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Havre (France) december the 5th A.D. 1866.

To the Honourable Thaddeus Stevens Esq.
Chairman of the House of Representatives
in the Congress of the United States
Washington city.
(D. C.)

Respected Sir,

I come to you, unknown and unauthorized, because I think that I have something very important to tell in behalf of the american people and that knowing your unbending convictions and fearless energy together with your sincere devotedness to your country and to the great principles of the republican party, besides the high official position you occupy, you appear to me the very man that I ought to choose as a confident.

Four years ago, when the news came on this side of the Ocean of the fight between the rebel "Merrimac" and the loyal little "Monitor" I felt greatly interested in, nay fearful of the probable results of the conflict if the rebels should push on the building of these floating fortresses and my mind being strongly excited I contrived some means that I thought would prove very effective in

the defense

the defense of forts against the attacks of these new and formidable vessels. Accordingly, I wrote on the subject to the U. S. Consul in Paris, Mr. Bigelow. M. B. engrossed with his "official" obsequiosities towards the french tyrant, had neither time nor patriotism enough to answer my communications.

As you recollect well, Sir, in these gloomy days, the prospect of a speedy restoration of peace was faint indeed, and the true friends of republican principles, were anxious to see the triumph of liberty and right, viz: the victory of the North. Two letters to the U. S. Consul in Paris, being left unanswered, I wrote to the noble and lamented Lincoln. I don't know if he ever received that letter, but he had so much to do, that I don't wonder he could not give to my communications the attention self-esteem taught me they deserved.

Not a bit discouraged by that silence, I wrote to the then mayor of New-York, honourable Geo. Opdyke, and from that patriotic gentleman I got an answer, a very amiable and polite answer that I preserve with care and pride.

Subsequently I went over to the "land of the free and the home of the brave", there to live and die

at last

at least, I thought so at the time; during my sojourn in the United States, I had opportunity to contrive a new invention and I proposed it to the Navy Department. Hon. Gideon Welles acknowledged my communication; but, Sir, it is a great sin, methink, to be poor and disinterested; I offered my invention out of love towards the North and the principles advocated by it, and almost gratuitously. Of course, they thought that my contrivances were worth what I asked for them, that is to say: nothing, and they despised them accordingly. That is, not quite so, for I learned, through the newspapers and with a good deal of satisfaction, that one of your admirals (I don't recollect his name now, but he was a dare-devil) availed himself of one of my suggestions (the linking together of two ships) to cross with his fleet, between rebel strongholds.

Circumstances compelled me to come back to France, and here I am, reading in the newspapers that the Yankees have invented guns so powerful that no fortifications, however thick and strong, can withstand their destroying missiles.

Now, respected Sir, I come to the object of

my letter. If the americans have such guns, the proud english and the glory-loving french will try their best to superside them in that way, and if they succeed, that may prove, some fine morning, very disastrous to the american sea-ports. I think I have hit upon a new system of fortifications, cheaper and a great deal stronger that the one now in use, and I offer it to the people that seems to me the best, nay the only safeguard and bulwark of human liberty and human progress.

One might say that I ought to have offered my invention to the head of the great american nation, that is to say her President; but sir, I don't believe in Andrew Johnson, never did since the murder of the martyr president, never, never. He has been brought up as a democrat, and worst of all, as a southern democrat. I hate the democrats (as a political party), since they have proved so false to the true principles of democracy, and I have no more confidence in them that I would have in Napoleon or any other representative of tyranny and oligarchy. Beside that, I always entertained the idea that Congress is the best, nay the only

true representative

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true representative of the American people.

Consequently, respected Sir, I offer through you to the Congress of the United States, a system of fortifications that I think very effective and not costly, and I will develop it, either orally or in writing, whenever you think it opportun (I would explain it now, if I were sure that this letter will safely reach its destination).

Although, I say in this letter that — spontaneous and gratuitous offers are generally considered worthless, and that to be consistent with that saying, I should ask something for the giving up of my invention, I cannot do it, on account of the deep regard I entertain for the United States. They are to me a "Seconde patrie" and I consider it my patriotic duty to offer on their altar, what love and patriotism suggested. It may prove to be a small affair; it may even prove to be, for the time being, a useless and worthless gift (I doubt that very much, though), yet, I feel constrained to do it, to show that although I am only an adopted child, I am a dutiful

and loving

and loving one.

Please, Sir, accept the assurance of the sincere sentiments with which I remain

Very respectfully yours

Prudence Léchaud

Here is my address: Monsieur Léchaud
Sanvic, près le Havre
(Seine-Inférieure) France.

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On Service

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LE PORT

Hon. Thaddeus Stevens
member of Congress
House of Representatives
Washington city
(D. C.)
Etats-Unis.