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CONCLUSION OF

Mr. Randolph's Letter.

It may be said that in time of peace the people of every portion of our confederacy find themselves too happy to think of division; that the sufferings of a war like this are requisite, to rouse them to the necessary exertion; and wars I very much fear will be wickedly declared, and wickedly waged, even by the New-England confederacy as they have been by every government (not even excepting the Roman Republic) of which we have any knowledge; and it does appear to me, no slight apprehension that the evil has not yet reached the point of amputation, when peace alone will render us the happiest; as we are the freest people under the sun; at least too happy to think of dissolving that union which as it carried us through the war of our revolution, will I trust, bear us triumphant through that in which we have been plunged, by the incapacity and corruption of men, neither willing to maintain the relations of peace, nor able to conduct the operations of war. Should I, unflatteringly be mistaken in this expectation, let us see what are to be the consequences of the separation, not to us, but to yourselves. An exclusion of your tonnage and manufactures from our ports and harbours, it will be our policy to encourage our own, or even those of Europe, in preference to yours; a policy more obvious than that which induced us of the south to consent to discriminating duties in favour of American tonnage, in the infancy of this government. It is unnecessary to say, to you, that I embrace the duties on imports, as well as the tonnage duty, when I allude to the encouragement of American shipping. It will always be our policy to prevent your obtaining a naval superiority, and consequently to cut you off entirely from our carrying trade. The same plain interest will cause us to prefer any manufactures to your own. The intercourse with the rest of the world, that exchange our surplus for theirs, will be the nursery of our seamen. In the middle states you will find rivals, not very heartily indisposed to shut out the competition of your shipping. In the same section of the country, in the boundless west, you will find jealous competitors of your mechanics—you will be left to settle, as you can, with England, the question of boundary on the side of New Brunswick, and unless you can bring New-Fort to a state of utter blindness, as to her own interests, that great thriving and most populous member of the confederacy will present a hostile frontier to the only states of the union at hand, that can be estimated as of any efficiency. Should that respectable city be chosen as the seat of the Eastern Congress, but how will she, within two days march of the most populous country of New York (Dutchess) of itself, most ample comode of the New-England states. I speak not in decision, but in soberness and sadness of heart. I have seen many like a thorough diplomatist, I try to suppress every thing like feeling, and to set this question as a dry matter of calculation, well knowing at the same time, that in every section of our vast empire, your passions are inflamed, your reason is blinded, and your authority has and in that continent of our confederacy, that a yell sound in all. How our people in Virginia would be glad to hear of the bombardment of Boston, so, if very much less, you would not be very sorry to see a similar insurrection in Virginia. But with I trust, if the general feeling in another country, other than that of once more that you like the British.

For, with every other man of common sense, I have always regarded union as the means of liberty and safety, in other words of happiness, and not as an end to which these are to be sacrificed. Neither, at the same time, are means so precious, so efficient (in proper hands) of these desirable objects, to be thrown rashly aside, because, in the hands of bad men, they have been made the instrument almost of our undoing.

You, in New-England, (it is unnecessary I hope to specify, when I do not address myself personally to yourself) are very wide of the mark, if you suppose that we of the south, do not suffer at least as much as yourselves, from the incapacity of our rulers to conduct the defence of the country. Do you ask, why we do not change those rulers? I reply, because, we are a people like your own Connecticut of steady habits. Our confidence, once given is not hastily withdrawn. Let those who will abuse the fickleness of the people: I shall say such is not the character of the people of Virginia. They may be deceived, but they are honest. Taking advantage of their honest prejudices, the growth of our revolution, fostered not more by Mr. Jefferson than by the injuries and (what is harder to be borne) the insults of the British ministry since the peace of 1783, a combination of artful men, has with the aid of the press and the possession of the machinery of government (a powerful engine in any hands) led them to the brink of ruin. I can never bring myself to believe, that the whole mass of the landed proprietors, in any country, but especially such a country as Virginia, can seriously plot its ruin. Our government is in the hands of the landed proprietors only. The very men of whom you complain, have left nothing undone that they dared to do, in order to destroy it. Foreign influence is unknown among us. What we feel of it, is through the medium of the general government, which acted on, itself, by foreign renegades, and us, of this pernicious influence. I know of no foreigner who has been, or is, in any respectable office in the gift of the people, or the government of Virginia. No member of either house of Congress, no leading member of our assembly, no judge of our supreme courts; of the newspapers printed in the state, as far as my knowledge extends, without discrimination of party, they are conducted by native Virginians. Like yourselves, we are an unmixed people. I know the prejudice that exists against us; nor do I wonder at it, considering the gross ignorance on our subject that prevails north of Maryland, and even in many parts of that neighbouring state.

What member of the confederacy has sacrificed more on the altar of public good than Virginia? Where did the general government derive its lands beyond the Ohio, then and now, almost the only source of revenue? From our grant a grant so cautiously worded, and by our present Palmarus too, as to except ourselves, by its limitations, from the common benefit. By its conditions it was forbidden ground to us, and thereby the foundation was laid of incurable animosity and division, between the states on each side of that great natural boundary, the river Ohio. Not only their masters, but the very slaves themselves for whose benefit this regulation was made, were sacrificed by it. Dispersion is to them a bittering of their present condition and of their chance for emancipation. It is only when he can be done without danger and without trifling individual loss that it will be done at all. (How was it common sense, to a political Quaker?)

This country was ours by a double title, by charter and by conquest. George Rogers Clark, the American Hannibal, at the head of the state troops, by the reduction of Fort Vincennes, obtained the Lakes by our southern boundary, at the peace of Paris. The man who of that great man and his brave companions

comparison with the passage of the Tidalmen marsh.

Without dwelling on things like an invidious distinction, I have not heard of any cession from Massachusetts of her vast wilds, and Connecticut has had the address, out of our grant to the firm, to obtain on her own private account, some millions of acres; whilst we, yes we, I blush to say it, have descended to beg for a pittance out of the property once our own, for the brave men by whose valour it had been won, and whom our heedless profusity had disabled us to recompense. We met the just fate of the Prodigal. We were spurned from the door, where once we were masters; with derision and scorn; and yet we hear of undue Virginia influence. This fond yielded the government, when I had connexion with it, from half a million to eight hundred thousand dollars, annually. It would have preserved us from the imposition of state taxes, founded schools, built bridges and made roads and canals through Virginia. It was squandered in a single donative at the instance of Mr. Madison. For the sake of concord with our neighbours, by the same generous but misguided policy, we ceded to Pennsylvania Fort Pitt, a most important commercial and military position, and a vast domain around it, as much Virginia as the city of Richmond and the county of Henrico. To Kentucky, the eldest daughter of the union, the Virginia of the west, we have yielded on a request of boundary, from a similar consideration. Actuated by the same magnanimous spirit, at the instance of the other states, (with the exception of New-York, North-Carolina, Rhode-Island,) we accepted in 1788, the present constitution. It was repugnant to our judgment, and fraught, as we feared, with danger to our liberties. The awful voice of our ablest and soundest statesmen, of Patrick Henry and of George Mason, never before or since, disregarded, warned us of the consequences. Neither was their council entirely unheeded, for it led to important subsequent amendments of this instrument. I have always believed this misintended spirit, so often manifested by us, to be one of the chief causes of the influence which we exercised over the other states. Eight states having made that constitution their own, we submitted to the yoke for the sake of union. Our attachment to union is not an empty profession. It is demonstrated by our practice at home. No sooner was the Convention of 1788 dissolved, than the feuds of federalism and antifederalism disappeared. I speak of their effects on our councils. For the sake of union, we submitted to the lowest state of degradation—the administration of John Adams. The name of this man calls up contempt and derision wherever it is pronounced. To the fantastic vanity of this political Malvolio may be distinctly traced our present unhappy condition. I will not be so ungenerous as to remind you that this personage (of whom, and his addresses, and his answers, I defy you to think without a bitter smile,) was not a Virginian, but I must, in justice to ourselves, insist upon making him a set off against Mr. Madison. They are of such equal weight, that the trembling balance reminds us of that passage of Pope, where he

Weights the beam against the last's hair.

The doubtful beam long wags from side to side.

At length the wags mount up, the hair is shaggy.

Intoxicated not more by the fulsome adulation with which he was puffed than by the fumes of his own vanity, this poor old gentleman saw a visionary coronet suspended over his brow, and an air-drawn sceptre, the handle towards his hand, which attempting to clutch, he lost his balance, and disappeared never to rise again. It is not, who "shaking" Nat. Lee's Alexander, taved about the people of Virginia as a faction to be humbled in dust and ashes, which the sceptre was already grasped in his own hand.

to too great a length. What is your object—Bacon? Can that be a thing, on any terms, whilst England sees a prospect of disuniting that confederacy, which has already given so deep a blow to her maritime pride, and threatens, at no very distant day, to dispute with her the empire of the ocean? The wound which our gallant tars have inflicted on her tenderest point has maddened her to rage. Cursed as we are with a weak and wicked administration, she can no longer despise us. Already she begins to hate us, and she seeks to glut a revenge as impotent as it is rancorous, by insults that would have disgraced the Buccaneers and buccaniers that would only disgrace the sovereign of Elba. She already is compelled to confess in her heart, what her lips deny, that if English bull dogs and game cocks degenerate on our soil, English men do not—and should (which God forbid!) our brethren of the East desert us in this contest for all that is precious to man, we will maintain it, so long as our proud and insulting foe shall refuse to accede to equitable terms of peace. The government will then pass into proper hands.—The talents of the country will be called forth, and the schemes of moon-struck philosophers and their disciples pass away and "leave not a wreck behind."

You know how steadily and perseveringly I endeavoured, for eight years, to counteract the artful and insidious plans of our rulers to embroil us with the country of our ancestors, and the odium which I have thereby drawn upon myself. Believing it to be my duty to soften as much as possible, the asperities which subsisted between the two countries, and which were leading to a ruinous war, I put to hazard, nay exposed to almost certain destruction, an influence such as no man, perhaps, in this country, at the same age, had ever before enjoyed. (The popularity that attends exposure is too delicate for public service. It is a bastard species; the true sort will stand the hardest frost.) Is it my fault (as Mr. Burke complained of the crowned heads of Europe) that England will no longer suffer me to find palliatives for her conduct? No man admired more than I did her magnanimous stand against the tyrant, before whom all the rest of Christendom at one time bowed; No man, not even her own Wilberforce and Perceval, put up more sincere prayers for her deliverance. In the remotest Isle of Austral-Asia, my sympathy would have been enlisted, in such a contest, for the descendants of Alfred and Bacon, and Shakespeare, and Milton, and Locke, on whom I love to look back as my illustrious countrymen—in any contest I should have taken side with liberty; but on this depended (as I believed and do still believe) all that made my own country dear in my sight. It is past—and unmindful of the mercy of that protecting providence which has carried her through the valley of the shadow of death, England feels power and forgets right. I am not one of that whining set of people who cry out against mine adversary for the force of his blow. England has, unquestionably as good a right to conquer us, as we have to conquer Canada; she has the right that we have to conquer England, and with about as good a prospect of success. But let her torturers declaim against the enormity of French principles, when she permits herself to arm and discipline our slaves, and lead them into the field against their masters, in the hope of exciting by the example, a general insurrection, and thus render Virginia another St. Domingo. And what the talk of Jacobinism? What is this, but Jacobinism and of the vilest stamp? Is this the country that has abolished the slave trade; that has made that infamous and inhuman traffic a felony; that feeds with the bread of life all who hunger after it, and even those who, but for her, would never have known their perishing condition.—Drum with the drum of abolitionists of France, they have been roused from the sleep, like some benighted travellers per-

ing in the snow, and warmed into life by the beams of the only true religion. Is this the country of Wilberforce and Howard? Is it, but like my own, my native land, has fallen into the hands of evil men, who pour out its treasure and its blood, at the shrine of their own guilty ambition. And this impious sacrifice, they celebrate amidst the applause of the deluded people, and even of the victims themselves.

There is a proneness in mankind to throw the blame of their sufferings on any one but themselves. In this manner, Virginia is regarded by some of her sister states; not advertent to the fact, that all (Connecticut and Delaware excepted) are responsible for the measures that have involved us in our present difficulties. Did we partition your state into those unequal and monstrous districts which have given birth to a new word in your language, of uncouth sound, calling up the most odious associations. Did we elect the Jacobins whom you sent to both houses of Congress—the Bidwells, and Gannetts, and Skinners—to spur on the more moderate men from Virginia, to excesses which they reluctantly gave into at the time, and have since been ashamed of. Who hurried the bill suspending the privileges of the writ of Habeas Corpus through a trembling senate; in consequence, as he did not blush to state, of a verbal (b) communication from the President? A senator from Massachusetts, and procer in her venerable university. In short, have not your first statesmen (such I believe was the reputation of the gentleman in question at the time,) your richest merchants, and the majority of your delegation in Congress, voted in support of the men, and measures that have led to our present suffering and humiliated condition?

If you wish to separate yourselves from us, you had ample provocation in time of peace, in an embargo the most unconstitutional and oppressive; an engine of tyranny, fraud and favoritism.—Then was the time to resist (we did not desert England in a time of war) but you were then under the domination of a faction among yourselves, yet a formidable minority, exhibiting no signs of diminution; and it is not the least of my apprehensions from certain proceedings to the eastward, that they may be made the means of consigning you again, and for ever, to the same low, insolent domination. The reaction of your Jacobins upon us, for although we have some in Virginia they are few and insignificant, through the men at Washington (a who must conciliate good republicans) (c) is dreadful. Pause, I beseech you pause! You tread on the brink of destruction. Of all the Atlantic States you have the least cause to complain. Your manufacturers, and the trade which the enemy has allowed you, have drained us of our last dollar. How then can we carry on the war? With men and steel—stout hearts and willing hands—and these, from the days of Darius and Xerxes, in defence of household gods of freemen, have proved a match for gold. Can they not now encounter paper? We shall suffer much from this contest; it will cut deep; but dismissing its authors from your confidence and councils forever (I speak of a few leaders, and their immediate tools, not of the deluded, as well in, as out of authority) we shall pass, if it be the good pleasure of him whose curses are tempered with mercies, through an agony and a bloody sweat, to peace and salvation; to that peace which is only to be found in a reconciliation with him. "Atheists and madmen have been our law givers" and when I think on our past conduct I shudder at the chastisement that may await us. How has not Europe suffered for her sins? Will England, not consider that, like the man who had yesterday bestrid the narrow world, she is but in instrument in his hands, who breatheth the weapon of his chastisement, what a measure of his people's punishment will she have to suffer for her sins? Will she start to forth, like some benighted traveller per-