

THE  
POLITICAL  
CENSOR,

OR

MONTHLY REVIEW

OF THE

*Most interesting Political Occurrences,*

RELATIVE TO

THE UNITED STATES

OF

*AMERICA.*

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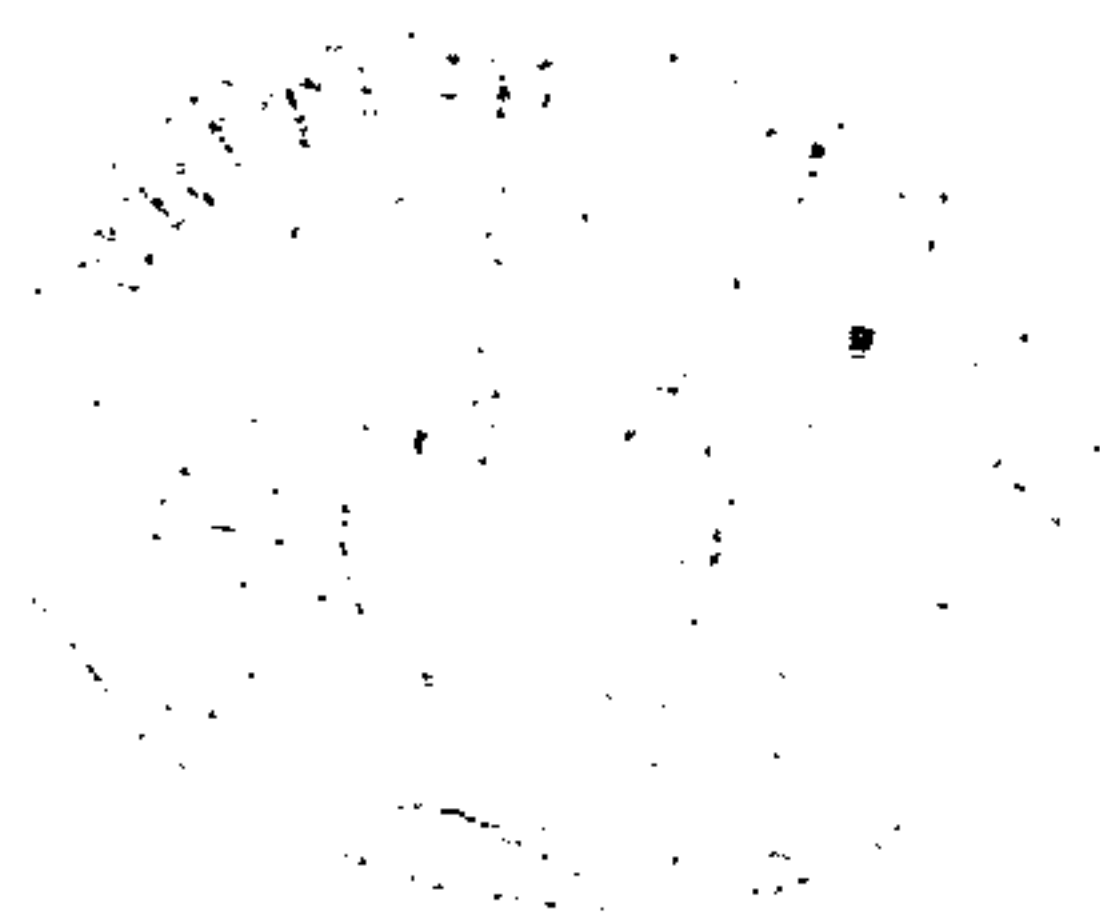
BY PETER PORCUPINE. *Revised, &c.*

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# INTRODUCTION.

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SOME of the principal debates of the present session of Congress, with Remarks thereon, appeared a few weeks ago, under the Title of, "A Prospect from the Congress-Gallery," published by Mr. Thomas Bradford. The favourable reception of that work led me to undertake that which I now offer to the public. My plan, however, being altered, for reasons with which I am going to acquaint the reader, it became necessary to alter the title also.

No one, who has been an attentive observer of the violent and dangerous attempts, which have been made, and are still making, against the Federal Constitution, and consequently against the peace, prosperity and happiness of our country, can have failed to perceive, that they had their rise in the deception, which has been so industriously circulated through every part of the United-States. It is not to be presumed, indeed, that the leaders in this hostile and formidable combination have been deceived: they have long been marshalled and ready for the attack: but, it is the delusion, which has been quietly suffered to steal its way among the people, that has called them into the field and encouraged them to assault, first the out-works, and at last the very citadel of our liberties and our lives.



The source of this delusion it is not difficult to discover : we have it continually before our eyes. I mean the *public papers*, and I speak with a very few exceptions.

The general government adopted the most effectual measures for facilitating the conveyance of information to every quarter of the Union, at the least possible expence. Hence subscribers to papers were found in abundance, and the editors, striking off numerous impressions, were, of course, enabled to furnish them at a low price. The intention of the government, as expressed by the President himself, was certainly the most beneficent, that of spreading *true* information and *useful* knowledge among all classes of the community. But what has been the consequence? Exactly the contrary. The French Revolution burst forth like a volcano, and its devouring lava reached even us. The editors, perceiving the partiality of the most *numerous* class of their subscribers for this revolution, and all the novel and wild principles it has given rise to, have been seduced, by the love of gain, to flatter that partiality by extolling those principles, at the expence of every thing, their own private interest excepted. Their papers, which swarm like summer flies, are become the vehicles of falsehood in place of truth, of ignorance in place of knowledge. Like the tenebrificous stars, mentioned by a celebrated author, they shed darkness in place of light.

A veil has been carefully drawn over the distresses and horrors resulting from the anarchical system of France ; or, when this could not be done, when the editors have feared to be anticipated by their fellow-labourers, they have endeavoured to out-vie each other in apologies for what ought to



have been held up to detestation, or, at least, as an awful lesson to ourselves. Every one, even of the most destructive and impious acts of that pretended republic, has been trumpeted forth as the effect of a liberal and enlightened policy; while no insinuation, no subtilty, no audacious falsehood, has been left unessay'd to thwart all the measures of our own mild and wise government, to disfigure its principles, and sever it from the affections of the people.

To countervail the malignant efforts of these retailers has ever been my wish; and, I hope, it will not be thought presumption in me, if I believe that the trifles from my pen, which the public have honoured with their perusal, have, in some slight degree, had the desired effect. But, alas, what can a straggling pamphlet, necessarily confined to a single subject, do against a hundred thousand volumes of miscellaneous falsehood in folio! Their sheets, if extended, would more than cover the surface of our country.

In opposing a literary monster like this, I am aware that a Porcupine, with all his quills, can never hope for complete success: but, nothing can be accomplished without being begun: I hope to call up abler hands to my aid: to me, it will be a sufficient honour to have led the way.

This I shall attempt, in a monthly work, of the same bulk and price as the one which is here submitted to the public. In this work I shall take a review of the political transactions of the past month; give an account of every democratic trick, whether of native growth or imported from abroad; unravel the windings of the pretended patriots,

and more particularly those of the *flour-merchants* ; and I trust, I shall be enabled to give, monthly, a sketch of political affairs more satisfactory, because more correct, than has ever yet appeared in this country. These will be the leading objects ; but I shall exclude nothing, not entirely foreign to the nature of the work, that may contribute to the use or amusement of my readers.

The news-papers are supported by subscription, and for that very reason the *Censor* shall not. As long as people read, so long shall I write ; and, when the Bookseller advertises me that the work lies on his shelf, it will be a very good hint for me to draw in my quills.

Here, then, begins a *bellum æternum* between the fabricating *Quid-Nuncs* and me.—There is my glove, gentlemen ; take it up as soon as you will. You well know that your abuse will infinitely redound to my honour ; and therefore, to silence me, by rendering my work sterile and uninteresting, you are reduced to the cruel necessity of telling the truth.

I should think it necessary to offer an apology for having prefixed the title of *Censor* to the present Number ; but the reader will at once perceive ; that it is now assumed for the sake of uniformity, as applicable to the future contents of the work, and not to the remarks on the debates of Congress, a *body* to which I should be very sorry to be wanting in respect.



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THE  
POLITICAL  
CENSOR.

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THE Reader will please to recollect, that, in the *Prospect from the Congress Gallery*, I brought down the proceedings in the House of Representatives to the 5th of January, the memorable day of the exhibition of the French Flag. I should not now have thought of returning to the same subject, had I not been led to it by an attack on the President, in the anarchical *Aurora* of Philadelphia.

One would have thought, that giving this flag a place among the *Archives* of the United States, would have been conferring honour enough on it; but nothing would content the French-Americans, who write in the paper I have just mentioned, short of its being hoisted in the Congress Chamber, as a trophy of the victory of French influence. They cite as the example of the Convention. But, let



them say under what circumstances, and with what motive our flag was granted a conspicuous place in their hall. It was dishonoured by being swung up, gibbeted up, by the side of the flag of *regenerated* Geneva ; a state in which the Convention had established their system of pillage and murder, and which they treated as a conquered country, rather than as an *independent* ally. To add to our humiliation, a duplicate, as I may call it, of our flag was sent to Geneva, and there exhibited in the Convention of a poor little degraded nation of thirty thousand bodies, I will not call them souls. This was saying to the Genevese : See, you are not the only people who have thrown themselves on our protecting power, and sent us a pledge of their submission to our principles.

Thus, by the indiscretion (to give it the mildest term) of our Ambassador, have we been degraded in the eyes of even *Italians*, and exposed to the gibes of the little scandalizing circles of the least respectable people in Europe : and, in return for this cruel insult, we are called upon to distinguish the flag of the Convention with a place in the public sittings of our legislature, and by this act acknowledge ourselves the supple tools of our insulters !—This is modern patriotism.



## DEBATE ON THE APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE MINT.

*January 19th.*

*Mr. Williams, agreeably to notice before given, moved to strike out of the Appropriation Bill all the gross sum, appropriated for the officers of the Mint.*

Mr. SEDGWICK (from Massachusetts) thought that the course which the gentleman is pursuing, has never been adopted before. It is incorrect to discuss the merits of the mint in passing this bill. We might as well take up the salary of the chief justice, or any other article in the bill, as the mint. We never would have done at this rate. We are now only to vote for the bill, as agreeably to the laws already made. Mr. Sedgwick said that if the gentleman from New-York (Mr. Williams) would bring forward any proposition for the regulation, or even the abolition of the establishment of the mint, if it could be proved productive of public benefit, he, with every other gentleman, would give him their aid to effect the object; but that now, he conceived, it could not regularly be brought forward. He thought an appropriation bill should be conformed exactly to the state of the public engagements, and that where establishments had been formed and salaries provided, the amount of them should be the principle of calculating the amount of appropriations; and the House ought not, by withholding appropriations, to break in upon and destroy establishments formed by the whole legislature. That these observations had hitherto been sanctioned by the practice on this subject. He observed, that if the House was to investigate, in the discussion of an appropriation bill, the amount of salaries and the legal establishments of government, the public service would be dangerously destroyed. He remarked, that it was to be observed, that no appropriation was made for any purpose since the commencement of the year.

Mr. GALLATIN (from Geneva) rose to state a general principle which he thought it of importance to lay down on this occasion; lest the decision on the present question grounded on a different principle, should on some future occasion be brought forward. The principle was, *that this House has a right by withholding appropriations when they see proper, to stop the wheels of Government.* This he said was plainly to be inferred from the practice of the House, in their passing annually an appropriation law—He observed, that in one instance the House had departed from that principle. In respect to the payment of the interest on the public debt, for the support of the public credit,



the House had thought it necessary to give up that right. If this principle is not just, it would be best to make a permanent provision at once.

Mr. SEDGWICK said that he had certainly no intention to have given occasion to the observations which had been made, but as the general principle which he had laid down, had been denied, and as it had some relation either intimate or remote to the subject before the committee, he would take the liberty to repeat the principle, and to say a few words in support of it.

The principle, then, which he had assumed was, that when legal establishments were made, it was the duty of the legislature to make appropriations conformably to the public engagements; and that neither branch had a right to withhold its assent.—He observed that the whole legislature, and not a part, were competent to form contracts, and to establish, and alter compensations and salaries. The legislature, and not either branch of it, had the power of expressing the public will, and pledging the public faith: that when a salary is ascertained, the public faith is pledged that it shall be paid, according to the stipulation; and that therefore the public credit is involved in making the necessary appropriations, without which it could not be paid. He asked if in such case it was competent to the House rightfully to withhold the means necessary for the performance of the public engagements!

He said he had always supposed that the power of the House, in the case of appropriations, did not give a power to yield or withhold assent on such a subject. He believed in every such instance the exercise of discretion was restrained; to illustrate his ideas, he could mention a similar instance. The constitution had declared, that the President should receive a stated compensation for his services, to be ascertained by law; which could neither be diminished nor enlarged during the term for which he should have been elected. Here was a duty imposed on the legislature, with the performance of which they could not, they had no power to dispense. Yet after the compensation was stated, no payment could be made in consequence of appropriating. He asked if in this case, when



the public will was expressed, the engagement and the national faith pledged; the legislature could of right withhold the necessary appropriation. The same observations might be said to be applied to every instance where public controuls were formed. The public faith was pledged; the necessary appropriations must be made to prevent a violation of it, and if withheld such violation might justly be charged on the legislature.

Here a long conversation took place with respect to the expediency of the proposed measure, on the advantages and disadvantages of a Mint, &c. After which Mr. *Livingston*, whom we shall by-and-by see making a considerable figure in the field of opposition to the government, made a motion *for the striking out the whole appropriation for the Mint.*

Mr. MURRAY, (from Maryland) said that had the gentleman from New-York moved for delay, for the purpose of introducing a motion to repeal the law which rendered this appropriation necessary, he would not have troubled the House with a single remark; but his motion to strike out an appropriation for the purpose of bringing the policy of the law itself into discussion, contained a principle in his mind so repugnant to the great legislative duties of the House that he would oppose it. The object of the appropriation is not a temporary one, but a part of the machinery of our government, under the express authority of the constitution by law. The doctrine now contended for by the gentlemen from New-York and Pennsylvania (Mr. *Livingston* and Mr. *Gallatin*) was that this House have a discretionary power of appropriating or not—To this doctrine, taken in the extent which he conceived they contended for, he could not give his support. On the contrary, he thought, that in all cases where an appropriation flowed from a law to make good a contract, or to erect a permanent organ in the government, and from any law whose object was permanent, the true doctrine was, that it was the duty of the House to vote an appropriation. A law is the will of the nation. The same powers only, that formed it can repeal it. If it be a constitutional act, no power can lawfully obstruct its operation or its existence. But attending to the doctrine



maintained to day it would follow, that though this House had not the power of repealing a law made by all the branches of government, it may obstruct its operations and render it a dead letter; though it cannot repeal, it may do what shall amount to a repeal, which is the assumption of a power almost equal to that of exclusive legislation. He thought he saw in this an evil of great extent, and an anarchy of theoretic principles. It appeared to him that though we originate money bills, we had no right to refuse an appropriation to existing laws that either secured a debt or any contract, or that related to objects permanent by the law that created or acknowledged them; as long as the law itself remained unrepealed. We had but a share of legislative power. Where a law relative to such objects as he had alluded to existed, from which an appropriation followed, till the law ceased by repeal or by other constitutional means, it was obligatory upon us as well as upon our constituents, and the only powers we could exercise of a discretionary sort resolved themselves either into the mode of making good the appropriation, or of voting for its repeal. The other branches would then judge of the propriety of our proceeding; but till they who assisted in its enacting, judged with us the necessity of doing it away, a duty resulted that we should give it the energy intended by its enactment.

The Appropriation for the mint was finally passed.

### REMARKS.

The first three items in the Appropriation Bill were as follows:

	DOL.
For compensation to the President of the United States	25,000
To the Vice President	5,000
To the Members of the Senate	38,000

Now, would it not have been much the shortest way for Mr. *Livingston* to move for striking out these three items! This would have been coming to the mark at once. By only three strokes of the

“ *Calm Observer’s*” pen, the free, the independent, the beneficent government of the United States might have been changed into a National Convention; and in the same number of days, we might have seen our streets patrolled by revolutionary ruffians, our property exposed to requisitions and our heads to the guillotine.

But, it is not my intention to enter into the merits of a motion, at once the height of malevolence and absurdity; I have introduced this debate merely to have an opportunity of introducing the principle laid down by *Mr. Gallatin*, and *Mr. Gallatin* along with it.

This gentleman tells us, that the House of Representatives “ have a right, by withholding appropriations *when they see proper, to stop the wheels of Government.*”—I should be glad to know were he learnt this: whether from his companions in Braddock’s Field, or from their correspondents, the corrupted *flour-merchants* in Philadelphia. They, indeed, were well versed in stopping the wheels of government, by the agency of *appropriations*.

When Mr. Gallatin rose from his seat to broach this clogging principle, there was an old farmer sitting beside me, to whom the person of the orator seemed familiar. “ Ah, ah!” says he, “ what’s “ little Moses in Congress!”—I sharply reprimanded him for taking one of our Representatives for a Jew; but, to confess a truth, the gentleman from *Geneva* has an accent not unlike that of a wandering Israelite. It is neither Italian German nor French, and, were it not a sort of leze republicanism, I would say he clipped the king’s English most unmercifully. Such an accent is admirably adapted for extolling the value of leaden buckles,



or for augmenting the discordant howlings of a synagogue; but it throws a certain air of ridicule over the debates of a legislative assembly, and forms a sort of burlesque on the harmonious eloquence of the other members.

When I told the good jog-trot to take care what he was saying, for that the personage then on his legs was no other than the great Gallatin, he opened his eyes, and with a look and voice expressive of an honest indignation, "what!" says he, "that same Gallatin who was one of the leaders in the Western Infurrection?"—I could not help smiling at the simplicity of my country friend, in not perceiving that such a circumstance was the highest proof of Mr. Gallatin's patriotism, and the only one that recommended him to the suffrages of his constituents.—"No wonder," says the farmer, "that he wants to stop the wheels of government: I wish he'd attempt to stop the wheels of my waggon, as I am going down hill."—God forgive me, but I believe I said *amen*.

Mr. Gallatin has been accused of inconsistency, but here I cannot join the enemies of that gentleman. Whatever a man may be, I love to do him ample justice. This is a principle so strongly imprinted in my breast, that it induces me to undertake the defence of Mr. Gallatin's consistency, though I have not the highest respect for his general conduct or for his character.

We might follow this gentleman through his political career from the day of his disembarkation to the present session of Congress, but it will not, I imagine, be necessary to go further back than the Western Rebellion.

So early as the 21st of July, 1791, we find him Clerk to a meeting for opposing the excise law, or, in other words, “stopping the wheels of government.”—On the 21st of April, 1792, we find this adjourned meeting declaring: “That  
 “whereas some men may be found among us, so  
 “far lost to every sense of virtue, and feeling for  
 “the distresses of our country, as to accept the  
 “office for the collection of the duty.

“Resolved, therefore, that in future we will  
 “consider such persons as unworthy of our friendship,  
 “ship, have no intercourse or dealings with them,  
 “withdraw from them every assistance, and *with-*  
 “hold all the comforts of life, which depend upon  
 “those duties which as men and fellow citizens we  
 “owe to each other, and upon all occasions, treat  
 “them with that contempt they deserve; and that  
 “it be, and it is hereby most earnestly *recommended*  
 “to the people at large, to follow the same line of  
 “conduct towards them.”

Thus, then, I think here is no inconsistency; no change of principles. The man that could draw up a resolution like this, cannot be said to have abandoned his principles, when he declares that the House of Representatives may stop the wheels of government, when they see proper, by withholding appropriations.

It is said, indeed, that Mr. Gallatin has since repented of his insurrection conduct, that he called the above quoted resolution his “political sin,” and we all know that he signed a promise of submission to the laws; but, let it be remembered, that he never talked about this political sin, until he came down to Philadelphia, and that his promise of sub-



mission to the laws was not made, until he saw that resistance was in vain, and that it was the only way of availing himself of the amnesty, and saving his carcase from a loathsome dungeon. And, if he did leave his poor deluded adherents in the lurch, and even sacrifice them to his own safety, this is no more than every rebellious ringleader is ready to do, when the moment of danger arrives. It is by no means a proof of inconsistency in the gentleman from Geneva. It is, to use the words of a late political writer, “*varying his means to*” “*preserve the unity of his end.*” When overturning a government, or stopping its wheels, is the sole object of a patriot, so long as he keeps steadily towards the point, whether by open rebellion, confessing his political sin, pretending submission, lurching his associates, or withholding appropriations, he can never be justly charged with inconsistency.



## DEBATE ON THE APPOINTMENT OF A STENOGRAPHER.

*January 29th.*

On the 28th a report of the Stenographical committee was given in, specifying that the committee had received proposals from Mr. *David Robertson* of Virginia, whose demand for one session was 4,000 dollars. The report became the order of the day for the twenty ninth, when a resolution was proposed in favour of the appointment.

I shall choose from this debate what fell from Mr. Swanwick and Mr. William Smith, as appearing to me to comprize nearly all that was urged on both sides.



Mr. SWANWICK (from Pennsylvania) As to the gentleman who is the subject of the resolution, If I have more strenuously than usual opposed the motion, it is from a desire to keep him from quitting the lucrative situation he is said to find himself in, to embark on the stormy sea he is contemplating: to be the organ of the members of this House to their constituents is indeed a very delicate task; one for which, considering the danger he might be in of an Orpheus's fate, that of being torn to pieces, the salary is but a poor compensation. He is to do justice to the eloquence of some members—he is to clothe in an elegant dress the uncouth, yet well meaning expressions of others, but what will he do with the silent members, who never speak at all?—What will their constituents think of them; indeed, Sir, if he had the idea I have formed of his danger, he will not undertake at all. Faction and party have been mentioned—happy Stenographer if he can keep clear of these. If he fall into their power, insensibly he will represent one side in clouds and darkness, the other as ornamented with the brightest beams of light. How will he please both? Misrepresentation is complained of alas, Sir, how quick is error, how slow is the progress of truth in almost all things: our Stenographer must indeed be a wonder working man, if he can revert this tide, and make every where light, and correct reasoning prevail. The best mode of informing our constituents is by the yeas and nays on our acts; this truly shews, as a gentleman from New-Hampshire has observed, our doings, which are much more interesting to them than our abstract reasonings; these our constituents will easily form to themselves ideas of when they know our votes.

Mr. W. LYMAN (Massachusetts) said that, if this resolution did not pass, *it would be advisable to send all the Printers to the gallery.*

Mr. W. SMITH (South Carolina) said it was admitted on all sides, that it was highly important for the people to receive the most accurate information of the proceedings of the house, and that the debates were in general extremely misrepresented. Was it not then the duty of the house to remedy this evil and to adopt such measures as would transmit to the people in every part of the United States the most accurate information of the conduct of



their representatives? The house had now an opportunity of obtaining the services of a gentleman peculiarly distinguished for the rare talent of reporting with accuracy public debates : the compensation which would be adequate to such useful and laborious service was beyond the ability of any printer, the house ought therefore to contribute towards it ; the sum required was a trifle when compared with the advantages ; it was no object : the only question then was whether the stenographer ought to be an officer of the House ; in that capacity he certainly would be more easily restrained from the commission of any wilful misrepresentation. Mr. Smith did not feel the force of the objections against the report. It had been said that although the members were now misrepresented, yet they had it in their power to publish corrections ; but these corrections were often overlooked, while the misrepresentation was operating very injuriously to the character of the member : this was generally the case in places remote from the seat of government ; the mangled account of a debate was republished in a distant paper, and the correction if it reached the distant printer, was generally disregarded. Among the opponents to the report, Mr. Smith said that he was surprised to find the gentleman who represented this city, (Mr. Swanwick) who more than any other member should have withdrawn his opposition to the measure proposed ; that gentleman's constituents had it in their power at any time to hear the debates of Congress ; they were on the spot ; ought he not then in candor to assist in facilitating to the remote citizens the means of obtaining the best knowledge of the proceedings, and the most correct statement of the discussions of the house ; ought they, from their remoteness, to be kept in the dark, or to be furnished with such light as would only mislead ? Had they not a claim on the house to adopt such means as would enable the citizens in every state to judge of the propriety of public measures ? The member from this city had another exclusive advantage ; if misrepresented he could correct the error, and the correction will be read ; that was not the case with the members of remoter states, whose reputation might be injured by misrepresentation without a similar advantage : the member from this city was in the midst of his constituents ; he had daily opportunities of setting right any mistatement by personal explanation.



Mr. SMITH said he did not agree with some Gentlemen that it was sufficient for the people to know what laws were passed, without knowing the previous discussions; he thought on the contrary, the favorable or unfavorable impression of a Law on the public mind would depend in a great degree on the reasons assigned for and against it in debates, and the people ought to know those reasons; when a Law passes, imposing a Tax, would not the people be reconciled, if they saw from the discussions of the house that such Tax was unavoidable, and that the particular mode of taxation was the best which could be devised? And ought this information to depend entirely on the caprice or convenience of the reporters, who attended when it pleased them, and who published just as much of the debates as they found leisure or patience to accomplish? Mr. Smith said, he was convinced that the errors which had excited so much complaint were not the effect of design, but merely of inadequacy to the task; very few were competent to such a business, which required peculiar skill in stenography, very laborious application, and a clear comprehension of the subject matter of debate. It could not be expected that persons thus qualified would devote their whole time to this business without an ample reward. The report was objected to because there was novelty in the plan; it was true the House of Commons of England had no such officer, but their practice was not a fit precedent for us on this occasion, for they admitted no person to write down in the house their proceedings; their debates were taken from memory. This house on the contrary had from its first institution, facilitated, by every accommodation, the reporting their proceedings. The thing was not altogether however without precedent; during the existence of the national assembly of France there were officers of the house who composed a daily work called the Logography, which was an exact account of the debates of that body. It had been asked what controul the house were to have over this officer? he answered that the Stenographer would be liable to be censured or displaced, if he should be guilty of wilful misrepresentation; it would be always easy to discriminate between a casual inadvertence, and a criminal mistatement: the officer's character and talents, his responsibility to the house, and his oath to report with impartiality, would



be a sufficient pledge of his accuracy. Mr. Smith seriously believed, that the character of the house had suffered from the erroneous statements which had gone abroad; he wished to guard against this evil in future; he was willing, for himself, that every syllable he uttered within those walls, should be carried to every part of the union, but he deprecated misrepresentation. He was anxious that the truth should be known, in relation to every act of the government, for he was as satisfied that the affection and confidence of the people in this government would increase with the promulgation of truth, as that whatever it had lost of that affection and confidence was owing altogether to the propagation of detraction and calumny. It was under these impressions that he had originally brought forward the proposition, and that he now recommended the report, and having heard no reasons to change his sentiments of the expediency of the measure, he should persist in supporting it.

The committee of the whole was discharged from any further consideration of the subject.

### REMARKS.

The House had nearly got upon a rock here, which they would have found it difficult to get off from in safety. Perhaps there was never a resolution proposed, at once so apparently trifling and so pregnant with mischief. Let any man reflect for a moment on the state of parties in this country, and he will look with affright at the appointment of an officer, invested with the power of disfiguring every argument and even every phrase that a member of the legislature may let fall. The gentlemen who supported the resolution, talk of his being sworn; and, did we live in those good old times, when oaths were superior to the spirit of party, the argument would be unanswerable: but, alas! those times are no more. Oaths on the Evangelists are, in this *enlightened* age, little more than mockery.

The members of the present Congress have every man of them sworn to maintain the Constitution of the United States, and yet, how many of them do we see at this moment straining every faculty of the mind to render it null and void? what, then could be hoped from a Stenographer.

Were a perfect stranger to listen to a debate he would contract a partiality for one side or the other, before it was half over. Every man in a popular government has his party; and who can suppose that the Stenographer would not have his? It was said that the House had a check upon him, in their power to dismiss him from his office. But, this must be done by a vote of the House, and therefore it could be no defence for a member who had the misfortune to find himself in a minority.

Indeed, this power of dismissal is one of the worst parts of the plan; for, as the Stenographer would be loath to quit so lucrative an employment, he would of necessity be led to preserve a majority in his favour; and, what would be so sure a way of doing this as misrepresenting the speeches of the minority? a member might complain; but the Stenographer, secure in his majority, would laugh at him. Thus might a man of talents and integrity be officially represented as a fool or a knave, without having the possibility of redress. In vain would he endeavour to justify himself: the sworn Stenographer would be believed before him, and the House, by a solemn decision, would determine that he had said what he never dreamt of.

Should an officer like this ever enter the House, it is easy to foresee that he will not be long wanted. The very sight of such a tremendous umpire



would frighten away all freedom of speech. It is true the members of the majority might prattle away, but those of the other side would naturally look upon themselves in the situation of a man who is making a deposition. One party only would dare to open their mouths. Where there is no opposition there can be no debate, and, of course no need of a Stenographer.

*Mr. Smith's* objection to citing the example of the British House of Commons on this occasion did not appear to me well founded. They permit no one to write down their words after them ; yet I believe it will be allowed that their debates are very well reported, and this is a pretty good proof that an officer for that purpose is by no means necessary,

This gentleman mentioned the officers of the *Logography* employed by the second National Assembly in France. Unfortunate instance ! the French Constitution, that “ master-piece of legislation,” which was to last as long as the round world, lasted only ten months and ten days ; and, among the engines by which it was destroyed, the office of the *Logography* claims a conspicuous place. There were ten of these reporters. They wrote in the literal character : one took the first sentence, another the second, and so on. Ten men were much more difficult to warp and corrupt than one would be, and yet we ever see them the decided tools of the strongest party. Members complained of misrepresentations, and had the satisfaction to see their complaints still more disfigured than their speeches. The consequence was, the few real friends of the Constitution were obliged to hold their tongues, and suffer the inflammatory har-

rangues of their opponents to go forth among the people uncontradicted.

I never like to hear the examples of foreign governments applied to our own, particularly the examples of what is called the government of France. I was astonished that a gentleman of Mr. Smith's good sense and good intentions should hold up for our imitation, or even mention as an instance, one of the most insidious measures of an Assembly, who were guilty of every crime under heaven; who, after having repeatedly sworn to defend with their lives the inviolability of their sovereign, coolly planned an insurrection to hurl him from his throne, afterwards made this very insurrection the subject of an article of accusation against him, and decreed that their own *perjury was a virtue!*

Mr. Lyman's hint for driving all the printers out of the house, *unless the resolution passed*, was a striking instance of the domineering spirit, which would infallibly have overborn any Stenographer who had been unfortunate enough to accept of the post.

This hint broke out, some days after, in the form of a resolution, from the lips of Mr. Heath of Virginia.—“Resolved, that, until a Stenographer be appointed, or further provision made for taking the debates of this House, *no printer be permitted to publish abstracts of the speeches of members, unless permitted by members making the same.*” This was the substance of the resolution, and a curious one it is.

These gentlemen seem to have been determined to force their harrangues, at full length, down



our throats, or to keep us in a sort of political starvation. We must either swallow them by dozens of yards, as buffoons do ribbons, or we must never have a taste.

I wonder where Mr. Lyman learnt a doctrine like this. Such an idea could certainly never be engendered in the free temperate air of Massachusetts. As to the gentleman from Virginia I am not surprized; for, we know that, when a sulky negro will not lick up his mess clean, however insipid, disgusting and nauseous it may be, he is muzzled till his stomach comes to. But, are we Pennsylvanians to be treated thus?—No, no, Mr. Heath; when you get the government on the other side of the Potomack, you may, and undoubtedly will, do what you please with it; but we have four years to live, at any rate; be not in such haste to muzzle us then.

Should this resolution ever reach the other side of the Atlantic, what idea will it give the English patriots of our liberty of the press? If a member of the British House of Commons were to propose such a tyrannical resolution, I should not wonder to hear of his being stoned to death. Not publish abstracts from speeches without particular permission! The idea was certainly imported from the borders of the *Palus Meotis*.

Had these two gentlemen restricted the prohibition to their *own speeches*, I believe that neither the House nor the public would have cared much about the matter; for neither of them is of the Ciceronian stamp. It is observable, that those who appeared most anxious for the appointment of a Stenographer, if we except one or two, are amongst the few whose speeches can do them no sort of cre-

dit with any party. This is the way of the world. Animals, whether endued with the faculty of speech or not, seem to fly in the face of nature. The ugly woman is everlastingly at her glass; the owl thought her frightful brood the prettiest little creatures in the world; and the insipid orator, while his voice is drowned in the hemmings, coughings and snorings of his drowsy audience, thinks he is uttering sentences that ought to be written in letters of gold.

It was observed in the course of the debate, that, if the printers committed errors, gentlemen might write out their speeches and send them to the press. To this Mr. Nichols replied, that he was above doing any such thing.—For my part, I must confess, that, were I capable of making a speech, I should be too lazy to write it out for the News-Papers; but as to its being beneath a law-giver, I shall say nothing; for we have an example before our eyes of a folio orator in the House of Assembly of Pennsylvania, who is so far from thinking it beneath him to write out his speeches, that he even reads them from his seat, like a school-boy from his bench. I allude here to one *Doctor Morpheus*, who, finding his neighbours determined not to die under his hands, is now endeavouring to assassinate the State. The State, however, seems to partake of the obstinacy of his neighbours, turning a deaf ear to all his prescriptions. The bolus of sedition which he had kneaded up for the Assembly, did, indeed, at first, operate as a provocative on some of the members from Whiskyland; but, luckily, the soporific qualities of it soon became predominant, and, at last, absolutely irresistible. At the end of the second paragraph the Chairman was perceived to yawn, the third rocked him off, and the fourth laid the whole Assembly fast asleep. The fifth



reached the door-keeper, at the further end of the passage, and before the sixth was half finished, an old woman who sells apples at the gate, dropped from her stool. The political *Morpheus* continued to spread his poppies, till, perceiving the effects of his bolus, he slunk off home to his liver nippy and four crout.—Should this quack in politicks as well as physick be suffered to continue his lectures, the Assembly of Pennsylvania may write over their doors, as the French do over those of their burying grounds: “This is the place of everlasting sleep.”

After this little trip to the Land of Nod, let us return to our Stenographer.

I by no means call in question the virtue of Mr. Robertson, the officer proposed: on the contrary, I should suppose his virtue must be very high; for, like that of Fielding’s post-boy, it is very high priced. If it be equal to his modesty, it is certainly beyond any thing reasonably to be expected from a frail mortal. The humble demand of four thousand dollars for the session is not a great deal more than eight times as much as any member of the House receives. The very mention of such a sum cannot fail to bring forth swarms of Stenographers, as a warm night at the play-house is said to hatch comedians.

I cannot conclude this article without reminding gentlemen of their cruelty to my poor Caledonian friend, Callender. How was he mauled! how was his *Register* torn to pieces! one took him by the wig, another by the ear; he writhed and winced and jumped about, as the French say, like a frog upon a gridiron. I much question if he were in greater torture when the constables of sweet Edinburgh were at his heels.—Oh! gentlemen from

Virginia! how could you so belabour this imported patriot? a man that has not only forsworn his country, but has written, or rather transcribed, two whole “Political Progrees” purely to curry favour with you! nay, he has even blasphemed the President, and justified the non-payment of debts; and yet, Oh, ingratitude! you could smile at his agonies! if this be the way you treat your friends, I hope I shall never be numbered amongst them; at least until your manners and principles change.

One gentleman expressed a good deal of anxiety, lest the “Political Register” should descend to posterity; but, let him quiet his fears on this account; for, whether the speeches which Callender has collected were *written out* or not, they are a more potent opiate than any drug that was ever pounded in the mortar of *Doctor Morpheus*; and that is saying a great deal, I am sure.



I now come to a debate, if a debate it can be called, which I would have the reader pass over without perusal, if he has a heart ready to take fire, when he sees a wanton indignity offered to the greatest and most estimable characters.

## DEBATE ON HALF AN HOUR'S ADJOURNMENT.

*February 22nd.*

This was the Birth-Day of *General Washington*. The morning was remarkably fair: the firmament decked in its brightest robes. May it ever be so! Never, never may a cloud darken this auspicious day!



The city was all alive : joy seemed to gladden in every face ; the workman had thrown by his hammer and the housewife her needle, to celebrate this festival of valour, wisdom, and true patriotism. I was going, among hundreds of others, to see the cannons of the state fired on this joyful occasion, when, passing by the House where the Representatives meet, I perceived the doors open. I thought I would just step in, and see what they were about. I entered, found the gallery quite empty, and was surprized not to find the house empty also. This surprize soon gave way to indignation, as the reader will readily believe, when he hears what was passing.

*Mr. Smith* (from South Carolina) moved, that the House adjourn for *half an hour*, in order to give the members an opportunity of congratulating the President of the United States on the return of his Birth-Day.

Strange to tell ! this motion was opposed. The ground of this opposition was, that it was the duty of the House first to attend to the discharge of their legislative functions, before they attended to the paying of compliments. It was said, on the other hand, that it had been the practice, ever since the establishment of the general government, for the House to make a short adjournment, for the purpose mentioned in the motion.

After some conversation in this way, *Mr. Galatin* (from Geneva, last from *Whiskyland*) moved, that the words, “ *half an hour*,” be struck out,

This amendment was rejected. The motion was then put, and lost.

Ayes 38  
Noes 50





the “ discharge of their legislative functions?” Yet, this was not done, nor, I believe, proposed; though some one of these fifty indefatigable members were certainly present. How differently do men see the same object, under different circumstances! the Speaker’s head-ache adjourns the House for whole days. But, *half an hour*, a poor thirty minutes, was too precious to be wasted in a respectful compliment to the best man, perhaps, this day existing in the world!

The gentleman from *Whiskyland* was, without doubt, afraid, that the motion would not be rejected altogether. He imagined the House had not so far got the better of all decency, as to come to an unqualified determination not to wait on the President, he therefore proposed to leave out the words, “ *half an hour.*” If this amendment had passed, the House would have adjourned, not for *half an hour*, but for the whole day; but then it would have seemed that they did it for their own pleasure and recreation, and not for the purpose of complimenting General Washington, the only thing that Mr. Gallatin seems to have been afraid of.

This proposed amendment is an excellent explanation of the ambiguous excuse, “ that it was “ the duty of the House first to attend to the discharge of their legislative functions.” What! would their duty permit them to separate for *the whole day*, and not permit them to separate for *half an hour*? these gentlemen seem to count time as the French do their assignats; a thirtieth part is more valuable than the whole. Mr. Gallatin appears to have scorned the subterfuge. No matter how much time was spent, or in what manner, so that it was

not for the express purpose of waiting on the President ; so that the insult was rendered acute.

What must have been the President's reflections, when he read the sketch of this debate? an intruding foreigner, a mere adventurer, who never set his foot in the United States, until long after the revolution, comes here to arraign the conduct of General Washington, to alienate the affections of the people from him, while he basks in the sunshine of his government, and reaps the fruits of his valour and his wisdom. And, what are the services Mr. Gallatin ever rendered America? is this question necessary? where is the man who does not recollect the alarm, the distress, caused by the Western Insurrection? the million and a half of dollars that it cost the Union, besides immense private sacrifices? fifteen thousand men forced from their business and their homes, to undergo one of the most fatiguing marches ever performed, and which many of them did not survive, cannot already be forgotten. Ask any of these men ; ask the families, the widows and orphans, of those who lost their lives in this expedition, what are the services Mr. Gallatin has rendered their country. And yet this man now raises his head among the legislators of the United States, and refuses thirty minutes of respect to the very man, to whose leniency, to whose *amnesty* alone he owes, that he is now in a situation to insult him.

When I compare the determination of the House of Representatives of this day, with their conduct and that of the people, at the time of the President's installation, I blush for them.—His journey from his seat in Virginia to New York, was almost one continued triumphal entry. As he approached the towns, he found the road decked with laurel and



strewn with flowers. Sometimes he was hailed with the firing of cannon, at others with the ringing of bells, and every where with the shouts of the multitude. Processions were formed to conduct him, the magistrates, the military, men of all trades, companies of matrons and choirs of white-robed virgins. It were vain to attempt an account of the festivals, balls, galas, fireworks, illuminations, mottos, sonnets, and odes, in honour of the “Saviour of his Country.”—“Merit (said one of his panegyrists on this occasion) ” Merit must be great indeed, “when it can call forth such honours from a free and enlightened people. Honours due to a man, whose life has been one series of labours, which are upon a scale that heaven never before assigned to mortal. *Future generations* will say of him with the poet :

“ So near perfection, that he stood  
 “ Upon the bound’ry line  
 “ Of finite from *infinite* good,  
 “ Of human from *divine*.”

Will “future generations” believe, that, in less than seven years after this unbounded strain of panegyric was in vogue, the Representatives of the people came to a formal determination, that *half an hour* was too much to be wasted in congratulating this same man on the return of his Birth-Day?

When the President first accepted the honourable post he now fills, what was the state of this country? Suffice it to say, that it was such as excited shame at home and contempt from abroad. His acceptance of the Presidency inspired a kind of national joy; it was the presage of a prosperity that

was to heal the wounds of a long and tiresome state of discredit and confusion. The people clung to him as the anchor of their hope: and, have they been deceived? Have not the riches and prosperity of the whole country far outstripped what could be hoped for by the most sanguine? More has been accomplished in the short space of seven years, under the Federal government than was accomplished in an age, under any other government in the world. If, then, the President merited such high eulogiums, at the time of his taking on him the administration of this government, what does he merit now? Certainly he does not merit to be insulted. Certainly *thirty minutes* of adjournment would not have been too much for a man, who, a few years ago, “stood upon the boundary line between human and divine goodness.”

Do the gentlemen of the House of Representatives recollect, that not only our eyes but the eyes of the world are on them? What will other nations say to us? What will Europeans, who look on General Washington as the first of mankind, and who have heard and admired all our praises bestowed on him, what will they think of us and our Representatives, when they are told of this thirty minutes decision. We have often boasted that our President was happier than any monarch upon earth, as reigning in the hearts of a free people. I hope this tone will cease, until we take effectual measures to guard him against future indignities. When a king is insulted, we see all the worthy part of his subjects press forward to the throne with assurances of their love and esteem, and pledging their lives and fortunes for his security. Here a certain torpidity seems to pervade all this class of society: if their wishes are kind and sincere, they



are useless, as long as they do not break out into action.

But, it would be unjust not to say, that this decision of the House of Representatives, was very far from being sanctioned by the voice of the people. That voice breathed sentiments very different from those of the opposers of Mr. Smith's motion for an adjournment; and of this the House had a striking and humiliating proof.—For my part, the motion was no sooner lost than I quitted the Gallery, boiling with indignation, and went to partake in the jollity of the day; but, the next morning, I had the satisfaction of reading the following extracts from the debates, that took place in my absence. “*Mr. Nichols,*” says the reporter, “offered his observations on the bill; but, from  
“the firing of cannon, beating of drums, ringing  
“of bells, and huzzas, *in honour of the President's*  
“*Birth-Day*, it was impossible to hear what he  
“said,”

Nothing on earth was ever more apropos than this. How must the opposers of the motion have felt? something like a king of England, when he heard the shouts of his soldiers for the acquittal of the bishops, whose disgrace and ruin he had contemplated. If ever malice met its true reward, it was at this moment. As if the people had said: “you  
“have aimed a blow at the reputation of our friend  
“and father: you wish to persuade us, that he is  
“no longer worthy of our love and veneration;  
“but you shall not succeed. He is as dear to us  
“as ever. You may continue your harrangues;  
“but we will drown your voices with our acclamations for the return of the happy day, that  
“gave him to the world,”

It is with triumphant satisfaction I observe, that the 22nd of February was never so honoured as this year. Every State, every town in the Union, resounded with festivity and joy. The city of Philadelphia, ever distinguished for its attachment to the President, seemed truly sensible of the treasure it possessed. The theatre, the circus, the ball-rooms, even those of private parties, were decorated with emblems of his wise and heroic deeds. Every heart overflowed with gladness and gratitude. A few solitary breasts in Congress alone, mourned amidst the joyous scene; as the poisonous plants under the torrid zone are said to flag and droop, while those of salubrious qualities raise their heads, flourish and bloom.

Though I am not an admirer of *toasts*, I shall close this article with one, drank at *Newark*, as it seems to express the general sentiment of the people of the United States, on this occasion. “The  
 “ illustrious *Washington*, our beloved President, in  
 “ whom are united the talents of a consummate  
 “ General; an honest Patriot, and an enlightened  
 “ Statesman. May the day of his nativity be  
 “ marked in the calendar of time, and consecrated  
 “ as a festival worthy of the celebration of the  
 “ latest ages; but let blackness of darkness for  
 “ ever rest upon the accursed hour, that gave ex-  
 “ istence to *his unprincipled calumniators*.”



## DEBATE ON THE BILL AUTHORIZING A LOAN FOR THE USE OF THE CITY OF WASHINGTON.

*February 23rd.*

This debate was very long, and rather uninteresting; but, as I mean to speak on it myself, I cannot with candour refuse to give a sketch of what was said by one or two of my opponents, to enable the reader to judge between us.

Mr. SWANWICK (who spoke on the same side that I shall do) said, that he objected to the bill generally upon the same ground as yesterday, with respect to joining the securities of the lots and the faith of the United States together. He asked how the passing of this bill could give value to the buildings of the Federal City? Is it not, said he, already enacted that Congress shall sit there in the year 1801? The value of the lots, he said, was to be increased only by the selling them to a number of persons. The city must owe its prosperity to its peculiar advantages as a commercial spot, and not from its being the seat of government. It was, therefore, the interest of the United States to sell the lots and induce the people to settle there. The higher price the lots bore, the greater would be the obstacles to settlement. If it was the intention of the United States to grant money for the completion of the buildings let the House say so. When it was first proposed to remove the government to the Federal city, it was said that it would be the interest of persons to give lots to encourage the government to come there. The security now asked for was never contemplated. He had, however, no objection to the United States granting money, but he was against the making of two loans, one on the credit of the United States, and another on that of the United States, and certain lots.

Mr. BRENT (from Virginia) said, that it had been observed, that if the lots be a sufficient surety for the loan, why guaranty it? at present, he said, the lots were not sufficient. Mr. Brent observed, *that the bill before them would be*

*considered as the touchstone to determine whether the seat of government will go to the banks of the Potomack, or not.* Motives of policy and economy, and objections to increasing the public debt, will not apply in this case; the very act provides funds to guaranty the loan, for though the property, until the proposed loan be guaranteed, would sell for *a mere trifle*, when it is *guaranteed*, it will sell for a *great price*; so great a difference would it make, that he believed property which will then sell for two millions of dollars, would not otherwise be worth 100,000 dollars. If, therefore, gentlemen are against the bill from economical views, they are mistaken; for, it was his opinion, that the property would not only pay off the loan, but eventually *be a considerable fund towards the discharge of the public debt*. It had been suggested that the United States were under no obligation to make this guarantee. He thought differently; he believed the credit of the United States materially concerned. The public have relied fully upon the countenance of government in the business, many persons, indeed, have made great sacrifices to procure lots in this new city, and, if after holding out temptations to people, government should not go there at the proposed time, all these persons will be ruined, and *a stain will be laid on the national character*. He hoped, therefore, no objection would be made to carrying the bill into effect.

Mr. GILES (from Virginia) wished to remark on what had fallen from a member from Pennsylvania yesterday, with respect to the law providing for the removal of the seat of government. *That law, he said, differed from all others.* The Constitution itself, he said, prescribes the rule, the act only fixes the spot where it should be carried into effect. *The act is, therefore, not repealable.* The Constitution does not give a power to fix upon two spots, but upon one spot. He thought it necessary to make this remark, lest he might be supposed to countenance the opinion he combated. It had been remarked, that it would be in some degree degrading to the United States, to borrow money on the credit of lots; he thought differently, and shewed that it was a common thing in governments to borrow money on different funds. It had been wished to disconnect the government from the business—whilst government guaranteed the loan, he said, it would make no difference



whether the loan was bottomed on the lots or otherwise. The nature of the engagement was the same. The question was whether the House would agree to guaranty the loan, or not.

Mr. GILES said, that he had seen and was acquainted with the buildings carrying on in the Federal city. He thought *the house erecting for the residence of the President was much too magnificent*, much more so than was intended. Every one thought so who saw it; but this was no reason for obstructing the progress of the business. He hoped the bill would be formed in a manner so as to meet the general sense of the House. Though he had *objected to the grandeur of the house intended for the President*, he would have the buildings *for congress erected on a grand scale, and fitted for the representatives of a great and free people*.

The Bill was finally recommitted.

### REMARKS.

The reader has heard what was said on both sides of this question, and I have now to beg him to attend to what I would have said, had I been a member of Congress.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

It is well known, that I am no orator; that I speak right on, making my tongue the true interpreter of my heart. You will not therefore expect from me the wily sophistry of a G—tin, the quibbling of a G—les, the verbosity of a B—win, or the patriotic bombast of a Liv—ton.

It is seldom, Sir, that I trouble the House with my sentiments on any question whatever. There are so many gentlemen among us, who are speechifiers by profession, who deck every subject, however sterile and trifling, with all the flowers of the

garden of eloquence, that a plain spokesman like me can have little chance of being heard with any degree of patience. On the present occasion, however, these gentlemen do not seem to be come, like the bee, loaded with sweets; the few they have brought with them are already scattered abroad, and have lost their fragrance: and, as the day is not yet far enough advanced to countenance an adjournment, permit me to hope for indulgence, while I humbly endeavour to spin out the time between this and dinner; or, as our ploughmen have it, while I take a gentle turn to wind down the fun.

Should gentlemen find themselves inclined to repose, as I have often been in listening to them, I beg them not to stand upon ceremony, but to loll back at their ease, and leave me to jog quietly on.

We are called upon, Sir, to *guaranty* a loan, for which the lots of the City of Washington are to be a *security*; and the gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Brent, tells us, that, though the lots are at present worth but a *mere trifle*, they will, when guarantied, be of *great value*. This is rather obscure, I shall therefore endeavour to explain it by comparison; which, I make no doubt, I shall do to the satisfaction of the House. Suppose I had a lot, not worth a brass farthing, and was to draw a note payable out of the produce of this same lot, such note would be worth but a "*mere trifle*;" but, when endorsed by a man of credit, it would be "*of great value*;" because the holder would always know where to look for payment.

But the friends of the guarantee do not stop here. They assure us, that it would render the



lots so very valuable as to “ create a considerable “ fund towards the discharge of the public debt !” Much as I wish to see that debt discharged, I by no means approve of its being done by taking advantage of an overstrained generosity. The Virginians have most generously bestowed part of the land, and, not content with that, they now offer us an opportunity of paying off the public debt with speculations in the lots. I am one of those who are willing to forego any and every offer of this kind. I am willing that the Virginians themselves should be permitted to guaranty this loan, and receive exclusively all the immense advantages accruing therefrom. Let them undertake the negotiation upon their own bottom, which, from the great credit they enjoy in foreign countries, they cannot fail to effect upon the most reasonable terms.

It is said, that foreigners will not venture their money on the lots, because they can form no idea of their value ; neither can I, and this is another reason for my wishing to leave the business in the hands of those who are upon the spot, and who seem to be the only persons interested in the matter.

The gentleman, who made us the bounteous proposal for paying off the public debt by the means of the guarantee, concluded with an argument, which, I believe, he conceived to carry more weight with it : that is ; unless the government went to the City of Washington at the time specified by the act, it would be “ *a stain on the national character.*” — I participate with Mr. Brent in his anxiety for our national character, and am glad to have it in my power to convince him, that it could be in no danger from the disappointment he seems so much afraid of. We see a very considerable State of the

Union, Sir, tenaciously adhering to a law, made expressly to screen its citizens from the obligation of discharging their just debts; and we have seen this very House pass a resolution for the sequestration of all debts, due from Americans to their creditors in Great Britain. Neither of these has ever been called a stain on our national character; and, if these are not, if our character is proof against these, I imagine we have little to fear from the governments' remaining at Philadelphia. I will mention another instance, Sir, still stronger. If we look back into the journals of Congress, we shall find the king of France styled, our *great* and *good ally*, our *friend* and *deliverer*; and yet we have applauded his murder . . . . . [there the Chairman would have called me to order, upon which I should have said]—Sir, I should be sorry to break through the rules of this House; and, I must insist that I am perfectly in order. The gentleman from Virginia had laid great stress on what he presumed would be a stain on our national character. I looked upon myself as entitled to prove, that he was mistaken; and I certainly had a right to do this, by bringing forward what I conceived to be much better calculated to impress a stain, and which, however, had not produced that effect. If, therefore, there was any deviation from the question, the gentleman led the way, and I was only following him. Besides, Sir, look over the debates of this House, and you will see to what a nut-shell compass they will be reduced, if you exclude all the extraneous matter. If members are to be bound down to the simple question before them, if no latitude of digression is allowed of, no little rambles to France for eulogium and to Great Britain for invective, how do you imagine, Sir, that *patriotic* members would be able to give proofs



of their diligence, by eking out the session to six or seven months?—Your assent, Sir, to the justness of these observations, encourages me to take up the thread of my argument.

If, on the day of our pompous reception of the French Flag, poor murdered Louis had risen up through the floor, and said : “ Ungrateful Americans ! you who flattered me in the hour of my prosperity and your distress ; you who called me your deliverer ; you who made public rejoicings for the day of my nativity, are now joining hands with the very men who led me to the block ; are expressing “ your sincere and lively sensibility, your sympathy and affection ” towards them ; are giving a pompous reception to the emblems of their triumph over me, at the very moment that my portrait, which was to be the memento of my services and of your gratitude, is hanging up within your walls.”—If the spectre of this injured prince had thus spoken, what should we have said ? I know a member who would have replied : Avaunt, “ ermined monster ! ” But, for my part, I should have felt the stain ; I should have thought myself spotted as a leopard. And yet, Sir, this has never been mentioned as a stain on our national character. To apprehend, therefore, any danger from our not removing to the banks of the Patomack, is to strain at a gnat, while we swallow a giant.

Much has been said, Sir, on the manner in which the buildings of the City of Washington have been conducted. This is a branch of the subject that I should have passed over in silence, had it not been for an expression or two that fell from another gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Giles. That gentleman

observed, that “ the house erecting for the residence  
 “ of the President was *much too magnificent* ;” but that,  
 “ though he *objected to the grandeur* of the house  
 “ intended for *the President*, he would have the  
 “ buildings for *Congress* erected upon a *grand*  
 “ *scale*, and fitted for the *Representatives* of a *great*  
 “ and *free people*.”—I do not choose, Sir, to let  
 this fall go abroad unnoticed, lest the world should  
 imagine us all tainted with that ungovernable vanity,  
 which seems to have engrossed the soul of our  
 unfortunate colleague.

The gentleman is afraid that the house of the  
 President may be *too magnificent* ; but that which he  
 expects to occupy *himself*, he wishes to see upon a  
*grand scale*—Modest man ! The President is to be  
 kept within the walls of a plain building, to remind  
 him of the lowliness of his estate, of his being the  
*servant* of the public ; while Mr. Giles is to strut  
 beneath the roof of buildings upon a *grand scale*,  
 fitted for the *Representatives* of a *great people* ; or,  
 in other words, for the *great Representatives* of the  
 people.

I am thinking, Sir, that the public will do well  
 to keep *us* within a plain building, or I am afraid our  
 heads will soon be turned. We are in absolute  
 need of being dieted, for we are grasping not only  
 at all honour but at all power too. If we once  
 enter the pile proposed by our colleague ; if we once  
 get under those corinthian columns and starry  
 vaults, we shall expect other things on a “ *grand*  
*scale*” also ; we must have our coaches-and-six,  
 our led horses, our pages, our grooms, our hunt-  
 men and our buck-hounds ; our villas, baths, sofas  
 and beds of state. We may expect, in due time,  
 to hear the gentleman from Virginia propose a *se-*



*raglio* as among the conveniences of the “ *Representatives* of a great and free people.”

Much do I fear, Sir, that if we were once got in possession of all these pretty things, we should be very loath to return to our humble dwellings and our homely fare. In short, I think we should do like the *great Representatives* of the French; that is, declare ourselves permanent, or, at least, order the people to elect nobody but ourselves, which amounts to exactly the same.

But, we are told, that this building upon a *grand scale*, is not intended as an honour to us, but to our constituents. This is the very gull-trap which the poor silly French have fallen into. Every thing that their grovelling low-bred tyrants have assumed to themselves, has been done under the specious pretext of doing honour “ to a *great and free* people.” They have seized on all the palaces in the kingdom, on the royal studs, coaches, and every other article of luxury, for their own exclusive use; they wallow in sumptuousness, while their ragged slaves have but two or three ounces of dirty-coloured bread a day, and, if they murmur, they shoot them down by thousands; and, all this is for the “ honour of a *great and free* people.” A great people, a free people, a sovereign people, and the like, are very pretty phrases: they tickle the ears of the multitude; but, should they perceive how completely the demagogues transfer this grandeur, liberty, and sovereignty, to themselves, perhaps they would cease to admire them; and nothing seems better calculated to open their eyes, than seeing them in a splendid palace, while they, many of them at least, are obliged to put up with log-huts.

It is become a prevailing fashion, among the opposers of our government, to confine the expression, "Representatives of the people," to this House only. But, Sir, is not this a very false, as well as dangerous notion? Is not the President the Representative of the people as well as Mr. Giles? Yes, and of the whole of the people too, while Mr. Giles represents but a very small part of one State. The epithet *immediate* is sometimes prefixed; but then, Mr. Giles can be the *immediate representative* of no more than an eighteenth part of the State of Virginia, while the President is the immediate representative of the whole Union; for the representation must ever be immediate, though the election may not. If therefore, a preference is due to any branch of the government, the President seems to have a better title to it than any of us, and seeing the thing in this light, I cannot help looking upon the observation of the gentleman from Virginia as extremely improper, if not indecent.

I thought, Sir, I heard the word *Capitol* mentioned during the debate. For the love of modesty, I hope the Congress House is not to be called a *Capitol*! If this be the case, it will be necessary to go a step further, and assume the masquerade dress of the French Romans. How pretty we shall look in long white robes, descending to our toes, a blue girdle about our waists, a scarlet cloak on our shoulders, and a red liberty cap on our heads! Let them all be well embroidered with gold, as those of the French legislators *are to be*; and, if they are even set with precious stones, it will be an additional proof of our jealousy for the honour of "a great and free people." We shall, indeed, bring on us a ridicule equal to that excited by the



upstart pettifoggers of the National Assembly, when they insisted on the Folding-Doors of the Louvre to be thrown open at their approach ; but, let the world be merry while we are swaggering about in our consular robes, we shall care but little whether we are called ambitious buffoons or not.

This idea of a *Capitol* seems to be borrowed from the State of Virginia, the Assembly-House of which has taken that name. For what reason it was there adopted, I know not, unless it be, that there are such numbers of Cæsars and Pompeys in the neighbourhood, against whose ambitious projects the grave and virtuous senate are ever vigilant to preserve the liberty of their country. The *Capitol* of Virginia resembles that of Rome also, in that it has a *slave mart* in its vicinity,

I shall now, Sir, return to the proposed guarantee, and advert to another of the forcible arguments of Mr. Brent. This gentleman tells us, that “ the guarantee is the touchstone to prove whether “ the seat of government is to be removed or not.” I am willing to take the gentleman at his word. I am willing to allow, that refusing the guarantee of the loan, will amount to a declaration of our wish to remain where we are ; and, with this view, I shall give the refusal my hearty support . . . . . [Here a loud cry of, hear him ! hear him !]—I am glad to find, Mr. Chairman, that gentlemen are so disposed to hear ; for, I can assure them, that, what I have to say, is not only worth hearing, but attending to also.

I look forward, Sir, to the day of removing the government to the banks of the Potomack, as the dawn of its destruction. Open the page of history,

and you will see, that the fate of every popular government in a great measure depends on the disposition of the people immediately in its neighbourhood. - I could cite you a thousand examples, from the fall of the Grecian States down to our own times ; but I shall content myself with one of modern date ; and, as the gentlemen on the other side of the House are so fond of flying to France, I trust I shall be excused for doing the same.

When the Constituent Assembly conceived the destructive project of annihilating the government, which their constituents had positively ordered them to aid and strengthen, what did they do ? Removed themselves to Paris, where they knew the greatest number of disaffected persons were assembled. The consequences are but too well known.

We are not ignorant of the general disposition of the State to which this government is to be removed. We have seen its legislature, during this very session, soliciting every State in the Union to join them in reducing this government to a mere democracy. Nor can any of us have forgotten the public invitation to the people of other States, to oppose the treaty with His Britannic Majesty by open force, boasting that there were “ a hundred thousand free and independent Virginians,” ready to strike the first blow. Can it be supposed, then, if we were now assembled at the City of Washington, that these hundred thousand free and independent Virginians, whether black, white or yellow, would not dictate to us all we should dare to say or do ? Do you think, Sir, that the cutting truths which have this day fallen from my lips, would ever have been uttered in the City of Wash-



ington? No; I should have expected to have my throat cut, or my eyes gouged out, by some slave or slave-dealer, before I got home to my dinner. I will never go there, Sir; and, to those gentlemen who do, I sincerely recommend the precaution of a steel collar, if not a suit of armour *cap-à-pié*.

Mr. GILES has told us, Sir, that the law for the removal of the seat of government differs from all others; that “the Constitution itself has marked the *rule*, and only left Congress to name the spot; that the law is therefore not *repealable*.” Curious quibble!—The Constitution says, that the Congress shall “exercise exclusive legislation over such district as may become the seat of government of the United States.”—Now, what is there here, that makes the act unrepealable? What *rule* is here marked out? Is there a word about the law being unalterable? Does the Constitution say, that when the district is once fixed on, it shall never be changed for another? There is something so ridiculous in the idea, that one would wonder how it ever found its way into words; and, to hazard those words, the gentleman must have a very high opinion of the forbearance of this House. Suppose, for instance, the banks of the Potomack should be visited with the plague or yellow fever; are we to remain there, and let our carcases be thrown into the river? Suppose a volcano or earthquake, or, in short, suppose what you will: are we yet bound to make the City of Washington the seat of government? And what, I ask, are plagues, yellow fevers, volcanos and earthquakes compared with the knives of “a hundred thousand *free and independent*” slaves?—In a word, Mr. Chairman, so fully am I convinced, that the re-

moval of the seat of government to the State of Virginia will prove the overthrow of our happy Constitution, and eventually plunge our country in anarchy and blood, that I shall not only oppose every measure that may accelerate the fatal epoch, but I pledge myself to bring forward a motion for the repeal of the act altogether.—And now, Sir, as I see the gentlemen from Virginia are bursting with reply, I sit down, satisfied of having discharged my duty, without giving offence to any one, to whose ears truth is not disagreeable.

*DEBATE ON THE MEASURES TO BE TAKEN TO PREVENT THE IMPRESSMENT OF AMERICAN SEAMEN.*

*February 18th.*

Mr. LIVINGSTON (N. York) said he would call the attention of the house to the situation of a very important and meritorious class of men whose value seemed to have been over looked and whose dearest rights were either shamefully neglected or ignominiously surrendered—He adverted to the seamen of the United States. This valuable class of men would fall under one of these descriptions.

1. Native American Citizens.
2. Such as were citizens at the Declaration of Independence and at the period of the peace with Great Britain.
3. Foreigners naturalized since the Declaration of independence.

It would be no difficult matter to prove that all the individuals of either of those descriptions were equally entitled to the protection of government; to the same or greater exertions in *their* favor than were made for those citizens whose situation rendered it easier to apply for relief.



Yet this meritorious body of our constituents, he said, thus entitled to our protection and favor, sailing under the sanction of our national flag, had been illegally seized, violently forced into a service they abhorred, cruelly torn from their relations, their families and their country, and ignominiously scourged for asserting the privileges of their citizenship. The country to which they looked for protection and relief had regarded their sufferings with apathy and indifference! Three years we had beheld their miseries and heard their cries; yet for three years we had been silent spectators of this disgraceful scene. We had begun a compact with their oppressors, in which these unfortunate men looked in vain for one word of comfort in their misery, for one little article in the voluminous pages of the instrument, that might offer a hope of recompence for their past sufferings, or security against future oppressions. “*I blush* (said Mr. Livingston) as an American to think it was an American Minister who could be “*guilty of this disgraceful omission. I should be covered with* “*shame and confusion for my Country* if I could suppose it “capable of giving that omission-its sanction, and I hold it a “sacred duty, in whatever station I may be placed, to contribute every exertion, and the little influence I possess, for “their relief.”—He concluded with moving the following resolution :

*Resolved*, that a committee be appointed to enquire and report whether any and what legislative provision is necessary for the relief of such American Seamen as may have been impressed into the service of any foreign power—and also to report a mode of furnishing American Seamen with such evidence of their citizenship as may protect them from foreign impressments in future.

Referred to a select committee.

*February 29th.*

The committee made their report, the substance of which was; that the impressment of American Seamen by *foreign powers* was too *notorious to need proof*; and that the President of the United States shall send agents to *England* and the *West Indies*, in order to afford relief to such American citizens, as have been illegally seized.



Mr. HARPER (S. Carolina) hoped when this resolution was committed to a select committee, some statements would have been brought forward, some facts produced, upon which to found the proposed enquiry. The committee have reported that they do not think it necessary to adduce any particular instances in which American Seamen have been impressed by foreign nations, the facts, they alledged, are too notorious to require particularizing. He could not suppose these gentlemen would believe that the House could proceed to legislate on uncertain newspaper reports. He trusted they would afford some proof who, what number, when, and where American seamen have been impressed. Until this was done, he should doubt the fact.—He was heard, he believed, by Representatives from every port in the United States, and if the fact was so notorious as to need no further evidence, he doubted not some of these gentlemen would be able to give some account of the business.

If the facts were established, Mr. Harper believed there would be but one opinion on the propriety of granting relief; but before they proceeded farther, some information was necessary respecting the existence of this abuse. He had applied to the office of the Secretary of State, and to other offices likely to afford information on the subject; but he found no instance of the impressment complained of, which redress had not been given. But, if any such instances do exist, in which relief has been applied for, and not obtained, gentlemen from some of the sea ports will be able to mention them. If not, he hoped the committee would rise and recommit the report.

Mr. LIVINGSTON said, the present measure was intended to afford relief to such of their distressed fellow citizens as had been illegally seized on the high seas. The gentleman, he said, who brings forward objections to the proposed enquiry, was in his place when the resolution upon which the report of the committee is founded, passed unanimously. Why did he not then come forward; [Mr. Harper said he was not in the House at the time.]—The resolution does not direct the committee to enquire into facts, they were considered as notorious, and nothing



seemed necessary but to fix upon the best mode of furnishing relief. The Legislature of the United States have formerly had evidence, and they have acted upon it. If the gentleman will look into the proceedings of the last session of Congress, he will find a considerable sum granted to Mr. Cutting, for relief of this distressed body of men. Some he relieved, others he did not. When the dignity of the nation, said he, is insulted, in the persons of our fellow-citizens, it is necessary at least to make enquiry into their sufferings.

A remark had fallen, Mr. Livingston said, from the member from South Carolina, which he wished to notice. He said he had applied to the office of the Secretary of State, and found there no complaint which had not been redressed. Now, he had waited upon the Secretary of State, as chairman of the committee, in vain for information on this subject. The Secretary informed him, that he could not give him the evidence which it appears he has given to the member from South Carolina. How, he wished to know, happened it that a member who opposes the business in question, should be furnished with that information which was denied to a member who supported it?

It is said, added Mr. Livingston, that we are attempting to legislate without evidence. Though no facts are at present before the House, it is notorious that numerous instances have been made known to government, and the present measure is meant to enquire into the cases of sufferers and remedy them as far as possible. It is admitted by the member from South Carolina that facts have existed, but that they have been removed. If these grievances, then, said he, have existed, let us prevent them in future. Let us not wait till it is too late to grant relief. The men, said he, who suffer by the depredations complained of, are at a great distance from their homes and friends, in foreign ports, dragged on board Tenders, and made to experience every hardship which can be conceived. And now, when a mode is proposed for the relief of these distressed citizens, evidence is called for! *If one of these men is confined in the East Indies, can evidence of his bondage be expected to be given here?* Such hardships have existed, and it was their business *to prevent them from again*



*occurring.* He hoped, therefore, the committee would not rise, as he trusted there was sufficient evidence on which to ground the enquiry.

Mr. HARPER wished to remark on what had fallen from the member from New-York, on the Secretary of State's refusing information to certain members and giving it to others. He applied to the office of the Secretary of State, to learn whether there were any documents there to support the proposed enquiry, and was informed there were only two cases; in one of which application was made to the British government; *four persons* were said to have been impressed; but on enquiry, it appeared, *that two of them were British subjects, and the other two had enlisted into the service.* The other complaint came to the office when the Secretary of State was much engaged in other concerns, but he believed relief was granted. This, he said, was verbal information; he had applied for written documents on the subject, and doubted not he should receive them as soon as other business would permit.

Mr. SWANWICK (Pennsylvania) said the member from S. Carolina had called for information; he conceived no particular information necessary. He could mention an instance in which he had immediate concern. A vessel of his going to the West-Indies had all her hands taken out of her, and obliged to work the guns of an English frigate; and, on their expostulating that though they were prisoners they did not wish to work the guns they were threatened with whipping, and the captain was told if he interfered, he should be whipped and *sent home* to England in irons. If he had thought facts were wanting, by a single advertisement in one of the Philadelphia papers, they would have been overpowered with facts. But if he had done so, he supposed he should have been charged with raising dissatisfaction in the minds of the people, or with encouraging Jacobinical principles. He therefore did not do it. But, without going out of the walls of the House, he said, he found evidence sufficient. He read an extract from the communication of the Secretary of State, dated March 2, 1794, in which were mentioned the representations made by fundry merchants of Philadelphia (of whom he was one) respecting the impressment



of American seamen. This document was thought sufficiently strong to make an article of instruction to Mr. Jay in his late negociation ; but, owing to certain difficulties, no specific agreement was entered into by him for their relief.

The plan now before the House, said Mr. Swanwick, is intended to remedy the difficulties which have been urged as obstacles in this business, by opening registers in which to enter every American seaman, by which may be known at any time the number of seamen belonging to the United States, and by means of which every such seaman would be possessed of a certificate of his *citizenship*.

Every one knows, said he, what has *been felt* on account of American seamen carried into *Algiers*. *No evidence was required with respect to their numbers, or how they were employed.* The united exertions of the whole American people *seemed to cry out* for their releasement, and the business, at length, has been effected. And let us not, said he, attend to our distressed citizens, in one part only, but in all parts of the world. Let us not, said he, *be too nice about evidence.* These men are generally *ignorant*, and cannot give the necessary information ; he thought, however, they had information sufficient for legislating upon in the present case. He hoped, therefore, the report would not be recommitted, until the committee had discussed the business.

Mr. TRACY (Connecticut) believed that every member in that House felt the propriety of extending the benefit of the laws to every class of citizens, and to none more than to American seamen. Some members seemed to suppose that the distresses of American seamen have been looked upon with apathy, but if due attention had been paid to the efforts of government, it would have been seen that they had always been duly attended to. It is well known that great difficulties arise when it is attempted to distinguish between *English and American seamen*. This has been the reason why ample regulations have not always taken place. He hoped the government would be popular, and that the new members in the House would assist the old ones to render it more and more so ; but thought



government ought not to be charged with apathy without paying due attention to what government had done.

Mr. TRACY proceeded to take notice of the resolutions proposed in the report. He enquired what good the agent to be sent to Great Britain would do. Are there seamen, said he, employed but at one place? Had not the United States Consuls at every port, and can they not do the business? He wished for information on the subject. *A great part of the seamen were foreigners*, he said, and it would be very difficult to separate them. If the plan proposed, however, could be made to appear to be beneficial, he would heartily join in effecting the desired relief to the class of citizens alluded to.

Mr. GOODHUE (Massachusetts) said the member from New York, on bringing forward this business, had charged government with looking upon the distresses of American seamen with apathy, and *blushed* on account of its conduct towards them. He represented, he believed, twenty times the number of American seamen that that gentleman represented; he was himself, indeed, formerly a seaman; yet he did not believe the evil complained of existed to any alarming degree. Mr. Cutting, it had been said, had relieved many seamen; that it was in the year 1790. Last summer the British took many vessels bound to France but they did not take the crews. There were some instances, he said, in which seamen had been impressed, and he should be in favour of every necessary step to afford them relief; but no obloquy should be thrown on government. Neither does the evil exist to the extent it might have been supposed, when the business was brought forward. A member from Pennsylvania had mentioned a particular instance: he could mention a particular instance of a French captain who had so ill-treated some American seamen, as to be cashiered, on a representation being made to the French government.

Mr. DAYTON (New Jersey) said that he had not expected an opposition to the resolution under consideration on the ground of fact, that he could not have supposed any member would have questioned the existence of the



evils, which the propositions were calculated to remedy. He entertained a belief that the impressment of American seamen, particularly on board of British ships of war, was a matter of too great notoriety, to need any evidence at this time. But the member from South Carolina, who manifested the most zealous opposition to these measures, had admitted that there had existed instances of this sort, and as it must follow that what had once existed might again exist, it behoved Congress to make provisions tending to prevent, or at least most speedily and efficaciously to remedy them.

Mr Dayton declared that he heartily approved the object of the resolution, as originally proposed by the member from New York, and the general principles of the report founded thereon, as a question of humanity, and of great national policy. It was, however, with pain that he heard the worthy mover draw into unfavourable question, the conduct of the Secretary of State, and indulge himself in some severe reflections and imputations upon that officer. Mr. Dayton ascribed it to an irritability, and perhaps an honest irritability, upon this subject so affecting and interesting to Americans. He ascribed it to a warmth of temper in which, in this particular case, the cooler judgment of that gentleman, and the knowledge of the real character and conduct of the Secretary of State had no agency or influence. The expressions which had been uttered by some gentlemen in the course of the discussion tending to charge our government with a criminal apathy and indifference towards this description of citizens, did by no means, Mr. Dayton said, meet with his approbation. He believed them to be unfounded, for he was persuaded that whenever it heard, it did whatever it could to relieve the seamen of the United States, and to obtain for those who unfortunately needed it, complete redress. Having said thus much in vindication of the conduct of the government he returned to the resolution itself, and declared himself its advocate. It contained neither in its words nor spirit, any imputation upon the Executive, of the sort hinted at.

In the former case, every one must perceive it more than possible, that owing to distance and the time which



must consequently be expended in the communication to, and remonstrance from our government, an *American citizen* might be impressed and compelled to serve months, perhaps years in a service which he detested, and possibly forced to apply the match to a cannon charged with balls aimed for the destruction of his friends.

Mr. BOURNE (Rhode Island) proposed to amend the resolution, by striking out that part of it which appoints an agent for Great Britain and confines the sending of an agent to that part of the English possessions in the West Indies to which the greatest number of American vessels sail.

Mr. LIVINGSTON was pleased to see gentlemen concur in endeavouring to form a plan for the relief of American seamen. It has been asked why the Consuls were not entrusted with this business; the committee considered that, as the Consuls of the United States received no other recompence for their services, than the dignity and consequence which their office gives them, they would not be likely to pay sufficient attention to a business of this kind. They considered the immense labour of Mr. Cutting to deliver the impressed American seamen. They supposed, therefore, if the duty were laid upon the Consuls, a salary should be annexed to their office? but, as there is no Consul in the West Indies, a special agent should be appointed.—In order to bring a view of the business before the House, he would ask, how relief is to be afforded to a seaman who has been impressed? Suppose he is seized in London, he is sent down to Portsmouth. The agent must attend immediately, get certificates, pay fees of office, employ council, &c. to release a single seaman; a trouble he believed no Consul would take. The committee supposed that the solemnity of commissioning an agent especially on the business, would convince *Foreign powers* that they would no longer suffer the British, or others, to exercise that power over American seamen which they themselves could not exercise. It is to be hoped, also, that when the government of Great Britain sees a step of this sort taken, it will give up the practice of seizing American seamen, and let them pass in quietness. If not, the agents employed could transmit to this country an account of what seamen were seized by them, and every particular



respecting the same. This consideration influenced the committee, and he trusted it would influence the House.

Mr. S. SMITH (Maryland) said that as the member from South Carolina had called upon gentlemen from sea-ports for evidence, if they were silent, it would be supposed no information could be given on the subject under discussion. He supposed he should be prevented from giving this information now, because the amendment of the first resolution was under consideration. [The House called for information.] He said he represented a port where the fact of American seamen being impressed by the British was *so notorious*, that *every* man knew it. But how, said he, is this information to be got and transmitted to the Secretary of State, no complaint is likely to reach his office, except brought there by merchants. In his *own trade*, he had frequent instances of this sort, almost in every voyage. He could *not say the men impressed were always Americans, but they were men sailing under the authority of the United States*. We have a flag, under that flag men are seized, and they have a right to expect, when seized, redress from government. There, is *no difference between British and Algerines*, for, by the former, they are compelled to fight against those whom they *wish well*, which is *equal to any slavery that can be imposed*. He said, that from one of his ships there were two New-England men impressed; one of whom being a stout, courageous man, wished to have defended himself against his assailants; but the supercargo said, no, this will risk the cargo of the owner. The advice he gave, supposing government would afford these men relief.

If the member from South Carolina wished for *such information as would be received before a court of Judicature*, it could not be got. Mr. Smith thought sufficient attention had not been paid by government *to merchants and seamen*. Mr. Jay, in his communication to Lord Grenville says, an impressment of American seamen had taken place, who had been forced to fight, &c. If this had not been so, it had not been written by Mr. Jay, nor would Lord Grenville have promised relief. He hoped this information would be thought sufficient.



It had been said that there were not many instances of American seamen impressed; but, suppose there were but one man, *and he a negro*, suffering under *the galling yoke of impressment*, it is the duty of government to provide relief for that man. The same member has said that the Quiberon vessels did not impress the crews of the ships; he said it was sufficient to take their flour and pay them nine dollars for what might have been sold the next day for twenty or upwards.—Mr. Smith concluded by observing, that if we were a feeble nation, we had a right to expect justice; but he hoped we were not so feeble as some gentlemen imagined.

Mr. GILES (Virginia) was of opinion, with the member from Rhode Island, that American citizens should be attended to in other countries, as well as in Great Britain. He had not heard, of any *impressments* but by the British, but he had heard of *captivities*; and that House had heard of a French officer being cashiered, for ill-treating American citizens; but it had heard no instance of Great Britain punishing officers for ill-treating American citizens. No, this marked the different character of the two nations towards the Americans.

Mr. SWANWICK rose to inform the house that since he was in his place yesterday, he had been called upon with evidence on the subject now before the committee, in consequence of the call made for it in the course of the debate. The instances he had given to him were, the case of Robert Norris a native of Princeton in New-Jersey, and *five others* who sailed on board the American brig Matilda, captain Burke, from Philadelphia, which sailed from this port in May last, for Bourdeaux, and were on the 9th of July, brought to by four British frigates, forcibly taken into the vessel, impressed and compelled to go and serve on board one of the said frigates called the Stag, where they served four months, when the said Robert Norris made his escape from the frigate at Sheerness, at the risk of his life, and returned in January last to the United States. His companions he believes are yet in bondage. The other instance was the brig Sally captain Wilkins, which sailed from this port in May last bound to Madeira, and five days after leaving the Capes was brought



to by the Rattle Snake sloop of war, captain York and the mate (*a native of Scotland*, but who had sailed for *many years* out of the United States) and one of the best seamen (an American) taken out. They were carried to Halifax, from whence the fore-mast man made his escape, and arrived here the beginning of July. Before they arrived at Halifax, he informs, that fifteen men were taken out of American vessels.—Mr. Swanwick read also an account from an owner of several other impressments.

Mr. SEDGWICK (Massachusetts) said, he was yesterday prevented from attending the House by indisposition. The subject struck his mind, he said, in several points of view which had not been noticed. He was surprized why the business was undertaken in the way it was. No description of men, he said, were more entitled to regard than seamen; but this did not reconcile the adoption of the subject in the manner proposed. The executive, he was of opinion, would consider itself as charged with this business. An agent who is neither consul nor minister, is an instrument unknown, an undefined character that would not be recognized. It was impossible, he said, for any two agents, one in Great Britain and the other in the West-Indies, to gain information of the sufferings of seamen in different parts of the two countries, particularly in Great Britain. He called upon gentlemen to say whether they had ever heard of such a character as they were proposing to create? He said America had consuls in every part of the world, and if they have not, they ought to have salaries for the business. Why appoint agents? and what authority will they have?

Mr. SEDGWICK noticed the different kinds of American citizens, and of the difficulties arising from the doctrine of inalienable right supported by the English, and observed that when two countries each claim a right to man no means but force was left to decide between them.

The resolution was amended, and a select committee ordered to prepare a bill. The substance of which in the next *Censor*.

Now, extraordinary as it may seem, and much as the reader may be disappointed, I must absolutely decline making a single remark on this debate. I would, however, recommend it to him, to give it an attentive perusal; after which, by way of recreation, he may read the following dialogue.

## LEGISLATIVE WRANGLING

*à la mode de Paris.*

*Mr. L*—— The seamen, sailing under the sanction of our national flag, have been violently forced into a service they abhor, cruelly torn from their dear wives and smiling babes, and ignominiously scourged for asserting their privileges as citizens! The country to which they looked for relief has regarded their sufferings with apathy and indifference. Three long, long years we have beheld their whippings and heard their lamentable cries; yet, for three long, long years we have been silent spectators of the disgraceful scene! We have begun a compact with their oppressors, in which these poor dear fellows look with longing eyes in vain for one little tiny article, one ray of hope! *I blush*, that an *A*——can Minister could be guilty of this *disgraceful omission*!

*Peter Porcupine*.—Mr. Chairman, the gentleman who spoke last, has described the sufferings of our injured fellow citizens in a manner that does infinite honour to his feelings. He talks about *blushing* and *guilty disgraceful omissions* with a warmth peculiar to himself, and admirably calculated to produce what the players call stage effect. Indeed, Sir, I cannot help looking on ourselves as engaged in the performance of a tragedy here: the gentleman has gone back 2203 years, even to the days of *Euripides*,



for his model. The piece will certainly do us honour; but, it seems to be incomplete without a chorus to throw light on some parts of it, that in particular where he speaks of *blushing*; and, as I have a few verses in my hand, which are not quite foreign to this subject, I beg leave to read them.

\* “ In short to run the L . . . . stonian round,  
 “ Where ev’ry trick of knavery is found.  
 “ Close at his heels trots cousin Peter R.  
 “ And M——, a younger, feeble star.  
 “ Two hopeful brothers of a hopeful breed,  
 “ Two thrifty plants of well approved seed,  
 “ Who long have tried, *by arts and measures base*,  
 “ To lift from filth the remnant of their race;  
 “ A race so sunk, by habit so deprav’d,  
 “ So long by vice and infamy enslav’d;  
 “ So weak, so haughty, pompous, proud and mean,  
 “ Indeed so black, so shameful and obscene,  
 “ That nought but strength omnipotent can save  
 “ Their name deep sinking in oblivion’s wave.”

Charity begins at home, says the old proverb; and so ought *blushing*, Mr Chairman. One would think, that a man to whom lines like these apply, need lend his cheek to blush for nobody, and particularly for the governor of N—Y—k, one of the brightest characters in this, or any country. There is more wisdom, more honesty, more real patriotism in one curl, nay in one single hair of Mr. J--y’s wig, than in all the skulls of all the L——s, from the days of St. Patrick down to the present hour.

Mr. L—— The gentleman seems to be paying me off *in my own way*.

Peter Porcupine. No, Sir, by no means, I am paying you at the rate of *twenty shillings in the pound*.

\* See Democratiad.

*Mr. L—*— I see the gentleman is a little nettled. The House know too well the value of what he advances to form a wrong estimate of it. I shall let him fling his dirt ; thank heaven, it cannot soil my character.

*Peter Porcupine.* True, Sir ; nor is it so malicious to fling dirt, as to fling *stones*. I defy any one to say, that I, or any of my *family* or *friends*, ever flung stones, in order to knock out the brains of a man, whose arguments I was afraid to hear, because I knew them to be irresistible. The treatment of Mr. H—ton is a stain, an everlasting stain on the city of N—Y—k. I do not scruple to say, without disparagement to a crowd of worthily celebrated men of whom this country may boast, that, after General Washington, this man has rendered it the most essential services ; this very man whom a gang of foreign ruffians were hired to dispatch. Had one of the missiles hurled from their infamous hands struck him on the temple, you might have had the pleasure of seeing him expire at your feet, while we should have mourned the irreparable loss. Were I to draw your character, Sir, and place it by the side of that of Mr. H—ton ; then you would have reason to blush indeed, a die ten thousand times deeper than crimson would become your jaundiced cheek.

*Mr. S—*— The gentleman last up seems to have lost sight of the question altogether. One would think he was contemplating protection to Mr. H—ton instead of A—can seamen. I shall endeavour to bring him back to the subject before the committee, reminding him, at the same time, that such personalities as he deals about him are very derogatory of the dignity of this House.



I am astonished that proofs of implemments are called for. When we heard of A——can seamen being prisoners *in Algiers*, no evidence was required with respect to numbers. The united exertions of the whole A——can people seemed *to cry out* for their releasement. Let us not be *too nice about evidence*. These men are *ignorant*, and cannot give the necessary information.

*Peter Porcupine.* Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for his hint about personalities ; but he will allow, that I am as excusable as Mr L——, who talked about the *shameful, guilty, and disgraceful* conduct of a most upright public Minister. I may not have the mellifluous eloquence of the gentleman last up : I know I am a rough-hewn mortal ; but, as I am speaking to men, and not to an assembly of *little misses*, the want of that gentleman's silver lip may not amount to a total disqualification.

I shall now turn to what the gentleman has advanced on the subject before us.—He begs us “not “to be *too nice* about evidence.” This is going a step beyond the Revolutionary Tribunal of Paris. There the *accuser* is heard, and if the jury are satisfied of the guilt of the prisoner, *no evidence is heard in his defence*. This is not being over nice ; but we are required to be still less nice. The merciful French hear the witnesses *against* the prisoner at any rate ; but we are called upon to give our verdict, without hearing any at all ; poor unfortunate Great Britain is to be condemned upon the bare indictment. One comes forward and accuses her ; she holds up her feeble emaciated hand, and pleads, NOT GUILTY, my Lords. Some of us wish to hear what can be urged against her ; but the gentlemen tell us not to be too nice about evi-

dence ; that she is a notorious offender ; that “ *every man knows it, though no one can give regular information of it,*” and, in short, that she ought to have been annihilated long ago. In vain do we, like Pontius Pilate, ask, *for what* ; still they cry with one voice : Let her be crucified ! Let her be crucified !—And, is it thus we treat our poor old mother in the hour of her distress ?

The gentleman produces, as a sufficient reason for our not being *too nice*, the great “ *ignorance of the citizens* impressed.” And, do I hear this language from Mr. S——k ? Is it possible for the people to be ignorant while under the rays of this focus of science ? Do I live, Mr. Chairman, to hear the words *ignorance* and *citizens* articulated in the same breath ? How long, Sir, have our ears been dinned with, *an informed people, an enlightened people* ; with the destruction of superstition and prejudice, and the luminous close of the eighteenth century ? And, shall we now be told, that our *citizens* are *ignorant* ? That they are such stupid brutes as not to be able to give an account of what has befallen them ? not even of their imprisonments and their stripes ?

But, Mr. S——k, after two or three days diligent search, brings us something like an account of some men impressed from a vessel *of his own*, and this, he insists, is evidence enough for any reasonable man. Thus, when a sailor can be brought to say, that he has been impressed and scourged, he is an *enlightened citizen* ; but when he cannot, he is a poor ignorant devil, “ *not capable of giving the necessary information.*”

The gentleman told us something about *Algiers*, and, though I cannot for my soul perceive why



Algiers was dragged into the debate, I look upon myself as entitled to say a word or two in reply. "The united exertions," says he, "of the whole  
 "A——can people seemed *to cry out* for the releasement of the prisoners in Algiers," I believe, Sir, that the people in general were much affected with the fate of those unfortunate men, and that, had proper measures been taken to call their feelings into action, the prisoners would long ago have been restored to their families and country, without the interposition of government; but, no one will deny, that these measures should have originated with the *merchants*; that the example should have been given, and, indeed, the greatest part of the money bestowed by themselves. Was this the case; They did, indeed, "*cry out*;" they might, for ought I know, make fervent applications to heaven; but the applications to their purses, which had been filled by the toil and hardships of these poor fellows, were very faint and ineffectual. A subscription was opened in this city, Mr. S——k was himself one of the receivers, and I now call upon him to say, how much his brethren subscribed, and how much he subscribed himself. I call upon him to say, whether a company of *foreign players*, yea, even English players, did not subscribe more than all the merchants of this great, rich and flourishing city!—Here was "apathy and indifference," indeed! Here Mr. L—— might have seen reason to "*blush* for a *disgraceful omission*!"

I am not sorry that the little gentleman bestowed a few of his silver sounds on the slaves in Algiers, as it furnishes me with an opportunity of comparing the conduct of the friends of the resolution towards those men, and that which they now hold towards seamen impressed by the English. The slaves in Algiers could have been at any time ransomed, and

we well know, that they were *all* real *A——cans*. The seamen impressed are indefinite ; we know not who or where they are ; all we know about them, is, that they are *all*, or nearly so, subjects of the king of Great Britain. Now, how comes it, that these gentlemen show such amazing zeal, and are so deeply touched with what they gravely call the *sufferings* of these subjects of His Britannic Majesty, while they show such indifference for our own citizens ? This seems totally unaccountable, yet, Mr. Chairman, I think I can explain it in a few words. The impressment of *British* seamen by the British forms a subject of opposition to the treaty ; any measures taken to resist that impressment may lead to a war ; the expence attending the agents sent out will come from the public purse, and not from the purse of these gentlemen. None of these weighty reasons existed with respect to the slaves in Algiers, and therefore, they might have remained there, 'till they had rotted in their chains, had not that government which these sticklers for humanity now accuse of apathy and indifference, been much more vigilant and humane than they.

I have much more to say on this subject, Sir ; but as the hour of Turkey and Madeira is at hand, I sit down, in order to give the House an opportunity of adjourning.

*(To be concluded in the Censor for April.)*

## NARRATIVE

*Of the Suicide of the Argus of New York.*

OF All the acts arising from folly, wickedness, or despair, that of Suicide is best calculated to awaken curiosity. It is so hard to be accounted for from the common evils incident to life, and is such a direct violation of the first law of



nature, that a man must possess an extraordinary degree of stoicism, not to feel some inclination to be informed of the cause. For my part, I felt this inclination so forcibly, upon hearing of the fate of the renowned *Argus*, that I could not rest, 'till I had obtained a circumstantial account of the whole affair. I trust, it is unnecessary to say how my breast has been wrung by this melancholy relation; nevertheless, I should not think that I discharged my duty as *Censor*, did I neglect to impart it to my readers.

By way of preface to this Narrative, it may not be amiss to give some account of the wonderful two-legged creature who is the subject of it.

His name indicates that he has a hundred eyes, which is a real fact. These eyes, like those of the beast in the vision, are divided between his fore and hinder parts; but, in other respects, they resemble those of the Lamper Eel: that is, they emit filth and noxious matter in place of admitting light; or, in other words, they answer none of the useful purposes of this organ in other animals. He is extremely vindictive and ferocious, and, though his stupid eyes are too dim to wound in the manner of the basilisk, yet, when he has no other means of vengeance left, he drops tears that scald and burn like *aqua fortis*.

These qualities could not fail to recommend him to the great Citizen G——t, of seditious and insolent memory. He very soon became the Citizen's chief favourite, and is supposed to have drank deeply at the fountain of his largesses. From motives of gratitude, therefore, he was desperately attached to the cause of the French Republic. He has written, sworn, and lied in that cause; and, of all the tools of faction, has, perhaps, been the most steady to his trust. He has chanted the Marseillois Hymn, and celebrated all the successful massacres of his benefactors, with that kind of savage joy that animates the ravages of beasts of prey.

But, alas! how transitory are all sublunary things! The disgraceful defeats, or to use their own expression, "the *little success*," of his masters, during the last campaign, plunged him into a state of dejection, from which he was only raised to be sunk over head and ears in despair. Like many other charitable patriots, he was buoyed up by the hope of a rebellion, or, to give it the fashionable term, of a *revolution*, in Great Britain; and this event was reduced to a certainty by the account concerning the *Sedition Bills*, which our industrious and faithful and impartial news-mongers spread through the country.

This, then, was the rock of our *Argus's* hope: full, however, he had his doubts and his fears, and these were left to fluctuate during the wide chasm in our foreign intelligence. No-



thing torments and harrasses the mind like suspense. The poor *Argus* became pensive and melancholy, was often seen to stop in the middle of the street, and heard to mutter incoherent expressions about rebellion and *Sedition Bills* and Pitt and King George, or Citizen Guelph, as he called him.

On Wednesday, the fatal 23rd of March, about a quarter after six in the morning, he was perceived, with a spying-glass in his hand, walking on the battery opposite the port. He was observed to stop often and clap the glass to one of his eyes, then scratch his head, clench his fist, and give other evident tokens of anger or madness. At last, turning himself towards the water, he laid the telescope to his shoulder, as if it were a gun, and, after making a motion to fire, uttered a loud cry and ran down to the beach. Two labourers, who had viewed him all this time, now lost sight of him. One of them hastened to the spot, where he found the poor distracted wretch labouring a log which had been thrown up by the tide. His left hand was all over blood, and the telescope was reduced to splinters, except about four inches of it, which he still gripped fast in his right. Upon being asked what was the matter: "Look," says he, holding his bloody hand to the man, "Look, my lad, that's the heart's blood of Pitt: no pity! no pity! let's to the palace and cut all their throats!"

The other workman now came up, and the two together, with the help of a third person, made shift to get him home, without further mischief. This was not effected, however, without some danger; for, as he conceived himself going to Newgate, as a preparative for a voyage to Botany Bay, there is not a mean of annoyance that he did not make use of, or an execration that he did not vomit forth.

When he was put to bed, he swore he was on a rack a million times crueller than that of *Dámien*. "Rascals," says he, "I have only killed a minister. I have only done my duty as a citizen and a patriot." These ravings continued for nearly two hours, after which, having been copiously bled, he dropt off to sleep.

About four in the afternoon he waked, when to the joy of his friends, and the surprize of every body, he seemed perfectly restored to his senses. He eat a basin of panada, drank a little wine and water, and appeared quite recovered, except from the bruises he had received from the ribs of minister Log.

Just as things were taking this happy turn, one of his printers brought word that a ship was that moment arrived from Liverpool, bringing news to the end of February. This imprudent communication was the cause of an immediate relapse. He jumped up, and, without either hat or coat, ran down to the wharf, from whence he got on board the vessel. "Well,"

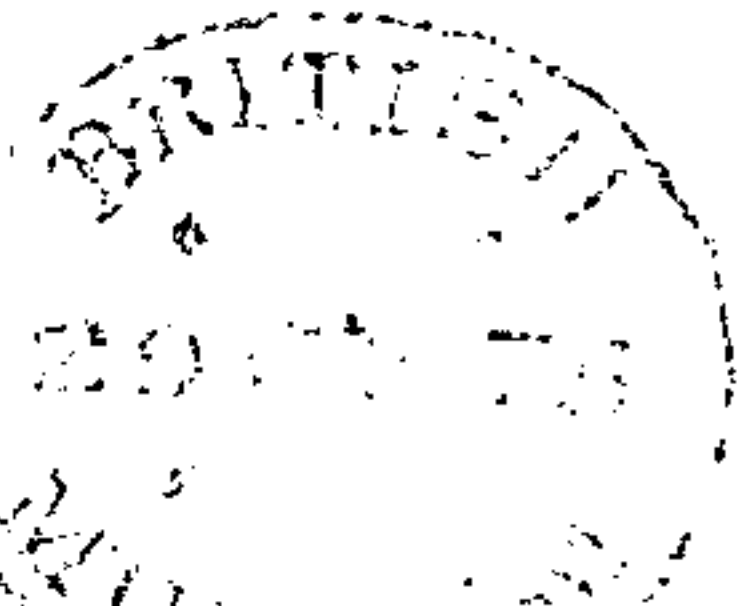


says he, with a voice and look that scared the whole crew, "Well, rascals, you are come at last. Tell me this moment; are the *Bills* passed."—The Captain answered yes. "What!" says the raving *Argus*, "the *Bills* passed, and no Revolution!" None, say the captain.—"What! the English are not cutting one another's throats yet!"—No, says the humane tarpawling, *more is the pity; but let us hope, for the love of God that they will begin soon.*—This charitable informant had hardly done speaking, when our poor unfortunate friend made an attempt to throw himself over the quarter deck. Being prevented here, he assumed a placid mein, pretended he was only in a joke, though it was evident to every one, he was but too much in earnest. Soon after this he slipped from among the crowd (which was very considerable on account of the great news that was expected) and got away on the fore-castle, where he was preparing to hang himself. He had even got the cord round his neck, when he was perceived by a man upon the yards. His intentions were now so manifest, that it would have been downright inhumanity to neglect him any longer. He was conducted home by some of the citizens, and put under the care of his own people.

Arrived once more at his home, he seems to have been resolved to defer the execution of his desperate design no longer. He dissembled, however; talked very connectedly; enquired whether the paper was nearly composed or not, and even sat down and took his pen under pretence of writing an article of news. By these means he prevailed on his people to leave him alone; two of them, however, thought it prudent to remain at the head of the stairs, in order to be at hand, should he make any attempt on his life. Their suspicions were but too well founded; for, at the end of half an hour's dead silence, they heard him utter a most dreadful groan, and, presently after, fall on the floor. They attempted to force the door, but it was too securely fastened. They then applied to the wainscot, and, at last, made an opening, when, shocking to relate! they found their dear master weltering in his blood, his throat being cut nearly across. A surgeon was instantly called, and every assistance given; but, I am sorry to add, that, when this morning's post came away, there was little hope of recovery.

The interval between his entering his apartment and the perpetration of the horrid deed, was, it seems, employed in writing a farewell letter to his Sister and only relation, the *Aurora* of Philadelphia. I am promised a copy of this letter, which, if obtained, shall find a place in the next *Censor*.

It is said, with what truth I do not pretend to ascertain, that the instrument with which the fatal gash was given, was one of the long *couteaux*, employed in the prisons of Paris, and was a *keep-sake* from a very intimate friend now in France.



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P O R C U P I N E's

# POLITICAL CENSOR,

FOR DECEMBER, 1796.

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CONTAINING,

REMARKS on the Debates in Congress, particularly on the Timidity of the Language held towards *France*.

A L S O,

A LETTER to the infamous *Tom Paine*, in Answer to his brutal attack on the Federal Constitution, and on the conduct and character of General WASHINGTON.

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THE SECOND EDITION.

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# R E M A R K S

ON THE

## DEBATES IN CONGRESS,

During the Sessions, begun on the 5th of  
December, 1796.

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### 5th DECEMBER.

**T**HIS day the Congress met, and, a quorum being formed, it was agreed, on the 6th, to inform the President that the two Houses were ready to receive such communications as he might have to make to them.

### 7th DECEMBER.

The President went to the Representatives' chamber, in the usual manner, where the two Houses being assembled, he delivered the following address.

*Fellow-Citizens of the Senate,  
and of the House of Representatives,*

I N recurring to the internal situation of our country since I had last the pleasure to address you, I find ample reason for a renewed expression of that gratitude to the



Ruler of the Universe, which a continued series of prosperity has so often and so justly called forth.

The acts of the last session, which required special arrangements, have been, as far as circumstances would admit, carried into operation.

Measures calculated to ensure a continuance of the friendship of the Indians, and to preserve peace along the extent of our interior frontier, have been digested and adopted. In the framing of these, care has been taken to guard on the one hand, our advanced settlements from the predatory incursions of those unruly individuals, who cannot be restrained by their tribes; and on the other hand, to protect the rights secured to the Indians by treaty; to draw them nearer to the civilized state; and inspire them with correct conceptions of the power, as well as justice of the government.

The meeting of the deputies from the Creek nation at Coleraine, in the State of Georgia, which had for a principal object the purchase of a parcel of their land by that State, broke up without its being accomplished; the nation having, previous to their departure, instructed them against making any sale; the occasion however has been improved, to confirm by a new treaty with the Creeks, their pre-existing engagements with the United States; and to obtain their consent to the establishment of trading houses, and military posts within their boundary; by means of which their friendship and the general peace may be more effectually secured.

The period during the late session, at which the appropriation was passed, for carrying into effect the Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation, between the United States and his Britannic Majesty, necessarily procrastinated the reception of the posts stipulated to be delivered, beyond the date assigned for that event.

As soon however as the Governor General of Canada could be addressed with propriety on the subject, arrangements were cordially and promptly concluded for their

evacuation, and the United States took possession of the principal of them, comprehending Oswego, Niagara, Detroit, Michilimackinac and Fort Miami, where such repairs and additions have been ordered to be made as appeared indispensable.

The commissioners appointed on the part of the United States and of Great Britain, to determine which is the river St. Croix, mentioned in the treaty of peace of 1763, agreed in the choice of Egbert Benson, Esq. of New-York, for the third commissioner. The whole met at St. Andrew's, in Passamaquoddy Bay, in the beginning of October, and directed surveys to be made of the rivers in dispute; but deemed it impracticable to have these surveys completed before the next year, they adjourned, to meet at Bolton in August 1797, for the final decision of the question.

Other commissioners appointed on the part of the United States, agreeably to the seventh article of the treaty with Great-Britain, relative to captures and condemnation of vessels and other property, met the commissioners of his Britannic majesty in London, in August last, when John Trumbull, Esq. was chosen by lot, for the fifth commissioner. In October following, the board were to proceed to business. As yet, there has been no communication of commissioners on the part of Great-Britain, to unite with those who have been appointed on the part of the United States, for carrying into effect the sixth article of the treaty.

The treaty with Spain required that the commissioners for running the boundary line between the territory of the United States, and his Catholic Majesty's provinces of East and West Florida, should meet at the Natchez before the expiration of six months after the exchange of the ratifications, which was effected at Aranjuez on the twenty-fifth day of April; and the troops of his Catholic Majesty, occupying any posts within the limits of the United States, were within the same period to be withdrawn.—The commissioner of the United States, therefore, commenced his journey for the Natchez in September, and



troops were ordered to occupy the posts from which the Spanish garrisons should be withdrawn. Information has been recently received of the appointment of a commissioner on the part of his Catholic Majesty, for running the boundary line ; but none of any appointment for the adjustment of the claims of our citizens, whose vessels were captured by the armed vessels of Spain.

In pursuance of the act of Congress passed in the last session, for the protection and relief of American seamen, agents were appointed, one to reside in Great-Britain, and the other in the West-Indies. The effects of the agency in the West-Indies are not yet fully ascertained ; but those which have been communicated, afford grounds to believe the measure will be beneficial. The agent destined to reside in Great-Britain declining to accept the appointment, the business has consequently devolved on the minister of the United States, in London, and will command his attention, until a new agent shall be appointed.

After many delays and disappointments arising out of the European war, the final arrangements for fulfilling the engagements made to the Dey and Regency of Algiers, will, in all present appearance, be crowned with success ; but under great, though inevitable disadvantages in the pecuniary transactions, occasioned by that war : which will render a further provision necessary. The actual liberation of all our citizens who were prisoners in Algiers, while it gratifies every feeling heart, is itself an earnest of a satisfactory termination of the whole negotiation. Measures are in operation for effecting treaties with the Regencies of Tunis and Tripoli.

To an active external commerce, the protection of a naval force is indispensable. This is manifest with regard to wars in which a state is itself a party. But besides this, it is in our own experience, that the most sincere neutrality is not a sufficient guard against the depredations of nations at war. To secure respect to a neutral flag, requires a naval force, organized and ready to vindicate it from insult or aggression. This may even prevent the necessity of going to war, by discouraging belligerent powers from

committing such violations of the rights of the neutral party, as may, first or last, leave no other option. From the best information I have been able to obtain, it would seem as if our trade to the Mediterranean, without a protecting force, will always be insecure ; and our citizens exposed to the calamities from which numbers of them have but just been relieved.

These considerations invite the United States to look to the means, and to set about the gradual creation of a navy. The increasing progress of their navigation promises them, at no distant period, the requisite supply of seamen ; and their means in other respects, favour the undertaking. It is an encouragement likewise, that their particular situation will give weight and influence to a moderate naval force in their hands. Will it not then be advisable to begin without delay to provide and lay up the materials for the building and equipping of ships of war ; and to proceed in the work by degrees, in proportion as our resources shall render it practicable without inconvenience ; so that a future war of Europe may not find our commerce in the same unprotected state in which it was found by the present ?

Congress have repeatedly, and not without success, directed their attention to the encouragement of manufactures. The object is of too much consequence not to ensure a continuance of their efforts in every way which shall appear eligible. As a general rule, manufactures on public account are inexpedient. But where the state of things in a country leaves little hope that certain branches of manufacture will for a great length of time obtain ; when these are of a nature essential to the furnishing and equipping of the public force in time of war ; are not establishments for procuring them on public account, *to the extent of the ordinary demand for the public service*, recommended by strong considerations of national policy, as an exception to the general rule ? Ought our country to remain in such cases dependent on foreign supply, precarious, because liable to be interrupted ?



If the necessary articles should in this mode cost more in time of peace, will not the security and independence thence arising, form an ample compensation? Establishments of this sort, commensurate only with the calls of the public service in time of peace, will in time of war, easily be extended in proportion to the exigencies of the government; and may even perhaps be made to yield a surplus for the supply of our citizens at large, so as to mitigate the privations from the interruptions of their trade. If adopted, the plan ought to exclude all those branches which are already or likely soon to be established in the country; in order that there may be no danger of interference with pursuits of individual industry.

It will not be doubted, that with reference either to individual or national welfare, agriculture is of primary importance. In proportion as nations advance in population, and other circumstances of maturity, this truth becomes more apparant; and renders the cultivation of the soil more and more an object of public patronage. Institutions, for promoting it, grow up supported by the public purse: and to what object can it be dedicated with greater propriety? Among the means which have been employed to this end, none have been attended with greater success, than the establishment of Boards, composed of proper characters, charged with collecting and diffusing information, and enabled, by premiums and small pecuniary aids, to encourage and assist a spirit of discovery and improvement.— This species of establishment contributes doubly to the increase of improvement; by stimulating to enterprize and experiment; and by drawing to a common centre the results every where of individual skill and observation, and spreading them thence over the whole nation. Experience accordingly has shewn, that they are very cheap instruments of immense national benefits.

I have heretofore proposed to the consideration of Congress, the expediency of establishing a National University; and also a Military Academy. The desirableness of both these institutions, has so constantly increased with every new view I have taken of the subject, that I cannot

omit the opportunity of once for all, recalling your attention to them.

The assembly to which I address myself, is too enlightened not to be fully sensible how much a flourishing state of the arts and sciences contributes to national prosperity and reputation. True it is, that our country, much to its honour, contains many seminaries of learning highly respectable and useful ; but the funds upon which they rest, are too narrow to command the ablest professors in the different departments of liberal knowledge, for the institution contemplated : though they would be excellent auxiliaries.

Amongst the motives to such an institution, the assimilation of the principles, opinions and manners of our countrymen, by the common education of a portion of our youth from every quarter, well deserves attention. The more homogeneous our citizens can be made in these particulars, the greater will be our prospect of permanent union ; and a primary object of such a national institution should be, the education of our youth in the science of *government*. In a republic, what species of knowledge can be equally important ? And what duty more pressing on its legislature, than to patronise a plan for communicating it to those who are to be the future guardians of the liberties of the country ?

The institution of a military academy, is also recommended by cogent reasons. However pacific the general policy of a nation may be, it ought never to be without an adequate stock of military knowledge for emergencies. The first would impair the energy of its character, and both would hazard its safety, or expose it to greater evils when war could not be avoided. Besides, that war might often not depend upon its own choice. In proportion as the observance of pacific maxims might exempt a nation from the necessity of practising the rules of the military art, ought to be its care in preserving and transmitting by proper establishments, the knowledge of that art. Whatever argument may be drawn from particular examples, superficially viewed, a thorough examination of the subject will evince, that the art of war is at once comprehen-



five and complicated ; that it demands much previous study ; and that the profession of it, in its most improved and perfect state, is always of great moment to the security of a nation. This, therefore, ought to be a serious care of every government ; and for this purpose, an academy, where a regular course of instruction is given, is an obvious expedient, which different nations have successfully employed.

The compensations to the officers of the United States, in various instances, and in none more than in respect to the most important stations, appear to call for legislative revision. The consequences of a defective provision are of serious import to the government. If private wealth is to supply the defect of public retribution, it will greatly contract the sphere within which the selection of character for office is to be made ; and will proportionally diminish the probability of a choice of men, able as well as upright. Besides that it would be repugnant to the vital principles of our government, virtually to exclude from public trusts, talents and virtue, unless accompanied by wealth.

While in our external relations, some serious inconveniences and embarrassments have been overcome, and others lessened, it is with much pain, and deep regret, I mention, that circumstances of a very unwelcome nature have lately occurred. Our trade has suffered, and is suffering extensive injuries in the West-Indies, from the cruizers and agents of the French republic ; and communications have been received from its minister here, which indicate the danger of a further disturbance of our commerce by its authority ; and which are, in other respects, far from agreeable.

It has been my constant, sincere and earnest wish, in conformity with that of our nation, to maintain cordial harmony, and a perfectly friendly understanding with that republic. This wish remains unabated ; and I shall persevere in the endeavour to fulfil it, to the utmost extent of what shall be consistent with a just, and indispensable regard to the rights and honour of our country : nor will I easily cease to cherish the expectation, that a spirit of jus-

tice, candor and friendship, on the part of the republic, will eventually ensure success.

In pursuing this course, however, I cannot forget what is due to the character of our government and nation ; or to a full and entire confidence in the good sense, patriotism, self-respect and fortitude of my countrymen.

I reserve for a special message, a more particular communication on this interesting subject.

*Gentlemen of the House of Representatives,*

I have directed an estimate of the appropriations necessary for the service of the ensuing year, to be submitted from the proper department ; with a view of the public receipts and expenditures to the latest period to which an account can be prepared.

It is with satisfaction I am able to inform you, that the revenues of the United States continue in a state of progressive improvement.

A reinforcement of the existing provisions for discharging our public debt, was mentioned in my address at the opening of the last session. Some preliminary steps were taken towards it, the maturing of which will, no doubt, engage your zealous attention during the present. I will only add, that it will afford me a heartfelt satisfaction to concur in such further measures, as will ascertain to our country the prospect of a speedy extinguishment of the debt. Posterity may have cause to regret, if from any motive, intervals of tranquillity are left unimproved for accelerating this valuable end.

*Gentlemen of the Senate and of the House of Representatives,*

My solicitude to see the militia of the United States placed on an efficient establishment, has been so often, and so ardently expressed, that I shall but barely recall the subject to your view on the present occasion ; at the same time that I shall submit to your inquiry, whether our harbours are yet sufficiently secured.



The situation in which I now stand, for the last time, in the midst of the representatives of the people of the United States, naturally recalls the period when the administration of the present form of government commenced : and I cannot omit the occasion to congratulate you, and my country, on the success of the experiment ; nor to repeat my supplication to the Supreme Ruler of the universe, and Sovereign Arbiter of nations, that his providential care may still be extended to the United States ; that the virtue and happiness of the people may be preserved ; and that the government, which they have instituted for the protection of their liberties, may be perpetual.

12th DECEMBER.

The Senate presented to the President the following Answer to his Address of the 7th.

WE thank you, Sir, for your faithful and detailed exposure of the existing situation of our country : and we sincerely join in sentiments of gratitude to an over-ruling Providence, for the distinguished share of public prosperity, and private happiness, which the people of the United States so peculiarly enjoy.

We are fully sensible of the advantages that have resulted from the adoption of measures (which you have successfully carried into effect) to preserve peace, cultivate friendship, and promote civilization, among the Indian tribes, on the western frontiers ;—feelings of humanity, and the most solid political principles, equally encourage the continuance of this system.

We observe with pleasure, that the delivery of the military posts, lately occupied by the British forces, within the territory of the United States, was made with cordiality, and promptitude, as soon as circumstances would admit ; and that the other provisions of our treaties with Great-Britain and Spain, that were objects of eventual

arrangement, are about being carried into effect, with entire harmony and good faith.

The unfortunate, but unavoidable difficulties that opposed a timely compliance with the terms of the Algerine treaty, are much to be lamented ; as they may occasion a temporary suspension of the advantages to be derived from a solid peace with that power, and a perfect security from its predatory warfare ; at the same time, the lively impressions that effected the public mind, on the redemption of our captive fellow-citizens, afford the most laudable incentive to our exertions, to remove the remaining obstacles.

We perfectly coincide with you in opinion, that the importance of our commerce demands a naval force for its protection against foreign insult and depredation, and our solicitude to attain that object will be always proportionate to its magnitude.

The necessity of accelerating the establishment of certain useful manufactures, by the intervention of legislative aid and protection, and the encouragement due to agriculture, by the creation of Boards, (composed of intelligent individuals) to patronize this primary pursuit of society, are subjects which will readily engage our most serious attention.

A national university may be converted to the most useful purposes—the science of legislation, being so essentially dependent on the endowments of the mind, the public interest must receive effectual aid from the general diffusion of knowledge ; and the United States will assume a more dignified station, among the nations of the earth, by the successful cultivation of the higher branches of literature.

A military academy may be likewise rendered equally important. To aid and direct the physical force of the nation, by cherishing a military spirit, enforcing a proper sense of discipline, and inculcating a scientific system of tactics, is consonant to the soundest maxims of public policy : connected with, and supported by such an establish-



ment, a well regulated militia, constituting the national defence of the country, would prove the most effectual, as well as economical, preservative of peace.

We cannot but consider, with serious apprehensions, the inadequate compensations of public officers, especially of those in the more important stations. It is not only a violation of the spirit of a public contract, but is an evil so extensive in its operation, and so destructive in its consequences, that we trust it will receive the most pointed legislative attention.

We sincerely lament, that whilst the conduct of the United States has been uniformly impressed with the character of equity, moderation, and love of peace, in the maintainance of all their foreign relationships, our trade should be so harrassed by the cruisers and agents of the republic of France, throughout the extensive departments of the West-Indies.

Whilst we are confident that no cause of complaint exists, that could authorise an interruption of our tranquillity, or disengage that republic from the bonds of amity, cemented by the faith of treaties, we cannot but express our deepest regrets, that official communications have been made to you, indicating a more serious disturbance of our commerce. Although we cherish the expectation, that a sense of justice, and a consideration of our mutual interests will moderate their councils; we are not unmindful of the situation in which events may place us, nor unprepared to adopt that system of conduct, which, compatible with the dignity of a respectable nation, necessity may compel us to pursue.

We cordially acquiesce in the reflection, that the United States, under the operation of the federal government, have experienced a most rapid aggrandizement and prosperity, as well political, as commercial.

Whilst contemplating the causes that produce this auspicious result, we much acknowledge the excellence of the constitutional system, and the wisdom of the legislative

provisions ;—but we should be deficient in gratitude and justice, did we not attribute a great portion of these advantages, to the virtue, firmness and talents of your administration ; which have been conspicuously displayed in the most trying times, and on the most critical occasions. It is, therefore, with the sincerest regret, that we now receive an official notification of your intentions to retire from the public employments of your country.

When we review the various scenes of your public life, so long and so successfully devoted to the most arduous services, civil and military,—as well during the struggles of the American revolution, as the convulsive periods of a recent date, we cannot look forward to your retirement, without our warmest affections and most anxious regards accompanying you ; and without mingling with our fellow citizens at large, the sincerest wishes for your personal happiness, that sensibility and attachment can express.

The most effectual consolation that can offer for the loss we are about to sustain, arises from the animating reflection, that the influence of your example will extend to your successors, and the United States thus continue to enjoy, an able, upright and energetic administration.

16th DECEMBER.

The following answer of the House of Representatives was presented to the President.

SIR,

THE House of Representatives have attended to your communication respecting the state of our country, with all the sensibility that the contemplation of the subject, and a sense of duty can inspire.

We are gratified by the information, that measures calculated to ensure a continuance of the friendship of the Indians, and to maintain the tranquillity of the *western* frontier, have been adopted ; and we indulge the hope



that these, by impressing the Indian tribes with more correct conceptions of the justice, as well as power of the United States, will be attended with success.

While we notice, with satisfaction, the steps that you have taken in pursuance of the late treaties with several foreign nations, the liberation of our citizens who were prisoners at Algiers, is a subject of peculiar felicitation. We shall cheerfully co-operate in any further measures that shall appear, on consideration, to be requisite.

We have ever concurred with you in the most sincere and uniform disposition to preserve our neutral relations inviolate, and it is, of course, with anxiety and deep regret we hear that any interruption of our harmony with the French Republic has occurred: for we feel with you and with our constituents, the cordial and unabated wish to maintain a perfectly friendly understanding with that nation. Your endeavours to fulfil that wish, and by all honourable means to preserve peace and to restore that harmony and affection which have heretofore so happily subsisted between the French Republic and the United States, cannot fail, therefore, to interest our attention. And while we participate in the full reliance you have expressed on the patriotism, self-respect and fortitude of our countrymen, we cherish the pleasing hope, that a mutual spirit of justice and moderation will ensure the success of your perseverance.

The various subjects of your communication will respectively, meet with the attention that is due to their importance.

When we advert to the internal situation of the United States, we deem it equally natural and becoming to compare the present period with that immediately antecedent to the operation of the government, and to contrast it with the calamities in which the state of war still involves several of the European nations, as the reflections deduced from both tend to justify as well as to excite, a warmer admiration of our free constitution, and to exalt our minds to a more fervent and grateful sense of piety towards Al-

mighty God for the beneficence of his providence, by which its administration has been hitherto so remarkably distinguished.

And while we entertain a grateful conviction that your wise, firm and patriotic administration has been signally conducive to the success of the present form of government, we cannot forbear to express the deep sensations of regret with which we contemplate your intended retirement from office.

As no other suitable occasion may occur, we cannot suffer the present to pass without attempting to disclose some of the emotions which it cannot fail to awaken.

The gratitude and admiration of your countrymen are still drawn to the recollection of those resplendent virtues and talents which were so eminently instrumental to the achievement of the revolution, and of which that glorious event will ever be the memorial. Your obedience to the voice of duty and your country, when you quitted reluctantly, a second time, the retreat you had chosen, and first accepted the presidency, afforded a new proof of the devotedness of your zeal in its service, and an earnest of the patriotism and success which have characterized your administration. As the grateful confidence of the citizens in the virtues of their chief magistrate, has essentially contributed to that success, we persuade ourselves that the millions whom we represent, participate with us in the anxious solitudes of the present occasion.

Yet we cannot be unmindful that your moderation and magnanimity, twice displayed by retiring from your exalted stations, afford examples no less rare and instructive to mankind, than valuable to a republic.

Although we are sensible that this event, of itself, completes the lustre of a character already conspicuously unrivalled by the coincidence of virtue, talents, success and public estimation; yet we conceive we owe it to you, Sir, and still more emphatically to ourselves and to our nation, (of the language of whose hearts we presume to think



ourselves at this moment the faithful interpreters) to express the sentiments with which it is contemplated.

The spectacle of a free and enlightened nation offering by its representatives the tribute of unfeigned approbation to its first citizen, however novel and interesting it may be, derives all its lustre (a lustre which accident or enthusiasm could not bestow, and which adulation would tarnish) from the transcendent merit of which it is the voluntary testimony.

May you long enjoy that liberty which is so dear to you, and to which your name will ever be so dear : May your own virtues and a nation's prayers obtain the happiest sunshine for the decline of your days and the choicest of future blessings. For our country's sake, for the sake of republican liberty, it is our earnest wish that your example may be the guide of your successors, and thus, after being the ornament and safeguard of the present age, become the patrimony of our descendants.

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This answer, on which there was a pretty long and warm debate, is somewhat different from that which was first proposed by the committee appointed to draw it up. Some members were opposed to almost every part of it, but their opposition was more directly levelled against three particular points ; the compliment to the President, the paragraph respecting the misunderstanding with the French Republic, and the expression of the free and enlightened state of the American people.

That a compliment to the President, or rather a faint acknowledgement of his virtues and services (for on this subject any acknowledgement must be faint,) should be opposed in the Congress of the United States, would be cause of great mortification to every generous and grateful mind,

were it not accompanied with the consoling reflection, that *Mr. Giles* was at the head of the opposition. There are certain persons, whose applause we shun with as much solicitude as we seek for that of others, and I must confess, there are few men in the world whose praises I should dread more than those of the Virginian Giles, and I dare say the President is very happy to think that he has escaped them.

The answer expresses a grateful conviction of the President's *wise, firm, and patriotic* administration, and regrets his departure from office. To all this the virtuous and upright *Mr. Giles* objected. He said, that "the President's administration had been neither *wise* nor *firm*; and "as to his departure from office, he felt not the "least regret on account of it. He hoped he "would retire to his country seat, and live comfortably there. He believed the government "of the United States would go on without "him. *The people* were competent to their *own* "government. That for those, who had opposed some of the principal measures of the President, to vote for the answer in its present form, "would be *writing scoundrel on their foreheads.*"

It would be useless to take up mine and my reader's time in a justification of the compliment to which *Mr. Giles* was opposed. The people of the United States, from one end of the Union to the other, have unequivocally expressed, what this gentleman is afraid to express, lest thereby he should write scoundrel on his forehead. If the reader will look back to the *Censor* for April last, he will find this same patriot declaring, that he *adored* the voice of the people, and yet he has



now the temerity to doubt its infallibility, to refuse obedience to it, even to mutiny against and offer resistance to its *awful* commands. If ever I derived an extraordinary degree of satisfaction from the embarrassment of others, it was on seeing Mr. Giles and his brother Patriots, the votaries of the popular voice, reduced to take the *unpopular* side of a question. The leader seems to have been sensible of the awkwardness of his situation, when he said that “*the people* are competent to their *own* government.” This was a kind of palliative, it was shifting the ground of opposition, it was a poor miserable attempt to preserve consistency, and betrayed either a total want of discernment in the speaker, or a consummate contempt for the understandings of the people: for, if the people are competent to their own government, they are certainly competent to form a judgment of the conduct of the President, and as they have declared his administration to be wise, firm and patriotic, how dared their zealous and pious adorer to say they are mistaken?

As to *writing scoundrel on his front*, of which Mr. Giles seemed to entertain such unnecessary fears, if the approving of the compliment in question would produce this effect, all the members of the state legislatures, and nine-tenths of their constituents, had already taken the hideous inscription. What a scoundrelly god, then, does Mr. Giles adore? If an obstinate opposition to all the most important measures of an administration, which the answer approves of in the aggregate, was calculated to imprint the terrific word, voting for the answer could do no more than render legible what was already written; as characters in certain liquids remain imperceptible till

drawn forth by the fire. Mr. Giles and his fellow labourers prudently shrank from the ordeal ; but they will excuse us, if our imaginations would supply its place. Read we assuredly shall, and it will be nothing very extraordinary if we should extend the signification of every term that we think we perceive.

The next subject of opposition was the paragraph which speaks of the misunderstanding with the bloody Gallician Republic. In the reported answer it stood thus : “ We have ever concurred  
 “ with you in the most sincere and uniform dis-  
 “ position to preserve our mutual relations invio-  
 “ late, and it is, of course, with anxiety and deep  
 “ regret we hear that any interruption of our  
 “ harmony with the French Republic has occur-  
 “ red: for we feel with you, and with our con-  
 “ stituents, the cordial and unabated wish, to  
 “ maintain a perfectly friendly understanding  
 “ with that nation. Your endeavours to fulfil  
 “ that wish cannot fail therefore to interest our  
 “ attention. And while we participate in the  
 “ full reliance you have expressed on the patri-  
 “ otism, self-respect and fortitude of our country-  
 “ men, we cherish the pleasing hope, that a spi-  
 “ rit of justice and moderation will ensure the  
 “ success of your perseverance.”

This was certainly tame enough, after all the outrages and insults of France. The desire to re-establish harmony is expressed, as *Mr. Ames* observed, with little less ardour than the requests of a supplicating lover ; and the confidence in the spirit of the country, in case of an appeal to arms, is disguised with as much care, as if it were a crime to be courageous in opposing the vio-



lence and resenting the indignities of a horde of base-born grovelling tyrants.

How different from this hesitating tone was that of the Senate: "We are," say they, "not unmindful of the situation in which events may place us, *nor unprepared to adopt that system of conduct, which, compatible with the dignity of a respectable nation, necessity may compel us to pursue.*" This manly answer does infinite honour to the man who penned it, and let the insolent convention recollect, that it was approved of by him with whom they will in future be obliged to treat.

The answer of the Senate was all that could be wished, but it should have been surpassed in warmth by those who call themselves the *immediate* representatives of the people. Language that may be extremely proper, at such a crisis, from cool and dispassionate Senators, whose business is rather to check than to encourage the ardour of the public spirit, may be poor and cold when coming from the Representatives. Every sentence from them should have smoked with indignation at the insupportable insolence of the French, they should have declared, that they were ready with their lives to defend that independence, which had been so openly attacked, and to support the government in every energetic measure it should take to obtain satisfaction for the indignities that had been heaped on it. Yet, so far from this was the conduct of the House, that even the paragraph above quoted was not humble enough for them: not content with expressing their *anxiety* and *deep regret* at the interruption of *harmony*, and their *unabated* wish to maintain a *perfectly friendly* understanding, with the nation who had

robbed, despised, and openly insulted them and their country, they must needs add another sentence, wishing for the restoration of that *harmony* and *affection*, which had hitherto so *happily* subsisted. Not content with amplifying their tremulous accents till the quaver had lost the sound of manhood, they must needs begin *de Capo* and repeat the faltering tune. Nay, the last sentence of the paragraph, which speaks of a spirit of *justice* and *moderation*, could not pass without being crammed with the word *mutual*. Mr. Giles indeed, wished to tack another phrase; viz. “*on the part of the Republic*,” to the end of this word *mutual*. He seemed to think that the answer would be incomplete without a little *nonsense*.—“That a “*mutual* spirit of justice and moderation *on the* “*part of the Republic* will ensure the success of “your perseverance.”—If you can go to the Sunday-Schools round the city, and find me a boy out of his primer, stupid and illiterate enough to compose a sentence like this, I will be bound to find you men in Virginia, who shall vote him into Congress.—“*The Republic*,” too. *What Republic?* Is not America a Republic as well as France? The French King forbade his subjects to address him, or speak of him, under any other name than simply that of *the King*, as if there were but one king in the world; just as we speak of the Sun or the Moon. The despots who have cut his throat, seem to have taken possession of his vanity as well as of his houses, his gardens, his coaches and his jewels. They call their poor beggared enslaved country *the Republic*. But other kingdoms never observed this style of eminence towards the French monarch, nor will it be observed towards the French Republic, I trust, by any other Republic, or any other mortal except Mr. Giles. It would



seem that the gentleman forgot where he was, and looked upon himself as a representative of the swarthy French, instead of the more humane and more enlightened, though footy, citizens of the ancient dominion.

The imagination of this man, and of all those who voted with him, appears to have been upon the rack to find out terms expressive of their dependence on the generosity and magnanimity of the insulting foe, and of their want of confidence in the people of this country. Was this what the President expected, when he complained to them of the aggressions of the French, and of the threats he had received from their minister? Was this what the people expected, when that insolent minister appealed to them from their government? No; they expected no such milk-sop tautology. They expected a good, plain, and resolute tone, calculated to convince the treacherous French, that their independence was not a mere name, and that, while a desire of peace dwelt in their breasts, fear of a war found no place there.

It was said by those who opposed the introduction of that redundancy of *affection*, which now dishonours the answer, that the first draught was dictated by a spirit of accommodation; and, indeed, this was evidently the case, for no one who knows Messrs. Ames and Sitgreaves, and reads their animated speeches in the debate, will believe that this draught was dictated by their feelings. My complaisance, however, would not have carried me so far; I would have stood alone in the House; I would have opposed every sentence, every word, and every syllable, that sa-

voured of tameness, that indicated a reliance on the *justice* and *moderation* of the French, or a fear of encountering their displeasure.

The third subject of opposition was, that sentence in the answer which styles the people of America “ the freest and most enlightened in the “ world ;” and who could help being surprised that the *adorer* of the *people* should take the lead here also ! One would imagine, that to be proper objects of adoration, they should at least be the most free and enlightened in the world ; unless we suppose that Mr. Giles adored them for their purity and virtue, which there is very little reason to do.

These words were at last changed for, “ a free “ and enlightened people.” the cause of this (with shame be it spoken), was, *fear of offending the French Convention*, an assembly that every worthy American longs to spit upon ; an assembly whose approbation is a mark of dishonour ten thousand times greater than standing in the pillory or being burnt in the hand. Talk of writing scoundrel in the forehead ! I would sooner bear the word scoundrel as a motto round the pupils of my eyes, than be blasted with the approving grin of a gang of assassins.

That the cause of the opposition was what I have stated it, must be clear to every one who recollects the language of the members who took a part in it, on other occasions. There is hardly a people in Europe, except the French, whom they have not, at different times, since the present war, represented as buried in slavery and brutal ignorance. They insisted that the House



had no right to cast reflections on foreign nations; what right had Mr. Giles, then, to cast reflections on the government and parliament of Britain? What right had another member to call the Empress of Russia a she-bear, another the King of Great Britain a robber, and another, all kings in general a herd of crowned monsters? "The fact may be true," said they, "but we have no right to step beyond the boundaries of our own country to contrast it with any other." Now, what did the pretty Mr. Livingston, who was one of these inoffensive and modest gentlemen, do last session?—"Great Britain," said he, "was *once* free; but now Great Britain, and *all Europe, France excepted, is in chains!*"—Was this stepping beyond the boundary line? This was not being content with eulogium on America, but was openly insulting every nation of Europe, *except the French, the free and enlightened* heroes of the *Bloody Buoy*. But, why need we go back to past sessions, when in the present one, and even in this debate, and on this very question, we hear the delicate Mr. Parker exclaim: "Kingcraft and priestcraft have too long governed the world with an iron rod: more enlightened times, I trust are approaching, and I hope ere long *republicanism* will cover the earth."—Like the universal deluge I suppose.

It is pretty clear from this fally of Mr. Parker, that no nations were to be excepted but those who are, or call themselves, republics. This might have done very well, and the answer might have been thus amended with some little consistency, but poor Mr. Parker has a short memory, and being pressed hard by Mr. William Smith, who truly asserted that fear of giving umbrage to the

French, was at the bottom of the opposition, he tacked short about, and ran headlong into the most monstrous contradiction that ever bemired a poor orator.—“No ;” said he, “I have not the French republic, or any other nation in view ; the Swiss Cantons have shown themselves more enlightened than we.”—All was well yet, but Mr. Parker, like most other eloquent men, is very fond of enumeration, and he unfortunately added the *Danes* and the *Swedes*. These nations also, he said, were more enlightened than the people of America, though, in the same speech, he declared that *King-craft* had too long governed the world with an iron rod, and hoped that more enlightened times were at hand, and that republicanism would soon cover the earth ! He could not be so very ignorant, or at least I should suppose so, as not to know that Denmark and Sweden are governed by kings ; but he was hemmed up in a corner, and did not know where to look for more enlightened republics than his own, *except France*.——A legislator should always understand geography and astronomy, and then “his eye in a fine fit of frenzy rolling,” might, as Doctor Rush says Rittenhouse did, find out republics in the moon. However, a very little study of the former science, might have led Mr. Parker, in his jump from Switzerland to Denmark, to perceive the dear sister republic of *Batavia*. Here he might have found a triumphant comparison. Republicanism has enlightened the Dutch with a vengeance. The *fans-culottes* have worn them down till you may read a newspaper through their ribs. *Geneva* too, which was so near him when he was got among the Swiss, might, one would have thought, have claimed a



preference to Denmark and Sweeden; particularly as the cheering rays of republicanism have been communicated to it by the great luminary which seems to be the sole object of his admiration.

Mr. Parker moved for striking out the words, “freest and most enlightened.” This Mr. Christie proposed to amend, by inserting, “free-est, “and *amongst* the most enlightened;” but still Mr. Swanwick thought the word “*amongst*” should come before, instead of after “*free-est* ; because “nothing could tend more to *preserve the peace* “of the country, than *treating others with respect* ;” and in this opinion he was joined by Messrs. Coit and Dayton, the latter of whom most humbly thought, that “the amendment very “much *softened* the terms, and rendered them “*more palatable.*”——At last, after these four words had undergone just as many changes as can be rung upon four bells, the peal was closed with, “*free and enlightened* people.”

Gracious heaven ! and have I lived to hear the American Congress, men whose brow I had been taught to believe *independence* had made its chosen seat, haggling three whole days about four words of compliment to their country, and at last expunge them, lest they should give offence to a foreign nation ! Mr. Livingston and the news-monger Brown may dun us as long as they please about the slavery of Britons, but if a member of their House of Commons were timid enough to express his *fears* at calling his nation the free-est and most enlightened in the world, I flatter myself he would never dare show his face again in that assembly. For a nation, which dares not pass on itself whatever compliment or encomium

it pleases, to call itself *free* and *independent*, is an abuse of words that nothing can be a sufficient punishment for, except the consciousness of being, and of being thought, exactly the contrary of what it strives to appear.

That the amendment should be adopted at all, is a circumstance in itself sufficiently humiliating; but, when we consider it was adopted for fear of giving umbrage to France; when we consider that the representatives of the people thought it unfitting to declare them more *free* and *enlightened* than the base, the willing slaves, the brutishly ignorant and illiterate wretches left in the French territory, we feel our superiority insulted, and despise the man who would shrink from the declaration.

In that *free* country, France, the parent dares not yield protection to his child, nor the child to his parent, without the previous consent of some petty understrapping despot. Man possesses nothing; his property belongs to a mob of tyrants, who call themselves the nation, who hold his labour and his very carcase in a state of requisition. If his griefs break out into complaint, he is dragged to a tribunal, where *no evidence is required*. A shrug, a look, a tear, or a sigh, betrays him. To repine at the cruelty of his fate, is to be suspected, and to be suspected is death.

We need not stretch our view across the Atlantic for specimens of French liberty; we may see enough without quitting our own country, or even our houses. The *cockade proclamation* of Citizen Adet is at once an insult to the United States, and an act of abominable tyranny on the



unfortunate French who have taken a refuge in them. They must not only suffer shame for their country, but must bear about them the sign of its disgrace, the liberty of the infamous Orleans. They must not only be despoiled of their wealth, and driven from their homes and their families, but must drag their chains into distant lands. It is not enough that they should be branded with the name of slave ; they must wear the symbol of their slavery, and that, too, exactly where other men wear the symbol of courage and of honour ! — Will not the people of America blush to think, that their representatives were afraid to assert, that they enjoyed a degree of freedom superior to this ?

Of the *enlightened* people, now called the French nation, not one out of five hundred can spell his own name. As to religion, four years ago they were seen kneeling with their faces prone to the earth, blubbering out their sins, and beseeching absolution from the men whom, in a year afterwards, they degraded, insulted, mutilated and murdered. After the changing catholic worship, at the command of one gang of tyrants, for a worship that was neither catholic nor protestant ; at the command of another, they abandoned all worship whatsoever, and publicly rejoiced that “ the soul of man was like that of “ the beast.” A third gang orders them to believe that there is a god : instantly the submissive brutes acknowledge his existence, and fall on their knees at the sight of Robespierre, proclaiming the decree, with as much devotion as they formerly did at the elevation of the sacred host.

Politically considered, they are equally *enlightened*. Every successive faction has been the object of their huzzas, in the day of its power, and of their execrations in that of its fall. They crowded to the bar of the Convention to felicitate Robespierre on his escape from the poignard of a woman ; and, in less than six weeks afterwards, danced round his scaffold, and mocked his dying groans.—First they approve of a constitution with a hereditary monarch, whose person they declare *inviolable* and *sacred*, and swear to defend him with their lives. Next they murder this monarch, and declare themselves a republic, to be governed by a single chamber of delegates. This second constitution they destroy, and frame a third, with two chambers and five co-equal kings.—After having spent five years in making war, in the name of liberty and equality, upon arms, stars, garters, crosses, and every other exterior sign of superiority of rank, they very peaceably and tamely suffer their masters to dub themselves with what titles they please, and exclusively to assume garbs and badges of distinction far more numerous than those which formerly existed in France.

But, the circumstance best calculated to give a just idea of their baseness of spirit and swinish ignorance, is, their sanctioning a constitution, which declares that they shall elect the members of their assemblies, and then submitting to a decree, obliging them to choose two-thirds of the number out of the Convention. Nor was this all ; the Convention, not content with ensuring the re-election of these two thirds, reserved to itself the power of rejecting such members of the other third as it might not approve of ! And yet



the wise Mr. Parker calls the French “a *free* and *enlightened* people,” and very piously wishes that *King-craft* may be done away, and that *republicanism* may *enlighten* the whole earth !——The House of Representatives were afraid even to hint that this nation of poor-cajoled, cozened, bullied, bamboozled devils, were less enlightened than the people of America!

There is not a true American, and I love to believe that a very great majority of the people of these states are of that description, who does not reject with scorn the idea of being upon a level with the regenerated French ; not only in understanding, but in any respect whatever. Their very friends, the Democrats, nay their best paid hirelings, despise them in their hearts, as much as a prostitute despises her cully.

After having contemplated the modest and humble tone of the Antifederal members towards France, it may not be amiss to contrast it with their language towards Great-Britain, on an occasion somewhat similar.—It was reported, that his Britannic Majesty had issued instructions for seizing American vessels, contrary to the law of nations. It was indeed, well known that many vessels were seized ; but it was not known that the seizure was authorized by these instructions. They were equivocal, and therefore left room to hope that they were misconstrued, by interested individuals, and that an indemnification would be obtained by a manly and temperate representation of the injury. This hope, which was then entertained by the friends of the federal government, has since been completely realized. But, what was the tone of Mr. Madison, Mr. Clarke,

Mr. Dayton, and all those who are now for softening their language towards France, till it surpasses in effeminacy the pipe of a sickly girl? What were the measures they then proposed? *Lay a double duty on their goods*, said one; *Prohibit all trade with them*, said another; and Mr. Dayton offered a resolution for “sequestrating all debts due from the citizens of the United States to the subjects of the king of Great Britain.”—Thus, without waiting a moment to inquire whether the king’s instructions were misinterpreted, or whether an indemnification was likely to be obtained, the seizure was to be regarded as a commencement of hostilities, reprisals were immediately to be made, and that, too, in a mode that every honourable and honest man turns from with scorn.—Was this very “palatable,” Mr. Dayton?

It was during this memorable debate, that Mr. Smith from Maryland, *modestly* exclaimed:—“Let us adopt the resolution. It will arrest twenty millions of dollars in our hands, as a fund to reimburse the three or four millions, which we have been stripped of by that piratical nation, Great Britain, according to the instructions of that king of sea-robbers, that Leviathan who aims at swallowing up all that swims on the ocean, that monster, whose only law is power, and who respects neither the rights of nations, nor the property of individuals.”—Was this *decent* and *honest* speech very “palatable?”—These political cooks seem to be very skilful in distinguishing the difference between the palates of Britons and that of the soupe-maigre, frog-eating French, who can relish nothing that is not *bien cuit*, or coddled to



mummy, except the flesh and blood of aristocrats.

Striking as this contrast is, it is not seen in its proper light, till accompanied with a comparative view of the injuries received from the two nations. The British, when they were called *pirates, sea-robbers, and monsters*, by a member of Congress, had unlawfully seized on American property, to the amount of “ *three or four millions of dollars.*” The French, even at that time, were guilty of the same aggressions, and of this the Congress could not plead ignorance, as it was stated to them by order of the President, in the same report that complains of the conduct of the British. At the present epoch it is acknowledged that the depredations of the French are double in amount to those of the British, before any indemnification was obtained. But, to avoid all dispute on this subject, let us suppose that the loss from both nations to be of exactly the same amount, and confine our remarks to the vast difference in their anterior situation and subsequent conduct with respect to this country. Great Britain had no treaty, either of amity or commerce, with America; her conduct towards us, therefore, was subject to no rule but that prescribed by the general law of nations, the principles of which, often leaving room for misinterpretation, give a scope to an abuse of power, that does not, if reparation be demanded and obtained, fix the stigma of cowardice or dependence on the injured nation. The situation of the French was quite different. The depredations committed by them are in direct violation of a solemn contract, voluntarily entered into with America. Great Britain excused herself by

declaring (whether truly or not is no matter) that her orders had been misconstrued, that she was ready to make restitution, and it is well known that she has made good this declaration, by paying the full value of the cargoes and vessels illegally seized. But, the conduct of the French leaves no room for an excuse. They cannot plead a misconstruction of their orders, their spoliations have not taken place under an ambiguous instruction, but are warranted by a decree of their tyrannical assembly; and, to deprive America of the hope of indemnification, and even of the appearance of maintaining her rights, they have hurled this decree in our teeth. The British unlawfully seized on the property of Americans, or, if you will, in the polite language of Maryland Mr. Smith, that nation of “monsters” robbed them; but the minister of these “monsters” did not proclaim the plundering order in this country, and insult the people whom they had robbed, by telling them that it was the fault of their own Executive. The French have done all this and ten times more: they have trampled upon the independence of Americans, braved them, scoffed at them: they have done every thing but kick the President from his chair and take possession of the government: and yet Mr. Dayton, the *energetic* Mr. Dayton, says not a word about *sequestration*; he is even afraid to compliment his constituents on their *freedom* and *understanding*, lest it should be *unpalatable* to this insidious, treacherous and insolent nation. Not a word do we now hear about “*pirates* and *sea-robbers*, and *leviathans*, and *monsters* :” all breathes a desire to cultivate “*harmony, perfect friendship, and affection*.” In speaking of the depredations of the



British, “ nothing,” it was said, “ was to be expected from the *justice* of a nation who had “ robbed us ;” but now, behold, every thing is to be left to the “ *justice and moderation*” of the French, after we are not only well assured that their robberies have far surpassed those of the British, but after their minister as contemptuously told us, that those robberies are sanctioned by his government ; that it has given orders for violating the treaty, and is determined to continue in the violation. Thus, one nation is spoken of with approbation, esteem and affection ; is even flattered and caressed, after loading us with injuries a thousand times greater than those which drew down on another nation the indecent and opprobrious terms of “ *pirates and monsters.*” Is this a proof of the candour or of the obstinate prejudice, of the wisdom or folly, of the House of Representatives ? Is it a proof of the independence of America on Great-Britain, or of its abject dependence on France ?

To what are we to ascribe the immeasurable difference between the daring and insulting tone formerly assumed towards Britain, and the poor, piping, pusillanimous language, that is now held towards France. Is it because one is a monarchy, and the other calls itself a republic ? I have heard, or read, of a fellow that was so accustomed to be kicked, that he could distinguish, by the feel, the sort of leather that assailed his posteriors. Are our buttocks arrived at this perfection of sensibility ? And do we really find that a republican shoe wounds our honour less than a monarchical one ? Is an injury from a nation on whom we heaped every term of abuse, and for whose annihilation we, and even some of our parsons, de-

voutly prayed, less calculated to rouse our feelings, than the accumulated injuries and insults of another nation, whom we distinguished by every sign of partiality, for whose misfortunes we put on mourning, and for whose victories we mocked and insulted heaven with thanksgiving? Is a single slap on the cheek from a power, with whom we had no connection, less offensive than reiterated blows from an *ally*? Finally, is the commerce of Britain less necessary to America than that of France, or is the power of the latter more to be dreaded than that of the former?—This last question is the only one that requires to be examined: the rest, I trust, are already answered in the mind of the reader.

The necessity of a commercial connection between Great Britain and America, is so loudly and unequivocally asserted by the unerring voice of experience, that nothing but the blindest ignorance, or the most unconquerable prejudice, could possibly have called it in question. Immediately after the suspension of this commerce, caused by the revolutionary war, it was on both sides resumed with more ardour than ever, notwithstanding all the arts that France and her partizans employed to prevent it. In vain did poor Louis issue edicts to encourage his people to supplant their rivals, in vain did he take off his duties and offer premiums; in vain did friend Brissot coax the Quakers, and citizen Madison speechify the Congress: in spite of all their fine promises, cajoling, and wheedling; in spite of the mortification of Britain, and the more powerful prejudice of America, no sooner was the obstacle removed by the return of peace; than without a treaty of friendship or commerce, without any



other stimulus than mutual interest, confidence and inclination, the two countries rushed together like congenial waters that had been separated by an artificial dyke.

It is this natural connection with Britain, the British capital, which a confidence in the stability of the government invites hither, together with the credit that the merchants of that country give to those of this, a credit which British merchants alone are either willing or able to give, that forms the great source of American wealth. Mr. Smith from Maryland, the *polite* Mr. Smith, who called the British “*sea-robbers and monsters*,” incautiously acknowledged, in the same breath, that these “*monsters*” gave a stationary credit to this country amounting to *twenty millions of dollars*. Grateful gentleman!—A very great part of this credit is given for a twelve-month at least; so that the simple interest on it amounts to *one million two hundred thousand dollars annually*; an advantage to this country that might have merited in return something “*more palatable*” than *sea-robbers and monsters*.”

If America could obtain what she stands in need of (which she cannot) from any other country than Britain, from what country on earth could she obtain them on terms like these? The capacity of France, in the brightest days of her commercial prosperity, was fairly tried. Correspondencies were opened with her merchants; but what was the result? The total ruin of them and of all those who were concerned with them. They are no more; they are forgotten. Their trade could be equalled in shortness of duration by nothing but the wear of their merchandise.

To say, as some of the French faction have done, that America does not want the manufactures of Britain, is an insult on the national discernment little short of the *Blunderbuss* of my old friend Citizen Adet. Let any man take a view of his dress (when he is dressed like a man), from head to foot, from the garments that he wears to sea, to plough, to market or to church, down to those with which he steps into bed ; let him look round his shop, and round the shops of his neighbours ; let him examine his library, his bed-chamber, his parlour and his kitchen, and then let him say how great a part of all he sees, of all that is indispensable, useful or convenient ; let him say how great a part of all this comes from Great Britain, and how small a one from France or any other country ; and then if he be fool enough, let him say with the Gallican faction, that we stand in no need of the manufactures of Britain.

The commercial connection between this country and Great Britain is full as necessary as that between the baker and miller, while the connection between America and France may be compared to one between the baker and the milliner or toyman. France may furnish us with looking glasses ; but without the aid of Britain we shall be ashamed to see ourselves in them, unless the fansculottes can persuade us that thread-bare beggary is a beauty. France may deck the heads of our wives and daughters (but by the bye, she shan't those of mine) with ribbons, guaze, and powder, their ears with bobs, the cheeks with paint, and their heels with gaudy party-coloured silk, as rotten as the hearts of the manufacturers ; but Great Britain must cover their and our bodies. When the rain pours down and washes the rose



from the cheek ; when the bleak north-wester blows through the gauze, then it is that we know our friends. Great Britain must wrap us up warm, and keep us all decent, snug and comfortable, from the child in swaddling cloths to its tottering grand-fire. France may send us cockades, as she does (or has done) in abundance ; but Great Britain must send us hats to stick them in. France may furnish the ruffle, but Great Britain must send us the shirt ; and the commerce of the latter nation is just as much more necessary to this country than that of the former, as a good decent shirt is more necessary than a paltry dishclout of a ruffle.

As, then, the importance of a trade, with any nation, must be the standard whereby to measure the embarrassment and distress that its suspension would produce, it is evident that a war with Great Britain would, in this respect, have been productive of infinite calamities to America, while a war with France would hardly be felt. The dangers, therefore to be apprehended from military operations only, remain to be considered.

By going back to the epoch when the hostile tone was assumed towards Great Britain, I could represent her as in possession of the *Western-Posts*, and consequently as in a situation to arm and support the Indians, to harass that frontier, and by those means find employment for an army of the United States, and that a very expensive one too. But, I shall decline this advantage, shall consider things in their present state ; I shall even suppose all inroads from Canada impossible, shall turn my eyes to the sea only, and there take a view of

what might be reasonably feared from a war with Great-Britain, and what from a war with France.

The mighty difference in the maritime power, skill and courage of the two nations, is so universally known, and has undergone so many and so convincing proofs during the present war, that any comparison in this respect would be superfluous. The hirelings of France, do, however, pretend that she could eat us up alive, crack us as a squirrel does a nut, while we could boldly bid defiance to her rival. I shall not suppose it possible for Great-Britain to bombard our towns and burn our shipping, I shall look upon all our harbours as completely defended ; I shall even suppose it impossible for her to make a landing on any part of our coast, to carry off a single sack of flour or head of cattle ; and only insist, that, with thirty detached frigates, and a squadron of twenty ships of the line, she could completely block up every principal port in the United States, in defiance of the French and their new allies, Holland and Spain. If I am told to look back to what she was able to do, in this way, last war ; I reply, that the commerce, the foreign relationships of this country, are not now what they were then, nor would the species of war, carried on by Britain, be the same. Then she had armies on the land, on which the operations of her fleet were dependent. It had garrisons to supply, convoys to escort, and transports to conduct from one state to another. Those who look to France and her allies for relief, forget that during this war France has lost *thirty-nine* ships of the line, with a proportionate number of frigates ; that the remnant of her shattered fleet is now blocked up in her own ports, and that her petty armaments skulk



about from harbour to harbour, as if their only object was to keep out of sight. They forget that the Dutch dare not peep out of the Texel, and that the Spaniards, after mustering their all together, are stationed before a place of refuge in the Mediterranean. In this situation of things nothing could prevent Great-Britain from totally cutting off the commerce of America, exports as well as imports, trebling the price of every article of foreign manufacture, and rendering the produce of the land a drug ; destroying the revenue of the country at the very moment that a tenfold augmentation of it would be necessary.

From the French and their allies, on the contrary, America has little, nay nothing to fear. When we are told about their demolishing our towns and invading our country, it seems to be forgotten that they must cross the sea to come to us. Fear seems to have deranged the trembling wretches who hold this language. They talk and think about the prowess of the barbarian armies, till they imagine us divided from them by a river only, or that it is as easy for a hundred thousand of them to be shipped off and landed in America, as for them to cross the Rhine; they imagine that a fleet of three hundred transports and fifty ships of the line are as easily erected as a bridge of boats. And, during this terrific reverie, it never once strikes them that Great-Britain is at war with the French, or that her fleets would blow them to atoms, before they could approach our coast. Mr. Giles, and all those who talk about the danger of incurring the displeasure of the French, delight in representing her as ready to make an attack on us in conjunction with the Spaniards. This is true, and we are informed that they have

already to these their “natural allies,” to seize and confiscate our vessels\*. There is no doubt but both nations would willingly co-operate in such an enterprize; but I would ask Mr. Giles seriously, whether he thinks America would stand singly in the war; whether he thinks the government or the people so incorrigibly blind and stupid, as, while they see the French calling in all hell to their aid, to refuse the only assistance capable of repulsing the infernal host.—Oh, Lord! says Mr. Giles, what are you talking about! “I dislike extremely any *intimate connection* betwixt this country and Britain, notwithstanding pecuniary advantages may arise from it†.”——So says Citizen Adet, and so says every Frenchman as well as Mr. Giles. Yes: this is what they “dislike,” this is the thing, and the only thing, they are afraid of, and it is for that very reason that it ought to take place.

But, I should be glad to know on what Mr. Giles founds his “dislike” to this connection, in case of a war. He acknowledges its “pecuniary advantages,” and that is one great point gained; for you well know, Mr. Giles, that in *connec-*

\* It is pretended by France, that our treaty with Britain contravenes that with her; and for that reason she seizes our vessels. Groundless and insolent as this pretext is, it is worth noticing now that the Spaniards have begun to imitate her. We had *no treaty* with them, when that with Great Britain was formed, and therefore, I presume, that the “*magnanimous* Spanish monarch,” as Mr. Swanwick called him, will alledge that our treaty with him was contravened *before it was made*: nor should I much wonder, if members in Congress were to be found, courageous and patriotic enough to attempt to support the charge.—This is all that is wanted to fill up the measure of our humiliation.

† See his speech in this debate.



*tions with foreign nations* nothing goes on cheerly without money. What, then, can be the objection? Because America is a *Republic* and Britain a *Monarchy*? This was the old objection to the treaty of amity and commerce with Great Britain; but it very luckily happened that, just before that treaty was concluded, the Republic of France had made a similar treaty with the king of Prussia; and now, as if on purpose to give us a second example, she has concluded a treaty offensive and defensive with the king of Spain, and has called that nation her "*natural* allies."—Now, Mr. Giles, rub that *forehead* of yours a little, and tell me sincerely, without any quibbling or subterfuge, whether you think the Spaniards are more *naturally* allied to the French than the Americans are to the British.

Surely no nation was ever so completely duped as America has been by the French and their partizans! By a sincere and hearty alliance with Great Britain, she would not only place herself in a situation to make a peremptory demand of indemnification from France, but, in case of refusal, would be able to strip both France and Spain of every inch of territory they possess in this hemisphere. There is no danger of any other nation taking umbrage at this. America and Great Britain might bid defiance to the world. The map of this continent and its islands lies open before them: they might cut and carve for themselves, and sit down in the quiet enjoyment of their conquests. The very mention of such an alliance would scare the Dons at the bottom of their mines, and would make the *seven hundred and five tyrants* tremble on their thrones. Yet the hirelings of France tell us that this alli-

ance must not be formed, because, forsooth, Britain is a monarchy ! Poor, paltry objection ! France avails herself of all the rascally aid she can rake together ; she forms treaties with all the monarchies she can find base enough to join her, and calls them her *natural allies* ; but, if America makes a treaty with a monarchy, be it merely for the purposes of adjusting disputes and regulating trade, France, “ terrible France,” takes offence at it, calls it an unnatural connection, seizes our vessels as a punishment for it, and (with shame be it spoken !) is justified by some of those who are chosen to preserve the honour and independence of the country !—All the world are the *natural allies* of France ; republics, aristocracies, monarchies and despotisms ; Dutch, Genoese, Spaniards, Turks and Devils ; but poor America has no *natural ally* at all, except France herself ; and if she chooses, with the aid of her allies, to rob and insult her, America must accept of no one’s assistance, but must stand and be pillaged and kicked till the by-standers cry shame.—Honourable Independence ! “ Glorious Revolution.” —If this must be the case, let us hear no more boastings and rejoicings. Let the *fourth of July* be changed from a festival to a fast, or rather, let it be effaced for ever from the calendar.



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A  
L E T T E R

TO THE INFAMOUS  
T O M P A I N E,

IN ANSWER TO HIS LETTER TO

*General Washington.*

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“ CEREMONY, and even *silence*, from what-  
“ ever motive they may arise, have a hurt-  
“ ful tendency, when they give the least degree  
“ of countenance to *base* and *wicked perform-*  
“ *ances.*” With this maxim, Tom, you begin  
your remarks on one of your then Sovereign’s  
speeches to his parliament, and during which re-  
marks you pay a very high, though just, compli-  
ment, to the talents and virtues of *General Wash-*  
*ington* ; the very man whom you now attempt to  
strip of every talent and every virtue, public as well  
as private. Complain not, therefore, if your max-  
im be adopted on the present occasion ; if your bru-

Having said, that all the commercial favours, or *concessions*, granted by America to England, are, by the pre-existing treaty, granted to France also (all which we knew while you were safe in your den), you proceed to number among those *concessions*, the acknowledgment of Great Britain's right to seize contraband articles and enemies goods, found on board neutral vessels, which is just *no concession at all*. Great Britain had, prior to the treaty, as she still has, a right to seize all such articles and enemies goods, so found. No stipulation in a treaty was necessary to the recognition of this right. It is established by the universal law of nations, and is, and ever has been, rigorously maintained, when not surrendered by particular convention. It could be no *concession* on the part of America to acknowledge that Great Britain possessed a right which she did possess, and which she exercised too, before the treaty was formed ; and if this was no *concession*, how can the second article of the treaty with France be in anywise applicable to the case ?

I shall not here prove that the regulations, respecting seizures, adopted in the treaty between Britain and America, are consonant to the principles of the modern law of nations, and are moreover sanctioned by the practice of France. Neither shall I enter into an explanation of the true meaning of the stipulation for *equal favour*, nor attempt to expose the absurdity of applying it to what every independent nation enjoys as a *right*. All this I have done, and I hope to the satisfaction of every unprejudiced mind, in my answer to the insolent and seditious Notes of Citizen Adet, to which I would refer you, Tom, were I not well assured, that you are guided by villainy, and not



misguided by ignorance or error. I shall not avail myself of the advantage to be derived from a repetition of these proofs. I shall admit your assertion in its fullest extent, and convict you on your own words.

You say, that the treaty with Britain, as far as it relates to seizures, “ is now become engrafted “ into that with France, and can be exercised by “ her as matter of right.”—Now, then, let us turn to what the British treaty says on this head. “ Where vessels shall be captured or detained on “ *just* suspicion of having on board *enemies pro-* “ *perty*, or of carrying *to the enemy* any of the ar- “ ticles which are *contraband of war* ; the said “ vessel shall be brought to the nearest and most “ convenient port ; and *if any property of an ene-* “ *my* shall be found on board of such vessel, that “ part *only* which *belongs to the enemy* shall be “ made prize, and the vessel shall be at liberty “ to proceed with the remainder without any im- “ pediment.”—Compare this with your justification of the present conduct of the French. Are they content with seizing only articles *contraband of war*, or the *property of enemies* ? And do they suffer the vessel to proceed with the rest of her cargo ? No ; they seize *all vessels bound to the ports of the enemy*, whether they have on board contraband articles, or enemies property, or not ! They seize and confiscate both vessel and cargo, and put the captains and seamen in chains.

You will say that Great-Britain stopped all our vessels bound to her enemies ports, some of which she also condemned ; but this was before the treaty with her was made, and therefore cannot be

attributed to that instrument, by which, on the contrary, she acknowledges the *illegality* of all such seizures, and engages to *make full compensation for the losses thereby sustained*.—Take, then, the treaty with England, let it be the law to judge your Harlequin masters by, and we shall soon have the pleasure to hear that they have shared the fate they long ago merited, and which their *servant* has often so miraculously escaped.

You were informed of the piratical orders they had issued, and were commanded to prepare a justification. In compliance with this command you rummaged about the treaty, as Milton rummaged the Bible to find a justification for the murder of his king. Your baleful eyes at last fixed on the eighth article. Here, you say, the treaty “makes a concession to England of *other articles* in American ships. *These articles are all other articles*, and none but an ignoramus, or something worse, would have put such a phrase into a treaty.” Do you think that we have never read this treaty? And, if we had not, do you think there is a man among us fool enough to believe that it contains such a concession? If you do, your opinion of the people of your “beloved America” must be much changed.

This article, out of which you have culled *two*, and only *two words*, runs thus: “And whereas the difficulty of agreeing on the *precise cases* in which *alone* provisions and other articles, not generally contraband, *may be regarded as such*, renders it expedient to provide against the misunderstandings which might thence arise: It is agreed, that, whenever any such articles, *so becoming contraband*, according to the *existing law*



“ *of nations*, shall *for that reason* be seized, the  
 “ same shall not be confiscated, but the owners  
 “ thereof shall be speedily and completely in-  
 “ demnified.”—So that, you see, your *all other*  
*articles* are reduced to such articles only as are  
*contraband of war*, according to the modern, *the*  
*existing law of nations*.

*Playfair* calls you “ the clumsy advocate of in-  
 “ surrection,” and you are certainly as clumsy an  
 advocate of piracy. Poor Citizen Adet is a lame  
 hand enough, but you are still worse; he did  
 flounce about and made a noise before he sunk;  
 but you just make a bubble, and go to the bottom  
 at once, like a stone or a lump of lead.

I now come to your charge against the President  
 respecting your detention in prison. You insist  
 that you were still a citizen of America, and that  
 therefore it was his duty to demand your enlarge-  
 ment.—You perceived that you had lost all claim  
 to citizenship here, in virtue of the article which  
 extends that deprivation to all those “ who shall  
 “ accept of any title or *office* under any foreign  
 “ king, prince, or *state*.” To get rid of this you  
 have recourse to a curious quibble: you pretend  
 that this provision did not embrace your case, be-  
 cause France, at the time you joined the legisla-  
 tive mob, was neither a kingdom, principality nor  
*state*, but *a people in a state of revolution*.

That France was not worthy of the name of *state*  
 I am very ready to allow. The French were then,  
 what they are now, a horde of savages, engaged  
 in the work of destruction. But, be this as it  
 might, France was acknowledged as a *state* by  
 America, and even you, I presume, will not have

the impudence to deny, that she was declared to be a republic too, the very first day that you took your seat in the convention, and, if a republic, she was certainly a state. Admitting your own doctrine, then, to have preserved your claim to American citizenship, you should have abdicated your seat, the instant this declaration took place.

You contend that a man may lend a hand to *form a constitution* for a nation who has none, without forfeiting his citizenship in his own country. This may be so: it is nonsense, and therefore not worth disputing about. But why did you not retire as soon as your job was done. You continued your seat after you had made and sworn to and made every one else swear to your silly work. You had tasted the sweets of plunder, and you hung to it like a leech, till Robespierre changed you from a legislator to a jail-bird.

You wish to persuade us, that the being a delegate to aid in forming a constitution, was not filling any *office* at all.—Now suppose that I should allow this, did you exercise no other functions than those of a constitution maker? Was not the convention every thing, legislative, executive and diplomatic; judicial, military, and *ecclesiastic*? Were not some of you watching the armies, others superintending the guillotine, and others preaching sermons of atheism? Was this filling *no office*? And were you not at all times as liable and as ready and fit to be thus employed as any of the gang? Nay, did you not preside *as judge* (“ah! righteous rascally judge!”) on the trial of Louis the XVIth? And did not your swinish voice pronounce on him the sentence of *banishment*? Was this filling *no office*?



But, whether you were an officer or not, or whether you had legally forfeited your American citizenship, what a poor mean-spirited miscreant must you be to make a complaint that your release was not requested by the President, the man whom you call an *apostate* or an *impostor*! What! *old Common Sense*, who was at all times “ready to fight a hundred tories;” the *great Rights of Man*, who, “proudly scorned to triumph or to yield;” is it this hero in the cause of French liberty, who boldly defied the gallows of Old England, that now trembles at the thoughts of the French guillotine!——“To such a pitch of rage and suspicion was Robespierre and his committee arrived that it seemed as if they feared to leave a man alive. *No man could count upon his life for twenty hours.\** One hundred and sixty-nine prisoners were taken out of the Luxembourg in one night, and one hundred and sixty of them guillotined. In the next list I have good reason to believe *I was included.*”—Well, and what then? Why should you not be included as well as the thousands you assisted in sentencing to death? What a poor whimpering story is here! After all your boasting of the greatness and dignity of the “democratic floor,” you have not discovered a zeal nearly equal to that of *Lord Stanhope*, one of “that class of equivocal generation, called *aristocracy.*”†

“*Lord Stanhope.* What are all the executions and what is all the blood, about which we hear such pitiful tales? The cause of France is the

\* This confession is valuable. The democrats will not now deny what I have ever said about French liberty.

† See Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports.

“ cause of freedom, of mankind. Who would  
 “ hesitate to be executed in such a cause? I would  
 “ *cheerfully be hanged* in her cause.”

“ *Lord Abingdon.* My lords, his lordship wishes  
 “ you to hang him. I beseech your lordships to  
 “ give the noble peer rope enough and he will  
 “ hang himself.”

Are you not ashamed, Tom, to be surpassed by a lord? Instead of coming forth from your den, a volunteer martyr in this glorious cause, and crying, *Vive la Republique!* with your neck under the national razor, you tremble even now at the thoughts of your danger. Instead of dancing to the music of your republican chains, you pine and peak and cry for *liberty*: as if it were possible for a man to want liberty in France!

I cannot help observing here how harmoniously you chime in with the cant of the enslaved French and the American democrats. “ During the *ty-*  
 “ *ranny of Robespierre—the orders of Robespierre—*  
 “ *the cruelty of Robespierre.*” Just as if the whole mob of tyrants, who passed the bloody decrees, were not as guilty as he who *proposed* them? But the rest, or the greatest part of them, are *alive* and *in power*, and Robespierre is *dead*.

You are obliged, however, to confess that the convention itself refused to release you at the request of some silly Americans: but here again, to avoid offending your despotic masters, you throw the blame *on the president* for the time being, and he, poor cut-throat, “ has since *ab/conded*.” If he had been present you would not have dared even to do this.



The committees, you acknowledge, did order your arrest ; but then as some of them are alive, and even on the throne, you add : “ the committees, of which *Robespierre was Dictator.*” Thus you qualify your tone, kneel, creep and cringe to those who have held you in chains, and brought you to the foot of the scaffold. Nay you do more. *Carnot*, one of the five fellows now called the Directory, was a member of these committees, he was Robespierre’s right-hand man, the jackall that brought provison for the guillotine. This is he who signs the decree for seizing the vessels of your “ beloved America,” and this measure your pen, your poor old double-turned antitheses, are now employed to defend. It is thus that you support “ the *dignity of man,*” that “ *dignity* compared to “ which that of lords, dukes and kings dwindles “ into nothingness.”

If Robespierre were still living, you would be as much his flatterer and slave as you are the flatterer and slave of Carnot. You were made for a French republican ; the baseness which they have constantly discovered, is in your nature. While the tyrant is alive, he is a God ; when dead, he is a devil. An ignominious death, the awful avenger of crimes, and, with other men, the oblivion of injuries, with you unlocks the faculties of reproach, and changes your praises into execrations. You are true carrion-crows : you flutter in flocks from the presence of the kite, but when he is wounded by the hunter and lies gasping on the earth, you attack his prostrate carcase, and pick out his eyes that are closing in death.

Now, Tom, for your attack on the *Federal Constitution*. On this head I shall be very concise.— You must recollect, if your memory is not as treacherous as your heart, that, in your “Rights of Man,” you every where coupled this constitution with that of France, which your book professed to defend; and that you held the Federal Constitution, in particular, up for the imitation of the English.—Let us therefore contrast what you then said of this constitution, with what you say of it now.

*Letter to Gen. Washington.*

I declare myself opposed to several matters in the constitution, particularly to the manner in which, what is called the Executive, is formed, and to the long duration of the Senate; and if I live to return to America I will use all my endeavours to have them altered.

It was only to the absolute necessity of establishing some federal authority, extending equally over all the states, that an instrument, *so inconsistent* as the present federal constitution is, obtained a suffrage.

*Rights of Man, Part. 2d.*

The whole expense of the federal government of America, founded, as I have already said, on the system of representation, and extending over a country nearly ten times as large as England, is but six hundred thousand dollars, or one hundred and thirty-five thousand pounds sterling.

The government of America, which is wholly on the system of representation, is the *only real republic in character and in practice*, that now exists. Its government has *no other object* than the public business of the nation, and therefore it is *properly a republic*.



*Letter to Gen. Washington.*

As the federal constitution is a copy, not *quite so base* as the original, of the form of *the British government*, an imitation of its vices was *naturally to be expected*.

*Rights of Man, Part 2d.*

It is on this system that the American government is founded. It is representation ingrafted upon democracy. It has fixed the form by a scale parallel in all cases to the extent of the principle. What Athens was in miniature, America will be in magnitude. The one was the wonder of the ancient world; the other is becoming *the admiration and model of the present*.

There is a pretty little posey for you, Thomas! What a vile wretch must you be! That which was becoming the "*admiration and model of the world,*" is now "*a copy, not quite so base as the original, of the British government;*" and you were exhausting all the hell of sophistry to persuade the English to change their constitution for another, from which the vices of their own were "*naturally to be expected.*"——Never, surely never, was a poor demagogue so completely detected. Your letter will do good in this country; but in England it will be a national blessing. Your *sincerity* will now be seen to the bottom. Those whom you had the address to deceive will now blush at their folly: they will see the pit you had prepared for them, and will bless the hand that saved them from destruction. For my own part, what I owe to this performance in common with every American and every Englishman, I have particular acknowledgments to make. It has flattered my vanity as a political writer; a species

of vanity which you know, Tom, is none of the weakest,—witness your Second Part of the “*Rights of Man.*” I long ago declared that all who were the enemies “of the British Government, would be found to be the enemies of the General Government of America.” And no longer since than the September Censor, which contains your infamous life, I said : “I sincerely believe that he (meaning you, Tom,) *hated*, and that he *still hates* the general government of the United States, as much as the Government of Great-Britain. But it was necessary that he should find out something to hold up to the imitation of the English ; no matter what, so that it differed from what they possessed.”

Among the good effects that your letter will have, one is, and that not of the least importance, it will tend to complete the reconciliation between America and Britain. Your intention and that of your employers was quite different ; but you have overstepped your mark. When the people of this country first read your “*Rights of Man,*” they were naturally flattered with your compliments to their wisdom. To have formed a government, “the admiration and model of the world,” and to be held up to the imitation of their rivals in freedom, merited a return of applause ; and they were astonished and offended to find, that the English refused to be instructed. Hence the appellations of “British tyrant,” and “willing slaves ;” and all the acrimonious and disdainful language that was for a long time held towards that nation. But now, when they perceive that their flatterer is become an assailant, and that their “admiration and model of the world,” is no more than a mere “*copy*, not



“ quite so base as the original, of the British government,” they will begin to think that the people of England were not so foolish ; that they still are free men, and worthy of their friendship and affection.

In a successive attack on all that is fair and excellent, *the conduct and character of General Washington* naturally follows the Federal Constitution.

I will not cast a slur on this illustrious man by attempting to defend him against the shafts of Tom Paine, but I will make you, Tom, defend him against yourself.

#### *Letter to Gen. Washington.*

When we speak of military character, something more is to be understood than constancy ; and something more *ought* to be understood than the Fabian system of *doing nothing*. The *nothing* part can be done by any body. Old Mrs. Thompson, the house-keeper of head-quarters, (who threatened to make the sun and the *wind* shine through Rivington of New York) could have done it as well as Mr. Washington. Deborah would have been as good as Barak. The successful skirmishes at the close of one campaign, matters that would scarcely be noticed in a better state of things, make the brilliant

#### *Common Sense.*

Voltaire has remarked that King William never appeared to full advantage but in difficulties and in action ; the same remark may be made on General Washington, for the character fits him. There is a natural firmness in some minds which cannot be unlocked by trifles, but which, when unlocked, discovers a cabinet of fortitude ? and I reckon it among those kind of *public blessings*, which we do not immediately see, that GOD hath blessed him with uninterrupted health, and given him a mind that can even *flourish upon care*.

*Letter to Gen. Washington.*

exploits of Gen. Washington's seven campaigns.--No wonder we see so much pusillanimity in the *President* when we see so little enterprise in the *General*.

Elevated to the chair of the Presidency you assumed the merit of every thing to yourself, and the *natural ingratitude* of your constitution began to appear. You commenced your Presidential career by encouraging and swallowing the grossest adulation, and you travelled America from one end—to the other, to put yourself in the way of receiving it. You have as many addresses in your chest as James the II. Monopolies of every kind marked your administration almost in the moment of its commencement. The lands obtained by the revolution were lavished upon partizans; the interest of the disbanded soldier was sold to the speculator; injustice was acted under the pretence of faith; and the chief of the army became the patron of the fraud.

*Rights of Man, Part 2d.*

I presume, that no man in his sober senses, will compare the character of any of the kings of Europe with that of General Washington.

As soon as nine states had concurred, (and the rest followed in the order their conventions were elected) the old fabric of the federal government was taken down, and the new one erected, of which General Washington is president.—In this place I cannot help remarking, that the *character and services* of this gentleman are sufficient to put all those men called kings to shame. While they are receiving from the sweat and labours of mankind, a prodigality of pay, to which neither their abilities, nor their services can entitle them, he is rendering every service in his power, and refusing every pecuniary reward. He accepted no pay as commander in chief; he accepts none as president of the United States.



*Letter to Gen. Washington.*

And as to you, sir, *treacherous in private friendship*, and a *hypocrite* in public life, the world will be puzzled to decide, whether you are an *apostate* or an *impostor*; whether you have *abandoned* good principles, or whether you ever had any?

*Dedication to the 1st part of the Rights of Man.*

SIR,

I present you a small treatise in defence of those principles of freedom which your *exemplary virtue* has so *eminently contributed to establish*. That the Rights of Man may become as universal as your *benevolence* can wish, and that you may enjoy the happiness of seeing the new world regenerate the old, is the prayer of,

Sir,

Your most obliged, and  
Obedient humble servt.

THOMAS PAINE.

Now, atrocious, infamous miscreant, “look  
“on this picture, and on this.” I would call on you to blush, but the rust of villainy has eaten your cheek to the bone, and dried up the source of suffusion. Are these the proofs of your disinterestedness and consistency? Is it thus that you are always the same, and that you “*preserve through*  
“*life* the right-angled character of MAN?”

The object of your masters, in having recourse to you on this occasion, is evident to every one. Your letter was written at the time they were passing the decree for authorizing the violation of their treaty with America. To prevent the people here from resenting the injury, it was necessary to persuade them that it was owing

to the mal-administration of their own government, and this could not be done without undermining the character of him who presided over it. It was thought that you yet possessed influence enough to effect this, and therefore the prostituted pen of the revolutionary ruffian was put in a state of requisition.

Your tyrants are completely baffled. The effects of your letter are exactly the contrary to what it was intended to produce. There is but one thing on earth nearer to the hearts of all true Americans than their constitution, and that is, the spotless character of their chief. Your brutal attempt to blacken this character was all that was wanted to crown his honour and your infamy. You were before sunk to a level with the damned, but now you are plunged beneath them. The vile democrats, nay even Franklin Bache, with whom you boast of being in close correspondence, can say not a word in its defence. All the *apology* for you, is, that you wrote at the instigation of the despots of Paris. Thus the great Rights of Man, the sworn foe of corruption, and the reformer of nations, winds up his patriotic career: his being *bribed* is pleaded as an *alleviation* of his *crimes*.



T H E E N D.



P O R C U P I N E

POLITICAL CENSOR

For *March*, 1797.





P O R C U P I N E's

# POLITICAL CENSOR,

*For March, 1797.*

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☞ *There is no Censor for February, this year.*

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A  
L E T T E R

FROM a GENTLEMAN in SWITZERLAND,  
TO HIS FRIEND IN AMERICA.

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*THE following Letter is so striking a picture of France and French Liberty, and has met with such universal approbation, that I thought it right to give it a place in the Censor.*

---

LAUSANNE, (SWITZERLAND)

February 24th, 1794.

*My dear Sir,*

I AM just returned from a very interesting tour, and will employ the few moments I remain in this place, in giving you a short and probably a very imperfect sketch of it. In my last I mentioned having a letter from the *Marquis de la Fayette* to

March.

A

*his wife*.—I had without consideration, undertaken to forward it to Mr. Morris, our minister at Paris ; but on reflection I was struck with the impropriety of enclosing him a letter from a man whose name alone was treason in France, and at a period when all letters were opened, and when the slightest and most innocent correspondence with emigrants continually brought numbers to the guillotine.—I endeavoured both at Laufanne and at Geneva, to find some person going into France, who would promise to deliver it ; but I easily perceived there was no one who would expose himself to such a risk.—In this situation, the interest I felt for the character who wrote the letter, and a desire of seeing France at a period so critical, induced me, though still indisposed, to resolve on being the bearer of it myself. I applied to Citoyen Soulavie, the French Resident at Geneva for a passport. He told me the one I had from Mr. Pinckney, was better than any he could give me, but that in a time of revolutions the merest trifle might irritate the people and with my English accent and appearance, he thought it adviseable to give up entirely the idea of going to Paris. Not satisfied with his advice, I determined to apply to higher authority, and to wait on a *representant du peuple*,\* who had lately arrived in the department bordering on Switzerland. The curious accounts I had heard of this man made me desirous of seeing him ; and I was fortunate enough to meet him a few days afterwards at *Verfoy*. A *representant du peuple* is a sort of *viceroy* chosen in the bosom of the con-

\* A member of the Convention.



vention and sent into the departments by the<sup>a</sup> *Comité de Salut publique*, with the power to kill, burn and destroy, at the risk of losing his own head at his return. I was ushered into a room where this animal was surrounded by his officers: his dress was curious; a *Bonnet Rouge*<sup>b</sup> with the motto, “Liberté, Égalité, &c.” a woolen jacket and trousers, an enameled<sup>c</sup> *Bonnet de la liberté* tied round his neck, with the tricoloured ribbon, and a card with his name “Gouly” hung at his button hole as a member of the *Jacobin club*; his hair cut short and without powder. I was received with<sup>d</sup> “*Que veux tu mon frere?*” “To know whether I could safely go to *Paris* under the protection of a passport from the American minister in London.” “*Ce n’est pas mon Affaire, Va au Comité de Surveillance.*” The president of this comité proved to be an uncle to the professor *Pictet* of Geneva.—He was pleased to find that I was acquainted with his relation, shewed me much politeness, signed my passports, and when I asked him what the *representant* had done since his arrival he whispered me in the ear, <sup>e</sup> “*Il a tout changé—Les gens riches sont arrêtés. Ceux qui étaient en place ne le sont plus; mon ami, c’est la fin du monde qui va arriver.*” In the mean time the *Citoyen Gouly* sent to inform him that he would answer with his head for what he was about, that many agents of the infamous Pitt had been detected in France with American passports. Instead of “*Monami*” from my friend

<sup>a</sup> Committee of public safety. <sup>b</sup> Red cap. <sup>c</sup> Liberty cap. <sup>d</sup> What dost thou want, brother? <sup>e</sup> That’s none of my business, get thee to the committee of superintendance. <sup>f</sup> “He has changed every thing; the rich are imprisoned, all who were in office are dismissed; ah, my friend, the end of the world is at hand.”

the president, it was now, “*Ab Scélérat, on te mettra dans la rattière,*” and I was on the point of being hurried to *prison*. I insisted on seeing the *representant*, gained admittance, and so perfectly satisfied him respecting my being an American, that he insisted on my dining with him.—He put his seal of office to my passport, and told me I might now go to Paris without fear.—The scene that succeeded was curious; servant and master, officer and soldier, all sat down to table together, with their hats on. Gouly gave us an account of the descent that was soon to take place in England, and that in two months time, *he* it was that would be sent to destroy *Carthage*, and to cut off the heads of *George and of Pitt*. He declared that we had treated the *Citoyen Genet* very ill, that he had been joined by the *true patriots*, but that *Hamilton* and his set were sold to Pitt.—I observed that though traitors were very easily to be found in some countries of Europe, I flattered myself that America had not yet gone to that degree of corruption, and that the representative of a nation should never adopt any party.—He then gave us a dissertation on the blessings of *Liberté, Egalité and Fraternité*, swore that the people in the departments into which he was sent were all aristocrats or egotists—that they had no *esprit Revolutionnaire*, but before he left them, with the assistance of the guillotine, they should be “*bien montés à hauteur des circonstances.*” I got up to take my leave, and was not a little surprised at his throwing his arms around my neck, and giving me the *Baiser fraternel*: this was an unfortunate compliment for me—it

*a* Ah, wretch, thou shalt be put in the rat trap.

*b* Well screwed up to the height of existing circumstances.



gave me so much consequence in the eyes of the people, that before I got out of Verfoy, I was kissed by the Mayor and all the Municipality.—The day after, I set out on my Journey to Paris, and notwithstanding the ridiculous scene I had been witness to, I flattered myself that I should return with many arguments to support my favourite opinion, “that after all their follies, and the horrors they had committed, the French would end by rendering themselves not only feared but respected.”

I left Nyon on the 10th of Jan. but my chaise breaking down on the top of the Jura, I was exposed for near two days to the most inclement weather at a small village called “*les Rouffes*, the first French post, in *Franche comté*.” I found here a great degree of tranquility: they were happy in having the Swiss for their neighbours, and in the protection of their mountains.—At Dijon, Auxere, Sens, &c. the *Esprit revolutionnaire* was in full force.—Crosses were broken, chapels burnt, many churches entirely destroyed, and those that remained had some part or other torn down; the celebrated convent of the *Chartreux*, near Dijon, a heap of ruins;—all the bells collected together to be turned into cannon; every house with the tri-coloured banner at the window, and the motto, “*Lib. Ega. &c. &c.*” on the door: chaises, waggon, carts, all with their little flags;—the *cap of liberté* sculptured on the mile-stones, and the national colours painted even on the trees that line the great road to Paris.—I had frequently been conducted by the guard to the *comite de Surveillance*, but had never met with any detention.—On my arrival, however, at Ponthieny about

30 miles from Paris, my fears began to increase, and I was agreeably surprised to hear that Saint Port, the country residence of Mr. Morris, was just opposite on the other side of the Seine.—I was happy in getting under the protection of his roof, and determined to wait for his advice before I proceeded. The next day I received a polite note from him, informing me that I should meet with no difficulties; and on the 20th I entered Paris for the first time. Instead of the noise and bustle I expected, there was a dead calm, the road appeared deserted, and not a carriage was to be seen in the streets.—I waited on Mr. Morris, and heard with regret that *Madame de la Fayette* was confined near her country seat in the south of France, with circumstances even of *cruelty and indecency*.—He had made a private application in her favour to the minister for foreign affairs, and was answered, “That she was fortunate in being so far from Paris, and that the greatest service her friends could render her, would be never to mention her name.

He smiled at my observations respecting the French revolution, and said he would leave me to form my opinion from experience.

I began by attending regularly the *debates* of the *Convention*—I entered the *Tribune* for the first time, with *that respect one naturally feels at the idea of seeing the rulers of a great nation*.—I found the president ringing his bell with all his might—half a dozen members speaking at the same time, and when they could not be heard from the chair, they attacked each other. It proved to be a quarrel respecting a member who had been de-



nounced. The figures of the Roman worthies ornamented the walls ; the busts of *Brutus*, *Le Pelletier*, and *Marat*, surrounded the President's chair ; opposite was a large thing like a *trunk*.—It was the *Ark of the Covenant*, covered with tri-coloured ribbons. I had an opportunity some days afterwards of seeing on the *place of the Bastille* a great *stone figure of Liberty* and an *immense trough*, out of which the deputies drank large draughts of water to the *Goddeſs* on the adoption of their last constitution. There was a poor fellow who narrowly escaped being guillotined for observing, that no doubt many wished it was wine.

The *National Convention* I soon perceived to be a *farce* ; of the 749 members of whom it was first composed—155 had either given in their dismissions, were guillotined, confined, assassinated, or taken prisoners : 228 form the 17 different comites for the transaction of business ; a considerable number are sent into the departments, and those who sit in the convention appear to meet merely for the purpose of giving an *apparent sanction* to the measures of the *comité de salut publique*. The President is continually engaged in receiving addresses, patriotic donations, and in giving the honours of the sitting and the *Baiser fraternel*. I was witness to a laughable scene of this kind ;—a deputation from *St. Domingo* entered the hall ; it consisted of a *white* man, a *mulatto* and a *negro*. *La croix* moved that the circumstance should be distinguished by the \* *accolade* of the President. The *white* man first flew into his arms, and was embraced most tenderly—the *mulatto* was hugg'd with still *more affection*—but when he came to the *negro*, had it

\* Embrace.

been a *mistress*, he could not have pressed her more ardently—*there was no end to the kisses that were given and received amidst the repeated applauses of the Convention and the Tribunes*—The next day, they voted the *emancipation of the slaves*, and declared, that they would form with *all negroes and mulattos* a “TRICOLOR’D COALITION which would soon destroy the combined powers of aristocracy and tyranny.”—An *old negro wench*, who was in one of the tribunes, thought this so fine, that *she fainted away*; she was immediately brought into the bosom of the Convention,—the members crowded round her, and again *fell a kissing, not only the negroes, but each other*.—I next attended the *Jacobin club*; they met about 7 o’clock, but the tribunes, were filled before 6, with the vilest collection of people I think I ever saw, mostly women and children. The sitting opened by reading the *procès verbal* † of the preceding evening, by which it appeared that a deputation of Blacks had been received most fraternally, and that it had unanimously decreed, that a flag should be hung over the chair of the President, on which should be a negro, a mulatto, and a French man holding up together the banner tri-coloured. Some bad verses were afterwards read in favour of the *mountain*, made by a woman, who attended the debates, and to this succeeded the epuration ‡ of the members. The questions asked on this occasion are, “where were you on the 10th of August?” “How did you vote in the case of Marat?” “Were you ever a banker or an agent de change?”\* Among others that were to be examined, was

† Journals.

‡ Purification.

\* Broker.



one Chambertoy ; as soon as he began his answer, a black-guard looking fellow who was sitting next me got up, and bawled out for the “ parole ”—He swore that Chambertoy was a rascal and an aristocrat ; another declared him to be as much of a patriot as the king of Prussia ; Chambertoy said a few words, when a woman got up behind him, and gave him the lie in plain terms. The most violent noise and uproar succeeded, and I was convinced that Chambertoy would be turned out ; at length, a child about thirteen or fourteen years old, a member of the club, mounted the tribune, made a long speech, observed that no person should be condemned, without being heard, and gained Chambertoy an opportunity of making his defence ; he proved that he was one of the party who proposed the events of the 10th August, (for they now consider as the greatest merit in themselves, what they attributed to their king as the greatest crime ;) he shewed a wound he had received at the Thuilleries, and was re-admitted with unbounded applause.—I was indebted, afterwards, to my being taken for an Englishman, for the pleasure of seeing Robespierre—they were satisfied, on my shewing a certificate from Mr. Morris, signed by the minister for foreign affairs, and made way for a “ brave American ”—I had thus an opportunity of approaching very near Robespierre at the Jacobin club. He is a little man, very pale and thin, decently dressed ; in general, a light coloured great coat, and powder in his hair, much the appearance of a petty-fogging attorney : He was listened to with great attention, and brings out his words with an almost

*n* The right to speak.

**B**

*March.*

affected slowness, while every other person speaks with violent passion.—They distributed in the tribunes<sup>o</sup>, a most ridiculous essay on the English constitution; when one Brichet got up and moved, that the club, before it debated the great question of a descent into England, and the vices of the British government, should occupy itself in destroying the “toads that had crawled up the mountain,” and that at least thirty members of the Convention should be guillotined. Robespierre observed, that he was an *Intrigant* and an *Ultra-revolutionaire*,<sup>p</sup> and moved that he should be turned out, which was immediately decreed; a friend of Brichet got up to take his part; Robespierre moved that he should share the same fate, and they turned him out also.

Frequently on leaving the convention, I pass through the garden of the *Thuilleries* to the *place de la revolution*, in order to get there after the *executions* had taken place, and was once or twice so unfortunate as to be a witness of them. It is out of my power, my dear friend, to give you a competent idea of this scene. Near the door of the convention you see two men with great fur caps and long beards, reading to the people the *crimes of the kings of France*, and abusing them all from *Charlemagne to Louis XVI.* A little further is a woman singing patriotic songs and giving lessons of morality; on the other side, is a man *preaching against Jesus Christ*. Every where you are pestered with *journals* and the productions of *Père Duchêne* and *Camille des Moulins*. At the entrance

<sup>o</sup> The galleries. <sup>p</sup> One who even goes beyond revolutionary limits.



of the gardens, are two *restoratives*<sup>q</sup> filled with people, *eating drinking and laughing*—*opposite is the guillotine*, and at ten yards from it is a *puppet show*, where *punch* is guillotined ! Here you see figures dancing on wires, *there* an exhibition of pictures, and a *calf bqrn* with a *national cockade* on its forehead—a crowd of women, and a collection of dogs immediately under the guillotine ; *children peeping into the hampers* that hold the bodies, and men selling the names of those who have just suffered, and crying out “ *Venez demain, n’y manquez pas, vous en aurez plusieurs, vous aurez des femmes*”. It is difficult to say which are most mad, the spectators or the sufferers. I have heard people in the streets observe to each other, “ *ou allons nous, voulez vous aller au caffè ou a la guillotine ?*” I have seen women go to be executed, as if to an entertainment, chattering and paying compliments to each other, even at the scaffold ; some laughing, cry, “ *vive la republique,*” the people call for the head, to see whether it still smiles. But what adds the greatest horror to the scene, is the gaiety that reigns on every countenance !

I attended many of the trials at the *tribunal revolutionnaire* ; you there find the forms of justice, but none of the reality. It consists of two courts, the *salle de la liberté* and the *salle de l’égalité* ; each composed of three judges, besides the president and an *accusateur public*—all dressed in black gowns, and black feathers in their hats ; round their necks a national ribbon, to which hangs a gold medal.—

<sup>q</sup> Eating-house, or ordinaries. <sup>r</sup> Come again to-morrow, dont fail, you’ll have several more, you’ll have some women guillotined. <sup>s</sup> Where shall we go ? will you go to the Coffee-house or to the guillotine ?

The jury consists of ten persons ; the clerk reads the accusation ; the witnesses are examined ; the accused is asked if he has any thing to say for himself ; the *accusateur public* speaks, and is answered by the defender chosen by the prisoner : The president declares the debate to be finished. The accused is carried out, the jury give in the verdict, and the accused is brought back to hear his sentence ; if he is condemned, he wishes the company a good morning, and goes away to be executed within 24 hours. If he is acquitted, he embraces the whole court ; some of the spectators are pleased when this happens to be the case, but I have heard others say, “ *je n’aime pas les voir échapper à la guillotine ;*” not only the judges, and the *accusateurs publics*, but the jury also, are nominated by the convention, that is, by the *comité de salut public*, and you may easily conceive the spirit which they receive ; accuser, judge and jury, all appear anxious to find the prisoner guilty, and if he is noble or has property, he is almost sure of being condemned.

Paris is perfectly quiet ! One part is a desert, the other is plunged into the profoundest apathy ; and no where is there so little appearance of interest in the affairs of France as in its own capital. There are from sixteen to twenty *spectacles* (theatres) every evening, and once each Decade all the theatres are opened gratis, to the populace, when some patriotic piece is given. The guillotine was the *spectacle* generally the best attended ; but to render the piece sufficiently amusing and wind up the *esprit révolutionnaire*, they are obliged at times to execute women, or some remarkable

\* I don't like to see them escape from the guillotine.



character. There are a set of people paid to attend the Convention, the Jacobin club, the Tribunal révolutionnaire, and the guillotine, to keep up an appearance of popularity.

There is no truth of which I am so perfectly convinced, as that the great majority of the people in France are already against the revolution, and would be happy to change, for any government whatever, the *horrid tyranny* under which they suffer. One of the members of the *comité de salut publique* has been heard to say, “We know that nine out of ten are against us; but the tenth man shall make the other nine march.” A president of a jacobin club not far from Paris, has whispered to me † “Un roi FOIBLE est un fleau;” and I have never had an opportunity of conversing with any person above the lowest class, who did not execrate the tyrants of the day. In the mean time, the military disposition of the French, the attention which is paid to the army, the unlimited powers of the *comité de salut publique*, and the immense riches on which they have seized, will give the ruling faction the means of making the strongest resistance, and it is possible they may involve in their own destruction the ruin of all France. There was a time when, besides the Vendée, Bourdeaux, Toulon, Marseilles, Lyons, Strasburg, were all for a counter revolution; and had the combined powers, instead of the detestible policy of dismembering France, been seriously occupied with the idea of putting Louis XVII. on the throne, it might have been affected. The Vendée was left to be destroyed by numbers, after giving repeated proofs of the most astonishing bravery. Bourdeaux was

† A weak king is a scourge.

on the point of declaring, but the mayor, who was a man of property, hesitated ; Lyons became a lesson, Bourdeaux escaped, but the mayor was guillotined ; Marseilles still suffers under the wrath of the convention ; Lyons, though obliged to adopt the language of the day, fought for royalty ; she expected assistance, but was cruelly disappointed ; Strasburg offered itself to general Wurmser, if he would accept it for Louis XVII. His orders were to take it for his master : in the mean time the representatives of the people entered the city and guillotined all who were suspected. The opportunity has been neglected, and humanity shudders at the approach of the next campaign. For two years past it has been expected, and even wished by some, that the want of provisions would put an end to the exertions of France. Those who entertained such hopes did not reflect that the army would be the last to suffer, and the innocent the first victims. The papers mention but 5450 persons, but I know from good authority that there are at least 15,000 confined at Paris, and those who are arrested in the departments may amount to about 250,000. Would not these as the “ Bouches inutiles”† be the first sacrificed ? In some places already, the *soldiers* receive good bread, while the *people* are obliged to eat that which is made of potatoes and bran. The prospects of a famine in France were probably never more serious than at the present moment, and the French may suffer greatly before their heir harvest ; but they will not starve. In many cantons the bread is good and cheaper than in Switzerland : in Paris it is bad, but is sold at the maximum ; in some few places the wheat was expended : the occasion of this dif-

† Useless mouths.



ference is that all grain remains in requisition in each canton—wheat is in general scarce. I have seen some of the people laugh at their own wants, and cry † “*il n’y a point de misère en France,*” and when I have asked the postillion which was the best inn, at the place I was going to, he answered with the greatest levity, || “*Il y en a deux, mais on n’a pas de pain.*” “*Et que fait on alors?*” “*On s’échauffe!*” There is one circumstance which after much inquiry I found to be certain, that in the department through which I past, there was as much corn planted as at any former period.

I went to Paris by the northern road, and returned by *Nevers, Moulins and Lyons*; at the first of these places many of the populace were intoxicated, and I could hardly get any person to examine my passport; they had just taken up about 70 *priests*; these unfortunate men had *conformed* to all the decrees of the Convention; some of them had married--*many were old, and some invalids*; they were crowded with great inhumanity on board a batteau to be sent to Brest. I asked one of those who attended, what was to be done with them?” I believe, said he, *they are going to drown them*”—*this they call the New Baptism of priests.* *Moulins* was formerly famous for its manufactories in cutlery; its commerce was destroyed as well as that of every other city in France. *But imagination cannot conceive the miserable situation of Lyons; all that was beautiful in building, rich in commerce, or respectable in inhabitants, is totally destroyed: the place de Belle Cour, formerly one of the most*

† There is no misery in France. || “There are two, but there’s no bread.” “What do people do in that case?” “They warm themselves.”

*beautiful in the world*, does not exist. The noble range of buildings near the Rhone, a heap of ruins, and the dust that arises from the houses they continue to demolish, renders the air almost suffocating. *They had just torn to pieces 60 persons with grape-shot*; the bodies were afterwards stripped by *women and children*, with the utmost degree of *indecenty*. The *Guillotine* had been *illuminated* on the anniversary of the king's execution. It had cut off 28 persons the day before my arrival, and was again prepared. Adjoining to it is the grand *Autel de la patrie*, † where there are fêtes every decade. I went into the *Hotel de Ville* to get my passport examined; I was surrounded by offices—here a crowd were waiting to be *married*, there they were waiting to be *divorced*. I saw a *burial*; the corpse was on a bier, half uncovered, with the *bonnet rouge* on the head; all those who attended had their heads ornamented in the same manner, and followed the body singing the carmagnole. The executions at Lyons had already amounted to above 3000 persons, and to those who spoke of mercy, the *representants* had answered, “that there were 10,000 more to suffer.” There are two tribunals continually employed in condemning. The “*commission militaire* and the *tribunal populaire*,” and women have been tied to the guillotine, to be witnesses of the execution of their husbands, merely for having solicited their pardon. I was obliged to remain at Lyons near two days from the difficulty of getting horses, and was happy to get out of it and relieve my eyes from such a scene of horror and madness. The great instigator of all the cruelties that are committed in this unfortunate

† Altar of the country.



city is *Collot d'Herbois*\* ; this man was not long ago an inferior comedian, and has often acted at the theatres of Lyons and Geneva ; he was the president of the comité that formed the last constitution, at present heads that party which is called by some *Ultra Revolutionnaire*, and as the people here always join those who go to the greatest excesses, it is probable that Collot d'Herbois, Herbert, the author of the *Pere Duchene*, and their set, may treat Robespierre and the Maratts as they did the Brissotines. When any man gets to the top of power, he naturally feels himself somewhat interested in the welfare of the country, and unwillingly adopts moderation as one of the means of increasing his popularity. Robespierre wished to have a motion past, for liberating all those who had been arrested without any grounds of accusation, the number of whom you may easily conceive to be very great, when for some time every person who denounced another, received 100 livres. Such however was the clamour, that he was obliged to abandon the idea. He next, without appearing himself, set Camille Desmoulins to write against the violent party : he begins by declaring himself a votary of the *divine Marat*. He was however expelled from the Jacobin Club, for having mentioned *a comité de clemence* ; and before he could be re-admitted, was obliged to confess his error. It is the violent party, who, to amuse the people, have started the idea of a descent into England. Robespierre declares, that the English only merit their contempt ; that if they are desirous of having their liberty, they are capa-

\* This is the MONSTER, who moved in the Convention the abolition of Royalty.

ble of gaining it for themselves, and if they are not, a descent into England would only be throwing themselves into the snares of Pitt.

The *Jacobin Club* is the source of power, and those who lead it govern France. It keeps up an intimate correspondence with all the inferior clubs in the different departments, and takes care that they shall be formed of none but the *vilest and most ignorant* of the inhabitants, entirely devoted to itself. It is the seat of information, gives what impression it pleases, and a defeat in the north is represented in the south as a victory. It has caused all the miseries of France, and, composed as it is at present, no good can ever be expected from it : God knows what will be the end, and we are at a loss what to hope. THE FRENCH APPEAR INCAPABLE OF BEING FREE ; the government of an usurper only leads to new convulsions ; the people, when fatigued with the present mode of government, may change it for something new. *Liberty* is at present the *fashion* in France ; you meet it at all the corners of the streets ; it is stuck up in large characters on every house ; it spouts at the theatre ; it struts at the opera ; it is become a by-word—I never *heard so much*, and never *saw so little of it*. The “Ancien Régime” has totally disappeared, and *decade* is as much in vogue as if Sunday had never existed. But will not a people who have, with *so much levity*, abandoned their *religion*, forget in the same manner their liberty ? Such appears to be the character of the French, a soil where every thing flourishes for a time, but nothing takes root ; if well or ill directed, a character capable of the greatest extremes of virtue or of vice.



*dee* in France, they were determined to have one also. It consisted of one house and of one man, a Mr. Miquily ; his house was surrounded, his furniture destroyed, and himself thrown into prison. The Comité provisoire accompanied the *Marsellois* who went on this expedition, in order to prevent mischief, but such was their impotency, that a poor man was *torn to pieces*, before their faces, for *refusing to put on the Bonnet Rouge*. On entering Switzerland, I felt as if I had at length *escaped from a mad house and again got into the society of reasonable beings*.

I have without thinking, permitted my letter to run on to an immoderate length ; you will I flatter myself, excuse not only the length of it, but also the hurry in which I have written it.

The active life I led at Paris, and the excellent table of Mr. ———, have been of service to my health, and since I have found that exercise is a remedy, I shall not remain idle ; I leave this place immediately for Milan, where my carriage and horses have been arrived near two months. I expect to pass the Holy week at Rome. The heat will soon oblige me to leave Italy, when I propose going to Vienna, to which place I have excellent letters.

I am anxious to hear from you, pray write to me frequently. There is no expressing the interest I feel in whatever passes in America.

I remain most sincerely,

your affectionate

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I ENTERED France one of the *warmest advocates* of the revolution ; I firmly believed that the great body of the people had just ideas of liberty, were acquainted with their rights, and after defeating the attempts of their enemies, would then establish an equal and well regulated government. *I left it with sentiments of indignation, disappointment, and disgust, convinced that there never was a people in the world so little calculated to enjoy the blessings of freedom.*

During my stay at Paris, I found nothing so interesting as the conversation of Mr. ———. He had been so obliging before my arrival, as to take lodgings for me near his own hotel ; and I had the pleasure of seeing him every day. He was formerly exceedingly well received at court, and possessed in a great degree the confidence of its ministers, and has since been able to render himself, though not liked, yet respected by all the parties that have succeeded : though a man of great abilities, he must have found it difficult to have steered so far with safety, through the storm : and America is indebted to him for remaining in a situation, which, though none can fill it with more capacity, cannot but be particularly irksome to him. All those for whom he could have felt any consideration, have either emigrated, been arrested or guillotined, and from being in the most agreeable society, he is left with hardly an acquaintance in France : the conduct he has pursued was the only one of avoiding all parties and maintaining in every respect the dignity of his situation. He particularly detested the Brissotines, whose *policy it was to draw America into the war*, and had they not been guillotined, Genet might have done us

considerable mischief. Mr.——— read me some of his correspondence, and I was surprized at the accuracy with which he had foretold the principal events of the revolution. These letters have fallen into the hands of persons, who, from being, I believe, prejudiced in favour of the French, have neglected to pay them the attention which they so highly merited.

A party of Americans have petitioned the Convention in favor of Tom Paine; they were invited to the honours of the sitting, but could not be much flattered, when a few days after, *a set of negroes* were received with far greater attention. As the French have no farther occasion for Common Sense, or the Rights of Man, Tom Paine still remains in prison, where he abuses Mr. Morris for not claiming him as an American, and amuses himself, I'm told, with writing a book against Jesus Christ.

It is difficult to meet with beauty at Paris, all the pretty women are in requisition; they are confined and employed in making shirts for the army. I endeavoured to console myself at the Gallery of Paintings, which is without exception the finest in the world—a collection of all the most valuable paintings that existed in France. Many Americans have been arrested on their first entering the Republic, and you are searched half a dozen times before you are permitted to leave it. I returned by Geneva and found the violent party worthy imitators of their neighbours—they had found that their last project of a constitution was impracticable, and accepted a new one, which the day after was violated. As there was a *Ven-*



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M<sup>R</sup>. NOAH WEBSTER'S  
ATTACK ON PORCUPINE.

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FROM THE MINERVA,

*Of New-York, March 21, 1797.*

**I**N a late paper, we inserted sentiments of this kind, that the putting up in the Coffee House, a card, on which was painted the English flag, was a low pitiful business, equalled only by the meanness of putting up a French flag, and that it is servile to be bandied about between the flags of different foreign nations. We ought to unite under our *own flag* and learn to be a nation.

Peter Porcupine has copied the paragraph with disapprobation, and says it contains more of *vulgar prejudice*, and mistake, than of justice or good policy. He observes that it is the “quo animo,” the intention of the act that stamps its character. He would have no foreign flag hoisted, as a rallying point for malcontents against their own government; but to unite the American Eagle with the British Lion against an ambitious enemy, he thinks, would be an act that we need not be ashamed of. He then speaks of an alliance of that kind, as honourable and advantageous to both parties.

No comment will be made on the insinuation of "Vulgar Prejudice," against the Editor of the Minerva. When Peter becomes acquainted with the editor's real character, he will learn, that in a combat of that kind, he himself must certainly be the loser.

But we contest Peter's principles. It was strongly suspected many months ago, that his principles are not very friendly to the independence of America, and still less so, to the form of our government. This suspicion has been greatly increased by the manner in which his gazette has been conducted. His retailing abuse against la Fayette, whose sufferings (even suppose him to have been in fault, which is doubtful or not admitted) are far too severe, and call for the sympathy of all mankind, denotes a man callous to the miseries of his species, and extremely disrespectful to the opinions of the Americans, who entertain friendship and gratitude for la Fayette. We observe also whole columns of some of the first numbers of Peter's gazette, filled with "apologies for the old government of France," that is, for the feudal system, though in a relaxed state, and for as corrupt a system of despotism as Europe ever witnessed.

The success of Peter's pen, in attacking the democratic factions of our country, has perfectly intoxicated him; and he mistakes the *sense of America* extremely, when he supposes the danger we have escaped of being prostrated at the feet of France, will urge us to lay our country at the feet of Great-Britain.



No, Peter ; your abusing the men who fought for our Independence, and your recommending the old Government of France, are not the means by which your popularity is to be maintained. The old government of France was not so bad, as the Jacobin government, it is true ; but there is a government different from both, which la Fayette fought, and which the people of this country will rejoice to see introduced, that is, a *Free Government*.

As to an alliance with Great-Britain, we want none except what is dictated by commercial views. Here our interest, calls for mutual aid and protection. So far as Great Britain will protect our trade, for her own sake, we shall gladly receive it, and no farther.

We ask *no favours* of Great-Britain, nor of any other nation ; for this would lay the foundation for more *claims of gratitude*, with which we have been outrageously tormented by the French, and their hirelings. The United States and Great-Britain are *allied by interest*. Setting aside sameness of language, habits and private connections, no two countries are so closely united by commercial advantages. Nor can this union of interest, for a long time to come, have a competitor. It is as much for Great-Britain's interest (not to say more) to protect our vessels, as it is ours to have them protected. So far an alliance will arise out of necessity and convenience, which will require very little modification by express agreements. As to any thing like a general treaty, offensive, and defensive, God forbid. Sooner may the United States be doomed to encounter

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another eight years war for Independence, than hold the blessing at the mercy of any foreign nation.

No, Peter ; the man who writes this, once voluntarily bore arms to defend Independence, in pursuance of the same principles he *first* proposed publicly the plan of a National Constitution, persevering in the same principles, he assailed the monster, FACTION, the moment it appeared, in the insidious form of popular clubs : and from that moment to this, he has never ceased to expose the artifices of the French agents, to lay this country at the feet of France. With the same determined zeal and firmness, Peter, he now openly declares war against the man who dares to vilify the defenders of American Independence, or to propose an alliance that would commit that independence to the power of a foreign state, or to the fate of European contests.

Americans desire peace, and rejoice that the flags of all nations stream in their harbours. But the man who unites a foreign flag with that of his own country, on the territory of the United States, without an order of government, is a *factious man*, and has not the honour of his country at heart. This little emblem of national honour ought no more to be the signal for mobs and for violence in a neutral country.

Such, Peter, is my political creed—I know no party, but that of MY COUNTRY. My country is INDEPENDENT ; it is for our interest, the interest of Great-Britain, and of all Europe, that it should be so ; and the man who seeks to tack it on any foreign country, to involve it in European broils



or make its independence the sport of European policy, is conceived to be an ENEMY. As such, his intrigues will be exposed and his influence resisted, by all those decent and legal means that distinguish the gentleman and the good citizen.

P. S. If Peter Porcupine's views are mistaken, it belongs to him to remove the impressions which his writings made on the genuine friends of this country.

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PORCUPINE'S ANSWER.

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LETTER I.

PHILADELPHIA, 25th March, 1797.

To Mr. NOAH WEBSTER, of NEW-YORK.

SIR,

**Y**OU tell me and the public, that you, with *determined* zeal and *firmness*, now openly *declare war* against me ;” and that “ I must *certainly* be “ the *loser*.” Softly, ’Squire Webster : it is not so *certain*, perhaps, as you may imagine. If you had remembered the fable of the man who sold the lion’s skin, and was afterwards killed in hunting him, you would not have cried *victoria* ! before you had given your antagonist time to return your fire.

This, Sir, I desire you to look upon as a counter-declaration ; as a preparative for repulsing the unprovoked attack. Your long, familiar, and modest address should have been answered this day (notwithstanding the *certainty* of my being the *loser*) did not the very extraordinary remarks it contains call for delay, in order to afford time for a full and fair discussion of a subject, of much greater importance than the "political creed" of a news-monger. In the mean time, Sir, be not too confident of victory. "Atchieve me first, good 'Squire, and then sell my bones."

For your attachment to the government under which we live and prosper, and for the services (however *trifling*) you have rendered it, accept the respects of

Your humble servant,

P. PORCUPINE.



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## L E T T E R    I I.

T O MR. NOAH WEBSTER OF NEW-YORK.

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“ Vain, fickle, blind, from these to those he flies,  
“ And *evr’y side* of wav’ring combat tries ;  
“ Large promise makes, and breaks the promise made ;  
“ Now gives the *Grecians*, now the *Trojans* aid.”

POPE’S HOMER, LIB. v.

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S I R,

SOME days ago I promised you an answer to your Address (or whatever else you may please to call it) of the 21st of March. It luckily matters little how this answer begins. Aware I suppose of the uncouth manners of the man you were about to assail, you kindly contrived that the rudeness of your attack should furnish an ample apology for his want of politeness.

Your Address treats of your importat self, of me, and of the proposed alliance between the United States and Great Britain. This alliance is a subject of too much consequence to be blended with an enquiry into your and my character, principles, and conduct, I shall therefore reserve t for a separate letter ; not losing, however, the present opportunity of declaring, that your reason-

ing, instead of convincing me that I was mistaken, has strengthened, as far as any thing in itself contradictory can strengthen, the opinion which gave so much offence to your wisdom.

You set out with telling the public, that, “ in  
 “ a late paper, we inserted sentiments of this  
 “ kind, that the putting up in the Coffee-House,  
 “ a card, on which was painted the English flag,  
 “ was a *low pitiful business*, equalled only by the  
 “ *meanness of putting up a French flag*, and that it  
 “ is servile to be bandied about between the flags  
 “ of different foreign nations. We ought to  
 “ unite under our *own flag* and learn to be a na-  
 “ tion.”

You then complain of my having quoted the passage “ *with disapprobation*,” which, with the application of the words *vulgar prejudice*, was, it seems, a stretch of presumption which your pride could not forgive.

I must confess, that, to venture to quote “ *with disapprobation*” the oracular precepts flowing from the lips of the high priest of Minerva, was rather bold; but (and with due submission be it spoken) it was not so much your advice as your *partiality*, your *versatility*, that I disapproved of. You have uttered such cart-loads of sentiments, that it is absolutely impossible you should recollect one half of them; and as, in politics particularly, you are led by no fixed, no polar-star principle, it is as impossible that you should ever be consistent long together. Your saying that the putting up of an English flag “ *was a low pitiful business*,” sounds well; but did you say this when the *French flag* was



put up? No; you called that neither *low* nor *pitiful*: it was even honoured with your applause, as far as a man, who looks upon himself as the exclusive possessor of all that is praiseworthy, can applaud the actions of others. The hoisting of the French flag was attended with feasting and noise, little inferior to what *we* have witnessed at the celebration of the murder of the Swiss Guards: yet it escaped your censure: it was suffered to hang very peaceably, and to receive the adoration of the devout fans-culottes of New-York: folly was permitted to revel at the foot, as it were, of the shrine of wisdom, for the space of three whole years, without receiving either chastisement or rebuke. But, behold the difference! The moment a representation of the British flag appears, though painted on a bit of paper only, and intended merely to produce a little sport, you cast off your lethargic forbearance. Your patriotism, that patriotism, which slept like a dormouse, while the French flag was not only hanging up in the Coffee-Room, but was borne about your streets to elections and town meetings; that drowsy patriotism, which seemed scarcely to perceive a banner of two yards square, though it brushed its very nose, became all alive, took fire in a moment, upon sight of a British flag in miniature.

You do, indeed, now talk about the “*mean-ness of putting up a French flag* ;” but when do you find courage to do this? At the moment the people around you are got tired and ashamed of their bauble. Far were you from calling it a *meanness*, and so far from it that your voice was one of the most sonorous in the ridiculous and

disgraceful hue-and-cry, raised against those who pulled it down, in the month of May, 1795.— On that occasion you very patriotically observed, that “*it was hoped* that the flags of the sister republics would have *remained undisturbed* by the *enemies of our peace* ;” and then, on you go to express your abhorrence of the conduct of the sacrilegious wretches whose impious hands had removed them. And, recollect, that you took special care not to utter a syllable against the savages, who attempted to murder a British Officer, to avenge “*the mighty wrong*.” To intrude your precepts, therefore, at this time ; to strut and hector over the poor fallen *Tricolor*, and to call on your readers to “*unite under their own flag, and learn to be a nation*,” entitles you to but very little praise. Your advice comes too late. The patient was in a state of convalescence, before you ventured to prescribe : French privateers, jails, whips, and irons, had effectually removed the malady of the public, while you stood fumbling its pulse. Had the same stupid admiration of the French, that prevailed, and that you participated in, for several years ; had this admiration and its concomitant partiality still existed, you would never have dared (with all your *heroism*) to call the hoisting of their flag “*a low pitiful business* :” you would prudently have left that to a writer of less caution and more sincerity, reserving to yourself the agreeable task of endeavouring to disfigure his motives and blast his fame.

And, was it then such a heinous offence to quote a writer of your stamp “*with disapprobation*,” or apply to him the charge of *vulgar*



*prejudice*? It would be curious to hear, on what it is that you grounded your right of exemption from all censure and criticism. Besides, to say that a man has adopted a *vulgar prejudice*, is calculated to give offence to no one but an illiterate booby, who does not know the meaning of the words, or a captious, inflated self-sufficient pendent. Yet it is this phrase, and this alone, that has provoked you to seek retaliation, and retaliation, too of the most base and malicious species. —“We *contest*” (say you, after declaring that *I am unable to cope with you*) “We contest Peter’s principles. It was strongly suspected many months ago, that his principles are not very friendly to the independence of America, and still less so to the form of our government.”

The grammatical inaccuracy of this last sentence, though fallen from the pen of a *language-maker*, it would be foreign to my purpose to remark on : it is the slander it conveys, that it is my duty to expose. “*It was strongly suspected.*” This is the true gossiping, calumniating style. All verbal assassins speak in the *passive voice*, that, what they cannot prove, they may at last throw on public report. If you had said, “*I suspected many months ago,*” though it would have led to a detection, you would have acted more like a man ; and this might have been expected too, in a volunteer of your “determined zeal and firmness.”

However, as you are very fond of the pompous plural number and passive voice, perhaps, it is but fair to suppose, that you mean to inti-

mate, that *you* suspected my principles *many months ago* ; and, if this was really the case, pray how came you to recommend my pamphlets to the perusal of your readers, as the best antidote to the anarchical principles of the enemies of the government? *How many months ago* was it that your penetration made the grand discovery? When I proposed publishing a paper, which was no more than about *six weeks* anterior to the date of your Address, you told the public in an exulting manner, that I should “prove a terrible scourge to the patriots,” meaning Bache, Greenleaf, and all the antifederal crew. *Six weeks* ’Squire Webster, is not *many months*. If you really suspected my enmity to the government, and to the independence of America, you were a very great hypocrite, if not something of a traitor, to applaud my undertaking ; and, if on the other hand, you had no such suspicion, and have now feigned it merely for the purpose of revenging what your haughtiness has construed into an affront, I leave the public to determine what name you are worthy of.

But, you do not stop at suspicions. You seem to have foreseen that your readers would require something more than mere surmise, and you were determined to furnish it. When a man is once got into mischief, he does not stick at trifles. —“This suspicion,” say you, “has been greatly increased by the manner in which Peter’s Gazette has been conducted.”—Now, who, upon reading this, would not imagine, that my Gazette had discovered a departure from the principles which I had before professed ; a spirit hostile to the government of this country, or



at least unfriendly to it. Who would imagine that you, or any other man who wishes to preserve the least pretensions to candour, would have ventured to accuse another of enmity to the government upon a foundation slighter than this? You can produce no such thing. After having turned and rummaged my poor gazette over and over again, pryed into every paragraph, and weighed each single expression, all you can collect to “*increase*” your suspicion, is, my “retailing abuse against *la Fayette*,” and my publishing whole columns, “filled with apologies for “the old government of France!” as if the sentiments of a man, respecting *la Fayette* and the French monarchy, formed a criterion whereby to estimate his attachment to the constitution and independence of the United States! Futile indeed must be the charge, that has no other support than such round-about kind of evidence as this.

I certainly might pass over with silent contempt, what if strictly true, goes not an inch towards justifying your malignant insinuation; but, as you have been mean enough to take shelter under the popular, the “*vulgar prejudice*,” that prevails in favour of *la Fayette* and against monarchical governments, I shall take one step out of my way, in order to convince the public, that I never shall decline a combat with Noah Webster, though backed with the misplaced partiality of millions.

What you are pleased to term, “retailing *abuse* “against *la Fayette*,” and, in another place, “*vilifying* the defenders of American Indepen-

“ dence ; all this put together, is, the publishing of a speech of Mr. Burke, on the motion brought forward in the British Parliament, for the purpose of prevailing on the king to intercede for la Fayette’s release. This speech was published in my Gazette, of the 7th. March ; and, so far from its being an abusive, vilifying harangue, though it is one of those pieces of oratory, that will for ages be an ornament to the proceedings of the British Commons, it is not more remarkable for its eloquence than for its *truth*.

You, indeed, tell us, that la Fayette’s being “ *in fault, is doubtful, or not admitted :* ”—and in this short sentence, you have given a more complete specimen of the *equivoque*, than is to be found in Boileau’s famous poem on the subject. In the first place, we know not whether you express the opinion of others, or your own : next, if you are understood as expressing your own opinion, you declare the question doubtful, you do not admit the fault, and yet you do not venture to declare your friend innocent : lastly, should some warm partizan, whether royalist or republican, call you to account for hesitating on the subject, still you have a shift left ; for you do not say, or even hint, whether it be la Fayette’s crimes against the king, or those against the assembly, that you doubt of.—It was in the wars I presume, that you learnt this precaution, of always securing a safe retreat.

To one, who so carefully disguises his sentiments, it is next to impossible to make a satisfactory reply : however, supposing you to doubt of la



Fayette's fault with respect to his sovereign, I would ask you, where you have lived for these ten years last past? To hear you start *doubts* on this subject, one would imagine you had dwelt in a dormitory or a hermitage; that you had been absorbed in heavenly meditation; that your vessel (as the puritans call it) had been a reservoir of godliness, in place of being what, alas! it is, a mere channel for news.

To enter into a minute examination of la Fayette's conduct, during his short-lived career in the French revolution, would be giving an importance to his character which it does not deserve. It is true that he always was an underworker, like many others; and, therefore, is not to be reckoned among the miscreant Mirabeaus, Condorcets, &c. whose puppet he was; but, he nevertheless comes in for a considerable share of that censure which is due to a combination of ambitious men, determined to build their own fame and greatness on the ruins of a mighty empire, without remorse for the miseries it must produce. One fact, when the merits of la Fayette are to be tried, ought never to be forgotten: it was his revolutionary brain that conceived the French *Rights of Man*, of which no more need be said, than that they are the very texts from which Tom Paine has ever since been preaching the duty of *holy insurrection*.

I would willingly believe that gratitude for the services which la Fayette rendered America, has now called forth your compassion for his sufferings, and your resentment against my paper, or rather against me. I would willingly trace your

asperity back to this aimable source; but your past conduct tells me that I should attempt it in vain. How come you to be grateful to la Fayette *alone*? Has no other friend to the American revolution lain on the damp floor of a dungeon? Never did you, (with shame be it spoken, Webster) never did you utter a word of compassion for the unfortunate friendless Louis XVI. when this same la Fayette was leading him in triumph from prison to prison. Never did you talk of cruel treatment, when the Queen of France was dragged in slow procession to Paris, while the myrmidons of this same la Fayette carried the ghastly heads of her murdered guards before her. No; you rejoiced at all this; and yet, I believe, no one will have the impudence to pretend, that la Fayette's services to this country, were a millionth part so great as those of poor Louis and his consort.—Nay, you saw the head of this fallen prince roll from the scaffold; you saw his family cut off one by one; you saw his innocent child lingering in a dungeon, robbed of sleep, terrified four times an hour with orders to prepare for death, and at last you saw his bloated and livid corpse stretched in a dung-cart.—On all this you looked with a philosophic eye. Not a tear escaped you; not a groan, not a sigh, was heard from the tender-hearted *Minerva*, who now tells us that “*la Fayette's* sufferings “ call for the *sympathy of all mankind.*”

No, Sir, nor did you ever feel any thing worthy the name of compassion for la Fayette himself, or you would have expressed your abhorrence of the cruel and savage measures adopted against him and his family by the pretended republicans of France. That was the time for your gratitude



and friendship to have shown itself. You, who  
 “once voluntarily bore arms to defend indepen-  
 “dence, and who now with determined zeal and  
 “firmness openly declares war against the man  
 “who *dares* vilify the defenders of it,” among  
 whom you count la Fayette ; you, sir, should have  
 stood forth against the then popular Convention,  
 who had fixed a price on the head of your friend ;  
 who had by law, authorized the citizens to shoot  
 him, or knock his brains out, like a dog ; nay,  
 had imposed it on them as a duty. Then was the  
 time for the *blue-eyed Maid* to grasp her javelin,  
 and shelter the injured hero beneath her ample  
 shield. As she neglected to do this : as she shrunk  
 from the encounter with popular fury ; as she  
 tamely yielded to the *valgar prejudice* that then  
 prevailed in favour of every act of the mock legis-  
 lators of France, however cruel and infamous, she  
 will now receive but little applause, from men of  
 sense, for her censure of the Emperor of Germany,  
 whose title alone, she well knows, will, with the  
 grots of *her readers*, be a sufficient apology for any  
 departure from decency and truth.

No, Sir ; it is too clear, that a desire to ingra-  
 tiate yourself with the deceived part of the public,  
 together with that of injuring me, led you to  
 bring forward the stalking horse la Fayette,  
 and not any friendship, gratitude, or compassion  
 that you entertained for him. This your manner  
 of proceeding incontestibly proves. First, you pre-  
 tend to suspect my enmity to the independence of  
 America ; then you artfully produce my publi-  
 cation of Mr. Burke’s censure of la Fayette, as a  
 proof of that enmity, leaving your readers to  
 draw the natural conclusion, that I had “retailed

abuse" against him, merely *for his having fought in the cause of Independence*.—Never did envy and revenge suggest a baser insinuation, or one, the falshood of which was more easy to detect.

If I bear malice against la Fayette, if I have published a censure on him, if I have "*retailed abuse* against him," as you are pleased to call it, on account of his having served here, during the revolutionary war; pray, does it not follow, that I must bear the same malice, and feel the same inclination to censure every one who aided the cause of Independence? If such be the motive from which I act, I certainly could look round among those who did more injury to the cause of Great-Britain in one day, nay in one minute, than la Fayette did during the war, or could have done in his whole life time. I call on you, then, to say whether I have ever, directly or indirectly, discovered an inclination to defame any man, merely because he was instrumental in establishing the independence of this country. Have I ever attempted to asperse, have I ever hinted any thing to the dishonour of Mr. Jay, Mr. Adams, or General Washington? These gentlemen, the most eminent actors on the great drama of the revolution, have all been attacked, slandered and abused, by those who are among the eulogists of la Fayette; and I leave the public to determine, who has shown the most diligence, zeal and courage in defence of their characters, *Peter Porcupine* or *Noah Webster*.

In pursuance of the same view it was, that you chose to comment on my having published "an



“apology for the old government of France,” which you assert to be “as corrupt a system of *despotism* as Europe ever witnessed.”

To call the old government of France, which all the civilians have reckoned among the *limited monarchies*; to call this government a *despotism*, argues a mind strongly tinged with the principles of liberty and equality; but, to say that it was as corrupt a system of *despotism* as *Europe ever saw*, puts you upon a level with the slanderous haranguers of the suburbs of St. Antoine and St. Marceau. He that can call the monarchical government of France the worst of *despotisms*, would make little scruple to imitate the *vénérable Père Du Chêne*, in branding St. Louis, Henry IV. and Louis the XVI. with the name of tyrants.

You do, however, allow that there is one species of government still worse than that of the French monarchy; and here your consistency is well worth attention. First the old government is *as bad a one as Europe ever saw*; then the Jacobin government *is worse*. This is not amiss; but you do not let us off so. After having thus acknowledged that the Jacobin government is *worse* than *the worst*, you have the conscience to quarrel with me, to wage eternal war with me, for censuring one of the principal founders of this very Jacobin government! You had forgot, or you never knew, the history of the first years of the French revolution. You contemplate your friend in the dungeon of Olmutz only; you do not look back, and behold him in the tribune of the Jacobin Club at Paris. La Fayette was one

of the very first, that took the name of Jacobin : he was a founder of the sect, and continued to be a member of it, till July, 1792. Even then he did not *withdraw* himself, but was *expelled*.

“The old government,” say you “was not so  
 “bad as the Jacobin government, it is true ; but  
 “there is a government different from both, which  
 “la Fayette *sought*, and which the people of this  
 “country will rejoice to see introduced ; that is  
 “a *Free Government*.”——Now, sir, what do you  
 mean by a government that la Fayette *sought* ?  
 To hear you, one would imagine, that he had been  
 foiled in some precious project for the good of his  
 country ; that his councils had been rejected, and  
 himself persecuted on account of his probity and  
 wisdom ; whereas the very reverse of all this was  
 the case. His projects succeeded to the utmost of  
 his wishes. The famous *rights of man*, of which  
 he was the proposer, became a fundamental law,  
 was sanctioned and sworn to by the whole nation.  
 The Constitution, grounded on those rights, he  
 saw completed, and he retired from the legislative  
 scene well pleased with the work. In short, the  
 government he *sought* he *obtained*, and a most stu-  
 pid, base and cruel government it was. A govern-  
 ment that acknowledged the horrid act of insur-  
 rection to be a sacred duty, and that, in its prac-  
 tice, made a beginning in that career of sacrilege  
 plunder and assassination, which has been so unre-  
 mittingly pursued by succeeding and more suc-  
 cessful usurpers. And this is what you call a *Free*  
*Government* ; one that the people of America will  
 be glad to see established in France ! If the people  
 of America are silly or wicked enough to enter-  
 tain any such wish, I sincerely hope it may not be



accomplished. The government they have now in France, is certainly a most abominable despotism, but it is not so destructive either in principle or practice, as that which *la Fayette fought* and assisted to form.

What involves you in these inconsistencies and contradictions is evident enough : you were a long time a very great admirer of the French revolution. I will not say that I could make *you* blush, but I am certain I could make your friends blush, by a quotation from your paper in *approbation* of Tom Paine's *Rights of man*, the manuel of Jacobinism. Exactly how far you went hand in hand with the revolutionists, I know not ; nor do I believe that you yourself know. You are in the predicament of a great many others, who, when they are asked what they approved and what they did not approve, answer, that they went *as far as la Fayette*, but *no farther*, and God knows that was far enough.

You, and all those who thus pinned their political faith on the sleeve of this unfledged statesman, would still have been revolutionists in the fullest sense of the term, had not the usurpers been preparing to extend their fraternal grasp to this government and country. Till then you carefully avoided saying a word against them : all their most atrocious deeds were smoothed over ; their plundering decrees, their invitations to rebellion, were all right, till they cast their looks this way : then your eyes were opened at once : like Bailly and *la Fayette*, you adored the holy right of insurrection, till it began to operate against yourselves.

From this digression, which your straggling from your subject invited, I return to examine more closely the accusation of having published “an apology for the old government of France.” This apology is contained in certain extracts from Gifford’s answer to lord Lauderdale’s letters to the Peers of Scotland. The writer observes with great justness, that “one of the most successful  
 “modes of *exciting sentiments favourable to the*  
 “*French Revolution*, has been the imputation of  
 “every vice creative of disgust to the old govern-  
 “ment of France.” He then notices the scandalous neglect of candour and truth, that has been displayed in the performance of this task: the unfair mode of arguing that has been adopted, and the exaggeration and calumny that has imposed on the uninformed. The object of all this, it is evident, has been not only to justify the revolutionists in destroying the monarchy, but to inculcate a belief, that the people, notwithstanding their present misery, are still gainers by the despotism that has been raised on its ruins.

To expose the falacy of this reasoning, to rectify the misconceptions of the weak, and to detect the misrepresentations of the wicked, Mr. Gifford enters into a candid examination of the subject, during which he proves, and that most satisfactorily, that the acts of oppression imputed to the French government, were generally, not to say always, exaggerated; that in many instances the charges were totally unfounded, and even ridiculous; that in short, to the happiness of France, no revolution was necessary; and of course, that this dreadful scourge is to be ascribed to the ambition and treachery of the usurping legislators.



With respect to the extracts, in themselves considered, the facts they contain are of indisputable authenticity ; as to the style, it is as far above the criticism of Noah Webster, as it is beyond his imitation ; and I defy you to cull out a single sentiment, from beginning to end, which, by the most violent contorsion, can be called hostile to true liberty. The elegant and convincing writer is an *Englishman*, and consequently knows how to estimate the blessings of freedom full as well, if not better than you. He is a *scholar*, and, which is more as to the present point, the author of a history of France, which has received the applause of the whole literary world, and which is the fruit of a long and painful research, during many years of residence in that country : of course his knowledge (particularly of whatever relates to the monarchy of France) is not to be sunk to a competition with that of a man, the greatest extent of whose travels has been from Connecticut to New-York, and the utmost exertion of whose talents is to be sought for in the compilation of a school book. Lastly, the author of the “ Apology for the old government of France ” is an *independent gentleman*, whose sole object in writing must be the attainment of honest fame ; and who is not therefore, like a diurnal retailer of *wisdom* and news, obliged to vary his politics to the more than female caprice of the multitude.

But, to do you justice, I really believe, you possess too much good sense not to be, in the present instance, charmed with what you pretend to disapprove of. Whether you will be pleased to hear your judgment thus complimented at the

expenditure of your sincerity, I neither know nor care; but it certainly was me, and not the extracts in my paper that you were angry with, and that it was your object to decry. You wished to propagate a belief that I was an enemy to the Independence of America, and also to the form of the federal government. The former charge, which has already been refuted, was to be looked upon as proved by my publishing Mr. Burke's censure on la Fayette; and the latter by my publishing, from Gifford, an apology for the old government of France.

The same shameful abandonment of candour, the same jesuitical spirit of perversion, that you discover in your comments on what respects la Fayette, is still more apparant in what you say of the apology.—You tell your readers, that you suspect my enmity to the *form of government* under which we live; and add, that this suspicion is encreased by my publishing an *apology for the old government of France*. Here you stop without saying that my intention is to introduce the latter form of government here: however, lest you should be misunderstood, of which you seem to have been much afraid, you afterwards revive the subject, and, addressing yourself to me, very gravely and very maliciously observe, that my “popularity, is not to be maintained by recommending the old government of France;” thereby intimating that I had actually proposed the old government of France, which you call the worst of despotisms, as a substitute for the Federal government of the United States! What a wretched attempt at imposition. This may well be termed, in your own flag language,



“*a low pitiful business.*”—You best know what stock of stupidity the readers of the *Minerva* are blessed with, but this I am certain of; that the clumsiest and most impudent vagabond Jugler never ventured to play off so barefaced a deception on the gaping clowns at a country fair.—And were you, could you be, so completely infatuated as to hope that any man in his senses, any thing in human shape, would become the dupe of your spiteful insinuation? The thing is beyond the compass of belief: to attempt to disprove it would be useless: to give it a formal denial, or even to call it a lie, would be doing it too much honour.

After having shown the absurdity, the malice, of your pretended suspicions with respect to my political principles, you will permit me to ask you once more, why those suspicions were never awakened till lately?—Many of the men who fought for American Independence have been treated, in my writings, with much less mercy than Mr. Burke’s speech treats *la Fayette*. Nay, I have never spared *la Fayette* himself, when I have had occasion to speak of him (and that has been very often) either individually or as a member of the Constitution making Assembly. And, as to the old government of France, I have often passed higher commendations on it, than Mr. Gifford does in the extracts you complain of. To be sure I never *recommended* it to the people of America, as you sillily insinuate I have done in publishing those extracts; but I have ventured “to predict  
“that, sooner or later, the French will return  
“to that form of government under which they  
“were happy, and under which alone they can

“ ever be so again ; and this I did in my *Life and Adventures*.—How came these things to escape your awful censure so long ? How came you never before to think it your duty to represent them as an indication of my enmity to the government and Independence of your country ? You let me go on uninterrupted, pamphlet after pamphlet, for three whole years ; yea, and even applauded my efforts all the time ; and now, at last, you find me to be a dangerous fellow, and burst out upon me all at once, like a thunder from a summer cloud.

In vain would you make me believe, that any real suspicion, that any apprehension of my insincerity, has caused this change in your conduct towards me. It is possible, indeed, and barely possible, that your vanity has been unable to support the charge of *vulgar prejudice*, and has stimulated you to this unmanly mode of revenge. But, are you sure, Webster, that *envy*, cursed *envy*, has had nothing to do in the “ *low pitiful business* ? ” Are you sure, that the 150 *Porcupine’s Gazettes*, daily sent to your city, together with those which may probably have supplanted your’s round your neighbourhood, thro’ New England, and the Jerseys : consult your heart and tell me, if you are sure, that it is not the spread of these innocent papers, and not any thing which they contain, that has roused your lethargic patriotism.

It is ever painful to be obliged to think ill, and much more so to speak ill, of those that we have been accustomed to esteem, and I should hardly bring myself to impute your enmity to so dishonourable a cause, were I not well assured that the imputation is just.



Unfortunately for your reputation, it so happens, that you possess a more satisfactory proof of my attachment to the government, than perhaps, any other man in the country does. The letter which I wrote you, when I requested you to publish the proposals for my Gazette (a letter written in the fullest confidence) must have convinced any man, of a mind not endued with the quality of turning its nutriment to poison, that the American government had not a more sincere, more zealous, or more devoted friend than I. This letter, whatever reluctance I might on any other occasion feel to suffer its appearance in print, I now call on you to publish in your paper ; and, if you have one single grain of candour or justice left, you will not hesitate to comply with my request.

Here I should close, but there are two or three passages more in your Address, which so strongly invite attention, that your vanity might, perhaps, take the alarm again, were they to pass totally unnoticed ; and, after having tasted so severely of the effects of your wrath, it is not to be wondered at, if I feel no inclination to brave it a second time.

You are so good as to inform me, “ that you  
 “ once *voluntarily* bore arms to defend Indepen-  
 “ dence ; that, in pursuance of *the same* princi-  
 “ ples, you *first* proposed publickly the plan of a  
 “ National Constitution ; that, persevering in  
 “ the same principles, you assailed the monster  
 “ *faction*, the moment it appeared in the insidious  
 “ form of popular clubs ; and that, from that mo-  
 “ ment to this present writing, you have never  
 “ ceased to expose the artifices of the French  
 “ agents to lay this country at the feet of France.”

*March.*

G

How all this got into a letter written about an English flag, I cannot for my soul conceive. However, 'tis *news*, and as such I am, in common with the rest of the trade, obliged to you for it.

I have read the history of the American war over and over again, but I do not recollect ever having seen the name of *Noah Webster* in it. That you were not very famous is therefore certain, and it is more than probable that you were looked upon as mere food for powder, a situation that, whatever might be the cause you were made use of in, is nothing at all to boast of.

Your being the "*first* who publicly proposed "a National Constitution," is a curious anecdote enough; and I cannot say but I am glad it is come to light, as it will tend to quash, or at least to moderate, the exorbitant pretensions of that unconscionable dog Tom Paine, who puts in an absolute claim to the whole credit of the invention. Tom does, indeed, confess, that he was anticipated by one writer on the subject, who insisted, that *thirteen staves without a hoop would never make a barrel*; and if you can make it out, as I have not the least doubt you can, that you were the real legitimate author of this shrewd and learned observation, Tom must give way to you, or, at least, you must be permitted to come in with him for a share of the honour.

Thus you see I do not dispute your pretensions to military or constitution making fame, but as to your boldness in assailing the monster FAC-  
"TION; as to your perseverance and success in  
"exposing the artifices of the French;" these I



do dispute, and not only dispute, but positively deny. You have, indeed, as far as you have found it prudent to go, *latterly* espoused the cause of order, and consequently that of the government; but, to do this with effect, you should have begun long enough before you did, and should have assumed a tone that never has been heard from the *Minerva*. At first you were a warm partizan of insurrection; you were among the abusers, the calumniators, of Burke, and the eulogists of Paine. At this epocha you were bold, because you acted with the crowd. When Genet's insolence awakened the suspicions of the people here, then you began to veer, to shuffle and to trim; and, from that time to the present moment, you have been playing that double handed game, which, however profitable you may contrive to make it, entitles you to the character of a Vicar of Bray. If my worthy patron, Bradford, is to be believed, your old friend, and *partner in the language trade*, Doctor Franklin, was six weeks in Congress, before any one could divine whether he was a Whig or Tory; and I have frequently been at a loss to guess, such a compound is your politics, whether I ought to class you among the Federalists or Democrats. If these words have any meaning, as applied to you, you are a Democrat in principle, and a Federalist for convenience.

Not content with a malignant misrepresentation of my motives and the meaning of my words, you must insult me with your *advice*. You tell me that I do not proceed in the right way to preserve my *popularity*, and caution me against publishing what is "*disrespectful to the opinions of Americans*;" and thus you discover a servility of mind

that would be disgraceful even in a mendicant. When you form a judgment of me, Master Webster, and of what is likely to produce a change in my conduct, be so good as not to consult your own heart, for it will assuredly deceive you. *Popularity* may be your God, as indeed, it evidently is : so is it not mine. Small is the sacrifice that I would make at its shrine. A volume of the best of praise is not, with me, worth its weight in bread and cheese ; and as to the stupid plaudits of a partial and prejudiced throng, I should think that they covered me with infamy instead of honour.

According to your notions of the liberty of the press, a man must not publish a word against la Fayette, though it be extracted from some other writer ; because, forsooth, “ it is extremely *disrespectful* to the opinions of Americans ! ” In other words, nothing must appear in a news-paper that does not perfectly chime in with the prevalent prejudice, however preposterous that prejudice may be, or however dangerous its tendency ; and thus the press, in place of a censor, is to be a parasite, to the public ; instead of being a terror to evil doers, it is to be the pander of folly and of vice.

That this has, for a long time, been the character of the American Press, as far as relates to news-papers, is but too true. Every one seems to have been upon the watch to find out the humour of the public, and to accommodate his sentiments and even his news accordingly : hence it is that we have seen hundreds of eulogiums upon Robespierre and Marat, and have been seriously told that the Franch gained a victory



over Lord Howe on the 1st of June, 1794. The motto of our *Philadelphia Gazette*, "THE PUBLIC WILL OUR GUIDE," would suit the whole of you, with a very few exceptions. The people are not told what is their interest, but what is their wish, or rather the wish of the multitude, to hear. If any one dares to speak what he thinks; to publish what he conceives to be useful, if it happens to be contrary to the *vulgar prejudice*, he is told that he is *disrespectful* to the opinions of Americans.

According to the cant of the day, the people of a state not governed by a monarch, is called the *sovereign*. For my part, I never hear talk of a *sovereign people*, of a society every individual of which is liable to the grasp of a catch pole; I never do or can hear talk of such a *sovereign* without laughing. But, as such *you* look upon the people. Well then, to have an idea of your own fervility, tell me what you would say of a news-printer in England, who should censure another for publishing sentiments extremely *disrespectful* to the *opinions of the king*? Would you not call him a slave, a poor rampant ispaniel-like fycophant? And, where is the difference, I would be glad to know, between crawling to a sovereign with one head and a sovereign with many?—No, Webster, your insinuations that I treat the people of America, or rather their *opinions*, with *disrespect*, will never deter me from following the bent of my own inclination. In my publications, I hope, I shall always be guided by truth: how few I may please, or how many I may displease, is to me a matter of very little moment. I entertain, I trust, a due respect for the real people of

this country, and a grateful sense of the liberal encouragement I have received from them ; but neither this respect nor this gratitude will ever lead me so far as to flatter, what I look upon as a foible or a prejudice. I have no pretensions to *patriotism*, and as to *disinterestedness*, it is nonsense to talk of it ; but, though gain be one principle object of my labours, I scorn to pursue it by the base means of trimming and truckling. No, Webster, the public will is not my guide : when my readers become so unreasonable as to require a suppression of every sentiment that does not accord with their own, I will quit the trade of a news-monger, hire a garret, write Carmagnole ballads for the diversion of the sovereign people, and elegies on the departed liberty of the press.

You conclude by declaring your resolution to annoy me “ by all those decent and legal means “ that distinguish the *gentleman* and the *citizen*.” This I highly approve of, and on my part, I solemnly promise to oppose your annoyance by all those decent and legal means that distinguish the Porcupine ; that is by pricking you every where and in every way that I can come at you.—After this candid declaration, you will undoubtedly look upon me as

Your most humble

and obedient servant,

P. P.



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## W I L L A N D T E S T A M E N T.

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*S*INCE I took up the calling that I now follow, I have received about forty threatening letters ; some talk of fisticuff, others of kicks, but far the greater part menace me with out-right murder. Several friends (whom by the bye I sincerely thank) have called to caution me against the lurking cut-throats ; and it seems to be the persuasion of every one, that my brains are to be knocked out the first time I venture from home in the dark.

Under these terrific circumstances, it is impossible that Death should not stare me in the face : I have therefore got myself into as good a state of preparation as my sinful profession will, I am afraid, admit of ; and as to my worldly affairs, I have settled them in the following WILL, which I publish, in order that my dear friends, the Legatees, may, if they think themselves injured or neglected, have an opportunity of complaining before it be too late.

I N

IN the name of Fun, Amen. I PETER PORCUPINE, Pamphleteer and News-Monger, being (as yet) sound both in body and in mind, do, this fifteenth day of *April*, in the Year of our LORD, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-seven, make, declare, and publish this my LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT, in manner, form, and substance following ; to wit :

IN PRIMIS, I LEAVE my body to Doctor Michael Lieb, a member of the Legislature of Pennsylvania, to be by him dissected (if he knows how to do it) in presence of the Rump of the Democratic Society. In it they will find a heart that held them in abhorrence, that never palpitated at their threats, and that, to its last beat, bade them defiance. But my chief motive for making this bequest is, that my spirit may look down with contempt on their cannibal-like triumph over a breathless corpse.

*Item,* As I make no doubt that the above said Doctor Lieb (and some other Doctors that I could mention) would like very well to skin me, I request that they, or one of them, may do it, and that



the said Lieb's father may tan my skin ; after which I desire my Executors to have seven copies of my Works complete, bound in it, one copy to be presented to the five Sultans of France, one to each of their Divans, one to the Governor of Pennsylvania, to citizens Maddison, Giles, and Gallatine one each, and the remaining one to the Democratic Society of Philadelphia, to be carefully preserved among their archives.

*Item,* To the Mayor, Aldermen and Councils of the City of Philadelphia, I bequeath all the sturdy young hucksters, who infest the market, and who to maintain their bastards, tax the honest inhabitants many thousand pounds annually. I request them to take them into their worshipful keeping ; to chasten their bodies for the good of their souls ; and moreover, to keep a sharp look-out after their gallants : and remind the latter of the old proverb : *Touch pot, touch penny.*

*Item,* To T—— J——son, Philosopher, I leave a curious Norway Spider, with a hundred legs and nine pair of eyes ; likewise the first black cut-throat general he can catch hold of, to be dead alive, in order to determine with more certainty the real cause of the dark colour of his skin : and should the said T—— J——son survive Banneker the Almanack-Maker : I request he will get the brains of said Philomath carefully dissected, to satisfy the world in what respects they differ from those of a white man.

*Item,* To the Philosophical Society of Philadelphia, I will and bequeath a correct copy of Thornton's plan for abolishing the use of the English language ; and for introducing in its stead a republican one, the representative characters of which bear a

strong resemblance to pot-hooks and hangers; and for the discovery of which plan, the said society did, in the year 1793, grant to the said language maker 500 dollars premium.—It is my earnest desire, that the copy of this valuable performance, which I hereby present, may be shown to all the travelling literati, as a proof of the ingenuity of the author, and of the wisdom of the society.

*Item,* To Doctor Benjamin Rush, I will and bequeath a copy of the Cenfor for January, 1797; but, upon the express condition, that he does not in any wise or guise, either at the time of my death, or *Six months after*, pretend to speak, write or publish an eulogium on me, my calling or character, either literary, military, civil, or political.

*Item,* To my dear fellow labourer Noah Webster, gentleman-citizen." Esq. and News-man, I will and bequeath a prognosticating barometer of curious construction and great utility, by which, at a single glance, the said Noah will be able to discern the exact state that the public mind will be in the ensuing year, and will thereby be enabled to *trim by degrees* and not expose himself to detection, as he now does by his sudden lee-shore tacks. I likewise bequeath to the said "gentleman-citizen," six Spanish milled dollars, to be expended on a new plate of his portrait at the head of his spelling-book, that which graces it at present being so ugly that it scares the children from their lessons; but this legacy is to be paid him only upon condition that he leave out the title of 'Squire, at the bottom of said picture, which is extremely odious in an American school-book, and must inevitably tend to corrupt the political prin-



ciples of the republican babies that behold it. And I do most earnestly desire, exhort and conjure the said 'Squire news-man, to change the title of his paper, *The Minerva*, for that of *The Political Centaur*.

*Item,* To F. A. Muhlenburgh, Esq. Speaker of a late house of Representatives of the United States, I leave a most superbly finished statue of Janus.

*Item,* To Tom the Tinker, I leave a liberty cap, a tricoloured cockade, a wheel-barrow full of oysters, and a hoghead of grog : I also leave him three blank checks on the Bank of Pennsylvania, leaving to him the task of *filling them up* ; requesting him, however, to be rather more merciful than he has shown himself heretofore.

*Item,* To the Governor of Pennsylvania, and to the late President and Cashier of the Bank of the said State, as to joint legatees, I will and bequeath that good old proverb : *Honesty is the best policy*. And this legacy I have chosen for these worthy gentlemen, as the only thing about which I am sure they will never disagree.

*Item,* To T—— Coxe, of Philadelphia, citizen, I will and bequeath a crown of hemlock, as a recompense for his attempt to throw an odium on the administration of General Washington ; and I most positively enjoin on my executors, to see that the said crown be shaped exactly like that which this spindle-shanked legatee wore before Gen. Howe, when he made his triumphal entry into Philadelphia.

*Item,* To Thomas Lord Bradford (otherwise called Goofy Tom), Bookseller, Printer, News-man,

and member of the Philosophical Society of Philadelphia, I will and bequeath a copy of the Peerage of Great Britain, in order that the said Lord Thomas may the more exactly ascertain what probability there is of his succeeding to the seat, which his noble relation now fills in the House of Lords.

*Item,* To all and singular the authors in the United States, whether they write prose or verse, I will and bequeath a copy of my Life and Adventures; and I advise the said authors to study with particular care the 40th and 41st pages thereof; more especially and above all things, I exhort and conjure them never to *publish it together*, though the bookseller should be a saint.

*Item,* To Edmund Randolph, Esq. late Secretary of State, to Mr. J. A. Dallas, Secretary of the State of Pennsylvania, and to his Excellency Thomas Mifflin, Governor of the said unfortunate State, I will and bequeath, to each of them, a copy of the sixteenth paragraph of Fauchet's *intercepted letter*.

*Item,* To Citizen John Swanwick, member of Congress, by the will and consent of the sovereign people, I leave Bills of Exchange on London to an enormous amount; they are *all protested*, indeed, but if properly managed, may be turned to good account. I likewise bequeath to the said John, a small treatise by an Italian author, wherein the secret of pleasing the ladies is developed, and reduced to a mere mechanical operation, without the least dependance on the precarious aid of the passions. Hoping that these instances of my liberality will produce, in the mind of the little



legislator, effects quite different from those produced therein by the king of Great Britain's pension to his parents.

*Item,* To the editors of the Boston Chronicle, the New-York Argus, and the Philadelphia Merchants' Advertiser, I will and bequeath one ounce of modesty and love of truth, to be equally divided between them. I should have been more liberal in this bequest, were I not well assured, that one ounce is more than they will ever make use of.

*Item,* To Franklin Bache, editor of the Aurora of Philadelphia, I will and bequeath a small bundle of French assignats, which I brought with me from the country of equality. If these should be too light in value for his pressing exigencies, I desire my executors, or any one of them, to bestow on him a second part to what he has lately received in Southwark; and as a further proof of my good will and affection, I request him to accept of a gag and a brand new pair of fetters, which if he should refuse, I will and bequeath him in lieu thereof—my malediction.

*Item,* To my beloved countrymen, the people of Old England, I will and bequeath a copy of Doctor Priestley's Charity Sermon *for the benefit of poor Emigrants*; and to the said preaching philosopher himself, I bequeath a heart full of disappointment, grief and despair.

*Item,* To the good people in France, who remain attached to their sovereign, particularly to those among whom I was hospitably received, I bequeath each a good strong dagger; hoping most sincerely that they may yet find courage enough

to carry them to the hearts of their abominable tyrants.

*Item,* To citizen M——oe, I will and bequeath my chamber looking-glass. It is a plain but exceeding true mirror : in it he will see the exact likeness of a traitor, who has bartered the honour and interest of his country to a perfidious and savage enemy.

*Item,* To the republican Britons, who have fled from the hands of justice in their own country, and who are a scandal, a nuisance and a disgrace to this, I bequeath hunger and nakedness, scorn and reproach ; and I do hereby positively enjoin on my executors to contribute five hundred dollars towards the erection of gallowses and gibbets, for the accommodation of the said imported patriots, when the legislators of this unhappy state shall have the wisdom to countenance such useful establishments.

*Item,* My friend J. T. Callender, the run-away from Scotland, is of course a partaker in the last mentioned legacy ; but as a particular mark of my attention, I will and bequeath him twenty feet of pine plank, which I request my executors to see made into a pillory, to be kept for his particular use, till a gibbet can be prepared.

*Item,* To Tom Paine, the author of *Common Sense*, *Rights of Man*, *Age of Reason*, and a letter to *General Washington*, I bequeath a strong hempen collar, as the only legacy I can think of that is worthy of him, as well as best adapted to render his death in some measure as infamous as his life : and I do hereby direct and order my Executors to send it to him by the first safe conveyance,



with my compliments, and request that he would make use of it without delay, that the national razor may not be disgraced by the head of such a monster.

*Item,* To the gaunt outlandish orator, vulgarly called The Political Sinner, who in the just order of things, follows next after the last mentioned legatee, I bequeath the honour of partaking in his catastrophe; that in their deaths as well as in their lives, all the world may exclaim; “ See  
“ *how rogues hang together!*

*Item,* To all and singular the good people of these States, I leave peace, union, abundance, happiness, untarnished honour, and an unconquerable everlasting hatred to the French Revolutionists and their destructive abominable principles.

*Item,* To each of my Subscribers I leave *a quill*, hoping that in their hands it may become a sword against every thing that is hostile to the government and independence of their country.

*Lastly,* To my three brothers, Paul, Simon and Dick, I leave my whole estate, as well real as personal (first paying the foregoing legacies) to be equally divided between them share and share alike. And I do hereby make and constitute my said three brothers the Executors of this my LAST WILL; to see the same performed, according to its true intent and meaning, as far as in their power lies.

PETER PORCUPINE.

Witness Present,

*Philo Fun,*  
*Jack Jockus.* }





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F O R M A R C H, 1797.

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