New York, Jan. 10, 1805.

Private

My dear Sir:

I have written you a short letter today in reply to yours of Dec. 28th, but having received yours of the 5th, I resume my pen to suggest a few ideas on the subjects you refer to.

The doctrine of specific appropriations is nonsensical when applied to the Army and Navy, unless the appropriations are so liberal as to admit little or no check on the expenditures and I predicted in my reply to the Report of the Committee of Investigation that this doctrine would never become a practical rule of business. It will not therefore in my judgment be polite or proper to censure Mr. Smith, but rather to reason from his practice against the expediency of these minute appropriations, which must either be disregarded, or the public service and interests sacrificed without an object. I would not impeach Mr. Smith, but support him, and if he is to be opposed, let the opposition come from his own party. This will be just and honorable conduct for the Federalists who are interested in having the Naval Department respectable and independent - it will also be consistent and will more effectually than any other way express the unfairness of the attack on the former Administration. To accomplish every purpose, you have only to aim at rendering the appropriations for the Navy and War Departments as generous as possible.

I am further of opinion that those of the present administration who are inclined to reverence Philosophy and be guided by Common sense ought to be encouraged in their virtuous inclinations. This is a critical period in our public affairs, and if danger arrives, the Country will inquire where