

*Britannia* is expected to leave Boston the 1st of February) obliges me to postpone a reply to those parts of them which are not of considerable and immediate importance.

The President expresses himself gratified with the manner in which the Queen received you, to present your letter of credence, and with the civility and respect which appear to characterize the deportment of Lord Aberdeen in his intercourse with you; and you will please signify to Lord Aberdeen the President's sincere disposition to bring all matters in discussion between the two Governments to a speedy as well as an amicable adjustment.

The President has read Lord Aberdeen's note to you of the 20th of December, in reply to Mr. Stevenson's note to Lord Palmerston of the 21st of October, and thinks you were quite right in acknowledging the dispassionate tone of that paper. It is only by the exercise of calm reason that truth can be arrived at in questions of a complicated nature; and between States, each of which understands and respects the intelligence and the power of the other, there ought to be no unwillingness to follow its guidance. At the present day, no State is so high as that the principles of its intercourse with other nations are above question or its conduct above scrutiny. On the contrary, the whole civilized world, now vastly better informed on such subjects than in former ages, and alive and sensible to the principles adopted, and the purposes avowed by the leading States, necessarily constitutes a tribunal, august in character and formidable in its decisions. And it is before this tribunal, and upon the rules of natural justice, moral propriety, the usages of modern times, and the prescriptions of public law, that Governments which respect themselves, and respect their neighbours must be prepared to discuss, with candour, and with dignity, any topics which may have caused differences to spring up between them.

Your despatch of the 31st December announces the important intelligence of a Special Minister from England to the United States, with full powers to settle every matter in dispute between the two Governments; and the President directs me to say, that he regards this proceeding as originating in an entirely amicable spirit, and that it will be met on his part with perfectly corresponding sentiments. The high character of Lord Ashburton is well known to this Government; and it is not doubted that he will enter on the duties assigned him, not only with the advantages of much knowledge and experience in public affairs, but with a true desire to signalize his mission by assisting to place the peace of the two countries on a permanent basis. He will be received with the respect due to his own character, the character of the Government which sends him, and the high importance to both countries of the subjects intrusted to his negotiation.

The President approves your conduct, in not pursuing, in England, the discussion of questions which are now to become the subjects of negotiation here.

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