

MARYLAND GAZETTE.

F R I D A Y, NOVEMBER 19, 1779.

PHILADELPHIA.

have been favoured with a translation of the following MANIFESTO, published by permission at Bourdeaux.

MANIFESTO,

of the motives of the conduct of the king of France relative to Great-Britain.

WHEN by permission of Divine Providence his majesty ascended the throne, France enjoyed the most profound peace. His majesty's first care was to manifest to every power the desire he had to render it permanent. All the world applauded this happy disposition; the king of Great-Britain in particular testified his satisfaction, and gave his majesty the most pointed assurances of a sincere friendship. This reciprocal of sentiments authorized his majesty to believe that the court of London was at last disposed to pursue a more just and friendly line of conduct than what it had done since the conclusion of the peace in the year 1763; and that a stop would be put to the arbitrary proceedings to which his majesty's subjects had been exposed since that time in the four quarters of the world. His majesty was the more persuaded that he could depend on the sincerity of the king of Great-Britain's protestations, as the revolution which has since taken place in America had then begun to make its appearance in a manner very alarming to Great-Britain. But the court of London considering that as fear or weakness, which was only the effect of his majesty's pacific disposition, had pursued its ancient system, and continued its vexatious acts of violence against the commerce and navigation of his majesty's subjects. His majesty, judging of the king of Great-Britain by his own intentions, laid before him with the greatest sincerity all his complaints, consistently expecting that they would be redressed. However, his majesty being informed of the embarrassments in which the affairs of North-America had involved the court of London, avoided to augment them by insisting in too strenuous manner on the reparations which the British ministry continually promised and evaded.

Such was the situation of the two courts, when the proceedings of the court of London forced its ancient colonies to fly to arms, in order to maintain their rights, their privileges and their liberties. All the world is acquainted with the epocha of this event; with the many ineffectual steps which the Americans took to regain the affection of their mother country; the manner in which Great-Britain rejected them; and lastly, the declaration of independence, which was and necessarily must have been the result.

The actual war in which the United States of America were necessarily involved with England, forced them to open a communication for disinterested commerce between them and the other European powers; his majesty would have betrayed the most essential interests of his kingdom, if he had refused to admit them into his ports, and had not allowed them a participation of the advantages enjoyed by all other Nations.

This just and wise conduct, practised by most of the commercial states in Europe, engaged the court of Great-Britain to take the liberty of making the bitterest complaints and representations, persuaded, no doubt, that the language of submission and haughtiness would be sufficient to obtain from France an implicit deference. To these indecent proceedings his majesty still replied with calmness, justice and reason. He informed the king of Great-Britain in the most explicit terms, that he was not, nor did he pretend to be, the judge of the quarrel between him and his ancient colonies; that it did not belong to him to change his cause; and that consequently nothing could oblige him to treat the Americans as rebels, to shut his ports against them, and still less to prohibit his own subjects from all kind of commerce or connection with them. His majesty nevertheless condescended as far as in his power to prevent the exportation of arms and ammunition, and even gave the most positive assurances, not only that he would not protect this commerce, but would leave Great-Britain at liberty to restrain according to the rules prescribed by the treaties and according to the laws and

customs of the seas, all his subjects who should contravene his orders. His majesty went still further; he observed with the most scrupulous attention the execution of the stipulations of the treaty of commerce signed at Utrecht, although Great-Britain had, at the time, refused to ratify every part of it, and daily infringed it. His majesty consequently gave orders that the American privateers should not be fitted out in his ports, that they should not sell their prizes nor remain in them beyond the time limited by the treaty above-mentioned. He also enjoined his subjects not to purchase the said prizes, and threatened the transgressors of his orders with the confiscation of their property. But all those acts of such remarkable complaisance, and so much fidelity in the strict observance of a treaty which he might have regarded as null and void, were far from satisfying the court of London, which pretended to make the king responsible for every transgression, while the king of Great-Britain himself, though assisted by a formal act of parliament, could not prevent his own merchants from supplying the colonies with merchandize, and even with ammunition.

It is easy to conceive how much a refusal to comply with the arbitrary pretensions of Great-Britain must have wounded the self-love of that power, and rekindled her ancient animosity against France. She was the more irritated as she began to experience a reverse of fortune in America, where every thing prognosticated an irreconcilable separation from her ancient colonies, and the inevitable losses that must ensue, and as she saw France availing herself of a part of that commerce, which she had imprudently driven away, and taking measures to render her flag respectable.

All these reasons together augmented the despair of the court of London, and induced her to cover the seas with privateers, under commissions of a truly offensive nature; to violate, in the highest degree, the faith of treaties; to interrupt, on the most frivolous and absurd pretences, the commerce and navigation of his majesty's subjects; to arrogate a tyrannical empire on the open seas; to prescribe laws arbitrary, unknown and inadmissible; to insult on many occasions his majesty's flag, and, in fine, to violate his territorial rights both in Europe and America, in the most insulting and outrageous manner.

If his majesty had been less influenced by the rights of humanity, if he had less valued the blood of his subjects, if instead of following the impulse of his own disposition he had only consulted his wounded dignity, he would not have hesitated a moment to have made reprisals and repelled the insult by force of arms.

But his majesty stifled his just resentment. He was willing to go to the utmost extent in the line of moderation, because he still entertained so favourable an opinion of his enemies, as to flatter himself that by such moderation and friendly remonstrances he could bring about a reconciliation which their own interest required. On these considerations the king laid before the court of London all his complaints, accompanying them with the most serious remonstrances, being determined not to suffer the king of Great-Britain to entertain the least doubt of his firm resolution to support his own dignity, defend the rights and interests of his subjects, and maintain the respect due to his flag.

But the court of London affected to pass over with contemptuous silence the greatest part of the remonstrances made by the king's ambassador and when it deigned to answer, made no difficulty to deny the most authentic facts, advancing principles contrary to the rights of nations, to treaties and marine laws, and to encourage judgments and confiscations contrary to all justice; at the same time refusing the right of appeal.

Whilst the court of London was thus putting the moderation and long suffering of his majesty to a severe trial, they were going on in their ports, with preparations and armaments which could not pass America for their object.

Their purpose was so manifest that his majesty could not mistake it, and from thence it became his indispensable duty to make preparations for preventing the evil designs of his enemy, and such depredations and insults as were committed in the year 1778.

In this situation of affairs his majesty, who notwithstanding his pressing interests, had until this time refused the offers made to him by the United States of America, found that he had not a moment to lose in forming connections with them. Their independence was declared and actually established; Great-Britain herself had in a manner acknowledged it, by suffering the continuance of acts which appertained to sovereignty.

Had it been his majesty's intention to deceive Great-Britain, and lead her into false measures by keeping her in error, he would have concealed with the utmost secrecy his engagements with his new allies. But the principles of justice which had guided his majesty, and the sincere desire he had to preserve peace, induced him to a more noble and sincere conduct; he thought it his duty of his own accord to enlighten the king of Great-Britain, by notifying to him the connection entered into with the United States.

Nothing could be more simple and less offensive, than the declaration his majesty's ambassador delivered to the British ministry.

But the council at St. James's did not view it in the same light, and the king of Great-Britain, after having broken the peace by recalling his ambassador, represented to his parliament his majesty's behaviour as an act of hostility, as a premeditated and formal aggression. Yet it would be unreasonable to imagine, that the resentment of the king of Great-Britain arose from his majesty's acknowledgment of the independence of the United States. That prince surely was not ignorant of all the examples of this kind which are found in the British annals, and even in those of his own reign. His resentment arose from another principle. The treaty of France frustrated the plan formed at London, of a momentary and precarious coalition with America, and disconcerted the secret projects which had influenced his Britannic majesty to such a measure. The true cause of the animosity, which the king of England manifested, and was communicated to his parliament, was, that he could not re-unite the Americans to his crown, and arm them against France.

Such an extraordinary conduct evidently demonstrated to his majesty what he had to expect from the court of London; and, if any doubt had still remained on this head, his majesty would soon have found proof in the imminence preparations which were redoubled with the most astonishing precipitation in all the British ports.

Such demonstrations, so manifestly directed against France, became a law to his majesty. He put himself in a condition to repel force by force. With this view he hastened the armaments in his ports, and sent a squadron to America under the command of count d'Estaing.

It is notorious that the forces of France were first in a condition to act. It was in his power to strike the most unexpected and sensible blow on Great-Britain. It shall ever be confessed that his majesty had entertained the thought, and that he was on the point of executing his projects, when the very name of peace stopped him. He was informed by his catholic majesty, that the court of London shewed some desire of a reconciliation, through the mediation of Spain. This monarch was not willing to appear as a mediator, until he had clear and positive assurance of being accepted, and without being informed of the principal objects which were to form the basis of the association.

His majesty received this overture, with a satisfaction proportioned to the desire he always had for the maintenance of peace. Although the king of Spain at first declared that it was indifferent to him, whether his mediation was accepted or refused; and though notwithstanding he had these proposals, he left the king his nephew at full liberty to act according to his own views, his majesty not only accepted the mediation, but immediately suspended the sailing of his fleet from Brest, and consented to communicate his conditions of peace, as soon as Great-Britain should in a positive manner signify her desire of reconciliation, on terms comprehending the United States of America, which France from principles of duty as well as inclination could not abandon.

[For the remainder see the last page.]