



AND NORTH-CAROLINA GAZETTE.

FRIDAY, MARCH 19, 1814.

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MR. MACON'S SPEECH

Continued.

We have been told that we might shortly have peace, and that this House was the place to begin the good work. Though I do not know how it is intended to begin, I will heartily join in any measure which may produce so desirable an end, and at the same time maintain our rights. I rejoice, sir, that these gentlemen now think we can legislate on foreign affairs, and not violate the constitution or usurp the Executive authority; may it seem we may now begin a treaty here without injuring the constitution; we may judge from the documents before us what would suit G. Britain, and we know that would not suit us; of course it will not be very easy to suit both; yet I am perfectly willing to make the trial, and must hold, that I never expected to hear the gentlemen talk about settling an affair with a foreign nation by paper measures. I had thought they considered them not only ridiculous but absurd also, and that their way was powder and ball. G. Britain knows as well as any man in this nation, that she can have peace under her present regulations, whenever she will quit the vile practice of impressing the citizens of the United States. Our sincere desire of living in peace with all the world, the many and honest attempts made to settle our disputes with her, and the laws we passed to avoid war, induced her to believe, that we could not resist, and now that we have resisted, we hear it said, that under no other administration would we have been at war. Can it be doubted that Gen. Washington would have resisted, had not Mr. Jay have made a treaty? or can it be doubted, when he demanded Commodore Barney, that he made the demand with an intention to enforce it if refused? His character forbids a doubt—he would not have sacrificed the rights or property of his countrymen. Permit me here to state what a federal friend of mine said in Carolina, who served in the American army during the revolutionary war: A friend of his said to him, after Hui's surrender, that we must now make peace. Never, he replied, till that disgrace is wiped away; my country is at war, and I will go with her—take away the disgrace before we talk of peace. This is federalism in the district which I represent; it is the sentiment of all parties in that part of the country.

All the gentlemen from Massachusetts who have spoken, except one (Mr. Widgery) have declared the war to be immoral and unjust on our part. If it be immoral and unjust in us, what must it be in Great-Britain, who had for years violated our dearest rights! They did not tell us—I wish they had. But some of these gentlemen voted at the last session to raise the 25 000 men: for what purpose could they be raised, unless for war? I have before endeavored to show that they were not wanted for the peace establishment; and surely they could not be wanted only for the purpose of paying them. Not one of the gentlemen who oppose this bill, and who voted for the act to raise the 25,000 men, have told us the purpose for which they wanted them; and have not these gentlemen, at this session, voted honorary rewards to those who have most distinguished themselves in this immoral and unjust war, as they call it? This vote, while it was a just reward to merit, was also an incitement to others to do the like, and was encouraging the war. I am no navy man; but I gave the vote, approving the conduct of those who fought in the navy, with as much sincerity as I ever gave one. These brave men know that the war is neither immoral nor unjust; and they know also that they are defending and supporting the rights of their injured country.

One of the gentlemen from Massachusetts (Mr. Quincy) could not

miss the opportunity, which this general debate afforded, to mention the negroes in the southern states. I had supposed, after former debates, they would not have been drawn into questions, where there was no necessity for it. The names of many persons could be mentioned who were slave owners, whose memory will be dear to the nation, as long as virtue and patriotism shall be respected; I will only name one—and he not a native of the southern states, but of New-England, and no man from that part of the union was more distinguished during the revolutionary war than he was—I mean General Greene, who commanded the southern army. The Carolinas and Georgia acted towards him in a way that no states acted towards any other man. After the war he settled among them—and, if I am rightly informed, became a slave owner. A regard to his situation in that respect might have induced the gentleman to have spared his observations; but they were also mentioned by a gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Sheffey); it was not expected from that quarter, and if his observations were intended to warn us, he ought to have considered that others might notice them; but more of this hereafter, when I shall attempt to answer some of his observations.

The gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. Pitkin) said, that if we carried on the war till G. Britain relinquished the right of impressment, it would last as long as the war in Europe.—He, like all other gentlemen who have spoken against the bill, or rather the war, gives the real question the go-by. The question is not that she shall relinquish any right she may have to impress, but that she shall not impress American citizens, which she has no right to do; and I sincerely wish the question could be fairly put to every man in the nation. I am confident the answer would be she shall not impress one. I should be very glad to hear some of the gentlemen state the difference between Algerine capture and British impressment. What situation can be more degrading than to be taken by force from your own vessel, and put on board her's to fight her battles, and probably against your own country. Tripoli had not done us the hundredth part of the injury which G. Britain has done, and all, as well as I now recollect, were willing to compel her to respect our rights—and she was compelled. The same unanimity now would have the same success. This same Great Britain, and France her rival in wickedness, while at war, have acted as if by concert to injure us—they each interdict our trading with their enemy, and establish a licence trade between themselves; but, strange to tell, we have British seamen in our service. Then the British service is not quite as agreeable as ours; but they are not impressed, and I imagine not in the public ships. The merchants when they want sailors generally take the first they can get; but there is a great difference between the merchant service which is voluntary, and impressment on board an armed ship. Besides, the British government refuses to make an arrangement, by which her sailors could not be employed in American vessels; her present system is more convenient; it enables her officers to get men whenever they want them—it they can only find them, no matter whether native, naturalized or foreigner, a sailor is a sailor with them. The gentleman also said we had done nothing to protect our seamen, and that we ought to pass a law, that a certain proportion of every crew should be citizens. This I have long been willing to do, but that would only be a paper protection, and the British officers would not regard it, more than they do the present protections—may, if we had the right to brand ours, and were to do it, I do not know but they would put the same brand on theirs, for the sake of making them so much alike that they could not be

distinguished, and then under the plea that they could not tell one from the other, continue the convenient mode of getting men in every part of the world by impressment. But are we not now trying to protect them by carrying on the war for sailors' rights and free trade?

The same gentleman, when he described the flourishing state of the country before the war, forgot to mention that more than 30,000,000 of the public debt had been paid during the last 12 years, and Tripoli compelled to respect our national rights, and that too without internal taxes or a tax on salt.

He also told us, in the first part of his speech, that we could not contend with Great Britain on the ocean, and, as he sat down, I understood him to say, we ought to carry the war on there. It appears very strange to me, that we should make our efforts where we are not able to contend with her. I regret that the gentleman and others who have spoken, are not in the House—the cause of their absence is known to every one.

The gentleman from New-York (Mr. Bleecker) read to us a letter written by Mr. Russell from Paris, that contained what he believed to be true, and his duty to communicate to the Executive—and his letter from London appears to be written under the same impressions—in both cases he has done his duty, and nothing more. It is however remarkable, that the letter from Paris is precisely what it ought to be, and that from London precisely what it ought not to be. As the gentleman seems fond of examining the documents, I will remind him of one, which was published some years past, and obtained the name of the X, Y, Z communication: in that he will find related conversations, not with authorised agents of the government, but with every man and woman (none it is believed were refused) who would say a word about a French party in this country, and who these people were, is not known to the public to this day, except one, whose name I do not recollect, and he denied the correctness of the statement concerning himself. These good men, the envoys extraordinary, thought it their duty to send to the Executive a statement of the conversations which they had, with these unauthorised people, and a very large edition of the communication was printed for the information of the nation; and pray what has Mr. Russell done? Related a conversation which he had with the chief minister of the Prince Regent.

When the arrangement made with Erskine was announced, what a fine fellow the President was; he was truly the President of the people! What a misfortune he had, not been sooner elected; every thing would have been right; he was quite a different man from his predecessor! Though in my opinion his predecessor would gladly have made the same arrangement at any time; but how was it when the British government refused to ratify the arrangement? The tone was changed—the man in the white house had taken the young minister in—he had made the arrangement without peeping behind the scene, to examine the authority under which the young man acted; and in some part of the correspondence it was then discovered, that an insult had been offered to the King, which his minister here, nor any body else could discover, till after the arrangement was rejected; and which no man can believe to be an insult or intended for one.

The same gentleman told us, we ought to make war on France, or acknowledge that we are wrong in making war on G. Britain. With respect to making war on France, it will be recollected that a gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. M'Kee) at the last session, made a motion in a committee of the whole House, to include France in the declaration of war; that it was seconded by myself, and I

believe some other member; only ten voted for it; three on that side of the House and seven on this; as for acknowledging that we are wrong in the war with England, that can hardly be expected—I believe it cannot be shown that we are, and it certainly has not yet been done.

The gentleman said we ought to insist on G. Britain to abandon the practice of impressing; I suppose he meant American seamen; but the manner in which this ought to be done he did not inform us. He is too high-minded to think of another mission, to beg that justice which she has so often refused to our supplicating ministers; in fact we are insisting that she shall abandon the wicked practice in the only way not tried before; that is—force. If we were to send another minister in the present state of affairs, we may fairly conclude that he would return, as all the others have done, with his finger in his mouth.

Canada, he said, is not worth conquering; it is a curse to Great-Britain, and we cannot conquer it, I believe we can conquer it, and that it is worth conquering, if it was only to get clear of a meddling and bad neighbor, who is always willing to make strife in our family. It cannot be forgotten, that it has been stated in this House, that more produce went down the St. Lawrence than the Mississippi, and the greater part of it is understood to be the produce of the U. States. It would appear from this, that it was not a curse to G. Britain and certainly she does not consider it one. Whether it be obtained this war or not, it will be had some time or other. Notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary, it is absolutely necessary, in my opinion, to the peace and happiness of the nation, as much so as the mouth of the Mississippi was. These two great rivers seem to have been intended by Providence, for an inland navigation from north to south, and their waters, if I am correctly informed, can be more easily united, than some of the canals already projected, be finished.

I understood the same gentleman to say; there was no patriotism in the ranks of the army. My opinion is very different; because I believe that respectable and patriotic men have enlisted, though not wealthy. In every country there is more patriotism among the middling and poor people, than among the rich and the avaricious. The middling and the poor are contented; the rich and avaricious are never satisfied; and this is peculiarly the poor man's country, because it is the only one in the world, where he is equal to the rich. The history of the revolution will satisfactorily prove, that there was patriotism in the ranks of the army, which achieved the independence of the country; and the ranks are no doubt filled with the same sort of men now that they were then. It is not long since we were told, and told again of the patriotism of the tars, that a 74 could be manned in an hour, and now it would appear, as if all countries were alike to them. He also informed us, that the militia were good for nothing, and that an army could not be raised. If it is so, the war must be at an end and we must beg for peace, as we have heretofore begged for justice. The militia of the Western country is the best answer to this charge; they are at this time performing a duty never surpassed. Bunker's Hill and King's Mountain are lasting monuments of the exploits of the militia; they were equal to those at Thermopylae and Marathon.

The gentleman appeared to console himself with the recollection that Napoleon must die. Can he or any other man living tell what will be the consequence of his death on the civilized world? Can he tell whether it would produce peace among the belligerents, or new wars? Europe is now in that state, that it is impossible to foretell how it will settle down, whether he live or die. The Greeks thought the death of Philip of Macedon would put an end to their troubles; but they were sadly deceived. Alexander added to them; and no doubt the countries which he conquered thought his death would relieve them; but it was a signal for new wars and new troubles. If we calculate that the death of Napoleon would change the conduct of the European governments towards us, we shall be deceived. No government in Europe can wish well to ours; it is formed on a plan which they do not like. We must

depend on ourselves, on our own means and resources; any other dependence would be like an idle man sitting in the shade and calculating to grow rich.

The gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. Tallmadge) regretted that party names had been introduced among us. No man regrets it more than I do; but it is more to be regretted that love of party should prevail over love of country. It must be recollected by every man acquainted with the history of the nation for the last twenty-five years, that the gentleman's political friends began party names; that they had their choice, and while they were in power, Federalism and Energy were their words, Republicanism then meant any thing or nothing. They had now, however, been long out of power, before they began to talk about Republicanism and the rights of the people, and now every Federalist claims to be a good Republican; and if they are kept out of power twelve years longer, I have no doubt, but they will be fond of being called Democrats as they are now desirous of being called Republicans.—The gentleman mentioned his revolutionary services. No man respects them more than I do; he is one of those whose names are honorably recorded in the Journal of the Old Congress; he also told us, that he would not vote men or money. I cannot forbear regretting, that he did not tell us what he would do, because, while I have the journal fresh in my memory, I cannot make a single comment on this, to me, strange declaration, which, if he will pardon me, I will say appears to differ widely from the record. God be praised, I have never said any thing against the patriots of the revolution.

The same gentleman and some others have said, that the war is now carried on for naturalized citizens alone. This, I apprehend, is a mistake. It would puzzle him to shew, when the British officers wanted men, that they paid any regard to the fact whether the men were native or naturalized citizens.—Their want was the only rule which regulated their conduct in impressment. The constitution of the U. States makes all citizens equal, except that a naturalized one cannot be elected President. It is true, as has been before stated, that the great point now in contest is the impressment of American citizens.

We hear so much about foreigners, that a stranger might suppose we were contending for their rights. The fact is not so; but the time has been when the U. States would have contended for their rights when in her service. Does not every man recollect some of them who have been in her service, whose names are still dear to the nation?

I come now, sir, to the question which has been forced into the debate: from my heart I wish we may never again have a discussion about foreign influence.—It ought not to contaminate our walls; I hate to name it, or to hear it mentioned; the very idea is degrading to the House, and disgraceful to the nation. Why the idle charge of French influence should have been introduced, I cannot conceive, nor can I persuade myself to think, that the gentlemen themselves believe it. What, in the name of God, is there in the administration of our government, or in the known principles and characters of the men who administer it, like the administration of the French government, or the principles and characters of the men who administer that? The principles of their abominable government are not more unlike ours than the men who administer it are unlike the men who administer ours. It was at one time apprehended by certain men, that our constitution would be destroyed for want of energy in those whom the people had elected to administer it; and a want of energy in the French government has never been suspected. Having already stated my opinion about foreign influence, I will now state a few facts to remind the committee, how much more noise would have been made about French influence, if France, bad as she is, had only have done that which England has done; and I do not mean to say that she would not have done it, had she been able. Suppose a French officer had treated Capt. Phillips of the navy and his crew as a British officer did, which was to have the crew mustered on deck and take two or three men from it? What a cry would have been raised about French insolence and cruelty! It is due to Mr. Adams to say, that he very proper-