Maryland Journal, 3 July 1787

Extract of a letter from Kentuckey, Fayette County, May 3, 1787.

"Although we are not unfrequently visited by the savages, and although our separation is become a serious subject, as it is drawing nigh, yet the public mind seems most attracted by our commercial prospects, of which the navigation of the Missisippi is our main hope. I agree with you, that the treaty with Spain might have a happy tendency to render useless attempts to cultivate tobacco, of course banish slavery, and, in their room, introduce European manufactures, which, in some degree, would compensate for the loss of trade.—But then, have you attentively considered that our country is, and will be for a long time, in want of hands sufficient to carry on manufactories to any good purpose.—That bulky articles must be our first exports, and that if those articles cannot be vended, it will greatly injure the landed interest. We would a thousand times rather agree that Congress would reverse the proposition, that is, for the Spanish court to agree to the free navigation of the Missisippi for 25 or 30 years, and after that period, to shut it for 25 years or more; by that time we will have made such advances in manufactures, particularly that of woollens, that we may find a vent for them up the Missisippi, and in Canada. Flax and hemp, the best in the world grows here; these can be made into still lighter fabrication, of course exported to a greater distance.

"I think I may affirm, by far the greater part of the people of this country join with you in disapproving of the sentiments of our letter-writer from the Falls of the Ohio, of December 4th and 6th last. I rather conclude it is the language of an individual who has received injury from the rapacious commandant at the Nachez, than the voice of the people of Kentuckey. They have too high a veneration for federal government to betray such disrespect; and it must be a repetition of injuries that will drive them to seek connexion with a people lately so hostile to their liberties.—Whilst I touch upon federal matters, give me leave to remind you to transmit, by the earliest conveyance, what you may learn has been done at the grand convention in Philadelphia.

"I am far from the opinion of some, that nothing else should be attempted, but to give the federal council a power to regulate foreign commerce. I think it would be of advantage to new-moddle and modernize the whole instrument, no matter whether in thirteen or twenty articles; and, perhaps, it will be found, that not the least of the defects of the present instrument is the having some states too large, others more ridiculously small, and the want of fixing, by precise limits, all the states; also providing a certain and regular mode for the erection of new states in the Western Country.—At a venture, however, this much might be attempted, to annex Rhode-Island to Connecticut, and Delaware to Maryland. All these you will say are Utopian schemes.

It may be so—but may not I say, if an essay is not made for a thorough reform, it will argue a want of wisdom and virtue somewhere?"

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