



AND North-Carolina State Gazette.

Our's are the plans of fair, delightful peace, Unwar'd by party rage, to live like Brothers.

THURSDAY DECEMBER 24, 1867.

No. 431.

General Assembly.

DEBATE

Addressing the President U. States.

Friday, Dec. 11.

The following Address to the President was offered by Mr. Hamilton, from Pasquotank, as a substitute for one he had laid on the table some days ago:

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON, President of the United States of America.

SIR,—The General Assembly of the State of North Carolina, convened at a moment when the Independence of their Country, in whose welfare they feel, and are on all occasions ready to manifest the noblest solicitude, is attacked; when their rights are invaded, their citizens seized, their property plundered, and their remonstrances disregarded, by a nation uniformly & notoriously hostile, & who appeals only to power to justify her conduct: When the Union of these States, which they sincerely desire may be perpetual, is endangered by the machinations of a disappointed (party) man & his adherents, who have sought to subvert, because we could not direct the measures of government; they feel it their duty to assure you, Sir, of their entire approbation of those measures which have been pursued for the defence and interest of their common country.

We will not, Sir, recount the many benefits which you have borne to your country from foreign courts, whilst engaged in the cause of Freedom: We will not review the eminent advantages derived from your talents & virtues, whilst employed in high and responsible offices at home; nor will the limits of an address permit us to enumerate the blessings which have flowed from the administration of our public affairs since the memorable period of 1801. We will only say, that in whatever point of view we regard you, whether in private or public life, we perceive such uniformity of conduct, such firmness of character, such entire resignation on the one hand, & so great ability to act on the other, that we have abundant reason to rejoice, that in a person called to preside in the councils of his country, the Statesman, Philosopher & Patriot are so happily and conspicuously united.

Although we are sensible that to you, Sir, whose time and talents have been entirely devoted to your country's good, the pleasures of domestic ease and retirement from the busy scenes of life, would now be particularly inviting; yet when we reflect that the period is probably near at hand, when the exercise of your patriotic virtues will be particularly important to your country, perhaps essential to its preservation, we cannot forbear most earnestly to solicit, that, at the next presidential election, you will not deny your countrymen the pleasure of again selecting you for the discharge of those important duties, for the performance of which you appear so eminently qualified.—And may that Being who regulates the affairs of men below, when the period of our final separation shall arrive, receive you into those mansions of bliss, reserved for those who have deserved well.

When the Editor of the Register entered the gallery of the House of Commons, Mr. E. HARRIS was speaking in support of the following address, which he had moved as an amendment to (or substitute for) Mr. Hamilton's:

"The General Assembly of the State of North-Carolina, deeply impressed with a sense of your long and useful labours in the service of your country, take this opportunity of expressing their approbation of your administration as President of the United States of America, and particularly their approbation of your official con-

duct in relation to our late unhappy misunderstanding with the government of Great-Britain. We feel confident that your best exertions to avert the calamities of war from our highly favoured country, will be unremittingly used. During the hostilities which have harassed the fairest portion of Europe, the U States by observing an honest neutrality, have flourished in an unexampled manner. We ardently hope that this happy state will continue; but if peace cannot be preserved on just & honourable terms, we declare for ourselves, and the freemen whom we represent, that we will exhaust our blood and treasure in support & defence of our rights and liberties. It is our sincere wish that Providence may spare your life many years, that your country may have the benefit of your illustrious talents on all occasions which may call for the exercise of them."

Mr HARRIS objected to the address proposed by the gentleman from Pasquotank principally because it contained a request to the President that he would not deny to his countrymen the pleasure of again selecting him, at the approaching election, to fill the Presidential chair. He said, that this was assuming a right which was not delegated to them as legislators, and it would be setting a precedent which might hereafter be abused. He insisted that the people at large only had the right to designate who is proper to fill that high and important office; and though he had the highest opinion of the present Chief Magistrate, and was willing to pay all due homage to him as such, he could not agree to address him in the venal and adulatory style of the address of the gentleman from Pasquotank, nor to request him again to offer for the Presidency.

Mr. HAMILTON did not approve of the amendment proposed by the gentleman from Craven. He thought it too rapid & insipid a composition to be addressed to so illustrious a character as Thomas Jefferson. He disliked also the quarrelsome wherewithal; for the gentleman had himself told him that a Federalist had assisted him in drafting it. He was at all times friendly to accommodation; he wished to hear the opinions of gentlemen on political subjects. The government under which we live, is a government of experiment and opinion; but he could not agree to accept of the proposed amendment. It speaks, indeed, with approbation of the government of the U. States, but contains nothing to show that we are pleased with the conduct of Thomas Jefferson. Indeed the gentleman says he disapproves of any address of the kind. If so the argument is at an end. For his part, Mr. H. said he could see no objection to the address which he had proposed. It is much in the same style with the addresses which have been sent to the President from every part of the Union. Counties, towns, companies of horse and foot, have all united in pouring forth their sentiments of approbation of the conduct of the President, and their determination to support the government at this important crisis of our affairs; and he could see no reason why this General Assembly should not do so too. He thought these addresses, when couched in temperate and decent language, were calculated to convince the British nation, that the people of this country feel the indignity which they have offered, to our flag and nation, and that they are determined to support their government in resisting it. He thought when the gentleman termed the address which he proposes to amend, venal and adulatory, and that it contains party reflections, he could not have attended to the reading of it with his usual accuracy. Mr. H. denied that it was exceptional in this respect. It cast no reflection upon any party, but upon Burr, and his adherents, who had endeavoured to overturn the government and produce a civil war in the country. No one in that Assembly could surely object to this. And is it not right, said Mr. H. to express our opinion as to the outrage committed by the Leopard on the Chesapeake, and as to the propriety of conduct on the

part of the President on this occasion? He trusted it was.

But the gentleman from Craven is averse to that part of the address which solicits Thos. Jefferson again to hold up his name for the Presidency. For himself, he looked upon this as the best part of the address. Should the President turn a favourable ear to this and similar invitations, he should consider it a great blessing obtained for the country at the present crisis, as, if he did not, he (Mr. H.) dreaded the danger that might arise to the country from the conflict of party spirit. There is, said he, no other candidate who would be able to keep down the turbulence of party at such a period. Suppose Rufus King were to be the candidate. He is a high-toned Federalist, if not a Royalist—he was of the same school with Gen. Hamilton. His offering would produce the greatest conflicts of party violence. If you take Gov. Clinton, he doubtless deserves well of his country, but he is the champion of a party, and comes from a State which, perhaps, more than any other, is divided by party contentions, and these would all be brought into view on such an event. It would be, in some degree, the same, if Gen. Smith, Mr. Monroe or Mr. Madison were brought forward; and if we passed over to S. Carolina, and nominated Gen. Pickens, similar objections would arise. He wished not to throw out any thing prejudicial to the character of any of these gentlemen. He had no doubt they all deserved well of the party to which they are attached. But he did not think any of them so well calculated to fill the Presidential Chair, at the present important crisis, as Thomas Jefferson, and therefore he was in favour of soliciting him again to serve.

Mr. E. HARRIS wished to set the gentleman from Pasquotank right as to a fact which he had stated. "I did not (said Mr. H.) tell that gentleman that a Federalist assisted in drawing the amendment which I have proposed. I mentioned to that gentleman that I had been assisted by a member in drawing the amendment; that I supposed it would obtain a general vote, and wished the gentleman to introduce it instead of his own." Mr. H. added, that he did not expect that this innocent and private conversation would have been thus perverted,—and then sat down for a few moments.

Rising again, he said he had taken his seat to give the gentleman an opportunity of correcting what he had stated; but as he did not think proper to do so, he would proceed. It is come to this (said Mr. H.) are we to nominate a candidate for the Presidency, and are the People implicitly to follow our choice? The gentleman from Pasquotank claims this as a right which the General Assembly possesses. This he did not expect. He had supposed that this doctrine might have been set up some 15 or 20 years hence; but that at present gentlemen would not have gone further than to establish precedent on which the doctrine might hereafter have been founded.

Mr. H. would not dispute with the gentleman as to what constituted Republicanism or Aristocracy.—Whenever a party of men as unite to themselves rights not derived from any proper source, they become dangerous to the Peace and Liberty of a country. We can determine what rights belong to us as Legislators, only by a reference to the constitution under which we act; for no gentleman will say, we have a right, in that capacity, to do what we please.

The gentleman from Pasquotank observes, that whenever a man is placed in the Presidency, he immediately draws a faction around him. This may be so. But if factions necessarily exist after a man gets into office, let us not raise a factious spirit around him beforehand. The evil is bad enough afterwards, let us not give it existence amongst the people by any act of ours.

Mr. H. was ready to agree with the gentleman, that the illustrious character, who now fills the Presidential Chair is as free from preju-

dice as any man. It would be well for us to follow his example—to mind our own business—attend to the concerns which come properly within our province—and not interfere with rights which are inherent in the people at large.

Mr. FOOTE proposed that as the amendment, in his opinion, went to strike out the most valuable part of the Address, the question should be decided by Yeas and Nays.—Agreed.

Mr. GASTON. I very much regret the necessity which compels me to address the House.—I would cheerfully have declined trespassing on their attention, if a sense of duty did not forbid me to be silent. I find myself constrained by the most imperious obligations, to submit a motion different from any yet proposed, calculated to relieve them from the unpleasant embarrassments in which they are involved, and entitled to a priority of decision.

It will, I hope, be distinctly remembered, that three weeks have elapsed since the original resolution for addressing the President of the U. States was first introduced to the attention of the House. At the request either of its author or its patrons, its consideration has been postponed from day to day—from week to week. Whenever the period arrived which had been assigned for its discussion, some opportune sickness has always occurred, either of the mover or his co-adjutors, to render a farther postponement decent and necessary. Yet this unfortunate indisposition appears not to have prevented their attention to the other business of the session. In common with the rest of mankind, I have been accustomed to consider uniformity and consistency as strong proofs of design, and utterly at variance with accident. I was impossible therefore, for me not to suspect that this procrastination was premeditated—the result of a fixed and premeditated plan. For some time I charitably believed that the advocates of the address had become sensible of its impropriety—that the sickness which affected them was merely a sickness of the subject; and I fondly hoped, that if postponing it from day to day, they would at length consent to postpone it forever.—It is unnecessary for me to say, how unfounded, how delusive was his hope. It has been succeeded by an apprehension to which my mind reluctantly yielded.—I fear and I believe, that the resolution was postponed because the temper of the House was for a long time unfavorable to its adoption. It was perceived that their good sense revolted at the terms in which it was couched. It was necessary to procure for passion the ascendancy over reason, to blow the sparks of faction into a flame—to awaken the dormant animosities of party spirit; by causes & other unwarrantable means to get together a band of determined followers, who by their blind and well disciplined adherence to their leaders, should alarm the timid, drive away moderation, and enforce a victory. Such means have been used; and I know they have been used.—An opportunity will now be presented of ascertaining whether they have been used with success. The result of the motion which I shall now submit, will enable us to judge with certainty of the result of these artifices.

I now move, that the original resolution and the amendments proposed to it, lie on the table indefinitely, and without order. Upon this motion, I presume it would not be regular to examine either of the propositions with a minute scrutiny. I shall, therefore, forbear to enlarge on the submissive tone, the supplicating language of the address—language better calculated for the meridian of Turkey than America; better suited to the trembling slave who falls prostrate at the feet of his despot, than to the Legislature of a free, sovereign and independent State. I will not now animadvert on the fulsome adulation, the whining cant of the amendment

proposed by the gentleman from Pasquotank, nor will I notice its higher claims to distinction, the poetic genius with which it inverts facts which have no existence, the calumniating audacity which attributes to virtuous men villainous conduct and villainous motives, and the puerile depravity of taste which mistakes bombast for sublimity. Nor will I now point out all I do not approve of in the amendment proposed by my friend from Craven, an amendment which I admit to be infinitely less liable to objections than either of the other propositions. It shall be my part to keep constantly in view, the objects contemplated by them all, and to enquire whether for these objects the President ought to be addressed by the Legislature.

They all have in view the expression of our decided approbation of Mr. Jefferson's public conduct, and particularly of the measures he has taken relative to the unhappy dispute between the U. S. and Great Britain.

It is incumbent on those who recommend a measure, to show its expediency and propriety. It is particularly incumbent on those who propose an extraordinary measure, to suggest a sufficient cause for its adoption. During the discussion which has already taken place, I have listened to the gentlemen with the most patient attention, to discover, if possible, the reasons on which the propriety of an address is attempted to be supported. Two only have been assigned, and it is not in my power to anticipate others. It has been said that Mr. Jefferson is an illustrious character, and it is fit that we should declare to him the admiration which we entertain of his exalted talents and eminent virtues. It is certainly true that I do not entertain the extravagant admiration which one of the members has expressed. That the President possesses talents, that he is not without his virtues, it would be uncandid in me to deny. But I am far, very far from believing the encomiums which have been poured forth with such unsparing profusion. I have seen something to approve and much to censure during his administration. But, it is not necessary to my present purpose, to enter into an investigation of his public conduct.—Be it admitted, to give the argument its full force, that he is an illustrious man—that he has rendered his country great services. Is the Legislature of N. Carolina therefore bound to address him? Carry this mode of reasoning to its proper mark and whither does it lead us? It must then be our duty to address every illustrious man. Mr. Monroe is said to be on his return home from a very delicate and important negotiation. How he has conducted it, and what is its result we as yet know not. But if fortunately it should prove that he has behaved with firmness and address, with diligence and zeal, and brought it to a prosperous and honorable issue, shall we not address him also? When Members of Congress, Secretaries of State, Governors of our Sister States gain the splendid appellation of illustrious, will they not too prefer an equally well founded claim to our addresses. If the principle is adopted I should humbly suggest a more economical mode of carrying it into execution. Instead of the Legislature devoting themselves to the agreeable amusement of rounding phrases and polishing sentences, that they may steal upon the tympanum of the ear with a musical snavity, let us at once appoint a Laureat, who shall compose addresses for all our illustrious characters. We do it at an expense to the people little short of seven hundred dollars a day. A less salary would induce many an ingenious young man, of fervid fancy and apt talents for panegyric, to manufacture addresses by the wholesale. We should have them in abundance, always ready for use, of every size and every variety of colouring. In this mode of economy, I hope this propo-

In the amendment here alluded to, it was declared, "That the safety of the nation was endangered by the machinations of a party, who seek to subvert because they cannot direct the government." The phrase was afterwards altered.

* In the original address was contained this sentence, "The General Assembly beg leave to solicit you to permit your name to be held up as a candidate at the next presidential election."