

THE STATE GAZETTE

O F

NORTH-CAROLINA.

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An ANSWER to the Letter addressed to the People of the State of North-Carolina.

BY A CITIZEN OF NORTH-CAROLINA.

Omnes autem habentur & dicuntur tyranni, qui potestate sunt perpetua, in ea civitate quae libertate usa est.

CORN. NEPOS.

Sine Larva.

S I R,

SUPPOSING your late address, however generally directed, could only be intended for the anti federal party; being one of the leaders of that party, and a member of the late Convention held at Hillsborough, I undertake to thank you for reminding us of the critical situation we are in and that it requires the most serious attention.—You are right, though you might have spared yourself that trouble, it being a situation we are too well pleased with, to be inattentive to.

Will you be pleased to recollect that our cause of complaint (I here speak of all America collectively) against the European tyrant, was his monopoly of all power and too lordly an exercise thereof over those he esteemed his vassals; in fine that hostilities were commenced, that victory declared for the states, of which we (North-Carolina) are one. Was it not a natural consequence to wish to enjoy the fruits of victory? and how could we be said to enjoy a privilege we did not exercise? The inestimable gem we won by our joint endeavours was divisible, and who shall hinder us from the occupation of our particular portion? We have occupied it for a considerable time illimitably; the pleasure arising from its use has so strongly captivated our souls, that we will not submit to the dictation of the other states how far we shall extend it, or how we again shall subdivide it among ourselves. I fortunately happen to be of a party which has acquired more than an equal share procured by our ingenuity, and we are not disposed to run the risk of having our hands weakened by a simple submission to the award of arbitrators. And sir, being so circumstanced, we do exult in consideration of our independence being increased, that we are now independent of all nations and states, our own not excepted, having gained such an ascendancy in the Assemblies and Courts, (for we are both representatives and magistrates, we make and interpret the laws) so that in a short time I hope to see our aristocracy as firmly established as those of Venice and Genoa.

As for the public debt incurred, it may or may not be a debt as we are pleased to consider it; if we ever discharge it, it will be merely *ex gratia*, and that perhaps in a currency to be struck for the very purpose, which by the laws of the land being declared a tender in all cases whatsoever, will serve to pay debts due to foreigners as well as citizens. This will serve also as a confutation of your assertion that we are without pecuniary resources; only remember when put to our shifts during the administration of the late Governor Nash, to whom was delegated the whole power of legislation in that particular, what an inundation of money he produced, beyond the power of arithmetic to calculate. Do you think the secret buried with him, and that source of credit and riches dried up to the fountain head?

True (you say jeeringly) we may now form alliances at pleasure,—and we may let it alone also. Is there any indispensable necessity for them? No!—Encompassed almost by the United States, we need fear no invasion by land from foreigners; the policy of those states will not permit troops to march through their terri-

tories to make war upon us, so that in that article we are safe; and although it may be alleged that forces may be landed immediately on our own coasts, the same answer a little varied, will again serve, to wit, the United States will assist us through fear, if not through affection; through fear of being attacked by the same power after our subjugation on the side of South-Carolina or Virginia.

Beside you write as if it was impossible for a state or nation to exist without forming alliances. I am sorry, sir, you read your bible to so little purpose as to have forgot that the Jews lived altogether independent of and unmixed with every other nation forty years in the wilderness, and then suddenly bursting forth from their obscurity, were so warlike, so well-appointed and so strong in finance, that the nations though sometimes trebly combined, fell before them like timorous sheep before a band of prowling wolves.

“Possibly we may be inflated with the ridiculous idea of our own importance”—If there be any earthly excuse for pride, have we not a temptation to be proud? Have we not in our resistance of a tyrant King disengaged ourselves from his yoke? Is there any thing sweeter than after such a conflict to impose that burthen on the necks of others, with which our own shoulders are yet galled? Our arms being too short to reach the tyrant and his emissaries, we therefore tried it on those nearer to us, and I do assure you it proved exquisite pastime; their curvetting, their writhing and twisting was to us (the imposers) a delectable pantomime, and we have never dropt the representation for a single day, for the play was for our own benefit.

Ye have voted us into authority and we have extended that authority; as members of legislation during the session: we are your sovereigns, when and where we take special care also of our juridical jurisdiction, so that between session and session, all judicial contests are decided by us, sometimes with, but much oftener without a jury, the authority of which is now reduced to an empty sound. Was the Rump Parliament under Oliver Cromwell's best modelling, ever more absolute? and being so firmly established, you will scarcely persuade us to part with that, which no man or set of men were ever known to relinquish for slender arguments than those of guns and swords.

One of the Apostles says, “He that provideth not for his family, is worse than an infidel.” There is but little difference between him who provideth not, and him who having provided the means wasteth them.

If we conform with the eleven states, we must pay up in proportion the public debt, pay a much heavier land and capitation tax than at present we are disposed to do, and must pay off also our British debts; thus we venture the beggaring or at least reducing our families to shorter and more lordly appointments than become our dignity. It is immaterial by what means we became great men—being so, it is our duty not to consent to any measures tending to diminish our consequence. Charity ought to begin at home, and when it becomes a question who shall suffer, thou or me? that reverend judge SELF, has seldom been known to decide uniaurally; except in the case of a few romantic fools, whose example we are not ambitious to imitate.

As to your pious hope that the notion of a disunion is generally reprobated, even by those who voted against the constitution, that hope, though not altogether groundless, is to be indulged *cum grano salis*, i. e. allow a large sum of paper-bills to be emitted, time for its utmost depreciation, and time for paying debts public and private, with the currency to depre-

ciated, and I will admit that perhaps there are many who then will care not, although the new constitution should be adopted; but who are they? wretches of no note or consequence, who never had a vote in an Assembly or a seat in the Courts.

The two instances of disinterested virtue, you hold up for our imitation in the persons of Governor Randolph and Mr. Smith, we dare not pattern after; they are great by genius, family, fortune, education and profession—they may safely make such concessions, and still remain patricians; but for us, the progenitors of many of whom are as uncertain, as those of the fatherless babes under the tuition of the overseers of the poor, to aspire to the practice of such sentiments, would be flat insanity—raised upon the stilts of popularity for imaginary qualifications, without genius, family, education or profession, for such to stoop, is never to rise again.

We thank you for your information relative to the deficiencies of the old constitution. For those very deficiencies we adore it; we plainly saw its given powers could not be carried into execution, yet were willing it should be suspended in *terrorem*, to fright naughty boys (not of our party) whose veneration for it made them think an infringement of any article thereof sacrilege, while we (of the junto) with the spirit of an Alexander, with true heroic petulance, cut in two its gordian knots at pleasure, enacting *ex post facto* laws, law for extending the jurisdiction of the county court magistrates in and out of court, law for stay of execution, which in its effects amounted also to positive law for the alteration of written and sealed contracts, &c. and not content to fix upon our subjects those badges of slavery, we attempted to tyrannize over their minds and consciences; prescribing for their belief a political transubstantiation in the case of paper currency, where every bill on its face carried an impudent assertion, that it was equal in value to gold and silver, with a fraudulent promise that it should be redeemed with that species of money at a future day; to the belief of which (less modest than Lord Peter in the Tale of a Tub) we did not condescend to offer even his or any other arguments, but trounced in the Courts many who ventured to judge for themselves by eyes, nose, teeth, or any other organ or distinguishing faculty Heaven had bestowed upon them, taking especial care notwithstanding to spare our own countrymen more than strangers, who dared to dispute our infallible ordinances.

My good sir, entertain a better opinion of us—we are not those vain creatures you are disposed to consider us—we are more modest and reasonable than to expect that after eleven states upon mature deliberation had adopted the constitution, they would tread back the ground they had gained—such a requisition was only thrown out to amuse: we never hoped for or desired such a confession, since so long as it shall be refused, so long shall we have a feasible apology for refusing to adopt the federal constitution (thereby becoming the assassins of our beloved principle). Nor do we alledge that the members of the Grand Convention, held at Philadelphia, or that the eleven state Conventions met since separately, are so ignorant of the proper principles of liberty, or so indifferent about them, as to consent to a system by which the general liberty of mankind would be infringed. No we feared and doubted them only for our special and particular liberty; the liberty of (our party) remaining free to trample upon the rights of all those who are not in the Assembly and commission of the peace.