

The Newbern Gazette.

NEWBERN, (NORTH-CAROLINA) PRINTED FOR JOHN C. OSBORN, & Co.

[Vol. I.]

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1798.

[NUMB. 38.]

THE ADDRESS

OF
JOHN HENRY,
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF
MARYLAND,
TO THE
LEGISLATURE OF MARYLAND.

Council Chamber, Nov. 7, 1798.

GENTLEMEN,

I N communicating the enclosed address from the executive, an opportunity is afforded of expressing to the legislature, respectfully and concisely, some sentiments on certain subjects, which appear important to the peace and welfare of the people.

It is now obvious to all, that the conduct of the French nation would long before this time have justified an open and direct state of hostilities.—The love of peace has hitherto restrained the authorities of the union from such a state of things. How long it will continue to do so, is not within our province to determine. The uncertainty renders it prudent to be prepared for the worst; and notwithstanding the defence of the union is wisely by the constitution intrusted to the general government, yet no one can deny the propriety and importance at all times of a sincere and vigorous co-operation.

We are taught by the constitution to rely on the militia for our general defence. On sudden emergencies it is certainly our only resource: it is therefore at all times important, but especially now, to place them on the most respectable footing.

My duty for the last months has called me, in conjunction with the council, often to deliberate on this subject: it would be criminal in this crisis of our public affairs to withhold from the legislature its denunciations and imbecility.

In various parts of the late indeed a spirit of patriotism has displayed itself, and the zeal and intelligence of the officers have surmounted the defects of the system; but such temporary effects are not to be relied on. The safety of a community ought not to depend upon the voluntary effusions of a few patriotic men. The law must govern and invigorate the whole mass. To answer this important and necessary purpose, it is indispensable that it be revised in all its parts, and ample powers given to produce order, discipline and obedience.

All men are now satisfied of the propriety of putting the country in a complete state of defence; and in case of actual war, or a remote expectation of it, it would be unbecoming the wisdom of the legislature to trust the peace and safety of the country on the present weak and defective system.—Menaced as we are from abroad, by a brave, intelligent and enterprising nation, this subject is all important; and in the deliberations of the legislature, all others ought to yield to it, as of inferior moment.

Attached to this subject, is the condition of our arsenals. Their present state, and the conduct of past legislature, would induce a belief, that they really considered themselves as exempt in all future times from the calamities of war.

Arms and ammunition are indispensable, in times of profound peace, a certain proportion of both are proper; it is peculiarly so now; and while it is possible that our altars or any portion of our social happiness, may in any degree depend on these things, no rational man, it is hoped, can doubt what course to pursue.

It appears important that the earliest and most unremitting attention of the legislature should be bestowed on these subjects and a supply of both speedily procured.

Expenditures on these articles are not lost, they are of a durable nature; and if from a display of animated and united councils, together with vigorous preparations for war, we should fortunately escape

the present desolating scene, which is laying waste the fairest portion of Europe, still they will be useful on future occasions, and will remain a standing monument how much the peace and safety of a country depends on a prepared condition for war.

It was greatly desired by the executive to complete the quota of men under the late call of the President of the United States.—Orders from the the Commander in Chief, before he came into office, and since, have been often but ineffectually repeated. It was finally determined to send the adjutant-general to various parts of the state, to try the effect of his official influence and exertions; various returns were procured in consequence of this measure, but the business is still incomplete, and will continue to be so until the system is radically improved. By those who are best acquainted with military subjects, an adjutant-general's office upon a respectable footing is essential. His confidence ought to be the seat of government, and his emoluments adequate to a suitable maintenance. In revising the militia system this subject will no doubt receive due attention.

It is with great deference that I call your serious attention to these important measures of defence; it may be thought unnecessary in an individual to press what is so obvious to the understanding of all. I shall, however, rely upon the seriousness of the times, the great deficiency of military articles, the solicitude which an high public officer may be permitted to express for the general welfare, and above all, the dangerous and embarrassing imbecility, as well as the utter insufficiency of the military system for my justification.

It was early foreseen, that the principles upon which our constitution was originally founded, and the spirit of the times would have a discomposing influence on the mind of a certain species of property among us.

To these powerful and operating causes have been added the establishment of certain self-created societies; the practices of individuals among some religious orders of men, have also combined to hasten this prediction; its effects are now in operation, and daily felt, and the magnitude of the evil calls for all the aid and circumspection which is in the power of the Legislature to exercise.

The delicacy of this subject renders it inexpedient to descend to particulars; it appears however, not improper to remark that while the laws of a great part of the union countenance this kind of property, self-created societies, and individuals of certain religious orders of men amongst us, ought not, of their own motion, and without authority, to set up their own judgements in opposition to the settled order of things.

The height to which these matters are carried by individuals in some of the neighbouring states, call for some speedy remedy.

A candid representation from the highest authority in the state, or a deputation from the two houses, would no doubt produce salutary effects both on public bodies and private individuals.

As to those classes of men among ourselves, and who reside within the limits of the state, the laws can be framed to reach the delinquencies. The propriety of bestowing early and serious attention on this subject is, with great deference, submitted to your serious consideration.

An early practice, now sanctioned by a positive law, requires the chief magistrate, in cases where a sentence of death is passed, to issue a warrant for the execution of the criminal. Trials of this kind are often remote from the seat of government, where the parties and the circumstances attending their cases are wholly unknown to the governor. It is difficult, however ardently it may be desired, to procure impartial information and it can seldom be had, except from the judges, themselves.

A record is forwarded to the executive,

containing a naked sentence of death. Is it possible, in such a case that he can exercise with due deliberation, the authority with which he is constitutionally invested? Can he intuitively determine whether it is proper to execute or meliorate the sentence of the law? The difficulty is felt. It is humbly suggested, that the judges before which the trial is had, ought to be enjoined, either to state the circumstances of the case, and the deportment of the criminal, or to express their opinion on the propriety of executing, or extending mercy to the criminal.

Since the legislature was last assembled, some resolutions have been received from the state of Massachusetts, respecting the dangerous tendency of foreign influence, and proposing an alteration in the constitution of the United States in this respect, which are now submitted to your consideration.

No one will seriously contend that there is any physical virtue in the foot of earth which first gave us birth, and yet all will readily acknowledge, that without the exercise of our reason, and indeed, independent of it, it produces a predominant affection and preference in its favour, which no time, nor scarcely any circumstances, will eradicate; and from hence arises the exclusion of foreigners from the affairs of the nations to which they are not allied by their birth.

The experiences of our own time, and the history of past ages, equally assure us of the propriety and truth of this practice.

The philosophy, however flattering to the pride of human nature, which teaches men to look upon themselves as citizens of the world, and who, when they are asked where their country lies, will point their fingers to the heavens; is too loose and universal for the present age, and will forever endanger the firm structure which human ingenuity, can devise.

The country from which we derive our origin, and indeed all the kingdoms of Europe, with which we are best acquainted, have from the most remote authority, suffered this passion. It has in some degree contributed to their grandeur and security. It is therefore no wonder that the prejudices of education should be on its side, and the mind early impressed with its truth and importance.

Seeing then how guarded most nations have been upon this subject, and testing the truth of it by the short experience which we ourselves have had, we have sufficient reason to be satisfied, that it is either too late or too early to support such systems of liberality. However exalted the virtue, or distinguished the talents of an individual may be, and however worthy of public confidence yet, it is nevertheless true, that in general it is unwise to trust the high concerns of a nation to men not born within its limits.

My own mind has long been satisfied on this subject, and it appears salutary to carry the Massachusetts resolve into effect.

By a resolution of both houses, the governor was directed to transmit a copy of our laws to the executive of each state.—This desirable measure I was not able to execute, from the impossibility of procuring the acts of some sessions. It was tho't therefore advisable to wait till a complete copy could be procured.

I was early made sensible of the propriety of passing an order in favour of Charlotte Hall School. The fostering care of the legislature while it does honor to the individuals concerned, is most useful to the country at large; and if I may be permitted to express an opinion, there is no subject on which the public money can be so usefully expended as on institutions similar to Charlotte Hall School, which brings a certain part of a liberal education within the resources of men of moderate fortunes.

From an early period of my life I have participated in the councils of my country, and it is not without reluctance that

I now separate myself from them: and this indeed, I cannot well do without looking back upon the various and interesting scenes which have passed, and of expressing with gratitude and great respect my obligations to my fellow-citizens. My heart and its best affections are devoted to their happiness, and will continue to the end of my life.

Should my name therefore be presented to you for the purpose of filling the station which I now enjoy you will be pleased not to receive it, as it is my determination to become a private Citizen.

I have the honor to be,
With sentiments of great respect,
Your obedient servant,
JOHN HENRY.

The Honorable the General Assembly.

BALTIMORE, November 20.

A gentleman from Anapolis has favoured us with the following address from the Legislature of Maryland to the President of the United States, as amended and agreed to, on Thursday last.

To JOHN ADAMS,
President of the United States.

SIR,
The General Assembly of the state of Maryland, composed of characters selected by the various classes of its citizens and possessed of a full knowledge of the sentiments of their constituents would, in this interesting crisis of public affairs, do little justice to their feelings, the interest of their country, and to your VIRTUE, in forbearing to express an entire and cordial approbation of the firm, temperate, and dignified measures of your administration.

Called to the Presidency of the general government at a moment when the aspiring and venal rulers of France convulsed all Europe with a war professed for plunder and aggrandisement, it was not difficult to foresee that every source of artifice and intrigue, that talents could suggest, ambition excite, or avarice inflame, would be employed to disturb our happiness and peace, to cajole or force our country into a war prejudicial to our interests, and to render your administration painful, perplexing, and, if possible, odious to the people.

The destruction of religion, and encouragement of loose principles, were eminently calculated to create fit instruments for promoting divisions in, and paralyzing the energies of, other governments—hence the unremitting, dark and insidious exertions, practised to divide us at home, whilst a lawless, vexatious, and predatory war plundered us abroad.

To prevent the repetition of aggressions not more flagitious than destitute of colourable pretext, and to recall the government of France to an honorable fulfilment of its engagements in the true spirit of sincere amity, we have seen, with pride and pleasure your ample, just, and pacific instructions to our ministers, to demand reparation in the accustomed form of diplomatic negotiation; instead of the directory's meeting these amicable overtures, with pain and indignation we have beheld insults heaped on injuries—our ministers spurned with indignity—our country threatened with the fate of governments wantonly annihilated—and our citizens treated as vassals and slaves, who must basely purchase the privilege of stating their complaints. Conduct like this has torn the veil from the face of hypocrisy, and awakened the people of America from the delirium of unsuspecting friendship to rally round the government of their adoption. We have seen with satisfaction a treaty declared void, which was violated as often as the interest of individuals or the caprice of a moment dictated; and we heartily approve of the protective measures of our government, as well as the late regulations for internal quiet. Preparation for war is preservation of peace.

Having emancipated ourselves from Britain, and secured our liberties by the revolution, we pledge ourselves not to