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FROM THE AMERICAN DAILY ADVERTISER.

No. III.

Continued from the Gazette of the 13th inst.

Mr. DUNLAP,

THE dispensation of the clerkship of foreign correspondence upon Mr. Freneau is the next circumstance, in the political conduct of Mr. Jefferson, which has given offence to the American. Upon this point the full force of his genius appears to have been collected, his passions roused, and his imagination to have displayed an unusual degree of brilliancy. The appointment of this gentleman to that station has been deemed an act of such enormity, that, like the original sin of our first parents, it could never be expiated. Deductions too, equally strange and wonderful, have been drawn from it. The imputation of a mere breach of duty in this respect, was a charge too mild and lenient for the supposed enormity of the crime. The humble sphere of the office, with any detriment which might possibly arise from an injudicious appointment in it, was a scale too limited for his capacious mind, and was accordingly immediately lauded over by our adventurers and fallen angels. In the fervor of the zeal, I presume, for the "public welfare," it has been held on, even as a proof of his hostility to the government itself. Happily however the tribunal to whom the appeal has been made, will be neither so fanciful nor indignant. Those malign and unfriendly passions, which prey on the mind of the writer, are entirely personal, and may be traced to personal motives. But it is not my desire at present, in pursuit of those doughty combatants, to make incursions into the enemy's territory. Foreign conquest is not the object of this essay. Those idolaters of monarchy, friends of the imperial cause, whether they defend it by questionable speculation, or more open and explicit avowals of their faith, may for a time rest in repose. A more humble purpose, a mere domestic defence of the personal rights, the vindication of the well-earned fame of a virtuous citizen, against impetuous and malicious slanders, is the sole object of the present undertaking.

The propriety of every act, in public as well as private life, must be scanned by some known and fixed principles. If it stands the test of these, the agent will, in proportion to its relative importance, merit well of his country; and on the contrary, if by this measure it should be found defective, he will in the degree be entitled to reprehension. There are in general so plain and obvious, and especially in relation to the duties of the several departments of our government, that when any act of a public servant shall be announced, if facts are likewise submitted, the unsophisticated common sense of every citizen may immediately arrange it in the scale to which it belongs.

This dispensation to office, tho' among the most important, is likewise among the most simple of public duties. One solitary principle governs every case: "That the man appointed to an office shall be irreproachable in point of morality and in other respects well qualified to discharge its duties with credit to himself and advantage to his country." The most ordinary capacity may comprehend the principle, and know what should be done. Talents of the more elevated kind are only requisite to enable those trustees of this portion of the public confidence, in the range of faculties, judiciously to distinguish between men, and to select those best fitted for the stations to which they shall be destined. To apply, in short, the most expedient means for the attainment of given ends. If appointments, from the highest to the lowest grade, will bear the test of enquiry by this criterion, those who confer them may rest contented: they have nothing to apprehend from the reproach of their own consciences, or the censure of the public.

To fill with propriety the humble station in question, but few qualifications appear to be necessary, and these to be comprised in the following particulars: "that he be a citizen of some one of these States, and acquainted with foreign languages." "That he should be a citizen, and if not a native, a resident for a term of sufficient duration to assure a superior attachment to this, over every other country, seems absolutely necessary; for whatever belongs to the department of State, in which affairs with foreign nations are transacted, may pass through his hands: and that he should possess a knowledge of foreign languages, must be equally so; for otherwise he would receive a

competence without being able to render service for it.

Limited, however, as the scale of necessary qualification may be, yet candor must admit that it is difficult to find them united in the same person; for it is a fact which cannot be controverted, that there are but few Americans, in any rank or circumstances of life, who possess an extensive knowledge of foreign languages. A strict adherence, then, to the first requisite must, from necessity, diminish the required proficiency in the latter.

Another circumstance of material weight, must still contribute to reduce the sphere of selection, to a much narrower scale. The compensation of 250 dollars per annum, will invite no respectable character from a distant State, to abandon a lucrative profession, or the comfortable ease of private life. Nor will it induce, especially when the comparative grade of office is contemplated, any person to accept it, even in the city in which the Congress may chance to reside, to whose ordinary subsistence it would not yield a considerable aid. In short, it must be manifest, that there can be no choice in the appointment, and if a suitable person should be found, it must be rather the effect of accident, than warranted by circumstances.

For this office, I have been informed, Mr. Freneau presented the following well authenticated claim. "A native of one of the middle States, he had been liberally educated at Princeton. To an accurate knowledge and refined taste in the English language, he had added a similar acquirement of the French; the nation with whom we have the most intimate connexion, and whose language has become, in a great measure throughout Europe, the general medium of political negotiation. That through life his morals were without blemish, and his conduct in the course of the revolution, though variously occupied, that of a sound whig and a republican. Perhaps his sufferings, having been taken a prisoner in the late war, and confined for a considerable time in the ship Jersey, that noted receptacle for unfortunate American captives, may have excited some additional sympathy in his favor. Such, however, I have understood, were his pretensions, and whether they were not sufficient to have recommended him to an higher station, the public will determine.

To what trait in his character, what defect in his qualifications, does the American object? Do his occupation;—and if so, to occupations generally, or to this in particular? The low rate, or grade of compensation, it has been already shown, precluded the hope of obtaining a man out of business. And to that of the press in particular, what well-founded objection can be opposed? Is it less honorable, less beneficial to mankind than all others; and does the American come forward to traduce and lessen it in the estimation of the public? Vain and unworthy effort! For whilst its services shall be remembered in raising man from a low and degraded state of barbarism to the high improvement of his talents, in the perfection of the arts and sciences, which furnish the proud boast of modern times, every attempt of this kind must be reprobated.

Whether he had already set up a press, or was about to do it for the American may have it either way; it being the supplemental aid in support of his family, to enable him to undertake the duties of this clerkship, wherein does the difference consist? If in the former instance it would have been proper, why less so in the latter? Unless it can be shown, that the effort to establish a press, should in all cases be discouraged, or discouraged when attempted by a man of his character—a whig and republican? Would it not be hard on men of merit in his line, and highly detrimental to the public, if the door of preferment should be shut against them, and the friendly countenance of the most respectable and virtuous of their countrymen, inhibited?

The conduct of the press itself, is, in every respect, a distinct thing, and for which Mr. Jefferson can be no way accountable. Like the professions of law or medicine, the emoluments belong to the proprietor; and for his agency therein, he alone is answerable. If an impartial vehicle of useful information, it will be respected; and if otherwise, it will fail; but in this, the Secretary can be no further interested, than any other republican. This, and every other press, in a free country, is, or should be open to him and others to publish their sentiments in. To say that this was more so, would impute to it, what others would deny, as reproachful to them. It would, in fact, derogate from the merit of the very impartial, and respectable channel, through which I now furnish these comments. That he has, however, in any instance availed himself of it, in the communication of his sentiments to the public, has not been shown, and is disproved, so far as he knew any thing about it, by the oath of the Printer.

The objection on the point of influence, if the characters in question were capable of it, appears to me so light and contemptible, in relation to this appointment, as scarcely to merit any farther notice. For the discharge of du-

* I have understood he was recommended by several of his fellow-colleagues—men of high reputation, and who were interested in his welfare.

ty is absolutely necessary, and well defined, the office was created by law, and a salary annexed to it. If the person appointed performs those duties, what other claim can the principal have on him? Is he not entitled, in such event, as well to the approbation of the head of the department, as to the legal compensation? Degraded, indeed, would the condition of a free-man be, if to the acceptance of an office of this kind, was enjoined, not only the performance of its public duties, but likewise a low subservience, in those domestic concerns, to the will of a superior upon which his welfare, happiness, and fame depended. Those circumstances which characterize an influence of this kind, bear a different aspect. It can exist only in those cases, where there is no intervening office, no stable ground, on which the independent mind may rest secure;—in those cases where the employment itself is occasional, and the person to be employed, and the compensation for the service, discretionary. If such a case does exist, 'tis not my wish to make the application; for the sake of public decorum, of common decency, I could have wished there had been no foundation for the allusion.

The negotiation, by which this worthy character is stated to have been brought into this subaltern office, has been described with great pomp and solemnity. A gentleman for whose public and private virtues—for whose talents and very eminent services to his country, and particularly for whose disinterested and republican patriotism, the good people of these States have long entertained the most exalted esteem, has been represented as the negotiator; and for the purpose of subverting the government which he contributed to essentially to establish. Can the public mind, when these flanderous imputations are passed in review, withhold from their author, the contempt and abhorrence, which are deservedly his due?

The reader is requested to make the following correction in Mr. Jefferson's first Letter: In line eighth, instead of "revenue from" read "recurrence to."

FOR THE GAZETTE OF THE UNITED STATES.

THE votaries of Mr. Jefferson, whose devotion for their idol kindles at every form in which he deigns to be mentioned, have produced matter of panegyric from his opposition to the measures of the government. "Dis according to them, the sublimest pitch of virtue in him, not only to have extra-officially embarrassed plans, originating with his colleagues, in the course of their progress, but to have continued his opposition to them, after they had been considered and enacted by the legislature, with such modifications as appeared to them proper, and had been approved by the chief magistrate. Such conduct, it seems, marks "a firm and virtuous independence of character." If any proof were wanting of that strange inversion of the ideas of decorum, propriety and order, which characterizes a certain party, this making a theme of encomium of what is truly a demonstration of a caballing, self-sufficient and refractory temper, would afford it.

In order to shew that the epithets have been misapplied, I shall endeavor to state what course a firm and virtuous independence of character, guided by a just and necessary sense of decorum, would dictate to a man in the station of Mr. Jefferson.

This has been rendered more particularly requisite, by the formal discussion of the point, which appears to be the object of a continuation of a defence of that gentleman, in the American Daily Advertiser of the 10th inst.

The position must be reprobated that a man who had accepted an office in the executive department, should be held to throw the weight of his character into the scale, to support a measure, which in his conscience he disapproved, and in his station had opposed.—Or that the members of the administration should form together a close and secret combination, into whose measures the profane eye of the public should in no instance pry. But there is a very obvious medium between aiding or countenancing, and intriguing and machinating against a measure; and between opposing it in the discharge of an official duty, or volunteering an opposition to it in the discharge of no duty; between entering into a close and secret combination with the other members of an administration, and being the active leader of an opposition to its measures.

The true line of propriety appears to me to be the following:—A member of the administration, in one department, ought only to aid those measures of another, which he approves—where he disapproves, if called upon to do officially, he ought to manifest his disapprobation, and avow his opposition; but out of an official line he ought not to interfere, as long as he thinks fit to continue a part of the administration. The measure in question has become a law of the land, especially with a direct sanction of the chief magistrate, it is peculiarly his duty to acquiesce. A contrary conduct is inconsistent with his relations as an officer of the government, and with a due respect as such, for the decisions of the legislature, and of the head of the executive department. The line here delineated, is drawn from obvious and very im-

portant considerations. The success of every government—its capacity to combine the exertion of public strength with the preservation of personal right and private security, qualities which define the perfection of a government, must always naturally depend on the energy of the executive department. This energy, again, must materially depend on the union and mutual deference, which subsist between the members of that department, and the conformity of their conduct with the views of the executive chief.

Difference of opinion between men engaged in any common pursuit, is a natural engender of human nature. When only exerted in the discharge of a duty, with delicacy and temper, among liberal and sensible men, it can create no animosity; but when it produces officious interferences, dictated by no call of duty—when it volunteers a display of itself in a quarter, where there is no responsibility, to the obstruction and embarrassment of one who is charged with an immediate and direct responsibility—it must necessarily beget ill humour and discord between the parties.

Applied to the members of the executive administration of any government, it must necessarily tend to occasion, more or less, distracted councils, to foster factions in the community, and practically to weaken the government.

Moreover the heads of the several executive departments are justly to be viewed as auxiliaries to the executive chief. Opposition to any measure of his, by either of those heads of departments, except in the shape of frank, firm, and independent advice to himself, is evidently contrary to the relations which subsist between the parties. And it cannot well be controverted that a measure becomes his, so as to involve the duty of acquiescence on the part of the members of his administration, as well by its having received his sanction in the form of a law, as by its having previously received his approbation.

In the theory of our government, the chief magistrate is himself responsible for the exercise of every power vested in him by the constitution. One of the powers entrusted to him, is that of objecting to bills which have passed the two houses of Congress. This supposes the duty of objecting, when he is of opinion, that the object of any bill is either unconstitutional or pernicious. The approbation of a bill implies, that he does not think it either the one or the other.

And it is not for this opinion. The measure becomes his by adoption. Nor could he escape a portion of the blame, which should finally attach itself to a bad measure, to which he had given his consent.

I am prepared for some declamation against the principles which have been laid down. Some plausible flourishes have already been indulged. And it is to be expected, that the public ear will be still further assailed with the commonplace topics, that so readily present themselves, and are so dexterously retailed by the traffickers in popular prejudice. But it need never be feared to submit a solid truth to the deliberate and final opinion of an enlightened and sober people.

What! (it will probably be asked) is a man to sacrifice his conscience and his judgment to an office? Is he to be a dumb spectator of measures which he deems subversive of the rights or interests of his fellow-citizens? Is he to postpone to the frivolous rules of a false complaisance, or the arbitrary dictates of a tyrannical decorum, the higher duty, which he owes to the community?

I answer, No! he is to do none of these things. If he cannot coalesce with those, with whom he is associated, as far as the rules of official decorum, propriety & obligation may require, without abandoning what he conceives to be the true interest of the community, let him place himself in a situation in which he will experience no collision of opposite duties. Let him not cling to the honor or emolument of an office whichever it may be that attracts him, and content himself with defending the injured rights of the people by obscure or indirect means. Let him renounce a situation which is a clog upon his patriotism; tell the people that he could no longer continue in it without forfeiting his duty to them, and that he had quitted it to be more at liberty to afford them his best services.

Such is the course which would be indicated by a firm and virtuous independence of character. Such the course that would be pursued by a man attentive to unite the sense of delicacy with the sense of duty—in earnest about the pernicious tendency of public measures, and more solicitous to act the disinterested friend of the people, than the interested ambitious and intriguing head of a party. METELLUS.

FOR THE GAZETTE OF THE UNITED STATES.

WHILE heav'n propitious pours its blessings down,
Scasons serene, and skies without a frown;
While Nature with a rich profusion yields,
And loads with grain the richly ripen'd fields;
While Commerce waits us with her swelling sail,
Earth's choicest products on each favouring gale;
While laws protect what industry acquires,
And reason only limits our desires;
While enterprise has boundless scope to range,
What madness 'tis to wish that time may change!
Yet some there are, whose souls with envy burn,
And all this scene to clouds and darkness turn.
C.