

Richmond, William

A letter on the
shipping interest from
W. Richmond to the el-
ectors of the Borough
of Tynemouth

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825
R43

A LETTER

OF

SHIPPING INTEREST,



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A LETTER
ON THE
SHIPPING INTEREST,

FROM

W. RICHMOND, ESQ.,

TO THE ELECTORS OF THE

BOROUGH OF TYNEMOUTH.

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W. RICHMOND, ESQ.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE

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WESTERN STATE OF WISCONSIN

WITNESSETH

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and the seal of the said State of Wisconsin, this 1st day of July, 1963.

1963

LEWIS AND CLARK

TO THE ELECTORS OF THE BOROUGH OF TYNEMOUTH.

“Thy riches, and thy fairs, thy merchandise, thy mariners, and thy pilots, thy calkers, and the occupiers of thy merchandise, and all thy men of war, that are in thee, and all thy company which is in the midst of thee, shall fall into the midst of the seas in the day of thy ruin.

And all that handle the oar, the mariners, and all the pilots of the sea, shall come down from their ships, they shall stand upon the land.

The merchants among the people shall hiss at thee; thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt be any more.”—*Ezekiel, chap. xxvii. ver. 27, 29, and 36.*

FELLOW TOWNSMEN,—

THE description which the wise and good Ezekiel of old, has given of Tyre, is (though in a far higher degree) applicable to you, inasmuch as the ships of the great Port of Newcastle, in their number and quality, the extent of their voyages, and the eminent skill of the mariners who direct them, are very superior to those of this ancient city, of which the Prophet has given us so admirable and graphic an illustration, in the chapter from which these verses are taken, that in some degree may be considered as the text or authority on which I found my argument—as it is evident from the *fate of this mighty mart*, that no human prosperity is permanent, or to be considered an inheritance.

After this prelude, I will endeavour—as briefly as the nature of the subject—or my own powers will permit, to state why I have presumed to address you—in doing so, whilst I shall freely place my views and feelings in the strongest light I can, to forward what I consider the general prosperity of

the town, yet I would most earnestly request of those who may adopt a different part or side in the coming contest, to bear and forbear with their neighbours, and to recollect the folly and ferment of the violence generated in the struggle between Messrs. Bell and Liddell; and, above all, to hold in their recollection the evanescent nature of such excitement, in favor of particular individuals, and how little it is worth.— What I then saw of popular feeling, would have induced me to expect that no time or circumstances could have worked a change, as related to Mr. Liddell; the enthusiasm manifested in favor of that gentleman, though not partaken in by myself at the time, did equal honor to the heads and hearts of my townsmen; circumstances subsequently gave me an opportunity of judging for myself, and I can only state the wish, that my feeble testimony, as to his excellent nature and faculties, could place him where I should like to see him, and where his own honorable ambition, I have no doubt, induces him to wish to be; but such wishes are vain at this peculiar period — though I am one that hope the aristocracy of England may yet resume that local power and influence; which will assuredly be the best preservative of the people, from the unbearable tyranny of a vulgar democracy, though we may have a miserable practical lesson to learn, ere this conviction becomes general.

The prosperity of the towns of North and South Shields, is so indissolubly interwoven with that of the maritime carrying trade of Great Britain, *that with it they must stand or fall.* The port of Newcastle, of which they form the basis, is, after London, the largest sea-port in the world; therefore, it is particularly incumbent upon their inhabitants to shew, by a *judicious choice* of Representatives, that they are sensible of the importance of their own position, and that they should set an example of wisdom in their selection, which may have a salutary influence, on those ports or places which, though they may

be less in the scale than themselves, yet whose co-operation will be highly beneficial in the appointment of members to represent them in parliament, who are capable of pointing out to a deluded and mistaken ministry, whether *Whig* or *Tory*, the insufferable injuries which have been inflicted upon the shipping of England, by the theories of an impracticable and uncalled for reciprocity with aliens and foreigners, the effects of which are rapidly realizing upon the heads of their constituents, all the evils which Ezekiel so prophetically denounced upon Tyre,

“ Whose ruins perish'd and her place no more.”

It is not necessary here to reiterate the incontrovertible, the incontestable arguments which myself and others have put forth, in so many and various shapes, to prove the anti-national and destructive tendency of the changes in the commercial policy of Great Britain, since the close of the great contest in 1814. It is enough at this time to know, that all the discontent and distress of which we hear, and see, and feel so much, has its origin in that traiterous and destructive disregard of native interests and industry, which has been the moving impulse of the infatuated ministers of England, ever since the signing of the preliminaries of the Treaty of Paris. No greater curse can come upon any state or community, than the errors of good intentions in weak or incompetent men; Great Britain—the sagacity of whose councils, had raised her to an unexampled pre-eminence amongst nations, became all at once the disciple and the dupe of the abstract speculative notions, taught in schools and colleges, and extolled by the vilest and most detestable instrument of delusion, which the world ever saw, the daily press, whose power of producing evil, it is difficult for the imagination to fix limits to, until the ruin and misery which it will effect, shall, as a matter of necessity, compel the rulers of nations, whether monarchies or republics, to check and control its abuse; *through*

its unrestrained influence all government must pass away—all institutions perish!

I should not have animadverted in an address like this, on such a subject as the press, if I had not known how instrumental it had been, and still is, in the propagation of those notions on Trade, by which and through which these towns have suffered so much, and are likely to suffer so much more, and *therefore*, the great necessity to select such men to represent the maritime Boroughs, as have language and ability, combined with knowledge and inclination, to expose the fallaciés through which so much evil has been effected. If the most eloquent and the most worthy man in existence, who advocated the doctrines of Free Trade, as it is so unaccountably called, was to become a Candidate for the representation of this Borough, I would, in preference to such a person, give my vote to the most untalented individual that the caprice of chance might throw in our way; but in the choice which we now have before us, it would be difficult indeed, to make a happier or more judicious selection, as relates to the talents and inclination of the individual, than is presented to us in Mr. Young. I have had opportunities of becoming acquainted with the qualifications this gentleman possesses, which the great bulk of my neighbours cannot by any possibility have had, and the result is a perfect conviction on my mind, that he is one of the most proper men that could be selected, to act as our Representative. I have no *private* or *individual interest* to serve, in what I am now stating; so far from that, I was no party, nor had I any share in the merit, which there undoubtedly is, in bringing this gentleman forward; had it depended upon me, a different, though equally talented individual, would have been a candidate for your suffrages; and, I consider I am paying Mr. Young no small homage, when I class his talents and attainments with those of the honourable Mr. Liddell, whose attributes were so highly estimated by you.

on a recent occasion, and through which, in my opinion, you did yourselves so much honor.

Of the certainty of the election of Mr. Young, there is no doubt on my mind. The preservation, the prosperity of ourselves and families, depend upon the able advocacy, of the depressed shipping, and commercial interests of England; that Mr. Young is capable of eloquently advocating them is very clear to you all; *these* are not like ordinary times when local feelings of respect, might induce us to give a vote to a wealthy, and respected neighbour, whom honest ambition might induce to solicit our suffrages. Now whatever our private inclinations may be, in favour of those we have long known and respected, we cannot, we must not indulge the inclination; a stern and uncompromising course is open to us, which we must abide by, or our children hereafter may accuse us of betraying their best interests by our weakness.

Nor can we, or ought we to overlook the necessity there is, for a spirit of union to operate and act upon us in our choice. I care not whether we are ship-owners or shop-owners, land-owners or house-owners, mechanics or manufacturers, rich men or poor men, all are interested in sending such men to represent us in parliament, as are likely to aid in giving that impulse to the national interests, which they are so capable of receiving, and without which, each of the grades of society that I have here enumerated, cannot exist and flourish as they ought. Politics, it is to be hoped, will now cease to cause divisions amongst us; the Reform Bill is passed: those who most opposed it, will, when opposition has become hopeless, best perform their duty by submitting to it with patience and resignation, in expectation that the benefits so confidently anticipated by its advocates may be realized; and further, by lending a helping hand to return such men as Mr. Young, they will be strengthening the probability of obtaining so desirable a result.

Venice and Genoa rose to maritime power and grandeur, upon the ruins of Tyre.—The Hanseatic League, and the passage to India by the Cape of Good Hope, pulled down proud Venice.—The Dutch succeeded that confederacy, and the navigation laws of Cromwell, (whose talents I reverence, though I am neither a democrat nor a demagog,) caused our matchless country to assume that power and rank amongst nations, which left her nothing but internal *impolicy* to dread. Napoleon, in the plenitude of his power, fulminated his decrees in vain against her ships—her colonies—and her commerce—but what that mighty and noble spirit could not effect, the Free Trade Policy of our Rulers has rapidly realized;—God forgive them for so doing! *I cannot*.—Placed as we are—forming as we do—so large a portion of the second sea-port in the world, I feel that we are imperatively called upon to contribute all in our power, towards arresting the downward progress of the maritime pre-eminence of England, and in no way can we do this so effectually, as by returning eloquent and able men to serve in parliament; I care not what they designate themselves, whether Whig or Tory: in both parties have been found the advocates and opponents of this delusion. Though truth compels me to say, that the monstrous system of our present commercial code is the offspring of the Tory Ministry, my firm belief is, that the Country would never have permitted the Whig Party to play the fantastic tricks with our trade and currency, which Lord Liverpool and his successors have done. I have heard the great and good Lord Eldon, bitterly lament the adoption of the Reciprocity System; for though engaged, as he was, in the absorbing duties of his high station, yet his powerful mind suggested doubts as to the efficacy of the measures which his colleagues were so strenuously advocating and adopting. I hope his Lordship will forgive me for introducing his much revered name into an address of this nature; but generations yet

to come will be familiar with it, amongst those of the illustrious men who grace the pages of their country's history.

In times like the present, it is not necessary to apologize to you, my neighbours, for the liberty of my obtrusion upon your notice and attention. A long application of the powers of my mind, such as they are, has convinced me that we owe all the inconveniences of our present state, to the absurd departure from the Mc'Adam^{'s} road, of our long and beneficially-*tried* trading regulations, and that the machine of the state must as soon as possible be replaced upon the old *trading* track. Here I beg to be understood, as strictly abstaining from political or abstract allusions; it is to *trade* and *trade alone* I confine myself. I have no wish to influence any one, further than I can do it by the calm and time-tempered arguments resulting from observation and experience. Differing from so many of you as I do, in some things, how doubly glad will I be, if by any feeble effort or address of mine, I can assist in effecting a union of action where unity is so desirable, as it is in the endeavour, to return a fit and competent man to represent us and our country's best interests. Nor must we overlook the circumstance, that whatever the endowments may be of the person we choose, the fact of his representing this *great port* will give him much additional weight and importance, as well as place his weakness, in a more prominent point of view, should we be so unfortunate as to make an improper selection.

If the *maritime districts* of England and Scotland will return twelve men as conversant with, and as capable of demonstrating the injuries inflicted upon them, by the insane alterations in our navigation and commercial regulations, as I know Mr. Young to be, they will be entitled to the grateful thanks of the whole empire; and on the contrary, if they, from what motive I care not, neglect this great and con-

servative duty, *the power to effect which, has been especially conferred upon them for the purpose, by the new constitution*, why then, the bitterest denunciation of vengeance, which Ezekiel fulminated on the heads of the refractory Tyrians, will deservedly be realized upon us ;—for to the spirit and letter has the Prophet's words been verified, in the destruction of that city and her inhabitants.

Without, in the slightest degree, laying claim to a spirit of prophetic foresight, more than the exercise of that ordinary sagacity, which enables man, by the aid of experience, to reason from cause to effect, I boldly state, that, if this kingdom does not abandon the illusions of *theory*, and re-adopt sound and *practical* views, as to the protection of native industry and productions, *what Tyre is, she will soon become*; though, like Ezekiel, I may not obtain credence for my anticipations, until the reality has become the indisputable voucher for the truth.

That such a catastrophe may, by the Great Dispenser of good and evil, be averted from you, is the fervent prayer and humble hope of your well-wisher and fellow townsman,

WILLIAM RICHMOND.

Dockieray Square, June 15, 1832.

R. Rodgers, Printer, Whitby.

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