

J. Stanton

THE STAR,

And North-Carolina State Gazette.

[No. 18.]

RALEIGH, (N. C.) FRIDAY, MAY 3, 1816.

Vol. VI.]

PUBLISHED WEEKLY.

BY THOMAS HENDERSON, JUN.

Subscription, three dollars per annum—but no paper will be sent without at least half a year is paid in advance, and no paper discontinued but at the option of the Editor, unless all arrearages are paid. Advertisements, not exceeding 14 lines, inserted three times for \$1, and 25 cents for each continuance.

STATE POLICY.

FOR THE STAR.

My Tin Cart, Feb. 3, 1816.

Mr. Editor—I observed in one of your late papers, an extract, or some extracts from the Journal of a Yankee Pedler Lawyer. As I consider myself the author of those remarks and observations, delivered in the form of Memoranda, I think I have some reason for complaint against that tattling sort of spirit that must out with every thing it either sees or hears; but as the folly and indiscretion of some one has prompted him to make my crude and undigested reflections public, I trust I need no other apology for re-appearing at this time, not so much in the character of a Journalist, as a defender of what I conceive will be thought heretical opinions, in this country; for such, no doubt, will be the prevailing sentiment respecting my mem's.

Perhaps one of the most flagrant accusations I could have made, in the eyes of a southern patriot, against his com-patriots, was, to allege in them a want of public spirit, as members of the Commonwealth; and to institute the invidious comparison I did, in this respect, between the northern and southern people.

I confess it myself, to be a bold declaration, and one which should not be hazarded against a loyal and intelligent people, without the best grounds. What, therefore, I may have now to say, shall be confined to the establishment of this point; and perhaps, if I get over it, without any great difficulty, I may proceed to defend some more of my rank positions.

I am not induced, Mr. Editor, to commence this vindication from any apprehensions about self; but because I wish to put the fact, as well as the assertion, home to you.

The only way by which the public spirit of a people is manifested, is, upon occasions of public interest or concern. What I understand, however, by public spirit, is not merely being alive, and awake, to what is passing in the community, and concurring in the advantages and improvement likely to happen or arise; but it is the disposition to aid and facilitate those designs, which have public utility, and public improvement, for their object, from the pure and disinterested motive of public welfare.

I think it is right to set out with definitions, particularly on propositions susceptible of various solutions. We then always know the point for which we steer, and any aberration from the mark indicates either a disposition to bolster a falling cause, or an inability to establish just conclusions.

Now that I have defined my proposition, and given my readers to understand what I mean by public spirit in a people, we will to the enquiry about the fact of its application. Upon this point I do not know that I shall be able to produce any direct, positive proof; such as I shall offer being rather of an indirect or passive kind; but still of a nature sufficient, fully, as we Lawyers say, to make out the case.

North-Carolina, I assert, as one of those facts which I wish to be taken in evidence of my charge, presents to the eye of the stranger fewer tokens of public munificence, and fewer objects of public improvement, than any other State in the Union of half her natural wealth and resources. I ask for one single index of national feeling, for national improvement, except the late appropriation (if it can be called an exception) by the Legislature for a Statue of Washington, to be placed in a building,—itself as proud a monument of taste, for style in architecture, as the appropriation at this remote period from the time of the existence of the great and illustrious worthy whom it is to commemorate, is a sign of national pride and grateful acknowledgement. Shall I mention the incorporation of two or three companies for opening some of the rivers of your state upon the great and efficient means of stock procured by individual subscription? The charters, &c. granted, which, for the probability of any beneficial result either to the State or said subscribers, will operate as a blank letter, and which nothing but the most narrow minded, niggardly and contracted policy, would have prevented a deliberative Assembly from foreseeing.

It is this crooked sort of policy in the legislative department of a state, which forever keeps the great body of the people ignorant of their territorial resources, inclines them to submit to tread the dull round of precedent and imitation, and never to indulge an aspiration after political greatness. What other designs, or what other attempts at domestic improvements, has your State to present to the view of the sojourner, who travels, perhaps, that his spirits may be exhilarated by those spectacles of human art and industry which most essentially and materially subserve the ends of human comfort and convenience?—What other to reward, to aid and to facilitate individual enterprise and exertion? What other to confer political weight and character in an estimate of national importance? I say, if such there be, of them neither hath my ears heard, nor my eyes seen. Possibly such may exist, and

should they, I trust that the patriotism of some one may prompt him to inform me. I would like greatly, aye, and vastly (as Launcelot Longstaff says) just to get at such intelligence; it would have so fine an effect in setting adrift a whole raft of my prejudices, which I have had the ill-luck to imbibe some way or other, to beg for reception elsewhere: Until, however, this welcome messenger shall sound his trumpet, I must continue to hug them, and offer for apology the opinion of Edmund Burke, that they sometimes come in aid of our reason. Perhaps the migratory nature of my calling may conduct me yet to some stupendous work of public utility. If such, however, are to be found, it must be somewhere among what one of my fellow-travellers terms the frog pond Counties of the State, whence proceeds that respectable portion of legislative capacity and patriotic liberality, so conspicuous in your last Session of Assembly. The same companion, of whose appellation I had occasion to speak above, and who is a little addicted to speculate when there are no inducements at hand to rummage among his tin, observed to me that he thought it a little ridiculous that the western section of the State, while it contained both a vast majority of population and a much more considerable extent of territory than the eastern, should always have the jack turned upon them in the legislative game. I asked him to account for it. He began this way. "Whether, (says he) the climate by its salubrious qualities, originates a superior energy, and activity of intellect, is a question I will not take on myself to decide; but on a comparison between the inhabitants of the eastern and western divisions of the State, in relation to superior intellectual vigor, the fact is certainly in favor of the latter—and a good proof of it is, that I can always make five good bargains in the lower parts of the State to one in the upper. This superior growth of talents and information, produces what under similar circumstances, I take to be a natural consequence,—a secret envy and jealousy of such superior, mental importance, and a continued dread and apprehension of being over-reached in plans and schemes of policy and finance. Hence it turns out that the members in the legislative body, are always kept at a sort of sparring. The western section of the State cannot have one of her great counties divided, but that the eastern must also be gratified in the creation of a new one. To such conduct they are no doubt actuated from motives of keeping up the balance." Then turning about to me, archly & sarcastically enough, "do you begin, says he, to perceive that the principle of political balancing, obtains as well in republics, as in monarchies and aristocracies? This principle of balancing in the political system, added here, is a natural one, and it obtained here in the State of North-Carolina, long before the discordant elements of revolution hurled to atoms and destruction the political ramparts of Europe; and, says he, in this little, narrow and circumscribed territory it has been productive of nearly the same bad consequences, as on the great theatre of European politics. You must remember, my friend, that having peddled longer in the State than you have, and having, besides, traversed it in almost every direction, I have had many and better opportunities of observing the workings and effects of this balancing principle. The fact is, that the true interests and welfare of the State are either lost or overlooked in the fear of ascendancy, the rivalry for power, and in the struggle for partial advantages. Upon scarcely any subject, affecting the interests of the people of the State generally, is this regard for sectional feelings and local prejudices lost sight of. Even that zeal of political controversy, by which the two parties of the U. States are divided, and with which they are animated, does not, in their legislative assembly, produce an indifference to local feelings and partialities. This, if all other considerations failed, we should consider enough to operate a fusion of parties on local subjects; but I have ever, as yet, observed the contrary to be the case. When local partialities, therefore, are so much permitted to sway the conduct of the legislative body of the State, it is in vain to look for that unanimity and cordial co-operation which moves to and ensures the execution of designs of internal improvement. The fact is, (so far as my opportunities have furnished me with the means of judging) that the western people are much more national than the eastern. They are not so clamish. They boast a more liberal, as well as a more enlarged principle of action; but as strenuous as they may be in their aims at public improvement, and as patient and as persevering as they may exhibit themselves under disappointment and defeat, yet will all this prove abortive while the eastern section of the State is permitted to exert such an undue and such an unnatural influence—at all times powerful enough to give my uncle Toby's favorite lullaby to any motion or project.

"It is melancholy enough to behold the sway of ignorance and prejudice in a legislative body, which might challenge competition, for several of its members, in point of genius, learning and intelligence, with any other in the Union; but the misfortune is, the western section of the State offers these few exceptions to this legislative mass of inert matter.

"Hence, my friend, you behold no streams down which glide vessels laden with the fat and plenty of the land—no roads, turpiked for the accommodation of either their own citizens, or those from other States—nor any other plan of internal improvement, from which any great benefit would result to the community.

"But, my friend, there is yet another thing to

be observed,—that the people themselves appear to be altogether ignorant of the benefit of plans of internal improvement. They are wheedled and cajoled out of their suffrages, upon the faith, hope and belief, that they shall pay no more towards defraying the expense of government this year than they did last.—The successful candidate knows that the performance of this promise, and the gratification of this wish, is a condition upon which he is to be maintained at his post. There are a vast majority of those who represent the people of the State, whose polar star, while acting in a representative capacity, is a re-election; and, in order to effect this grand desideratum, will be guilty of a sort of moral treason against the prosperity, the welfare and the happiness of the people of the State, by being always foremost in opposition to those plans of public utility from which it may be apprehended that popularity may receive some rude shock, or some sirocco blast. But this is not all; these said characters must justify themselves to their constituents; and in order to stand acquitted in their eyes, they are forced to flatter some of the most low, vulgar and contemptible passions and prejudices of those they represent. And here it is that they cease to be passive instruments and become the positive and efficient agents, not only in perpetuating those illiberal opinions and contracted notions, prevalent among the common order of men, but lend the sanction of their names and approbation to that wretched system of political waywardness by which it may be said, that almost every avenue to correct information and intelligence, is closed against the people. What shall be said of such men, who thus act so diametrically opposite to the purposes of their election; who, instead of furnishing every aid in their power towards ameliorating the condition of those they represent; who, instead of endeavoring to accelerate the march of the human mind, and to establish the dominion of intelligence and refinement over ignorance and superstition, seem to do all they can to prevent the accomplishment of these great ends?

"That popularity which dares not expose itself to the shock of political discussion and party agitation, is of a sickly and degenerate species, and at once denotes its origin. That genuine popularity of "its own conscious virtue hold," is, my friend, in these latter days, a sort of rare commodity, fit only for an order of men, altogether different in kind from the great majority of the legislative assembly of North-Carolina.

"I am afraid, indeed, that this genuine species, having grown sick and disgusted at the fine scenes exhibited at Old Field Musters, over the heads of whisky and brandy barrels, has soared to a purer region, and to a more genial clime. In her stead she has left a sort of counterfeit species, which starts at the whispers of a caucus, much like the young fawn of Horace at the rustling of the leaves.

"If, now, my friend, what I have stated be correct, you may discover a great reason why this State is so far behind others in the great career of political and domestic improvement. No man thinks himself elected to serve the interests of the people of the State collectively, but only that section whence he derives a little "brief authority;" and as the great mass of the population are not sufficiently aware of the importance of national character, nor intelligent enough to discern the breach of legislative confidence, things go on at this day as they did twenty years ago.

Here my friend stopped his remarks. As his opportunities for forming opinions upon the subject of your political humility, had been better than mine, I did not think proper to object to a single position he advanced. In the general outline our opinions chimed exactly; and as it regarded the shadowing out part of the picture by the aid of particular observation, as this seemed to come in so very appropriately, to corroborate general principles, I could allow no latitude, even here, for my scepticism. The opinions of my friend, the pedler, which, for the sake of better, I must adopt, not vouching, however, in every particular, for their correctness, I wish to be taken in part vindication of my opinions as expressed in my Journal. My charge of a want of public spirit among the people of the State, I wish to be confined, more particularly, to the eastern division of it. To this ignorant, stupid race of mortals, I do not know whether to concede them public spirit as a virtue, or impute it as a crime.—From their systematic opposition to every thing that bears the complexion of public utility or improvement, one would be led to suppose that they regarded their interests as a people altogether distinct and incompatible with that of the rest of the State; whereas, nothing can be further from the fact of disunion and incompatibility of interest, as they might learn from the most common and obvious principles of political economy—and if I did not know how repugnant were the prejudices of education and the feelings of old habits to the introduction of new doctrines, I might put myself to the trouble of shewing them that the interests of the two divisions of the State were one and the same, and that any plan of internal improvement, which would promote the one, would likewise the other; but, as Bonaparte said of the Russian Boors, on the subject of emancipation from vassalage, I can, as yet, hardly believe them sufficiently enlightened either to comprehend the design, or receive the lights of such intelligence.—In justice, however, to the common people, I should discriminate between them and their representatives—nor should their heads be visited for the political sins of their delegates: It is to this latter hurly, obstinate, intractable and incorrigible set of animals, to whom, Mr. Editor, I would be understood to allude—to this group of

worthies, the fruit of whose labors is forever bitter, and the sweat of whose brows forever poison. I had as live be a dog, whose business it should be to "bay the moon," or as commodiously situated as Shakespear's toad in the dungeon, as to be compelled to serve a community of freemen with such characters. I confess, Mr. Editor, that on this subject I feel all that indignation at such conduct, which I hope every honest and enlightened citizen of your State indulges. It is, Sir, an eternal disgrace to the legislature of North-Carolina, convened for the year 1815, that the admirable report of the committee on the subject of Inland Navigation, should have been suffered to engross so small a share of consideration. A more able paper, written, indeed, with all the ability of the statesman, and all the elegance of the scholar, never, I venture to assert, was submitted to a deliberative body. I trust, however, it will be found to possess this redeeming virtue with future legislatures,—that while it will hold up to contempt that body with whom it originated, it may point to the land of discovery for those that may succeed.

What other State is there in the Union, that has not done more for its citizens than yours? Not one, I venture to assert. While some have extended the work of Inland Navigation, others have been erecting Penitentiaries and turpiking their roads. Of not one of these kinds of improvements can your State boast; and I fear you are destined to walk in the political back ground, until a political regeneration takes place—until the people see how their confidence has been violated—how their trusts have been abused—and until a spirit of reformation begins to animate the whole mass of your population. In other States you might look for the seeds of improvement in the representatives of the people; but this order does not seem to obtain with you. One thing I take to be morally certain, that if your state never starts in the career of improvement, until its representatives become the agents and organs of imparting liberal and enlightened notions of policy and economy, you are to remain, like Gen. Hull when near Malden, some time in *statu quo*. Good people of the State of North-Carolina, let me advise you, as a disinterested stranger who knows something of the wayward policy of your representatives, to turn over the hot beds of political treachery. Sow a new crop of public characters, that you may reap a new harvest of public measures. Reflect upon their qualifications to serve you, and to confer that respectability and importance to your State, which it does not at present possess. Barter not your suffrage, the noblest prerogative of a freeman, for a hearty shake of the hand, or a good drink of grog. Select those who have opinions of their own, and who have intrepidity of character enough to maintain them; but not so closely wedded to prejudices as to lose sight of a liberal policy. By pursuing this course, you may gain the elevated ground to which the natural wealth and resources of the State seem to entitle you.

Let me again exhort you to "cast off the coil" of your political "incumbrances" to soar in the political regions to a purer sky, and to be influenced by an "holier ambition" than local feelings and local partialities. When this shall be the case, perhaps the Yankee Pedler Lawyer shall cease to hawk his tin among you, and aspire to the privileges of a native citizen.

QUID PRO QUO.

MORALITY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE STAR.

SIR—Please to give the following Constitution and notice a place in your public paper as soon as may be convenient.

PREAMBLE.

Whereas it is manifest, that many vices are prevalent among us, which tend, not only to demoralize our citizens, and corrupt the rising generation, but also to draw down the judgments of God on our beloved and highly favored country; and whereas the experience of many ages has testified, that, under the influence of a benign Providence, in the use of proper means, a stop may be put to prevailing immoralities, therefore, in order to accomplish that important end, by exerting our influence, aided by our example, & to assist the civil magistrate in the discharge of his official duty, in carrying into effect those salutary laws enacted by our Legislature for the suppression of such vices, or immoralities, we, whose names are underwritten, do voluntarily enter into an Association, and adopt the following

CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE I. The name of this Association shall be The Society of Statesville, for the suppression of immoralities, and reformation of manners.

II. The object of this Society shall be to discountenance and suppress, so far as our influence may extend, the too free and intemperate use of ardent spirits, together with its kindred and concomitant vices, such as profane swearing, gaming, and the breach of the Sabbath.

With a view to this object the society will recommend the institution of similar auxiliary societies in different parts of the state, upon such a plan as may be deemed best adapted to give system and efficacy to the whole design. It will also hold correspondence, as occasion may require, with other societies which may be instituted for the same general object.

III. No person shall be eligible, as a member of the society, who is not of a moral character