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*For the* NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

## TO THE PEOPLE,

## THE DEFENCE.

*No. XVII.*

*(Subject of Foreign Relations, Continued.)*

The people have not forgotten the zeal and wisdom with which those who compose the administration, and particularly the chief magistrate, defended the neutral rights of the United States, and more especially the great principle that free ships make free goods. They have perceived, through the whole of his political career, a resolute purpose to maintain those rights and this principle inviolate. While they have condemned the wanton departure made from it by preceding administrations, they have rejoiced to see a consistency between the professions and conduct of those now at the head of their affairs.

Nothing, on this point, can be more true than the language of the American Envoys, appointed to adjust the differences with the French republic. "The desire," say they, "of establishing universally the principle that neutral bottoms shall make neutral goods is perhaps felt by no nation on earth, more strongly than by the United States. Perhaps no nation is more deeply interested in its establishment. It is an object they keep in view, and which, if not forced by violence to abandon, they will pursue in such manner as their own judgment may dictate as being best calculated to attain it."

We have dwelt the longer on the aspect of our foreign relations with regard to France and Great Britain, from the conviction that they are the two pivots on which the European world turns. Their power pervades the continent. It hurries it into war or hushes it to peace. Their mighty and turbulent vortices embrace almost every nation of the world, to whom the alternative is only left of sharing the fate of the one or the other. But alas! how little have the latter profited of their participation. With a very few exceptions they have shared a common fate. The blood of their citizens has flowed in torrents, and the resources of their industry, their arts and their trade have been consumed —for what?—To raise the false glory of one man, and to consolidate in one nation the despotism of the ocean. Happy had it been for these unfortunate powers, if they had suffered the Leviathans of the world to fight their own battles; and had embraced the golden opportunity of invigorating their resources, while the overgrown nations were exhausting theirs.

This has been the wise determination of America; and it has been her rare felicity to carry this determination into effect. The infatuated councils of one man carried her to the precipice from which so many nations have fallen; but thanks to the Supreme Being, the wisdom of another has snatched her from ruin.

The means of this preservation do not, in all their details, appear. The usage of nations keep them in most cases from the public eye. We cannot, therefore, step by step, number the measures of our government in its intercourse with foreign powers. We cannot see the wisdom with which it timed its demands, the spirit with which, at a fit season, it urged, or the prudence with which it appeared for a time to wave them; we cannot see displayed the happy union of dignity and moderation so important to the harmony of sovereign powers; we cannot see the vigilance which seized all fit occasions, and the talent which made the most of them, to advance, by just means, the interests of our country.—These may perhaps, receive the meed of justice by some future historian who shall have access to the public records when secrecy may no longer be useful. But what is most important, we contemplate, so far as time has allowed, their great and happy effects. We contemplate our country prosperous within, and commanding among the nations of the earth a higher estimation than she has ever before enjoyed.

Let it be recollected too that this rare distinction of a young nation has been secured without the surrender of a single right, or the slightest violation of the most punctilious honor. Like other nations, we may not have conquered peace at the cannon's mouth; but we have secured it by far nobler means, by means which God and justice sanction.

With one other nation of Europe we have had some difference. Spain, owing probably to the feebleness of her power more than to hostile sentiment suffered considerable spoliation to be committed by private vessels on our trade about the time that similar depredations were committed by France. The remonstrances of our government during the presidency of Mr. Adams having proved unavailing, the new administration were charged with enforcing them. Measures to this effect were immediately taken; with what prospect of success does not appear, when an object of vast importance to the whole of America claimed the attention of the goverment. This object, the secure navigation of the Mississippi, from its magnitude, justified a superior attention to all others: and we may well suppose that in its prosecution minor objects for a time received but subordinate regard. The slowness with which the Spanish monarchy acts is well known, and this likewise tended to delay the negociations. Notwithstanding however, these obstacles, they issued in a convention, whose ratification, as well as provisions, have been lately so copiously discussed, as to supersede in this place all further notice.

The only hostilities into which we have been drawn are with Tripoli. It does not appear that this rupture arose from the neglect of any means on the part of our government calculated to avert it; and it will be allowed that the war, to which it has given birth, has been pursued with such spirit as completely to protect the American trade, without incurring, until the present year, any expence beyond that requisite for the ordinary naval establishment. Through all its vicissitudes the honor of the American flag has been upheld by the valor and skill of our seamen; and, in a recent instance, their conduct has inspired the respect of the world. A misfortune, it is true, to which all nations are liable, has befallen us; but we are greatly mistaken if this disaster will not be improved to strike a salutary terror into the pirates of the Mediterranean, and thereby to command a lasting peace.

But that measure, which of all others is the most highly appreciated, and which of all others developes a wider exertion of talent and power than any other, is the acquisition of Louisiana. To do this act full justice it is proper to view it as forming a part of the general measures of the administration.

We have seen that the just conduct of the administration had laid the foundation of mutual confidence between the United States and France and England, the leading powers of Europe. Some of the means by which this difficult and delicate result was insured, have already appeared. We have seen that an honest neutrality was rigidly observed towards both nations, connected with a respectful solicitude to cultivate every friendly relation not incompatible with it. We have seen that all existing sources of dissatisfaction, so far as depended upon the American government, were removed; that treaties formed by a preceding administration were conscientiously executed, and that new stipulations, rendered necessary by unforeseen occurrences, were cheerfully entered into. Other causes of mutual good will are hidden from our view. Every individual, engaged in active life, knows how large a portion of the success with which his plans are crowned depends upon the manner in which he holds an intercouse with those with whom he transacts business. The humblest menial has pride that may be awakened by arrogance, and feelings that may be wounded to resistance. This sentiment, in the intercourse of nations, rules with a ten fold energy. Injuries are often overlooked, but insults are never forgiven. In proportion to the alienating tendency of reproaches and rudeness, is the contrary influence of manifestations of respect and esteem. While these are preserved, however wide the differences between nations, the door of conciliation is kept open. The existing differences do not awaken the malignant passions that engender deadly hostility, and produce a wide spread opinion that all prospect of compromise is over. Governments do not assume that ground of jealous pride that disdains to propose terms of accommodation, derogatory to the dignity of an insulted nation. Happy had it been for the peace of the United States if these prudential considerations had had their proper weight during the administration of Mr. Adams. Had this been the case the æra of peace would probably have sooner arrived, and millions of national and personal property been saved. Had this been the case, the chief magistrate would not in his official character, have ascribed to the government of France "a disposition to separate the people of the United States from the government; to persuade them that they have different affections, principles and interests, from those of their fellow citizens, whom they themselves have chosen to manage their common concerns, and thus to produce divisions fatal to our peace."—Much less would a Secretary of state have been permitted to declare to Congress and to the world that in this way "it (France) determined to fleece us." "In this way it gratified its *avarice and revenge*—and it hoped also to satiate its *ambition*. After a long series of insults unresented, and a patient endurance of injuries aggravated in their nature and unexampled in their extent—that government expected our final submission to its will. Our resistance has excited its surprise; and as certainly encreased its resentment. With some soothing expressions, is heard the voice of wounded pride. Warmly professing its desire of reconciliation, it gives no evidence of its sincerity: but proofs in abundance demonstrate that it is not sincere. From standing erect, and in that commanding attitude requiring implicit obedience—cowering, it renounces some of its unfounded demands. But I hope we shall remember "that the tyger crouches before he leaps upon his prey."

Gracious heaven! is this the language of one of the first officers of our government; of a government that styled the nation over which it presided the most enlightened of the world? But I forbear—my object is not crimination—Would to God, for my own feelings, for the proud feelings of my countrymen, I could throw a veil over the ferocious sentiments of these ferocious times!

Examine the diplomatic correspondence of the present administration;—examine even that correspondence which the lawless depredations of piracy have extorted; you will find no language like this; language, surely not intended, but certainly calculated to convert the civilised world into a wilderness, and to enlist the *hyenas* of the new against the *tygers* of the old world. No! With every nation with which we have had recent intercourse, the language of decision, the demand of justice, the threatened vindication of right, has been accompanied with no rudeness to the government we addressed, with no insult to nations guiltless of offence. Our moderation and dignity of language have inspired our friends with increased affection, and have instilled into the breasts of our enemies a conviction that our eventual dependence is upon actions, and not words. The chief magistrate has been reproached with calling the government of France "*an enlightened government*." But on what grounds is this reproach sustained? It can only be sustained on three grounds; either that it is untrue; that it is partial; or that it is impolitic. That it is true the state of the whole world attests. When was France so formidable as at this period? Has she an enemy of whom she is afraid? Are not empires shaped by her will? Does not the majesty of kings bow in her dread presence, and whence all these mighty effects but from the superior wisdom of her councils? But the expression has been distorted. It has been made to imply an unlimited encomium on the *internal* measures of her government.—It has, however, no such meaning. It can have none such. With this the American government has nothing to do;—its whole relationship to France springs from the measures that unite her with other nations. Nor has this government any thing to do with the conduct of that government to foreign powers, so far as it avoids all interference with our rights. Properly explained, the expression is very narrow. It applies *exclusively* to the conduct of the French government towards us. It also applies *exclusively* to the *present time*. Who is there then that disputes that *this conduct at this time* is enlightened?

Is the encomium partial? The same message represents the British government as actuated by honourable sentiments of good will to the United States. Was it impolitic? Let events decide. We have an uninterrupted peace with France; we have more; we have, on several recent occasions, received from her the most effectual aid towards the accomplishment of interesting objects—Why has the dissatisfaction of Spain at the possession of Louisiana vanished?—Why have the Tripolitans covered our captive citizens with kindness instead of chains? If a few words, neither untrue nor partial, could have these effects, were they unworthy of the penetrating judgment that dictated them?

It was announced at the commencement of Mr. Jefferson's administration that he was held in contempt by France, and that the English government distrusted him. If so, how much greater the merit of converting these hostile feelings into amicable sentiments?

CURTIUS.

*(Subject of Foreign relations to be continued.)*

*From the Freemans Journal.*

The following is a copy of an original letter from the venerable Franklin, to a minister of a church in the south part of New Jersey, which has been recently discovered there among some old family papers. It is a composition perfectly in the manner and spirit of that great and worthy man.

*Philadelphia*, June 6th, 1753,

DEAR SIR,

I received your kind letter of the 2d inst. and am glad to hear that you encrease in strength—I hope you will continue mending, until you recover your former health and firmness. Let me know whether you still use the cold bath, and what effect it has.

As to the kindness you mention, I wish it could have been of more serious service to you; but if it had, the only thanks I should desire, are that *you would always be ready to serve any other person that may need your assistance*; and so let good offices go round; for mankind are all of a family. For my own part, when I am employed in serving others, I do not look upon myself conferring favours, but as paying debts. In my travels and since my settlement, I have received much kindness from men, to whom I shall never have an opportunity of making the least direct return; and numberless mercies from God, who is infinitely above being benefited by our services. These kindnesses from men, I can, therefore only return to their fellow-men; and I can only shew my gratitude to God by a readiness to help his other children, and my brethren, for I do not think that thanks and compliments, though repeated weekly, can discharge our real obligations to each other, and much less to our Creator.

You will see, in this my notion of good works, that I am far from expecting to merit Heaven by them. By Heaven we understand a state of happiness, infinite in degree and eternal in duration. I can do nothing to deserve such a reward. He that for giving a draught of water to a thirsty person should expect to be paid with a good plantation, would be modest in his demands, compared with those, who think they deserve Heaven for the little good they do on earth. Even the mixt imperfect pleasures we enjoy in this world, are rather from God's goodness than our merit; how much more so the happiness of Heaven? For my own part, I have not the vanity to think I deserve it, the folly to expect it, nor the ambition to desire it, but content myself in submitting to the disposal of that God who made me, (who has hitherto preserved and blessed me, and in whose fatherly goodness I may well confide) that he will never make me miserable, and that the affliction I may at any time suffer, may tend to my benefit.

The faith you mention has doubtless its use in the world. I do not desire to see it diminished, nor would I desire to lessen it in any man; but I wish it were more productive of good works than I have generally seen it. I mean real good works, works of kindness, charity, mercy and public spirit; not holyday keeping, sermon hearing or reading, performing church ceremonies, or making long prayers filled with flatteries and compliments, despised even by wise men and much less capable of pleasing the Diety.

The worship of God is a duty, the hearing and reading may be useful, but if men rest in hearing and praying as too many do, it is as if the tree should value itself on being watered and putting fort leaves, though it never produced any fruit.

Your good master thought much less of these outward appearances than many of his modern disciples. He preferred *the doers* of the word to the hearers; the son that seemingly refused to obey his father and yet performed his commands, to him that professed his readiness, but neglected the work; the heretical but charitable Samaritan to the uncharitable but orthodox priest and sanctified Levite. And those who give food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, and raiment to the naked, entertainment to the stranger, and relief to the sick, &c. though they never heard of his name, he declares shall in the last day be accepted; when those who cry Lord! Lord! who value themselves on their faith, though great enough to perform miracles, but have neglected good works, shall be rejected. —He professed that he came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance, which implied his modest opinion, that there were some in his time so good that they need not hear even him for improvement. But now-a-days we have scarcely a little parson, that does not think it the duty of every man within his reach to sit under his petty ministration, and that whoever omits this offends God—I wish to such more humility and to you health and firmness,

Being your Friend and Servant,

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

## CHESAPEAKE AND DELAWARE CANAL.

The committe of works of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, in pursuance of the plan adopted by the president and directors for giving information to the Stockholders and public at large, of the progress of the work—now offer the following detail of its procedure since the stated meeting of the board in July last.

During the whole of this period the work has been carried on with unremitting diligence: about 250 workmen have been constantly employed, and their progress has been such as to satisfy the utmost expectations of the committee.

Several of the committee having just completed a visit and examination of the whole of the works, are enabled to give the following particulars of its progress.

From the commencement of the Feeder at the forge on Elk river, about half a mile has been fully completed, filled with water, and is navigated for conveying stone for the intended aqueduct over the Elk.

From the end of this first piece or division a second piece of about half a mile more is open and nearly finished, having been more tedious from its rocky soil, which however furnishes stone for the masonry of the works.

After a few intervening perches of ground not yet begun, a third piece or division extends for near three fourths of a mile to the road from Elkton to Lancaster, which it crosses; of this distance the greater part is quite complete, and the rest nearly finished.

From the above road eastward, towards the Newark road to Elkton, upwards of half a mile more is open, a considerable part completed, and the rest greatly advanced.

Between the Newark road and the main post road from Christiana to Elkton, near a mile is opened and much advanced.

To the eastward of the main post road, about one fourth of a mile is open and a considerable part of it finished.

All these parts of divisions, taken together, amount to upwards of 3 1-2 miles out of five, which constitutes the whole course of the feeder to the reservoir.

The interstices or spaces between these different pieces or divisions, except in one or two places, are mere divisions of the different contracts by which the work has been done, or are left to accommodate other operations, and will soon be removed so as to unite the parts which are completed.

With respect to the plan and execution of the work, the committee feel highly satisfied that the form and size of it are such as at once to afford the conveyance of water and navigation to the canal, with as much simplicity as possible, and that its execution has been made with as strict economy as is consistent with the importance of its uses, and the strength and durability which a public work of so much importance ought to possess; nor do they hesitate in believing, that the finished parts of it will bear the test of comparison with most European works of the kind.

The committee feel it an act of justice to say, that the plans and conduct of the engineer have been such as to do high credit to his professional skill and abilities. That the superintendants of the masonry, and other mechanical parts, have evinced great skill in their respective works; that the contractors for digging, have performed their work with diligence and integrity, and that the laborers have conducted themselves in general with industry and propriety.—From such a body of men collected together some instances of disorder will be expected, but few or none have occurred except in the unfortunate affray at