

From the New-York Minerva.
ESSAY on the CITY of WASHINGTON.

TO found a City in the center of the United States, for the purpose of making it the depository of the acts of the Union, and the sanctuary of the laws which must one day rule all North-America, is a grand and comprehensive idea, which has already become, with propriety, the object of public respect.

In reflecting on the importance of the Union, and on the advantage which it secures to all the inhabitants of the United States, collectively or individually; where is there an American who does not see, in the establishment of a federal town, a natural mean of confirming forever the valuable connection, to which the nation is indebted for its liberation from the British yoke—that union which affords to every individual mutual aid against the efforts of any who may care to disturb public order and tranquility—that union, the field of the wise laws under the protection of which we shall all enjoy a life of peace, a freedom of opinion and moral equality in a degree hitherto unknown to any people on earth—that connection, in short, to which the United States owe the extent and the flourishing condition of their commerce, the respectable station they occupy among the nations of the earth, and which, under such a variety of aspects, ought to be the object of the veneration of every reflecting man.

The Federal City, situated in the center of the United States, is a temple erected to the Union, and towards the summit will the wishes and expectations of all true friends of their country be incessantly directed.

The City of Washington, considered under such important points of view, could not be calculated on a small scale. Its extent, the disposition of its avenues and public squares, should all correspond with the magnitude of the object for which it was intended, and we need only cast our eyes upon the situation and the plan of the city, to recognize in them the comprehensive genius of the President, to whom the direction of the business has been entrusted by Congress.

Washington is situated in 38 degrees 50 minutes north latitude; at the confluence of the Potomac and the Eastern Branch. Its limits extend over a part of Maryland and a part of Virginia, which are separated by the river Potomac.

The ground on which the city is laid out is healthy and fertile, and is disposed that more than half its circumference has the benefit of navigable water, and although its distance from the Capes of the Chesapeake Bay is almost three hundred miles, yet the tide rises there four feet, and the water readily admits vessels of four and five hundred tons burthen. The river above the city is on the point of being rendered navigable for boats of 150 and 200 barrels, to the extent of five or six hundred miles.

The city will cover a surface of nearly 4000 acres. The ground is not perfectly level, but declivities may be so managed as not only to be rendered almost insensible, but very useful in carrying off the water and preserving the cleanliness of the city.

This description would perhaps be sufficient to give the reader a high idea of the city in general; but the details are of a nature to interest and command the attention of men of all ages and in all situations.

Washington, as the metropolis of the Union, as a commercial town, and a pleasurable situation, may, in every point of view, present resources that are rarely united; it is sufficient to attend to this establishment under all its aspects, and to induce one to assign it a distinguished rank among the most celebrated Capitals of the world.

When Major L'Enfant conceived the vast and magnificent plan, the execution of which must unite true elegance to utility and agreeableness; his attention was first directed to the situation now occupied by the Capitol. Here he fixed the center of the city, as the city is the center of the American Empire; and he rendered the edifice accessible by more than twenty streets, which terminate at this point. Each street is an emblem of the rays of light, which, issuing from the Capitol, are directed towards every part of America, to enlighten its inhabitants respecting their true interests. Each street is also an emblem of the facility, with which the Capitol may be approached, in every respect, and at all times, by every individual, who shall live under the protection of the Union.

This ingenious allusion has been happily favored by the ground. The Capitol has an elevation of 72 feet above the level of high water, and overlooks the city in such a manner, that its horizon will be bounded only by the small mountains at several miles distance.

This situation is well calculated to elevate the mind of the legislator; it will continually remind him, that, if from this Capitol are to proceed the laws, which shall give life and energy to all parts of the dominion; it is towards this central point also that the active vigilance of a nation of freemen will be directed.

The Capitol, which is constructed on the plan drawn by Mr. Hallet, will be one of the most spacious modern edifices. It will comprehend the halls intended for the two branches of the Legislature; the halls of conference; and the different offices attached to them, collectively or separately. The proportions of this magnificent monument correspond with its destination. The architecture is masculine and bold. The details are elegant, and the ornaments are well adjusted. The composition resembles the physical and political situation of the United States; each part has its local advantages; but its true beauty results from the connection of all its parts.

The court of this building is spacious and regular; it enlightens the interior, and facilitates the communications—it will be embellished with a colonnade of the Doric order; in the center will be placed the altar of Liberty, around which the United States will be represented under the figure of young women, which will be closely joined together. This group will be the emblem of the Union; pedestal statues of all the illustrious men, who by their valor or their writings, have contributed to establish and confirm the Union, may be placed between each portico, in the circumference of the court, and the niches arranged in the interior of the galleries, will be successively filled with the busts of distinguished men, whose life shall have been consecrated to the happiness of their country.

The Capitol will be the point from which the Americans will reckon their longitude; the tables are calculated by Mr. Ellicott, Engineer and Geographer to the United States.

The entry of the Capitol, on the east, will face a rectangular square, sufficiently spacious to contain fifty thousand souls on days of public solemnity; the approach to this is, as has been before remarked, by more than twenty different streets and avenues, some of which are from 80 to 100. This magnificent proportion adds to the grandeur of the Capitol; and the rows of trees, which will line the great streets, or avenues, will render the view picturesque.

In the center of the square, there will, probably, be erected a groupe, representing, on one side, the United States assigning to the President the direction of the Federal City; and on the other, the President, inviting artists from every part of the world, to come and enrich, with their talents, the establishment confided to his superintendance.

The principal avenue, on the west side, will be divided, through its whole length, by a canal, from which will proceed an immense number of branches, intended to water and cleanse the streets of the city. The declivity occasioned by the difference of level, between the Capitol and garden, will form a carpet of green which will extend to the borders of the canal, and be interrupted by cascades of running water, issuing from allegorical statues, emblematical of the great rivers of America, such as the Delaware, the Hudson, &c. which may be placed on the terrace of the Capitol.

The second principal building is the house intended for the President of the United States: It is constructed on the plan designed by Mr. Hoban, and next to the Capitol, will be the most spacious and splendid monument hitherto erected in America. By its position, it is the point of union for more than fifteen streets. The Capitol and the President's house are so situated, that the President may have continually in his view, the temple where are deposited the laws, the execution of which is committed to him; and it seems, that by the multiplicity of the streets and their diverging direction, it was intended to remind him constantly of the importance of directing his official views to the most distant parts of the Empire; and this ingenious allegory, in an inverted sense, will call to his mind, at the same time, that his actions, are continually and unavoidably open to general inspection.

Upon the square in front of this edifice, may be represented the founder of American liberty, encircled by his companions in arms, Governors and Ministers, renewing, in the face of heaven, the oath to maintain the union at the hazard of their lives.

These allegorical groupes which continually retrace some duties, are doubtless preferable to statues erected by flattery to men, whom impartial history so often strips of their fictitious virtues.

America in discharging a duty imposed on her by gratitude to her first magistrate, will at the same time, furnish a useful lesson for his successors, by showing them what she expects from their exertions, and what they have a right to hope from her gratitude.

Every thing around these edifices corresponds perfectly with their grandeur: the streets and the avenues which terminate here, are of a breadth and extent of which one cannot yet form any idea by comparison; indeed no city on earth offers so many points of connection, so spacious and laid out with such regularity.

If the city of Washington contained nothing interesting, except these two monuments so important by their situation and their political relations; what inhabitant of the United States would not wait with impatience for the first Monday of December in the year 1800, and desire to be a witness of the dedication of the two edifices, which will forever be a memorable epoch for America? But in describing a subject so important, it is obvious the resources of eloquence become useless; for that which is really elegant has no need of ornaments, and the imagination readily supplies every thing that could be added to the subject.

The garden which connects the Capitol and the President's house, is laid out in proportions that correspond with the magnificence of those structures; the space which it is designed to occupy is 1700 feet broad, and more than 7000 in length, independent of the two immense declivities which extend from the Capitol, and the President's house to the canal which separates them from the garden.

(To be Continued.)

UNITED STATES.

ELIZABETH-TOWN Feb. 4.

At a stated meeting of the "Constitutional Association of Inhabitants of the Borough of Elizabeth," held at Elizabeth Town, on the first Monday in February, 1795—present one hundred members; after free discussion, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted, excepting one dissentient to part of the third—the fourth—and eighth resolutions:

Resolved I. That the present constitution of the United States, the foundation of our federal union, is entitled to the patronage of every real friend to the peace and prosperity of our country as well as to the good wishes of every friend to the liberties and rights of mankind.

II. That the rank which the United States held among the nations, their well established credit, their growing commerce, the full demand for all agricultural property, their present state of amity and peace with all European nations, and in a word, the general aspect of the riches and rising glory of our country, form a sufficient testimony in favor of the present administration of public affairs, and afford a full answer to all the calumnies of its enemies.

III. That George Washington, our illustrious President, hath continued to deserve well of his country, and especially by his late exertions in issuing, and supporting a proclamation of neutrality by developing and frustrating the designs of a foreign incendiary; by his exertions to prevent a war with Great Britain, and by crushing the late insurrection without the shedding of human blood.

IV. That the late attempts to lessen the esteem of the President in the opinion of the good people of these United States, have been marked with design, and betray both, a disregard to truth and to the public weal, and ought to be guarded against, as attempts in the person of the President, to sap the foundation of our present political fabric.

V. That if the citizens of New-Jersey have ever acquired any fame, by a ready expression of their zeal for the public good, so far as the influence of this association extends, care should be taken that this good opinion be not forfeited by any forgetfulness of duty in time to come.

VI. That the peaceful enjoyment of our religious rights will, under God, be best maintained by a steady adherence to the principles of the confederation in which the rights of conscience and

religious opinion are equally secured to all.

VII. That the right hand of citizenship be extended to all citizens of these United States, disposed to meet us on the principles of our association and of these resolutions—assuring all such that we will ever be happy to maintain a friendly correspondence with any bodies of citizens, who may judge it expedient to form themselves into associations upon similar principles, or to maintain epistolary correspondence with any reputable individuals, as corresponding members of this association, with whom it may not be convenient to be united in any associated body at home; and it is humbly recommended to any other associations formed or to be formed in connection, to adopt the same principles of correspondence.

VIII. That this association highly approve of the patriotic testimony of the Tammany Society of New-York, in their declaration of the 19th ult. and hope as their constitution bespeaks them friends to liberty and their country, they will never want courage publicly to avow and boldly to defend their constitutional character.

IX. That the idea this association entertains respecting the existence of their own or other similar associations, is pertinently expressed in the following declaration of Germanicus, No. 3. "The propriety or impropriety of self-created societies depend upon the propriety or impropriety of their principle, and especially as that principle is developed by their actions."

X. That the committee of correspondence take such measures for the promulgation of the principles and proceedings of this association as they may think proper, and that the public be informed that this association contemplates an associate existence no longer than while associations of a contrary spirit and practice shall appear; and, finally, our doors are to be considered as ever open, not only to the attendance but to the arguments of any citizens of the United States, demeaning themselves according to the rules of the institution.

MAT. WILLIAMSON Pres.
Aaron Ogden, Secretary.

The dissentient member, alluded to above, embraces the present opportunity to declare, that no man entertains more exalted ideas of Washington than himself; that in the third resolution the expression "developing and frustrating the designs of a foreign incendiary," (on which was founded his objection) is in itself true; but as it was intended to pierce the Democratic Societies—as the framer of the resolution chose in this manner to stab in secret—to endeavor by ambiguity of expression to acquire an unanimous vote, rather than *bona fide*, candidly, and clearly bring forward the matter, that it might be fairly met—for these reasons he voted against it.

For the fourth resolution he saw no necessity to lay that the President was fallible—that he might be deceived—that, in their opinion, he was unconsciously laying a foundation for future despotism?—Was it abusive in them to point to the ruins of cities once free and flourishing, and warn Americans to beware of the causes of this calamity? Did these things display malice? Malice works in secret—these things were done openly; malice resides only in unworthy bosoms—to these institutions many of the most respectable inhabitants of the country belong. Would you wish to know their names? Ask the encircled heights of Bunker's Hill, and the green-stained plains of Monmouth, and let these answer. It is not reasonable to suppose that such men as these would fawn upon the hand, which forges shackles for them.

CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Wednesday, February 4.

The bill authorizing an allowance of drawback on part of the cargo of the ship Enterprise, was read a third time and passed.

Mr. Sherbourne, from the committee to whom was referred a bill from the Senate to amend the post-office law, made a report, which was read a first and second time, and referred to a committee of the whole to-morrow.

It was moved, that two members should be added to the select committee to whom were referred the memorials of the manufacturers of cordage, of chocolate and of paper. This was agreed to.

The house, on the motion of Mr. Heath, went into a committee of the whole on the report of the select committee as to the progress made in settling the accounts of balances due to the old government. This was accordingly done, Mr. Cobb in the chair. The report was read.

The first resolution in the report was that further and more adequate provision ought to be made for recovering of debts due to the United States. Mr. Heath was in favor of the resolution.

Mr. Sedgwick thought any new regulations superfluous, as every precaution had been taken that could be taken.

There was a message from the President, with a letter from the Secretary of State.

Mr. Wadsworth, in the discussion of this report, said, that he had got his own accounts with the United States settled, and to be sure it was much better that the thing was done, but he would not go through such a business again for twenty times the balance that he recovered. Many people had in despair given up the attempt.

The resolutions were agreed to with amendments, and reported to the house. The galleries were then, at half past one o'clock, ordered to be cleared for reading of the communications from the President.

Thursday, February 5.

A bill relative to compensation to certain officers employed in collecting the duties of import and tonnage, was read a third time, the blanks filled up, and the bill passed.

It was moved and seconded that the house should resolve itself into a committee of the whole on the report of the committee on reducing the national debt, which was done accordingly, Mr. Cobb in the chair. The resolution was then read.

Mr. S. Smith said, that he had not recollected before the house resolved itself, that he had in his pocket an address and remonstrance of the sugar refiners of Baltimore to submit to them. The committee, on this account rose. The address was then presented and read by the clerk. It stated, in pointed terms, the oppressive effects attending the excise on refined sugar. When the address had been read the committee was resumed, Mr. Cobb in the chair.

Our readers will recollect, that when this second resolution was laid before the committee, Mr. S. Smith had moved to strike the resolution out of the report.

Mr. Fitzsimons said—He believed that there had only been two of the taxes contained in the resolution complained of, viz. those on snuff and refined sugar. The auctioneers complained not of the tax, but wanted some particulars altered. This might be done, and it would be more candid to confine the motion merely to those parts of the resolution which had excited complaint.

Mr. Heister said, that in Pennsylvania, the tax on auctioneers had never, as he understood, been carried into execution. He was for dividing immediately on the motion as it stood.

Mr. Hillhouse was also for a division on the question.

Mr. S. Smith was anxious that the nature and extent of his motion might be understood. He had moved for striking out these taxes for the present, not to prevent the execution, but to suspend for the present the prolongation of an act which would expire in the end of the session of 1797. The taxes were confessedly experimental, and another year would enable the next Congress to decide much better whether they ought to be continued, than could be done at present. He hoped, therefore, that gentlemen would not mistake his motion, as if it went to an absolute negative of these taxes, when it was only temporary and conditional.

Mr. Page was likewise for striking out the clause. If good, at the end of the former term, it could be renewed. But let the experiment be made.

Mr. Sedgwick, Mr. Chairman, the principal question involved in that before the committee is, shall permanent provision be made, for the reduction of the public debt? As subordinate to this, is it necessary that the taxes laid last session, on loaf sugar, snuff, liquors, and sales at auction should be continued? The great subject, then, of providing the means of reducing the debt, is necessarily involved in the discussion. If it shall appear to be the duty of the legislature to establish an efficient system for this purpose, and if it shall be demonstrated that these taxes are indispensable for that end, it will follow, that the resolution for their continuance, should not be struck out, until an adequate substitute is proposed.

When we take a retrospective view of the various stages, thro' which the mass of debt has passed, previous to the funding system.—The extreme difficulty there was in executing that business—the agitations which attended it—the jealousies, suspicions, and animosities which have resulted from it; when we call to mind the disunion and party which have flowed from this source when we reflect on the magnitude of our debt; and when we know how anxious our constituents are, it should be put in a train of reduction, we must conclude that we ought assiduously to seek the means of effecting it.