

COMMUNICATION.

French Reasons for condemning an American Vessel and Cargo.

That the rôle d'Equipage, presented by Captain Laurence, neither contains the domicile, nor the place of birth of the individuals therein inserted; that neither the rôle or the engagements are dated, contrary to the express desire in the printed part at the top—That no document proves that Captain Laurence has been authorized by the public officers appointed for that purpose, to take on board the *Supercargo*, or his servants, which he terms *Passeengers*, and of which the rôle makes no mention.

That the Directory decreed, that conformable to the law of 14th February 1793, the dispositions of the regulations of 21st October 1744, and of 26th July 1778, concerning the manner to prove the property of neutral ships, and property shall be executed according to their form and tenor; that, in consequence, every American vessel shall be made a good *Ze of*, that shall not have on board a rôle d'equipage in due form, such as is prescribed by the model already mentioned, of which the execution is ordered by the 25th and 27th articles of the aforesaid treaty.

That from hence it can no longer be doubtful, that the ship *Plato* ought to be condemned a good prize—That the certificate of the Consul of the United States, residing at Leghorn, is upon a sheet of paper annexed to the rôle d'equipage, and upon which alone he has put his consular seal, when it ought to have been placed equally upon the principal sheet; does not do away the nullities referred to, as it contains neither the names of the crew being changed, nor the place of birth or of residence of the individuals, nor the names of the passengers, nor the acts of engagements and of shipments, nor, in short, the proof that the original rôle d'equipage had been signed by the public officers of the place of their departure.

That since the ship *Plato* is found in the act of condemnation, it ought to be considered as enemy, and consequently according to the 7th article of 9th title of the marine ordinances of 1681, which have not been abrogated, the cargo ought equally to be confiscated.

That it cannot be alleged that this article refers only to vessels taken under the enemy's flag, because the shippers ought to assure themselves, by a *festible* examination, whether the neutrality of the vessel announced by its flag is otherwise properly proved by the papers on board.

Done in the French Consul's office, at Malaga, in September 1797.

REMARKS.

Here then is an instance of a regular American vessel, bound from Leghorn (a neutral port) to Baltimore, being condemned, and her cargo also, under the most frivolous pretences. This vessel had a rôle d'equipage, signed by the American Consul at Leghorn, but because the original rôle d'equipage from New-York, was not produced, and there had been a change of some of the seamen either from death or desertion, and because the American Consul placed his seal on a sheet of paper annexed to the rôle d'equipage, when it ought to have been done to the principal, the vessel was considered a good prize, and by the same logical reasoning, the cargo was also condemned.

This is one sentence of the Terrible Republic. This rôle d'equipage is the best system that could have been fallen on, to put our seamen into the hands of the British, as upon this evidence alone they can take their seamen on board our vessels.

The rôle d'equipage contains the name, birth, residence and citizenship of the crew, and if born in Britain, and not in America before the peace, they are considered British subjects.

FROM A VIRGINIA PAPER.

Messrs. Printers,

The dialogue lately published in your Museum under the signature of "Student," was well received by the public so far as my observation has extended; encouraged by his success, I beg leave to trouble you with another, which I overheard the other day between a Frenchman and a Virginian:—By publishing which I doubt not but it will render equal satisfaction to your readers. And oblige yours, &c.
PHILO-STUDENT.

Frenchman. So now my good friend John Federal, we are now all citizens of the world; and I am come over to advise you what you should do.

Virginian. Advice! Monsieur Francois; do you pretend to give advice?—And what advice have you brought with you?

F. My advice is that you should not think so highly of your American liberty, or suppose it worth keeping; but that you should give it up, and become as free and as happy as we are.

V. As happy! if you call your present situation happiness, what must you have been used to?

F. Oh begar, it was so very bad it could not be worse.

V. What!—Did you begin to dislike your black bread?

F. No.—Black bread is a one very good thing; and we are now glad enough to get it. Do but join us and I think you will soon learn to like it.

V. No that won't do: black bread would soon turn four on an American stomach.—We are used to corn bread, good homany, strong leather shoes, and good shirts.

F. Leather shoes and good shirts! Oh, my friend, that's luxury. Wooden shoes are very comfortable; and as to shirts, they are no more necessary than breeches.

V. If the French think so that may be all very well for them; but if you are so easily satisfied, what could go wrong with you?

F. Perhaps you have heard of the *Basille*; and that the noblest could fans ceremony, have any one he chose sent to a dungeon there for life.

V. Aye by Jove; but if one was to try these tricks here we should have our *Habits Corpus* and flogging damages for false imprisonment: our juries would not be very merciful to those kind of gentry.

F. Perhaps you might; but the *basille*, Lord! that was nothing; we did not mind that. It was a flea bite. We were twenty-four millions of people: they could not

put us all in at once; and those who were out would dance and sing as if nothing had happened; or, believe me, they were not Frenchmen.

V. Not mind imprisonment in a dungeon for life! if you did not mind that, what the devil did you mind?

F. We all minded what we all felt; and nothing else.

V. And what did you all feel then; or what could be worse than the *basille*?

F. Many things in France, my dear John Federal were a thousand times worse. We all felt our taxes; we all felt the manner in which they were imposed; and the manner in which they were levied.

V. Why, to be sure, taxes are very bad things; but I am afraid there is no doing well without them.

F. It was not the taxes we minded but the abuse of them. In the first place the nobility and the clergy, two very numerous and opulent bodies amongst us, paid no taxes at all.

V. Why, they could best afford it; the rich folks pay almost all the taxes with us.

F. But not so in France; the rich were entirely exempted. But we could have borne that, if that had been all. The worst was, that the intendants of the provinces and their deputies had the whole direction as to who should pay taxes, and who not.

V. In America, however, it is very different.

F. The intendant could exempt or charge any one as he pleased. His relations, his friend, his deputies, their cousins, and dependents, were favored or discharged from taxes as he pleased; and the whole burden was to fall on the poor, the friendsless, and those who were the least able to bear it.

V. And how long had that cursed work gone on in your country?

F. Some centuries.

V. Some centuries! It would not have lasted in America, some hours. Why zounds, man, if a big man was to try to throw his taxes upon one it would not be enough to let him hear of it at the county court, I would make the whole continent ring with it.

F. But we did, and we bore other things as bad. What do you think of the *tail-tax*?

V. Every poor family was to pay for so much salt every year, whether they used it or no; and there were from 3000 to 4000 poor men, women and children, sent to prison every year (and a large number of them travelled on a miserable journey to the galleys), for endeavouring to avoid the tax for the salt which they could not afford to use.

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statesman, none are left to till the ground or get in the harvest.

V. That's a bad business, and not to be cured by all your fine speeches: for, you know there is no preaching to the stomach, as it has no ears.

F. To be sure the *manufacturers, tradesmen and farmers*, have been dreadful sufferers, and that must be expected at such a time. But then the glorious equality of our nation! that's the thing. Think Mr. Federal what it is to have twenty-four millions of people and all *exactly equal*.

V. But how will you keep them *exactly equal*? must not industry and economy always acquire wealth? and ought not a father to have a right of leaving to his children what he has earned by his industry?

F. We have a remedy however for that; a remedy which will bring all French citizens to govern in their turns, sooner or later, and for a shorter of longer period.

V. What can that be?

F. Equality, my friend cannot be preferred but by cutting down all that rise above others—Those to whom France owed its liberty, were great men, and had great merit: but their existence was not to be put into competition with their country, or with the system of equality. They have therefore all been either *massacred or banished*.

V. I am very sorry for it.

F. It could not be helped—There is no maintaining a complete system of equality without it. Some of their successors have undergone, and others are now undergoing, the same fate; and the last set who have just come into power, must soon, in the same manner make room for another crop: and so we shall all *live free, and die in our turns*.

V. A very envious situation indeed.—But what is all this to Americans whose birth right is Liberty?—The abuses that you complain of do not exist in America; and our free constitution is justly admired by every true-hearted American.

F. A constitution! I laugh at your constitution. What will you pretend to compare America with France in that respect?

V. Read your own dreadful accounts of the torrents of blood which have stained the French revolution; and then turn to the American history and see our federal government formed without one drop of blood, without interruption to the ordinary course of justice, and without violation even of the forms of civil harmony.

F. But Mr. Federal consider the natural rights of man.

V. When we enter into society, we exchange our natural rights for civil rights. The first are the rights of a savage to prey upon the weak and helpless; the latter are the rights of society, uniting us for our general happiness and mutual assistance and protection.

F. But why not have both?

V. Because they are incompatible. *Your Equality* leads to nothing but confusion, plunder and massacres: the result of which unless your wild notions of liberty are cured, will be a relapse into slavery, as the lesser evil.

F. Ah! Sir don't be seduced by your present peace and prosperity; why will you persuade yourself that you are free and happy, or trust to appearances, however favorable.

V. Why now to reason about it Monsieur Francois; would you seriously insist on my taking physic because you have been sick? or because you have the French disorder is it necessary that I should undergo a *Salivation*?

F. It might be very good for you by way of prevention.

V. And then perhaps my history might be the same as the man's who was well;—took physic to be better;—and died.

F. Ah my good friend, be assured that the French nation interests herself in your following her in this as in other fashions, and that she earnestly wishes that America was at this moment *exactly in the same situation as France*.

V. In truth I believe she does; and so do all the natural enemies of America. Envy Monsieur Francois envy will be busy. What! when we enjoy all the trade and commerce of the world, in the full tide of success; our liberties secured, our manufacturers employed; our resources increasing; shall we remove the blessings of peace, order, liberty and national prosperity (such as neither the annals of history, nor the circuit of the globe can equal) for—what? for anarchy, confusion and wretchedness. God forbid! Adieu—

From the *EAGLE*, printed at Hanover, New Hampshire.

Hearing much of an extraordinary circumstance which took place on Moose-mountain, in this town, during the late violent rains, my curiosity was invited to make a visit to that mountain, on the east-side of which a rupture has taken place.

The elevation of the mountain forms an angle of 45 deg. consequently it is very steep in this place.

About forty rods above the foot of the mountain, the eruption began. Here the soil, loose stones and rubbish appeared to be about three feet deep, lying upon a solid rock which composes the mountain. The depth of soil increases as you descend the mountain until it becomes 15 feet deep at the bottom.

The earth, loose stones and trees, began to descend the mountain about 40 rods from its base, forming a channel of about six rods wide at its beginning, and increasing to about twelve, sweeping every thing to the bottom, tearing up trees and rocks of an enormous size, the direction was immediately down the mountain, until the heavy rubbish formed a little mountain of itself at the bottom: the light rubbish, such as trees, small rocks, &c. took another direction, forming an angle of 30 deg. with its original direction, and about 19 rods farther; and 200 trees were tumbled together in the wildest disorder you can imagine.

This forming another obstruction to the eruption, it took its first direction and ran about 15 rods farther, and even here stones were carried, measuring 12 feet in length, and three feet on each side. From the circumference, you may form some faint idea of the amazing force; which the eruption had here.

From inspection, the cause of this phenomenon, is easily investigated. During the violent rains, the mountain became full of water, and not only the water which ran down on the top of the solid rock, but likewise the whole body, with which the mountain was impregnated, bursting through the crannies and apertures of the solid rock, a torrent was formed, which spread devastation before it.—The water to appearance was 12 feet higher than where the rubbish was thrown up, and even after you came some distance into the level land, from the bottom of the mountain, the trees are braided with stones, 10 feet above the ground: One stone I measured 21 feet in length and 3 feet on each side, was carried and landed 19 feet above the natural surface of the ground.

Hanover, Oct. 10, 1797.

S. B.

C O N G R E S S.

H O U S E O F R E P R E S E N T A T I V E S.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20.

Mr. Macon was persuaded that it would be of advantage to the revenue, as well as agreeable to citizens in the habit of distilling, if persons were allowed to take out licenses for a single week. He therefore proposed a resolution directing the committee of ways and means to report on the expediency of such a measure, by bill or otherwise. Agreed.

The house again resolved itself into a committee of the whole, on the bill for the relief of North and Vesey of Charleston, and the petition having been read, the amendment proposed yesterday by Mr. Cbit, to leave it to the collector of the Port to ascertain the quantity of sugar destroyed, was agreed to 48 to 12; the committee rose, the house concurred, and the bill was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading to-morrow.

Mr. D. Foster reported a bill for the relief of the representatives of captain George Hurlbut, which was twice read and committed for to-morrow.

Mr. Harper moved a resolution to the following effect: "Resolved, that a committee be appointed to enquire whether any, and if any, what amendments are necessary to be made in the act relative to invalid pensioners, and to report by bill or otherwise."

Mr. H. said, it must be recollected that frequent application had been made to that house by persons who had been wounded in the war, for a pension, who would have been duly entitled to it, and to whom the house wished to have granted it, had not their claims been barred by the law of 23rd Feb. 1795, with which the petitioners were generally unacquainted. Some of these cases had appeared to be so hard, that in one or two instances the house had been induced to dispense with the law. He tho't, therefore, it was proper the law should be reconsidered.

Mr. J. Parker seconded the motion.—He knew of several instances where persons were justly entitled to pensions, who had never heard of the act of 1795 until their claims were rejected, whilst others, perhaps less deserving, were in possession of pensions. He hoped they should not longer deny the justice which was due to the veteran wounded soldier.

Mr. Macon believed that as all subjects of this kind were constantly referred to the committee of claims, they were of course better acquainted with the business than any other committee would be likely to be; he therefore moved to have this resolution referred to that committee.

This motion was supported by Mess. Coit and Nicholas, and opposed by Mess. S. Smith, Parker, Harper, Brookes and Swanwick. It was, however, finally carried, there being 51 votes in favor of it.

Mr. Nicholas called for the order of the day on the bill suspending the second section of the act regulating foreign coins; which motion being agreed to, the house went into a committee of the whole on the subject; when

Mr. Sitgreaves wished to propose an amendment to the bill, so as to make it conformable to the report of the Select Committee; but, as he believed it would be difficult to incorporate such an amendment into the bill, without re-committing it, he should move for the committee to rise, with a view of afterwards moving a re-commitment of the bill. He would not recur to the arguments used on a former occasion in support of his motion. He wished to give the Foreign coin in question a partial currency, which should give it a natural current towards the mint. A number of calculations had been made on this subject, when formerly under discussion, drawn from an old report from the Mint, which were very inapplicable to the present state of that establishment. By the report of 1796, it appeared that a greater proportion of Silver than of Gold Coin had been issued; but by this report, the Gold coin was nearly doubled since that time. It appeared also by the report of 1796, that the proportion of coins deposited, compared with Ingots and other Bullion was very small; whereas, by the present report, it would appear that three-fourths of the whole amount of the deposits in Gold, had been made in coin, and two-thirds of the silver. This report would also show that the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. S. Smith) was not correct in his remark, when he said, no bank in the United States would part with their foreign coin for the purpose of re-coining, as not only three-fourths of the Gold deposited had been coin, but it was almost exclusively from

the bank of the United States; a great proportion of the silver coin deposited had also come from the banks; and the director informed them that, in the banks of New-York and this city, there were the value of 300,000 dollars in crowns, ready to be sent into the Mint. These statements furnished great reason for doubting the justness of the inferences drawn by gentlemen in the former debate, and gave additional weight to all the arguments in support of the report of the select committee. It appeared by the reports, that there had been issued from the Mint of the United States, coins to the value of 773,000 dollars. He had never seen any estimate of the whole amount of the circulating medium which would be necessary in this country for all its commercial concerns, nor did he know upon what data such an estimate ought to be made: but when they saw the amount of the coin issued, and recollected the immense quantity of Spanish dollars in circulation, as well as bank paper bottomed upon actual specie in the coffers of the Banks, there could be little doubt that there was a sufficient quantity of circulating medium for all the purposes of commerce, though the act of 1793 were now to go fully into operation, without even the partial suspension recommended by the select committee. The only evil which would result, would be, the loss which might be sustained by the holders of this species of coin; but even if the law were suspended for two years, as proposed, the same evil would in a great degree, then recur. Gentlemen greatly miscalculated, he said, when they supposed, that, in the mean time, the foreign coin would, by degrees be brought into the Mint. Indeed they say, it cannot be spared from distant parts of the country; and if so, it cannot be expected to come into the Mint, without a legitimate force to bring it there. A partial suspension would produce this effect; and whilst this coin was received by the collectors, as usual, it could not diminish greatly in its value. Indeed, he was of opinion that it would be best to keep the law as it stood, and leave any regulation which might be necessary, to the Executive of the United States, who had already ordered it to be received in the way proposed by the select committee, and who would be the best judge of the regulation from time to time necessary.—With respect to the foreign gold coin, as the law prohibiting that as a tender, did not take place for some months, the holders of it might get it out of their hands, before its value was diminished; and as to silver, he believed the injury was already done. If the act of 1793, were therefore, suspended, it would give the crowns a new value, and, at the end of two years, the same objection would be again urged, and the Mint, in the mean time would be without support. He thought it was proper, on this occasion, that those who wished to suspend the law, should come out with respect to the Mint. He thought it best to go to the whole subject now, and let the act of 1793