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HAVING been, for some time, diverted from my course, to take a view of some particular matters, I now return to that which is the more general subject of these papers, the alliance of the States with France.

The abbe Mably observes, "that it is not so easy as one may suppose, to give a good form to a treaty, which embraces many objects. How many plenipotentiaries, says that judicious writer, have well deserved the reputation which they have acquired, and yet have failed in this work! He is at a loss to follow them; no order in their plans, no thread which connects the particulars; all is thrown out at random; the reader who would mean to understand, must begin by endeavouring to, set in order a chaos, and something he will end, by seeing that he does not understand that which he had conceived he did understand. Such confusion in a treaty infallibly announces, that the ministers have negotiated at hazard, and without having any certain and precise ideas of the affairs with which they were entrusted. Some are willing to impress on their treaties that character of finess and subtlety, which they have employed in the course of their negotiation. They avoid the proper term, even when they have no interest to avoid it; they affect obscurity, and speak nothing fully out. We must divine their meaning, and yet cannot flatter ourselves that we shall be able to divine it. They tell you of a minister of Italy, who boasted with much self-approbation, that he had never spoken, in a critical conjuncture, but in such a manner that it might be interpreted in either way. Ambassadors cannot dress an article, without inserting in it some superfluous clause; and they prove, by this, that they do not understand the nature of which they treat. Frequently little matters are inflated by them, their vanity leading them to consider these as important objects; they pretend that their negotiations will acquire the more majesty, and they do but discover the littleness of their own minds."

So far the judicious abbe: And without doubt, there is a great force of truth in these words; for, to make an able negotiator, it is requisite that he understand the commercial and territorial interests of the respective States; what it may be necessary to acquire, to give stability and safety to his own cause; what it may be proper to cede, in order to remove suspicion and jealousy from the minds of the enemy; and what may be the interests and the sentiments of the neighbouring powers, with regard to the stipulations of the treaty. Nor is it enough to comprehend the present interests and views of the several States, but also to perceive the springing and possible interests that may exist in future, so as to adjust the articles of the treaty with regard to these, and to lay the foundation of a general and lasting concord. When these are understood, it is requisite to be able to condense the ideas, and to bring them clearly into one point of view; to give paucity, and at the same time arrangement to the articles. For, as an army drawn up in order, whether in square, wedge, or in column, or with wing and main battle, can be taken in by the most simple eye, and, as in the discourse of an orator, the arguments placed in their proper order, are more clearly perceived by the minds of

the audience, so in any treaty, a noble outline and just order is requisite, that it may be comprehended by the most simple nation.

The language of the treaty is also worthy of attention. For, as in contracts between individuals, a term not known to the law, or a dubious expression, may be the foundation of expensive lawsuits between the parties, so in a compact between nations, the ambiguity of a single phrase may give rise to long contentions. In the treaty of Aix la Chappelle between France and England, an article relative to the limits of their possessions in North-America had this expression, "That all things should be upon the same footing they were, or ought to be, before the war. Their words, ought to be, which inadvertently had crept into the article, seemed fair and reasonable in themselves, but, when each party came to apply them, they had different ideas of what ought to be, and to determine this was the subject of a new war, which, as it turned out, not less than ten years, and the blood of thousands shed on both sides, was able to extinguish.

I have considered with attention those treaties which subsist between France and these States, and I find them drawn up in a manner very matterly. The ministers appear to have understood, to the most minute particulars, the interests of France and of these States; and we know that a perfect knowledge is the foundation of what is excellent in every performance of the mind. The poet tells us, that "good sense is the principle and foundation of good writing;" and, "that if we are masters of our subject, we shall be able to find out apt expressions;" and St. Luke tells us, that he undertakes to write his gospel, "because he had perfect knowledge of these matters."

The affairs of America and France were well understood by those concerned in drawing up these treaties. The plan is extensive and comprehends every possible interest of the two nations, not only for the present, but for the future time. The ideas are precise, with regard to these interests. The order is luminous; the language is unambiguous and clear. I do not find one term, on which the wit of man, serving the purposes of his dishonesty, can raise a dubious construction. This will appear to the world to constitute no mean part of the excellence of the stipulations; for while it reflects honour on those who were engaged to draw them up, it has laid the foundation of a harmony which may be perdurable. There can be no debate between the spirit and the letter of the treaties; and the minds of men being perfectly satisfied with regard to the intention of them, will be disposed to observe, with good faith, the alliance which they have established.

THE HONEST POLITICIAN.

Sapere est, scds scribendi Principium & finis. Hor. Sat.

Si leba potentes erit res, Verba non invita sequatur. Hor. Ar. Po.

CHARLES-TOWN, South-Carolina, Oct. 26.

LAST Thursday evening, the honourable Major-general Lincoln, commanding the troops in the Southern department, returned here from the Southward.

Last Sunday arrived here from Cape Francois, the brig Content, captain Williamson; sloop Good-Intent, captain Allen; and sloop Family-Trader, captain Stiles.

Several vessels arrived lately at the cape distressed, in a gale of wind, which happened about the middle of last month, one of whom had taken up and brought in the crew of a vessel from New-York for Halifax. Captain Nicholson; in a vessel from Philadelphia, arrived lately at the Mole in a shattered condition, having lost all his masts, and was obliged to throw his guns overboard, in the above gale of wind.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 6.

Extract of a letter from Mr. Hendrick Hoop, burg-master of the city of Amsterdam, to his friend in Connecticut, dated July 13, 1779. Notwithstanding I have had little opportunity to convince you of my real esteem and affection for you, I have however often wished, that God may conduct and save you, and by his assistance may be the means to promote the happiness and prosperity of our dear country, with that of the Thirteen United American States. How rejoiced shall I be, if I can contribute any thing to it: I knew no greater joy on earth, or more agreeable rest for my soul, than when the Almighty enables me to promote the happiness of my fellow-creatures, under whatever climate they might be born.

It is not impossible to imitate the deity, from whom we have received all, more than to sacrifice joyfully life and property, for the destruction and breaking of the slavish ties, and to preserve our posterity from slavery. North-America, as long as the world lasts, can glory, that in her are found such men, as are endued with wisdom, knowledge and bravery, to procure to a numerous nation, and by nature blessed extensive country, the greatest treasure on earth, I mean liberty, so as to proclaim without fear of the inquisitions, GOD only is our KING! That king of kings, I hope, shall further conduct the American heroes by his spirit, and preserve them from all misfortunes. Here are my prayers and wishes, assure those noble souls, of my name, who justly may be called the fathers of their country. In a little while than all the nations of the earth acknowledge the independence of North-America: while the English are disabled to have their commands obeyed; they shall be deprived of people and money, and compelled to make peace with the powers they are at war with, &c. &c."

We have the greatest reason to expect, that by the multitude of friends amongst all ranks of people in the different provinces of the United Netherlands, especially by the open protectors of liberty in the city of Amsterdam and other places that they will over-balance any prejudicial resolutions of such provinces as have not feeling enough to maintain their own liberty, much less that of the North-American States. A friend to the country observes, that it is a matter much commendable to all merchants of the United States of America, who are trading to Holland, to examine into the characters of their correspondents there, so that the sweet engagements of trade and commerce should not fall into hands who do not deserve it; as these are as well Tories in Holland, as in America. For the sake of justice we can assure the public, that Mr. John De Neuville and son, a mercantile house in Amsterdam, has been from the beginning active and friendly to the American cause, from pure motives of its justice; and the Americans have always met with comfort there; that worthy gentleman has even ordered from time to time his friends in England to have the American prisoners assisted with very considerable sums of money.

On the 24th of August, the brig Amsterdam, an American vessel, commanded by captain Magee, laying at anchor in the Stee, was visited by a Holland admiralty vessel, the officers of which went on board of captain Magee, and the American flag was saluted by them with all honour. The ship Henry, captain Burk, from Boston for this port, was drove ashore on Brigantine Beach, in a gale of wind last week: the people, cargo, rigging and materials are saved, but the vessel is lost.

Est illud by a letter from a gentleman of undoubted character and veracity, to his friend in this city, dated at Allicans, Sept. 21, 1779.

The combined fleets of France and Spain, are composed of 66 ships of the line, besides frigates, bomb-ketches and fire-ships, well manned and provided with every necessary: they are in pursuit of admiral Harty's fleet, composed of 41 ships of the line, besides frigates, who avoid an engagement with such a superior force. They have nevertheless taken four British ships of 64 and 74 guns.

There are 500 transports ready for sea, on the coast of Brittany, who are to take on board 60,000 choice troops in order to land them in England.

Gibraltar is besieged by 20,000 picked Spanish troops, who are advancing their trenches; that port is also blockaded by a squadron of the