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WEDNESDAY, September 18, 1793.

[Whole No. 458.]

RICHMOND, (Virginia.)
The following is the address of the citizens of this city
and its vicinity to the President of the United States.
RICHMOND, August 17, 1793.

SIR,

IMPRESSED with a full conviction of the wisdom of your administration in general, & especially approving that system of conduct which you have adopted, and steadily observed towards the belligerent powers of Europe, we, the inhabitants of Richmond and its vicinity in the commonwealth of Virginia, are happy in an opportunity of conveying to you their genuine sentiments.

When propitious heaven had crowned with victory the efforts of your country and yourself, while rejoicing America enumerated the blessings to be derived from so important a revolution, it was not reckoned among the least of them that, in future, the people of this favored land might in peace pursue their own happiness, though war and violence should desolate the European world, or drench it in human blood—So too, when the good genius of America had devised that change in our government, which her wisdom has since adopted, it was held an argument of some weight against the necessity of this change, and all in opposition to it with one voice declared, that, situated as this country is, no madness or folly could ever be so supreme as to involve us again in European contests. Nor was this opinion, so uniform and universal, in favor of peace, derived from any other source than a knowledge of the real situation and a conviction of the real interests of America. It is impossible for the eye of cool and temperate reason to survey these United States without perceiving, that, however dreadful the calamities of war may be to other nations, they are still more dreadful to us, and however important the benefits of peace to others, to us they are still more beneficial.

From those whose province it is to make war, we expect every effort to avoid it consistent with the honor, interest and good faith of America; from you, sir, to whom is assigned the important task of, "taking care that the laws be faithfully executed," we have already experienced the most active and watchful attention to our dearest interests.

Ever since the period when a just respect for the voice of your country induced you to abandon the retirement you loved, for that high station to which your fellow-citizens unanimously called you, your conduct has been uniformly calculated to promote their happiness and welfare: And in no instance has this been more remarkable, or your vigilant attention to the duties of your office more clearly discovered, than in your proclamation respecting the neutrality of the United States.

As genuine Americans, with no other interest at heart but that of our country, unbiased by foreign influence, which history informs us has been the bane of more, than one republic, our minds are open to a due sense of the propriety, justice, and wisdom of this measure; and we cannot refrain from expressing our pleasure at its adoption.

We recollect too well the calamities of war, not to use our best endeavors to restrain any wicked citizen, if such indeed can be found among us, who, disregarding his own duty, and the happiness of the United States, in violation of the law of the land, and the will of the people, shall dare to gratify his paltry passions at the risk of his country's welfare, perhaps of her existence.

We pray heaven to manifest its providential care of these states, by prolonging to them the blessing of your administration—and may the pure spirit of it continue to animate the government of America through a succession of ages.

Signed by desire and on behalf of the meeting,
GEORGE WYTHE, President,
(Teste) ANDREW DUNSCOMB, Sec'y.

ANSWER

To the inhabitants of Richmond and its vicinity.
Fellow-Citizens,

AMONG the numerous expressions of the public sense, in favor of the measures which have been adopted for the observance of neutrality in the present war of Europe, none is more grateful to me, than that of Richmond and its vicinity.

The manner in which it is conveyed, lays claim to my affectionate acknowledgments.

In recollecting the anticipations which were entertained of a pacific policy, as most consonant with the situation of the United States and the genius of our government, it is a pleasing reflection, that when the occasion for exemplifying it occurs, sentiments corresponding with it appear to pervade every part of the community. This steadiness of views, highly honorable to the national character, is well calculated to support in the administration of our affairs, a spirit constantly favorable to the great object of peace.

And though the best and sincerest endeavors to this end, may sometimes prove ineffectual, yet it will always be a source of consolation and encouragement, that the calamities of war, if at any time they shall be experienced, have been unfought and unprovoked. Every good citizen will then meet

events with that firmness and perseverance which naturally accompany the consciousness of a good cause, the conviction that there is no ground for self-reproach.

True to our duties and interests as Americans—firm to our purpose, as lovers of peace—let us unite our fervent prayers to the Great Ruler of the Universe; that the justice and moderation of all concerned, may permit us to continue in the uninterrupted enjoyment of a blessing which we so greatly prize, and of which we ardently wish them a speedy and permanent participation.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

At a general meeting of the inhabitants of the town of Petersburg (Virginia) and its vicinity, at the court-house of the said town on Monday the 2d September 1793.

The committee appointed by the town meeting held on Saturday last, to draw up and propose to the present meeting, for their consideration, certain resolutions, this day proposed to the meeting the resolutions following, viz.—

Resolved, That it is consistent with the true interest of the United States, as well as their good faith, to preserve the strictest neutrality in the present situation of Europe.

That we highly approve, and are firmly resolved strictly to observe the President's late proclamation, because we believe it was dictated by a profound knowledge of the interests of these states, and by a sincere and honest desire of promoting their real happiness and prosperity.

That we will use every exertion to discountenance and suppress all such designs and proceedings as in any manner tend to interrupt that harmony and tranquillity which we enjoy under a just and pacific administration of the happiest government.

That the interference of any foreign power or minister in the internal administration of our government, is an infringement of the sovereignty of the people, tends to destroy public confidence, to introduce confusion and anarchy, and therefore should excite the indignation and reprehension of every independent American.

That any attempts to diminish that confidence which our citizens repose in the disinterestedness of the present chief magistrate of the United States, are equally ungrateful, illiberal and unjust.

Resolved, That the Chairman transmit the foregoing resolutions to Thomas Jefferson, Esq. & request him to communicate the same to the President of the United States.

And the said resolutions being severally and distinctly read, were unanimously adopted.

And the meeting continuing, the following resolution was proposed and unanimously agreed to.

Resolved, That we consider the combination of the despots of Europe against the liberties of France, as having a direct tendency to destroy the political happiness of mankind; & though we feel an interest in preserving our neutrality, yet it is our sincere wish, that liberty and the rights of man may be the prevailing principles throughout the universe.

THOMAS G. PEACHY, Chairman.

THE Grand Jury for the district, composed of the counties of Henrico, Goochland, Hanover, Chesterfield, and Powhatan, impressed with the charge delivered to them by the presiding Judge of this district, have directed their attention to the subjects which it presented to their notice, upon some of which they think it proper and necessary to express their sentiments.

Adverting also to the nature and objects of their institution, they consider themselves to be fully authorized, as often as the occasion shall be sufficiently pressing or important, to animadvert upon the laws and proceedings of the government.

In the present calamitous state of foreign hostilities, the Grand Jury conceive that the honor and happiness of this country are in a great measure involved in the conduct which its government shall pursue towards the nations at war.

They consider the United States as bound by the treaties as well as their dearest interests to observe a strict neutrality towards the belligerent powers, and therefore they testify in this public manner their high approbation of those measures which have been adopted by the President of the United States, to procure a punctual observance of that neutrality and thereby to preserve the honor and to promote the true interests of this country.

The Grand Jury, estimating as they ought the sovereignty and independence of these United States, view with a just indignation all attempts of foreign powers or their Ministers to influence the measures of our government, or to detach the confidence of the people from those to whom they have committed its administration, such attempts ought to be considered as high insults upon the people of America, as incitements to the boldest treason, and as calculated to plunge the government and Citizens of the United States, into all the evils of anarchy and disorder.

CARTER BRAXTON, Foreman.

HELVIDIUS—No. V.

HAVING seen that the executive has no constitutional right to interfere in any question whether there be or be not a cause of war, and the extensive consequences flowing from the doctrines on which a claim has been asserted, it remains to be enquired whether the writer is better warranted in the fact which he assumes, namely that the proclamation of the Executive has undertaken to decide the question, whether there be a cause of war or not; in the article of guaranty between the United States and France, and, in so doing has exercised the right which is claimed for that department.

Before I proceed to the examination of this point, it may not be amiss to advert to the novelty of the phraseology, as well as of the doctrines, expounded by this writer. The source from which the former is evidently borrowed, may enlighten our conjectures with regard to the source of the latter. It is a just observation also that words have often a gradual influence on ideas, and when used in an improper sense, may cover fallacies which would not otherwise escape detection.

I allude particularly to his application of the term government to the Executive authority alone. The Proclamation is "a manifestation of the sense of the government;" "why did not the government wait, &c." "The policy on the part of the government of removing all doubt as to its own disposition," "It was of great importance that our citizens should understand as early as possible the opinion entertained by the government, &c." If in addition to the rest, the early manifestation of the views of the government, had any effect in fixing the public opinion, &c. The reader will probably be struck with the reflection, that if the Proclamation really possessed the character, and was to have the effects, here ascribed to it, something more than the authority of the government, in the writer's sense of government, would have been a necessary sanction to the act, and if the term "government" be removed, and that of "President" substituted, in the sentences quoted, the justice of the reflection will be felt with peculiar force. But I remark only, on the singularity of the stile adopted by the writer, as shewing either that the phraseology of a foreign government is more familiar to him than the phraseology proper to our own, or that he wishes to propagate a familiarity of the former in preference to the latter, I do not know what degree of disapprobation others may think due to this innovation of language, but I consider it as far above a trivial criticism, to observe that it is by no means unworthy of attention, whether viewed with an eye to its probable cause or its apparent tendency, "the government," unquestionably means in the United States the whole government, not the executive part, either exclusively, or pre-eminently; as it may do in a monarchy, where the splendor of prerogative eclipses, and the machinery of influence, directs, every other part of the government. In the former and proper sense, the term has hitherto been used in official proceedings, in public discussions, and in private discourse. It is as short and as easy, and less liable to misapprehension, to say, the Executive or the President, as to say the government. In a word the new dialect could not proceed either from necessity, convenience, propriety, or perspicuity; and being in opposition to common usage, so marked a fondness for it, justifies the notice here taken of it. It shall no longer detain me, however, from the more important subject of the present paper.

I proceed therefore to observe that as a "Proclamation," in its ordinary use, is an address to citizens or subjects only; as it is always understood to relate to the law actually in operation, and to be an act purely and exclusively Executive; there can be no implication in the name or the form of such an instrument, that it was meant principally, for the information of foreign nations; far less that it related to an eventual stipulation on a subject, acknowledged to be within the Legislative province. When the writer therefore undertook to engrave his new prerogative on the Proclamation, by ascribing to it so unusual, and unimplied a meaning, it was evidently incumbent on him to show, that the text of the instrument could not be satisfied by any other construction than his own. Has he done this? No. What has he done? He has called the Proclamation a Proclamation of neutrality; he has put his own arbitrary meaning on that phrase, and has then proceeded in his arguments and his inferences, with as much confidence, as if no question was ever to be asked, whether the term "neutrality" be in the Proclamation; or whether, if there, it could justify the use he makes of it.

It has appeared from observations already made, that if the term "neutrality" was in the Proclamation, it could not avail the writer, in the present discussion; but the fact is no such term is to be found in it, nor any other

* The writer ought not in the same paper, No. VII. to have said, "Had the President announced his own disposition, he would have been chargeable with egotism, if not presumption."

term, of a meaning equivalent to that, in which the term neutrality is used by him.

There is the less pretext, in the present case, for hunting after any latent or extraordinary object because an obvious and legal one, is at hand, to satisfy the occasion on which the Proclamation issued. The existence of war among several nations with which the United States have an extensive intercourse; the duty of the Executive to preserve peace by enforcing its laws, whilst those laws continued in force; the danger that indifferent citizens might be tempted or surprised by the crisis, into unlawful proceedings, tending to involve the United States in a war, which the competent authority might decide them to be at liberty to avoid, and which, if they should be judged not at liberty to avoid, the other party to the eventual contract, might not be willing to impose on them; these surely might have been sufficient grounds for the measure pursued by the executive, and being legal and rational grounds, it would be wrong, if there be no necessity, to look beyond them.

If there be any thing in the Proclamation of which the writer could have made a handle, it is the part which declares, the disposition, the duty and the interest of the United States, in relation to the war existing in Europe. As the Legislature is the only competent and constitutional organ of the will of the nation; that is, of its disposition, its duty and its interest, in relation to a commencement of war, in like manner as the President and Senate jointly, not the President alone, are in relation to peace, after war has been commenced—I will not dissemble my wish that a language less exposed to criticism had been preferred; but taking the expressions, in the sense of the writer himself; as analogous to the language which might be proper, on the reception of a public Minister, or any similar occasion, it is evident, that his construction can derive no succour, even from this resource.

If the Proclamation then does not require the construction which this writer has taken the liberty of putting on it; I leave it to be decided whether the following considerations do not forbid us to suppose, that the President could have intended, by that act, to embrace and prejudice the Legislative question whether there was, or was not, under the circumstances of the case, a cause of war in the article of guaranty.

It has been shewn that such an intention would have usurped a prerogative not vested in the Executive, and even confessedly vested in another department.

In exercising the Constitutional power of deciding a question of war, the Legislature ought to be as free to decide, according to its own sense of the public good, on one side as on the other side. Had the Proclamation prejudged the question on either side, and proclaimed its decision to the world; the Legislature, instead of being as free as it ought, might be thrown under the dilemma, of either sacrificing its judgment to that of the Executive; or by opposing the Executive judgment, of producing a relation between the two departments, extremely delicate among ourselves, and of the worst influence on the national character and interests abroad; a variance of this nature, it will readily be perceived, would be very different from a want of conformity to the mere recommendations of the Executive, in the measures adopted by the Legislature.

It does not appear that such a Proclamation could have even pleaded any call, from either of the parties at war with France, for an explanation of the light in which the guaranty was viewed—while, indeed, no positive indication whatever was given of hostile purposes, it is not conceived, that any power could have decently made such an application—or if they had, that a Proclamation, would have been either a satisfactory, or an honorable answer. It could not have been satisfactory, if serious apprehensions were entertained, because it would not have proceeded from that authority which alone could definitely pronounce the will of the United States on the subject. It would not have been honorable, because a private diplomatic answer only is due to a private diplomatic application; and to have done so much more, would have marked a pusillanimity and want of dignity in the Executive Magistrate.

But whether the Executive was or was not applied to, or whatever weight be allowed to that circumstance, it ought never to be presumed, that the Executive would so abruptly so publicly, and so solemnly, proceed to disclaim a sense of the contract, which the other party might consider and wish to support by discussion as its true and reasonable import. It is asked, indeed, in a tone that sufficiently displays the spirit in which the writer constructs both the Proclamation and the treaty, "Did the Executive stand in need of the logic of a foreign agent to enlighten it as to the duties or the interests of the nation; or was it bound to ask his consent to a step which appeared to itself consistent with the former, and conducive to the latter? The sense of treaties was to be learnt from the treaties themselves." Had he consulted his Vattel,