

CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Monday, December 22, 1794.

In Committee of the whole on the naturalization-bill, Mr. Cobb in the chair. Mr. Dexter after some observations on the importance of the subject before the Committee; and expressing his disapprobation of the facility by which, under the existing law, aliens may acquire citizenship moved that the term of two years in the bill referring to the previous residence should be struck out and a blank left, to be filled up after more mature consideration—this motion was agreed to—another amendment was proposed by that gentleman referring particularly to mercantile foreigners who may wish to acquire citizenship—but this after some debate was withdrawn.

Mr. Giles then proposed an amendment the object of which was to impede a return to citizenship of those who should expatriate themselves—he proposed that a special law of the state from which such persons should detach themselves, should be requisite in order to their being re-instated.

Mr. Tracy—after observing, that altho' he was not in favor of a perpetual allegiance as understood by the British Government, yet he was of opinion that the return of persons who should expatriate themselves ought to be clogged with greater impediments than simply a law of a particular state—if the amendment is a proper one of which he confessed he had his doubts, he would suggest to the gentleman an addition, by making a law of the general government also necessary in the case.

Mr. Giles observed that the object of his motion was not by any means to lessen the impediments in the way of return to citizenship, but the reverse; he should therefore agree to the amendment of the gentleman from Connecticut—The motion was afterwards considered in several points of view, as blending state and continental legislation, as interfering with the legislative rights of the states by force, and as operating in the same manner in respect to the right reserved by the constitution to the general government, which is authorized to pass uniform laws of naturalization by others.

Mr. Sedgwick having stated that his colleague had prepared a motion with regard to the kind of evidence, that an applicant should exhibit, of the goodness of his moral character and of his attachment to the Government: He requested Mr. Giles to withdraw his motion, for the consideration of the other, which he did, and thereupon, Mr. Dexter moved that no alien should be admitted to the rights of citizenship, but on the oath of two credible witnesses, that in their opinion he was of good moral character and attached to the welfare of this country, which motion was seconded by Mr. Sedgwick who added the following observations.

He said, that the subject under consideration was certainly of great importance, and opened an extensive field of discussion. The present motion, taken in conjunction with that already adopted, had for its object embarrassing the facility, with which aliens may be admitted to the rights of citizenship. He would submit to the consideration of the committee, some of the leading ideas, which had occurred to his mind on this subject.

America, he said, if her political institutions, should on experience be found to be wisely adjusted, and she shall improve her natural advantages, had opened to her view, a more rich and glorious prospect, than ever was presented to man: She had chosen for herself a government, which left to the citizen, as great a portion of freedom, as was consistent with a social compact. All believed the preservation of this government, in its purity, indispensable to the continuance of our happiness. The foundation on which it rested was general intelligence and public virtue; in other words, wisdom to discern, and patriotism to pursue the general good. He had pride, and he gloried in it, in believing his countrymen more wise and virtuous than any other people on earth; hence he believed them better qualified to administer and support a republican government. This character of Americans was the result of early education, aided indeed by the discipline of the revolution. In that part of the country with which he was best acquainted, the education, manners, habits and institutions, religious and civil, were republican. The community was divided into corporations, in many respects resembling independent republics, of which almost every man, the qualifications were so small, was a member. They had many important and interesting concerns to transact. They appointed their executive officers, enacted by-laws, raised money for many purposes of use and ornament. Here, then, the citizens early acquired the habits of temperate discussion, patient reasoning, and a capacity of enduring contradiction: Here the means of education and

instruction are instituted and maintained; public libraries purchased and read: "these are," said he, "the proper schools for the education of republican citizens; thus are to be planted the seeds of republicanism—If you will cultivate the plants which are to be reared from these seeds, you will gather an abundant harvest of long continued national prosperity."

Much information, he said, might be obtained by the experience of others, if in despite of it, we were not determined to be guided only by a visionary theory. "The ancient republics of Greece and Rome," said he "see with what jealousy they guarded the rights of citizenship against adulteration by foreign mixture"—The Swiss nation, he said, in modern times, had not been less jealous on the same subject. Indeed no example could be found, in the history of man, to authorize the experiment which had been made by the United States. It seemed to have been adopted by universal practice as a maxim, that the republican character, was no way to be formed but by early education. In some instances, to form this character, those propensities which are generally considered as almost irresistible, were opposed and subdued. And shall we, he asked, alone adopt the rash theory, that the subjects of all governments despotic, monarchical, and aristocratical, are, as soon as they set foot on American ground, qualified to participate, in administering the sovereignty of our country? Shall we hold the benefits of American citizenship so cheap, as to invite, say, almost bribe, the discontented, the ambitious and the avaricious of every country to accept them?

We had he said on this subject not only example but warning—"Will gentlemen," said he "recollect the rage of ages, which existed in the country from which we came, between the Saxon, Danish and Norman emigrants, and the natives of the country? The cruelties, the oppressions, the assassinations, in a word the miseries to which this gave birth? Perhaps it might be said that in this instance the emigrants were hostile invaders—but the same events took place, in the decline of the Roman empire, between the emigrants who were invited to occupy the vacant frontiers and the ancient inhabitants; altho the former ought to have been united to the latter by every principle of affection, and gratitude. By these and almost an infinity of other instances, it would not be rash to conclude, that by the undeviating principles of human nature, whenever the inhabitants of one country, should be permitted to settle in another, by national affections, an union would be formed, unfriendly not only to the ancient inhabitants, but also to social order. Our own experience was not, he believed, in opposition to the general observation. Altho this reasoning was to his mind conclusive against a general and indiscriminate admission of aliens to the rights of citizenship; yet he did not wish it should go to a complete exclusion.

It was said in support of what was termed our liberal policy, that our country wanted commercial capital—that we had an immense tract of vacant territory; and that we ought not, with the avarice of a miser, to engross to ourselves, the exclusive enjoyment, of our political treasures.

Mr. Sedgwick said he had never been convinced, that we ought to make so great a sacrifice of principle, for the rapid accumulation of commercial capital—He had never been convinced, that by an improvement of our own resources, it would not accumulate as fast as might be for the public benefit. We heard much of equality. Property was in some sense power; and the possession of immense property, generated daring passions which scorned equality, and with impatience endured the restraints of equal laws. Property was undoubtedly to be protected, as the only sure encouragement of industry, without which we should degenerate into savages. But he had never been convinced that the anxiety with which we wished an accumulation of capital, in the hands of individuals, was founded on correct republican reflection. The ardent ambition inspired by the possession of great wealth, and the power of gratifying it which it conferred, had in many instances disturbed the public peace, and in not a few destroyed liberty.

The vacant lands which some with so much avidity wished to see in the occupation of foreigners, he considered as the best capital stock of the future enjoyment of Americans; as an antidote against the poison of luxury; as the nursery of robust and manly virtue, and as a preventative of a numerous class of citizens becoming indigent, and therefore dependent. Whenever the time should arrive, and might that period be very distant, when there should no longer be

presented to the poor a decent competence and independence, as the effect of industry and economy, which would generally be the case, when lands were no longer to be obtained, on their present easy and reasonable terms, then, that description of men, now perhaps the most happy and virtuous, would become miserable to themselves and a burden to the community. Now the man who entered on the stage of life, without property, had a reasonable assurance, that a few years of industry and economy, would give him independence, competence and respectability. The prospect gave relish and effect to his labors. He planted himself on the frontiers, and cultivated in his posterity every useful and manly virtue—This was his treasure and it was a glorious one.

Mr. Sedgwick said he considered America as in possession of a greater stock of enjoyment than any other people on earth. That it was our duty to husband it with care; yet he could not altogether exclude such virtuous individuals, as might fly here, as to an asylum against oppression. On the one hand, he would not dissipate our treasures with the thoughtless profusion of a prodigal; nor would he, on the other, board them, as in the unfeeling grasp of a miser. "Our glorious fabric," said he, "has been cemented by the richest blood of our country, and may it long continue to shelter us against the blasts of poverty, of anarchy, and of tyranny."

The present, Mr. Sedgwick said, he believed the most inauspicious time for the indiscriminate admission of aliens to the rights of citizenship. A war, the most cruel and dreadful which had been known for centuries, was now raging in all those countries from which emigrants were to be expected. The most fierce and unrelenting passions were engaged in a conflict, which shook to their foundations all the ancient political structures in Europe. This contest was supported on the one hand by men who believed personal political distinctions were necessary to the great purpose of security; and on the other by those who thought that society could be protected and individuals secured by a government with departments, and without checks; neither embracing the principles established here, where without privileged orders distinct portions of power were to be deposited in different hands, in such manner that it was almost impossible for the mind even to conceive that the different departments should form an union for any mischievous purpose; and altogether impossible to believe that without such concurrence either alone should be capable of executing any wicked design.

Could, he asked, any reasonable man believe, that men who actuated by such passions, had fought on grounds so opposite, almost equally distant, from the happy mean we had chosen, would here mingle in social affections with each other, or with us? That their passions and prejudices would subside as soon as they should set foot in America? or that possessing those passions and prejudices they were qualified to make or to be made the governors of Americans?

He believed that the amendment now proposed by his colleague, in conjunction with that which had already succeeded, would on the one hand check the admission of foreigners in such numbers as might be dangerous to our political institutions; and on the other, that it would not exclude such meritorious individuals as might be willing to serve the apprenticeship which might qualify them to assume the character and discharge the duties of American citizens.

He concluded by saying, that he had always been opposed to the policy of the government on this subject—that his opposition had not been abated by reflection, but increased by the existing state of things in Europe.

Tuesday, Dec. 23.

(Concluded.)

The bill to regulate the pay of the militia when called into the actual service of the United States having been returned with an amendment from the Senate, the same was taken into consideration, and the house agreed with an amendment to the amendment of the Senate.

The house in committee of the whole took into consideration the reported plan for the reduction of the public debt.

Mr. William Smith one of the committee who brought in the report, entered into a detail of the present and probable state of the finances, and the principles on which the report was founded.

Mr. Nicholas offered some remarks, the object of which was to show that a much larger surplus than that contemplated by the report, may be applied to the reduction of the debt.

The committee, without taking any vote rose and reported progress, and the house adjourned.

Foreign Intelligence.

PARIS, Sept. 10.

LITERATURE.

Yesterday died at Seaux (near Paris) the celebrated count St. Florian, celebrated for his many literary productions in prose and verse which breathe sensibility, display a sweet temper, and announce a refined judgment.

Though this distinguished author long before the revolution professed the true principles of republicanism, particularly in his Numa Pompilius, he fell nevertheless a prey to the jealousy, illimitable fear and cruelty of Robespierre, and was arrested by order of that tyrant; but after the dictator's death he was set free again. His health however was considerably impaired by the hardships he suffered during his long detention at Port Libre, (Port Louis) and the most cruel of the three filters, cut the fatal thread and deprived the Republic of an estimable citizen, when he had hardly attained the age of 39 years.

He left among his papers some new and complete works, which will perhaps soon be published.

UNITED STATES.

PORTLAND, Dec. 15.

A brig arrived at this port last Saturday belonging to Scarborough, having had 22 days passage from Barbadoes; the Capt. of which informs, that a British Admiral (whose name he does not recollect) had arrived at that island about the 17th Nov. with four 74 gun ships, in 24 days from England; and that two days after the squadron sailed for Martinique or Guadeloupe. It was reported at Barbadoes, that 10,000 British troops were daily expected in the West Indies.

BALTIKORE, December 22.

An unfortunate accident happened early on Friday morning last, at Herring Run, near Mr. Webster's on the Philadelphia road. As AUSTIN, a Mulatto waiting man belonging to General Washington was riding towards the said Run on a Mare, accompanied by a mule Colt, the Mare stooped to drink when suddenly turning to her colt, she threw off Austin into the water, hanging by his foot in the stirrup. A Negro fellow present attempted to save him but in vain. He was afterwards carried to the House where he lodged and had the assistance of a Physician, who found him past recovery. It is said that Austin has been a long and faithful servant of our beloved President attended him through all the various scenes of the Revolution, and no doubt his unexpected death will be deplored by him.

Extract of a letter from a gentleman at Hamburgh, to his friend in this town.

In the course of 36 hours, about 1000 sail of vessels, loaded chiefly with West-India produce, have arrived at this place from Amsterdam, which has given us reason to expect, that a few days will put the French in possession of that city.

Arrived yesterday, in 17 days from Barbadoes, the ship Nancy, Captain Anderson, who informs that a transport had arrived there, full of troops; and reported that the rest of the fleet (which it appears had sailed for that place) might be daily expected.

Captain Anderson left there the brig Eliza, of Philadelphia, and two brigs from Alexandria, the names of which he does not recollect.

He spoke the brig Nancy of N. York, bound from Jamaica to that port, all well.

He confirms the account under the Barbadoes head, of the arrival on the 26th of two 74's with the prize ship of war La Jacobin, of 27 guns.

We were yesterday favored, by a friend, with the Barbadoes Mercury of the 22th of November, from which the following intelligence is extr. Ved.

BRIDGE-TOWN, Nov. 29.

Wednesday last arrived in Carlisle bay his Majesty's ships of war Montague, captain Fookes, and Ganges, captain Trescott, of 74 guns each, in thirty-two days from Cork; and brought with them the French national sloop of war La Jacobin, of 22 twelve pounders, and 220 men, commanded by citizen Dandy Colle. This vessel fell in with the above men of war off Cape Clear, four days after their departure from Cork, and taking them for two Spanish register ships, run along side the Ganges and fired into her, but immediately perceiving their mistake struck her colours; notwithstanding which, however, the Montague coming up at the time, they also fired into her and killed three men; in consequence of which, when her commander delivered up his sword to captain Fookes, he threw it overboard as a mark of his displeasure at their infamous conduct.

LA JACOBIN

is, perhaps, for her size, one of the finest ships in the French navy, built on a new construction, entirely flush fore and aft, working all her guns on one

deck, and carrying three barges for beating shot; her rudder is cased so as to be unscathed, and protected from any injury of the weather or shot; she is ballasted with water, and has on board a greater quantity of stores, &c. &c. than any first rate ship of the line. She was built at Brest, and was launched in February last, and equipped for sea with great expedition; on her first cruise she captured seventeen sail of vessels, and was out on this her second, but a short time previous to her capture. Her lowest computed value is at least 70000, and she cannot but prove a great acquisition to our navy, in these seas, as being a vessel well adapted to protect the trade of the islands.

By the arrival of the Montague and Ganges, we learn, that a vessel had arrived at Cork, two days previous to their departure from thence from Gibraltar, the captain of which informed, on an examination before admiral Kingmill, that he saw eight ships with the British flag over the National colours, beating into the gut of Gibraltar, four of which he took for line of battle ships, and the others frigates; supposed to be captured by Lord Hood, who, in the Victory of 110 guns, with the Britannia of 100, admiral Boscawen; Agamemnon of 64, captain Nelson, and a squadron of frigates, sailed from Leghorn on the 19th of September, in quest of some French men of war which they had an account of having got out of Toulon.

From Martinique we learn, that the Zebra sloop of war has captured a brig called the Sans Culotte, mounting 106 six pounders, and carrying forty men principally Americans, fitted out at Boston, and sailed from thence in company with a ship of 18 guns and 100 men, on a cruise among the islands. It appears that this ship was formerly the Lovely Lass, brig belonging to this port, which was some time past illegally seized in America, and has since been altered for the purpose of privateering. In consequence of this intelligence admiral Caldwell has dispatched a brig to windward of this island in quest of her, and for the protection of our trade.

Admiral Sir John Jervis and general Sir Charles Grey, sailed in the Boyne, from Fort-Royal, the 21st instant, for England.

Yesterday evening sailed for Martinico, the Montague, Ganges, and La Jacobin.

HALLOWELL, Maine Dec. 9.

IMPORTANT NEWS.

A gentleman from Wiscasset informs us, that a vessel had arrived there after a short passage, from Liverpool (England) which brings the agreeable intelligence, that the French had actually GOT POSSESSION of AMSTERDAM (the Capital of Holland) That nine tenths of the inhabitants were glad to receive them—and that at their approach the gates were opened, and the place given up without resistance.

NEW-YORK, Dec. 23.

The following determinations of the Committee of Public Safety are extremely difficult to be obtained in print, there being only a few copies printed for the use of the Generals. They respect the general security of the conquered countries, and enjoin the discharge of all the native military officers, and that the armed force shall be constituted from the armies of the Republic exclusively. Civil officers are to retain their situations, provided their civism is not suspected. To prevent vexatious imprisonments, &c. criminal affairs are to be subject to the decisions of the Generals, and the representatives of the French nation. All the inhabitants must bring their arms to the magazines.

The second part of these resolutions treats of the disposal of ammunition, artillery, forage, and other effects, not excepting accoutrements, camp equipage, &c. which must also be delivered up, and, if there is more than necessary for the army, be sent to France. These requisitions extend to horses, ammunition-waggons, and the like.

The third part treats of the public revenue chests, tables and merchandise; the fourth of materials that may be manufactured; the fifth of horses and other cattle in general; the sixth of corn, meal, and forage; and the seventh contains instructions for agents of every class. It is also understood that the best commodities are to be purchased by assignats, partly for the use of the army, and partly for conveyance to France.

BOSTON, Dec. 15.

From France, &c. 24.

On Sunday arrived the schooner General Heath, Captain Bacon, in 51 days from