

MARYLAND GAZETTE

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T H E treaty which we have before us is admired by the whole world. To use the language of the old prophet, "a new thing is seen in the earth." A court quitting that boundary of selfishness which so long had marked the policy of princes, has acted with the wisdom and benevolence of an antient patriarch. Abraham himself, in his agreement with the "sons of Heth" for the cave of Machpelah; or, in his delivering up the spoils rescued from the four kings, to the prince from whom they had been taken, discovered, in the one case, not more uprightness, and, in the other, not more generosity, than has been shown by France to America in the articles of this treaty. In return for every advantage of a participation of our commerce, she has "weighed" an ample compensation in the freedom of her-commerce, "which we shall enjoy without inequality of duty, import or custom." Of these our possessions, which she has in great measure rescued from the king of Britain, she has not been willing to retain a foot of territory. It has been her language, "I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldst say I have made France rich." Her object single and alone has been to accomplish that which is declared to be the "essential and direct end" of the alliance.

It is declared to be the "essential and direct end" of the alliance to "maintain effectually the liberty, sovereignty and independence of these United States, as well in matters of government as commerce." That it is so in spirit as well as in profession, is evident from the treaty. There is no other object which the wit of man can fix upon as proposed by it. It is not the guarantee of territory on our part to France, the restriction of commerce to her shores, the payment of a subsidy, nor, on her part, is it even the ambition of superior interest in our councils for the war. The "cause" is "common" and our councils equal. "His majesty of France and the United States are to aid each other mutually with their good offices, their councils and their force, according to the exigencies of conjunctures, as becomes good and faithful allies."

That the independence of the States is the sole and simple object of France is evident from her councils. Why was it that she used her whole interest with the emperor, whose sister is the queen of France, and with the king of Prussia, who is her old and natural ally, to bring them to a compromise of differences relative to the succession of Bavaria, but, that by preventing a general war upon the continent, in which it was not impossible but that she might be directly engaged, she might have it in her power to attend solely to the requisition of the States and to draw forth her whole resources in a naval war. She could propose to herself advantages from a general war upon the continent; for, as she is allied to Sweden and to Prussia, and by contiguity and marriage with almost every power of Europe, in the general conflagration, she could hope to snatch Hanover and any of the German principalities favouring to England, and make interest sufficient to be suffered to retain them by consent of all. But these advantages which the might propose she easily rejected, and employed her whole skill in the most refined but just policy to allay debates, and conciliate peace.

That our independence is her great object is evident moreover, from the actual operations of her arms. The first expedition of her fleet under count d'Estaing was to these coasts, where she hoped, by co-operating with general Washington, to strike an effectual blow, and reduce the enemy to reason. Had extension of dominion been her object, she would have ordered this fleet to the West-Indies, where she would have had the earliest opportunity of attacking those islands unapprised, unprepared, and undefended. She would have taken easily every island which has since cost her time, men and money to reduce. Had she chosen to make her conquests in another quarter, she would have sailed to the banks of

Newfoundland, where the British vessels on the coast, and the fish drying on the banks, would have been an easy prey; and every island and possession in that quarter would have been added to St. Pierre and Miquelon, and made a part of the dominion of his most Christian Majesty; or she would have early bent her course to the shores of Africa, and reduced the British settlements on the river Senegal and along the whole gold coast, where the miserable inhabitants should no longer rake the soil for that dust which must supply the treasury of Britain; and enable her to wage a future war; or the fleet of France, passing every shore of Africa and turning round the cape, might have sailed to the East-Indies, not only to prevent the fall of Pondicherry, but to reduce the garrisons and settlements on every point of land and every island on that continent, and to turn the whole of the East-India trade, which is the source of the wealth of nations, into her own hands. But neglecting these objects, she fitted out the Count with twelve ships of the line for the Delaware, with a view to surprize the fleet of the enemy in that river, and by co-operating with general Washington, to reduce the British force to a capitulation, and by one masterly and bold stroke to put an end to the war, and establish the independence of the States at once. Disappointed in this hope by the tediousness of the voyage, previous advice of the destination of the fleet having been received by the enemy, and afterwards unsuccessful by reason of the storm, and obliged to rest in the harbour of Boston, the enemy were reinforced, and it became advisable, both for the convenience of our commerce and to distress the enemy, to draw off to the West Indies, where most vulnerable, as we have already hinted, they would most sensibly feel damage, and from whence, should an opportunity present itself, it might be convenient to return to attack their fleets upon our coasts or to block them up in any of our harbours. Thus in every expedition and manœuvre of the fleets of our ally, and in every operation of her arms, it is evident that the only thing proposed by her is, to reduce the enemy to reason, and the acknowledgment of our independence.

The powers of Europe are sensible of this, and hence it is that they have given no interruption to the views of France in the course of this debate. It is their interest that our empire, which constituted a main foundation of the British grandeur, should be dismembered from it; and that our commerce, which had been restricted to her shores, should be detached and left free and open to the whole world. They, as well as France, had felt the triumph of the British flag waving with haughty tyranny on every sea; they, as well as France, had seen, with an unwilling eye, the commerce of a great part of the western world concentrated to the shores of Britain. It was equally the interest of the powers of Europe, to reduce the one and to share the other. It only remained to be considered, who it was that would undertake to step forth and to strike the first blow. France alone had it in her power to do what the others, singly, dared not to attempt, and what, combinedly they were not willing to propose: but our independence was the only object which, consistent with their own interests, they could propose; and France, in effecting this, labours for the whole of Europe. In this case will they be disposed to obstruct her measures? It would be to contravene their own advantage and resist their own hopes. It has been shewn to be an argument of the uprightness of the views of France in her conduct to America, that our enemies, the British ministry and parliament, have not been able to assign a single article in the treaty, into which she has entered with us, as unequal or insidious; it will also be an argument of the uprightness and the just views of this kingdom, that the powers of Europe, whose ministers are at her court, and who have the best intelligence of every measure and of every counsel, are fully satisfied with her intentions; and Britain has not been able, as is acknowledged by lord North in the house of commons, to form an alliance with one of these powers; for even Russia, from whom he most expected it, is unwilling to make the least engagement of this nature. The amity of these powers with France, and that pleasure which they have expressed for

her victories, (victories obtained in their behalf, but not at their expence) is a full evidence that they are persuaded of the uprightness of her views, and that her object is not the aggrandisement of herself, but singly and alone, that which is the equal interest of them all—the independence of America.

Our independence will appear to be an object not unworthy of the councils and the arms of France, if we consider, that besides the reduction of the power of Britain, and the sharing of our commerce, it is acquiring to herself immortal honour. What can be more glorious to a nation than to be founder of a young empire, that will one day be the seat of science and the arts, and the rival of the free States of the old world? Men take a pleasure in erecting buildings even of wood and stone, because they are the works of their own hands. But they feel a nobler pleasure in doing good to men. For wood and stone, and the ornament of carved work is dumb, but the mouth of the grateful person shall speak his benefactor's praise. Why is it that Mæcenus of Rome, and the Medici of Tuscany, and young prince Henry of Portugal, are heard of with so much reputation in the world? It is not so much for any thing they have done in literature or arms, as on account of that patronage which they afforded to men of talents and of virtue. Sir Philip Sidney is described by the writers of his age as the most perfect model of an accomplished gentleman. His praises have been transmitted with advantage to posterity, because, says the historian Hume, "the credit which he possessed with his queen was wholly employed in the encouragement of genius and literature." Why may not a nation as well as an individual find a recompense in the praises consequent upon a generous action? It is the happiness of the deity himself to give life to beings, to see a world starting to existence, and to cause it to improve and to shine before him.

We may believe that a principle of this nature actuated France; for it is the genius of the nation to be taken more with a prospect of honour than a prospect of advantage. Hence it is that she has made such generous exertions in our favour, which it is not probable that any hope of profit could have drawn from her. There is a life and romance in the thought of honour, to which the groveling pursuit of wealth can never rise. France has yet more of the old crusading and heroic spirit than any other power of Europe. I had said in a former paper, that it might have been her natural language to our commissioners at Paris, soliciting attention to the object of their embassy, that "the whole French nation had not taken upon herself a vow of knighthood to go through the earth to rescue fair ladies, and to rid the world of monsters." Nevertheless, I may in truth say, that she has in some measure risen to this character of ancient and heroic chivalry. The principles of her conduct towards us are generous, and her exertions have been great, and surpassing common expectation. They resemble the achievements of the noble knights of St. John of Jerusalem in their expeditions to the holy land.

France, in this cause, has stood forth the champion of Europe, and every power on the continent is disposed to give her due praise. America, whom she has principally engaged by her kind offices, will not be wanting in correspondent feelings of affection. The nation is beloved by us, and every name from that kingdom is received amongst us with honour and respect. The prince, whom we consider as the source of every kind act, is spoken of in America with a degree of enthusiasm to be found only amongst a free people, whose feelings are strong, and whose affections are sincere. Every one must remember with what undisturbed sincerity his majesty's birth day was celebrated some time ago among us, when the oldest age was not tardy to behold from windows and balconies the display of fireworks on that occasion; and when the name of Louis XVI. was familiar in the mouths of our youngest children. Every one will remember this with pleasure, more especially when he is informed that to all what this prince has already done for us, he has lately added a farther obligation, in offering to guarantee a loan which is now about to be negotiated for the use of these

† Jeremiab. Article 11.