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FROM THE BALANCE.

Observations respecting the invitation of Mr. Jefferson to Thomas Paine to come over to America.

No. III.

THE singular acquisition to American patriotism, that has been obtained by the importation of THOMAS PAINE, begins to be a subject of democratic triumph. In the first instance, the democratic papers roundly denied that he had been invited. Then, after the fact had become too notorious and stubborn to be controverted, they, in a seemingly supplicant manner, besought the favor of hospitality toward an old man, who, forsooth, was coming over merely to die and lay his bones in the country. But now their taste is changed, & they confidently come forward with heavy claims upon the public gratitude. The former services of PAINE are proclaimed in such strains of lofty panegyric, that it would seem that the American revolution, was, in a great measure achieved by his Herculean labours.

Let us investigate this subject. Let us examine the merits of this daemon, to whom the knee-tribute of the nation seems to be demanded. What were the mighty services of THOMAS PAINE, in this country? Did he throw himself into the foremost ranks of our hottest battles? No;—like the Grecian Therites, together with a saucy tongue, he has always had the timid heart of a fawn. He followed our army, and had a full share of the public provisions of beef and brandy; but he never faced the foe in the day of battle. Scenes of real danger he always cautiously avoided; and his name in the annals of our revolution, was enrolled on the list of cowards. But men may be highly useful at the council board, though they should have neither talents nor disposition to serve the public as soldiers. To the fugitives, as well as to the heroes of our revolution, the grateful homage of the country is due.—Was TOM PAINE among those fugitives? Did he plan the movements of our armies, or the systems of public defence? Did he form any arrangements of finance, or any useful institutions for our infant republic? Was he the Mentor, that guided our public councils?—Who did ever see him acting in any of these important characters? What well-informed American did ever think of him, in the light of a sage civilian, or a capable and prudent statesman?—If such a person now exists, within the limits of the United States, let him speak.—After having mentioned the negative services of PAINE, in relation to the American revolution, it is but just to acknowledge the full amount of his actual services.—This shall be done without any reluctance.

THOMAS PAINE came over to this country from Great-Britain, in the year 1774; and fixed his residence at Philadelphia.—Soon after his arrival, at the eve of the commencement of the American war, he published a spirited pamphlet, entitled "Common Sense;" which, as it was written in a popular manner, & pungently applied to the irritated state and revolutionary feelings of the public, was read with avidity, & had a rapid sale and an extensive circulation. A short time before the declaration of independence, he also published several popular and applauded essays, called "The Crisis;" which were intended to prepare the minds of the people for that great event. These and some other occasional publications of less note, were the sum total of PAINE's services in this country.

"Montes parturiunt et nascitur ridiculus mus." Mountains have

been in travail, and a mouse is born! The man, whose former services in this country are now puffed and trumpeted, as if he were the Atlas, whose mighty shoulders had sustained the weight of our national affairs—the man, who has had the impudence to challenge equality, in point of merit & service, with the immortal WASHINGTON—the man, who now in his first letter of address to the people of the United States, vauntingly reminds them of the share he himself sustained in their revolutions; was what?—A mere knight of the Gooite quill—a pamphleteer!

Our revolution was progressing when PAINE first arrived. Opposition to the measures of the British government was organized. The great body of the people were determined; & if instead of advocating the revolution, he had even used his efforts against it, they would have been as unavailable as a feather in a storm. His writings, it is owned, had some effect. They were a stimulus to minds, already exasperated.—They added a poignancy to the resolution of some, who were already resolved; and they whetted the public resentment against Britain: in the meanwhile, their astonishing popularity was owing to the state of the times; and, in no inconsiderable degree also to the circumstance, that the author was a subject of that government with which this country was contending. It is a notorious fact that literary men, and the leading characters generally, in our nation, as they had been familiarly conversant with the works of Locke, Montesquieu and other celebrated authors upon republican government, neither did or could receive any real information from the writings of PAINE. Confidently may it be averred, and without any fear of contradiction from feally judicious and candid men of either political party, that PAINE's Common Sense, with respect to solidity of argument, elegance of composition, or indeed in any point of view, will bear no comparison with the Farmer's letters, which had been previously written by Mr. DICKINSON, of Pennsylvania:—or with the excellent political essays of Publius, entitled "The Federalist."

The history of PAINE's transactions in America does not end here. Under the old confederation, he was made a secretary to Congress; which office was then a mere clerkship; & for a flagrant breach of trust, he was censured, and reprobated by the venerable patriots of '76. Thus disgraced in America, he returned to Europe. His display of zeal, together with some talents at writing, had obtained for him a temporary credit, as an actor in our revolution; but his breach of trust proved him to be a ven upon its back.

Upon balancing the merits and demerits of PAINE, during his former residence in this country; and placing to the account his horrible blasphemies against religion;—his infamous scurrilities against WASHINGTON;—his habits of low debauchery, and the general contempt in which he has long been held;—the wife and the good will unanimously pronounce, that it was in an evil hour, that the inviting arms of our President were extended toward him. The measure cannot fail of occasioning ultimately the regret of Mr. JEFFERSON himself; who now seems to have no other alternative, but either to carefs and domesticate a common drunkard and a low black-guard; or to provoke his implacable enmity.

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Forged Letters.

[The attention of the public has been recently excited by a controversy, originating in Newport, Rhode Island, in which the character of Mr. Rutledge, (a member of Congress from S. C.) has been severely handled. He is charged with having fabricated certain letters, in the name of one Nicholas Geffroy, a watch maker in Newport, addressed to the President of the United States, the object of which seems to have been, to impose on Mr. Jefferson, and to mislead him, with respect to certain measures and certain characters in that State. The following account of Mr. Rutledge, is taken from the National A, is a Democratic Paper.]

FROM THE NATIONAL AERIAL
FIRGED LETTERS.

The public sentiment being yet divided with respect to the author of the forged letters to the President, as we have once given a decisive opinion on the subject, we feel it our duty to offer to our readers a brief analysis of the evidence on which this opinion was founded. We will in the first place state to them the substance of the evidence, which is adduced for the purpose of criminating Mr. Rutledge; & then exhibit the proof which is offered in exculpation. It is agreed on all hands, that the letters were actually forged. For the purpose of detecting the forgery, they were placed in the hands of Mr. Farnsworth, the printer of "the Rhode-Island Republican," that they might be examined. Six gentlemen, out of ten, who compared them with specimens of Mr. Rutledge's hand writing, have made oath that there is a very striking similitude, and that they have no doubt the letters were written by him. The other four were of a different opinion. They have since been examined by several other respectable persons, who have concurred in the first opinion. It is understood that the six gentlemen, whose affidavits have been published, are all republicans. In addition to this evidence, the deposition of Mr. Richardson, the post-master at Newport, is offered. He swears that the letters were brought to the office on the 2d and 7th of August, by a girl, who said she lived with Mr. Rutledge, and that he sent them; that they appeared to him to be in the hand writing of Mr. Rutledge, though disguised. His son, the assistant post-master has deposed to the same effect. These witnesses afterwards designated "a little white girl," as the person who brought the letters. Thus far the criminating evidence.

On the other hand, Mr. Rutledge offers the affidavits of 11 respectable gentlemen, who swear in substance, that they are intimately acquainted with his hand writing [several of them having known him from his infancy] that they have carefully compared the letters in question, with letters, &c. written by Mr. Rutledge, and that they are decidedly of opinion they were not written by him. Among these witnesses is Mr. Seixas, the cashier of the bank, whose occupation naturally leads him to a critical attention to handwriting. It is understood that the eleven witnesses who depose in favour of Mr. Rutledge, are all federalists. Mr. Rutledge, himself, has also sworn that the letters were not written by him; and that he had no knowledge of them, before reading them in the "Rhode-Island Republican."

In addition to this, Betsey Chapman (wears, that she went to live in Mr. Rutledge's family, about the last of August, and that while there, she never carried any letter to the post-office or any other place. Rhody Chappell, testifies, that at the time alluded to, she was frequently in Mr. Rutledge's family, and is positive there was no white girl or

woman, & no young female domestic of any sort, in the family at that time.

A young girl by the name of Polly Osborne, about eleven or twelve years of age, it seems did live with Mr. Rutledge, some time in the month of August. From the description of the girl, who, it is said carried the letters to the office, it was suspected she might be the person. On application to her, she positively declared, that "she never carried any letters, while at Mr. Rutledge's, to any person or place." A Mr. Moore has also sworn, that this girl, in conversation with him, had told him that she would not say she had carried letters for Mr. Rutledge, to the post office "if all the town, say'd her to;" and added that "her father told her she might get something handsome, if she said she carried the letters, and she might get herself into difficulty." It is stated that young Mr. Richardson was at first very positive he could find out and identify the bearer of the letter. This, however, he has failed to do, & "no little white girl" has been designated, who lived in Mr. Rutledge's family at the time, or who knows any thing about the transaction. One witness, (Mr. Kinlock, a particular friend of Mr. Rutledge) has sworn that Mr. Richardson, the post-master, told Mr. Rutledge, on the first enquiry "he did not know who bro't the letters."

Mr. Geffroy, (the person in whose name they were written) has testified, that on opening the answer from the President, he found the water wet, as if recently inserted, which led him to suspect an imposition; that he immediately applied to the Post-master, who, without any hesitancy, returned the postage.

It is also stated by Mr. Geffroy, that after the receipt of the first letter from the Post-office, it was hinted that there would probably be others, directed to him—through the same medium, and his permission was requested to take them up in his absence.

As to the letters themselves, they are written in a peculiar and ridiculous style, and without any apparent design.

The above statement, we believe comprises all the essential evidence, respecting this mysterious transaction. We offer no comments on this occasion. We have before remarked, that the balance of the evidence appeared to us, clearly in favour of Mr. Rutledge. Our impressions are yet the same. Every reader is now left, to examine and decide for himself.

CAUTION!

SOME time in the month of November, 1802, as nearly as I can at present recollect, I entered into an obligation with a Mr. William Brown of Sumpter District, South Carolina, to deliver him at Statesburg, in the said State, about the beginning of January, 1803, a likely negro wench about 20 years of age, and having a child about a year old, for which he paid me in advance 200 dollars in cash, and delivered me a horse at 140 dollars; and was at the time of delivering him the wench and child to have paid me the further sum of 125 dollars. Some time since, I understood that a certain Jesse Lee, then of Fayetteville, N. Carolina, purchased and took up the said obligation, and I did hope for the purpose of having the same discounted in part of his debt with me—but having understood that the said Lee has removed from his former residence, to some distant parts, and fearing that he may attempt to transfer the said obligation, I do thus publicly forwarn all persons whatever from taking an assignment thereof, being determined not to settle the same with any other person than the said Jesse Lee, who owes me vastly more than that amount.

JAMES HOWARD.
Fayetteville, November
8th, 1802.