

of Representatives in the foregoing report and resolutions.

F. WARLEY, Clerk.

A True Copy, and which I Attest,
J. S. Darr, C. H. R.

[Here follows a number of Affidavits.]

Philadelphia, 25th December, 1793;
2d year of the French Republic,
one and indivisible.

The Citizen Genet, Minister Plenipotentiary from the Republic of France to the United States, to Mr. Jefferson, Secretary of State of the United States.

SIR,

I LEARN by the reports of the Consul of the Republic, at Charleston, and by the public papers, that the legislature of South-Carolina, had caused to be arrested, different persons, accused of having received from me commissions for the purpose of levying an armed force in that State, for the service of the Republic. Conceiving that such conduct, if it were true, would offend the sovereignty of the American people, I hasten to affirm to you, sir, that I have not authorized in any manner, the recruiting, the formation, or the collecting of an armed force, or of any corps in the territory of the United States; but at the same time, I am too frank to disguise from you, that, authorized by the French nation, to deliver commissions to those of your fellow-citizens, who should feel themselves animated with a desire of serving the best of causes, I have granted them to several republicans of South-Carolina, whose intention appeared to me to be to expatriate themselves, and to go among the independent Indian tribes, ancient friends and allies of France, in order to retaliate, if they could, in concert with us, on the Spaniards and English, the injury which the government of these two nations had the baseness, for some time to commit on your fellow-citizens, under the name of these savages, in like manner, as is lately done under that of the Algerines.

I notify you, sir, that I shall publish this declaration, in order to calm inquietudes, and to dissipate the doubts to which the denunciation made in the legislature of Carolina, might give rise.

Accept my respect,

GENET.

CONGRESS.

House of Representatives.
January 20.

In committee of the whole on Mr. Madison's resolutions.

Mr. Lee's speech continued.

Mr. Chairman, while I agree with my colleague, that the first essays from which our constitution arose had relation only to our trade; he will, I am sure, acknowledge that this was not the only object for which the grand convention met, he will acknowledge that this is not the principal object contemplated by the constitution: The power of regulating commerce is an inferior power vested with much more important powers in the Congress of the United States. But, sir, I need not make a comparison between the various powers of Congress. What does this sovereign act of the people declare to be their intention? I need only repeat their words—

"We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

In these words we see the sovereignty of the people exercised on one of those occasions which I have before stated in forming a government, and we hear the purposes for which they formed it. It does not say that it was formed to regulate our commerce. The people had more important objects in view: I do not think therefore that so much stress ought to be laid on this idea, as gentlemen have been inclined to bestow on it.

But, having been induced, to go back to the period which gave birth to our constitution I shall be excused, if before I return to the present subject, I take a review of the then existing circumstances of the United States. We had then a government contemned abroad, and despised at home, incapable of commanding the respect of foreign nations or the obedience of our own citizens. Its credit was sunk abroad and at home. Debts were accu-

mulating in Europe and in America. Our commerce was almost annihilated, our agriculture languished, paper tenders existed in some states, the ties of confidence between man and man, and consequently the ties of morality were broken asunder; nay, inimicities between the states began to prevail instead of fraternal concord. Such was the situation of the United States and to remedy these evils was the constitution made. Has it not produced the intended effects? That it has, I need only appeal to the feelings of every fellow citizen who hears me. I should therefore unnecessarily take up the time of the committee in enumerating the various blessings which it has showered on our country: I will only mention the stimulus which our agriculture has received. In travelling through the various parts of the United States, I find fields, a few years ago waste and uncultivated, filled with inhabitants, and covered with harvests; new habitations reared, contentment in every face, plenty on every board, confidence is restored, and every man is safe under his own vine and his own fig tree, and there is none to make him afraid. To produce this effect, was the intention of the constitution, and not solely to regulate our trade, and it has succeeded. But I feel myself wandering from the subject.

The committee will readily perceive that I have been led into my last observations, because, gentlemen have assigned as an important reason in support of the resolutions, that the constitution had been principally framed with a view to this object. I think I have shewn that too much importance has been given to this idea.

I think my colleague also observed, that if the measures he had now proposed were not adopted at this time, after a new election, and a full representation of our fellow citizens, he would despair of ever seeing them succeed; and I think he assigned this reason, and it gave me pain when he uttered it, that the subjects of Britain, in consequence of the interest they had in our trade, and in our pecuniary institutions, would acquire a predominant influence over our public councils. This idea was more fully dilated upon by a gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Findley). The danger of this influence seemed to be the principal reason, why he wished to lessen our commercial intercourse with Britain. The gentlemen perhaps did not perceive the full extent of this observation. It wounds deeply, in my opinion, the republican principle, and I am sure neither of them intended to do this. It goes to deny the competency of the people to govern themselves. It goes to assert that we are better judges of the future exigencies of the society, than those who will live after us. The people on former occasions have been found possessed of virtue and knowledge equal to the preservation of their liberties and interests; what right have we to say, that hereafter they will be less wise and less virtuous? Let me again recur to former experience. At the commencement of our struggle with Britain, they certainly had all the commercial influence over us, which the monopoly of our trade could give; what did it amount to, it neither damped our courage nor checked our unanimity, and why suppose less virtue in our citizens, now that we have become free, and enjoy the fruits of order and good government, than when we existed in the colonial dependence.

The same gentleman from Pennsylvania and another of my colleagues (Mr. Nicholas) expatiated largely on the mischiefs of credit. My colleague, however, very justly and frankly acknowledged, that it was questionable how far government had a right to interfere in the pecuniary concerns of individuals.

But whatever may be the mischiefs of credit, I do not think they will be prevented, by sumptuary laws, or laws which may be calculated to operate that way, and I doubt the consistency of such laws with civil liberty. There is only one remedy which occurs to me, it is a proper administration of justice between man and man—Establish this; compel every individual to pay his debts; when this is done the society will have no reason to limit his expenses, or to apprehend evil from his example; but this important part of social police belongs peculiarly to the state governments; they have the only effectual means of preventing the mischiefs of credit and preserving the purity of morals. Congress have not the power of changing the municipal regulations or the juridical establishments of the respective states.

It has not been asserted that our treat-

ties of commerce have produced us any advantages as yet. Our principal and most beneficial intercourse, it has been proved, is with those nations with which we have no treaties. Our treaty with France, has in the course of the last year operated to our injury in a twofold degree.

The asylum given to French privateers in our ports, has covered our coasts with them, and has therefore prevented the ships belonging to nations which are most accustomed to trade with us, and buying our surplus produce, notwithstanding the prodigious demand for part of it in Europe. I believe that in the state of Virginia, this perhaps combined with other causes, has produced an astonishing depression of the price of our tobacco and grain. In Europe, the only advantage which we had in return for these injuries, we have been deprived of; the treaty has there been violated by France, but every American will readily acknowledge, very properly violated, when he considers the necessity and imperious circumstances of the case.

Gentlemen have said we ought to pass these resolutions to express our gratitude for services formerly rendered to us by the French nation; as to the virtues of generosity and gratitude, they are God-like attributes, they belong I believe, more to Heaven than to earth, they are rarely seen among individual men, and more rarely felt by nations, and it has been acknowledged, I think in the National convention itself, that the assistance we received was rendered, not so much for our sakes, as to weaken a dangerous and powerful rival.

But gentlemen have said, tho' we may not have derived any peculiar commercial advantages as yet from our intercourse with France, that we have every reason to expect the greatest advantages hereafter, from the fraternal regard expressed by their present government to us, and the similitude of its principles to ours.

If the French nation feels this friendly disposition towards us, and I verily believe they do, because they say they do, our constitution has provided the means, by vesting adequate powers in the President and Senate, of meeting them on the ground of a new treaty, and I rely with full confidence on this subject, on the wisdom and patriotism of the constitutional authority.

But, Sir, I do not think the gentlemen spoke accurately, when they mentioned the similitude of the principles of the present French constitution to ours. But supposing the resemblance existed, which I shall presently shew does not, have we any reason to conclude from the past history of nations, that such a resemblance necessarily begets friendship and cordiality: history exhibits the fact differently:

Witness the wars between Carthage and Rome, the jealousies and wars between the different republics of Greece; witness our own experience, the inimicities which began to arise between the states previous to the adoption of the present government, and the difficulty of producing that adoption. The truth is, nations in their intercourse with one another, regard nothing but their interest; hence the alliance so frequent between commonwealths and monarchies, more frequent than between commonwealths themselves.

But as peculiar emphasis is laid on the similitude of the principles of the French government to the principles of ours, I will take the liberty of applying the principal traits of their government to our situation.

Their republic is one and indivisible, our republic consists of sovereign states having extensive and important local jurisdictions and a diversity of laws and interests.—Does our republic then resemble that of France in this leading feature. Consolidation these states have ever deemed fatal to their liberties and happiness, and he would be deemed a traitor to his country, who should propose to render our republic one and indivisible.

So jealous are the states on this head, that they have generally demanded an alteration in that part of the constitution which subjects them to suits in the courts of the United States, and the senate has already sent for our consideration an amendment to that effect; the French executive is plural, their legislative is single. This idea is counter to the practice of almost all the states; and to the division of powers in our constitution: Will any gentleman say that such a form of govern-

ment is suited to our ideas and our circumstances?

Is every part of the United States in a situation to extend the idea of equality as far as it has been carried in France? I believe no gentleman will say it is; the conflagrations, the desolations, and the bloody scenes of St. Domingo, might also then be exhibited on our peaceful and happy plains.

(To be Continued.)

Foreign Intelligence.

FRANCE.

NATIONAL CONVENTION,
November 7.

NATIONAL DOMAINS.

Chochan, in the name of the Committees of War and Domains, procured the adoption of the following Decrees on the mode of payment to be made, according to the nature of the provisions, by the farmers of the National Domains:—

I. From the day of the publication of the present decree, no leases of national property, producing wheat, rye, hay, straw, or any kind of vegetables, shall be renewed without the insertion of a clause, providing for the payment in provisions.

II. If the property consists of wine, oil, liquors, &c. the payments shall be made partly in money, and partly in provisions, which are mentioned in the first article.

III. The preceding articles are applicable to farmers, the price of whose leases, previously to the present law, shall have been stipulated to be payable in money.

IV. That this decree may be more readily carried into execution, every farmer of national property, shall declare, within ten days from the publication of this decree, the nature of the property he rents, to the district within which he lives.

V. In case of omitting to make such declaration or of a fraudulent one being made, the property to be confiscated.

VI. All provisions deposited in the national warehouses, shall be at the disposal of the Ministers at War, who are to account to the Convention for the manner in which they shall be disposed of.

[A great number of other articles follow.]

Gregorie read a speech relative to the establishment of houses of rural economy, for the instruction of agriculturists and the promotion of agriculture; the discussion of which was adjourned, and the speech ordered to be printed.

A deputation of the public functionaries of the district of Belley, in the department of Ain, were admitted to the bar. They represented, that on account of having supported the interests of the Republic, they were exposed to the rigours of a resolution entered into at Dole, distant 45 leagues from Belley, by the representative Proft, relative to the denunciation of persons discovered to be concerned in the different robberies which had been committed in the district during the sale of the effects of the emigrants.

Merlin—It is my duty to inform the Convention, that the greater part of the facts stated at the bar by the petitioners, is strictly true; no persons are better qualified to give a just account than Amar and myself, for, during the period of our mission to this district, we discovered the infamous manner in which the sales of the effects of the emigrants were carried on. At that era we could only discover one guilty person, Vetard Piot, the Procurer Syndic who has been mentioned. We put him in arrest, and ordered him to be carried before the criminal tribunal of his department. This was done. In the drawing up of the indictment against him, other criminal persons were discovered, and several measures were consequently adopted. The guilty person immediately fled to Dole, to deceive our colleague Proft.

They deceived him, I am certain, for they induced him to grant an arrest which ordered all those persons who had been of service in this important business, to be removed from the functions and to be arrested.—I can assure the Convention that several of these persons are the most warm Patriots of the District, particularly *Perfet* and *Lebatse*.—It is proper that Virtue and Patriotism should triumph in all parts of the Republic:

"I therefore move, that the Convention should, by a decree, suspend the exe-