

THE RALEIGH MINERVA.

RALEIGH, N. C.—PUBLISHED (WEEKLY) BY LUCAS AND A. H. BOYLAN.

[OR \$2 50 CENTS IN ADVANCE.]

VOL. 16.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25, 1811.

No. 812.

Political.

FROM THE ALBANY GAZETTE.

Reflections of a Native American on the late publications of E. C. GENET.

The boldest asserters of liberty are often mistaken for the tools of faction, or if they happen to be men of sanguine temper and ardent imagination, they are frequently numbered among its dupes. The rank of Mr. Genet, and the important posts he has occupied, one would suppose ought to have protected him from the charge of weakness, and the principles he professes from that of political wickedness. But strange as it may seem, he has been suspected of both.

Is it true that an honest heart is the only standard of political rectitude? How deplorable then must be his condition, who has been lifted up by public distraction into public notice, far beyond his scope and intellect, without even honest intentions to assist him! The victim of his own designs, his zeal will outrun its object, and his schemes, however dark, will be baffled before he is aware that they are understood. The unceasing regard of Mr. Genet for the American people merits their warmest gratitude—Many of us have witnessed his conduct, & listened with delight to his professions, from the first moment he set foot on our shores, to the present hour; and notwithstanding he assured Mr. Jefferson with all the warmth of enthusiasm that "he passionately loves his native country" (1) notwithstanding he publicly declared to the citizens of New York that "the cause of France is the cause of all mankind, and especially of the United States." (2) we still believe and we call heaven and earth to witness, that his steady and preserving zeal for our honor and independence against the dominions of Great Britain, if it be not patriotism, has at least the appearance of it. But unfortunately for Mr. Genet, ambition too often walks abroad, under the mask of public spirit, and in spite of himself, we fear he will be suspected of dishonest artifices. We are a jealous people—We love our country; her glory is dear to us—We revere the patriots who brought into life and action our free government, and sit with proud exultation under the shadow of their fame—With such feelings, when we listen to Mr. Genet's professions, we regret that Washington distrusted them, and that Mr. Jefferson has endeavored to contract the sphere of his influence, and to place obstacles in his way to public confidence, which are almost insurmountable. Is any man at a loss to what we allude? General Washington, in his message to congress, Dec. 5, 1793, declared, "that it was with extreme concern he had to inform them that the proceedings of the person whom the French nation had unfortunately appointed their minister here (alluding to Mr. Genet) had breathed nothing of the friendly spirit of the nation sending him; that their tendency, on the contrary, had been to involve us in war abroad, and discord and anarchy at home." Neither can it be forgotten that Mr. Jefferson in his letter of August 16th, 1793, to Mr. G. Morris, then our minister in France, had the temerity to call Mr. Genet "an agent of the French government whose designs were mysterious;" and to declare, "that his continuance here was inconsistent with order and peace." "That for the expressions of attachment with which Mr. Genet was welcomed on his arrival, and for our long forbearance under his gross usurpations and outrages of the laws and authority of our country, he rewards us by endeavoring to excite discord and distrust between our own citizens and those whom they have entrusted with their government."—Nay! In that memorable letter (which is in every body's hands) Mr. Jefferson goes further. He fixes a charge upon Mr. Genet which fills every good citizen with horror, and makes him shudder to the heart. He says "that if our citizens have not already been shedding each other's blood, it is not owing to the moderation of Mr. Genet!" (3)

Thus, is Mr. Genet represented by two of our most distinguished citizens; gentlemen of opposite parties, as the mal demon of discord, turbulent and ferocious, roaming through our country, scattering flames and fury, breathing out destruction against the established order of things, unsettling and unhinging society, and at last stirring up our fellow citizens to wage an impious war against the government of their own choice, and to butcher their brethren. Such sentiments from such men, could not fail to shake public confidence in his professions, ardent and affectionate as they were. (4) We all remember how he shrunk from the public view, how he lay buried in the heart of our country for a series of years, and left the people to shift for themselves.

So long, and so completely was he lost from the eye, that even history spent a paragraph upon his name and consecrated his memory for his future admiration. The world well knows how faithfully he has paid the tribute.

It must gratify Mr. Genet's ruling passion, to be snatched so unawares from oblivion; that he is able to anticipate the sentence of posterity and can build castles upon his future fame. Little men frequently become great by connexion with great ones. The slave, who would have poisoned Alexander, and the assassin of Henry the Great, have come down to us along with their masters. Even Mr. Genet's name stands on the same page with Washington's. Notwithstanding the historian has represented him as a fiery demagogue without cunning or address, struggling to destroy the "temple of liberty" (5) it must still afford him rich consolation that he is able to live on any

terms, with the present age and with the future, at the same instant of time. That while the laurel is yet blooming on his brow, it has sprung up, as it were, round his tomb. But here he could not rest. The interval of concealment is past, with the motives that induced it. And now, Washington is dead, and Mr. Jefferson has retired, he comes forth again, to express new anxieties for our welfare and fresh fears for our safety. Accept, most excellent sir, our renewed thanks. We fear, however, that suspicion is still awake. Fair pretences so often gild the blackest purposes. Our people tremble when you flatter. The clouds shine brightest at the approach of night.

Very many of our citizens, most respectable and discerning men too, still believe that Mr. Genet has no real affection for our country, none for government, principles or manners, that he would be glad to chain our destinies to the imperial car of France, and hopes yet to share, with the rest of his family, the blood stained bounties of a French master. Much as it is to be regretted, it cannot, cannot be denied, that some of these opinions have been sanctioned by his own declarations. Declarations of a recent date, made without reserve and without a blush to two of our native citizens, gentlemen of distinguished rank and probity, whose testimony is before the public. (6) With such principles and such wishes, together with his previous life in view, there appears still to be a prevailing opinion that Mr. G. has been amongst us from the first, as Alcibiades among the Spartans, an exile from home, in an adopted country, with all his treacherous attachment to his native soil, without his "reach of genius" or fascinating manners. But it is time to speak out. Mr. Genet's late letters to Mr. Pickering, relative to the affair of the president and the Little Belt, would have passed by, among the scraps of the press, but for the sanction of his name. Even with that, they are only important as new proofs of the impudence with which foreigners intermeddle in our public concerns. However important the subject, the present is an improper time for newspaper discussion even among our own citizens. It was not so, when Mr. Pickering wrote: The case then, was this. Two ships of war of two allied powers meet and light, and on one side there are several killed. This is a state of open war. Whichever commenced the attack, if it was authorized by either government, under any circumstances, it amounts to a declaration of war. If neither government authorised the act, the officer who provoked the contest ought to be tried and disgraced. The honor of both nations demands it. So that in every point of view, the affair is deeply interesting to America, involving nothing less, than the peace of the nation, or the character of the first officer in our navy. Under these circumstances, we are told in the government paper that the president approved of the conduct of commodore Rodgers, and has resolved to smother all enquiry. Thus adopting at once, the act of the commodore as an act of the government. The consequence was inevitable. If it should afterwards appear to the British government, that the commodore was the aggressor, no alternative would be left. The two nations would be at war, without the formality of public declaration. To avert this, to provoke enquiry, to rouse Mr. Madison from his fatal lethargy, a native American, of exalted worth, who had spent his whole life in the public service, and who is one of those rare men who are fitted by nature to guide and preserve a nation, sounds the alarm & points out the dangers that surround us. At length his warning voice reaches the government, and a court of enquiry is ordered. Mr. Pickering's object then being answered he drops the subject and retires. It is now a matter *sub judice*, and every mouth is still. Even the watchdogs of faction have ceased to bark, and the whole nation stands in silent, anxious suspense, waiting the result.

At this moment a Frenchman, trained up "in the very bosom of pespotism," who had been denounced by the public functionaries of three different nations as a disturber of peace and order—a man who can neither speak nor write our language correctly, and who once before, within our memory, had broke into our public councils and polluted the tabernacle—This man, with restless impatience, and the fury of a gladiator, steps forth into the midst of the amphitheatre and throws down the gauntlet—attempts to pre-occupy the public opinion and prejudice the case. To support his pretensions, he makes pompous display of his titles, offices and honors—Titles that were never his—offices that he has not held—and honors that he never wore (7)—He summons to his aid, all the lights of universal science—He presses into his service the civil, the maritime and the municipal laws of all nations—He comes with treaties, proclamations, manifestoes and huge folios of ancient and modern history—"news from all nations lumbering at his back"—and deficient, in even the rudiments of scholastic knowledge, he who cannot wield a Latin *preposition* (8) would fain pass a Grotius or an Azuni.

Thus much for Mr. Genet's claim to attention—His diplomatic learning and reasoning shall receive notice in due season.

NOTES.

1. In a letter to Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Genet has these expressions: "It is a pure and warm blood runs with rapidity in my veins.—I love passionately my country. When I find an injustice done to my fellow citizens... that their interests are not espoused with the zeal which they merit, no consideration would hinder either my pen or my tongue from tracing— from expressing my pain."—Mr. Genet dare not deny this letter.

2. In answer to an address from the republican citizens of New York, he says: "the cause of France is the cause of all mankind—and no nation is more deeply interested than the United States in its success. Whatever fate awaits her the United States are ultimately to share"—God for bid!—Mr. Genet will not deny that he has used these expressions.—He cannot.

3. See President Washington's message to Congress, and the papers relative to French affairs, December 5, 1793, p. 67, 68.

4. We may learn the value of this gentleman's professions, by examining his letters sent to Congress, December 5, 1793, written at the very time he was thus denounced by Washington and Mr. Jefferson. In his letter of the 18th September, '93, to the latter gentleman, he tells Mr. Jefferson, that "always faithful to the cause of liberty, he had rendered to the Americans in the different employments he had had, all the services which depended on him," and again, "that next to the French, the American people were dearest to his heart!"

5. See Marshall's Life of Washington—p. 409 444, vol. 5.

6. General Henry K. Van Rensselaer and the Adjutant General Solomon Van Rensselaer, to whom Mr. Genet declared that his family in Europe had been well provided for by the late king of Holland, Louis Bonaparte—and that the emperor Bonaparte had already subdued all his enemies in Europe excepting England and Russia, and that he would unquestionably conquer those powers also—and that afterwards, in case the government of the United States did not conduct towards him with more friendship and civility than it hitherto had done, they would next be attacked and subjugated by him—This he said to those gentlemen, no longer ago than in 1807, and their affidavit is published. Can he shew it to be false?

7. In Mr. Genet's first letter to Mr. Pickering, he tells of his "diplomatic missions at different courts of Europe," we find the same story in his letter to Mr. Jefferson, 18th September, 1793, and over and again in his letter to that gentleman of the 15th November, the same year—always the herald of his own fame, he tells Mr. Jefferson, that he was busy in translating the American political papers of '76 or '77, in the bureau of foreign affairs in France, under the direction of his father, at the age of 12 years! Wonderful boy—En ego Ascanius! After this, and before he came to this country, he says in his next letter, "that he was seven years at the head of the bureau—one year at London—two at Vienna—none at Berlin—and five in Russia." Here then he has honors of sixteen years growth in a period a little short of fourteen years. Sent all over Europe between the year '77 and the year '92, and yet only 12 years old in the year '77—"Fortuna improba sinonem vanum mendacemque finxit." Mr. Jefferson did not believe a word of it.—When a man is counting his honors he should never be guilty of anachronisms.—Judge Marshall, in his Life of Washington, has cropt them all and binding them up in one knot, he represents him as a mere sub-clerk in one of the inferior bureaus of France, and afterwards as only charge d'affaires or chief clerk to a minister in Russia.—And Mr. Genet himself confesses to Mr. Jefferson that he was expelled from Russia—driven out by order of the Empress.—See Marshall's Life of Washington, 5 vol. p. 469, and President Washington's Message, December 5, 1793, p. 70, 72, 91.

8. See Mr. Genet's first letter, where he talks of defending our territories *per vi et armis*.

At length came the prodigious Comet of 1680, which descended almost perpendicularly towards the sun, arose from him again with equal velocity, and the illustrious Newton demonstrated not only what Kepler had found did necessarily obtain in the planetary system, but also that Comets observe the same law, moving in very long ellipses round the sun, and describing equal areas in equal times.

The revolutions of only two Comets (or the number of years necessary for performing a journey round the sun) are known with any certainty. The one is that which appeared in the years 1456, 1531, 1607, 1682, and 1759, and is ascertained to move round the sun in 76 years; it will therefore make its appearance in 1835. The other is the Comet seen in 1580, in 1196, in 531 and soon after the death of Julius Cæsar, about forty years before Christ. It is mentioned by many historians of those times, and Piny in his natural history, where Augustus Cæsar says concerning it—

"In the very days of our games, a hairy star, (Sydus Crigitum) was seen for 7 days in that part of the heavens which is under the Septentriones; it arose about the 11th hour of the day, and was clearly to be seen all over the world."—The period of this Comet is therefore ascertained to be about 575 years old. Its appearance will be in the year 2255.

The number of Comets belonging to our system is unknown, but it has been ascertained, that more than 450 have been seen, but the number whose orbits are settled with sufficient accuracy for us to ascertain their identity on their reappearance, is only about 59. The orbits of most of these are inclined to the plane of the ecliptic in large angles, and in their perihelion they come much nearer the sun, than the earth does. Their motions in the heavens are also different from those of the planets. When a Comet arrives within a certain distance of the sun, it emits a prodigious fume or vapour called its tail. These tails seem largest and most splendid immediately after they return from the sun, because being hottest, they emit the greatest quantity of vapours, and are always opposite those parts which the body of the comet leaves in its descent, which is agreeable to the nature of smoke and vapour—They also appear broader on their upper part than near the head of the Comet; like all vapours the higher they rise the more they dilate themselves.—The celebrated comet of 1680 came so near the sun, that it was not a sixth part of the sun's diameter distant from its surface; and therefore its heat must then be two thousand times hotter than red hot iron. And from thence it took its course from the sun to the distance of eleven thousand millions of miles, which is at least 14 times further than the orbit of Saturn.

At their first appearance, comets are computed to be as near to us as Jupiter, and therefore considered to be less than that planet: the present one [of 1807] (which has passed its perihelion) is supposed to be eight times larger than our globe, and to move with the amazing velocity of sixteen thousand miles a minute. The conjectures respecting comets are various. The ancients believed they were harbingers of divine vengeance:—thus Homer—

"A fatal sign to armies on the plain,
"Or trembling sailors on the wat'ry main."

Some of the moderns, particularly sir Isaac Newton, are of opinion, that they are ordained, by Providence, to supply the sun at stated periods, with matter peculiar to its nature; and to make up the deficiency which must arise from the continual emission of the particles of light. These, however, are mere hypotheses. The same also may be said of every thing that can be advanced concerning their being inhabited worlds, for if animals can exist there, they must be creatures very far different from any of which we have the least conception. Some who have indulged themselves in visionary ideas, think they are appointed as the place of torment for the damned; that each Comet is, properly and literally speaking, a hell, from the intolerable and inconceivable heat and cold which alternately takes place in these bodies!

It is supposed by some, that Comets are the means appointed by the Almighty for the destruction of this world, and all the planetary system, by involving the globe of the planets in their atmosphere of water, in their return from the cold regions. Amongst those who have written upon the subject are, Mr. Whiston, and the learned Dr. Halley. The former is of opinion, that this world will be destroyed by a general conflagration, occasioned by our globe being involved in tail of some comet, after it has been prodigiously heated in its passage from the sun.

The latter declares, that it is possible for a comet to produce some change in the situation and species of the earth's orbit, and in the length of the year, and says, "But may not the great God avert a shock or contact of such great bodies, moving with such force (which however is manifestly by no means impossible) lest this beautiful order of things be entirely destroyed, and reduced into its ancient chaos."—Indeed it has been shewn that the Comet of 1680, November 11th, at one o'clock in the afternoon, was so small a distance from the earth's orbit, that had the earth been nearer that part of its orbit, God only knows what the consequence might have been!—If then a Comet should encounter the earth at its return from the sun, it would undoubtedly consume the earth and all its inhabitants, as so many moons; it might convert the matter of the present earth into a different kind of substance, and render it an habitation fit for beings of a quite different nature from ours.

COMETS.
[The following observations respecting Comets are extracted from a London Magazine published in November, 1807]

A Comet, vulgarly called a blazing star, on account of its appearance, is a very extraordinary sight; for though the number of them be great, yet on account of the long period of their revolution, they but very seldom appear. They are supposed to consist of a very compact and durable substance, capable of the greatest degree of heat and cold without being subject to dissolution; and, like the planets, shining only by reflection.

By the ancients, Comets were considered as vapours or meteors; and of this opinion was Aristotle, the celebrated Greek Philosopher. These phenomena were therefore treated with neglect, until the time of Seneca, who observed two very remarkable ones, which he scrupled not to place amongst the celestial bodies, though owns their motions to be governed by laws not then known.

Doctor Halley declares, that notwithstanding all his researches into the histories of Comets, he found nothing satisfactory; until a Constantinopolitan historian and astronomer, in the year A. D. 1337, pretty accurately described the paths of a Comet amongst the fixed stars. The next Comet which appeared, was in the year 1472, and was observed by Regiomontanus; it was the swiftest of any that have hitherto appeared, and the nearest to the earth. This Comet so dreaded on account of the magnitude of its body and tail, moved at the rate of forty degrees of a great circle, in the heavens, in the space of one day, and was the first of which we have any proper observations. In the year 1577, a remarkable Comet visited this earth, to the study of which Tycho Brahe assiduously applied himself. This great astronomer, after many faithful observations, found that it had no perceptible parallax; and consequently could not be an aerial vapour.—Tycho was succeeded by the sagacious Kepler, who discovered the true physical system of this world.