

(Gaston's Address concluded from our last.)

But to proceed with the history of Executive measures. On the 30th of December 1805, our Ambassadors at London, were apprised by the British government, that, if contrary to every expectation, America should submit to the insolent mandates of Napoleon, and acquiesce in his flagrant usurpations, they might be compelled to adopt measures in retaliation of the Berlin decree. America, as we have seen, did submit. America did acquiesce, and by such submission and acquiescence virtually surrendered her independence; or at least abandoned her neutrality. Yet in December following, upon the bare rumour that Britain was about to press retaliating orders, at the very moment when it was known that our minister Mr. Monroe had just arrived from London, and was on his way to the seat of government, and that an envoy extraordinary from the British court dispatched expressly to atone for our insulted honor, in the attack on the Chesapeake, was on the ocean, the President makes a confidential communication to Congress—their doors are closed—and at his suggestion an unlimited Embargo is laid. The act, either from the extreme haste or want of skill of its authors, being clumsily framed, supplement on supplement is added to it, till at length even the necessary and harmless coasting traffic of our country is so hampered with tyrannical restraints as to be nearly annihilated.

Review these facts, and then pronounce whether they do not justify the remark, that the improvident conduct of our administration (not to give it a harsher epithet) has contributed to, if not brought upon us, the evils which we now endure? Had they manifested a becoming spirit of resistance to the Berlin decree; had they but declared to Napoleon, "so long as you forbid us to trade with your enemy, so long we will have no commercial intercourse with any of your subjects," the decree itself would in all probability have been repealed, or at least favourably modified. At all events, such a resistance was due to the honor of the American name; it would have effectually prevented the retaliating orders of Britain, and thus rendered a recourse to the tremendous expedient of an Embargo, unnecessary. Never was there a sounder maxim than that contained in the farewell address of the illustrious WASHINGTON: "the Nation which indulges towards another an habitual hatred or an habitual fondness, is in some degree a slave." What indeed have we gained by an abandonment of that open, manly, direct and impartial policy of which he gave the example, and which our condition, as a neutral and independent people, so obviously required? What have we gained by all our concessions to France, or by all our hectoring towards Great Britain? We have increased the overbearing insolence of the one, and have irritated into intractable stubbornness the haughtiness of the other.—To punish this insolence, and to subdue this pride, are now said to have been the ends contemplated by the Embargo.—How futile the measure, all must see! Ten months nearly has it been in operation, and not the slightest indication is manifested by either of the belligerents to recede from the position it has taken. What effects it has produced on ourselves, it is needless to describe.—My head is sick and my heart is sad at the sight of the distress which every day forces into observation—at the sight of industry, unable to procure its accustomed rewards, and enterprize, languishing for an opportunity of exertion.—But what are the inconveniences now felt, compared with the calamities which must be encountered if the Embargo is to be prolonged, another—and another year? The farmer with the crops of two seasons on hand, unable to pay his debts, and ashamed to look his creditor in the face—the merchant embarrassed, or reduced to insolvency, from a failure in the accustomed punctuality of his customers—the mechanic in vain soliciting for employment, or attempting to procure payment for his past labor—and the mariner compelled to abandon his occupation, or wander to some foreign country where he may be permitted to exercise it. These are a few specimens of the general wretchedness that will in a greater or less degree overwhelm all. But besides all this, there will be an empty treasury, which the people must fill, in order to pay off those philosophic statesmen who speak as eloquently, and recommend with so persuasive a grace "a dignified self retirement."—Will the embargo be continued another year? It is not for me to presume to reply to this question. But if James Madison is to be elected President of the United States of America, you can obtain an answer to it from indisputable authority. Consult the ministerial and official prints, attend to Mr. Jefferson's recent answer to the address of the New-Hampshire Legislature, and you will find, that a PERPETUAL EMBARGO, or a BRITISH WAR, are the only alternatives in the system of our Rulers, unless Napoleon will relieve us by a revocation of his edict. If Britain were to repeal her orders to-morrow, ex-

pect not that your commerce with her is to be renewed. Napoleon has vowed that his stubborn foes, "those proud Islanders," shall be extirpated, and has denounced vengeance against all who presume by an intercourse with them to counteract or retard the execution of his fell resolve. Other nerves, I fear, than those of Mr. Jefferson or Mr. Madison, are wanted to encounter with firmness his menaces and his frowns.

Such at least is my sincere conviction—Such are the apprehensions which actually oppress my mind. To express them candidly and without disguise, I consider a duty which it would be criminal to decline. You will decide for yourselves how far they are warranted by the facts already stated, and what corroboration they receive from the pertinent secrecy observed by our executive and his partisans in Congress, on the subject of French affairs. Why have the efforts to procure information respecting them, when the just anxiety of the nation was so highly and painfully excited, been treated with obstinate and sullen disdain? What reason can be assigned for conduct so indecorous and anti-republican, but the fear lest the people might know too much—might know with certainty what now can only be inferred from circumstantial evidence? To my mind this secrecy speaks a dreadful language. Every thing relative to Great Britain has been permitted to be made public—with respect to France, we are scarcely permitted to know any thing.

But, fellow-citizens, if these fears could be shown to be visionary, and these opinions proven to be unfounded; if all the objections I have yet declared to Mr. Madison could be removed to my entire satisfaction; yet should he not have my vote for President, while I could find another individual equally qualified for the office. The manner in which he has been obtunded upon the people of the United States, is so revolting to every sentiment of propriety, so repugnant to the principles of our sacred constitution, and so fraught with danger to our most valuable rights, that let this obstruction be sanctioned by his appointment, and a precedent is established which the rational friends of liberty will long have occasion to deplore. Towards the close of the last session of Congress, under the eye, and unquestionably with the approbation of Mr. Madison himself, a Caucus of Members of the National Legislature was assembled, in pursuance of a formal summons from one of their body, styling himself President of the Republican Convention, to ascertain for the people, who ought to be their next President and Vice-President.—This Caucus, consisting almost exclusively of the devoted friends of Mr. Madison, balloted for a Chief Magistrate of the Union, and having elected him as far as their votes could accomplish it, proceeded to recommend to the People to give to this appointment the formality of their suffrages. And that it might be known, in case of any unexpected difficulty occurring, what would best meet the wishes of the Caucus, a committee of two Members of Congress for each State was appointed, through whom the requisite orders and instructions might regularly be transmitted from the very commanders in chief to the lowest subalterns. Whatever attempts may be made to give to this Caucus a different appearance, and to assign to it other views, its real object and character are too apparent to be hidden from any one who wishes to see. None but the wilfully blind can fail to discover in it, an illicit combination of Members of Congress to influence the popular sentiment, to dictate under the semblance of a recommendation. The indecency of the attempt is so obvious, that in other times than these, when party is too generally the arbiter of right and wrong, it would be superfluous to point it out. The Constitution of the United States defines the powers and privileges of Members of the National Legislature, and any assumption by them in that character, of powers not given, is an act of usurpation. It is idle to alledge that this convention was called in their capacity of individuals.—The answer is ready.—Why were Members of Congress alone invited to it, and alone admitted? But if an assumption of undelegated power is in every instance an act of usurpation, by what epithet shall such an assumption be characterized, when the spirit, if not the words of the Constitution, has explicitly forbidden it? That venerated charter of Federal Union has provided, "That no Senator or Member of the House of Representatives, shall be appointed an Elector." If we desire the reasons of this prohibition, let us recur to that admirable work "The Federalist," written by Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Madison and Mr. Jay, in conjunction, and we shall find them sly and perspicuously stated. These expositors of the Constitution inform us, "It was desirable that the sense of the people should operate in the choice of the person to whom so important a trust was to be confided.—This end will be answered by committing the right of making it, not to any pre-established body, but to men chosen by the people for the special purpose and at the particular conjuncture." Vol. 2, Ch. 68,

page 141. "Nothing was more to be desired than that every practicable obstacle should be opposed to cabal, intrigue, and corruption. The Convention have guarded against all dangers of this kind, with the most provident and judicious attention.—They have not made the appointment of President to depend on pre-existing bodies of men, who might be tampered with before hand to prostitute their votes; but they have referred it in the first instance, to an immediate act of the People of America, to be exerted in the choice of persons for the temporary and sole purpose of making the appointment. And they have excluded from eligibility to this trust, all those who from situation might be suspected of too great devotion to the President in office."—Page 142. "Another and no less important desideratum was, that the executive should be independent for his continuance in office, on all but the people themselves. He might otherwise be tempted to sacrifice his duty to his complaisance for those whose favor was necessary to the duration of his official consequence. This advantage will also be secured by making his re-election to depend on a special body of representatives deputed by the People for the single purpose of making the important choice."—Page 143. These were the sentiments of Mr. Madison, at the time when he was one of the champions of the Constitution, when he so ably advocated its adoption, when he was proud, and justly proud, of the title of Federalist. How melancholy a dereliction of principle is manifested by his acquiescence in the scheme of a Congressional Caucus! If the reasons already cited, are convincing to shew that the national Legislature should be precluded from the appointment of a President, do not the same reasons demonstrate that they should not control nor interfere with the appointment? The recommendation of the Legislative Caucus, was designed to influence the people in the choice of a Chief Magistrate, otherwise it was ridiculous and nugatory. If designed to affect the choice of the people, then is it completely exposed to the invincible force of the arguments taken from that celebrated commentary on the federal compact. And if this design be effectuated, you may for a while preserve the forms of a popular election, but the real choice of a President, will thenceforth belong to Congress.

Having thus communicated to you my sentiments on the claims of Mr. Madison to the presidency it is proper that I should notice those of the other candidates for that high office. These candidates as far as I have yet heard, are George Clinton of New-York, James Munroe also of Virginia, and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney of South-Carolina. General Clinton and Mr. Munroe are both exempt from some of the strongest objections urged against Mr. Madison, but they are nevertheless liable to objections of no trivial nature. General Clinton was originally a warm and decided enemy to the Federal Constitution, and it is not certain that this enmity has been succeeded by as warm and decided an attachment. Many years since, he declined the appointment of Governor of New-York on account of his advanced years and infirmities, and I have yet to learn that his constitution has been re-established, or his years renewed. He is at the head of a numerous and factious family, who under the sanction of his name, have engrossed most of the lucrative offices in New-York, and manifested in too many instances, a dangerous aristocracy of disposition, and utter want of principle. Mr. Munroe, was also originally an opposer of the Constitution. When ambassador to France, under the administration of Washington, he evinced such intemperate zeal for the revolutionary phrenzy then prevailing, as betrayed him into a neglect of the substantial interests of his country; and compelled Washington to recal him. Indeed I have my doubts whether, independently of all other considerations, Mr. Munroe's talents are of that pre-eminent kind, as ought to be desired in a Chief Magistrate of the Union. Of Gen. Pinckney, who is also presented to the notice of the American people at this interesting crisis, I cheerfully avow my decided approbation. I have traced him through a long and active life, and have ever found him distinguished for inflexible integrity, and unsullied honour; zealously devoted to the interests of his country, and blessed with the intelligence to discern, and the spirit to defend them; invariably true to his principles of right, but superior to the intemperance of faction; the brave soldier, the practical statesman, and the virtuous citizen. From the period when he commenced to call himself man, up to this moment, when he is in the vigorous autumn of his days, he has been engaged in scenes eminently calculated to exhibit him to the world such as he really was. To his singular honor, he is recorded that the tongue of obloquy has never dared to attach reproach to his name. At the commencement of the revolutionary war, he abandoned his books for the profession of arms, as a volunteer in his country's cause. In June 1775, he was appointed the first captain in the first regi-

ment of infantry, levied in South Carolina. He was regularly promoted in the course of that arduous struggle, during which he yielded to none in patriotism, activity and gallantry, till in November 1783, he was raised by the vote of the Continental Congress to the rank of Brigadier General. Called at different times since the peace, to almost every distinguished station in the government of his native state, he was ever found equal to their duties, and always commanded the reverence and love of those around him. As a distinguished member of that band of worthies who formed the Federal Constitution, he was well known in Washington, and was selected by that eminent judge of worth and talents to succeed Mr. Munroe, as our minister at France. At the head of the embassy sent to that arrogant government under the administration of Adams, he succeeded in union with his colleagues in rendering the American character illustrious for wisdom, moderation and firmness. When applied to by the agents of the executive directory for large sums of money as a preliminary to negotiation, he replied in the language becoming the representative of a great and free people; "my countrymen are ready to expend millions in the defence of their rights, but they will never give a cent for tribute." Strongly attached to that character of our political union which he assisted to frame, solicitous to see it expounded with candor, and acted upon with energy, he has never abandoned the title of Federalist, by which its first friends were distinguished. Early in life, inspired with an ardent love for the principles of freedom, and having drawn his sword in their defence, he has manifested by his subsequent conduct, that his attachment "grew with his growth, and strengthened with his strength," and that he is justly entitled to the appellation of a Republican. I am happy to discover that those who know him best, esteem him most; and that the Citizens of South Carolina, however divided by party politics, are likely to unite their efforts to place him in the Presidential Chair. With General Pinckney for our President, we may hope to see our national councils characterised by wisdom, moderation, impartiality, and decision. He, who has with equal success combated British arms and French arts, may well be expected to present to both stations, that firm and undaunted front, which commands respect and secures peace. He, who comes forward at the spontaneous choice of the People, will naturally consider himself as the Chief of the Nation, and not the Leader of a Party. He who has been educated in the school of Washington, and distinguished by the favor of that illustrious sage, it may justly be hoped, will be found to observe his precepts, and to walk in his foot-steps.

If however, the war whoop of faction should be raised against this man, great and good as he unquestionably is, be not surprised. Since his revolutionary chief, and political father has been traduced and vilified, it will not be strange if General Pinckney should not escape the same fate. The calumniator of Washington—he who insolently called on the citizens of America to celebrate as a jubilee, the day on which Washington retired from office, and prostituting the words of inspiration, impudently exclaimed, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."—William Duane yet lives. Lives, did I say? For some services, (I dare not conjecture what) he has recently been raised over the heads of revolutionary merit, and native talents, to the appointment of Lieutenant-Colonel in the new army! A horde of retainers in the train of this chief of slander, imported patriots, who undertake to teach Americans the principles of Republicanism, are ready at the word of command to discharge the shafts of falsehood and abuse, and to denounce as monarchists and Tories, men and the sons of men, who have bled in the cause of liberty. The senseless yell once raised, may be reverberated by some from interest, by others from prejudice, and by many from ignorance. If I did not believe you had the good sense to despise unmeaning clamour, I had not appeared before you as a candidate. Yet it may not be amiss to caution you against the base artifices too frequently and successfully practised in the work of deception. Be on your guard, against whomsoever they may be circulated, of all general charges, vague rumours, and opprobrious insinuations.—Always enquire for facts and authorities, and you will bring to shame the authors and propagators of calumny. To the arguments of men of honesty and information, of whatever side, addressed to your understanding and apparently founded in truth, listen with candor and attention, for on your decision may depend your country's fate.

FELLOW-CITIZENS, you have now before you a candid exposition of my sentiments on the very interesting subjects which called for this address. It is scarcely necessary to add, that if appointed an Elector, I purpose to vote for Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, as President, unless some unexpected events should occur to convince me that a different