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HAVING shewn the impropriety of a connection with *Great-Britain*, it remains that I now more immediately address myself to consider our situation with regard to our new neighbour *France*, and to point out the advantages that must arise from a good understanding with her. And indeed, if, as many good men seem to fear, there are some in these states who are greatly active, by every art, to put mischief between us, surely it becomes the duty of every one who can express a thought upon paper, to endeavour to prevent it. This cannot be better done, than by explaining properly the circumstances and the grounds of the connection, and by endeavouring to keep alive our gratitude and good-will on both sides.

When we take a retrospective view of the situation in which we found ourselves at the commencement of the war, it has been usual to say that we were without arms, without ammunition, and without cloathing; and though the repetition of any set of words must become tiresome, yet these above all others, though frequently repeated, may be tolerable, because they are in themselves strong and pithy, and serve to excite our attention to Divine Providence, who has raised us from a low estate to what we now are, an independent people amongst the nations of the earth. It was a custom established by the ceremonial law amongst the Jews, to repeat, every third year, in the temple, a kind of recollective confessional, beginning with these words—"My father was a Syrian, ready to perish;" meaning Jacob, who had sent down his sons to buy corn in Egypt. In like manner it may be our language, not every third year, but every year of our lives,—my father was an American, by the formidable armament of Britain, "ready to perish," when he was without the means, and with out the will of war. His only hope was in the Great Director of the affairs of men, that he would be pleased, first, to inspire us with courage and fortitude in our defence—and second, that he would dispose the heart of some foreign power to appear in our behalf.

France was the only power from whom we had any reason to expect assistance; for she alone had the means, or the inclination, to oppose Great-Britain, victorious from a former war, and greatly strengthened in her dominion of the sea. France was the antient and determined enemy of Britain; and though she might not chuse to risk her safety to effect it, yet certainly she would rejoice to see America separated from the dominion of that island.

While France had not yet interposed in our behalf, what were the alternate tides of our hopes and fears that she might, or that she might not interpose. It was the opinion of many persons, even well affected to our cause, that she would not interpose: For, said they, she is wise and politic, and Britain has it in her power to bid more for her neutrality, than we can possibly bid for her assistance. All that we can propose to her is a mere negative advantage, the ceasing to be connected with Great-Britain; whereas, on the other hand, Britain has it in her power to offer her settlements in the East-Indies, settlements in the West-Indies, possessions on the coast of Africa, an enlargement of her right to the fisheries on the banks of Newfoundland, the restitution of Canada, and many particular exclusive advantages of commerce, which cannot be easily enumerated.

These considerations were, I must confess, greatly [illegible] and there were few amongst us who did [illegible] it as an equal chance, whether France would not appear decidedly in our behalf. It is true every good whig, like the prudent leader of a faithful band, endeavoured to put the best countenance upon the matter, and to speak of it as a thing extremely probable, nay almost certain, that she would decidedly espouse our cause. But I know that those in our councils, who had the best opportunity of knowing the industry of Britain, and the offers she had made, and was about to make to this power, were greatly apprehensive of what might be the issue. It was possible, that in the violence of her resentment to a people, whom not to be able to subdue was greatly irritating to her pride, she might propose even to divide our territory, and to give the one half, as we say in common life, for help to subdue the whole.

Apprehensions of this kind, however in the nature of the circumstances reasonably founded, were considerably removed when we began to perceive, by many evidences, that the affections of the [illegible] nation were engaged in our behalf. It was not yet to be discovered whether she would take an active part for us, but there was every reason to believe that she would, by no offers, be induced to take an active part against us.

When, from more confirmed evidences of affections in the people and the court of France, the congress were led to entertain the hope of her assistance, it gave a new spring of energy to our exertions. In a declaration of this honourable body to the people of *America*, July 5, 1775, I do well recollect that sentence, forcible in its impression, and durable in its remembrance, "foreign assistance is undoubtedly attainable." This sentence in that masterly performance, said to be written by his excellency the present president of congress, Mr. Jay, passed like the voice of an archangel through the continent, and was more to animate us to resistance than a thousand arguments. The words of this sentence, like the bright stones in the breast-plate of *Aaron*, were the urim and the thummim, the light and the perfection of our resolutions. We may talk what we will of pamphlets and publications in the papers, and without doubt these did great good; but I can say for myself, what I believe others can say for themselves, that this single sentence, consisting of five words, did more to convert me to the doctrine of independence, than all the pamphlets that were ever written. Pamphlets and publications were well enough in there place, to address the passions of the people; but these few words, expressed in a simple language, contained a substance of thought that alone could encourage to attempt the bourne of a new existence.

There was no friend to his country ever doubted but that independence was our happiness, if it could be effected; but the point was, whether, without the assistance of a foreign power, we could be able to effect it. It was the opinion of most men who thought while they spoke, that we could not, unless heaven itself was almost miraculously to interpose. But it was a plain case, that while we continued to acknowledge our dependence on Britain, and debated with her only about the line of that dependence, we had no reason to expect the assistance of any power whatsoever. On the other hand, having some good ground to expect that assistance, the declaration of our independence became a wise and a salutary, because it was a just and a safe measure.

The declaration took place on the memorable fourth of July, 1776, which has become an æra, with us in *America*, that may be as famous as that of Nabonnassar of the Assyrians, or the Hegeira of the Saracens, or any other that the world has ever yet known. At this time we had no engagement, or express promise from the court of France; but from many evidences of her good-will and affection for our cause, there was every reason to believe that she would, in due time, appear in our behalf. We had now ceased to be considered by her as the subjects of Great-Britain; and it was rendered perfectly consistent with the laws of nations, and the rights of independent states, to assist us. Nevertheless, that she might avoid every possible ground of a charge against her amongst the powers of Europe, of which, as a nation respiring from many wars, and loving peace, she was greatly careful, she did not all at once acknowledge our independence. But now that we had been in full possession of it for some time, and what was requisite to be known, we had given convincing proofs that we were in earnest in declaring that we would adhere to it—on the 6th of February, 1778, she entered into a treaty of alliance, and of amity and commerce with us, the direct end and object of which was, as is expressed in the treaty, "to maintain effectually, the liberty, sovereignty, and independence of these United States."

During that period, which elapsed between the declaration of our independence and the acknowledgment of it by the court of France, our hemisphere was greatly clouded, and every breast was filled with anxiety. With what solicitude did we often run to a member of congress, to know if the packet, which was said to have come to hand, had brought any intelligence of this event? When any vessel had arrived in our harbours, with what avidity did we drink in a half conjectured story of a speedy interposition on the side of France? There was not a friend of his country at that time that would not have thought this nation deserving of the love and warmest affection, and steady trust and adherence of *America* for ever, on condition that she would declare for us.

The convention of Saratoga was indeed brilliant, and, like the affair of Trenton, formed a bright æra in the chronology of our success; but nevertheless, to those well acquainted with the every day deranging state of our finances, with the ruined condition of our fleet, on which alone we had hitherto depended to supply us with cloathing and with ammunition from foreign shores, our affairs wore a lowering aspect; and I well remember, that when "for many days no sun of alliance had yet appeared," the boldest and most intrepid spirits in our country were not without their apprehensions. It was a short time, after the alliance was announced to us, that a worthy brother of congress, in a conversation which led us to speak of the great distress from which it had relieved us, said to me, putting his hand upon his breast, "you see, Sir, to what a skeleton I am reduced, owing not to any indisposition, but to the sore anxiety I have felt for the uncertain state of our affairs."

No wonder then that on the annunciation of this happy event, there was an illumination, not of the buildings only, but also of the hearts and countenances of every good American.

The alliance, the alliance, was repeated from mouth to mouth, and in every publication. France was noble and generous, and more disinterested than any people had ever been in any treaty since the world began. She was timely in her interposition, and she was just and truly wise, in the fair and equal terms of the treaty into which she had entered with us.

This was not the language of our lips only, but of our hearts also; for I am bold and confident in asserting it, that though there may be men who, from antient disaffection, or from other causes more lately operating, are enemies to the alliance, yet the people of America are honest; and though, as is natural to the human heart, the fervour of their affection may a little have subsided, yet the love of the alliance has penetrated deeper, and tho' it may not be spoken of at this day with so much rapture in every conversation, yet it is felt with a stronger, more intense, and more stedfast attachment. When a man is warm with any feeling, he is apt to paint things strongly; and therefore it is possible that I may somewhat have depressed the situation of America, and advanced the interposition of the court of France. But surely any friend to his country will easily forgive this, when he considers that it is the daily practice of our enemies, the disaffected persons of the several states, under great shew of zeal for the honour of America, to throw out hints that she might have done as well without France—and that she stood in no need of her assistance.

Against those men who, by any artifice, may be disposed to weaken that affection which we entertain for this nation, it is proper that we lift up a standard. O men of America, I am persuaded it is not your intention, nor will you ever suffer a few ingrates to eat out the vitals of your dear bought liberty, by destroying that which is a noble and permanent support of it, your connection with a great nation. If there are some amongst you so lost to all sense of honour, as to entertain the fury of ingratitude within their breasts, yet certainly it is not yet politic to be ungrateful. Let these men wait at least until it is consistent with your safety; let them not endanger your existence as a people, at the same time that they excite you to give up your honour. Is it time to be directed by the impressions of ill-designing men, when Hannibal is yet at your gates; when that very enemy, against whom you have sought assistance, is yet within your borders. It is not time, O Americans! and it becomes you, while you exert your own powers in your defence, that you cultivate the affection of the nation which has taken you by the hand in this debate.

There may be those amongst you, conscious of your own honesty and not suspecting that of others, who may be ready to declare to me, that you cannot apprehend that there is so much danger of hostility meditated; and that I may as well call upon you not to pull down the Allegany mountain, a thing you have no thought of attempting, as to dissuade you from any injury to that, which you look upon to be greatly your happiness. I make no doubt but this is in the honesty of your hearts, may be your opinion, but you will easily conceive that it is not impossible for men to be made, unwarily, the instruments of that injury which originates from the disaffection and malevolence of others, and which they, not in the most distant idea, had ever entertained in their minds. For this reason it will be necessary