



Our sure the plans of fair, delightful Peace, Unwar'd by party rage, to livelike Brothers.

AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION.

Mr. Dickerson's Speech concluded.

It is not probable that the constitution when submitted to the states for ratification was such as exactly pleased any one of the convention who formed it, or those who concurred in its ratification. It was perhaps the best that could have been agreed upon, amidst the conflicting interests and contrariety of sentiments, that prevailed among the members of the convention. The wonder is, not that it has faults, but that it has so few faults, considering the circumstances under which it was formed. The instrument carries on its face an admission, that it is imperfect, by providing the means of its amendment, without which provision it would never have been ratified, by the required number of states. Indeed many who concurred in the ratification, did it under express declarations, that important amendments were necessary, some of which were stated at the time, and have since become a part of the constitution. But human wisdom could not foresee all the amendments that experience might prove to be necessary. And in the second contested presidential election, that of 1801, our government was upon the point of dissolution, in consequence of the provision requiring the electors to vote for two persons as president, against which no voice had been raised.

The most difficult task that devolved upon the convention who formed our Constitution, was to establish the principles which should regulate the election and control the power of the chief executive. This subject no doubt received their most diligent attention, their most laborious investigation: And yet I hope I shall not be accused of any want of respect for the statesman and patriots who formed that constitution, if I express an opinion, that the provisions on this subject do not exhibit that degree of wisdom, which, judging from other parts of the same instrument, we had a right to expect from them.

The regulations for choosing the executive of the United States, are more vague, more uncertain, more undefined, more variable, more subject to abuse, than are the regulations for choosing the meanest officer in the community. And as to any effectual control upon the power of the executive, that must depend, as it heretofore has done, rather upon the virtues of the individual exercising the office, than upon any positive regulations contained in the constitution. The broad road to monarchy is left open:—incumbered indeed with obstructions, but such as will easily yield to the pressure of ambition.

The most obvious barrier to the career of ambition on the part of a president, would have been a reasonable limit to the time in which any one could exercise this important office. This, however, was omitted, no doubt after a full discussion of the subject, and for reasons which I cannot divine. As yet, it is true, experience has not exhibited any necessity for such a barrier, for the ambition of our presidents thus far, has been, not to extend or perpetuate their power, but to increase the happiness and prosperity of the country over which they have presided. This, however, let us remember, is not the usual current of ambition.

We have constantly the most deplorable evidence of the total inadequacy of our system, to regulate with any degree of safety, the election of a president. In the year 1801, it was in the power of a single individual in the Senate of Pennsylvania, to give to that state fifteen electors or to deprive her entirely of a vote, at his pleasure. In the election of a president that year, all the electors, of South Carolina were in favor of the candidate who ultimately succeeded, but the state, in the house of Representatives, voted against him: at the same time all the electors of New Jersey voted against that candidate, & the state in the house of representatives voted in his favor, in six and thirty ballots. In 1812, a very large majority of the state of New Jersey and all their representatives in congress were in favor of the candidate then elected, but the votes of all her electors were against him; and this by an abuse of power, that may probably be practised again, in that as well as other states.

We cannot look into the history of our presidential elections, without meeting at every step, the most deplorable proofs of the imbecility of our system.

Warned by the dangers we escaped in 1801, we have so far altered the constitution that we shall not again be exposed in precisely the same manner, and by precisely the same cause we were before. But there are other dangers much more important than that was, before actual experiment had presented it to our view:—dangers which can never be obviated, while the minority have the power of choosing a president.

Great as the danger is, that some ambitious individual may gain the presidential chair against the will of a large majority of the people, the subject presents itself in another point of view; not less interesting. I mean the operation of our system, to enable an ambitious president to perpetuate his power and to transmit it to his posterity. It is true, the illustrious patriots who have filled that exalted

station, have none of them discovered a wish to continue in office, for a longer period than eight years:—but such instances of voluntary retirement from power, are rare occurrences in the annals of the world; and will some ages hence be cited as almost incredible instances of the virtues of the ancient republic. Such examples however, will in future times, be rather the objects of praise than of imitation.

Let us suppose, that at some future period, we shall have a president of forty years of age, of great talents, unbounded ambition and an insatiable thirst for power; the period of eight years would elapse at about that period of life, when ambition takes the firmest hold of the human mind. He would easily persuade himself that the public interest would suffer by his retiring from office. The great facility of securing a re-election under our present system, would be a temptation not to be resisted. And the host of choice spirits, by whom he would be surrounded, would certainly succeed in persuading him to bear the weight of government, for another period, and another, and another, to the end of his life.

Suppose this president to have a son of talents and ambition like his own, and of a suitable age to become his successor.—The transmission of the power from the father to the son would excite no unusual apprehension.—His election would be a mere matter of form, and our government would quietly sink into an hereditary monarchy; after which a Tiberius, a Caligula, or a Claudius, might reign uncontrolled in America. These are not mere illusions;—mere phantoms of the brain. Had the candidate in 1801, for whom such desperate but unsuccessful efforts were made, succeeded in obtaining in the house of representatives, a place for which he was not intended by a single elector who voted, he would eagerly have seized upon the reins of government. And what would have been the consequence? We have reason to believe he would have been hurled from his chair, by an insulted and an indignant people, Terrible indeed would have been this resort, which would have produced the utmost anarchy and confusion and all the horrors of a civil war.

But suppose he had possessed those great military talents which his friends have gratuitously ascribed to him, and had been enabled, with the treasury and the small military force that would have been at his disposal, to crush all opposition to his power, would he not under our present system, with his talents for intrigue, which have never been overrated, by his friends or his enemies, and which have been rarely equalled in any country;—Would he not have been able to secure a re-election, and another and another, to the end of his life?

But suppose an incredible case, that at the expiration of eight years, his ambition had ceased to operate; and that he no longer wished to continue in power;—would he have dared to retire to private life? would he have dared to relinquish a power, which for eight years he had held by force and fraud in despite of the will of a great majority of the people?—If he had despised danger as it respected himself, would he have abandoned his friends who had faithfully adhered to his fortunes and supported his authority at all hazards? Sir, the moment he should have retired from power, a reaction would have taken place, which would have overwhelmed him and his friends in ruin. Unfortunate indeed would be the situation of such a president;—not so the situation of one elected by a majority of the people. He would rest securely upon the strong arm which had placed him in power, and which could protect him there. He would fear no popular commotions, no insurrections against the exercise of his lawful authority; and when he should have performed his official functions for a reasonable period, he might relieve himself from the weight and cares of government, and retire to private life, amidst the blessings of his fellow citizens, where exercising the virtues, which have adorned the illustrious characters who have presided over the United States, he would find in his declining years, that literary, philosophic and sweet repose, so ardently desired by the great and the good, in all ages of the world.

Let us not, while contemplating such examples of exalted virtue, which are the pride and the boast of our nation, be lulled into fatal security. Let us not forget that the constant tendency of our government, is towards despotism. Let us not forget that ambition is the strongest passion of the soul.—By that sin fell the angels.—Let us not forget that it is a duty we owe to ourselves, and to posterity, to adopt every measure, which may have a tendency to preserve the republican principles of our government.

Have I overrated the dangers to be apprehended from ambition? I believe not. Those dangers are not immediately at our doors, but their existence is not the less certain on that account.

Sir, the time will come, I fear, when our country will be filled with an army of pensioners, always the friends of arbitrary power. The time will come, when we shall have a numerous host of officers, civil and military, in every department of the government, spread over our im-

mense territory, looking up to the president, as the source of their power and emoluments. The time will come, when luxury and extravagance will banish from our country every species of republican virtue; and the time will come, I fear, when this Senate shall be no more than the shadow of what it was intended to be, by those who formed our constitution; when it shall be no check whatever upon the executive; when it shall be as insignificant as was the boasted Senate of Rome, in the time of Tiberius. The whole patronage of government will centre in the President; and that patronage, under our present system of choosing electors, will become a machine of irresistible power. The management of this power will become a matter of science. He will be deemed the greatest politician, & the most able minister, who can, with a given portion of patronage, produce the greatest effect. The force of this power will be applied to effect the purposes of ambition, with as much economy and skill as the force of water is applied to the wheel, or that of steam to the engine.—It would be difficult to devise a plan better calculated to accelerate the approach of those deplorable events, or to promote the views of an ambitious President than the present system of choosing electors.

When, by a combination of a few States, by the obvious means which I have suggested, an ambitious President could control a majority of the people, he might throw off every shew of ambition; might exercise from period to period the supreme power, with seeming reluctance; yielding to what would be called the voice of the country, and paving the way to monarchy, while the world would be amused with his hypocritical pretensions of a desire to retire from the weight of public affairs.

When Augustus Cæsar had secured to himself the support of the senate and the army of Rome, he played the hypocritical farce of attempting to abdicate his usurped power; but was persuaded by those, who he knew would persuade him, to be considered as the head or prince of the senate, and, in conjunction with them to administer the affairs of the government for ten years, by which time peace and prosperity might be restored to the commonwealth. At the expiration of that period the same ridiculous farce was repeated, and again and again, during his long life; and after he was as firmly seated on the imperial throne of Rome, as Alexander is upon that of all the Russias.

When Augustus seized upon the liberties of Rome, Brutus was dead; but his spirit was not extinct. Augustus found the Roman people, though greatly corrupted by the civil wars of his time, and those which immediately preceded it, still possessed of some spirit of independence, some love of liberty; but he left them all slaves.

The history of this extraordinary man affords the most impressive, the most admonitory lessons to the citizens of the United States. While his insidious march to empire will afford a model for the imitation of some future president, it should warn every citizen, who has the least love for his country, to watch with the utmost vigilance and to provide every possible check, against the ambition of such presidents, as may attempt to establish their power, by the subversion of our liberties.

Some gentlemen may think that I have overrated the dangers to be apprehended from our present mode of choosing electors; it may be so;—I may have given more importance to the circumstances connected with this subject, than they merit; but, if gentlemen thinking so, deem my observations worthy of an answer, let them not satisfy themselves, by showing that I have thus overrated those dangers; let them show that no such dangers exist; let them shew that the constitution already provides sufficient checks against the career of ambition, and I will vote with them.

The friends of this measure do not flatter themselves, that the proposed amendment will afford a remedy for all the evils complained of; but it will afford a remedy for part of them. It will not eradicate the principles of ambition, but it will retard their progress. It will not render perpetual our republican form of government, but it will probably add ages to its duration; and this is gaining an object of immense magnitude. It is gaining all that we are permitted to hope for.

The seeds of death are interwoven in our constitution. Its fate is inevitable.—No human wisdom can say it from dissolution; but by wise measures, its existence may be continued for many ages. Ardent must be the wish of every patriot to put off the moment of its dissolution and to the latest possible period.

We all know that the term of our life is limited; that death awaits us. None but madmen seek to evade this law of our nature; yet it is the dictate of wisdom to devise the means of prolonging life, and for putting off the moment of dissolution, to the latest period which the laws of our nature will permit.

It is my fervent prayer, that the proposed amendment may be adopted, not with the vain hope of rendering our government immortal, but for the purpose of securing the prosperity and integrity

of the union for many ages yet to come, and for the purpose of extending the blessings which we enjoy, to millions and millions of human beings, who may inhabit our immense territories, in a long succession of ages.

BY AUTHORITY.

Resolution directing a survey of certain parts of the coast of North-Carolina.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, That the President of the United States be, and he is hereby requested to cause surveys to be made of the points of Cape Hatteras, Cape Lookout, and Cape Fear, and of the shoals of those Capes, respectively; and to cause such an examination to be made of those Capes & Shoals respectively, as will ascertain the practicability of erecting light houses, beacons, or buoys on or near the extreme points of them, or either of them; and also to cause the latitude and longitude of the said capes, extreme points, and shoals respectively, to be ascertained with as much exactness as may be practicable; and that the results of such surveys and examinations be reported to Congress. Approved—January 19, 1819.

An act for the relief of Maj. Gen. John Stark. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, That the Secretary for the War Department be, and he is hereby directed to place upon the list of invalid pensioners of the United States, Major-General John Stark, at the rate of sixty dollars a month, to commence on the 16th day of August, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-seven.

Sec. 2. And be it further enacted, That the pension aforesaid shall be paid at the Treasury of the United States; or in the same manner as invalid pensioners are paid who have heretofore been placed on the list of pensioners, at the option of said pensioner. Approved—Dec. 28, 1818.

An act for the relief of Wm. Barton. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, That the Register and receiver of the Land Office at Vincennes, be, and they are hereby authorized to permit Wm Barton to withdraw his entry of the north-east quarter of section three, in township six south, of range twelve west, in said district, and to place the moneys by him paid on said entry, to his credit, on any purchase of public lands he may hereafter make or shall make in the said district; provided it shall appear to the satisfaction of the said Register and Receiver, that the numbers on the corner designating the north-east quarter of thirty-one, in townships six south, of range twelve west, in said district, were so defaced or imperfectly made, as to have caused a mistake in his aforesaid entry. Approved—Dec. 28, 1818.

An act for the relief of Dr. Matron Ball. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, That the Secretary of the Treasury cause to be paid unto Matron Ball, of Northumberland County, Virginia, the sum of one thousand four hundred dollars, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, the same being in full for the destruction of his buildings on Old Court-House Point. Approved—January 19, 1819.

An act for the relief of Frederick Brown. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress, assembled, That the accounting officers of the Treasury Department be, and they are hereby authorized to settle the accounts of Frederick Brown, late a Captain in the army of the United States, upon just and equitable principles; Provided, that it shall appear that the said Frederick Brown has not been guilty of any misconduct or default in failing to render his accounts for settlement. Approved—January 19, 1819.

NEW BOOKS.

J. GALES has just received the following from the North. Criminal Trials illustrative of Tales of my Landlord. Bleecker's edition of Holt's Law of Libel. Cases in the time of Talbot. Blake's Chancery. Phillips's recollections of Curran. Seybert's Statistical Annals of the U. States. McClure's Geology of the U. States. Curwen's Agricultural Hints. The Backwoodsman. Massillon's Sermons. Intellectual Flambeau. United States and England. Goldsmith's Works. Animated Nature. The Nurse's Guide. White's Farriery. Campbell on Miracles. English and German Dictionary, &c. January 3.

THE CELEBRATED And unequalled Race Horse, TIMOLEON, WILL STAND the ensuing Season at the Subscriber's Stable, 3 miles from Warrenton, N. Carolina. Terms, Blood and Performance will be made known in due time. ROBT. H. JOHNSON. December 17, 1818. 4 tf

The Celebrated Imported Horse, EAGLE, Unquestionably the best Horse that was ever in England—will stand the ensuing Season at the RED-HOUSE, Caswell county, N. Carolina, where he gave general satisfaction the last Season, with only a few exceptions. Eagle's performances, and terms, will be made known in due time. Eagle is in as fine health as any Horse on the continent. January 26, 1819. 11 11w

SIXTY DOLLARS REWARD.

DESERTED on the 30th of November last, CLINTON GRIFFIN, enlisted originally on the 4th of January, 1814, but who re-enlisted on the 31 of October, 1818, thirty years of age, 5 feet 6 inches high, of dark complexion, dark hair, blue eyes and by profession a Soldier. Also, THOMAS DOWNIE, 25 years of age, 5 feet 11 inches high, of dark complexion, dark hair, hazle eyes, and by profession a Farmer. Griffin is probably lurking about Augusta, or Savannah, and Downie about Rutherford in this State. A Reward of Thirty Dollars each, together with all reasonable expenses, will be given for their apprehension and delivery to me, or to any officer in the Army. S. DONOHO, Capt. of Artillery. Recruiting Rendezvous, near Caswell C. H. N. C. Jan'y 1, 1819 \$10 4w

The Editors of the Georgia Journal will insert the above four weeks and forward their bill to Caswell C. H. North-Carolina.

STATE OF NORTH-CAROLINA, Mecklenburg County. Superior Court of Law, November Term, 1818.

Elizabeth Smith, Petitioner for a Divorce and Alimony. vs. William Smith.

IT appearing to the Court that the Defendant, William Smith, is not an inhabitant of this State; it is therefore ordered, that publication be made for three months in the Star and Raleigh Register newspapers, published in the city of Raleigh, that unless the defendant William Smith appear at the next term to be held for said county, on the 6th Monday after the 4th Monday in March next and plead, answer, or demur to plaintiff's petition, judgment pro confesso will be entered up against him. 4 3m GEO. GRAHAM, C. S. C. L.

OLD LEVI WIGGINS, The Scoundrel!

RANAWAY from Cabarrus County not long since, and has left several debts unpaid. This is to warn all honest men from having any dealings with him, as I am fully convinced that he is one of the most consummate scoundrels I ever saw. He is of small stature, has grey or blue eyes, small Roman nose, and grey hair, which has been occasioned by age and rascality united. He is probably 60 years of age. Wiggins, commonly (in the summer) wears a hunting shirt of a peculiar make. He frequently talks of his exploits in the Indian warfare, in Tennessee &c. and effects to know a great deal; and if he would acknowledge his acquaintance with villainy, I would at once agree with him in opinion. It is probable he has gone to Chatham county, in this State. JOHN TRAVIS. Concord, January 23

N. B. The Editors of Newspapers in North Carolina will render the public a service, by inserting the above in their papers.

By the President of the United States,

WHEREAS, by an act of Congress passed on the third day of March, 1815, entitled "an act to provide for the ascertaining and surveying of the boundary lines fixed by the treaty with the Creek Indians, and for other purposes," the President of the United States is authorized to cause the lands, acquired by the said treaty, to be offered for sale, when surveyed;

Therefore, I, James Monroe, President of the United States, do hereby declare and make known, that public sales for the disposal (agreeably to law) of certain lands in the Alabama territory, shall be held at Cahaba, in the said territory, on the first Monday in January next, and shall continue for three weeks, during which time will be offered for sale the tracts numbered as follows: in range 2 3 to 16 inclusive in range 2 3 to 16 inclusive in range 2 3 to 16 inclusive in range 2 3 to 16 inclusive

except such lands as have been reserved by law for the support of schools, and for other purposes. The land shall be offered for sale in regular numerical order, commencing with the lowest number of section, township and range. Given under my hand at the City of Washington, the 17th day of July, 1818, and eight hundred and eighty one. JAMES MONROE, By the President: J. MEIGS, Commissioner of the General Land Office