Dear Burr. Phila. Decr. 11th 1799.

As yet this place has afforded so little to write about that I have written but very few letters. The President's Speech you must have seen in the papers & yesterday we agreed to the Answer reported without an Amendment & without much being said. There were members on both sides that disliked that part of it which spoke of the Mission to France. This was a measure not relished by some of the friends to Govmt. and their wish was to say nothing about it. The leaders in the opposition on the Contrary were highly pleased with it & was desirous that an approbation should be expressed in strongest terms, but the misfortune was that in doing this they might encrease the popularity of the President & therefore the thing was suffered to pass over as it was.

With respect to my own Opinion on this subject there no doubt but the envoys ought to have been sent. The rulers of France had given the assurances which the President had declared necessary & professed a great desire to settle the differences between the two Nations, under these circumstances it was his duty to meet the advances which they had made. It is true enough that these people cannot be rely'd on, but when is this objection to be removed? if we are not to negociate with ~~these people~~ these untill they become vertuous I am afraid a perpetual state of warfare might be expected. It is thought by some that to negociate with France will produce a Rupture with Great Britain; If this is true I am ready to acknowledge that the latter can injure this

Decr. 11. 1799

Maj. Burr

Mr. Coddington

hand you to send the letter to Mr. Parish in town as you know

Country much more than the former & if we must be at War it would be better for us that it was with France, but I cannot be persuaded that this will be the Case nor indeed do I feel disposed to ask liberty of our Nation to settle amicably any differences which we may have with another.

There is still much said in the Newspapers about British depredations on our Commerce and before I made enquiry here I felt great fears that that Nation was disposed to be at variance with this, but the result of my enquiry is that only one case of this kind has been laid before the Executive, it is impossible therefore that these complaints can be well founded. The truth I believe is, that these Captures are made on Contraband trade when the Merchants are doing the business in their names for French & Spanish Owners and am satisfied that redress could not be had if they were to complain, I suppose notwithstanding the Captures they find enough of their vessels escape to make it worth pursuing.

I still entertain a hope that moderation & temper will govern the proceedings of this Session. The leaders in the opposition still seem sulky & keep much to themselves, but as there is great temper & moderation observed towards them it may be a means of coaxing them down.

It was not until Yesterday that we got fairly under way in our House, after the Address was agreed to, the several matters recommended by the President were taken up & referred to Committees, a Committee is also appointed to bring in a Bill on the subject of Bankruptcy, this with the Attention proposed to be made in the Judiciary System will probably take up a great part of the Session which I hope will end in March. Remember me to all & am

Yours Affectionately

Levin Powell

Mrs. B. Powell

Phila. Decr. 11th 1799.

Dear Burr.

As yet this place has afforded so little to write about that I have written but very few letters. The Presidents speech you must have seen in the papers & yesterday we agreed to the Answer reported without an Amendment & without much being said. There were Members on both sides that disliked that part of it which spoke of the Mission to France.
This was a Measure not relished by some of the Friends to Government and their wish was to say nothing about it. The Leaders in the opposition on the Contrary were highly pleased with it & was desirous that an approbation should be expressed in stronger terms, but the Misfortune I was that in doing this they might increase the popularity of the President & therefore the thing was suffered to pass off as it was.

With respect to my own Opinion on this subject I have no doubt but the message ought to have been sent, The rulers of France had given the assurances which the President had declared necessary & professed a great desire to settle the differences between the two Nations, under these circumstances it was his duty to meet the advances which they had made. It is true enough that their people cannot be rely'd on, but ~~but~~ when is this objection to be removed? if we are not to negociate with them untill they become virtuous I am affraid a perpetual state of Warfare might be expected. It is thought by some that to negociate with France will produce a Rupture with Great Britain, If this is true I am ready to acknowledge that the latter can injure this Country much more than the former & if we

must be at War it would be better for us that it was with France, but I cannot be persuaded that this will be the Case nor indeed do I feel disposed to ask liberty of our Nation to settle amicably any differences which we may have with another.
There is still much said in the Newspapers about British depredations on our Commerce And before I made enquiry here I felt great fears that that Nation was disposed to break with this, but the result of my enquiry is that only one case of this kind has been laid before the Executive, it is impossible therefore that these complaints can be well founded. The truth I believe is, that these Captures are made on Contraband trade when the Merchants are doing the business in their Names for French & Spanish Houses and are

satisfied that redress could not be had if they were to complain I suppose notwithstanding the Capture they find enough of their vessels escape to make it vastly pressing.

I still entertain hopes that moderation & temper will govern the proceedings of this session. The leaders in the opposition still are sulky & peevish much to themselves, but as there is great temper & moderation observed towards them it may be a means of cooling them down.

It was not untill yesterday that we got fairly underway in our House after the Address was agreed to, the several Matters recommended by the President was taken up & referred to Committees, a Committee is also appointed to bring in a Bill on the subject of Bankruptcy, this with the Alteration proposed to be made

in the Indiana System will probably take up a great part of the session which I hope will end in March. remember me to all I am

Yrs affectionally
Levin Powell

Majr. B. Powell

Dec. 2. 11. 1799

Major Burr Powell
Middleburg