

THIS DAY, at 12 o'Clock, the PRESIDENT of the United States communicated, by Mr. COLBES, his Secretary, the following MESSAGE to both Houses of Congress.

TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

AT a moment when the fleets of Europe are in commotion and arming against each other, when those with whom we have principal intercourse are engaged in the general contest, and when the countenance of some of them towards our peaceful commerce is not less unfavourable than that which is manifested by what is passing on the general theatre, a meeting of the Representatives of the Nation in both Houses of Congress has become more than usually desirable. Coming from every section of our country, they bring with them the views of the whole, and will be enabled to give a direction to the public affairs which the will and the wisdom of the whole will approve and support.

In taking a view of the state of our country, and in the first place noting the late afflictions of our cities under the fatal fever which in later times has occasionally visited our shores. Providence in his goodness gave it an early termination on this occasion, and lessened the number of victims which have usually been the result of the course of the several visitations by this disease, it has appeared that it is strictly local, incident to cities and on the tidal waters only, incommunicable in the country either by persons under the disease, or goods carried from diseased places; that its connection with the autumn, and its disappearance with the early frosts. These restrictions within narrow limits of time and space give security even to our maritime cities, during three-fourths of the year, and to the country at large. Although from these facts it appears that the disease is confined to the few foreign nations, and cautions on their part need to be complained of no danger whose limits are yet unknown to them. I have strictly enjoined on the officers at the head of the customs to certify with exact truth, for every vessel sailing from the foreign port, the nature of health respecting this fever which prevails at the place from which she sails. Under every motive from character and duty to certify the truth, I have no doubt they have faithfully executed this injunction. Much real injury has however been done from a partial knowledge of this as a fact, and from a partial source from which individuals receive it. Our authorities charged with the care of the public health, and Congress with that of the general commerce, will become able to regulate with effect their respective duties, and the department of the health of Quarantines is felt at home as well as abroad; their efficacy merits examination. Although the health laws of the state should be found to need present revival by Congress, yet commerce claims that their attention be ever to them.

Since our last meeting the aspect of our foreign relations has considerably changed. Our coasts have been infested, and our harbours watched by private armed vessels, some of them without commissions, some with illegal commissions, and some with those of legal form, but committing piratical acts beyond the authority of their commissions. They have captured in the very entrance of our harbours as well as on the high seas, not only the vessels of our friends coming to trade with us, but our own also. They have carried them off under pretence of legal adjudication; but not daring to approach a court of justice, they have plundered and sunk them by the way, in obscure places, where no evidence could arise against them, maltreated the crews, and abandoned them in the open sea, or on the coast, without any food or covering. These enormities appearing to be unreachably by any control of their sovereigns, I found it necessary to equip a force, to cruise within our own seas, to arrest all vessels of these descriptions found hovering on our coasts, with the view of their capture, and to bring the offenders in for trial as pirates.

The same system of hovering on our coasts and harbours, under colour of seeking enemies, has been also carried on by public armed ships, to the great annoyance and dissatisfaction of our citizens. New principles too have been interpolated into the law of nations, founded neither in justice nor the usage or acknowledgment of nations. According to these a belligerent takes to itself a commerce with its own enemy, which it denies to neutral nations, on the ground of their being in a state of war. But reason revolts at such an inconsistency, and the neutral having equal right with the belligerent to decide the question, the interests of our constituents, and the duty of maintaining the authority of reason, the only dispute between neutral nations, on the ground of their being in a state of war, has determined opposition to a doctrine so injurious to the rights of peaceable nations. Indeed the confidence we ought to have in the justice of others, still countenances the hope that a sounder view of those rights will itself induce them every day to a more correct observance of them.

Inations during the former war, for which he had formally acknowledged himself responsible, have been refused to be compensated but on conditions which have proved to be no less onerous to them. Yet the same practices are renewed in the present war, and are already of great amount. On the Mobile our commerce passing through that river continues to be obstructed by arbitrary detentions of our vessels. The same is the case adjusting amicably the boundaries of Louisiana has not been acceded to. While, however, the right is unsettled, we have avoided changing the state of things, by taking new posts, or strengthening our forces in the disputed territories, in the hope that the other power would not by a contrary conduct, oblige us to meet their example, and endanger conflicts of authority, the issue of which may not be easily controlled. But in this hope we have no reason to lessen our confidence. Incursions have been made into the territories of Louisiana and the Mississippi, our citizens have been seized and their property plundered in the very parts of the former which had been actually delivered up by Spain, and this by the regular officers and soldiers of that government. I have therefore found it necessary to issue orders to our regular troops, that they should not be in readiness to protect our citizens and to reply by arms any similar aggressions in future. Other details, necessary for your full information of the state of things between this country and the world, shall be the subject of another communication. In reviewing these injuries from some of the belligerent powers, the moderation, the firmness and the wisdom of the legislature will all be called into action. We ought still to hope that a more correct estimate of our interests, as well as of character will produce the justice we are bound to expect. But should any nation deceive itself by false calculations, and disappoint that expectation, we must join in the unprofitable contest, of trying which party can do the other the most damage, and which may perhaps be the only way to a peaceable remedy. Where that is competent it is always the most desirable. But some of them are a nature to be met by force only, and all of them are liable to it. I cannot therefore but recommend that the attention of our government should be directed to place our sea ports towns out of the danger of insult. Measures have been already taken for furnishing them with heavy cannon for the service of such land batteries as may make a part of their defence against armed vessels approaching them. It is desirable that our regular troops should have a competent number of gun-boats, and the number to be competent must be considerable. If immediately begun, they may be in readiness for service at the opening of the next season. Whether the purchase of such armaments should be decided by occurrences probably in the course of your session. In the mean time you will consider whether it would not be expedient, for a state of peace as well as of war, so to organise or class the militia, as would enable us on any sudden emergency to have the services of our militia in portions, manœuvred with the old and those having families. Upwards of three hundred thousand able bodied men, between the ages of eighteen and twenty-six years, which the last census shows we possess, are now unemployed, and without a competent number for offence or defence, in any point where they may be wanted, and will give time for raising regular forces after the necessity of them shall become certain; and the reducing to the early period of life all its active service cannot but be desirable, on the ground of the loss of the militia, as well as future times, inasmuch as it engages to them in more advanced age a quiet and undisturbed repose in the bosom of their families. I cannot then but earnestly recommend to your early consideration, and expeditious execution, of my system as, by the separation of the more active part from that which is less so, may draw from it, when necessary, an efficient corps, fit for real and active service, and to be called to it in regular rotation.

Considerable provision has been made under former laws for the supply of arms and ammunition to our detachments, and for the purchase of arms and ammunition.

During from these unpleasant views of violence and wrong, I congratulate you on the liberation of our fellow-citizens who were stranded on the coast of Tripoli and made prisoners of war. In a government bottomed on the consent of all, the only remedy for such a situation of which our citizens become interesting to all. In the treaty therefore which has concluded our warfare with that state an article for the ransom of our citizens has been agreed to. An operation by land, by a small band of our countrymen, and the engagement of our regular troops, in conjunction with the force of the Ex-Bashaw of that country, gallantly conducted by our late consul Eaton, and their successful enterprise on the city of Derne, contributed doubtless to the impression which produced peace, and the conclusion of this treaty. The opportunity of which our officers and men of our squadron destined for Tripoli, would have availed themselves, to emulate the acts

of the last year. Reflecting with high satisfaction on the distinguished bravery displayed whenever occasions permitted in the late Mediterranean service, I think it would be a useful encouragement, as well as a just reward to make an opening for some promotion by enlarging our peace establishment of Captains and Lieutenants.

With Tunis some misunderstandings have arisen not yet sufficiently explained, but friendly discussions with their am- recently arrived, and a mutual disposition to do whatever is just and reasonable, existing between the two states that we may consider our peace on that coast, generally to be on as sound a footing as it has been at any preceding time. Still it will not be expedient to withdraw immediately the whole of our force from that sea.

The law providing for a naval peace establishment fixes the number of frigates which shall be kept in constant service in time of peace; and prescribes that they shall be manned by more than two thirds of their complement of seamen and ordinary seamen. Whether a frigate may be trusted to two thirds only of her full complement of men must depend on the nature of the service on which she is ordered. They may sometimes for her safety, as well as to ensure her object, require her full complement. In advertent to this subject, Congress will perhaps consider whether the best limitation on the Executive discretion in this case would not be by the number of seamen which may be employed in the whole service, regulated by the number of vessels. Occasions often arise for the employment of small, than of large vessels; and it would lessen risks as well as expense, to be authorized to employ them of preference. The limitation suggested by the number of seamen would admit a selection of vessels best adapted to the service.

Our Indian neighbors are advancing, many of them with spirit, and others beginning to engage in the pursuits of agriculture and household manufacture. They are becoming sensible that the earth yields subsistence with less labor than the forest, and fix their interest on the improvement of their lands, and the surplus and waste lands for the means of improving those they occupy, and of subsisting their families while they are preparing their farms. Since your last session, the northern tribes have sold to us the lands between the Connecticut reserve and the former Indian boundary, and those on the Ohio, from the same boundary to the rapids of the river. The Chickasaw and Cherokee have sold us the country between and adjacent to the two districts of Tennessee, and the Greeks the residue of their lands in the fork of Onaugue up to the Uleofahatche. The three former purchases are important, inasmuch as they are the principal parts of our territory, and render their intercourse secure; and the second particularly so, as with the small point on the river which we expect is by this ceded by the Piankeshaws, it completes our possession of the whole of both banks of the Ohio, from its source to near its mouth, and the navigation of nearly two thirds of that river, by our citizens settled and settling in its extensive waters. The purchase from the Creeks too has been for some time particularly interesting to the state of Georgia.

The several treaties which have been mentioned will be submitted to both Houses of Congress for the exercise of their respective powers.

Deputations now on their way to the seat of government, from various nations of Indians, inhabiting the Missouri and other parts beyond the Mississippi, come charged with assurances of their satisfaction with the new relations in which they are placed with us, and their desire to enter into commercial intercourse with us. A state of our progress in exploring the principal rivers of that country and of the information respecting them hitherto obtained, will be communicated so soon as we shall receive some further relations which we have reason to expect to be obtained.

The receipts at the treasury during the year ending on the 30th day of September last have exceeded the sum of thirteen millions of dollars, which, with not quite five millions in the treasury at the beginning of the year, have enabled us after meeting other demands, to pay nearly two millions of the debt contracted by the late treaty convention, upwards of four millions of principal of the public debt, and four millions of interest. These payments, with those which had been made in three years and an half preceding, have extinguished of the funded debt nearly eighteen millions of principal. In consequence of the late treaty convention, we are authorized to borrow 1,750,000 dollars towards meeting the claims of our citizens assumed by the convention with France. We have not however made use of this authority; because the sum of four millions and an half, which remained in the treasury on the same 30th day of September last, with the receipts which we may calculate on for the ensuing year, besides paying the annual sum of eight millions of dollars, appropriated to the funded debt, and meeting all the current demands which may be expected, will enable us to pay the whole sum of three millions seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars assumed by the French convention, and still to have a surplus of one million and a half in our treasury. Should you concur in the provisions of arms and armed vessels recommended by the circumstances of the times, this surplus will furnish the means of doing so.

On this first occasion of addressing Congress since, by the change of my constituents, I have entered on a second term of administration, I am sensible that I shall have the assurance that I will exert my best endeavors to administer faithfully the Executive Department, and will zealously co-operate with you in any measure which may tend to secure the liberty, property, and personal safety of our fellow-citizens, and to consolidate the republican forms of our principles of our government. I am sensible that your session will be a busy one, and which I can give for the dispatch of the public business, and all the information necessary for your deliberations of which the interests of our own country, and the confidence reposed in us by others, will admit a communication.

TH: JEFFERSON.

December 30, 1853.