

A

FIVE MINUTES ANSWER

TO

P A I N E ' S L E T T E R

TO

G E N ^L. W A S H I N G T O N .

W. D. Murray Esq. Minister from the U. S. of A.

Bata

A

from the Author

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TO

G E N ^L . W A S H I N G T O N .

Horry, Charles Lucas Pinckney

.....Mihi.....
 Parca non mendax dedit. . . malignum
 Spernere vulgus.
 HORAT. od. 13 lib. 2.

L O N D O N :

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The reader must think it strange that an answer to Paine's letter should come out so long after the letter itself ; but the author of the answer did not meet with it untill many months after his publication. He hopes that the incorrectness of the following pages (the negligent production of an idle morning) will be excused on account of the hurry in which they were written.

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F. B. M. 1920-11-3

SIR,

YOUR letter to general Washington would pass unnoticed by me, were I not aware that you, and those who resemble you, never attribute silence to contempt, but to an impossibility of answering your attacks: I am loth also that your misrepresentations should go flaunting in the face of day without being corrected; for those to whom your character is unknown may be betrayed into believing them. These are my sole motives for taking up my pen; indeed what other can I have? The most chivaleresque disposition cannot be flattered by any hope of honor, in entering the lists with Tom Paine; the breaking a lance with so dirty a knight and wrestling with a chimney-sweeper appear to me equally inglorious.

In your first charge against the late President you say (1) « that the lands obtained

(1) Page 4 of Paine's letter,

» by the revolution were lavished upon
 » his partizans , the interest of the disbanded
 » soldiers was sold to the speculator , injus-
 » tice was acted under the pretence of faith ,
 » and the chief of the army became a patron
 « of fraud ». This assertion , Sir , you back
 by no proof ; you cite no example in its sup-
 port ; are we to take it on your simple word ?
 or are the repeated marks of love (adora-
 tion I may say) of the army , for the illus-
 trious character you calumniate , and his in-
 creasing popularity sufficient to prove it to
 be false ?

I pass over your letter (which I find in
 the next page) to your *female literary*
correspondent of New - Yorck. I suppose
 you meant it as a pastoral episode ; your horse
 Button (1) eating the grass of Borden-
 town or Morissenia has a very rural effect ,
 no doubt ; but is nothing to the purpose ;
 any more than the lady , whose letter , you
 tell us , was very well mixed with *friend-*
ship , sentiment and politics , of which I

(1) « I had rather see my horse Button eating the grass
 » of Bordentown or Morrisenia than see all the pomp and
 » show of Europe », p. 5.

wish you much joy: I own I did not suspect you of so much gallantry, as to have a *female correspondent*; tho' she must be somewhat to be pitied, if your *taste* for *sentiment* is not superior to your *knowledge* in *politics*; but perhaps your having been a member of the *french convention* (whom we all know was very sentimental) may have improved you.

In page six, you tell us that *you know* that « had it not been for the aid received » from France in men, money and ships, » general Washington's *cold* and *unmilitary* » *conduct* would in all probability have lost « America ». Now if you know this, sir, you are more knowing than any one else, and America is much obliged to you for letting her into the secret: but I (who have not the gift, or the pretention of judging things of which I am totally unacquainted) know military men who have bestowed the highest praise on the late President's science and ability in the art of war: they have ranked him among the first captains of this, or any other age; his conduct in the retreat, after the battle of Germantown, and his attack on the English in Princetown

extorted the encomiums even of his enemies ; and I confess I have so much prejudice about me , as to think that men who have , from their childhood been devoted to the honourable profession of arms , must be better able to appreciate the merits of a general than yourself *citizen Paine* ; and you will excuse me , if I prefer their testimony : your saying that *we owe our liberty* to the French , like your other assertions remains unproved : *we had declared our independance , and had captured general Burgoyne , before France gave us any assistance whatever.* The conviction of having gone to far to recede — the temper of the public mind — and the exultation of taking an english army would have insured us ultimate success , even had France never become our ally. I know that the present government of France affects to think as you do , and that one of her five rulers (the assassins (1) and successors of the monarch they dethroned) told , at the public audience , your friend Mr. Monroe ,

(1) At the time this was written Barthelemy (whose accession to power inspires Europe with the hope of peace) was not a member of the Directory.

that he hoped America (for I suppose 'twas her he meant by the descendants of Columbus, Rawley and Penn (1) would not forget that it was to France she owed her freedom : now we do not acknowledge this debt to France, of which she is so generous as to remind us on every occasion. 'Tis true *that we have obligations* to France ; but 'tis false that we owe her our liberty : there are two circumstances however worth remarking in this business, one is that whatever benefit resulted to us from the aid of France, it is to Lewis the sixteenth that we are indebted, and not to the french republic ; because it depended entirely on his will to have made war against, instead of for us, or to have remained neuter : the other point which I can't help observing is, that the old court of France, to whom *we did owe something*, was candid in avowing its motives of assistance, and that the present french government, *to whom we owe nothing*, pretends to have served us from pure love and friendship : If you wish to

(1) See Barras's speech to Monroe, on his taking leave.

know what were the motives of France for entering into a treaty with us, and how openly those motives were declared, you have only to read the following extract from the observations which the court of Versailles published on a memorial of the english cabinet, written shortly after the marquis de Noailles, then (1) ambassador at London had announced to that court that his most Christian Majesty had formed a treaty of amity and commerce with the United States.

« It is sufficient (say the observations (1))
 » for the justification of his majesty, that
 » the colonies which form a considerable
 » nation, as well for the number of its inha-
 » bitants, as for the extent of their domi-
 » nation have established their independance,
 » not only by a solemn declaration, but also
 » in fact, and that they have supported it
 » against the efforts of the mother-country—
 » Such was in effect the situation of the
 » United States, when the king began to
 » negotiate with them; His Majesty had full
 » liberty of considering them as independ-

(1) In 1778.

(2) Page 77 of the observations.

» dant or as the subjects of Britain ; he
 » chose the first , because his safety , the
 » interest of his people , invariable policy ,
 » and above all the secret projects of the
 » court of London imperiously laid him under
 » the necessity ». In another part , you'll
 find that : « In treating with the Americans ,
 » *after they became independant* , the
 » king exerted the right inherent in his
 » sovereignty *with no other view* that to
 » put an end to the predominating power
 » which England abused in every quarter of
 » the globe ». The observations further add
 that « the king (of France) had by this
 » conduct shown the interest he took in the
 » welfare of all the sovereigns in Europe ,
 » by contributing to restrain a power which
 » always carried to excess the abuse of her
 » resources ». (1) In another place , they
 make this interrogatory (2) : « Is there a
 » sovereign , who in the situation of His
 » Majesty , would not have imitated his
 » example ! » After reading this fair and
 frank confession of the french ministry ,

(1) Page 89 of the obs.

(2) page 78 of the obs.

which owns that *our independance was established before our treaty with France*, and where the reasons for that treaty are so openly proclaimed, after this statement of motives and facts, no one, I think, but Tom Paine, or the most obstinate of jacobins (which are synonymous) can persit in aser-ting that America obtained her independance by the means of France, or that she became our friend from desinterested views.

You next tell the President (1): « You » commenced your President's career, by » encouraging and swallowing the grossest » adulation, and you *travelled America* » from one end to the other to put your- » self in the way of it. ». (This phrase is not the most accurate english, but that you can't help.) You go on and say: « You have as » many addresses in your chest as James the » second ». Here your second charge con- tradicts the consequence of the first; for who would take a tedious dreary journey of a thousand miles, when he received addresses from all quaters, without quitting his seat

(1) Page 9 of Paine's letter.

of government? But, sir, it was the duty of the President, as the executive power, and commander of the armies to visit the different states of the Union, that he himself might judge of their situation, examine the position of their forts and forces, know personally the men who had most influence, and be informed of all the detail military and political administration.

Your next page or two is filled with much low abuse (for indeed of whom do you speak well, but of yourself?) against Mr. Adams and Mr. Jay. You tell us that the former thought that the presidency should be hereditary, and that the latter was of opinion that senators should be elected for life : I don't know this to be true ; for *your advancing it* would rather dispose me to disbelief. But supposing these gentlemen to have held such sentiments, I don't perceive in what they are culpable, unless it be a crime to have ideas different from yours. I see nothing extraordinary that two statesmen long engaged in public affairs should have their opinions on a subject of politics and government ; but perhaps you would accord that exclusive privilege to your club - meeting

patriots only , your sans - culottes philosophers , bankrupt Brutus's and Cato attornies , who have this , it is true , in common with their models , that most of them have suffered for the good of their conuntry , or the whip and the pillory have been uselessly employed ; you would add possibly to so enlightened a body a few turbulent exiles , ontlaws , and other like dregs of society , which would without doubt form a political seminary for the education of apprentice patriots and sucking legislators. But I find I become flip-pant myself , and perceive that one risks acquiring very bad habits , in perusing any thing written by Tom Paine.

You employ many of the subsequent lines in telling us that you were put in prison , and accuse general Washington (for here we have the real cause af all your gall and scurrility) of baseness , ingratitude , etc. , in not applying to the french governement to have you released : you hold that it was the duty of the President of the United States of America , to reclaim *you Tomas Paine* , whom the french had elected one of their *representatives* , a *member of their legislature*. No ! you exclaim , having expelled

me from the convention, I am no longer a french citizen, I become an American; I was only a *citizen of France by compliment*. « A foreigner might be a member of
 « a convention, for framing a constitution,
 » without affecting his right of citizenship
 » in the country to which he belongs (1),
 » etc. » In short you wish to prove that you might be an american and a french citizen at the same time, or alternatively, just as it suited your convenience; you expected to be always secure, so long as it was permitted you to shuffle under this double character, which you were to vary at will: but the case was this: you had heard what was going on in France, you were told that riot was running wild from one corner of the kingdom to the other; that property was every where violated; that murder and rapine passed not only with impunity, but were encouraged; that a merciful monarch who had divested himself (fatal weakness!) of almost all his rights, with the hope of pleasing a capricious rabb'e, you were told, I say, that this patient martyr was thrown into

(1) page 9.

a dungeon with his wife , his children and his sister ; that to this act of treason and wickedness succeeded the massacres of september ; that all religion was abolished (1) , and its ministers murdered at their altars ; that the head of a defenseless woman (2) was carried about in triumph ; that every idea of justice , duty , honour and probity was regarded as a prejudice , or persecuted as a crime ; in short , that there was a complete revolution as well of morals as of government ; you were informed , sir , of all this , and all the tragic details which mar-

(1) One may well repeat with one of the most eloquent writers of the age : « quand nous lisons avec horreur les » cruautés exercées contre les chrétiens des premiers siècles » par les Césars persécuteurs , qui nous auroit dit que nous » verrions , nous , chez-nous , une persécution plus cruelle et » plus horrible ! que nous la verrions dans un siècle qui s'appellait celui *de la tolérance et de l'humanité* , que nous la » verrions exercée au nom de *la philosophie* ? que nous » verrions des hommes chassés et massacrés comme des bêtes » fauves , torturés de toutes les manières , brûlés , noyés , » décapités , mutilés , déchiquetés , sans autre crime que leur » croyance ? » VIDE. *Du fanatisme, dans la langue révolutionnaire* ; a work which deserves to be translated into every language , and read by every nation.

(2) The princess de Lamball,

ked the months of august and september 92 : *Aye!* is it so? (You cried out at the cheering recital) what ! Imprison kings ! murder bishops ! place the head of a princess on a pike ! And I not at the fête !!! And immediately, like at hief at the cry of fire, you repaired to the scene of action ; you enlisted under the sanguinary banners of the revolution ; you became a member of the national convention , and represented french citizens ; you received your pay like other deputies — with them you took your seat in the legislature ; from that moment you made common cause with its members, and like them you became subject to all the part you had undertaken in the ridiculous tho' bloody pantomime which you afterward acted. Without any compulsion , but with the free liberty of choice , you embarked in the french revolution ; you were of course to risk all the storms that might arise ; you have had , it is true , pretty rough weather , but by no means so much as you deserve ; I should wonder indeed how you have escaped a complete shipwreck , did I not reflect *that in revolutions it is generally the virtuous who sink ; the scum swims in security.*

Your asserting that, « a foreigner might » be a member of a government to make a » constitution, tho' not after it had a consti- » tution » is a poor subterfuge, and I thought that your cunning (remark I don't say sense) might have suggested to you more specious argument. You wish to make it appear that you were member of the french Convention, merely and solely for the purpose of forming a constitution; if that were true, why did you vote on questions which had nothing to do with that object? Was the black catalogue of violence and injustice decreed into laws by the convention, constitutional subject? And yet you had your share in these horrors; you did as much as you could do, you voted and you could do no more, for you can't speak french; I am told indeed it is with great difficulty that you read it: you thought proper however (tho' you tell us that your only motive for becoming a deputy was to aid in framing a constitution) you thought proper, I say, to vote on the king's death; was the question of life and death of an innocent prince a constitutional question? No, sir; say what you will, employ cunning and equivocation to your utmost, you will never convince any one that

you

you were not a member of the french Convention. You were a member of a body of men, sir, whose names will be ever repeated with execration; you were one of a government, sir, who committed crimes, not from the impulse of the moment, but in cool reflection, the effects of *thinking villany*, — crimes which for their excess and continuance surpass every thing history has recorded; and I declare most solemnly that the acts of the french convention and its triumph — *the success of the wicked and the sufferance of the innocent*, are to me among the strongest reasons for the belief of future rewards and punishments. Go, sir, and in some obscure corner repent for the threadbare remnant of your ill spent life. — Go, and carry with you not only the hatred of the french, and the abhorrence of the civilized world, but as constant (and more troublesome) a companion, *your own conscience*; may it recall to you night and day the decrees of 93 — the prisons — the revolutionary tribunal and guillotine, — with all the laws which legalized injustice, and persecuted the deserving, which forbade the worship of God: and to whom but to its god could the broken heart confide its sorrows, when the expression of

every human sentiment was proscribed at the tribune, and marks of compassion became treason to the state (1)? But even this was denied, and you refused the wretched the consolations of religion, — the balm of hurt minds, the last resource of impuissant virtue. And if the picture of what you rendered Paris is not sufficient to awake compunction in a mind familiar with forfeits, let your imagination paint to you the provinces, as they were governed by those to whom you delegated unlimited powers, powers to dispose of the lives, the persons, and the properties of every individual. Go through those ravaged lands, and inquire of the ruins the fate of their ancient possessors. Enter the solitary castle or the deserted cottage, and death and desolation will be the silent answer of each forsaken tower and each tenentless shed. I say cottage and castle; for the peasant, as well as the noble, felt your tyranny; the people drowned in the Loire (2), and those destroyed by the fusil-

(1) « La pitié est un signe de trahison. — Ce qui constitue la république est la destruction de tout ce qui lui est opposé ». *Speech of St. Just.*

(2) The noyades were directed by Carrier, and the inven-

lades of Lyons, were more in number perhaps than the more illustrious victims of the guillotine; I do not cite Lyons and the country about Nantes, as having suffered more than many other places: from Savoy to Quiberon, from Bordeaux to Bruxelles, there has been the same tragedy acted, the same scenes of blood and iniquity: go to the plains of Languedoc and Provence, and you will be told the same dismal tale of woe — You will there trace the same vestiges of your infernal agents. In those countries I am told the excess of cruelty weighed so much the more on the inhabitants, as strongly attached to the customs of their ancestors, their disposition is totally averse to principles of subversion, to disorder and irreligion — to that system of destruction of every kind which had laid waste the provinces of the south. — Alas! the descendant of the ancient troubadours may now accord his plaintive notes to the ruin of his ravaged fields; he may now weep over the fallen walls, where once

tion of the famous *bateaux-à-soupape* is also attributed to that virtuous patriot. — The fusillades of Lyons and the destruction of part of the town were conducted by Collet-d'Herbois, another agent of the Convention.

stood the mansion of hospitality, and over the remains of depopulated hamlets; he will long regret the pipe and the dance, the guirlands and all the joys of rural festivity. — All have been swept away by the goths of 93; even the roses which were wont to decorate the holidays of love, and even those of religion (1) seem now to appear tinged with the blood with which the soil has been so plentifully replenished: these once smiling vallies, the parent of the vine and of the olive, heretofore the country of content and gaiety, are at present as miserable as you can wish them to be. — Go, sir, and contemplate your work; yes, it is your work, for it is the work of those who called themselves the national convention, of which you were a member.

It was far from my intention to have touched a subject so little engaging, and so foreign to the motives which influenced my pen; but I have been betray'd into this digression by the recollection of scenes of which I have been the eye witness, and which having strongly affec-

(1) It is a constant custom among the catholics to adorn heir churches with flowers, in the spring, and on days of particular solemnity.

ted me will , I hope , excuse the warmth with which I express what I felt.

In the perusal of the next pages of your letter, I find nothing but your correspondence with M. Monroe, who may possibly be a very well meaning man, but who certainly mistook his *fort* when he entered the diplomatic career; but I am told he is honest, and if dullness is a mark of probity, *his* must be unquestionable: it is however consoling to think that if his abilities are insufficient to do good, his mediocrity of character prevents him from effecting the ill to which his inclination or his advisers might lead him; the most reprehensible part of his conduct is in having kept you in his house, after your impertinent letter to the President, who had taken him from planting tobacco in Virginia, to cultivate politics in Europe: but enough of *citizen Monroe*; for what can we say of nothing?

In some of the subsequent parts of your pamphlet, you make a violent attempt to seize on our sensibility; you hang the theatre with black, and introduce on the scene all your misfortunes, which are nearly as interesting as a puppet - show tragedy. — You pass in review your arrestation, sickness and sufferings;

but I own myself to be so hard-hearted (which is perhaps an aristocratic quality) as not to be affected otherwise than by a disposition to doze over your *penseroso drama*; for I meet with nothing to relieve the heavy flat style in which you narrate your penitence in prison, except a luminous passage on a lamp lighter (1), and a curious phrase, where you excite a smile of contempt, by assuring us that Washington was a colleague in the projects of Robespierre. — You tell us also that you have been ill, and thought of dying in your bed, which no one expects; — that you recovered, about which no body cares; — and that (by way of thanksgiving) you wrote your blasphemous work of the *Age of Reason* (2), which nobody reads.

We next come to your letter to the President, which you say you had withdrawn, but which you now publish, for fear, I suppose, so good a thing should be lost to the world. In this letter you have really surpassed yourself; it is the *ne plus ultra* of impudence and vanity. I here quote a pas-

(1) Page 17 of Paine's letter.

(2) Page 20.

sage or two ; for they are unique in their way : after saying that « the President knew
 « enough of your character to be assured
 « that you could not have deserved impri-
 « sonment in France » (which in one sense
 is true enough ; for generally speaking , it
 was *les honnêtes-gens* who were imprisoned)
 you modestly add : « I do not hesitate to say
 « that you have not served America with
 « more fidelity , or greater zeal , or more
 « disinterestedness than myself , and *perhaps*
 « *not with better effect* ; after the revolution
 « of America had been established , *you* rested
 « at home to partake its advantages , and I
 « ventured into new scenes , to extend the
 « principles which that revolution had pro-
 « duced ; in the progress of events , you
 « beheld *yourself* a president in America ,
 « and *me* a prisoner in France etc. etc. »
 It is by a vast deal too ridiculous to hear
 a miserable adventurer , a revolution hunter ,
 a scribbler of pamphlets compare himself
 with Washington ; and your asserting that
your principles were the principles of the
 american revolution is an infamous calumny
 on the country ; did the principles of the re-
 volution of the United States go in any man-

ner whatever to the violation of property? On the contrary, in the beginning of the war, when party rancor and prejudice put in motion every passion of ill will and malevolence, even at this moment of angry turbulence, after a very large majority had decided to shake off the yoke of England, time was given to those who were of a different opinion to sell their possessions and arrange their affairs, and their persons remained secure and unmolested: but when America fought for freedom, she unfurled the banners openly in the field of battle, and met her enemies face to face; when you and your convention told the french that they had liberty, you erected in Paris alone near thirty prisons, from whence you sent hundreds to be slaughtered on the scaffold; and among these your victims were many whose great age (1), and others whose sex and extreme youth (2) not only create the

(1) La vieillesse et l'enfance
En vain sur leur faiblesse appuyaient leur défense.

(2) See the lits of those condemned by the revolutionary tribunal of Paris: old men of upwards of eighty, and children of sixteen were *voted guilty* of conspiracies which never existed,

most tender compassion, but must have rendered the crimes imputed to them an absurd impossibility. But, sir, it was the *Gentlemen* of America who atchieved its revolution; I am sorry to chock the *democratic delicacy* of your ears, but I repeat to you that it was the *Gentlemen* of that contry who governed her councils and who led her armies; it was the men of the first families and fortunes, men of honour and probity who took the lead, and they have kept it. The same men who fought her battles in war, who formed her government at the peace, those same men at this instant occupy places at home or abroad; they are ministers of state, members of the legislature, or ambassadors in foreign countries; they enjoy the love and confidence of *their country*, while your Brissots, your Dantons and your Robespierres have died the execration of *theirs*. But whence and on what foundation is so often raised this invidious, this forced comparison between the revolutions of France and America? Every real American must be revolted at, and disown the hidious picture in which you would in vain make him find a resemblance.— Did

America, emprison, murder, and rob as you did in France? in all the years of her revolution, had she a month like your september 92? Sir, the Americans made war because they were an oppressed people, because they were refused the rights accorded to other subjects of the king of England; they made war against tyranny, but not against justice, religion, and morality, all which you have done in France. Sir, there is no more difference between the revolutions of the two countries than there is between right and wrong — between virtue and vice — between yourself and every thing that is great and noble. The Americans made use of you, it is true, during their revolution, because in certain circumstances it is permitted to employ even the meanest tools; *you* are an instrument for pulling down and destroying; and when the object was to subvert the power of Britain, they availed themselves of *you*, as an engineer would of the aid of *gun-powder*, when he wished to blow up an enemy's fortification: but when at the peace it was necessary to *establish a government*, did any one then think of you? No, sir, they knew better how to

appreciate you to than the french have done ; they knew you possess the mischievous talents for destruction , but none for erecting.

I proceed to other passages of your elegant epistle. You go on thus : « As every thing I » have been doing in Europe (and what » have you done?) was connected with my » wishes for the prosperity of America , I » ought to be the more surprised at this » conduct (1) of the government ; it leaves » me but one mode of explanation , which » is that every thing is not as it *ought to be* » *among you*, and that the presence of a man » who had credit enough with the country » to be heard and believed , was not wished » for etc. etc. » What amiable expressions of dignified diffidence !! Any man who knows America must shrug up his shoulders with pity at this frothy trash ; but to the uninformed it becomes dangerous , particularly when those who have vague and erroneous ideas on American affairs are at the head of empires , and draw their information from so muddy a source as yourself : I think it very possible that this kind of language which

(1) The not interfering in his imprisonment,

would persuade strangers , that the country and the government of America are at variance, and that they have separate interests , has much encouraged the intrigues of the french sans-culotte ministers , Genet , Fauchet and Adet (1) ; and it, no doubt , gave rise to that part of Barras's speech to the late minister of the United States, where he speaks of *the people of America* , instead of its government : it is by such conduct that beings like yourself think to attract notice ; like the evil principle, in the system of Manicheus , you are incapable of doing good , you have only the power of perpetrating evil , and you expect to gain celebrity in proportion to the harm you commit. One might hope that from your insignificance and from your notorious immorality your calumnies would be impotent ; but unfortunately to many who listen to you vice and virtue are of equal , or rather of no value , and falsehood from *Tom Paine* would be perhaps of more weight than truth from the mouth of Washington.

(1) If the Americans have tolerably memories , they will recollect for a long time names which terminate in *et*.

The rest of your pamphlet (except where you cite a law of the american constitution which does not exist (1) contains little else

(1) The passage to which I allude is in page 47. — It is this : « I am well aware (says Paine) and always was » of the article of the constitution which says , as » nearly as I can recollect the words , that any citizen » of the United States who shall accept any title place or » office , from any foreign king , prince or State , shall » forfeit and lose its title of citizenship of the United states ». Now this article which he has contrived with peculiar ingenuity to recollect , never formed a part of the american constitution ; 'tis a mere dream of the inebriate brains of citizen Paine ; the only thing which bears to it the faintest shadow of resemblance is the first article of the ninth section where it says : « no title of nobility shall be » granted by the United States , and no person holding » any office of profit , or trust under them shall without » the consent of the congress accept of any present , emolu- » ment , office or title of any kind whatever from any king , » prince or foreign state ». See the 1st. article of the IXth. section. — But even this does not apply to Paine's case , for he held no place either of profit or trust under congress , and supposing he has (which is supposing a great deal) , there is no article in the american constitution which can deprive any of the rights of citizen of the United States ; when those rights have been once accorded ; but at the same time , Paine could not expect that America would claim a power of interfering in his favor , or that she would hazard any steps for his deliverance from difficulties he incurred as being a french citizen : in short , he could not own allegiance to two different powers at the same time. — It has

than calling in doubt the President's privilege of *proclaiming* neutrality, and a vast deal of *combustible writing* on M. Jay's treaty. — With regard to the first, you tell us with that charming condescension which distinguishes every thing which flows from your pen that « this proclamation of neutrality has always appeared to me ('tis » Paine that speaks) an *assumption* of the » part of the executive ; but passing this » over as a disputable cause (kind soul !) » and considering it only as political, the » consequence has been that of sustaining » the losses of war without the reprisals. » — Now I should wish to know what reprisals America, who does not possess a single ship of war, could make upon England, whose fleets are triumphant in every part of the globe ? — Many states have felt and all of

frequently happened that military men (tho' far be it from me to draw any comparison between such gallant characters and Tom Paine), it has frequently happened, I say, that military men have served in foreign armies, yet, when they have been made prisoners, or have experienced any misfortunes attached to service they had adopted; they never looked for aid from their natural country, but sought relief from the power in whose cause they had engaged themselves.

them know that these haughty islanders regard the sea as their birth right, and that they have also the power to enforce what laws they think proper on their watery domain. The reprisals the United States could make on England would have been ridiculous in the attempt, and impossible in the execution, and would much resemble those the lamb would take on the wolf. — So much for your charge of impolicy against President's proclamation of neutrality.

I shall not touch on M. Jay's treaty which seems to have given you *such great cause of uneasiness*; first, because it has nothing to do with our present subject, because the able reasoning of the Secretary of state in his letter to M. Pinckney, leaves nothing to be added in its defense, and also because no new argument can, I think, be started on so exhausted a topic (I am sure in what you say of it there is nothing new but the original vulgarity of your language). I shall therefore only say in answer to the nine lunatic pages which you bestow on this worn out affair, that whether the treaty be good or bad, the government of America, as an independant sovereign had a right to make

it — that her government is the best judge of what suits her interests; without being obliged to gain the consent of France for its actions (1), and that supposing the treaty to be bad (which I am far from acknowledging), it would have been still worse for America to have gone to war with England, whose flag, as I have before observed, was lord of the ocean, and when the two first maritime powers of Europe (Spain and Holland) were making common cause with her against France, their present *dear* ally, and whose friendship has been indeed dearly purchased by those to whom it has been sold; and particularly Holland, that Bœotian satellite of France, can certainly not boast

(1) This perhaps, sir, you'll be inclined to dispute, since your *old friends, the new french*, have dictated laws to every nation, over whom they have had any positive power or indirect influence; witness the Low-Countries, Holland, Venise and Genoa; their conduct towards the two latter (whose government they have totally subverted) is so much the more scandalous, as they pretended in the beginning of their revolution to take arms against the powers who intermeddle in french politics, and they themselves act with regard to their friends and allies (Venise and Genoa) in the same manner which they accuse their enemies (Austria and England) to have endeavoured to act towards them.

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of having gained french affection and french liberty gratis; they might well have said to profered boons of freedom and fraternity, considering from whom they came: *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.*

As to the so much dreaded consequences of M. Jay's treaty., these are the effects it has produced: — A ruinous war has been evaded — the western ports (a grievance of which we had long complained) have been evacuated by the English, and Great Britain has already paid to our Commissionners a sum of money, as a portion of a much larger reimbursement destined to the payment of the Americans whose ships have been captured; and if, sir, you have as much credit with the French Directory, in teaching them to act with justice, as I have reason to believe you have had in misleading them to do the contrary, I would wish you to suggest to them this example of restoring plundered property; and should you succeed in your persuasions, I dare promise that you will acquire more credit for so good an office (and from you its novelty will add to its merit) than for all the fullmoon stuff and blasphememes which you have written on politics

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and religion. The sufferers from french piracy may perhaps adorn your pious brows with *a civic crown*, which would be much to your taste, and which after all is better than an halter which is certainly your desert.

We now (thank heaven) approach the conclusion of your letter, which if it had cost but half as much trouble to its writer, as it does *ennui* to its readers, would no doubt have been much shorter. — After accusing the President of *pusillanimity*, and other vices equally applicable to the august character to whom they are addressed — you conclude with these lines, which I extract for their curiosity; they are almost as original as your idea of charging pusillanimity to Washington. — Ladies and Gentlemen, pray, attend to Tom Paine's exit in a rage : « And as to » you, sir (cries the citizen in wrath), » treacherous in private friendship, and an » hypocrite in public life, the world will be » puzzled to decide whether you are an » apostate or an imposter, whether you » have abandoned good principles, or whe- » ther you ever had any.

« *Signed Thomas Paine!!!* »

This explosion carries with it its own comment; I shall therefore make none on the delirious offspring of inebriety, or madness; for it must certainly have been produced by the abuse of spirituous liquors, or was perhaps the effect of more permanent insanity; I wish to attribute it to the former as well from motives of compassion, as from the *notoriety of the habits of its chaste and moral author.*

As I was not in America, when Paine's letter appeared, I am ignorant of the effect it produced, nor do I know that it had any other than that of increasing the sentiment of indignant contempt which the *Age of Reason* had already inspired, and added to the character of the atheist, the infamy of the calumniator: the letter was published about the same time that Adet's insolent note came out, and I regard them both, as the joint efforts of the same party, to achieve the same project, I mean the subversion of the present government of the United States. One of the means which they have employed, was to calumniate the character of its first magistrate, the great and good Washington: and I here think it necessary to mention in a parenthesis, for the

benefit of my french readers, that goodness in America does not imply weakness ; it is supposed by us , savages of a new world , to be a quality compatible with sense , honor , probity and courage ; this may appear strange to those who have seen in France for the last seven years great abilities and great wickedness almost constantly combined ; but notwithstanding this frequent union of vice and talents , we still think it possible to be honest without being a fool ; --- Paine's letter and Adet's note , as I have observed came out together ; nearly at the same epock the President published his farewell address to the United States, in which he declares his intention of retiring from public life , and absolutely refuses occupying for the future the place to which they had raised him (and which , as is well known , he had constantly filled ever , since it had been created). There is little doubt that had he not been so decided in his resolutions , and so explicit in expressing them , he would have been reelected unanimously ; for immediately from every state of the Union (except Tenassé who had scarcely entered into political existence) , there were returned the most affectionate answers to his address , all declaring their sin-

cere regret at losing their veteran favourite ;
 --- Filled with sentiments of gratitude , for his
 past services , and with wishes for his future
 happiness ,---they assure him that their hearts
 accompany him in his retreat---that his worth
 and actions will for ever live in their memo-
 ries , and they pray the Almighty rewarder of
 the just, who had crowned his sword with vic-
 tory in the meridian of his life , to grant to the
 declining days of their old leader every bles-
 sing which domestic peace can bestow.—I was
 not in America at this interesting period , but
 I am informed that the people shew'd the grea-
 test reluctance to part w th their President :
 perhaps they would have insisted on his conti-
 nuance in office , and have claimed his com-
 pliance with the public voice , had they not
 reflected that there would be more of cruelty
 than of kindness in exacting the unceasing la-
 bours of a man whose best years had been de-
 voted to them , and whose age permitted re-
 tirement.—They may have made also a scruple
 of insisting on his stay in place , when he would
 not accept any salary for his services: and it is
 a circumstance little known out of America ,
 that Washington throughout the war, when
 he commanded the armies, and afterwards

when President, would never receive any pecuniary recompense;— he only suffered his expenses to be paid, of which a statement was always sent into the treasury; so scrupulously delicate was he on this point that when commander in chief, he himself kept a particular account of his expenditures; in some of the articles there is an exactitude of detail which resembles more the noble simplicity of the age of St. Louis, than the eighteenth century, and tho' such minutiae may appear frivolous, and little worthy the attention of a great mind, they are stamped with that character of disinterestedness which heretofore so much distinguished the brave and irreproachable (1) Bayard.

In the year 89, the United States put in action the constitution which they had formed, sent to the seat of government their suffrages for the choice of a President, and Washington was named chief of the new empire. He was installed on the 4th of March, with all the eclat which public exertions could bestow on a ceremony where gratitude and veneration paid a tribute to exalted worth.—Here virtue had its

(1) Le chevalier sans peur et sans reproche.

mede, and even democratic faction was forced into a silent acquiescence in the justice of the election; or if the crawling insect hissed its murmurs, they were drowned into the vast tide of enthusiastic applause which shouted the praises of Washington.—He now began a new career, and the eight years of his administration prove his skill in political government to be equal to his former ability in the command of armies.—In the latter part of this period, it required very superior conduct to evade a war, curb factious, and preserve in their integrity the laws over which he presided: for this, great firmness and great moderation were necessary, an art of creating means, of combining resources, and of foreseeing events. Perhaps few would have succeeded like Washington; but it has been the gift of this extraordinary man to be victorious in whatever situation he has been placed.—His genius and strength of mind sport with difficulties and command success. Like the pure ore of the chymists, he has come forth with new lustre from every trial; and what is perhaps the most singular circumstance of his life, is his unabated popularity.

In monarchies, the honours which a prince

bestows on his subject are reflected back on the donor;---when he distinguishes merit, the distinction shews his penetration, and reward his liberality; he himself is the fountain of honor, and tho' what flows from it enriches, the source is not empoverished: but in republicks, in whose composition jealousy has so large, and gratitude so small a share, each individual thinks he deprives himself of the niggard applause which he reluctantly accords---which is rather forced than given, and is taken by assault, as it were, when the qualities, and merit are of that exalted cast, that to dispute them would be an absurdity. This is the case with the late President; no one can deny his merit, no one can refuse him admiration, and the people (a thing unusual in popular government) have been constant in theirs. The flowers which were strewd in his way, when he mounted the President's chair, in eighty nine, were not faded in ninety seven, and the laurels which installed the first president of the United States, still bloom with Washington at Mount-Vernon (1). The 22d. of

(1) The name of his country seat.

February preceded but a very few days that of his resignation, which tho' it has always been celebrated, as the birth-day of Washington, ought to be yet on this occasion shew'd not only more than usual brillancy, but bore also a flattering, tho' painful expression unknown to that day on foregoing years. For notwithstanding the life and joy which a *grand-fête* always inspires, there was still a tinge of melancholy to be discovered on every countenance, which seemed to anticipate the regrets of a last farewell.-- Early in the forenoon, the President's levé was attended by all the Officers of state---the foreign Ministers---the members of Congress, and every stranger of distinction in Philadelphia: it was thronged also by numbers of private gentlemen who came from distant states, to the seat of government, from no other motive than that of shewing their respect to a character who so justly deserved it. All the military were under arms, and with colours; and warlike music paraded thro' the city, to celebrate the natal day of their commander.---The members of the Cincinnati, the companions of his toils, and partakers of his glory, assembled also their

martial bande, to salute for the last time as a public officer their chief, whose example and patient endurance had taught them the heroic duties of a soldier.---In short, nothing was neglected, which could prove attachment, or do honor to the birth-day of a beloved father.--- I cannot avoid observing that all this demonstration of good will, these marks of esteem and affection were for a man who was to quit his place in eleven days---who might be considered as no longer holding the reins of government, and as having it no longer in his power to recompense the eager zeal and assiduity of his friends : no one therefore could have been actuated by an impulse of self interest---by the prospect of gaining a place, or by the hope of any preferment : it was to Washington alone, to his person, and not to the President of the United States, that were addressed these expressions of sincere and heart-felt regard.

On the 4th. of march 1797, the new President, M. Adams, was installed; the house of Representatives, where the ceremony took place, was crowded almost to suffocation ; for besides the two houses of Congress, the Ministers, and the Corps diplomatic, all the

beauty and fashion of Philadelphia attended to behold once more a hero whose virtues they wished those who were most dear to them to resemble, and to sigh a last adieu at his departure. Mr. Adams entered and took his seat for the first time as president; he was received with the applause to which his talents, his virtues and uniform firmness of conduct entitled him to; but when they perceived Washington, who entered also for the first time as a private individual---, without sword or uniform, or any thing which distinguished him from the crowd, the whole house broke forth in one general burst of enthusiam---every idea, every sentiment was centered in their love for their old favourite. In that moment they saw nothing but Washington, and felt nothing but their sorrow to lose him. This boisterous greeting was succeeded by the most attentive silence, as soon as the President began his speech; when he came to that part in which he addresses his predecessor, every eye filled with tears; there was something mournful and august in the solemnity of the scene which affected every one present: none however hardened by a long experience of life;

were able to guard against the sensations it produced, but gave way to the graceful weakness, and wept this last farewell, as they would have done the death of an old friend or beloved parent.

Thus ended the political life of a man; whose actions will form one of the most brilliant pages of the history of his country, and of the age he lived in. Tho' his voluntary abdication of power and high office is far from being unprecedented, he is the only man who has carried with him throughout his career such constant proofs of the disinterested love of every class of people; — I except the jacobin faction whose hatred does him as much honor perhaps as the affections of honest men: and unless the world undergoes a revolution in morals as well as in politics, his name will be cherished and revered in future ages as much as it is at present. — Posterity will admire the virtues of the Héro and the Statesman, and will repeat with the same fervor that his contemporaries have done:

Semper honos, nomenque tuum, laudesque manebunt.

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