



"Ours are the plans of fair, delightful Peace,
"Unwarped by party rage, to live like Brothers."

Vol. XIII.

FRIDAY, APRIL 3, 1812.

No. 654.

From the National Intelligencer.

In looking over the files of newspapers of a few years back, we laid our hands upon the following sketch of the character of the present President of the United States, the republication of which will not, we trust, be unacceptable to our readers. It appeared, we believe, originally, in the Aurora at Philadelphia, a few days after the inauguration, and is taken from that paper of March the 7th, 1809.

Mr. MADISON.

It is one of the great advantages of the equal laws and the equal government of a republic, that its highest offices are open to every citizen. Under the monarchies of Europe it must be a rare concurrence of fortuitous events, that can raise to conspicuous situations men whose claims rest only upon personal merit. Wealth, birth, family alliance, the favor of a minister, or the favor of a prince, so often capriciously bestowed, are among the causes which, in those countries, procure elevation to distinguished posts. The American government, in a spirit of just equality, offers its highest stations, holds out its first rewards, to genius, to enterprise, and to virtue.

The present President of the United States has risen, by the high merits of his own character, to the post he now fills. He has obtained, by deserving, the honors that surround him. The time has, alas! nearly gone by, when our country can bestow its first office upon any more of the patriots and sages who led us through the revolution. This period of our history found Mr. Madison a youth, at the college of Princeton, engaged in the diligent cultivation of the faculties of his mind.—It found him engaged in the noble work of laying the foundations of his future usefulness. But although too young to have been a prominent sharer in the peril and the glory of that day, he was not obscure. As a youth, he was advantageously known to his fellow-citizens, and had already afforded those proofs of early ability, which were remarked as the presages of his distinguished career. In the interval that passed between his leaving college and the close of the revolutionary contest, the tendency of his political course and the commencement of his fame, were seen in his enlightened and glowing attachment to the cause of his country, and in emulously dedicating to her service the exercises of an accomplished though juvenile pen. He was soon chosen a member of the legislature of Virginia, his native state. Here he first began conspicuously to unfold that comprehensive knowledge, and those powers as a speaker, as a member of deliberate bodies, he has throughout his life so signally displayed.

Since the war, Mr. Madison has been, with scarcely any intermission, in public life; discharging a train of successive trusts with uniform superiority of talents and uniform purity of character. He has been in most of the situations of his country calculated to fix upon him the public eye and afford scope for the display of political ability. He was among the earliest movers in the great plan of a confederated government, differently modelled from that under which the nation languished, and had a zealous and leading participation in the formation of the present constitution of the United States. The part he took in the general convention at Philadelphia, when this instrument was under deliberation, placed him, altho' surrounded by so many able men, in the first rank of his country, as a dignified orator and deeply versed statesman. After the adoption of the constitution by the convention, in the drafting of which he had so large a share, his pen became actively and powerfully employed in its defence. With mastery skill he analysed and expounded its provisions, viewing them with a comprehensiveness and a detail, which shewed the depth and discriminations of his intellectual survey, and attested his claims to the name of a fine classic, as well as a close and successful reasoner. He next became a member of the convention in Virginia. On this new stage of his labors for the establishment of the constitution, he displayed, with unabated enterprise and increasing anxiousness of disposition, the fertility of his knowledge, the diligence of his patriotism, and the copiousness of his eloquence. The figure he made in this body interested the pride of his own state, and helped, by its benefits, the great work of union.

On the organization of the general government, the partiality and confidence of his fellow-citizens in Virginia eagerly allotted him a seat in the House of Representatives of the U. States. On this theatre, perhaps the most expanded which the world presents to the views of a great and liberal statesman, Mr. Madison at once stood upon that high ground which his character, and his previous exertions, fitted him to occupy.—In the novel questions of policy and government, which engaged the attention and fixed the most anxious deliberations of a new people, his conduct was marked by a capacious discernment and inflexible pursuit of the soundest interests of his country, and was followed by praise correspondent to the high sense of duty which dictated, and the wisdom which enforced exertions so able and patriotic. Educated in the precepts of republicanism, confirmed in their truth by the happiest examples, the reflections of his own mind, and the experience of his own life, equally tended to fix his judgment and his feelings in an unqualified attachment to our systems, on their freest and most republican scale. It was, hence, his object to impart to the first operations of the government a tone in unison with its republican genius.—His counsels were always those of a discerning statesman, unfolding his conceptions with an oratory prompt, dignified and nervous. Punctual in the exercise of all his duties; foremost in debate, he maintained, while in Congress, that weight of character, and acquired that solidity of fame, which were the just result of acknowledged probity and abilities so extensive. But the highest evidence of Mr. Madison's endowments rests on the manner in which, for the last eight years, he has filled the office of secretary of state. The superintendance of the foreign department of our government is, at any time, a task of moment. During the last eight years it has been one of peculiar magnitude and difficulty. The public systems of Europe have presented aspects equally novel, intricate and fierce. The ancient relations of policy and power have been broken up; the governments of countries, their limits, their very names been in a state of constant change. France and England, like two mighty and desperate gladiators, have dealt destruction all around, leaving scarcely any thing but wrecks, within the wide range of their blows. The world has seen but one ferocious power upon the ocean, and but one ferocious power upon land. The valid prescriptions of immemorial usage, the more binding authority of long established law, heretofore the safety (the frequent safety at least) of states, the praise and the boast of christian Europe, have been denied, have been prostrated; more, have been sarcastically scouted in their fall—and rapacity and force, those only umpires of feudal or of pagan contentions, been the avowed resort, of the promulgated code, of national rage! In the situation of our foreign affairs thus hazardous and embarrassing, has the American secretary of state been looked to for a proper execution of his responsible trust. He has had to watch the turns of fortune abroad; to detect the disguises of diplomacy; to expose the crookedness of injustice; to trace out the wiles of duplicity; to hold up the falsities of contradiction. The claims of arrogance and strides of power have alternately exercised the criticism and demanded the remonstrance of his pen. Engaged in repelling one trespass upon right, new trespasses, bolder inroads, have instantly succeeded; the issues of corrupt power and ambition have been opened, and their baleful floods seen to encompass their functionary, from the overwhelming effects of which, nothing but the possession and the exercise of the highest attributes of mind and unwearied powers of application, could have been the instrument of rescue. But rescue and triumph have been eminently witnessed. In his instructions to our ministers abroad, in his correspondence with the agents of foreign governments at home, he has manifested a profundity and readiness of research, and a cogency and conclusiveness in argument, at which his countrymen have looked with the proudest approbation. In recounting the abuses of commercial usage, in fixing the boundaries of maritime right, the close and lucid deductions of his own mind have been fortified by the allusions to historical and jurisprudential truth. The vigilant observer of his country's wrongs, the profound vindicator of her rights,

few ministers of state have stood in situations of severer trial. Called on at a portentous crisis, this officer has combated, almost singly, and with an ineffectual though sublime moral force, for principles, whose permanent, and to the civilized world necessary truth, the temporary sway of injustice cannot shake. When the dizziness of ambition and the fury of power shall a little subside; when nations, for mutual safety, shall lapse again to their more common base, the sober historian will say, that the unyielding and comprehensive protests made by this organ of the American government against the invasions of public law, have been honorable to the age, as, it is hoped, they will prove useful to posterity.

Mr. Madison now stands pre-eminent in Fame's temple, adorned with all the virtues of the man, gifted with all the talents of the statesman. Practised in affairs, full of experience as of wisdom, always in the confidence of his illustrious predecessor; with a perfect knowledge of our inward and the best views of our foreign policy, he enters upon the administration with every qualification to advance the happiness of his country. May the auspices of that beloved country brighten, and Providence so guide his councils, as to light up, with an effulgence of true glory, the American name?

CURTIUS.

In the exalted post of President of the United States, Mr. Madison has largely increased his claims to the approbation of his country. With a scrupulous and unshaken fidelity to all the obligations of this high station, he has gone along in a still broader path of wisdom, opening, we trust, to his country one of safety and of glory. The time is not yet ripe, nor does the occasion require a whole review of the effects that naturally belong to the just principles and impartial dignity by which his administration of the government has, thus far, been guided. Disappointed by European faithlessness, in the beneficent intentions and the beneficent acts which marked the first stages of his presidential career, he has ceased with the offerings of amity and reconciliation, only because they have been spurned at his hands. The nation has hailed, the nation will hail his firm reprobation of her wrongs. With the amplest knowledge, with the purest patriotism, under sacred responsibilities, he has pointed out the course due to her sovereignty, due to her honor, therefore due to her essential welfare. The nation is willing, is eager, to tread it. The attributes of independence, of freedom and of valor which illustrate the annals of such a nation, will applaud, with loud and increasing acclamations, the chief who scorned to give up the rights he was solemnly delegated to maintain, while the sword was left for their protection. With many virtues he has recommended this last appeal, and the hearts of all Americans see in it a new pledge of his own greatness, and a new claim upon their confidence, love and support.

The British Plot.

From the National Intelligencer.

The report of the committee of Foreign Relations on this subject is now before our readers, together with the testimony of the gentleman whom we have heretofore stated to have been examined before that committee. It appears that Mr. Henry's character, to which objections have been offered by Mr. Foster and others, was not taken into consideration by the committee, who conceived the documents to bear on their face such marks of authenticity as could not be resisted.

It will be seen also, if such confirmation be needed, that strong circumstantial proof is afforded by Count Crillon's testimony in support of the statements of Mr. Henry, who appears to have stood as high in England as in this country, and was equally distinguished in London as in Boston, in both of which he frequented the best society.

We have seen it intimated, in certain prints, that Henry's disclosures are unimportant because no names are given of those with whom he held correspondence during his mission in this country; and we should not be surprised to find this report adduced to prove that here has been no such intercourse.—The committee, it will be observed, have not taken any steps to implicate any persons in this country who may be supposed to have been concerned in this plot; but as they have not implicated,

neither have they exonerated, any—and perhaps it was not within the strict line of their duty to have done either the one or the other. In relation to this point, we may be permitted to remark, that we have been disposed to attach importance to this disclosure, not at all because it may incidentally implicate some of our own citizens, but as exposing the treacherous conduct of a nation covertly seeking the destruction of the only free government on earth; as elucidating the real cause and motives of the policy observed by G. Britain to us, taking into view her contemporaneous proclamation, during the embargo, admitting into her ports American vessels without clearances, &c.—Canning's official sneers in his intercourse with our minister in London; Erskine's assurance of the sincerity of his master's inclination to favor the interests of this country and maintain with us unceasing amity; the appeal from our government, addressed particularly to the people of the Eastern section of the Union, by the publication of Canning's letters in Boston; and other circumstances which the recollection of our readers will supply more readily than our pen. When we review this issue of deception; when we reflect on the conduct of Britain, tendering in one hand the calumet of peace whilst the other held the poisoned chalice to our lips, we emphatically feel that a nation, like a man,

"May smile and smile and be a villain."

The disclosures made by Mr. Henry have been held up to ridicule as unimportant, and, with the same grace as a froward child breaks out into a hysterical laugh to conceal the sorrow its little heart is too stubborn to avow, we have seen some who have affected to laugh at their contents. If this merriment be affected, it is childish and unworthy of men of sense and character; if not, it is worse. In the same spirit in which Nero fiddled when Rome was in flames, thoughtless men may smile at the approach of the hydra of foreign influence which threatens to devour them; as far be it from us to envy them, as to participate in their amusement. This is not the first time that ridicule has been resorted to where the recoil of weightier weapons has been dreaded. But in this case, the arrow is so light and ill sped that it glances from the object at which it is aimed, rebounding on those who use it—for what can be more ridiculous than to manifest hatred for the agent in his plot, in the same breath that the principal is defended, or what more absurd than the declaration that these documents are forgeries, and Henry himself unworthy of credit, at the same time that his whole budget is ransacked, and this man's private letters exposed to view, to exculpate from participation in his views those whom no one has censured as concerned?

A futile attempt is made to stifle the force of Henry's evidence, to screen from the public eye the damning facts he exposes to view, by magnifying the amount of the compensation said to have been made by our government to Mr. Henry for his disclosure. Supposing all that is said to be true, how can that possibly detract from the atrocity of the act disclosed, and which is tacitly confessed even by the British minister? When a man is convicted of house-breaking or murder, is his conviction less important to society because a reward was paid for his detection or apprehension? On the same principle it is that services such as Henry has rendered us are rewarded by governments. What honest industrious man, that in the silent dead of night has found his house in flames, his property menaced with instant destruction and only saved by the interposition of Providence, but would freely give a tithe of his weekly earnings for the discovery of the incendiary? We know not what Henry has received for revealing to our government the incendiary agency for separating this union, but this we know: that those who hold this Union cheap will think the secret purchased at a price too dear. Of one fact we venture confidently to assure our readers; that whatever compensation Mr. Henry may have demanded from our government for the communication of his credentials, he might, from another quarter, have commanded five times as much for their suppression.

Although many may say, with the honorable Mr. Quincy, that the President has done worthily in laying the affair before Congress, in our view he has only performed an act of obvious and imper-

ative duty, imposed by the awful solemnity of his oath to support the constitution of the United States. If the President knew of the existence of evidence of a plot to sever the Union, to destroy the constitution he had sworn to support—was he not bound to obtain it? When obtained, could he have faithfully discharged the duty confided to him if he had refrained from laying it before Congress? If not, ought he to have refrained from so doing from an apprehension of offending those who chose to consider themselves as implicated? If he had concealed it, he had become an accomplice in the crime; by disclosing it, it is no fault of the President, however it may be a cause of regret, that the feelings of some respectable individuals of keen sensibilities appear to have been unintentionally wounded.

From the Columbian.

HENRY'S PLOT.—The following letter was received by the last eastern mail. It is unquestionably genuine. And if a request from the proper authority is made, the blanks will be filled and the proper reference given.

March 15, 1812.

SIR—Observing in the Columbian of the 14th instant, a piece headed "important disclosure." I take the liberty although in haste to state that I am well acquainted with the personage alluded to, as a secret agent called James Henry; but whose real name is John Henry: The said person, John Henry, was a captain in the federal army, and was discontinued from office in 1802 or 1803. Immediately after he purchased a seat in Windsor, Vermont, where he edited a federal paper for some time. Being disappointed in his anticipated success as an attorney at law, he removed to Montreal, where he entered as a law student, with Mr. Stephen Sewall, at present solicitor-gen. of Montreal: Here, it is supposed, he was again thwarted in his projects, but being intimate with Sir James Craig, governor-general of Canada, Henry was no doubt employed in the nefarious object of dismembering the United States.

I have to state, that various projects of his I am acquainted with, and likewise some others, which will be recited anon. Indeed, the daily attempts of the Tories and adherents of Great Britain, to render odious our blessed constitution and government, which I witnessed; the encouragement given to smuggling during the embargo; the bribes offered the soldiers stationed on the lines, and the continued efforts to engage me in the service of our eternal enemy, determined me to leave Canada, where I then resided. Concerning captain John Henry, I shall say no more at present, but have enough to disclose, if necessary. Proofs of my veracity and character can be given. Your humble servant,

Mr. C. Holt.
P. S. Enquire of *****, of *****, respecting *****.

HENRY'S MISSION.—Why do the leading federal newspapers wince and writhe so deplorably at the exposure of the secret and dark designs of the British government against their country? It is because it gives a direct contradiction to all they have been so long and so loudly repeating to us of the very favorable views and friendly dispositions of that government towards the United States.

While it has been the pride of some politicians to hold up the British nation as fighting for the liberties of the world, it appears she was secretly plotting to destroy the only free constitution of government in existence at the time.—*Id.*

A FEDERAL GOVERNOR.—What must have been the language, what the conduct, of Governor Tichenor, when a British Spy could write to his employer that the Governor of Vermont made no secret of his intentions "to refuse obedience to any command from the general government which can tend to interrupt the good understanding that prevails between the citizens of Vermont and his Majesty's subjects in Canada." "Treason against the U. States shall consist only in levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort." Does it not now, more than ever, behoove the federal party when they select men for high confidential stations, that they take especial care that they do not select men subject to the suspicion of "adhering" to a foreign government in preference