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L. 435, 1758
PRINTING
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THE [Numb. 708.]
MARYLAND GAZETTE,

Containing the freshest Advices foreign and domestic.

THURSDAY, November 30, 1758.

A SPEECH concerning the PRUSSIAN TREATY delivered in a certain POLITICAL ACADEMY by Mr. PITT.

THE Treaty now in Question is, perhaps, a Transaction of as interesting a Nature to the Interests of England, and the Liberties of Europe, as any that ever was brought into any Assembly.
Gentlemen, upon one Side of the Question, have said a great deal against what they call continental Connections, and others have supported them with equal Warmth. For my own Part, Sir, give me Leave to say, that I partly differ, and partly agree, with both; and, let me say farther, that the Treaty before us seems to have hit the very Point in which the true Interest of Great-Britain ever lay; in which, Sir, it ever must lie while we are a Protestant, a free, and an independent People.

Could I conceive a continental Measure, Sir, so circumstanced as to be totally unconnected with our Interest, I am very sure my honourable Friend over the way could not oppose it with more Zeal, tho' perhaps he might oppose it with more Abilities, with more Efficacy, than I would. But, Sir, I am afraid I may not have the same Notions of the Interest of Great-Britain, that some Gentlemen have.

In my Opinion, Sir, the Interest of England, in whatever Light we view it, comprehends the whole System of public Liberty in Europe. Whenever that, Sir, is affected, whenever that is shock'd, give me Leave to say, and I appeal to all Experience for the Truth of what I advance, the Interest of England is endangered. This, Sir, is a Maxim that has ever been laid down and invariably pursued by all the wise and public-spirited Princes and Ministers we have ever had, and I hope it never shall be given up under this Family.

The Increase or Diminution of our Exports and Imports, the Articles upon our Custom-House Books, and the several Matters contained in the Papers that now lie before us, are, all of them, Points of the highest Consequence to this Kingdom; and I may say to the Existence, of this Kingdom; but for Gentlemen to confine all their Views, all their Cares, all their Reasonings, to that Point, is like cleaning the Dial-Plate, and adjusting the Movements, of a Watch, without considering that the main Spring is ready to snap asunder. The preservation of the public Liberty of Europe, which can be effected only by the Preservation of the Protestant Religion, give me Leave to say, Sir, the main Spring of the Interests of Great-Britain. The Moment, Sir, we shall fold our Arms, sit tamely by, and see that destroyed, that Moment we give the Ambition of France Leisure to look round, Leisure to cope with us, upon the very Element we now consider as our greatest, if not only Security; a dreadful Prospect, Sir, when we consider what has happened during the Course of the late and present War.

I am as far as any Gentleman in this House can be, from justifying all the continental Connections we have run into for these 20 Years past. But, Sir, will any Man lay his Hand upon his Heart, and say, that if Great-Britain, during that Time, had been an unconcerned Spectator of the Troubles of Europe, that France would not, at this Time, have been more than in a Condition to have disputed with her the Empire of the Seas. Even with all the Ruin which the late War brought upon her Marine, notwithstanding the numberless Offices her Trade has sustained in this; notwithstanding all the providential Checks her Arms have received in Germany, and the Money she has squandered on the Continent, you see what Efforts she even now making at Sea; Efforts that will stagger future Times to believe, unless (which Heaven prevent) their future Successes shall render them credible.

I know not any one Point more generally agreed upon, amongst all who have Opportunities of being informed, than that the French Ships are in ever-Respect preferable to ours; than that their Metal is heavier, and that both their Officers and Men are at least as brave, and behave as well in Action, as ours; and I believe, Sir, we have but too good Reason to believe they will never be at a Loss for Materials to build a Navy, while they preserve their Superiority on the Continent. If, Sir, these Things are so (and who can dispute that they are not so?) what, in the Name of Heaven, can prevent France from having a Marine superior to ours, whenever she is at Freedom to bend her Power and employ her Subjects on that, and that alone?

The single Consideration therefore with me is, how far we are, humanly speaking, at present, from that fatal Period? This, Sir, I say, is the single Consideration that now influences me, and I can't help calling it a tremendous one to every true Englishman.

Public Liberty has, in the Person of his Prussian Majesty, a Champion on whom I cannot bestow a more just, and therefore a greater Encomium, than to say, that he is worthy the Cause in which he fights, and the Cause is worthy of him. This, Sir, is saying more for him than we can say by giving him the Preference to all the Heroes of Antiquity. But, Sir, tho' the Person, the Cause, and the Arms of that great Prince, seems hitherto to have been the peculiar Care of Heaven, we are to remember that Success is attach'd to no Cause, and; even the Hero I am now speaking of, has had his Reverse of Fortune. I speak not this, Sir, as if we had any Reason to doubt his Virtue, his Courage, or his Wisdom, but I cannot go so far as to say that he is omniscient or omnipotent; that Victory will be always chain'd to his Chariot Wheels, and that Conjunctions cannot happen, in which the most consummate civil and military Virtues may be oppress'd by superior Power and Numbers.

An honourable Gentleman, whom I always hear with Pleasure, even when he speaks against my own Sentiments, has said, that Germany will be always able to secure her own Liberties, and he appeals to the Events of last Year as a Proof of his Observation. Sir, I am as sensible as any Gentleman can be of the Greatness and Glory of those Events. But have we not, almost in our own Memory, Examples where a continual Career of Victories over a reduced Enemy has, at last, taught that very Enemy to beat their Conquerors? Some of us may remember the Case of Charles, King of Sweden, who, by often beating the Muscovites with greater Odds of Numbers against him than the King of Prussia had to do with in the last Campaign, was at last ruined by the Skill and Knowledge of Discipline which his Enemies acquired by their Defeats. The Valour and good Discipline of the Austrian Troops were both felt and acknowledged in the last Campaign by his Prussian Majesty, who never shew'd himself a greater Man than he did in confessing his own Fallibility, and giving even his Enemies their due Praises. His gaining the Battle of Rosbach, next to his own matchless Conduct and Valour, was, humanly speaking, owing to the bad Policy of the Court of Vienna, who trusted the Contingent Troops of the Empire, under Prince Saxe-Hilburghausen, to co-operate with those of France; two Bodies of Men, Sir, that I will venture to say, would rather have cut one another's Throats, than those of the Prussian Army. The Stream of Successes that afterwards attended his Arms, were great beyond any Parallel, at least in modern History. But had not his Enemies been intoxicated with an Opinion of their own Power, had not Want, Sickness, and Desertion, weakened, and Pride, Rage, and Revenge blinded, the Austrians, his Laurels, tho' not less glorious, must have been

less spreading than they are at present. I know, Sir, his Prussian Majesty shew'd himself a great General, by taking the Advantage of the Circumstances that either enfeebled, discouraged, or divided the Enemy; but let me ask, Sir, What must have been the Consequence had no such Circumstances presented themselves?

In short, we are not to trust to such another Concurrence of Circumstances in our Favour; it would be tempting Providence to do it. It would be acting like the Fellow in the Fable, who prayed Jupiter to help his Cart Wheels out of the Slough, when he ought to have freed them by the vigorous Application of his own Strength and Shoulders.

I hope I may, without Offence, ask, Gentlemen, in what Condition must the Affairs of this Protestant Kingdom be, should our Enemies profit by Experience; should Ambition and Revenge reconcile the Powers that Ambition and Revenge have ever disunited? I cannot, Sir, without trembling, enter into the Idea. And give me Leave to ask farther, Sir, Where is the Improbability that they will not? Consider the Progress the French have made in their Marine ever since the Commencement of this War. Consider the Successes they have had in America, which was confessedly the primary Object of the War on both Sides, and is, in Fact, the grand Spring of all their Motions. Gentlemen, when they look upon this War in detached Operations, must always form a wrong Idea of the French Designs; and partial Views will ever produce partial Representations.

The French, Sir, consider Power as their Ultimate, and wherever this Power can be acquired it must equally answer their Purposes. They know that the Source of Power lies in Riches, and that the Source of the English Riches lies in America. They know that in Proportion as we are weakened there, in the same Proportion they are strengthened. And, Sir, any Man who considers their Conduct ever since their Differences with England broke out, will have no Difficulty in concluding, that, however their Operations may be directed in Germany, the ultimate Object of them lies in America. Gentlemen have talked a great deal of Religion, and a Religious War. I am no Stranger to the Weaknesses of some Powers in that Respect, but I look upon Religion, Sir, to be only the Side Wind of Ambition amongst Princes. But supposing it, Sir, to be what we may call the cardinal Point of their political Compass; how is the Matter altered? The Tools of the Church of Rome are taught, that it is necessary to acquire Power in order to establish Religion, so that the Work of Ambition is always sure to go forward, whether Religion be their primary or secondary View.

Therefore, Sir, in the present Case, it does not signify a Farthing whether the present is a War of Religion or of Ambition; we are sure that it is a War designed, on the Part of our Enemies, to strip us of our most valuable Properties. Their Religion teaches them, to do that, to begin there. They can succeed in no other Way; the Popish Religion never did succeed any other Way but by strengthening themselves and weakening their Adversaries.

Gentlemen, I know, have said, that if the Views of the French are upon America, why ought we not to have America in our Eye likewise? I agree Sir, that we ought; but then, Sir, I think we have our Eye upon America, when we fix it upon any Spot of the Globe, where the Power of France is to be curbed, or her Injustice chastised. If we can by supporting his Prussian Majesty, divert the French from pursuing those Schemes that must infallibly give them a Superiority by Sea; we provide, in the most effectual Manner, for our Settlements in America. Give me Leave therefore to say, that Gentlemen do not take a sufficiently comprehensive View of the French Politics, when they make a Distinction between Germany and America. For when they have nothing to fear from Germany,