

RALEIGH REGISTER,



AND North-Carolina State Gazette.

Ours are the plans of fair delightful Peace,
Unwarp'd by party rage, to live like Brothers.

THURSDAY, APRIL 5, 1810.

No. 550

WHIG PRINCIPLES.

SPEECH OF MR. SAMMONS.

Before the vote was taken in the House of Representatives on Mr. Giles's resolutions, Mr. Sammons rose and delivered the following speech—It is a spark from the altar of '75. An observer remarked, that it commanded the greatest attention he ever witnessed in an assembly.

MR. S. is from the state of New-York—he is in opposition to a Republican—but he has often voted with the Federalists—but he has the rights and honor of his country at stake, when he saw the laborious efforts which were made to exculpate Jackson and to maintain our own government, particularly in the House and desultory effusions of Great-Britain he succeeded in debate; Mr. S. spoke like an American.

MR. S. was one of the heroes of the revolution—his brother he was made a prisoner in Canada, where they passed through a series of sufferings. The calves of his brother's legs were almost rotted off, in consequence of the cruelties which he suffered. Was it any wonder, then, asks a contemporary, that this brave man should have been so long in retirement, when he beheld the flag of the son of a British adherent flying over the war of liberty, from the same state which had, dissipating six hours of laborious study in the defence of the British minister, Jackson?

Place before your eyes, a man like Mr. Sammons—didst yet conscious of public fame—a revolutionary soldier, amidst the perils of the sea—with none of the graces of youth, but the feelings of a man—his head bent over with age and with services—thus the Orator, who now addresses us.

MR. SAMMONS—I rise with some diffidence to speak; but the course this day has taken, makes it my indispensable duty to my constituents, to give my opinion.—A member from New-York (Mr. Gardiner,) has appealed to the members from that state in particular, how they could reconcile it to their friends, relatives and neighbors, if they voted for these resolutions now under consideration, and invited a discussion. Although I have not been in the habit of speaking in public, being called on in this public manner, I shall proceed to give the reasons on which my opinion is made up. When this is done, I shall inform my colleague who my friends, relatives and neighbors were in the resolution. This I will not do to gratify the gentlemen from N. York, but such of my constituents as may read his speeches, and his speeches for 3 weeks past, of 2 or 3 hours at a time, lest they should think I had made up my opinion on the spot. No Mr. Speaker, not on their opinions, but their lengthy speeches, but on the more substantial—on the conduct of the Government and Great Britain, communicated to this House by the President—on this information I judge—the correspondence is plain; it speaks for itself; every citizen can read and judge for himself, and will be more likely to form a correct opinion, than from the multitude of speeches delivered in this House. It would here be superfluous to make further explanation. Sir, I approve the conduct of the President in the dismissal of Mr. Jackson, in as much as a man of his talents and our rageous insult was offered to the honor and dignity of the Nation by Mr. Jackson. What, Sir, would we let the President stand alone? No, he stands as President of the U. States, and in that capacity he is to perform the Executive duty, agreeably to the Constitution and laws of our government, and as such the nation ought to support him. I hope the time has not yet come, when a foreign minister with his power shall charge the Executive with a libel. That was the true meaning of his language—and when he was suspected to do so, he again insisted on it as a matter of fact. If he persisted in it, I would have seen to it that he would have lost my confidence, and I believe, that of the Nation. I will support the Executive in his just and lawful act to protect the Constitution, laws and independence of our Federal Republican Government, as I represent as a representative, and as a citizen, as a militia man, as I have been before, against any foreign enemy of our domestic Union. If we are patriotic Americans, we had rather part with our lives than our Liberty, which has been sold by the blood of thousands of our fellow citizens in the Revolutionary War.

The business here is to look to our rights and interests; to protect them, to preserve them. We hear much talk of the great Napoleon and the subjects of the British. Our business will be, in the future, to extend no farther than to main-

tain our national rights against their encroachments, and when ever that subject shall be acted on, I shall act on the same principle as I do in relation to England—Let us do one thing first, or else I fear we shall do worse than nothing. Is it our business, or can we direct the French in their relations with other nations? The great Napoleon, as he has often been termed in this House, is in the power of the God of armies, as an axe or hammer in the hands of a workman. Thus far and no farther shall he go! Since his numerous armies failed on the Island of St. Domingo, I have thought that he was not destined for conquest in this quarter of the world, if such an attempt should be made—We hear much of our weakness, & it is insinuated that this country would be come an easy prey to France. If we consider the distance between the two countries, we shall be convinced France could not carry on a war with a prospect of success; but, say gentlemen, the English navy stands a bar in the way between us and France. I say, if we give up our national rights and independence to the bar, (the English navy,) we have nothing worth contending for. If we contend for liberty and give it up to England, France could not take from us what we did not possess.

As this resolution is a matter of indifference between this government and England, I shall confine myself more to that subject. We hear repeated again and again in debate the great power of the British navy; and much said of our inability to oppose them. I differ in opinion with gentlemen on this point. I consider the British to be in a most terrible situation. It has been the opinion of political writers, that England could not long support her government without allies against her powerful enemies. She is nearly if not altogether excluded from her European allies. I believe her foreign ministers have nearly all returned home except this Jackson, & I wish in my heart he was out of our jurisdiction; he does no good here, but may do much harm.

This great nation with her navy, has got enough to do at home to blockade her enemy's ports—let her withdraw her remnant of her armies from Holland, Spain and Portugal, and watch a most inveterate enemy which would take the first opportunity to attack her at home. These remarks on the situation of England have been extorted from me against my wish; we have nothing to do with the affairs of other nations, except where they interfere with us. Let us talk plain—I say, gentlemen in opposition have advocated the cause of England and degraded their own government. The gentleman from N. York has said that England did not encroach on the rights and independence of the U. States, or words to that effect. I had taken it down, but I have lost my notes—it is no matter, I have the substance in my head. Again he says, you are going to pass censure on the Minister of a great and powerful nation! But, Sir, what does he mean when he says, when shall England and we come together again? Does he mean under the old colonial government? [Mr. Gardiner wished to explain. Mr. Sammons insisted on the rules of the House and was permitted to go on.] Shall a young lawyer, said he, who spoke or detained the House about eight hours, who knows nothing about the revolution by which our liberties were acquired, and not much about many things he may say in this House, embarrass the proceedings of Congress by speaking of forms, punctilios and many other terms he may collect from his law books?—Etiquette is of no consequence to the nation, Sir—I wish to act on the principle of the matter, not the form—the substance not the shadow. I am sent here by freemen who expect to be heard, and I will speak as a freeman. I conceive the two nations have never been together since the declaration of independence. Are not the English waring on us by plundering our property on the high seas, and impressing our seamen? Must the British Orders in Council thro' their Courts of Admiralty, be binding on us in all cases in our lawful commerce with other nations? It is not 3 years since that shameful act committed on the frigate Chesapeake, when the Americans received a deep wound, the blood was spilt in a cowardly manner; when they expected they had met their friends, they had their matches burning. This shameful act, said the

British government, was not authorized; although done by the immediate command of one of their admirals (Berkley)—that the government would make suitable reparation. Mark the result—the prisoners taken were forced into their service and there retained, and the British minister who made an arrangement on terms accepted by our government, he says, was unauthorized—and so say the opposition to this resolution. In the dismissal of Mr. Jackson the President did an honorable act, and I believe every one who considers it impartially, by common sense and the independent rights of the nation, will say so. In the arrangement with Mr. Erskine, the President committed a fault: It was too much faith in either the government or its creature the minister, or in both. I forgive him, because he acted the honest part; he however was not cautious enough for deception. Our government have always acted on the principles of justice and right with England and all other foreign governments, whilst they only tried to embarrass justice and invade our national rights.

Much has been said about the manner of negotiating; it seems to be the opinion of some gentlemen that foreign Ministers must have instructions for every act they do, and show them. Does not reason teach them otherwise? It might then as well come direct from the government to our, "these are our terms"—here would be no negotiating. Is there any gentleman who, with a moment's reflection, will believe that the British Minister at Copenhagen showed to the Danish government his instructions, and the intention of his government to surprise them, though in perfect peace? Do not we know that the British diplomacy is a very material part or branch of their government, by which they have had it in their power to do more mischief and bring more confusion and destruction on other governments, than all their fleets and armies could accomplish, when, if they had told the truth where they were received at foreign governments, they could have done very little mischief? Is it not stated in the Annual Register as a fact, that the people of Vandeke, a department of France, received supplies of powder and money from England, by which a most bloody civil war was carried on with the then Republic of France? Would that and similar acts have hastened the downfall of the French republic, and established a monarchy in its stead, were not British diplomacy employed in almost every part of Europe? I ask if they have brought peace where they have been received of late years? Have we any reason to believe that they would act more favorably towards us than other nations, if they could divide us, or if we were weak enough to condescend in their fidelity? Since we have the examples of other divided nations before us, let us unite under the government of our choice, take into consideration the real situation of our country, with a full determination not to yield our national rights. England will soon give up her contemptuous policy towards us—France will be compelled to respect us as a nation.

The gentleman from N. Y. speaks frequently of Washington—there is no man holds Washington's name in higher veneration than I do, and never suffered any censure on his character to pass before me in silence; but, as much as I respect his fame, my national liberty and independence I consider of much more importance. I have seen Washington—he appeared to be but a man—of his good qualities no one doubts—he is no more? After his death he left us a legacy—he left us a free people, an independent nation, with I, for my part, am determined to support; and those who will not, should not talk about Washington's principles for a cover of deception. At all events, says the gentleman, we should avoid a war, for we do not know if we could get another Washington. Sir, we, the people in general, knew little or nothing about Washington's name when the troubles with England first began. Have we no man to rely on? Is there not one of the old revolutionary characters appointed to a high station in the military establishment—he defender of Fort Stanwix or S. Huyler, a man of genuine patriotism and undaunted confidence? I must again enjoin the duty of attention on this House. To Congress be people look for protection—Let us not disappoint them—let us not eat the

people's bread and live in luxury on their money. Let us do one thing first—that is my way as a farmer, and I see it applies to this business also.—There is no man more for peace than I am; but is there any other way to obtain it than to be prepared for war, with a prospect to carry it on, united and determined as Americans? Upon no other single point will Great Britain do us justice. The times call for energy—a middle course will no longer do.—I say, with others, if this resolution was not before us, I would be satisfied for the present to go on with other necessary business. But we are acting on it. Shall we then tell the nation and the world, that we are divided from the executive. The President has acted, and cannot retract without disgrace to himself and his country. In the summer's session a great deal was done. Yes, Sir, we then united like honest men; things went smoothly; every party was eager to be foremost to act for the general interest. My heart rejoiced to see the liberality of southern gentlemen voting for generous appropriations—there was nothing appeared for selfish views; a great deal of jealousy appeared to be done away. Every gentleman I conversed with, though of different politics, said, the President does well makes no difference in nominating to office, and is not a party man, but will act for the good of all. I hope I shall not come too closely on the motives of any party. The people were so taken with the opening of trade, that no party could have got a party of the people. I approve the conduct of the President, in as much as he has not once charged the British government with the act of their minister Jackson. They may make peace, if they are willing to come to terms of justice. The objection is held out to them. What choice will they make? I believe a bad choice. Every single act of that government seems to be to embarrass other nations, but turns out more ruinous to themselves. Will she thus provoke us to a war by continual encroachments on our national rights—with unabating contempt to hasten her own destruction? We have nothing else to expect, unless, indeed, England finds us prepared for war, ready to act and determined to defend our rights. If the spirit of the nation was awakened it is possible they would hesitate. It is in vain to ask for favors—but, tell that government, you must do us justice, if not, we will no longer submit. Is not his conduct a mere mockery of it? Does not Jackson talk plain? I am come to discuss and receive proposals. Who can doubt him? He had no other object than to entangle and embarrass, without directions to make a treaty; till they farther saw what was going on here and in Europe. It is time that we should attend to the business of the nation, and pass this resolution.—Why should more time be lost unnecessarily?

I shall now give a short account who my friends, relatives and neighbors were in the revolution. They were a kind of people at that time called Whigs—near them was another kind of people called Tories. That gentleman (Mr. Gardiner) now disagrees with me in opinion; at the time to which I allude, his father also differed with me: I belonged to the Whigs; he to the tory party; he told his neighbors, that they ought not to resist Great-Britain; she was all powerful, and would crush them; but we did not believe him—we did resist; in doing which, this arm was shattered (holding out his right arm) and to resist her again, I am ready to use the other. I have been particular to make a distinction of two kinds of people, because they differed in principle. It so happened that the Whigs, talked about liberty—a number of them collected to raise a liberty pole. Colonel Johnson, then superintendent of Indian affairs, a very lucrative office, Sir, John Johnson, and many others of their connection, attended at the place in order to embarrass and stop the progress of liberty. The Whigs had were collected were farmers, and could not argue with these great men, but were determined to take part with their own country, not a foreign government. Colonel Johnson addressed the meeting, and requested, or rather commanded, them to desist and give up their visionary projects. This did not satisfy the Whigs, and, as the spirit of liberty spread among them, they could no longer remain silent.

One of them made some reply on the right of the Americans to oppose certain acts and impositions of the British government. Col. Johnson continued his discourse. What, says he, would these colonies do?—would they dare to go to war with so great and powerful a nation as England? They have no navy, and are in no situation to build two ships of the line. A few regiments of regulars, with the faithful subjects (meaning the tories) will mar the thro' any part of the colonies. Your sea-ports will be totally destroyed, and we will send the Indians and Canadians on your backs. It will soon be over with you, and your rebel leaders will be hanged. They did not speak of a war with England as more terrible than we now hear it spoken of, nor did they say one word of the justice and rights of the people. A war soon commenced when they joined the British, their real patrons, and deluded many honest people to go with them, who afterwards imbued their hands in the blood of their neighbors. From the commencement to the close of the war, the British with their Indian allies and tory friends, did carry on a most terrible, inhuman, predatory war with fire and sword. Enormous barbarities were inflicted on my friends and neighbors, desolating our frontiers without regard to age, sex or condition, with almost a total loss of property. Those of us whom the fortune of war put in their power, were confined in prisons, there to languish in irons, of which one of my nearest relatives partook a share. To such people I can say that I am not afraid to return, when I support the principles they once contended for. At the same time I assure my colleague, that I have no consideration in giving my vote on this resolution or any other question, to acquire popularity from any political party or neighbors.

The difference between this Country and England is a great national controversy of principle, which has nothing to do with our party differences. Before the revolution, all her mis-erable politicians setting forth the right of the Americans, laid before the feet of the throne, could get no redress, but were treated with contempt, in a similar manner as our present demonstrations are now treated; but patriotic Americans then only enquired what was right, what was just, and on a matter of just principle they met their enemy; & there was no consideration about loss of property, but liberty or death, with arms and the undaunted spirit of freemen we persevered. Yes, Sir, in the record of our revolution you will find that the brave men who followed Washington, could be traced by the blood of their feet over the frozen ground; they, however, did not charge this to their own government, but England. Was this a matter only for themselves? No, Sir, it is left for us to defend, and there is no right in us to give it up to England under any consideration or pretensions whatever. By the solemn oaths we have all taken before our God to support our constitution and laws, we are compelled to defend it. We have nothing from England as a gift, but forced her by arms to acknowledge our independence; and we are in duty bound to defend it by arms. And until we can convince her, as we did before, I fear she will not let us alone, unless she sees the spirit of freemen raised. Let us then unite as Americans. With respect to myself, the journals of this House prove my politics; they are not confined to any party consideration; I do not care whether a proposition comes from a federalist or a republican. I only consider the subject of the matter, and what I believe to be right. I support with my vote. I have yet great hopes that we shall act together on this question. Yes, Sir, when I see in the opposition men who deserve well of their country, in particular an honorable gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. Isham) now in his seat, I hope we shall unite. I lately read an account of a detachment which he commanded, and in a gallant manner surprised a post of our inveterate enemy, the British—he surely will defend the principles, and will not suffer the honor of his country to be led in disgrace before any foreign power.

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