

MARYLAND GAZETTE.

F R I D A Y, O C T O B E R 2 2, 1 7 7 9.

From the PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE.

NUMBER IX.

HOWEVER desirable it might be with France to see the states of America in disunion with the empire of Britain, yet it did not consist with the law of nations and the faith of treaties, to contribute to that object, while we continued, in any sort, to be considered as the subjects of the island. Still more, it did not consist with the safety of the kingdom to embrace a cause, until we had declared ourselves independent, and by a course of action, had evinced that we were sincere in our determination not to accommodate with Britain, or to fall back under her dominion. All that the court of France could do, was to hold out a smiling countenance, and, though laws and restraints of commerce did exist, to cause them to have a mild operation. Her privateers were not admitted to carry in prizes to her ports, because they could not be condemned as prizes but by the judicial process of the maritime law; but her harbours were open, even to our armed vessels, for every other purpose, and our merchantmen were received with the utmost hospitality, and protected in her ports with the same security as the vessels of her own trade.

The court could not send supplies of military stores to these states; but, declaring commerce free, she did not prohibit individuals of the nation, who at their own risk might endeavour to supply us. All that it behooved them to know, was, that if they were questioned by the armed vessels of Great-Britain, and captured accordingly, as supplying contraband commodities, it was not in the power of the sovereign to reclaim them. Vessels were fitted out at the risk of individuals, and quantities of ammunition and stores of every kind were sent from Havre de Grace, and from other ports of the kingdom, taking their passes for St. Pierre, or Miquelon, and sailing unquestioned in that direction, until within a few leagues of the coast, it was easy for them to make the ports of Boston, or some port of the Delaware and Chesapeake bays. Thus, what the court could not do the nation did; and France, even before our independence was acknowledged by her, contributed, in a very eminent degree, to support us in the contest. She inspired our first exertions. She kept alive our hopes. In every stage of the debate, our liberty had been greatly indebted to her guardianship and care.

The advantages derived from the acknowledgment of our independence by the court of France, were great and extensive. I do not conceive that they are understood by all. It is possible for a man to fix his eye on the rapidity of those where they terminate in the center of a large wheel, and not much to mark the extreme points which describe a much greater circle in the same space of time. France opposed herself with vigour to the enemy on these coasts, and in the West-Indies, but at the same time she checked, or rather, prevented altogether, the farther negotiations of Britain to obtain troops from the princes of Germany. These princes would be careful not to offend the house of Bourbon, the house of Austria with whom she is connected, by furnishing troops to obstruct the great object which France has in view, the independence of these states. It is demonstrative of this, that the landgrave of Hesse, who had entered into a treaty of that kind before France had declared in our favour, thought it necessary to make a friendly apology to that court, informing her, that "the state of his finances had greatly pressed him to the engagement." We had been often told of thirty thousand Russians that were to sail from the Baltic, and to live amidst frosts and snows on the plains of North-America, but, since the interposition of the court of France, we hear little more of them. We know very well that in the year 1743 the king of Holland and of England did hire thirty thousand of these people, the formidable conquerors of the Swedes, and, that marching into Franconia in Germany they were at hand to lift the war. We know also that in the year 1753 thirty thousand of the same troops were raised from the extremities of the north, by the king of England, to protect Hanover,

and to carry on the war against France. But, at that time, the influence of our ally was not so extensive at the Ottoman Porte, nor did the same jealousy, and hostile spirit exist between the two empires of Turkey and Russia, as exists at present. It was not therefore possible to procure a diversion so easily on that side. The empire of Russia was then rising, but not so much the object of attention with the grand turk. Now, as France has been happy to mediate a peace between these two powers, she could more easily have contributed to encrease the burning of the war which had already burst out. This she would have done, had Russia discovered the least disposition to attend to the requisition of the court of Britain soliciting the body of troops, of which she had been led to entertain the hope.

The apprehension of the war with the Turks, which by the influence of France might be excited, and which might be kept alive against her, no doubt, weighed with the empress of Russia to reject the solicitation of the king of Great-Britain for a body of her troops to carry on the war in America. But the yet unpopulated state of her vast country also rendered it impolitic for this princess to send out her subjects from the empire. It would be inconsistent with her views, which are to pursue the plan of the great Peter, and by agriculture and commerce, and the cultivation of the useful arts, to raise her people to the civilization and politeness of her more southern neighbours. But, at the same time, we are not to be unmindful of what truth and justice require us to mention, that the great virtues of the empress would dispose her to turn away from the solicitation of the court of Britain to furnish troops against America struggling in a just cause. We have been made acquainted some time ago with her answer to the ambassador from this court, "that she would never tarnish the glory of her reign with the infamy of oppressing those who contend only for freedom, and justice." This was a noble sentiment, and worthy of an antient Greek or Roman lady. It does honour to human nature to find it in the breast of a sovereign who sways with an absolute command three thousand miles of an extent of empire, and has eighteen millions of subjects under her dominion. This princess is, indeed, a truly amiable woman. Born in Germany, she has had the earliest and the happiest education in all parts of philosophical, and solid literature. She herself is of a philosophical and elevated turn of mind; greatly learned in the old as well as modern languages, and by her humanity, and love of justice, worthy of every praise. She is deservedly esteemed an ornament to empire, even in an age, when a spirit of true philosophy is introduced at almost every court, and so many great characters fill the thrones of the several kingdoms: in an age when Britain is almost the only power which is not softened by the voice of reason; she alone remains black and silent, like the "Ile of Mist" in the song of Ossian. Philosophy has not yet reached her heart. It is to be found in the books of her sages, but not in the councils of her court. No wonder then that the empress was unwilling to send thirty thousand of her subjects, to serve the purposes of the ambition of this island, and to take lessons of cruelty under the orders of its generals in the campaigns in North-America. This would have thrown just so many of her subjects back from that point of civilization to which they are arrived; and would have taught them a spirit of devastation, and severe barbarism, which even the antient inhabitants of the northern countries never knew. It may be therefore said that her love of universal justice, attention to the interests of her empire, and a desire to preserve peace with Turkey, disposed this princess to reject the solicitation of Great-Britain. She knew that the influence of France was great at the Porte, and besides, the regard which this princess entertains for the mild, moderate, polite, and learned French nation, would lead her to avoid doing any thing to obstruct the object which the sovereign has in view, the establishment of these states.

The countenance of France checked America, and delivered us from all apprehensions of new treaties to procure troops from the German powers, or to call Russians from the margin of the frozen ocean. These have been the good effects of the countenance of France.

of the councils of our ally. Those resulting from the operations of her arms have been more obvious. On the sailing of the count d'Estaing from the coast of France, early in the year 1778; it was suspected by the enemy, and in this suspicion they were right, that his destination was the bay of Delaware. Orders were given to withdraw the fleet from that river, and to evacuate Philadelphia. This capital, the seat of congress, and the safest harbour in the states, was delivered out of their possession, and new strength given to our affairs at home, and lustre and dignity abroad. It was no small advantage to repossess this central city, convenient with its stores and wharfs, and happy in its buildings to receive the scattered families who on the approach of the enemy had quitted it, or those from other towns, likewise banished by the rude foe, and who, in different parts of the country, had not found it easy to subsist. It was no small foundation of éclat and brilliancy to regain it, as the ministry of Britain had here hoped to be able to give despotism to America. This great event, the evacuation of the city, was produced by the first fallent by the count d'Estaing, in his adventure from the harbour of Toulon.

On the appearance of the admiral on this coast, the predatory spirit of the enemy was checked, and their armed vessels and their fleets were fain to hide themselves in the harbour of New-York. Every port was thrown open from Charles town to Boston, and the commerce of the seas was free. Commodities of merchandise, and military stores of all kinds, were received from the islands, and from Europe; and we were no longer under any apprehension of extreme suffering in the article of cloathing for our army, which happiness we felt the more sensibly, as in the preceding winter near one fourth of our army, from a want of this article, had been unfit for duty while we lay at the Valley Forge.

The admiral, for some time, blocked up the fleet of the enemy in the harbour of New-York, and reduced them to great distress by the capture of vessels intended to supply them with provisions. In concert with the councils of the congress he sailed for Rhode-Island, to co-operate with general Sullivan, in his attempt to reduce the garrison of Newport. The enemy found it necessary to detach a considerable body of their army to relieve the garrison, and that they might be able to throw in the reinforcement, the fleet appeared off the harbour of Newport, and seemed to offer count d'Estaing battle. The count judging it of more consequence to give the enemy a blow by sea than to reduce half their forces on the land, drew out to attack them. The British admiral, as the count had expected, endeavoured to avoid the engagement. But this would have been impossible, as the count had already fallen in with the fleet, when a severe storm, from which both suffered greatly, obliged the one to retire to the port of Boston, and the other in a very shattered condition from the engagement and the tempest, to think himself happy in being able to make the harbour of New-York.

These operations of the count, though in some measure disappointed by the intervention of the will of providence, were, nevertheless successful to give a respite of security to the commerce of the states, and what was equally desirable, perfectly to prevent the enemy from making a campaign. The detachment which they were under the necessity of sending to reinforce the garrison of Newport, so weakened the main army under general Clinton at New York, that he found himself unable to take the field against general Washington for the whole season.

The sailing of the count d'Estaing for the West-Indies; and his success in those parts have been greatly serviceable to the general cause. I find my sentiments on this head well expressed in a Boston Chronicle July 19th, from which I shall beg leave to make the following extract. "The possession of Dominica and St. Vincent, by our allies the French, must be an heavy blow to Britain, and conduce much to establish the great objects of the late treaty of Paris, the independence and rights of the United States; additional to which, if we have the fairest prospect, it will probably conduce to an happy termination of the war. But there are not