



"Ours are the Plans of fair delightful Peace,
"Unwar'd by Party Rage to live like Brothers."

VOL. I.

TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 1800.

No. 24.

CONCLUSION OF THE DEBATE

ON

Mr. Nicholas's Proposition
For repealing certain Parts of the Act for raising an additional Army.

General Lee observed, that if search after truth was sincerely pursued in debate, the House would be relieved from much useless discussion, and the common good would be more thoroughly promoted. But it seems as if long habit in public speaking produced a desire rather to give some colourable pretexts for favourite opinions, however erroneous, than by open and manly arguments to enlighten and convince.

The gentleman last up had started with a fundamental error, which had diffused its influence through his whole argument. To have regarded the turn of his discourse, one would suppose that the question before the House was the creation of a permanent military force, when in truth it is whether we shall disband a considerable portion of the army raised for the express purpose of defending the United States from an unprovoked existing war waged against us by France, before we know what may be the termination of our third attempt to secure to us a solid peace. We contend, said Gen. L. that prudence, dignity and economy, alike command us to make no diminution in our actual force till the result of the existing negotiation is ascertained.

If the real question be this, continued he, I ask on what ground can gentlemen hesitate in their decision? In three months we shall know whether the enemy conclude a peace, or continue the war. In the first event, the army falls of course; in the last event, their services may be wanting. The intermediate expence will not be more than 130,000 dollars, and still we, to avoid this small expence, properly styled "contemptible," by the gentleman himself, deprive our country of the means of self-defence acquired by a large expenditure of our money?

But, says the hon. gentleman, we believe the negotiation for peace will fail, and then we have no doubt the army will be held in service, and an useless expence of 2½ millions of dollars be thus incurred. To prevent this, we now urge its reduction. It is not possible to declare the situation of things should the negotiation fail; therefore it is not possible to say now, what it may be proper to do in case of such failure—the conduct to be observed must be decided by the existing circumstances of the period. But I hesitate not in pronouncing it as my opinion, that if the public interest shall require a reduction, or even disbandment of the army, negotiation failing, such reduction or disbandment will be made—the happiness of the people would command the measure, and their happiness is the sole object of the exertions of those gentlemen with whom he had the pleasure of acting on this floor, as well as of every department of government, so far as it was in his power to distinguish their views.

The gentleman thought it extremely improper in our deliberations, to respect at all the influence which our conduct might have on the councils and conduct of any other nation, but contended that every measure ought to be tried by its own intrinsic merit. I differ entirely in opinion from the hon. member. In my judgment, no consideration is more proper than the effect of our measures on the conduct of the nation to whom such measures apply; he knew no other test by which the merit or demerit of our deliberations could be so fairly ascertained—thus we act in private life, and thus do and must all nations act. By what other rule ought we, or can we direct our steps.

But it seems, we not only ought to disregard the influence of our measures on our present foe, but must shut out too, from our deliberations all the instruction which history affords.

The learned and relevant researches which the hon. member from South-Carolina edified us with, have been upon him from the gentleman

last up, unmerited asperity. Very differently indeed, said he, did my mind feel under the instructive illustration. I feel the propriety of holding up to the view of America, the fall of Venice, of Holland, of humble, but once happy Switzerland. The example of other nations ought, and I hope will teach us to avoid similar destruction, by adopting in time different conduct.

How then results this historical enquiry? Certainly, that the United States, warned by the fall of other nations, ought to hold fast all her acquired means of defence, till the establishment of a solid peace shall authorize her with safety to save her money by reducing her expences.

But the same member had been pleased to acknowledge that the system of defence had produced a change of conduct on the part of France, but attributes this change to our diplomatic efforts and naval exertions. I agree with him in part, the ability displayed by our late Envoys, and the vigilance of our infant navy, no doubt contributed to produce the change alluded to, so did also the raising of an additional military force, and the other defensive measures adopted by Congress.

The hon. gentleman has attempted to do away all the operation of the illustration which fell from the gentleman from South-Carolina, so far as it grew out of difference of opinion existing in this country, by asserting that although the Hollanders did experience much evil from their internal discord, yet the same evils were not to be apprehended from our differences of opinion. We had no Stadtholder, nor did we assimilate in any respect to the condition of the people of Holland. It is true we have no Stadtholder, nor is our situation, as a people, much like that of Holland; but we are men, we are governed by the appetites and passions common to men, and we must expect the same effect from the same causes, unless, as was correctly expressed by an ingenious young member the other day (Mr. Randolph) the operation of physical and moral causes and effects were suspended in America. The truth is, and I acknowledge it with much pang of heart, that our differences in America are the same, as to principle and operation, as are the differences referred to, and the extent of the effect will depend on the good sense of the people. For my own part, I sincerely wish they would rid the public councils of all factious men. Thus, and thus only, can the evil be arrested. Difference of opinion, backed by possession of power, no matter how named, or how dressed, will lead always to disastrous consequences, if successfully fostered by an erring people, or by the intrigues of a foreign nation. This truth the hon. member would find fully exhibited in that invaluable book written by the illustrious personage at the head of our government, and which work, in my humble opinion, stands first, in all the efforts of science, to secure and perpetuate the blessings of liberty to man, notwithstanding the misconceived and unmerited censure which now furrows it.

It is in vain for gentlemen to treat so indifferently the existing difference of opinion among us, their own experience meets them full in the face; when that great and good man, whose picture hangs before us, conducted the government, what was the trial to which he was submitted with a foreign agent. How difficult did he find it, with all the greatness of his character, to repress the intrigues of this foreigner. Did not a difference of opinion, ranged in conformity with existing differences of opinion, pervade the continent.

Were there not found many citizens who openly maintained the proceedings of the foreign minister, in opposition to their own chief magistrate. How then can gentlemen affect to disbelieve that the people of America are liable, like other nations, to all the disasters which spring from factions and factious men?

The gentleman is certainly correct, when he says, that powerful

nations consult too often their own will, and not the rules of right; nor can the truth of the position be more precisely maintained than by the example of that very nation now at war with us. Austria, Great-Britain, powerful nations, I dare say, have also often proved the correctness of the gentleman's opinion; but it does not follow that because these two nations do wrong, that therefore we ought to submit to injuries received from France. My own opinion is, that America ought to guard herself against injury, from all nations, disregarding their name or situation.

It has been more than once insinuated, that the army is preserved with a view to turn their arms on a part of the people who differ in sentiment from administration. Is it possible that such an opinion can be entertained? What evidence can be referred to in justification of such a sentiment? Ought it to have been ventured without full proof to support it? Can any insinuation be more cruel or absurd? An administration uniformly distinguished by love of country, by zeal for the common happiness, by vigilance and wisdom in the execution of its duty, and by an enlarged and correct arrangement of all the affairs of the nation, surely deserves very different treatment. I must therefore say, what I utter with reluctance, that these derogating suspicions must have been experienced in the breast of the member who announced them.

Another never-failing topic, is the militia; and to shew their entire capacity to defend the country, various instances have been cited of their valor in the American revolutionary war. It is certainly grateful to the American ear to hear eulogiums pronounced on our countrymen, and no heart rejoices more than does mine in recollecting the gallantry of our militia; but tho' the militia be equal to any troops in personal courage, and exceed all in fidelity, they want method, patience, obedience and combination, without all which attributes no man can be a good soldier. You must, therefore, when you prepare for war, create a trained army.

We want no mercenary or foreign army, we want our own brothers, our own sons, taught to be patient, to obey, to retreat, to advance, to act in concert, and thus in the hour of battle to be equal to their enemy, however skilful. Shew me, in any country, where militia have so done, until beaten into it by a long and constant course of service. It cannot be done.

He was sorry his hon. colleague had used the word 'mercenary.' It certainly was not justly applied to our army. An army of foreigners fighting for pay only was so designated with propriety, not to an army of natives interested in common with us all as to country and objects, and distinguished from us only by the receipt of pay. If this last distinction authorized the expression, it might be applied to our militia. They received pay when in service.

In every view of the subject, said Gen. L. I must give the motion my decided negative, convinced that in so doing I truly promote the public good.

Mr. Huger said he rose to express his desire, that the committee would take the question. He confessed he had made up his mind. Indeed, after the talents displayed on the present question, he should suppose every member had received all the information possible on the subject, and he could not be wrong in thinking every gentleman had formed his opinion. He considered the present state of things called upon him to vote in the negative.

Mr. RANDOLPH denied having asserted that our finances were in a situation which would not permit the raising of more money, however urgent might be the necessity. But he persisted in declaring, that their condition was alarming, and that gentlemen had, instead of offering proof to support their opposition to the resolution, perpetually eluded the question; which was, whether there was danger in the first place? and whether, in the second, these troops were competent to meet it?

Gentlemen could not even agree in the use to which these troops were to be applied. Some asserted that they were to act in the first instance; the militia not being in a state of preparation. Others sensible that they could not annihilate space and be present every where, said that the militia could oppose the foe, until these troops could march to their relief. If gentlemen were persuaded of the danger of invasion, there was no mode to convince them of their mistake. Mere impression could not be effaced by argument. But was it true policy to expend the "sinews of war" upon the chance of bringing these men into action? Mr. R. insisted that his use of the term 'mercenary,' as applied to the army of the United States, was warranted. He denied Gen. Lee's interpretation of the word, which he had declared applicable only to foreign troops subsidized by another state. Mr. R. stated that the original word signified wages, and had no relation to foreign or domestic affairs. That a mercenary army was one in which the military art was carried on as a profession, in contradistinction from a militia or patriotic army, composed of citizens, without respect to station or fortune, indiscriminately bound to defend their country. He declared that he had no intention of receding from any opinions which he had impressed, but there was a term which he had used yesterday, and which (as no notice had been taken of it) he would exchange. It was Raggamuffin. It had been extorted from him by the characters and appearance of the recruits in his country; men the most abject and worthless of the community, and to their protection, said he, we are told to confide our Liberties and Independence. We revolt, said Mr. R. at the idea. We hold those blessings in contempt of their protection. We hold them in defiance of all force, foreign or domestic. We hold them by the tenure of that valour which obtained them.

Mr. R. denied that this tax would fall light upon the community. In the tobacco country it would be severely felt. The depreciation of that important article would alone cause great distress. If to this effect gentlemen were insensible, it would speak to them in a language which they would be obliged to hear, in the diminished amount of the revenue drawn from the imposts. The consumption of foreign articles must be limited by the ability to pay for them. The large importation of last year was scarcely half sold. There were (he had it from good authority) goods on hand nearly sufficient to supply the ensuing year's demand. Under all these circumstances members were hooted at for talking of economy. Whatever gentlemen might say or insinuate about speeches calculated to ensure popular favour, he would never vote one shilling until he saw the public resources better husbanded. A gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Otis) who had taken exception to the term, had told us that we could not "squeeze" the public, without squeezing ourselves.

Mr. R. said that he did not make professions of uncommon patriotism; that it was not the least of his objections to taxing his constituents, that he must also burthen himself and his property, being of that kind which exposed it to be "squeezed" on all occasions, rendered him particularly averse to the operation. The member from Massachusetts spoke lightly of our reluctance to part with money. That gentleman was eminent in a lucrative profession; and did he too derive a handsome revenue from talking, he might perhaps be less averse to voting away money.

A gentleman from South-Carolina, in a long detail, to which, said he, I cannot with my colleague (Mr. Lee) attach the epithet of a "learned history," has been so very candid as to allow, that the friends of the resolution (at least some of them) are actuated by pure motives in the support they have given it. I felt disposed to thank the gentleman for this great degree of charity; but the burthen of obligation was lifted from my shoulders, when he talked of modern patriotism, which

consisted in declamation against public burthens and a devotion to France. When it is considered that those against whom these insinuations were thrown, had not only "drawn its love of country with their mother's milk," but were attached by every tie which could bind the heart of man to the soil which gave him birth, and in which their property consisted, the committee would decide upon the motives by which their conduct had been actuated. When it was recollected that they were supposed to have been peculiarly friendly to the mission to France, and to be highly anxious for its success, whilst the opponents to the resolution exhibited a greater coolness with regard to a compromise of differences with that Republic, he trusted that the alarm with respect to the effect of the measure under discussion upon that negotiation would wear off. Mr. R. declared that although he had become the object of what the member from South-Carolina no doubt intended as a chastisement, he had no reason to regret it. He was, on the contrary, glad that he had excited the gentleman's animadversion, since, by that means, the committee had been favoured with the very correct, luminous and conclusive observations of a gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Gallatin) which must have carried conviction to every unprejudiced mind, and doubtless produce a decided approbation of the measure now under consideration.

Our people knew that there was no immediate danger. They therefore refused to enter a service, into which the indolent and worthless had been allured by the potent consideration of being clothed and fed at public expence. As to the proposal to stop the enlistments, and retain the officers upon pay without any nominal duty to perform, he declared that it would justly excite the public indignation. With these remarks, he concluded by expressing a hope that the resolution would be carried.

The question was then taken, and it was negatived—Ayes 39, noes 60.

Our readers will recollect that after this question was negatived, the opposers of it brought forward a proposition to retain the present officers and men, but to stop future enlistments, which has passed into a law.

RAN AWAY,

On the Night of the 3d Instant,

TWO likely Negroes; the one a Fellow of a black Complexion, about five Feet eight or nine Inches high, strong built, 23 or 24 Years Old; The other, a Woman of a yellow Complexion, and pleasant Countenance, about the same Age. It is probable the above Negroes will endeavour to get to the Neighbourhood of Murfreesborough, having been purchased from there last October. A Reward of Twenty Dollars will be given on apprehending said Negroes, and confining them in some Jail in the State; or if delivered to me in the Neighbourhood of Hillsboro', the above Reward, and all reasonable Expences paid.

ARCH. CAMPBELL.

March 6, 1800.

The Names Lydia and Jeffrey.

AN ACT

To ascertain the Amount of the Certificate Debt of this State.

WHEREAS it is necessary to ascertain the Amount of the Certificate Debt of this State, to the End that Provision may be made for discharging the same:

I. *Be it therefore enacted by the General Assembly of the State of North-Carolina, and it is hereby enacted by the Authority of the same,* That all Persons holding Certificates of the Debt of this State, shall, on or before the first Day of December, one Thousand eight Hundred, present the same at the Office of the Treasurer; whose Duty it shall be to register the Number, Date and Amount thereof, together with the Name of the Persons to whom the same shall be made payable, in a Book to be by him provided for that Purpose; and the Treasurer shall note on the said Certificate, that the same has been presented and registered as by this Act directed.

II. *And be it further enacted,* That all Certificates of the Debt of this State, not presented to the Treasurer for the Purpose of registering as aforesaid, within the Time limited by this Act; shall forever thereafter be barred; and shall not be received in any Payment to the State, nor in any Office thereof.

III. *And be it further enacted,* That it shall be the Duty of the Treasurer, to give public Notice of the Requisites of this Act in the State Gazette, and at least three other Newspapers within this State, within one Month from the Rise of this General Assembly, and continue the same at least three Months.

IV. *Provided,* That this Act, or any Part thereof, shall not be construed or operate to give Currency to such Certificates as have, by any Act of this State, heretofore been declared fraudulent, or refused to be received at the Treasury, or other Offices of this State.