

Mr. Howes,

An old subscriber to the Federal Gazette, not frequently troublesome, solicits the favor that the following may have an early appearance in your paper. It being on a commercial subject, the writer prefers your columns for its circulation.

A government, founded upon equality of rights, owing its very existence to the citizens upon whom it must operate, naturally possesses the support of those citizens in its progress; until corruption of principle either in private persons or in those to whom the government is entrusted, diverts the attention from a this laudable and regular channel.

The excellent construction of that government, which owes to the people of the United States its existence, affords the most delightful prospect of human happiness. All citizens are allowed to speak their own language in the choice of those to whom the general interest is entrusted; & create their own legislators and governors.

Thus it would appear that without corruption, our guardians who, going from amongst us, feeling in the ordinary course of things, the necessity of those regulations which suppress the evils of designing characters, and support the virtuous in their regular pursuit, that nothing could be wanting, attainable by the power of man, in relation to government, to complete the felicity of a free people.

But when we, as individuals, see, or most seriously feel our national character sinking, the public good declining, our means of defence destroyed the moment that our commerce stands subject to the oppression of belligerent fury, and our merchants confused and oppressed by the frivolous arrangements of our own government, tending to no general advantage, certainly it must appear that ignorance or a wretched depravity contaminates that system, to which we look for our political blessings.

These things cannot be doubted, when we recollect the late enthusiasm for the sale of our public vessels, and the zeal for destroying every thing which bore the face of defensive preparations, merely to come under that beautiful and favorite system of moderation and economy. But in the erection of a new sort of navy, consisting of gun-boats, (an economical order indeed) we discover a propensity to satisfy the public wish—though so completely enveloped in ignorance that no one yet has ever been able to discover any useful result.

The ingenuity displayed by discovering to the people of the United States, that their taxes were considerably reduced by the present ruling party, because none of it was collected in the interior, is a delusion beyond common. It is their duty to know, that notwithstanding the sale of public vessels, bank-stock & lands, to a large amount, this delusion could not be maintained without levying a tax of much greater magnitude than all which was repealed put together.

So completely was this system of moderation and economy known to all Europe, and so completely was it carried into effect that the lethargic spirit of our present rulers, and our defenceless condition, invited the different powers of Europe to trample with impunity upon our neutral rights.

That our national character is falling, no one can deny, when they contemplate the respect commanded by our ministers abroad, and that we must pay tribute to one nation, to gain the privilege of contracting with another. The respect shown for our neutrality by foreign nations, is another, amongst the many proofs, of our high standing.

But when I come to a consideration of that important, but disgraceful fact, that our merchants are confused and oppressed by the frivolous arrangements of our own government, I speak for myself, and would look to our guardians for those wholesome regulations, which I have a right to expect; but alas! I fear we expect in vain, until the collected wisdom of all honest citizens shall replenish the cabinet with able statesmen, where now preside the magnanimous philosophers. The universal embarrassment to which our commerce has been abandoned, is too seriously recollected by the unfortunate victims of foreign oppression. The open sea did not afford complete gratification to the growing avarice of cruisers, knowing no opposition, but our harbors were watched for booty. From the mouths of our bays and rivers, and even our ports, the property of our citizens, scarcely yet borne on the Atlantic, becomes the prize, without regard to justice, to a profligate seaman, and notwithstanding this degrading system had become so universally notorious, the moderation of our government could feel nothing of the insults, nor regard the interest of our citizens, until shame! shame! was cried from all parts of the union. The consequence of this universal outcry, was a partial restriction upon the importation of British goods after a stated period. But the different occurrences at the same time, so developed every wish of our government that little credit was given to it, either in England or this country. The face of the law bore evidence of its design.

Passing over the impracticability of maintaining a commerce with any nation upon the minute of such a regulation, without

the greatest risk to our own merchants, it will only remain to contemplate the present situation of that law, imperfect as it is, in relation to ourselves.

It was expected that the first act of our new congress would not be a continuance of error, but a repeal of the law, at least until the result of our new mission had reached us. But in their wisdom its operation was suspended to the 1st July, with the power lodged in the president, to make a further suspension until December next, provided the public interest should require it. Now it is generally believed that a repeal will certainly take place. But of this we are not certain. And notwithstanding the president states a probability of adjustment, new difficulties may arise and render it incompatible with his views further to suspend its operation.

Thus our merchants, whose business it has been to import British manufactures & dispose of them either to our own or foreign citizens, insuring to themselves a certain profit, which constituted their living, are left by this embarrassing suspension, without the knowledge how to proceed in their trade for the present year. It is now time to shape their business for the ensuing fall. But to order those articles which are prohibited after the 1st July, would be an attempt to contravene an existing law of our country, and render our property liable to confiscation. And to direct our trade to any other country for goods of this description, while the prospect of repeal is so great, would be ridiculous indeed. It is well known that no country furnishes these articles so cheap, or so well calculated for our market as Great-Britain. And to receive goods higher charged and not so well calculated for our trade at a moment when the embarrassment may be removed, would subject ourselves to the risk of much loss, by the difficulty we might experience in disposing of them.

Had there been one plain systematic order, a murmur could not arise. Had a prohibitory law been enacted, which wore the prospect of being acted upon at a stated period, some calculation might direct the routine of that part of our trade. But while we are denied by a law in one hand a certain privilege, indications of acquiescence are held out in the other.

We are told from high authority that our differences with England are in a fair train of settlement. But must we be lured into danger by this enticing tale? It is hard to decide. Should some unguarded trader, on whose prosperity perhaps, may hang the earthly blessings of a wife and children, become a victim to this milk-and-water law, where is the redress? A relief from the public fund cannot be expected. It was a violation of law, and the penalty must bear upon him. Perhaps he may find relief in that overflowing treasury of wisdom, firmness & moderation, the influence of a magnanimous soul.

From this unfortunate condition what have we a right to expect? Shall we imitate the virtuous example of our patriotic chief in forbearance, by a silent relinquishment of a part of our living? Or shall we with a more daring spirit, act as tho' no embarrassment existed upon our prospect in regard to England? Or shall we embark in the dangers of a trade with another nation, while our plans are fraught with the prospect of loss? Or shall we more reasonably expect our government to relieve the oppression by a definitive arrangement? This latter is a reasonable expectation, growing out of our immediate wants. And to prevent the laudable pursuit of a free citizen, for no general good, certainly unhinges every nerve of enterprise, and is contrary to the very spirit of our political union. Our situation calls most seriously upon the people, in whom exists the power, to correct those evils, which in their progress must soon lead to an issue, as disgraceful to the nation, as injurious to individuals. Who can doubt from these facts that our political doctrine is perverted? That ignorance must be the spring of so great an evil, no reasonable man can deny.

Must we proceed to further difficulties in this ruinous channel, or fly to a change of men to protect our property, to regulate our trade, and to save our political existence.

A Native Trader.

FROM THE BOSTON PALLADIUM.

COMMON LAW.

The inconsistency of the democrats is proverbial and characteristic. They are so restless, absurd and querulous, that if you remove one cause of complaint, they loudly complain because you have removed it. In the year 1787, one of their objections to our constitution was, that it did not expressly secure and guarantee to the people the benefits and privileges of the common law, without any restriction or limitation. Parts of this law certainly are not adapted to the manners and habits of the citizens of this country; and those parts the federalists contended should not be enforced, because they were too sanguine and cruel for the people not yet ripe in wickedness. But in these days the democrats complain because any part of that law is retained. We would ask them, what is this law, against which they raise such clamors?

One of our brightest luminaries of law observes on this subject:

"Whence comes this enmity to the common law? It is of mushroom growth.

Look through the journals of congress during the revolutionary war, you will find it claimed as the great charter of liberty; as our best birth-right and noblest inheritance."

"Why do I love the common law, especially the criminal part? I will tell you, and I think you will say that I have reason on my side, as I am one of the people.— Because, as Mr. Randolph says, it enabled Horn Tooke, Thomas Hardy and Mr. Thelwall, with a jury, to pass unhurt through the flames of ministerial persecution. Because, to the common law we are indebted for trial by jury, grand and petit, without the unanimous consent of which latter, I cannot be convicted. Because it secures me a fair trial by challenges, the laws of evidence, confronting me with my accuser, and exempting one from accusing himself, or being twice liable to trial for the same offence. These things would constitute a redeeming spirit against all attacks, were its assaults twice as numerous as they are.

"Abolish the common law, judging not by instances but by principle, where are you? Shew me an indictment of any kind, even for assault and battery, it is bottomed on common law; with us we have no course of proceeding in criminal cases but by the modes of the common law, except in cases of murder and treason."

A distinguished democratic judicial officer, who understands and correctly estimates the value of the common law, observes, "It is in the volumes of the common law we are to seek for information in the far greater number as well as the most important causes, that come before our tribunals. That invaluable code has introduced & perpetuated that admirable institution, the free-man's trial by jury. Much abuse has of late teemed upon its invaluable institutions. To treat it justly they should be able to comprehend the whole. Those who understand it best entertain the highest opinion of its excellence. No other persons are competent judges of it. Those who know it know that it regulates with a sound discretion, most of our concerns in civil and social life; her rules are the result of the wisdom of ages."

Notwithstanding the excellence & utility of this part of our law, it experiences from the democrats, all that abuse, which has been poured on every institution that adorns and improves our country. It is, however, worthy of remark, that those persons have been most zealous in opposition to it, who have been most in danger of enduring coercion and restraint on account of their violation of its just and equitable regulations.

From the Mercantile Advertiser.

PROSPECTUS OF A PLAN

For an effectual defence of New-York.

Proposed by Archibald Robertson.

It requires not to be demonstrated, nay it is admitted almost as an axiom, that forts or land batteries alone cannot prevent New-York from being surprised by an enemy, even of very weak force. Who can deny but that a frigate, even in defiance of all the works that may be erected betwixt the city and the ocean, might without much peril, come along side of our docks? One principal cause of which is, that cannon cannot be wielded with the same facility as a fowling piece; and if that were practicable, it could only at most be expected to cripple the enemy, prior to their arrival at our doors, by a few chance shot: weighty artillery cannot be expected to hit a flying object! But were it practicable to arrest an enemy, and lay him stationary under the fire of our guns, then might some effectual security be found against the attack of the most powerful naval force. The following observations include a proposal for this purpose, and the point most proper is the gorge of the channel at the Narrows, by means of an elastic and flexible boom and chain, laid in the form of a salient angle, the moorings of which are light and calculated to give way to any impression greater than what is necessary to retain it in its position against wind and tide; and by means of its flexibility, elasticity, and levity, it will arrest by a gradual retardation the heaviest vessel. This boom is constructed by floating a strong chain by sufficiently large and buoyant logs; and these logs attached to each other to any length required, and laid in the form of a V with the point outwards. Along each arm of the V, or salient angle, are attached eight cables, with grapplings of three fathoms of sufficient weight to retain the boom in its place, but to give way upon the pressure of any extraordinary impulse upon it. The effect of this construction will be,

1st. A vessel impelling against it, is not repulsed; but the moorings being light, give way to the pressure till such time as the assailing vessel's way is gradually stopped, and she lays at the mercy of our batteries.

2. It is well known that the largest vessel under full sail can be brought to by dropping one or at most two anchors, if the anchoring ground is but tolerably good. So much more readily will a heavy vessel be brought to by being gradually retarded.

3. When a moving vessel first bears against this boom the weight of it first retards her way; she then presses on till she starts and drags one or two grapplings. If she still presses on, she drags two more; and there is no question, if she should still press on, but she must eventually be bro't to, and so lay helpless and at mercy.

4. But as there is but little probability that any moving vessel can keep her direct course, after so much resistance, she will be thrown down with her broadside to the boom; and, if she continues moving, must infallibly be cast aground either on Long-

Island shoal or Staten-Island shore, according to which face of the salient angle she may strike upon, directly under our batteries; in which case her destruction or surrender is insured.

5. If six or more vessels assail at once, the effect will be alike destructive to them. The original form of the salient angle will no doubt, be altered: but the boom cannot be broke, and they can only entangle themselves in it to more sure destruction; and, at worst, propel it from the shape of a salient to that of a re-entering angle.

6. The channel of the river is not in the least interrupted; as the boom may be moored agreeably to the current of the river, in sections 200 yards long; when, in the course of a few minutes, it may be floated round into a line on the least appearance of an enemy, in its true form of a salient angle, at any time of tide.

7. The situation of the channel is very favorable for this mode of defence; it is of sufficient breadth to give operation to the flexibility of the boom; and the whole lies under the commanding ground of the Signal Hill; where the works and batteries of any description or strength may be erected; by which the right flank is defended, and on perhaps stronger ground upon the left, by works on the Long-Island shore, having the shoal in front; aided by a flotilla, which will act as a moving battery, to take advantage of the entanglement of the enemy's vessels. They will be raked by a cross fire in this situation that must be irresistible.

8. And though last, perhaps not the least importance is the cheapness of the boom. The cost at the extreme is but 32,230 dollars, and it may cost less; for as the chain that was at West-Point is still serviceable, the expence may be reduced one-third.

The works necessary to defend the above will be three batteries on Long and the same on Staten-Island, protected in the rear by regular pentagons of 5 bastions, which construction best suits the form of the river at this point; and the probable cost of all the above may be covered by less than 500,000 dollars.

Whatever number of ships of force, floating batteries and gun-boats, &c. can be added, so much the better; the greater the quantity of fire that can be poured on the enemy in the shortest possible time, so much the sooner will he be overcome.

It must be remarked that the flanks of the boom are to be placed immediately under the shore, so that the guns on each rake its adjacent arm of the V or salient angle. Also, that the more oblique or acute, the salient angle is, so much more efficacious it will prove; provided the angle is within point blank cannon shot, which is 1200 toises. But the breadth of the river at the Narrows is but 900, so that batteries on either shore command the whole field.

The span of the channel at the flanks of the boom is 1200 yards; with a shoal on the Long-Island shore of 3 feet depth at low water, and about 600 yards breadth. The depth of the middle channel is 15 fathoms, with as fine anchoring as is to be found any where. This channel shoals to 4 fathom on Staten-Island, and to 2 on the Long-Island side. The flood sets in on the Staten-Island shore, and the ebb on the Long-Island, at the rate of from 4 to 4 1/2 knots per hour.

The great advantage which ships of force have against land batteries, is when they can lay close along side of them; so that, by musketry from their tops, they destroy them in the battery. But here, by the elevation of ground on Signal-Hill, they lose this advantage on the one flank; and on the other, by means of the shoal on Long-Island, they are kept at a proper and respectful distance; so that, in every way, the enemy is totally disarmed, and New-York will remain impregnable to the most powerful fleet by the means of gradually retarding the enemy's career, till he is finally arrested, immediately under the fire of our guns.

Documents accompanying the bill repealing the acts laying duties on salt, and continuing in force for a further time the first section of the act intitled "An act further to protect the commerce and seamen of the United States against the Barbary powers."

COMMITTEE ROOM,

December 12, 1806.

The committee of ways and means, to whom has been referred that part of the message of the president of the United States, of the 2d instant, which suggests the expediency of abolishing the duties on salt, and of continuing, for a limited time, those duties, the proceeds of which constitute the Mediterranean fund, have instructed me to request that you will furnish them with such information, in possession of the treasury department, as you may deem connected with the subject.

I am, sir, with very high respect, your's,
JOHN RANDOLPH.

The secretary of the treasury.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,

December 18, 1806.

I had the honor to receive your letter of the 12th inst, requesting such information as I might deem connected with the proposition for abolishing the duty on salt, and for continuing, for a limited time, the duties which constitute the Mediterranean fund.

An examination of the report made on the 5th inst. in obedience to the provisions of the act, supplementary to the act to establish the treasury department, will shew, that if no other expences whatever shall be

incurred, but such as are already authorised by law, neither the salt tax nor the Mediterranean fund are any longer wanted. The propriety of continuing the last mentioned fund for a limited time, must be decided by considerations connected with the political situation of the United States. For it is only to provide for the speedy payment of any contemplated acquisition of territory, without creating a new debt, or in case of war, that the fund can be wanted. Under existing circumstances, I should think it consistent with prudence to continue it for one year longer.

As to the duty on salt, the only additional information which appears connected with the subject, is what relates to the allowance heretofore made to vessels employed in the cod fishery. For this perhaps exceeds the duties paid on the importation of the salt employed in curing the fish.

The allowance has amounted,

	Dollars.
For the year 1803, to	117,174
For the year 1804, to	145,987
For the year 1805, to	152,928

The quantity of dried American fish exported, during the year ending on the 30th September, 1803, to

	quintals.
461,870	
For the year ending the 30th September, 1804, to	567,825
And for the year ending 30th September, 1805, to	514,549

But the quantity of fish of that description, consumed within the United States, is not known.

The bounty paid on the exportation of pickled fish, pork and beef, is said to be no more than the duty on the salt used in curing the same.

Should there be any points on which further elucidations are wanted, and the committee will be pleased to designate what they are, their directions will be immediately attended to.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,

ALBERT GALLATIN.

Hon. JOHN RANDOLPH, chairman of the committee of ways and means.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT.

January 23, 1807.

I have the honor to inclose a statement of the quantity of salt imported into the several ports of the United States and exported therefrom to foreign countries, during the year ending on the 30th day of September, 1805.

I have the honor to be very respectfully, sir your obedient servant.

ALBERT GALLATIN.

Hon. John Randolph, Chairman of the committee of Ways and Means.

A statement, shewing the quantity of salt imported into the several ports of the United States, and exported therefrom, during the year ending on the 30th September, 1805.

Ports.	Imp't.	Exp't.
Portsmouth,	bushels, 66,086	
Vermont,	5,958	
Newburyport,	133,305	
Gloucester,	21,300	
Salem,	53,884	2,882
Marblehead,	49,219	219
Boston,	641,753	4,411
Plymouth,	257,148	
Barnstable,	14,729	
Nantucket,	24,640	
New-Bedford,	55,925	
Dighton,	14,041	
York,	7,706	
Biddeford,	3,445	
Kennebunk,	14,364	
Portland,	243,897	2,113
Bath,	14,405	
Wiscasset,	13,420	
Waldoborough,	11,028	
Penobscot,	10,022	
Frenchmans Bay,	1,200	
Passamaquoddy,	657	
Newport,	40,493	6
Bristol,	6,850	
Providence,	73,439	1,084
New-London,	92,405	222
Middletown,	39,229	
New-Haven,	48,099	
Fairfield,	22,002	
Champlaine,	2,185	
Hudson,	23,478	1,882
Sag Harbour,	5,200	
New-York,	742,275	
Perrh Amboy,	989	
Philadelphia,	155,073	1,554
Presque Isle,	20	
Baltimore,	169,292	
Georgetown, (Columbia)	3,378	
Alexandria,	47,615	
Norfolk,	296,040	
Petersburg,	27,653	
Richmond,	9,333	
Tappanhook,	7,184	
Folly Landing,	257	
Wilmington (N. G.)	88,919	
Newbern,	13,125	
Washington,	22,115	
Edenton,	24,937	
Camden,	1,401	
Beaufort (N. C.)	2,906	
Georgetown (S. C.)	17,753	
Charleston,	127,280	517
Savannah,	72,371	
St. Mary's,	366	
Miami,	34	
Detroit,	13	
Michillimackinac,	127	
New-Orleans,	42,914	40
Mobile,	7	
Total bushels,	3,652,276	15,544

Treasury Department,

Register's Office,

January 2d, 1807.

JOSEPH NOURSE, Register.