



NORTH-CAROLINA STATE GAZETTE.

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

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On War and Peace,

By one of the arrivals, we have received a London paper, containing the following well-written observations, translated from the Paris Monitor. We make no apology for giving them to our readers.

FOR several years the sweet name of peace has resounded from one end of the world to the other. The hope of it is in the hearts of all people, and on the lips of those who govern. It is the first want of the nations themselves who do not take an active part in the war, who have been unable to escape from its disastrous influence.

Never, in fact, has any war in so short a time, overthrown more States, defoliated more families, shaken more profoundly the basis of social order, than the present contest, equally astonishing in its principle and results. Where is the man who should now be bold enough to say that blood enough had not yet been shed, and that the glory and prosperity of his country still required some thousands of human victims? But since a single voice is not raised for the continuance of this deplorable war, where then is that concealed power which keeps peace at a distance, while it is called for by all the world? What is this boasted empire of opinion which governs, it is said, the world, if the secret passions of some individuals counter-balance the evident interests of nations?

This phenomenon merits observation, but it is not my object to explain it.

If there could exist a man whose desire of continuing the war might be pardoned; it doubtless would be that man who is indebted for his glory and his fortune to this war, and whose experience and talents would be pledges of new triumphs in new contests.

It is not necessary for me to pronounce the name of this man; it is not necessary for me to say that he has not shewn himself ambitious for this increase of military renown, All Europe sees that he aspires to another kind of glory, if not more brilliant, at least more humane and more permanent. It is his desire to govern; which is more difficult than to conquer.

After having for the first time conquered Italy, an outset more glorious than the military careers of the greatest Captains, he crossed the Julian Alps, and found himself on the Drave and Muhr, within a few marches from Vienna. The wish for peace was expressed by the enemy. Buonaparte checked his victorious career, abandoned the fascinating hope of proceeding to compel the Emperor to peace, even in the very capital of his states—suspended hostilities—negotiated and concluded the treaty of Leoben, which produced that of Campo Formio. France would have never obtained such vast advantages by a treaty, had not ignorance and blind passion destroyed at Rastadt the work of an enlightened moderation.

It is incumbent on me to observe once more, that when the fortunate revolution of the 18th Brumaire had placed Bonaparte at the head of the Government, the first act of his authority was to express his wish for peace; and that wish was rejected, with as little reason as decency, by the British Ministry. After the almost fabulous campaign of Marengo, the Conqueror signed, upon the field of battle, an armistice, which probably saved the remainder of the vanquished army.

Moreau, after marches combined with equal certainty and skill, moved forward from success to success into the heart of Germany. Who could maintain that the enemy's army, as much discouraged as weakened by a series of disasters, would have stopped him in this progress? But humanity obtained what the ambition of glory would have rejected. The first consul

beyond all other considerations, preferred peace. He granted a favourable armistice to the enemy, on condition of negotiating without delay.

The end of war is victory; the end of victory should be peace; but every enemy can commence a war; it is the conqueror only that can put an end to it. These thoughts have been the rule of the First Consul's measures. It is neither in publications nor in speeches, that we can form an opinion of the man who governs. In manifestoes, proclamations, ministerial notes, I behold on every side an equal horror expressed for the effusion of human blood, and equal desire to restore tranquility to the people. But after all these vain protestations, I see that rivers of human blood continue to flow and poison all the sources of order and of social happiness; and I do not perceive in any quarter weighty interests which can counterbalance such vast calamities. Let us then investigate, not in words, but in their results, the real intentions of men. Let us consider in that point of view, the result of the conduct recently adopted by our government to accomplish a general pacification.

The court of Vienna proposed as the place of conferences for peace a central town of France. Luneville was fixed upon by the First Consul. That court sent thither a celebrated negotiator, equally esteemed for his character and his talents. He was received with honour as a friend to peace. The court of London manifested an intention of taking part in the negotiation, and that of Vienna expressed a desire of treating with its ally. The First Consul might have recalled to his mind personalities as indecent as they were undeserved, to which the principal men of the Britannic government had recourse against him; but he was too much above insults to involve his private resentment with such immense interests. He acceded without hesitation, to an overture which might accelerate the peace of Europe.

Citizen Otto, who resided at London as commissioner of the government for the exchange of prisoners, was immediately authorized to treat with the English Ministers. That negotiation failed; and what cannot be observed without concern is, that the English ministry, far from preserving any desire of conciliation, appears to have been studious to irritate still more the public mind, by a proceeding unnecessarily impolitic, and contrary to all the usages of civilized nations it has just made public the details of the negotiation.

One government only had given, until the present moment, the example of such a conduct, and it was also the English government, after the negotiation of Lisle. The tone and forms with which that negotiation was conducted and broken off by an imperious Directory, which was ignorant and defied every thing that was suitable and decent, might perhaps, justify the conduct of the court of London. But now, when the First Consul has afforded the example of the respect which governments owe to each other, and of the esteem which is due to acknowledged laws in diplomatic transactions, what motive can have authorized the English ministry to publish amicable communications, destined by their nature to remain secret until their publicity should be required by national interest?

It is an established maxim in society, that letters of confidence written to each other by individuals cannot be published by him who receives them without the consent of him who has written them, unless the former be in want of them to defend his rights before the courts of law, or his honour before the public tribunal.

Why should not this maxim of social morality be equally respected in political morality? It is enforced by greater interests, and consecrated by the usages of nations. Is not a violation of these usages, which are called the *Rights of Nations*, a subversion of the basis, already too weak, on which is placed the tranquility of the people?

By publishing the papers to which this allusion is made, the British ministry has, perhaps hoped to impose, not on enlightened men, but on the multitude. It has observed, that in ordinary disputes the disputants made a greater impression on the mass of the spectators than the sound reasoning of the other. It has thought, that the confidence which is displayed in the goodness of its cause, would inspire its judges with a favourable prepossession. But these first prepossessions are light and fugitive: those of justice and of reason alone are permanent.

In looking to the publicity given to the negotiation of Citizen Otto as a provocation without motive, the French Government has nothing to apprehend from its effects. Never were intentions more upright manifested by communications more candid: A short analysis of the progress of the negotiation will prove, I hope, what I advance.

I shall commence with a general observation. Those who have had occasion to observe the conduct of Ministers and agents of the English Government in public affairs, have remarked that they proceeded in them with extreme caution; that they wrote little; that in every matter of importance they expressed in a vague and general manner: those qualities belong to the nature of the Government; every public man knows that he can neither write nor speak a word, of which he may not be liable, some day or other, to give an account to his country. From this there results a general spirit of circumspection, which increases by habit, which often becomes pedantic, austere, or timid, beyond what prudence or interest requires.

This sort of deportment displayed itself in a remarkable manner during the two negotiations of Lord Malmesbury, and still more during that of Citizen Otto; because in the latter the usual circumspection of the English character was fortified by a systematic wish to gain time without concluding anything.

To any person who reads the first communications made by Citizen Otto to the British Minister, for the purpose of opening the negotiation, it will appear that the French Commissioner did immediately and unequivocally make known the object of his mission, and the powers with which he was invested. Lord Grenville, on the contrary, appears at first to avoid entering into the merits of the business, by recurring to the minutiae of forms, and demanding explanations without necessity. Why, for instance, should he require Citizen Otto to communicate to him the note addressed to Baron de Turgut by the English Ambassador at Vienna, for the purpose of announcing the intention of his Britannic Majesty to take a part in the negotiation at Luneville? Surely Lord Grenville knew that note perfectly well; and the circumstance of its having been communicated to France. It is also observable throughout the whole course of the negotiation of Citizen Otto, that the English Minister reaped advantage from every difficulty; that he multiplied explanations, and that he even managed his objections in a manner to gain delay, and to protract that premeditated refusal with which he finished the negotiation.

But let us lay aside all forms, and enter for a moment into the question itself; it reduces itself to

this point. The King of England desires to treat for peace in concert with his ally the Emperor. The First Consul consents to this without any objection. But should we continue to be attacked, while treating for an accommodation? This would be to place us on a very unfavourable footing. The events of war are every moment producing changes of circumstances which serve to strengthen the pretensions of one party, or to influence the resentments of the other. France and Austria felt this; a suspension of hostilities had been the preliminary to their treating for peace. Because England wished to make common cause with its ally, this necessary preliminary should also be common to them. It was also conformable to the nature of things that a maritime truce between France and England should take place previous to their entering into the discussion of interests which divide them.

The French Government presented the project of a naval armistice, which was rejected; and the English Minister presented a counter-project, which was found inadmissible. In this state of things the French Government reduced the propositions to the alternative either of beginning a common negotiation with England and Austria, by concluding an armistice according to the modified project which France had proposed, or of negotiating for a separate peace with England, by concluding the armistice according to the project proposed by the British Ministry.

In this mode of simplifying the question, and of opening to England two ways by which the negotiation might be entered into, it is difficult not to perceive most clearly the sincere desire of speedily coming to a reconciliation. The two essential points of the contest were, first, the possibility and the conditions of a maritime armistice; second, the propriety of a separate peace.

It is unnecessary to prove the possibility of a maritime armistice. One was concluded between France and England at the Congress of Utrecht in 1782. It is true that at that Congress preliminaries had been signed before the armistice was agreed to. The concurrence of these two measures is without doubt favourable to conciliation, but it is not indispensable. The one would not be without the other a step towards peace.

Besides, who prevented the British Ministry from proposing preliminaries? The whole of the Chief Consul's conduct during this war does not allow us to doubt, but that he would have received with eagerness a proposition which could tend to the acceleration of negotiations. And certainly England had at the epoch of the treaty of Utrecht stronger reasons than now to reject an armistice. France, exhausted at home, defeated abroad, without finance, commerce and a navy, had every thing to look for in a suspension of hostilities by sea. At present, France, victorious in Germany and Italy, recovered from her internal commotions, rich in her national resources, has nothing in common with what she was then, but the weak state of her navy and commerce.

It must be admitted, that the arrangements of a naval armistice abound with difficulties which are not to be found in a continental armistice; but these difficulties are an object for discussion, and every thing is easily settled when the armistice is concluded with good faith.

Neither is it doubtful, that a maritime truce would have been attended with results more unfavourable to England than to France. That consideration was neither disguised nor eluded by the French Government, which demanded the

naval armistice only as a necessary preparative to the success of the negotiation. If England experienced in the course of it some disadvantages, they ought to be considered as a sacrifice which she will make at the altar of peace—a pledge which she will give of the sincerity of her dispositions to a just and reasonable settlement; and the advantages which might result from it to France will be but a compensation for those which the continental armistice has procured for Austria.

This last point has been satisfactorily discussed by the French Commissioner. In fact, the continental armistice gives to the Court of Vienna the means of reorganizing its armies, of converting into soldiers, into arms, and stores of all kinds, the subsidies furnished by England, and of fortifying and victualling the place of the second and third line, which had been neglected, because it was impossible to foresee the rapid successes of the French arms. A repose of six months would have been sufficient to re-animate the zeal and courage of the troops, and to weaken the natural impression produced by multiplied victories—that moral influence which augments the forces of the conqueror by confidence, and diminishes that of the conquered by a contrary sentiment.

The most important advantage which France could find in the maritime truce, was unquestionably that of supplying the garrison of Malta and the army of Egypt with reinforcements and subsistence; but the solicitude manifested by the First Consul on that occasion was a sacred duty prescribed to him by humanity as well as the national interest. What did he require by the project of truce? For Malta, the means of existence; for the army of Egypt, the means of defending itself against a cruel and perfidious people. What a barbarous political system is that which would form an alliance with famine for the purpose of destroying warriors whom it was unable to vanquish! Which refuses bread to an enemy to whom it holds out the hand of reconciliation!

The refusal made by the British Ministry, in its project of armistice, to suffer even limited succours to pass to the army of Malta and Egypt, also presents itself under a remarkable point of view. Lord Grenville had established as the basis of the armistice this specious principle, that the position of the two armies should remain such as that neither of them would acquire advantages over the other, which it would not have had without the armistice. This principle has an imposing appearance of justice, but by a rigorous application it would give rise to endless difficulties; for during a suspension of hostilities between two nations at war, there can never be such a parity of circumstances, such an equilibrium of interests, that one of the two should not find some advantages in the truce.

Had France concluded an armistice on the condition of not sending succours to the troops of Malta and of Egypt, she evidently would have placed herself in a worse condition in that respect than if she had continued in a state of war. In the latter case, she might hope to accomplish what she had already done, to dispatch to Malta and Alexandria some vessels, which might escape the vigilance of the enemy's squadrons. During the armistice, according to the plan of the English, France would be deprived of every resource. Was not such a suspension of arms a measure truly hostile.

The counter-project of the English is an artful combination, where good faith and the desire of conciliation are not manifest. All the advantages are in favour of England; for the freedom of navigation