

The Gazette.

PHILADELPHIA,
FRIDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 20.

LETTER from Mr. PICKERING
Secretary of State, to the Chevalier DE
TRUPEL, Envoy Extraordinary and Mi-
nister Plenipotentiary of his Catholic Ma-
jesty to the United States of America.
(Continued from the Pittsburg Gazette.)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE.
Philadelphia, August 8th, 1797.

On this, as well as on another occasion, you have thought fit to upbraid me with showing to the British minister a degree of candour and confidence which you impute he does not deserve, and which, you seem to think, I have withheld from you. Yet, sir, all the declarations made to me by that minister, verbally and in writing, touching the points in controversy between you and me, have been verified. As I have already said, you declared to me that you had just reasons for suspecting that an expedition was preparing on the lakes by the English, in order to attack Upper Louisiana. The British minister, in the first instance, assured me that he had no knowledge of it—and his subsequent inquiries enabled him further to assure me, that no such expedition had been or was intended by the British government. And I have in another place offered other reasons which confirm the truth of these assurances. Yet you tell me that the assurance given me by the British minister, but without any signature, did not inspire the servants of his Catholic Majesty with the same blind confidence which it produced in me. I shall take no other notice of this remark, than to put you right in point of fact. The note of the British minister containing the assurance to which you refer, is not "without a signature." This (like other official notes from that minister) has his signature—his name written with his own hand—at the head of it.

You declared to me "that you knew to a certainty that the English had made propositions to general Clarke, of Georgia, in order to avail themselves of his influence in that State, together with some other persons, for making a diversion, or serious attack against Florida." The British minister informed me, that although he knew nothing of general Clarke or his expedition from Georgia, a proposition had been made to him (the British minister) for an expedition against the Floridas; but that he told the projector that he had no power to authorize it: and besides, that there were among other objections to the plan, two of great weight—one that the Indians were to be employed—the other, that it would violate the neutral rights of the United States. The British minister has since shown me an original letter from lord Grenville, dated the 8th of last April, in which he informs the minister, that if there were no other objections to the plan, the two mentioned by him, viz. that it could not be executed without employing the Indians—and without violating the rights of the United States, would be sufficient to induce the British government to reject it. This proves, sir, that Mr. Ligon's declarations on this point were not "vague and unauthentic" as you pronounce them, but in strict conformity with truth.

As to general Clarke of Georgia, the British minister declared he had never even heard of him; and the extract of the letter from Mr. Jackson, the district attorney of Georgia, respecting gen. Clarke and any expedition forming there, in behalf of the English against the Floridas, will incline every candid inquirer at least to doubt whether such a project has ever been proposed to him. We shall afterwards see that Mr. Blount's plot does not appear to have any connection with an expedition under general Clarke.

Thus you see, sir, that I have not blindly placed a confidence in the British minister: for aught that has yet appeared, he was entitled to the credit he has received.

I return to your letter. You mention your communications to the baron de Carondelet respecting the intended expedition from Canada: from that moment, you say, imperious necessity, and the great principle of self-defence, made his Catholic Majesty's officers turn their thoughts to objects of a more urgent nature than running the boundary line. And here you introduce "Mr. Blount's letter, and the late detected conspiracy, as evincing how far their conduct in this respect was necessary." It is wonderful, sir, that you should attempt to make it be believed that Mr. Blount's letter and the late detected conspiracy, had any connection with the expedition which you suggested was preparing on the lakes of Canada against Upper Louisiana. All that is yet discovered of Mr. Blount's project or conspiracy, proves that it was to have been formed in one of the flats south of the river Ohio; and that it was destined against the Floridas, and perhaps Lower Louisiana. I therefore, feel myself, for this and the other reasons before exhibited, still warranted in considering the suspected Canada expedition among the pretences for delaying to evacuate the posts, and to run the boundary line: and consequently that your charge, that I have in this instance "palpably attempted to make groundless and unfair imputations on the public mind," is alike unfounded and unbecoming your public character to suggest.

In your next paragraph you thus address me. "Nor do your ill-founded insinuations stop here: sentiments and expressions still more violent, flow from that same hasty pen." This passage is in perfect correspondence with the general strain of your letter. Whether your charge is correctly made, is now to be examined.

I am ready to confess that my report thus stigmatized was, from the pleasure of

business, written in haste: but a revision of it satisfies me, nevertheless, that it is not inaccurate in its statements.

You quote the passage in my report which has called forth this reproach; it is in these words: "That there is but too much reason to believe Mr. Ellicott's suspicions well founded, that an undue influence has been exercised over the Indians by the officers of his Catholic Majesty, to prepare them for a rupture with the United States." And then you say that I mention the source of these "dreadful conjectures" to be, a private letter from Mr. Sargent, Secretary of the North Western Territory. Here you are extremely incorrect; as usual when you undertake to recite my conclusions, and the facts and circumstances upon which they are formed. It is from "a view of the whole correspondence" referred to in my reports of the 10th of June and 3d of July—On the intelligence received by the Secretary of War—and the private letter from colonel Sargent, that I drew the conclusion you have quoted.

Mr. Ellicott formed his suspicions on the spot, from what was passing before him; and he is not a careless or undiscerning observer.

General Wilkinson says—"Letters from all quarters announce the discontent and menacing aspect of the Savages; two white men have been recently murdered on the Ohio below the Cumberland; and the Savages beyond the Mississippi, and those who pass Massac, make no hesitation to avow their purpose for war." And then he refers to a letter from colonel Hamtramck, who commands the United States troops at Detroit, in which the colonel says—"I am pretty sure that both the French and Spaniards have emissaries among the Indians. I have it from indubitable authority, that a large belt [by which is meant a speech] from the Spaniards is now travelling through the different nations;" meaning the nations within the territories of the United States.

Colonel Sargent writes, it is true, a private letter; but it is to a public officer; and his situation as Secretary and Governor for the time, of the North Western Territory, would render it his duty to be vigilant for its safety; and his character vouches for the accuracy of his information; and you do not question the truth of any part of his statement.

After mentioning that the Spaniards were re-inforcing their upper posts on the Mississippi, that upwards of three hundred men had arrived at St. Louis and were erecting formidable works; he adds—"It likewise appears, through various channels, that they are inviting a great number of Indians of the territory (meaning of the United States, North West of the Ohio) to cross the Mississippi: And for this express purpose, Mr. Loran, an officer in the pay of the crown, made a tour through all this country last fall; since which time several Indians have been sent on the same errand, and generally furnished with plenty of cash to defray their expenses."—A large party of Delawares passed down White River about the 6th of May, on their way to the Spanish side bearing the national flag of Spain, sent them from St. Louis.

Lieutenant Pope, in his letter of May 9th, to the Secretary of War, says, "There have been several attempts made to draw on the Indians upon my troops: I have fully ascertained this fact, and demanded of the Governor to have a principal actor immediately brought to punishment, or sent out of the country. He has been sent for, and is now on board one of the Gallies, which is now about descending the river."—And, sir, if you enquire, you will find that this "principal actor" (Rapelje by name) was one of Governor Gayoso's agents.

These, sir, are the grounds on which I expressed the opinion, that there was but too much reason to believe Mr. Ellicott's suspicions well founded, that the officers of Spain had exercised an undue influence over the Indians to prepare them for a rupture with the United States.

This detail, sir, strikingly shews how little you have understood, and how entirely you have misrepresented my reasoning on this subject. I leave you to reconcile your reflections on the British Minister and his nation for their inhumanity in employing the Indians in the American war, with your justification of the Spanish officers at this time, in securing the aid of the Indians in your war with the British. "The Spaniards (you say) have fortified St. Louis and availed themselves of every means of defence which the country afforded;" meaning by the ingenious expression every means of defence which the country afforded, the employing of the Indians.

You are pleased next to charge me, in your customary style, with "falling into the most glaring inconsistency," because I remark that although, "it may be difficult to say whether this plan of exciting the Indians to direct hostilities against the United States, has been contemplated and promoted by any of our own citizens; yet it is certain that one or more of those citizens have proposed and taken measures to detach the Southern Indians from the interests of the United States, and to destroy the influence of the public agents over those nations, and thus to defeat the great objects of their appointment; the chief of which is to preserve peace."

Having quoted this passage from my report, you ask "How is it possible to reconcile such evident contradictions? On the one hand the Spanish officers are those who excite the southern Indians against the United States, and on the other you quickly follow presuming, with sufficient foundation in my opinion, that it may be some citizens of the United States." Allow me, sir, to ask in my turn, how it was possible for you not to see that heretere is no contradiction? Is it not very possible that the Spanish officers might be courting the Chickasaws, who live above the Natchez, with large presents, and be preparing the Choc-

taws, who dwell along the Natchez district, and the Delawares, Shawanees, Miamis, and other tribes dwelling in the territory north-west of the Ohio, for war against the United States, while Mr. Blount and his agents were detaching the southern tribes of Cherokees and Creeks from the interests of the United States, and eventually to aid the British in an enterprise against the Floridas? The Cherokees and Creeks, you might have seen, were the only Indian nations mentioned in Governor Blount's letter. And is it not very possible, if these two nations should thus be led to war against the Spanish possessions, that they might not be excited to direct hostilities against the United States? And, therefore, that although Mr. Blount might contemplate the former, he might abstain from the latter? And is it not then my cautious manner of speaking of this latter, perfectly correct?

I am happy to arrive at your last observation. And I wish it was not, like the rest, exceptionable and incorrect. These are your words—"Respecting the last article of your report, I have only to observe, that although you have constantly assured me that government had not the least information respecting the subject of my representations, and although the letter of Mr. Jackson, of Georgia, appears to coincide with your ideas, nevertheless time has shewn that I have complied with my duty by not reposing on such assurances. The plot is discovered, and nobody any longer doubts the expedition was to have taken place."

The expression that "you complied with your duty in not reposing on such assurances" may mean that you thought the assurances deceitful, and, therefore, not meriting belief. Perhaps you did not intend this. Perhaps you meant no more than that the government had been "remiss" in its duty, in not pursuing with eagerness the trains of your various suspicions. But I must shew you that here (as in all other instances) your criminations are void of foundation, in either point of view.

The last article of the report respects general Clarke of Georgia, to whom you said you knew of a certainty that the English had made propositions in order to avail themselves of his influence in that State, with some other persons, for making a diversion or serious attack against Florida; and you add that "you do not doubt that in consequence of your information, the executive government will take the proper steps that Georgia also should not infringe the laws of neutrality." Here you confine your requests to Georgia, that she might not infringe the laws of neutrality; and my letter to Charles Jackson, Esquire, the district attorney of that State, shews that the government took prompt measures to defeat the project of general Clarke and his associates, if such a project existed. I suppose none did exist: You acknowledge that the letter from Mr. Jackson coincides with my ideas. Your "certain knowledge" of an intended expedition in favor of the English from Georgia against Florida, under general Clarke, you have never supported by a shadow of evidence. If you possessed any evidence of the fact, it would be easy to produce it. What you call your "certain knowledge" could rest only on information, or the testimony of others, which might be as false or as vague and inconclusive, as the information about the Canada expedition; which I hope I have proved, to your conviction, never to have existed, even in idea. Yet you declared to me that you had "just reasons for suspecting that expeditions was preparing on the lakes;" and hence how can I avoid concluding, that your "certain knowledge" in one case, like your "just reasons" in the other, were without a sufficient foundation.

But you say "The plot is discovered, and nobody any longer doubts that the expedition was to have taken place." Strange remark! Just the reverse of it should have been made. For although there is a discovery of Mr. Blount's plot, its extent is by no means ascertained; and far from nobody doubting, probably every body doubts whether the projected expedition was to have taken place. It was not to be undertaken but in conjunction with a British force—and on the proposal of the expedition to the British government it was totally rejected. Even Mr. Blount, who, if the project was adopted, expected to be at the head of it, ventures no farther than to say he believed that the plan would be attempted, but if attempted, that it would not be the "fall;" and consequently your zeal in March and April, for which, at the expense of decency towards the American government, you take to yourself so much credit, had then no just object. This zeal of yours is displayed in the information you gave to the baron de Carondelet, in March or April, of the expedition supposed to be preparing in Canada against Upper Louisiana: yet you would now attempt to justify this zeal by the plot of Mr. Blount; although this plot and the Canada expedition were wholly distinct and unconnected.

I shall conclude this long letter with your eleven positions, which you state with as much serious formality as if they were all of them important, and all of them supported by facts or just reasoning. But the details I have given demonstrate that these positions are either unfounded, or simple propositions of not the smallest consequence.

These are your positions addressed to me in your own words.

1st. That on the 27th of February I gave you sufficient particulars respecting the intended expedition, to have attracted the attention of this government.

Answer. I have offered reasons to prove that you gave me no particulars, but only mentioned your suspicions, and that you promised to give me your representations in writing; for which, of course, it was proper for me to wait.

2. That altho' to this verbal communication, I added another in writing on the 2d of March, the President had not the least knowledge of it on the 9th of the same month; and that without doubt you must

have had very powerful motives to prevent you from communicating it to him.

Answer. I have accounted for the delay in a satisfactory manner. I have shewn that I had abundant reason to conclude your suspicions to be wholly unfounded, and for attaching no sort of consequence to them. The event demonstrates that I was right; and that instead of very powerful motives, none were needed for a delay of only four or five days, or for a much longer period; and that to notice your naked suspicions at all, was not an act of necessity, but of complaisance. I might with justice complain of your delay to answer my letter of the 16th of March, on a subject of very high importance to the United States, I mean the evacuation of the posts. I will not say that you were negligent—or "remiss"—but I will say that for a whole month you omitted to give me your short and unsatisfactory answer. The indisposition which you assign as the cause of the delay, did not prevent you from writing on other subjects—nor long from going abroad.

3. That it does not appear by the documents presented by the Secretary of War, that government had given orders to the military commanders to cause the territory and neutrality of the United States to be respected.

Answer. I have shewn that none were necessary to be given.

4. That you made to the English minister a communication which in my opinion you ought not; and that even if you thought it necessary, you delayed doing it for two months, that is from the 27th of February to the 28th of April, although it respected a most urgent and important object.

Answer. On the 28th of April, I informed you by letter that I had communicated to the British minister your suspicions of an expedition preparing by the English against Upper Louisiana; and as for upwards of two months you expressed no dissatisfaction on account of this communication, I might well conclude you did not think it improper. Nay in your letter of July 11th, which I am now answering, you refer with apparent approbation to this very communication, connected with the declaration which accompanied it to the British minister, that the President could not consent to the march of any troops, either British or Spanish, through the territory of the United; and you consider it as a "determinate disposition" of the American government on this point. I have also shewn, that admitting this communication to Mr. Ligon to be proper, I did not delay doing it for two months nor two weeks; altho' it respected at best but an imaginary project.

5. That the Baron de Carondelet could very well have received my letters, without its necessarily following that his had come to hand.

Answer. I have shewn that you did not understand my reasoning on this point; which went to prove that your answer of the 17th of April to my letter of the 16th of March, about the evacuation of the posts, was wanting in candour.

6. That the Baron did not represent Mr. Ellicott's not writing to him officially as a complaint, but as an observation, and that in fact he never has done it in those terms.

Answer. I have shewn that whether the Baron's assertion should have been called a complaint or an observation was perfectly immaterial; I meant to shew it was unfounded; and this you yourself admit.

7. That the proofs you allege to exculpate Mr. Ellicott respecting his intentions of taking the fort of Natchez by surprise are purely negative.

Answer. I offered them only as negative proofs. Yet when one complaint or assertion against Mr. Ellicott was known and acknowledged not to be true, the negative testimony of gentlemen likely to be well informed, would be deemed sufficient to bring another, and in its nature very improbable, complaint or assertion of the same person, into discredit.

8. That it is not merely pretences, but very powerful reasons which have impeded the evacuation of the Posts, and the running of the boundary line.

Answer. The point of view in which I have now exhibited the conduct of the Spanish governors relative to the evacuation of the posts and the running of the boundary line I should suppose might convince you that the causes which they have offered for the delay, are mere pretences: the American citizens, to whom you have appealed, have been convinced only by reading the printed documents, without any comments.

9. That the insinuations with which you are willing to persuade the American people that our arming is directed against them, are unjust as well as unfounded, as by Mr. Blount's letter it is clearly demonstrated to be a precaution for the mere purpose of defence.

Answer. The grounds of my suggestions, which you call "insinuations" are detailed in this letter, and embrace too many facts and circumstances to be abridged:—permit me to desire you to review them. I shall only repeat, that nothing is more certain than that Mr. Blount's letter has not the remotest reference to the suspected Canada expedition; which is your only pretence for reinforcing the posts in Upper Louisiana—for calling the Indians to your aid—for holding the posts at the Natchez, and Walnut Hills—and for delaying to run the boundary line.

10. That you evidently contradicted yourself, when on one hand you are pleased to attribute to us the movements of the Indians, and in the very next paragraph you shew it might proceed from American citizens, as it actually does, according to Mr. Blount's letter; and that he acted with the knowledge and intelligence of the very same British minister, in whose private notes, without signature, and perhaps not of his own hand writing, you place such implicit confidence.

Answer. I have shewn that there is not a shadow of contradiction in my observations

on this subject; and your assertions to the contrary must proceed only from your not understanding them. You say that Mr. Blount acted in this matter with the knowledge and intelligence of the British minister. This is not likely to be true. It is in proof, by other evidence than the British minister's notes, that he did not and could not authorize the projected expedition against the Floridas—and particularly that one of his strong objections against it was, that it contemplated the employing of the Indians; although he thought it proper to submit the project to the consideration and decision of his government. Nobody therefore will believe that he authorized Mr. Blount, or was even privy to his measures, for preparing the Indians for war. Besides, Doctor Romayne, who may be presumed to be well acquainted with Mr. Blount's plot, suggests that it is not the project offered to Mr. Ligon by Chisholm. These are his words: "Mr. Blount is totally unknown to Mr. Ligon, and so are all his views." And there is a passage in Mr. Blount's letter which countenances the doctor's assertion, and indicates, that although Chisholm and Blount had some communications with each other, yet that their views were not precisely the same. Mr. Blount, in his letter to Carey, says, "Where Captain Chisholm is, I do not know.—I left him in Philadelphia, in March, and he frequently visited the minister and spoke upon the subject; but I believe he will go into the Creek nation by way of South-Carolina or Georgia. He gave out he was going to England; but I did not believe him." These last words afford a pretty strong proof that they were not acting wholly in concert. Probably Mr. Blount endeavoured to persuade Chisholm that he would co-operate in the prosecution of his scheme; while at the same time he might have another of his own or in concert with doctor Romayne, and stand ready in the event of things, to make his advantage of either; whichever should offer the best prospect of success: Doctor Romayne, you see, says that Mr. Blount is totally unknown to Mr. Ligon; but it is well known that Mr. Blount was your frequent guest, and intimate companion; and that he was on this intimate footing with you during the whole time that you were representing to the government your suspicions of British expeditions. Yet after the discovery of the conspiracy was made public, you formally requested the American government to punish him for so scandalous a crime. But seeing that Mr. Blount was a citizen of the United States, and not a subject of Spain, it would have been decent in you to have left him with his own government without interfering your advice. But especially when you knew that the President had laid his letter before Congress; and the two houses were deliberating on the mode of punishing him; when the investigation had proceeded so far that a committee of the Senate had reported a resolution to expel Mr. Blount from the Senate; and a committee of the House had reported a resolution that he should be impeached for high crimes and misdemeanors: For you then to interfere was singularly improper; and it was such an ostentatious display of zeal, as under all the known circumstances, suggests more than one interpretation.

11. That although in all your official communications, you have always manifested to me that the American government knew of nothing which indicated any foundation for my suspicions, Mr. Blount's letter clearly proves that I was perfectly in the right.

Answer. This remark is perfectly inconsequential; for your communications exhibited your suspicions of projected expeditions only from Canada and Georgia; and I have shewn that Mr. Blount's letter has no relation to either.

I thought I had reached the end of your criminations; but in your concluding paragraph you accuse of an "unjust partiality," meaning, no doubt, towards the British minister and his nation. The details I have given in this letter, I trust will abundantly prove that this charge is as unfounded as it is indecent. These details verify the representations of the conduct of certain Spanish officers which are given in my report of the 3d of July to the President. If the truth has excited any unpleasant sensations, those only are to blame whose injurious acts obliged me plainly to declare. Instead of this talk, I should have been happy to execute the grateful office of stating to the President the good faith and amicable manner in which the officers of his Catholic Majesty had executed the treaty of Friendship, limits and navigation between our two nations.

You think also that my report to the President is not calculated to strengthen the bonds of friendship which unite Spain and America.—Friendship, Sir, cannot subsist without mutual confidence; and confidence springs from sincerity. But the proceedings of the Spanish officers, which are the subject of this correspondence, have shaken the confidence of the government and of the citizens of the United States; and my report to the President only exhibits a summary of those proceedings; or rather the plain and obvious conclusions from the authentic facts and circumstances detailed in the documents, then and before presented to his view. And I dare venture to say, that every independent American, has from the same premises drawn the same conclusions.

Nothing, Sir, will give truer satisfaction to the government and citizens of the United States than to see such a change in the proceedings of the Spanish officers as will restore confidence. The change would be easy, and the effect certain. Let them withdraw their troops and garrisons from the territories of the United States. Let them commence and prosecute the running of the boundary line. Let them cease to stop, control or regulate the passage of our citizens on the Mississippi, seeing they have a right to navigate it with perfect freedom.—And let them cease to send Agents or Emissaries among the Indians residing within