

and abroad, as these may affect the public mind; and such have never failed to come to their relief, when otherwise their case would have been hopeless. I give you the most serious assurance, that nothing less than the shameful conduct of the enemy and the complexion of certain occurrences to the eastward could have sustained Mr. Madison after the disgraceful affair at Washington. The public indignation would have overwhelmed, in one common ruin, himself and his hireling newspapers.—The artillery of the press, so long the instrument of our subjugation, would as at Paris, have been turned against the destroyer of his country. When we are told that Old England says, he "shall," and New-England that he "must," retire from office as the price of peace with the one, and of union with the other, we have too much English blood in our veins to submit to this dictation, or to any thing in the form of a threat. Neither of these people know any thing of us. The ignorance of her foreign agents, not only of the country to which they are sent, but even of their own, has exposed England to general derision. She will learn when it is too late, that we are a high minded people, attached to our liberty and to our country, because it is free, in a degree inferior to no people under the sun. She will discover that "our trade would have been worth more than our spoil," and that she has made deadly enemies of a whole people, who in spite of her and of the world, of the strength of her resources, or of the force of her arms, are destined to become within the present century, a mighty nation. It belongs to New-England to say, whether she will constitute a portion, an important and highly respectable portion of this nation, or whether she will dwindle into that state of insignificant, nominal independence, which is the precarious curse of the minor kingdoms of Europe. A separation made in the fulness of time, the effect of amicable arrangements, may prove mutually beneficial to both parties; such would have been the effect of American independence, if the British ministry could have listened to any suggestion but that of their own impotent rage; but a settled hostility embittered by the keenest recollections, must be the result of a disunion between you and us, under the present circumstances. I have sometimes wished that Mr. Madison (who endeavored to thwart the wise and benevolent policy of General Washington "to regard the English like other nations, as enemies in war, in peace friends") had succeeded in embroiling us with the court of St. James twenty years sooner. We should in that case, have had the father of his country to conduct the war and to make the peace; and that peace would have endured beyond the life time of the authors of their country's calamity and disgrace. But I must leave past recollections. The present and the immediate future claim our attention.

It may be said, that in time of peace, the people of every portion of our confederacy are themselves too happy to think of division; that the sufferings of a war, like this, are requisite, to rouse them to the necessary exertion; and that incident to all governments; and wars, I very much fear will be wickedly declared, and weakly waged, even by the New-England confederacy, as they have been by every government (not even excepting the Roman Republic) of which we have any knowledge; and it does appear to me no slight presumption that the evil has not yet reached the point of amputation, when peace alone, will render us the happiest (as we are the freest) people under the sun; at least too happy to think of dissolving that union, which, as it carried us through the war of our revolution, will, I trust, bear us triumphant through that in which we have been plunged, by the incapacity and corruption of men, neither willing to maintain the relations of peace, nor able to conduct the operations of war. Should I, unhappily, be mistaken in this expectation, let us see what are to be the consequences of the separation, not to us, but to yourselves.—An exclusion of your tonnage and manufactures from our ports and harbors. It will be our policy to encourage our own, or even those of Europe in preference to yours; a policy more obvious than that which induced us of the South, to consent to discriminating duties in favor of American tonnage, in the infancy of this government. It is unnecessary to say to you, that I embrace the duties on imports, as well as the tonnage duty, when I allude to the encouragement of American shipping. It will always be our policy to prevent your obtaining a naval superiority, and consequently to cut you off entirely from our carrying trade. The same plain interest will cause us to prefer any manufactures to your own. The intercourse with the rest of the world, that exchanges our surplus for theirs, will be the nursery of our seamen. In the middle states you will find rivals not very heartily indisposed to shut out the competition of your shipping. In the same section of country and in the border-lands west, you will find jealous competitors of your mechanics—you will be left to settle, as you can, with England, the question of boundary on the side of New-Brunswick, and unless you can bring New-York to a state of utter blindness, as to her own interests, that great, thriving, and most populous member of the southern confederacy will present a hostile frontier to the only states of the union of Hartford, that can be estimated as of any efficiency. Should that respectable city be chosen as the seat of the Eastern Congress, that body will sit within two days' march of the most populous county of New-York, (Duchess) of itself almost equal to some of the New-England States. I speak not in derision, but in soberness and sadness of heart. Rather let me say, that like a thorough bred diplomatist, I try to suppress every thing like feeling, and to treat this question as a dry matter of calculation; well knowing, at the same time, that in this, as in every question of vital interest, "our passions instruct our reason." The same high authority has told

us that Jacobinism is of no country, that it is a seat found in all. Now, as our Jacobins in Virginia would be very glad to hear of the bombardment of Boston, so, I very much fear, your Jacobins would not be very sorry to hear of a servile insurrection in Virginia. But such, I trust, is the general feeling in either country, otherwise I should at once agree that union, like the marriages of Mezentius, was the worst that could befall us. For, with every other man of common sense, I have always regarded union as the means of liberty and safety, in other words, of happiness, and not as an end, to which these are to be sacrificed. Neither, at the same time, are means so precious, so efficient (in proper hands) of these desirable objects, to be thrown rashly aside, because, in the hands of bad men, they have been made the instrument almost of our undoing.

You in New-England (it is unnecessary I hope to specify when I do not address myself personally to yourself) are very wide of the mark if you suppose that we to the south, do not suffer at least as much as yourselves from the incapacity of our rulers to conduct the defence of the country. Do you ask why we do not change those rulers? I reply, because we are a people, like your own Connecticut, of steady habits. Our confidence once given, is not hastily withdrawn. Let those who will, abuse the fickleness of the people. I shall say such is not the character of the people Virginia; they may be deceived, but they are honest. Taking advantage of their honest prejudices the growth of our revolution, fostered not more by Mr. Jefferson than by the injuries and (what is harder to borne) the insults of the British ministry since the peace of 1783, combination of artful men, has with the aid of the press and the possession of the machinery of government (a powerful engine in any hands) led them to the brink of ruin. I can never bring myself to believe, that the whole mass of the landed proprietors in any country, but especially such a country as Virginia, can seriously plot its ruin. Our government is in the hands of the landed proprietors only. The very men of whom you complain, have left nothing undone that they dared to do in order to destroy it. Foreign influence is unknown among us. What we feel of it is through the medium of the general government; which, acted on itself by foreign renegades, serves as a conductor, between them and us, of this pernicious influence. I know of no foreigner who has been, or is, in any respectable office in the gift of the people, or the government of Virginia. No member of either house of Congress, no leading member of our assembly, no judge of our supreme courts; of the newspapers printed in the state, as far as my knowledge extends, without discrimination of party, they are conducted by native Virginians like yourselves, we are unmix'd people. I know the prejudice that exists against us, nor do I wonder at it, considering the gross ignorance on the subject that prevails north of Maryland, and even in many parts of that neighboring state.

What member of the confederacy has sacrificed more on the altar of public good than Virginia? Whence did the general government derive its lands beyond the Ohio, then and now, almost the only source of revenue? From our grant—a grant so cautiously worded, and by our present Palatines too, as to except ourselves, by its limitations, from the common benefit.

By its conditions it was forbidden ground to us; thereby the foundation was laid of incurable animosity and division between the states on each side of that great natural boundary, the river Ohio. Not only their masters but the very slaves themselves, for whose benefit this regulation was made, were sacrificed by it. Dispersion is to them a bettering of their present condition, and of their chance for emancipation. It is only when it can be done without danger and without ruinous individual loss, that it will be done at all. But what is common sense to a political Quixote?

That country was ours by a double title, by charter and conquest. George Rogers Clark, the American Hannibal, at the head of the state troops, by the reduction of Post Vincennes, obtained the Lakes for our northern boundary at the peace of Paris. The march of that great man and his brave companions in arms across the drowned lands of Wabash, does not shrink from a comparison with the passage of the Thrasimen marsh.—Without meaning any thing like an invidious distinction, I have not heard of any cession from Massachusetts of her vast wilds; and Connecticut has had the address, out of our grant to the firm, to obtain, on her own private account, some millions of acres; whilst we, yes we, I blush to say it, have descended to beg for a pittance, out of the property once our own, for the brave men by whose valor it had been won and whom our heedless profusion had disabled us to recompense. We met the just fate of the prodigal. We were spurned from the door, where once we were master, with derision and scorn; and yet we hear of undue Virginia influence. This fund yielded the government, when I had confided with it, from half a million to eight hundred thousand dollars annually. It would have preserved us from the imposition of state taxes, founded schools, built bridges and made roads and canals throughout Virginia. It was squandered in a single donative at the instance of Mr. Madison. For the sake of concord with our neighbors, by the same generous but misguided policy, we ceded to Pennsylvania Fort Pitt, a most important commercial and military position, and a vast domain around it, as much Virginia as the city of Richmond and the county of Henrico. To Kentucky, the eldest daughter of the union, the Virginia of the west, we have yielded on a question of boundary, from a similar consideration. Actuated by the same magnanimous spirit at the instance of the other states (with the exception of New-York, North-Carolina and R. Island) we accepted, in 1788, the present constitution. It was repugnant to our judgment and fraught, as we feared, with danger to our liberties. The awful voice

of our ablest and soundest statesmen, of Patrick Henry and of George Mason, never before or since disregarded, warned us of the consequences. Neither was their counsel entirely unheeded, for it led to important subsequent amendments of that instrument. I have always believed this disinterested spirit, so often manifested by us, to be one of the chief causes of the influence which we have exercised over the other states. Eight states having made that constitution their own, we submitted to the yoke for the sake of union. Our attachment to union is not an empty profession. It is demonstrated by our practice at home. No sooner was the Convention of 1788 dissolved, than the feuds of federalism and anti-federalism disappeared. I speak of their effects on our councils. For the sake of union, we submitted to the lowest state of degradation, the administration of John Adams. The name of this man calls up contempt and derision, wheresoever it is pronounced. To the fantastick vanity of this political Malvolio may be distinctly traced our present unhappy condition. I will not be so ungenerous as to remind you that this personage (of whom, and his addresses, and his answers, I defy you to think without a bitter smile) was not a Virginian, but I must in justice to ourselves, insist upon making him a set off against Mr. Madison. They are of such equal weight, that the trembling balance remains us of that passage of Pope, where Jove "weighs the beaux wits against the lady's hair."

"The doubtful beam long nods from side to side,
"At length the wits mount up, the hairs subside."

"Intoxicated not more by the fulsome adulation with which he was plied, than by the fumes of his own vanity, this poor old gentleman saw a visionary coronet suspended over his brow, and an air drawn sceptre "the handle towards his hand," which attempting to clutch, he lost his balance, and disappeared never to rise again. He it was, who "enacting" Nat. Lee's Alexander, raved about the people of Virginia as "a faction to be humbled in dust and ashes," when the sackcloth was already prepared for his own back.

But I am spinning out this letter to too great a length. What is your object—peace? Can that be attained on any terms, whilst England sees a prospect of disuniting that confederacy, which has already given so deep a blow to her maritime pride, and threatens, at no very distant day, to dispute with her the empire of the ocean? The wound which our gallant tars have inflicted on her tenderest point has maddened her to rage. Cursed as we are with a weak and wicked administration, she can no longer despise us. Already she begins to hate us; and she seeks to glut a revenge as important as it is rancorous, by inroads that would have disgraced the Buccaneers, and bulletins that would only not disgrace the sovereign of Elba. She already is compelled to confess in her heart, what her lips deny, that if English bull dogs and game cocks degenerate on our soil, English men do not;—and should (which God forbid!) our brethren of the Fast desert us in this contest for all that is precious to man, we will maintain it, so long as our proud and insulting foe shall refuse to accede to equitable terms of peace. The government will then pass into proper hands.—The talents of the country will be called forth, and the schemes of moonstruck philosophers and their disciples pass away and "leave not a wreck behind."

You know how steadily and perseveringly I endeavored, for eight years, to counteract the artful and insidious plans of our rulers to embroil us with the country of our ancestors, and the odium which I have thereby drawn upon myself. Believing it to be my duty to soften, as much as possible the asperities which subsisted between the two countries, and which were leading to a ruinous war, I put to hazard, nay, exposed to almost certain destruction, an influence such as no man, perhaps in this country, at the same age, had ever before attempted. (The popularity that *dreads exposure*, is too delicate for public service. It is a bastard species; the true sort will stand the hardest frosts.) Is it my fault (as Mr. Burke complained of the crowned heads of Europe) that England will no longer suffer me to find palliatives for her conduct? No man admired more than I did her magnanimous stand against the tyrant, before whom all the rest of Christendom at one time bowed: No man, not even her own Wilberforce and Perceval, put up more sincere prayers for her deliverance. In the remotest isle of Austral-Asia, my sympathy would have been enlisted, in such a contest, for the descendants of Alfred and Bacon, and Shakespeare, and Milton and Locke, on whom I have to look back as my illustrious countrymen—in any contest I should have taken side with liberty; but on this depended (as I believed and do still believe) all that made my own country dear in my own sight. It is past—and un mindful of the mercy of that protecting Providence which has carried her through the valley of the shadow of death, England "feels power and forgets right." I am not one of that whining set of people "who cry out against mine adversary for the force of his blow." England has, unquestionably, as good a right to conquer us, as we have to conquer Canada: the same right that we have to conquer England, and with about as good prospect of success. But let not her orators declaim against the enormity of French principles, when she permits herself to arm and discipline our slaves, and to lead them in the field against their masters, in the hope of exciting by the example, a general insurrection, and thus render Virginia another St. Domingo. And does she talk of Jacobinism!—What is this but Jacobinism? and that of the vilest stamp?—Is this the country that has abolished the slave trade? that has made this infamous, inhuman traffic a felony? that feeds with the "bread of life," all who "hunger after it"; and even those who, but for her, would never have known their "perishing condition."—Drunk with the cup of the abominations of Moloch, they have been roused from the sleep of death like some benighted traveller perishing in the snows, and

warmed into life by the beams of the only true religion. Is this the country of Wilberforce and Howard? It is—but like my own, my country, who pour out its treasure and its blood in the shrine of its own guilty ambition. And the impious sacrifice they celebrate amidst the plaudits of the deluded people, and even of the victims themselves.

There is a proneness in mankind to throw the blame of their sufferings on any one thing. In this manner, Virginia is regarded by some of her sister states; not adverting to the fact, that all (Connecticut and Delaware excepted) are responsible for the difficulties. Did we partition our state into those unequal and monstrous districts which have given birth to a new word in your language, of uncouth sound, calling up the most odious associations? Did we elect the judges whom you sent to both houses of Congress, the Bidwells and Gannetts, and Skippers, to spur on the more moderate men from Virginia to excesses which they reluctantly gave up at the time, and have since been ashamed of? Who hurried the bill suspending the privilege of the writ of *habeas corpus* through a blushing senate, in consequence of a demand from the president? A senator from Massachusetts, and professor in her university. In short, have not your gentlemen (such I believe was the reputation of the gentleman in question at the time) your great merchants, and the majority of your legislature in congress, voted in support of the measures that have led to our present suffering and humiliating condition?

If you wished to separate yourselves from us, you had ample provocation in time of an embargo the most unconstitutional and oppressive: an engine of tyranny, fraud, and favoritism. Then was the time to resist, did not desert England in a time of war, if you were then under the denomination of a faction among yourselves, yet a formidable minority, exhibiting no signs of dissension, and it is not the least of my apprehensions, from certain proceedings in the eastward, that they may be the means of consigning us again and forever, to the same low, insupportable domination. The reaction of your feelings upon us (for although we have some in Virginia, they are few and insignificant) through the men at Washington ("who must coordinate good republicans") is dreadful. Pause, I beseech you pause! You tread on the brink of destruction. Of all the Atlantic states, you have the least cause to complain. Your manufactures and the trade which the enemy has allowed you, have drained us of our last dollar. How then can we carry on the war? With men and steel—stout hearts and willing hands—and these, from the days of Darius and Xerxes, in defence of the household gods of freemen, have proved a match for gold. Can they not now encounter paper? We shall suffer much from this contest, it will cut deep; but dismissing its authors from our confidence and councils forever (I speak of a few leaders and their immediate tools, not of the deluded, as well as *as out of authority*, we shall persevere) it be the good pleasure of Him whose eyes are tempered with mercies, through an agony and a bloody sweat, to peace and salvation, so that peace which is only to be found in reconciliation with him. "Atheists and madmen have been our law givers" and when I think of our past conduct, I shudder at the ebullition of that may await us. How has not Europe suffered for her sins! With England not excepted, that, like the man who but yesterday hestrule the narrow world, she is but an instrument in his hands, who breaketh the weapons of his chastisement, when the measure of his people's punishment is full?

When I exhort to further patience—to a resort to constitutional means of redress only, I know that there is such a thing as tyranny as well as oppression. And that there is no government however restricted in its power, that may not by abuse, under pretext of exercise of its constitutional authority, drive its unhappy subjects to desperation. Our situation is indeed awful. The members of the union in juxtaposition—held together by no common authority to which men can look up with confidence and respect. Smitten by the charms of Upper Canada, our President has abandoned the several states to shift for themselves as they can. Congress is *folle de se*. In practice, there is found little difference between a government of requisitions on the states, which these disregard, or a government of requisitions on the people, which the governors are afraid to make until the public faith is irretrievably ruined. Congress seem barred by their own favorite act of limitations, from raising supplies: prescription runs against them. But let us not despair of the commonwealth. Some master spirit will be kindled by the collision of the times, who will breathe his own soul into the councils and armies of the republic; and here indeed, is our chief danger. The man who is or deludes enough to believe that a constitution, with the skeleton of an establishment of 10,000 men, not 2,000 strong, (such was our army the 2 years ago) is the same as with an army of 60,000 men, may be a very amiable neighbor, but is utterly unfit for a statesman. Already our government is in fact changed. We are becoming a military people, of whom more than of any other it might have been said—*fortunatus sua si bona parant*. If under such

*The constitution admits no suspension of the writ *habeas corpus* in case of insurrection, shall as such a shape as to make it indispensable, and yet bill passed the senate for that purpose, without any formal communication from the president of the existence of the one or the other fact, upon which it should be bottomed. The honorable senate sat with closed doors. The yeas and nays were not taken, and record remains of the names of those who voted. It is believed that this body was unanimous (as is believed) in the vote, this omission was well advised.
*A Virginian and New-England republican are almost much alike as an English whig and a French democrat.

* This is the language of the Declaration of Independence.