negative against the declaration; Boyd, Hufty, Maxwell, Newbold in favour; Condict and Morgan, Pennsylvania, all present, 16 votes in favour of the declaration, and only two in opposition Milnor and Rodman. Delaware only one member in the negative. Maryland 3 in the negative; 6 in the affirmative; Virginia 19 members present, divided 5 in the negative; 14 in the affirmative; three members absent, had all been present, the Virginia votes would have stood 15 to 7. North Carolina 9 members present, divided 3 to 6; three seats vacant. South Carolina, Georgia and the western states unanimous in favour of the declaration.

Now it comes before the Senate whether it will carry there is not ascertained. It is an unfortunate circumstance that only two Senators are absent and both opposed to war. Something will depend upon the two Senators, Smith and Giles. If they vote in favour of war it will be on purpose to destroy the administration. * * * A rumor was afloat yesterday that the Indians had destroyed Vincennes the chief town in the Indiana territory and had taken Gov. Harrison prisoner. The blame of these Indian hostilities is all thrown on the British, and this no doubt contributes to keep up the irritation. But I believe it may be traced to another source, viz., the encroachments of unprincipled white people upon the Indian lands and of this same Gov. Harrison as much as any man. The encroachments are frequently made in this way. The Indians are not very particular respecting boundaries. Two or three different tribes frequently claim the same tract of country. Agents

of the United States either authorized or unauthorized are in the practice of tampering with the tribe, which can with the greatest facility be either overawed or flattered to sell the tract on which they cast their eyes, a bargain is made and a treaty concluded, frequently with the tribe that has the least shadow of a title. The other tribes grow uneasy and make reprisals. The whole system of Indian treaties for the purchase of lands is a system of fraud and iniquity. The poor Indians have no historians to record, nor newspapers to publish their grievances or they would contain many a doleful story. Ours gives an affecting picture of their barbarities but are silent about their grievances and sufferings. I think this will be a troublesome summer on the western frontier.

* * *

Yours affect'ly,
SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, June 12, 1812.

MY DEAR SIR:

Today I walked to the patent office and paid 80 cents for the copy of Parsons' Patent so that business is closed. I have given you an account of the decision of our House so far as I know the progress in the Senate I shall mention it. The declaration which had passed our House when it was submitted to the Senate and was by them referred to a committee. The committee of 5 reported the declaration without amendment 3 to 2. In course of the discussion a motion was made to call upon the War Department for information relating to the progress of the enlistments. This was carried by a majority of two, 17 to 15, and an answer has been obtained not very flattering, all the returned enlistments do not amount to enough to fill up the old army of 10,000. A motion was then made to recommitt the declaration for the purpose of making an alteration in the principle, and reducing the direct declaration of war to the issuing of *letters of marque* and reprisal. This question was debated I believe for rather more than two days. * * *

Yours affect'ly,
SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, June 23, 1812.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * A remonstrance against the war will be published in a few days as the joint act of the minority. A committee was chosen nearly three weeks ago to prepare one, consisting of Messrs, Key, Emott, Quincy, Milnor and Pitkin. It is ready I understand for our signatures and a meeting will be held this evening for that purpose. As the Congress of the United States appears to have been left to themselves, or rather to have been judicially blinded in madly attempting a declaration of war, so it would seem as if they were deprived of all that share of common sense which God had originally given in the manner in which it is like to be conducted.

As if it was not enough to be at war with Great Britain we must also be at war with Spain; a resolution has been introduced which has produced the report of a bill which will be discussed this day, to enable the President to take immediate forcible possession of East Florida and that part of West Florida occupied by Spain with particular allusion to Amelia Island, St. Augustine and Pensacola. For this the trade to Cadiz which is so offensive to Bonaparte must be sacrificed. This however is *entre nous* as it is still with closed doors. Another resolution on which it is probable a bill will be reported has been submitted for the purpose of prohibiting all commerce in neutral vessels during the war. This will cut up the small remains of our commerce by the roots. * * *

I shall not anticipate remarks which you will find more at large in my printed speech when it comes to hand. Symptoms begin to appear as if it was the intention to crush all opposition to the war by strong measures. Tarring and feathering has been threatened as the mildest treatment. Some serious riots have taken place in Savannah on account of certain resolutions which you have seen published which were forwarded to Congress; and you have probably seen some of the most respectable citizens ventured to remonstrate against them and it is a matter in dispute, whether a majority voted for them at the time, but the opposers of them some of the most respectable citizens of Savannah have been threatened with tar and feathers. The rioters have as yet been disap-

pointed in their attempts. They seized upon a Mr. Mitchell, an able and independent editor of a newspaper for the purpose of tarring and feathering him, but he was rescued out of the hands of the mob before he received any other damage than the pumping a little water upon him. The editor of the "Federal Republican" of Baltimore has also been threatened with tar and feathers and I heard yesterday, but for the truth of it I dont vouch that he had absconded; a Federal printer in Alexandria has also been threatened. A first object will be to silence the Federal press, threats have been thrown out in many places, and even on the floor of Congress they have not been spared.

It is a lamentable state of society when the most valuable American citizens are not only calumniated but subjected to foreigners without any one American feeling, and many of them fugitives from justice in their own country, as is the case in Baltimore and other places, but more lamentable when the grossest outrages are countenanced by men whose duty it is to repress them.

I cannot give you any information about the fatal catastrophe of the assassinating of Mr. Percival but should the truth ever come to light I think it will be found to have proceeded from the same source with the attempted assassination of the Emperor of Russia. Mr. Percival was by far the ablest Minister in England since Mr. Pitt, and for that reason peculiarly obnoxious to the destroyer of nations as well as to our rulers in this country. I cannot think that the maniac by whose hand he fell was the original contriver of the assassination. The riots in England and the assassination of Percival are all parts of the same plan, and what would you think if the same men who made such a rout about the fictitious Henry plot, were at this moment paying an annual pension to Cobbett for stirring a spirit of opposition in Great Britain? But such is believed by many to be the fact. Intelligence has been received from England five days later than the death of Percival. Expectations were entertained that the orders in council would be revoked. But it is to me doubtful whether the United States would abandon the war even if that was done and everything conceded which they have heretofore made.

Many I know have expressed a determination never to sheath the sword until Great Britain relinquishes Canada let her make what other concessions she pleases. Should some of their future enterprizes be showered with success it will no doubt strengthen that determination; but I understand the prospect of a first conquest has obtained a little check already. It was determined to attack Fort Malden from Detroit as soon as war was declared; but I understand that intelligence has been received yesterday that Detroit is more in danger from Fort Malden than the latter is from Detroit. Instead of being garrisoned by about 200 men as was supposed, the amount of troops stationed there are 2700 a much greater force than the United States have at Detroit. An unsuccessful skirmish or two or a long period of inactivity, will soon run down the war and change the tone of our war-hawks.* * *

Yours affect'ly,
SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, July 2d, 1812.

DEAR SIR:

I have this moment received the copy of Rutter's patent. It comes charged with \$1.20 which makes \$2 for the two. I shall leave Washington on Saturday. As the travelling is good, I hope to be in season to reach the stage which reaches Greenfield on Friday the 10th instant. * * *

Yours affect'ly,
SAM'L TAGGART.

N. B. I have this moment received a number of copies of the address a copy of which I shall immediately enclose. I have also received the balance of my intended speech which I enclose.

WASHINGTON, Nov., 12, 1812.

MY DEAR SIR:

I write to let you know that I am once more in the great city in good health, pleasantly situated in company with Mr. Davenport and Mr. Sturgis and lady of Connecticut, and Mr. Wheaton of Mass'tts.

We have heard the President's message smooth, jesuitical, abounding with erroneous statements and false colouring, as usual this with the accompanying documents I send you. The President seems still disposed to prosecute the war altho' evidently at a loss for even a plausible reason for carrying it on.

* * *

I waited with some others on his little majesty yesterday for the purpose of paying the usual complimentary visit at the beginning of the session. I could not find that there was now any point of difference which was not got over or in a way to be got over, only merely the mode of ascertaining who were British seamen. The point of impressing real American seamen never was insisted on, on the one hand, and that of protecting British runaways by the American flag, appears to be given upon the other. * * *

You have no doubt heard that Harrison's celebrated expedition which was to overrun Upper Canada and retrieve the disgrace of Hull has ended in smoke for the want of a few trifling articles such as provisions, clothing, blankets, suitable muskets, and a sufficient supply of ammunition, and for the want of harmony among the officers. Another famous Indian expedition of 3000 men set on foot in Kentucky under Gen. Hopkins has also failed, the men have returned worn out with hunger and fatigue under which the principal part of the horses and a number of the men have sunk without meeting with a single hostile Indian, or effecting any one contemplated object of the expedition. The loss of some valuable lives on both sides and a plentiful harvest of disgrace on ours is all we have to boast of.

Among those lost on our side, that of Col. Fenwick of the artillery said to be dead of his wounds received at the Battle of Queenstown is peculiarly regretted by all parties. He was unquestionably the first officer in the United States troops and fitter to command her armies than ten such generals as Hull and Dearborn. I had some acquaintance with him. He was a gentleman of liberal education, very extensive information, of amiable manners in private life, and a plentiful fortune. He studied the military art as a science in the most celebrated academies in France and Great Britain where he

spent several years; and in knowledge of military tactics, but particularly as an engineer, was surpassed by few. He had no inducement whatsoever to go into the service, only his enthusiastic fondness for a military life. He served a year or two in the Navy Yard as a Lieut. of Marines, where he had previously resigned his commission and at the raising of the new army was appointed a Col. of Artillery.

If the events of the war are not consoling, the northern elections are not much more so. Barbers who shave Democrats at Washington ought to have an increase of fees on account of the unusual lengthening of faces. The prime movers or rather jugglers in our political machine, if not wise have certainly a considerable portion of cunning so far as their own popularity is concerned. Had the taxes been laid last session, and had the extraordinary vent for flour not taken place, Pennsylvania and probably Virginia would have been revolutionized, and that of Maryland and New Jersey would have been more complete. A large portion of the population of Pennsylvania is German. As they do not emigrate and as they are remarkable for industry and economy, they are rapidly gaining on the other description of population, particularly on the Irish who are daily selling to the Germans and immigrating to the new country. So long as a German is not accosted by a taxgatherer and can obtain from 2 to 2½ dollars for his wheat, he will support the administration and consider the war if there is a war as a pretty good thing. Indeed I have been informed that great numbers of them will not believe that there is any war and consider all that is done as a Federal lie. This will probably secure Madison's reelection, where as had the taxes been laid and had the restriction on exportation continued, he might have hung his harp on the willow and there would have been a clear majority against the whole system in the next Congress.

This trick however it may have succeeded partially, it has not taken in Massachusetts. I need not inform you of the result of her elections, all parties are astonished at it altho' our sensations are very different. A similar phalanx is expected from New York. Intelligent members from that state, not Federalists, inform me that there is no chance for the

election of more than three advocates for war and there is an even balance for and against them. Without reckoning any thing on Vermont whom we still hope may be roused by the example of Mass'tts and New Hampshire, the opponents of the administration cannot be calculated at fewer than 80, probably will exceed that number in the next Congress. The following is considered as a possible guess altho' as in several states their members are not chosen, and in others the political complexion is not correctly ascertained, it can be but a guess. N. Hampshire 6, Mass'tts 19, R. Island 2, Connect. 7, New York 24, N. Jersey 4, Del. 2, Pennsylvan. 1, Maryland 3, Ohio 2, Virginia 9, N. Carolina 5. Tot. 84. As Vermont is about to choose by a general ticket should her election prove Federal, it will make 90 from 182 will leave 92 a pretty small majority for carrying on a war. At most, Madison's majority in the next Congress cannot be calculated as more than 8 or 10.

* * *

Yours affect'ly,
SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, December 8, 1812.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * As to the fate of the Presidential election that I have no doubt is decided in favour of Madison, altho I have as yet heard of but very few returns on that subject. I cannot calculate upon Clinton obtaining more than 89 votes altho' it is possible he may have obtained three or four more. * * * A number of the Clintonians in Congress are as good Federalists as I wish, and this attempt has been, I think, a means of consolidating the north in a manner which could not have been effected had a Federal candidate been set up; and altho' Clinton has not succeeded, the union which has been affected in the north has taught our rulers a lesson which they will not easily forget.

But altho I never was sanguine about the Presidential election, you may perhaps think me too sanguine about the complexion of the next House of Representatives. I think it will depend upon the election in Vermont whether Madison has a majority in favour of his war, and I am not out of hopes

she may profit by the example of New Hampshire and Massachusetts. One thing which encourages me is the evident agitation of James Fisk and Co. upon that subject. * * *

I have lately seen a letter from a gentleman well known to several members of Congress, and who is said to be a man of veracity and intelligence who writes from a detachment of Harrison's army at a place called Huron in the Connecticut reserve about 50 or 100 miles from Detroit. He says there was at that time, Nov. 24, about 3000 men at that place who expected to move in a few days in order to concentrate with some other detachments, that they consisted principally of drafted militia, that they had been three months in the service without pay, that many of them were without blankets or any kind of comfortable winter clothing, and no inconsiderable number without shoes, that they were on short allowance of fresh beef and flour without salt, that the weather was cold and the ground covered with snow, that the men were sickly and dying fast. I find some are beginning to denounce Harrison as no better than Hull.

I know not as some of the observations may be considered as too trifling on such a serious subject as war. But certain it is that the operation of it hitherto have not been very consoling to the authors of it. Still there seems to be a disposition to continue it altho' every ostensible ground on which it was waged unless it be one which half a century of war will never remove, I mean the claim of Great Britain to search neutral merchantships for her own seamen. There is no one point on which the eyes of the public are so blinded by dust as that of the impressment of seamen. Multitudes are led to believe that Great Britain claims the right of impressing American seamen, than which nothing is more remote from the truth, and the agents of the government give countenance to the delusion altho' they well know the contrary, but nearly an equal number in the House of Representatives in the next Congress will cause the war to drag heavily. * * *

You will perceive that the Senate have struck out one very exceptionable provision from the bill for augmenting the pay of the army. I mean that for authorizing recruiting officers to enlist minors between the age of 18 and 21 years

without the consent of parents, masters, and guardians, with only four dissentients of which the immaculate Varnum and Robinson were two. The subject of the merchants bonds on the late importations from Great Britain has been under discussion for 5 days without coming to a decision, and I think it probable the debate will be protracted for 5 days longer. The sum and substance of all the arguments in favour of exacting the bonds, or referring the subject to the Secretary of the Treasury which is the same thing, is \$18,000,000 is a great deal of money. The Government stands in great need of it to carry on this righteous war. It may be long before fortune throws such a chance into their hands again. The one thing needful is to get money honestly, if you can, but at all events get money and the ruin of a few merchants in a way which would disgrace an Algerine pirate in order to promote the general good. Among all the generals ancient and modern there never was a greater scoundrel than this said General Good. Murder, war, rapine and every kind of crime must be considered as virtuous deeds when necessary to support him.

The Federalists hitherto have taken no part of the debate. The principal speakers in favour of the reference have been Richard M. Johnson, Mr. Roberts, and our Speaker Mr. Clay; against it Mr. Cheves, Dr. Mitchell, Mr. Richardson, and Mr. McKim. Mr. Cheves is chairman of the committee of ways and means but disagreed to the report. * * * He made a speech which did honour to his head and heart. It was taken all in all a good Federal speech. I understand it has procured him the denunciation of his own party; indeed, they must either buy him off or kick him out, and since he made that speech I have heard much said about him as intended for the Secretary of the Navy. This will be treating him *à la mode* Monroe and Armstrong. I made no doubt Cheves would make a respectable Secretary of the Navy every way preferable to the present incumbent. Mr. Hamilton's talents have never been estimated above mediocrity. He is much of a gentleman, very agreeable in private life especially at certain times of the day, but a man whatever may be his other qualifications who rarely spends a day without being in

a state approaching intoxication, if not absolutely intoxicated, cannot be considered as one of the most fit persons for a high responsible office. * * *

Yours affect'ly,
SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, Dec 21, 1812.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * Perhaps there is nothing which at this moment has a more powerful influence of increasing the real Federal party than the name of peacemen, connected with the total want of success in the war and the disastrous and even ridiculous issue of almost every expedition. As to your doctrine of coalition, I see no way in which a party decidedly a minority, can ever become a majority unless it is by a coalition either with bodies or with individuals of the opposite faction. If a coalition can be formed with a powerful party whereby they shall become completely detached from their former connections, I see nothing of a worse tendency in it than a coalition with individuals.

In the present instance the Federalists have not gone over to the Clintonians but vice versa. The Clintonians now in Congress are as good practical Federalists as I could wish, and by the means of this coalition I expect nearly an undivided phalanx from New York in opposition to the present iniquitous war. You ask what pledge have the Federalists of the course Dewitt Clinton will pursue? I answer the surest of all pledges from a man of his talents and ambition, his own interest and that of his friends. That he has been somewhat of a political trimmer I have no doubt. But it is hardly fair to construe every expression a man may use in the heat of debate by the rigid rules of logic or metaphisics. Now his political consequence is identified with that of the Federalists and he must stand or fall with them.

The following piece of history I know not whether you are acquainted with. Dewitt Clinton was opposed to the embargo and intended to have taken a decided stand against it, but finding Gallatin and Co., to be like to prove too strong for him even in New York, in order to maintain his consequence

in that state he withdrew his opposition and lent it a feeble support, but he never has since regained the confidence of the administration, and his being at present a candidate for the Presidency has rendered the breach such as can never be healed. Had he not been taken up by the Federalists he and his friends would have been in a manner compelled back into the Madisonian ranks, and the Federalists would have been far from obtaining that consequence which they will undoubtedly have in the next Congress. I think it probable they will have it in their power to select either Dewitt Clinton or one out of their own ranks for the next President.

A politician must to a certain extent be the creature of circumstance. He must take mankind as they are and in many instances conform to the foibles of human nature and without encroaching on good morals, he may at least be allowed as great latitude in politics as Paul took in Christianity when he became all things to all men. To gain a point it is many times necessary to resort not to those arguments which are most forcible and conclusive in a strict logical point of view, but to those best adapted to the temper of the audience.

As a political manoeuvre the Federalists taking up Clinton was a wise one and I am not sensible that they have made a sacrifice of one single principle of the good old Federal doctrine, and if they have acquired such an accession of strength as Dewitt Clinton and his friends, its wisdom is tested by its success. But enough of this topic. The subject which now as much as any one, I mean foreign to the immediate business of legislation, which occupies the attention of all parties is the passing elections.

The wise men of Vermont have for once outgeneralled themselves, and given another evidence of the bad policy of Gerrymandering. Their elections to their state legislature happened at a critical moment. The news of Hull's disaster had just arrived and was circulated with some industry by Federalists. To rebut it runners with handbills were dispatched all over the state who represented it as a Federal lie, an electioneering trick, and the flattering news of Hull's success, which had been circulated a few days before gave a degree of plausibility to the tale. In addition to this there

was an understanding between the Governor of Vermont and the Executive of the United States that the militia which had been detached were not to be called out until after the election, and the report was industriously circulated and credited that they would not be called for.

As soon as the election was over I know not but the very next day, they were ordered to march. The Democratic legislature in order to make sure of the whole Congressional delegation in the first place, changed the mode of election to a general ticket because it was ascertained that two and possibly three Federalists might be chosen if the election was by districts. In the second place a nomination under the sanction of the Legislature or what amounted to the same thing, of the majority in caucus was held up, and in the last place passed a law authorizing the militia to vote whether at home or abroad. The militia returned just before the election, perfectly disgusted with the war and a large majority of them supported the Federal ticket.

One sample of the operation was in the town of Whitingham. This had sent a Democratic representative for three years. At the last election for the state Legislature a new candidate for representative, a Capt. Preston was set up, and by the dint of Federal exertion and the personal popularity of the man he was chosen by a small majority. He was one of the detached captains and was ordered in a day or two after he was chosen to march to the lines which he did. He said he intended to try to obtain a furlough to attend the Legislature which I know not whether he obtained or not. He returned before the last election. The votes in that town for members of Congress stood 160 to 10.

So far as we have heard from New York election it appears well. My friend from New York writes to me that there was little doubt but the district composed of the first and second ward of the City, and Long and Staten Island had chosen two Federalists. This was considered as doubtful as any part of the state. Two Federalists are also chosen in the district composed of the other 8 wards of the city, and the villages of Harlem and Greenwich, and the other scattered inhabitants of York Island. Thus far the elections offer well and, if the

state should turn out in the same way, Madison may whistle for his war majority in the next House of Representatives.

* * * I forget whether the news of the capture of the *Macedonia* had arrived when I wrote last. If it had I undoubtedly mentioned the noisy rejoicing which there was on the occasion. One thing, however, I did not mention. On the same evening there was a splendid ball which was previously appointed in honour of some naval officer in return for an entertainment given to citizens and members of Congress on board the *Constellation*. Queen Dolly was at the ball. Young Hamilton, son to the Secretary of the Navy, who was the bearer of the despatches in company with Capt's Hull and Stewart, the latter of whom commands the *Constellation* brought the colours of the *Macedonia* and laid them at the feet of Mrs. Madison, not as it is thought much to the honour of such distinguished naval officers as [torn out] Report says, but for the correctness of which I do not vouch as I go to none of these entertainments, that she set her feet on the colours to show contempt. An Englishman in the city hearing this report basely observed that Charlotte, meaning the Queen of Great Britain, would not have done so with the American colours. But what ever rejoicings were on that occasion they are all past and gone. * * *

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, January 3d, 1813.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * You must allow me to be a little covetous when I assure you that not one cent of the avails of my pamphlets will ever go into my pocket. If anything is left after satisfying the printer, it is to go to the Foreign Missionary Society. I did not know, however, that you would encourage the publication of a man who so far compromised with iniquity as to be in favour of Federalist's voting for Dewitt Clinton. But enough of this. My intrest in Dewitt Clinton is so small and my attachment to him so slender that I would be very sorry to barter the intrest I have in your friendship for it. * * * During the last week except so much of it as was taken up in

attending the funeral of Mr. Smilie who was interred the last day of the year, and in paying the customary compliments of the season to the President on New Year's Day, a piece of service from which I excused myself at this time, as did also most of Federalists, the House has been taken up with the consideration of two bills for the increase and better organization of the army. The one contemplates increasing the bounty on enlistments from 16 to 40. The pay is already increased from 5 to 8\$, and making an additional number of officers, viz., 1 major general, 4 brigadiers, an additional major to each regiment, and a second lieutenant to every company. This bill passed the House of Representatives on Saturday, so that we may expect recruiting officers to be spread over the United States nearly as numerous and quite as mischievous as the locusts of Egypt. The other bill contemplates an additional army of 20,000 men enlisted for one year with a bounty of 16 dollars. This will create another host of officers so that for the next campaign, we are to have an army up on paper of 55,000 men. After the defeats, disasters, disgrace, sufferings and mortality of the last campaign, I don't believe that all this encouragement will afford sufficient inducement for men to enlist in sufficient numbers to half fill such an army, the 20,000 is to be instead of the volunteers. That scheme is to be abandoned and the law repealed. The old army of 35,000 including the 10,000 peace establishment, and the 25,000 regulars authorized by the law of last session I don't believe has ever been at any time more than half filled up, and that half I presume if we deduct diminutions by the sword, and captivity, and by desertion, and death it must be diminished more than half, and the remainder naked, dispirited, debilitated and discontented. It is computed that we have already as much as an officer for every five men, what more are wanted for, it is I believe difficult for any one to tell unless it is that a man recruited by each officer may make an army. * * *

I ventured last year to predict the bad success of the last campaign, I still venture to predict boldly. I have no expectation that the campaign of 1813 will be either more successful or less disastrous than that of 1812. But altho' one campaign

has shook the pillars of democracy to their very centre, should peace be made now, or at least before the opening of another campaign the party would be left strong and might probably in a short time recover its pristine vigor. Another campaign I think would completely prostrate it, probably to rise again no more, and could the United States fairly get rid of a set of men and a system of measures which they have been cursed with for the last twelve years it might be well worth the sufferings of a two year's war. * * *

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, January 17, 1813.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * I need hardly inform you that we had a very long and very interesting debate on the bill for raising the 20,000 yearlings so called, and that it has at length terminated as all similar debates have almost invariably done in Congress, i. e., in every man's voting on the question before the House, precisely as he would have done before the debate took place. On this question there was a great latitude of discussion and the whole subject about the justice and policy of making war and the causes for continuing it were brought into view. I know not whether I have written to you since the debate was undertaken in earnest. In the course of much good sense and sound argument as well as a competent share of satire, acrimony, and severe sarcasm, and not a little low vulgar scurrility was used. Mr. Quincy was very severe on the Cabinet as you may see by a sketch of his speech that is published. The entire speech will appear in a few days, a number undertook to answer him but as if it had not been done enough. The bill which was then in the House was recommitted to the committee of the whole for the ostensible purpose of making some trifling amendments which might have been as well made in the House, but for the real one of giving the Speaker, which is perhaps the most accomplished blackguard of the party the opportunity of abusing Quincy, which he did in such a strain of low vulgar Billingsgate

scurrility, as was much better adapted to a barroom after the close of an angry town meeting when the disputants were pretty well heated with liquor, than to the hall of a national legislature. The bill passed by 44 to 76, as full a vote as we have had at any time this session. * * *

War questions drag rather heavily in the Senate. Could we be fortunate enough to have two or three changes for the better, they would almost be able to put their veto upon it in the next Congress, but in Vermont there is one change for the worse. In New York and New Hampshire we hope for a change for the better. I dont believe that all the encouragement given will afford men inducements to enlist so as to fill up such an army after the disasters of the last campaign, but could they be even raised I dont know from what source the ways and means are to be derived. To prosecute another campaign to the extent talked of will incur an expense of not less than \$40,000,000.

I dont believe the enormous expenses of the last campaign, particularly of Indian hunting and Harrison's campaign are more than half come within the estimate. Before it reached Harrison's headquarters it is said the cost of the article of flour was enchanced to the enormous price of 140\$ per bbl. I dont believe that the military operations of any nation under Heaven were ever prosecuted with such an enormous waste of public treasure in proportion to their extent. No resources that I know of are talked of besides loans. The merchant's bonds which were no doubt intended to be converted into a forced loan, are got out of their clutches. The only resource to pay the intrest of one loan will soon be to negotiate another, or it must be unpaid which will soon put a stop to borrowing. But if the men can be raised, and if money can be obtained to support the army, and if anybody can be got to command them better than William Hull, Granny Dearborn, or Alexander Smyth, we are to have a very vigorous war the next campaign. * * *

Monroe is talked of for Commander in Chief altho' I know not that it is any more than the unfounded rumor of the day. Some rather express a wonder where he came by all his military knowledge who never saw a day's actual service in his life. I

understand that he in private conversation assumes the braggadocio stile of William Hull and Alexander Smyth about the facility of conquering Canada. * * *

You have no doubt heard of the change in the Cabinet and the filling up of the vacancies. Armstrong laboured hard in the Senate and his nomination was finally sanctioned by a majority of only three. His attempt to excite a mutiny, or rather a rebellion in the army at the close of the revolutionary war, which was only quelled by the influence and address of a Washington is not yet forgotten. Perhaps a lapse of 30 years may have cooled his ambition as he must be now between 60 and 70 years of age. He is considered as purchased in by the Government, his appointment to the office of Secretary of War is considered as the last installment of the purchase money. Had he been no more dreaded than he is beloved by the administration, he might have had liberty to have spent the remainder of his days in dignified retirement. He does not want for talents but he is thought to be too indolent for the head of a department, and that he will prove an obstinate and unmanageable member of the Cabinet.

The Madisonian party have prevailed in Vermont by a very lean majority. Such a victory is at least half a defeat but it is a matter of exultation here. One of their present members, Dr. Shaw has got himself into an unpleasant situation. During the time when the President's election was depending, he reported rather privately that Josiah Masters, formerly a member of Congress had as an agent in the business offered him, Dr. Shaw, 10,000 dollars to use his influence in the State of Vermont in favour of the election of Dewitt Clinton. This was one of the numerous reports spread in North Carolina where the Madisonian interest was then doubtful. Mr. Van Cortland told him at the time that it was untrue, without any hesitation. Report reached Masters, he has been here whether on purpose I know not, and after some conversation with Shaw on the subject, he has posted him in the public prints as a liar or scoundrel and a poltroon, and that had it not been for his respect to the privileges of the House of which he was an unworthy member, he would have inflicted upon him personal chastisement. If Shaw had any feelings,

they must be unpleasant but I believe he is not burdened with anything of that sort. * * *

Yours affect'ly,
SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, January 25, 1813.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * One thing which struck me as showing the spirit of the Russian nation is show'd in the answer of Marshall Kutusoff to Lauriston when sent by Murat to ask for a cessation of arms in order to a peace. He answered that the Russians did not invite the French to Moscow and that they might get away the best way they could, that if he would test his sincerity in his wishes for peace he might bring the head of his master as a pledge. Should this downfall be complete, of which I now begin to have pretty sanguine hopes, it will perhaps be one among the most important events which have happened since the manifestation of a saviour to a lost world. What effect it will have on our - - - - at Washington I know not. I am in hopes that these powerful negotiators at Russia, I know not the folly of some and the wickedness of others, have precipitated the country into its present disturbed situation and the obstinacy of all seems disposed to continue it at present. I make no doubt that many even on the floor of Congress are inwardly grieved at the Russian successes, and shall be still more so should they prove complete which they do not yet seem disposed to believe. Not that they have any particular enmity to Russia, and perhaps many have no particular wishes for the success of Bonaparte as a thing desirable in itself, but such is the enmity against Great Britain that they would be willing to sacrifice not only Russia but the world to the altar of their revenge. They wish the success of Bonaparte because they probably consider him of the only instrument of accomplishing their revenge. Should the consequences be a peace in Europe, whether our wise men will in that case be disposed in that event to maintain a war against Europe in favour of an ideal right, I know not. At present the appearance seems to indicate a vigorous prosecution of the war. * * *

On Saturday our chancellor of the exchequer, alias chairman of the committee of ways and means, opened the budget of the supplies. The present chairman is Mr. Cheves, unquestionably by far the most respectable man in the majority, and worthy of a conspicuous standing in a better cause than aiding in the prosecution of an iniquitous war. We are not to have any of the proposed taxes during the present session. It is found that the avails will not be wanted during 1813, but from some very general hints I smell out that Congress will be called at an early day in the summer, perhaps in May, for the purpose of imposing the taxes that their avails may be produced in season to meet the expenses of 1814.

The double duties which have been imposed on the importation from Great Britain have granted a partial supply which will not be repeated the next year. This will give to the treasury a supply of 5 or 6 millions. The expenses of the present year are calculated at 36 millions. To raise supplies to meet these expenses the following ways and means are proposed: a loan of 16 millions, 5 millions as an additional sum of treasury notes to be issued, 12 millions expected from the revenue, 8 millions in the treasury, 2 millions of the loans of last year unexpended, total 38 millions. The loan bill is now under consideration on the question of engrossing for a third reading. The loan proposed is to be unlimited as to the rate of interest. A proposition has been made and negatived, to limit the rate of interest which has been negatived, another motion has been made to insert a proviso that the stock shall not be sold under par which has also been negatived. Thus this loan is to be negotiated by in the first place creating a stock and sending it into the market to be sold at such price as they find purchasers and at such rate of interest as can be agreed on.

This is a pretty good specimen for the beginning of the war. A debt created in two sessions of 37 millions in two years is a pretty good beginning. Loan of last year 11,000,000, treasury notes issued last year, 5,000,000, ditto this year 5,000,000, loan of the present year, 16 million. As the ordinary of the year 1814 is not calculated to amount to more than 3,000,000. To meet the same rate of expense the year 1814

loan of 25 millions will be requisite besides an extra provision to pay an interest of perhaps 8 or 9 per cent on loans of the present year. * * *

Yours affect'ly,
SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, February 4, 1813.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * You have doubtless become acquainted with the vigorous measures adopting for carrying on the war. Armies and loans in abundance upon paper with no money in the treasury and but few men in the ranks. The ranks were but scantily filled in the first instance and Providence has seen fit to thin them by an uncommon mortality. Take the following for a sample and it is far from being a solitary instance. A Capt. Walker of Stratford, Connecticut enlisted in that and the neighbouring towns fifteen men. He is dead himself and ten men out of the 15. The last loan of 16,000,000 is without limitation as to the rate of interest and it is to be obtained by the creation of stock and sending it into the market for sale for what it will fetch. Two propositions were made and successively negatived, one to limit the rate of interest if 6 per cent was considered inadequate say at 7 or 8, and the other to provide that the stock should not be sold under par. I cannot but say that the reason given for not limiting the rate of interest was a tolerably good one altho' I do not believe it was the true one. It was that the principal part of the money would probably be procured at 6 per cent altho' it was possible that 7 or 8 would have to be given for some but if 8 per cent was limited as the maximum, no money would be procured under that rate. * * *

There seems to be some intention to make a motion towards a peace, our vast preparations for war to the contrary notwithstanding whether it be meant merely as a gull trap, or whether there is any sincerity in it I cannot say positively. I can only draw inferences from my knowledge of the men and their communications. There is only one thing which I can consider as affording any adequate pledge of their sincerity, i. e., the downfall of the tyrant of Europe, an event

of which there is now ground to hope: In that case being influenced neither by fear or attachment, having nothing to fear or to hope from him, they may probably suffer their deep rooted enmity against Great Britain to give way to the dictates of policy.

I have forwarded you the late report of the committee of foreign relations which is from the pen of Mr. Monroe. This I call the second blast of the war trumpet, somewhat more gentle than the first. This is followed with a bill in relation to seamen to take effect on the restoration of peace, the purport of which is to exclude foreign seamen from the American service, under a variety of penalties and restrictions conditioned on Great Britain relinquishing the right of searching for seamen. I know not that I ever felt myself more embarrassed how to act than on this bill. The course in the first place I conceive to be an improper one. The affair ought to be adjusted by treaty in the first instance and if this required the passage of reciprocal laws of this or any other kind, the Legislature would be bound in duty to pass them. * * *

The details of the bill altho' drawn up with all the wisdom of the Cabinet have also great objections, some of its provisions are not only embarrassing but impracticable. One in particular about the introduction by masters of vessels of foreign seamen into the country is pretty much like some of the old blue laws, particularly one which imposed a fine of I think four pounds on any master of a vessel who should be guilty of introducing a heretic into the colony. I find also in the bill a trap set for the Federalists which will spring both ways. If they vote against the bill then the hue and cry will be set up that altho' they clamour against the war, they oppose every pacific advance made by the Government. If they vote in favour of the bill and the scheme fails of success, that they will be considered as pledged to unite in support of the war, a kind of a pledge which I enter my protest against. The bill will meet with great opposition in the majority and some suppose it cannot pass without Federal aid.

I find jealousies begin to pervade the ranks of the warhawks which I shall not distress myself in finding out expedients to allay, and curses begin to be muttered against Madison.

Those who were at first and still continue to be hearty in the war are beginning to suspect probably not without grounds that he never was hearty in his war measures, but was induced to recommend them because after the irritation against Great Britain which he had been so instrumental in raising, he found actual war to be the only weapon which he could wield with success to secure his reelection, as without this weapon he would lose the support of the south and west without gaining that of the north and east in return, and that now having obtained everything he wanted by the war instead of being disposed to prosecute it with vigor and obtain an honourable peace in that way, he wishes to rid himself of it and be let down in the easiest manner possible. I know not what will be the fate of the bill. It was discussed about two hours yesterday, Grundy in favour and Wright against, and was then laid over until today * * *

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, February 11, 1813.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * I understand that yesterday I offended some of their high mightinesses by an observation I made in the hearing of three or four persons of different political description. I understand it only by report, no one has said anything to me on the subject. One of our Federalists observed, (the subject of conversation was the late disaster of the army under Winchester) that he had scarcely ever heard or read of a war so uniformly disastrous in all its operations as ours had been, which was a clear proof to him that 'to go to war in a state so totally unprepared was the height of impolicy, he had never said that the war was unjust. I replied that I had no hesitation in saying at any time and in any place, that I believed it to be an unjust, an iniquitous war, and that it appeared to me that the finger of Heaven was pointed against us in our carrying it on, or words to that purpose. No reply was made. But I understand it has given offence. I can neither retract nor soften the expression.

I have never seen such a degree of gloom overspread the House as since the news of that disaster. It was at a time when expectation was on tiptoe, some uneasiness had been manifested heretofore that Harrison was so tardy in his movements. Now he was at length got on the move. The disgraces of Hull's affair were about to be wiped away, and it was but the day before that intelligence had been received of the affairs of the 19th in which Col. Lewis had driven a party of Indians off the same ground. This intelligence coming the very next day excited great consternation.

It has fallen peculiarly heavy on Kentucky. Most of Winchester's men were Kentucky volunteers. A number of the first men in the state have either fallen or are in captivity. Some of the members of Congress had sons and some brothers in the field. The western people had a great hand in producing the war. Hitherto they have suffered by it. They in the first place provoked an Indian war. By the hostile expedition into the Indian country, in the affair of Tippecanoe, they in the first place provoked an Indian war, then charged the British with exciting the Indians to commit hostilities and improved this as one of the principal causes of war with Great Britain.

Everything in this quarter has turned out contrary to their expectations. It was expected that Hull's expedition would overrun Upper Canada and that the Indians would either be driven off or be quiet with the loss of their most valuable lands, and if the war was continued the distresses of it would fall on another quarter, viz., on the seaboard, and that they would be gainers by it both in wealth and population. It may be wrong but these circumstances cannot but in some degree abate the sympathy which I feel for their distresses. It is, however, painful to reflect that these distresses in many instances fall most severely on those who were by no means accessory in producing them.

Great alarm and agitation prevails in the south on account of the appearance of a British squadron near the coast of Virginia. This squadron at its first appearance consisted of 2 ships of the line and 3 frigates, 2 additional frigates have since joined it and more are expected. They are said to be

furnished with Congreve rockets and other instruments for the destruction of towns. Great ferment prevails in Virginia, it is said; but these things I state merely as reports without vouching for their truth, that before the appearance of this fleet the people of Virginia applied to the general government thro' the President for maritime protection and received for answer that the general government could not protect them, they must protect themselves. This it was said was the cause why the loan failed and such a ferment is raised that it is thought that if the Presidential election was to take place now, Madison would not obtain a single vote in Virginia. I hope they will keep it up until after the election of members of Congress.

Notwithstanding our loans and armies which have been voted in such profusion I cannot but think there is a little more of an inclination to make peace than there was sometime ago. Perhaps it is nothing more than a gull trap to catch popularity, influence the spring elections and make the people believe that the blame of continuing the war rests on Great Britain, but some things lead me to believe that they are actuated by a little more sincerity than heretofore. But Madison has obtained all he wanted by the war, i. e., he has secured his reelection and would now wish to get out of it as easily and speedily as he can. Some of the most violent war folks begin to suspect that this was his principal view from the first and begin to mutter curses not in very gentle whispers. By the way, the votes were yesterday counted and Madison declared President for the next four years; the votes stood for Dewitt Clinton 89, James Madison 128, one vote in Ohio lost.

The disasters in every quarter may be also an inducement to desire peace, but above all the reverses in Russia, which may expose them by and by to contend single handed with the whole power of Great Britain. Whether its attachment or some other motive no doubt many, perhaps a majority wished for Bonaparte's complete success in Russia because they expected it to be instrument of their vengeance against Great Britain. Many believe nothing about the extent of the disaster but still anticipate his being victorious in St. Petersburg in the spring or early in the summer. For my part

comparing all accounts together, it is my prevailing opinion that it is no more in the land of the living or if he should have made his escape, it is only with the mere wreck of an army which a few months ago was deemed invincible. * * *

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, February 15, 1814.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * You will have heard by the papers of the changes in the Cabinet and of the renomination of Gallatin as fifth commissioner to Gottenburg. As the objection taken to him from his being Secretary of the Treasury was removed by the appointment of a successor, there was little opposition made to the last nomination. His successor is one of the bitterest of the bitter warhawks, and it is I believe the universal opinion among the Federalists, as well as that of many of the Democrats, that his talents are not equal to the station. The wags of the city however have found out something very significant and appropriate in his name, George Washington Campbell, G. W. C. Government Wants Cash.

For a considerable time after the army bills were pretty much disposed of the proceedings of Congress were principally on local matters, but now for five days an important subject has been under discussion, viz., a bill authorizing a loan for the trifling sum of \$25,000,000, and issuing 5,000,000 in treasury notes, thirty millions in the whole and should the campaign be carried on to the full extent of the army authorized by law, and at the same ratio of expenditure with the two last this sum enormous as it is would be not half equal to defray the expense.

There have been some able speeches made on the Federal side of the House. Those of Messrs. Pitkin, Sheffey and Hanson have been the most distinguished. The minority has occupied the floor the largest portion of the time, indeed about three days and a half out of five. Ingersoll arose yesterday just before the House adjourned, and occupied it long enough to secure the floor for this day. It is probable he will occupy it the principal part of the day. Hanson

delivered yesterday one of the severest phillippics ever delivered in the House. He was on the floor about two hours and a quarter. He stripped Monroe to the skin and when he had stripped him lashed him most severely. He had the documents in his hand and quoted Monroe *versus* Monroe, i. e., as he expressed it, Monroe when he was disposed to be an honest man *versus* Monroe after he had undergone the operation of whitewashing, and spent a sufficient time on the stool of political repentance to fit him to be a candidate to succeed James the first under the name of James the second. * * *

[This letter is unfinished in the original manuscript]

WASHINGTON, March 10, 1814.

MY DEAR SIR:

It is long since I have heard from you and some time since I have written. I suppose you are closely occupied with your distillery, and I am jogging on pretty much in the old way in the hall of Legislation. * * * The war is becoming so unpopular that perhaps no step could be more effectual to advance their popularity and enable them to keep their places *ad libitum* as to make a tolerable peace. There is one thing, however, which I find is elevating, some of the chiefs of the party considerably, i. e., the hope that Russia, Austria, Prussia, &c, will conclude a separate peace with France and will probably unite with France in pressing upon Great Britain the relinquishment of her maritime system.

I do not believe there is any foundation for this and that they will soon find their mistake, that there will be either a general peace or no peace. But it is curious to observe the singular alteration in the language of our ruling party in relation to the Emperor of Russia. At the time when we declared war Bonaparte was marching with an immense force to the conquest of Russia, and not one Democrat in the United States but firmly believed that Alexander would be soon humbled under the feet of the victor. Then Alexander was nothing but the northern barbarian or the northern *copac*. After Bonaparte was fairly expelled from Russia, and especially after Dashkoff had either prudently or otherwise said that his master was convinced that the United States had

done all they could to avoid a war, a subject of which he could know as much as the man in the moon he became the illustrious Alexander. If he should prove capable of doing an act which would stamp his character with infamy to the latest posterity, he would be more illustrious still, and the subject of incessant Democratic panegyric.

This forlorn hope I expect the first news we have from Europe will dissipate, but there is one thing may be depended upon. Our administration men are calculating to be armed at all points or prepared for whatever contingency which may happen by throwing blame on the minority. Had it not been for the opposition of the minority Great Britain would have conceded whatever we demanded without our being put to the necessity of resorting to war. All our defeats and disasters from the surrender of Hull down to the present time, whether occasioned by the folly or imbecillity of the Cabinet, or the misconduct or incapacity of some blockhead or another, nicknamed a general, has been owing to a want of co-operation in the minority. If the present negotiation does not terminate in peace it will be because Great Britain is encouraged to protract hostilities, and refuse to do us justice or if we are obliged to accept of a peace on more favourable terms than we could wish or than we had reason to expect, it will be all owing to the opposition of the minority. * * *

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, November 2d, 1814.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * Some think that the prospect of peace is not entirely at an end, for my part I see but little ground for it yet certainly there is something mysterious in it. We have no account of its termination and while our ears are stunned with the insulting proposals made by the British Government, we have no account of what proposals were made by our envoys or whether any at all. Pretty certain it is that despatches have been sent out but of what kind I know not. I think the hue and cry which has been raised about the enormity of the British proposals is in some measure unfounded,

especially as they were the principal part of them first proposals and not things definitively to be insisted upon. The claim for a corner of Massachusetts is more in name than in value. I do not know what is the extent of the country claimed but I conclude not great in value, it is a cold barren inhospitable region probably not worth one cent per 100 acres. Could the free uninterrupted use of the fisheries be got as an equivalent, which I am apprehensive was intended, it would be a good bargain for Massachusetts.

There would be nothing at all enormous or unreasonable in the United States laying claim to the whole of the British possessions on the continent of America. With respect to arming on the lakes could it be mutual it would no doubt be advantageous to both nations. It seems hardly fair to have the exclusion all on one side. But on this subject there hangs a tale which I could farther explain if my lips were not sealed. With respect to the Indian boundary, however improper it might be to assume the treaty of Greenville as a boundary, yet I think it would be very proper to have such a boundary to protect that much injured people. * * *

With respect to the taxes I need not inform you what those taxes are, the system which has passed the House in the form of resolutions is taken from Eppes's report from Dallas's financial report. Air and water are exempted from taxation and but little else. Our plows, waggons, carts and every thing in which either wrought or cast iron is a material, is taxed by the duty on that article. These taxes have not yet come before the House in the form of bills. I expected them before this time, what the reason is why they are not reported I cannot tell. I shall myself vote against the whole of these taxes and I could wish every Federalist in the House would do likewise altho' I presume they will not.

I know not but I could give 20 reasons for my vote, but I shall give only one and that is, that I can never consent by my vote to tax the citizens of Massachusetts to the full extent of their means, and it may be beyond their means to furnish money to the general government to squander away in profligate expeditions against Canada, while the state is assailed in various quarters by the enemy, made so against their wills

by the act of the general government, can obtain no protection but if protected at all it must be by their own means. * * * Some observations were made a few days ago by a man pretty closely connected with the Cabinet not calculated to give much consolation to public creditors or much encouragement to money lenders. I did not hear them myself but understood them to be the following import, that it was optional with the Government whether they paid the debt in one century or 10 centuries. Indeed he did not think they ever ought to be paid without a reduction of the nominal sum to the amount actually advanced to the Government. The member who made these observations was John G. Jackson.

I understand the public creditors are already alarmed. Indeed, I have no doubt but some are already looking forward to the payment of the public debt with a sringe. You probably have seen the outlines of the bill for filling up the army by classing the male population and using a compulsive process to obtain recruits. * * * Something or another is making trouble in the wigwam. The proposed Hartford Convention excites considerable agitation here, but the troops of the palace are still amusing themselves that there is physical force enough in Massachusetts which would crush any opposition to the general government should it be attempted. T. B. Varnum and Co. have been constantly misleading the people here about the state of affairs in Massachusetts. Certain it is there seems nothing like a disposition to conciliate New England. Indeed it would seem that the wish of many was to drive us into a rebellion that they might have an opportunity of crushing us.

The Pennsylvania election however gives a little check. The keystone of the great arch of democracy seems to be getting out of place. I believe 8 Federalists are elected to the next Congress and a number more of the Democrats very hard run. Had it been understood in all the counties of the state that Wayne had consented to be run, Snyder would have had little to have boasted of. There is one Federalist elected in South Carolina, where there has not been one before for ten years. The still tax in Pennsylvania is more than 100,000

dollars more than in any other state, add 20 cents per gallon on the liquor and the revolution will be complete. * * *

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, November 22, 1814.

MY DEAR SIR:

* * * On last Saturday week a discussion commenced on the subject of a national bank which is still continued. The bill first reported was bottomed on the plan suggested by Mr. Secretary Dallas in his letter to the chairman of ways and means which everybody has seen. Three days were spent in discussing and amending the bill without altering the principal of it, when on Wednesday morning last Mr. Calhoun came forward with a number of amendments which went to make an entire change in the whole complexion of the bill. Some of the leading features of Calhoun's project were as follows: the amount of specie to be paid in the same, and no alteration to be made in the capital of the bank which still stands at 50 millions; no part of the stock to be subscribed or owned by the United States, and the President and Senate to have no voice in the appointment of directors; the bank to be under no legal or compulsory obligations to loans to the Government; in order to constitute the capital of the bank, treasury notes to be issued to the amount of 29 millions in certain proportions, monthly, which it is expected will be absorbed by subscribers in order to be converted into bank stock; these notes to operate as a loan to the Government for the service of the year 1815; the other 15 millions, the residue of the 50 to be issued in treasury notes likewise, but convertible into stock already issued for loans during this war.

Calhoun's propositions were warmly debated for two days and finally adopted by a majority of more than 2 to one, and the residue of the week was spent in bringing the bill into shape conformable to the new principle adopted, when it was reported to the House where the amendments are again going over. I had no hesitation in preferring Calhoun's plan to the former which would have rendered the bank a

mere engine of the Government. Let the United States own 20 millions of stock and then the bank loan 30 millions to the Government, the capital would be completely exhausted and a deluge of depreciated and depreciating paper thrown upon the country. Still there are in my opinion objections insuperable against Calhoun's plan, the principal of which is the want of solid capital. It will be a great mammoth paper bubble.

The Federalists all voted for his amendment preferring his plan to that of the Secretary if the bank must pass, altho' I believe but few of them will vote for the bank. Indeed it is doubtful whether the bill passes in any shape. About 20 are said to be against the establishing of a bank in any form on constitutional grounds, and upwards of 20 more will vote against Calhoun's plan who would have voted in favour of the other, and many I believe the principal part of the Federalists, altho' they voted in favour of Calhoun's plan preferring it to the other, will ultimately vote against the bank.

It is said that Dallas takes the rejections of his plans in great dudgeon and threatens to leave the treasury if his plan is not adopted. It is also said that Calhoun's plan originated in the Cabinet where there is not an entire agreement on the subject.

With respect to other subjects in general neither the tax nor army bills have yet been acted upon and what the ultimate views of the administration are it is impossible to divine.

* * * It pretty plainly appears that our administration is incompetent either to carry on a war or make peace, for if our envoys will neither make any propositions themselves nor discuss those of the enemy, I see not how a peace can be negotiated. Tidings out of the north and east also give them some trouble. The returns of the Mass'tts elections are by no means consoling to democracy, altho' I am afraid they will not prove quite so flattering to federalism as we had anticipated. From some of the first returns we expected a unanimous Federal delegation. Two of the eastern districts still hang in doubt. The elections in them will be very close. But at any rate it is far from coming up to the expectations of Democrats.

The administration party here were led to believe that the late proceedings of the Mass'tts Legislature did not express the sentiments of the people, and that they would make it manifest at the congressional elections, and that this connected with the publications of the despatches from Ghent, would give an addition of at least 4 or 5 Democrats to the next Congress. The event has not verified the predictions. The Hartford Convention also excites attention. Since the result of the Mass'tts election has been in some measure known, that has been spoken of in terms of greater mildness. Three weeks ago the factious party were to be crushed by force, and whenever anything like opposition appeared against the general government, there was physical force in any one state to crush it. Of late the Convention at Hartford has become lawful; they have a right to assemble and petition or remonstrate and state their views of the affairs of the nation, and their representatives are entitled to due considering. Should an attempt be made to enforce the conscription law it will bring on a crisis in New England. May that kind Providence which has hitherto appeared so conspicuously to bring light out of darkness appear for us. * * *

Yours affect'ly,

SAML TAGGART.

WASHINGTON, February 10, 1815.

MY DEAR SIR:

I received yours, I think on Tuesday evening the 9th dated at Hartford on a day of the month which occurs but rarely, i. e., Janr'y 32d. * * *

I recollect the 11,756 dollars. I believe you will find my name recorded on the journals in favour of no tax bill. Still when taxes are necessary for a legitimate object, I view domestic distilled spirits a fair subject of taxation to a certain extent. Every such measure carried to an extreme defeats its object. I believe that to be the case with the tax on domestic distilled spirits. I think it probable that a tax of ten cents on the gallon would have yielded more to the revenue than 30 which is computed to be about the amount of the present duty, the tax upon the capacity being supposed to average about 5

cents. But though we have gone great lengths in taxing the people, Dallas says we have not done enough. You have no doubt seen his last report. * * *

The question how the people shall be able to rid themselves of their present burdens is a serious and important one and one which it is difficult to answer. I have heard of none suggested against which there is not very weighty if not insuperable objections. Should a separation of the Union be resorted to, against that there lies very important objections. * * * Of one thing however I am glad, i. e., that the states are rising and taking measures to defend their state rights. I view the state government to be at this day the principal barrier which is to defend the liberties of the people. The obvious policy of the general government appears to me to usurp nearly the whole power, civil and military and to reduce the powers of the states into that of mere corporations. I believe it is according to the establishment of human conduct for a government weak in itself and tottering to its downfall, to endeavour to make the greatest stretches towards arbitrary power. This is at least obvious with the present ruling party and in proportion to the narrowing of their means they increase in the extravagance of their expenses. * * *

I am fearful that an honourable peace cannot now be very early obtained by our Government were they disposed. They might earlier have avoided this foolish and ruinous war and now been in peace with all nations and probably would have done it, had not Jefferson & Co., who were constantly predicting the invincibility of Bonaparte and the downfall of Great Britain, been deceived themselves and deceived others by the falsehood of their predictions; but the policy of our Government for several years before the commencement of the war, was to provoke Great Britain in every way they could short of actual hostilities, from the idle presumption that whenever they saw fit to have recourse to force they could coerce her at any time into an acquiescence in their demands. In this way the administration has excited a considerable degree of choler in the breast of John Bull, and as he has the power of retaliating either in the way of revenge or chastisement, I wish he may not with the power have also the disposition.

I can scarcely conceive of a motive which can influence the minds of either good or bad men, which would not dispose our administration to wish for peace at this moment, unless they are under the same influence with the desperate gambler who having more than half ruined his fortune ventures all the remainder on a single throw of the die. * * *

The late events at Orleans however have put our warhawks into high spirits and probably should they be realized to the full extent, would induce our administration to rise in their demands. We have had no late accounts from Orleans excepting a report by the way of Savannah that the British had abandoned the enterprise, which I think is entitled to but little credit. The mail is expected from there either today or tomorrow. * * *

You have doubtless heard of the veto which the President put on the bank bill which has passed both Houses. Another has been caucused up more congenial to the view of the Cabinet and has been discussed in the Senate during very long sessions for the last two days. It is pretty much on the same principle with that first suggested by Dallas which had been rejected but varying in details, capital 50 millions, to consist of 15 millions, 6 p'r cent stock without particularly designating the war stock, 20 millions treasury notes, 5 millions specie, and 20 millions to be subscribed by the United States in stock nearing an interest of 4 p'r cent, the bank to loan the Government 30 millions. It is probable that it will prove nothing but a bubble which will deceive the Government and the nations and throw out a deluge of irredeemable depreciating paper on the community, i. e., if it should ever get into operation of which there are great doubts. But if it should succeed according to the face of its charter, in the first place the stockholders will, if the Government should prove solvent, receive an interest from the public of 8 and three 5ths p'r centum on their whole capital of 50 millions, i. e., on a loan of 30 millions, \$1,800,000 on 35 millions stock and treasury notes constituting the capital \$2,100,000. The treasury notes whenever they fall due are to be converted into 6 p'r cent stock, and 4 p'r cent on 10 millions of stock subscribed by the Government \$400,000, total \$4,300,000, which is 4 and three 5ths p'r cent on 50 millions, and this ex-

clusive of all the usual bank emoluments by discounts there during the war will be small, but should peace come and commerce revive they may be great so as to make an income of perhaps 16 or 17 p'r cent.

This is a favourite plan of Dallas and some think he has manifested more zeal and perseverance to carry it thro' than was consistent with his being disinterested. It is thought it will pass the Senate by a majority of two or three and it has been supposed that a sufficient number of votes were ascertained to ensure its passage thro' the House of Representatives. But I had an intimation yesterday that some symptoms of resentment have been manifested and such insinuations as this thrown out, that Congress must not be browbeaten into the measure by Dallas. If these come from the quarter which it has been suggested to me I think its passage is doubtful.

Yours affect'ly,

SAM'L TAGGART.

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