

[XXXVIIth Year.]

MARYLAND GAZETTE.

[No. 1813.]

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11, 1781.

For the MARYLAND GAZETTE.

M. CARROLL is pleased to assert, that "I opposed the repeal of the tender law, when the pretext for its passage no longer existed;" he insinuates, "that I have taken a vast sum of that law, and paid more monies than I received;" and "that a renewal of cancelled loan-office bonds would not be relieved by persons in my predicament; and he intimates some misconduct, or speculation, about the convention money, and alludes to some affidavits read in the house of delegates on this subject.

I admit that I voted in congress to recommend to the legislatures of the several states to make the continental bills of credit a legal tender in payment of debts; and I want not Mr. Carroll's admission that my object was honest and virtuous. The intention was to give credit to the money, to render it of universal use, and to force tory creditors to contribute their aid to the war. The senate always admitted, that the tender law was made "for good and salutary purposes," and urged a repeal or suspension, because it was discovered by experience not to have answered its original intention. Mr. Carroll ascribes my vote to make paper money a tender to an error in judgment, and an impetuosity of temper. I will accept no apology from him, it is his intolerable vanity only which can induce him to imagine his judgment superior to that of others.

At the time of passing the tender law I esteemed the making the paper money current in payment for debts, as proper and necessary to maintain its credit. The very great and unexpected emissions, the arts of our open and secret enemies, the continuance and events of the war, and the practices of debtors and creditors, combined to the rapid and extensive depreciation. At October session 1778, on a petition from the father of Mr. Carroll for a repeal of the tender law, the house of delegates unanimously resolved, "That a repeal of the law, at that time, would be highly injurious to the cause of America, destructive to public credit, and the ruin of many individuals." I was not then a member. At July session 1779, the senate proposed to repeal the tender law, so far as it affected debts, due before the first of June 1776; and at various times they proposed to suspend its operation, as to old debts; but without making any provision for any case. It is a fact not to be denied, that the whig creditors, in general, received the bills of credit for their debts, and that the tory creditors, and the disaffected, evaded the receipt by every art. Scotch and British factors had paid the creditors of their principals (especially in St. Mary's and Charles counties) and afterwards secreted, or sent away, their books of accounts, to avoid payment. Many of our merchants, warm and zealous whigs, had received their debts from the farmers and planters, in the depreciated currency, and must have been entirely ruined, if not enabled to pay their Scotch and British creditors. A general repeal, or suspension, therefore, would have been attended with more inconvenience and injury to the people, than a continuance of the law. I therefore ever opposed a general repeal, or suspension. Mr. Carroll, and a few more in the senate and house of delegates, of great wealth, warmly urged a general repeal or suspension, and were pleased to be offended with those who differed in sentiment. They took no regard for any case but what affected themselves. If the signature would prevent a payment of their old debts, they cared not what numbers might be ruined.

But I benefited myself by the tender law. Mr. Carroll has not ventured to assert this as a fact; but he implies it by asking the question. I will fully inform the public. The trouble I have taken is not to satisfy Mr. Carroll, but those whose good opinion I wish to preserve. I paid two debts to the loan-office, and not exceeding £.600 to private creditors, when the depreciation was not very considerable. I received for lands sold, and debts due before 1776, above twice the sums paid. I have been benefited by the tender law, and the depreciation, two fold; and well improved plantations, worth £.500 specie, some thousands of acres of land, and a sum of money in debts. In a word, by the tender law I have sunk one third of all my property; and received the money when depreciated even thirty per cent. If I had refused, what a clamour would have been raised? The records shew my conveyance

of lands, for which I received from six-pence to ten pence per acre. I could not in justice to a numerous family take the whole burthen of depreciation on myself. I never could suspect that the public would make me repay the loan-office; such conduct would be too glaringly unjust. The legislature compelled me to receive their notes of credit in payment of my private debts as specie, and declared them payable also in discharge of the debts due to their loan office. If attempted I shall have this consolation, that many others, and Mr. Carroll himself, will be in the same predicament, as he too paid off his bond to the loan-office.

But "in the draught of a bill sent to the senate, I attempted, by a clause, to provide for my own case." I again wish Mr. Carroll had been pointed. He certainly means some improper conduct, and the suspicion is confirmed, because the senate struck the clause out of the bill. I have read of certain ladies who delight in scandal, and "who can not or will not a reputation down." Can any reader guess what Mr. Carroll means? Some "piece of ingenuity," I suppose, in which I used my influence, as a delegate, to promote my own private interest, but was detected by the senate! Mr. Carroll has only hinted at the transaction, because it would be painful for him to defend to the particulars, and his benevolence would be injured by the recital. It is only by his reference to a clause in a bill from whence I can conjecture his meaning. It being agreed by the house of delegates to call out of circulation the current notes emitted by congress, and our conventions, and to give in exchange one dollar of a new for forty of the old emissions, it was thought proper to make provision for contracts made since the emissions and in the currency of the state. Every man of common sense, and common honesty, must see that contracts made in continental or state currency, ought not to have been affected by the legislature's calling them out of circulation. A man in 1779 agreed to pay a sum of current money (say £.20 per hundred for tobacco) on the first of January 1784, and the convention money, which was the state currency, was, by the terms of its emission, not to be called in, or sunk, before 1785. For reasons of state, or the public good, the assembly determined to annihilate the convention money after a short day, and to give one dollar of a new emission in exchange for forty dollars of the convention emission. Ought not the new dollar to represent forty old, ought the contract to be altered, or the debt changed from a depreciating currency, in which it was made, into gold and silver? It was universally agreed to make provision for such debts from one citizen to another, and to enable the creditor to pay one new dollar in discharge of forty old; but many of our traders owe such debts to non-residents. The clause proposed to enable such creditors to pay their debts into our loan office. This the senate objected to, but readily agreed, that the creditors of non-residents might be enabled to pay one new dollar for forty old, and to the law passed. If Mr. Carroll can point out any improper conduct, or that any thing was desired to promote my interest contrary to the principles of honour and justice, he is very welcome. But his insinuations are ungenerous, mean, and malicious.

Mr. Carroll speaks of a speculation as to our convention money, which was proved by affidavits produced and read in the house of delegates. It is a man's reputation is to be damned by a hint, Mr. Carroll can claim the palm; and it dark surmises will be received as proof, no man can be his rival. In May 1780 a report was raised and industriously circulated through the state, that I had purchased up, with continental currency, very large sums of convention money. This slander first received its authority from a message of the senate to the house of delegates, of May 10, 1780, and gained almost universal credit. It was represented, that the convention money was to be made of the value of gold and silver, and that myself, and a few others, were to be enriched by heavy taxes on the people. The object was to raise a popular prejudice against me, and to draw off the attention of the people from the confiscation of British property. The design succeeded, and a very general clamour was raised, and it ended in a breach of our public faith and honour, and all the consequences which have since happened are justly imputable to the party who brought about that weak dishonest measure. The food of envy and malice is the misery of others, and some wretches would rather that the sun should cease to shine, and would live in perpetual darkness, rather than the man they hate, should receive

any benefit from the light of heaven. I believe many would violate the public faith, to prevent my receiving any benefit by the preservation of the public credit. I cannot discover that any political or moral forbids the purchasing the convention money. I do declare I, nor no person connected with me or on my behalf ever purchased one shilling of convention money, and from the time the report was first raised to the time of calling it out of circulation, I never was possessed but of a few dollars by exchange. Surely if any sums had been bought up by me, or any one on my behalf, some one person could be found to prove it. I never thought there was any thing improper in purchasing convention money, and if I had done it, I could justify it against Mr. Carroll, and all his adherents. It was proved, by the affidavit Mr. Carroll alludes to, that a gentleman, with whom I am connected, lodged a sum of continental with the sheriff of Frederick county, to be exchanged for convention money. This was the substance of the affidavit, but not one word of a purchase of convention money, and a proposal to exchange is called by Mr. Carroll a speculation.

Mr. Carroll mentions, "that in October 1778 he found several gentlemen of the assembly warm in their complaints against me, not only about the purchase of wheat and flour, but upon some other points, in which they conceived this state had been materially wronged." I cannot conjecture those other points in which I had injured the public, and I presume Mr. Carroll forbore "to bring them back to the public memory because it would be painful for him to defend to particulars." A benevolent man will never censure his neighbour, or give credit to the tales of envy or malevolence, or repeat their slanders. It is well known that at that time I urged my countrymen to accede to the confederacy, and it is equally notorious that my advice was unpopular. The offensive objection made against me was my opinion in favour of the confederacy. I published my sentiments, which then were correspondent to the opinion of Mr. Carroll. If Mr. Carroll should think proper to defend to the particulars of the other points, he alludes to in which I have injured the public, I engage to give a full and satisfactory answer.

Mr. Carroll has attempted to justify his conduct in relation to the confiscation of British property, and the law to disqualify merchants from a seat in congress. It is not my business to recriminate, or to censure Mr. Carroll's conduct, but to justify my own. I esteem his public conduct very exceptionable in many particulars, but I am inclined to think the public are wholly indifferent about us both, and will not take the trouble to examine into the conduct of either.

Mr. Carroll has asserted that he published his address to me "from a desire to vindicate his character from the false, bad, and illiberal motives which I had attributed to his public conduct." This assertion is void of truth as to my conduct to Mr. Carroll, but expressly applicable to his towards me. He was the aggressor. We differed in sentiment as to a test to discriminate whigs from tories. He was against any test, I was against a general one. He was ever the friend to the absentees. He proposed the instructions, to destroy my reputation, and he opposed the confiscation of British property, upon principles incompatible with our independence, and impugned my maintaining the legality and policy of the measure to base and interested motives. The expressions of scorn and contempt interperfed through his address I dispute. I hold him in equal contempt, and can return him freer for inerer. His avaricious wealth and imaginary greatness commanded no respect from me. Whether he has violated his friendship I alone must judge, satisfied of his perfidy I shall never desire any connection with him. I wish not any personal altercation, or divisions, especially at this time, as it can only gratify the common enemy. Mr. Carroll is pleased to deny his declaration, "that he did not intend, or aim the instructions at me." No gentleman ever called on Mr. Carroll, at my request. Mr. Carroll's observation, "that the instructions were general, and that I was not named, but it the cap fitted me, that I might wear it," is only remarkable for conveying no information, and the vulgarity of the expression. I was certainly informed that Mr. Carroll had made the declaration I mentioned, by a gentleman then a member of the council, and Mr. Carroll's and my particular friend; and by a lady, whose veracity neither Mr. Carroll or I can question.