New York, Feb'y 7th, 1806.

My dear Sir:

I have received your letter of the 30th. My engagements have prevented me from writing as frequently as I wished. On the subject of the imprisonment of our seamen by the British, it is certain that nothing can be done by Congress. The basis of a settlement ought to be this:- that Great Britian should renounce the practice of imprisoning seamen from our vessels on the high seas, and that we on our part should grant a summary process in their favor for the recovery of deserters from their ships - if application is made in a certain reasonable time after the desertion. Both parties would in this case be protected and Great Britian would gain a great advantage, as their seamen would not so readily desert if they knew they were liable to be taken up and sent back. A precedent for this principle will be found in the old Consular Convention with France. You must expect however, that the Southern States will be opposed to this and every other arrangement to which Great Britian is likely to accede, because their ships have but few native seamen and thought they talk much, they really feel no great interest in the question. I should think it wise to bring up in some debate, the idea of a settlement on this principle that the true bearings of the interests of the different parts of the Union may be understood by the Community.

You will I suspect find that the Southern people will not seriously contend for the participation in the Colony Trade, in which the Northern Cities are so greatly interested. They entertain the narrow and unfounded opinion that if our vessels were confined to a commerce for the exportations of our Native productions, and the importation of supplies for consumption - that