

MARYLAND GAZETTE.

F R I D A Y, JANUARY 31, 1780.

OF THE MARYLAND GAZETTE. NUMBER XXV.

THE war at the beginning of the present century, had for its object, on the part of the allies, the preservation of the balance of Europe. For it was apprehended, that should the Duke of Anjou, grandson of Louis XIV. be placed on the throne of Spain, it would be to cast an accession of force to the house of Bourbon, as would enable it to overthrow the liberties of all the neighbouring states.

How happy would it be for mankind, if the spirit of politics had but its reasonable fears; or, that the passions concealing themselves under its mask, did not oftentimes affect false tenours, in order to find a pretext to sacrifice all to its caprice! Never had alarms less foundation than those of the allies. If the union of France and Spain was an unhappiness for them, why did they bind the knots closer by their threats? If Philip V had inherited, without opposition, the provinces of Charles II, we should not have seen the French in the forests of the Low Countries; nor in the ports of the Spanish Indies. The two nations, perceiving less the necessity of being united, would, from thence, have conducted themselves according to their antient interests. Louis XIV, of an age now advanced, had not that ardour which inspires the love of war; he had experienced that in making efforts to augment his power, he had, in effect, reduced it. He knew so well the weakness of the dominions of his grandson, to give himself up to the projects of a vast ambition. In spite of that ascendant which Louis might have had over Philip V, Europe had nothing to fear for the present moment, and she might be well assured, that she would not find in their successors, those sentiments of mutual friendship and regard, which she dreaded, nor that union which had reigned amongst the heirs of Charles V and of Ferdinand I.

By the very situation of their possessions, the two branches of the house of Austria could not aggrandize themselves; the one at the expence of the other; every source of division was taken away, and the closest alliance could only make them to be respected by their enemies. It was not the same with regard to the two branches of the house of Bourbon. Their neighbourhood on the side of the Pyrenees, and still more on the side of the Low Countries, must have exposed them to frequent debates and continual suspicions. Bound, the one by the other, and, of consequence, not having the same interests, they could not have been long friends, or France would have abandoned the projects of ambition which had been objected to her, and with which her neighbours were so groundlessly alarmed. In the one and the other case, the raising the Duke of Anjou to the throne of Spain, would have become useless to the aggrandisement of France. The United Provinces had no need of a barrier; their commerce, and that of England, was in safety; and the empire preserved all its rights and its independence, if the French had contented not to trouble their neighbours any more. In supposing, on the contrary, a passion to extend themselves, and to make conquests, Spain must necessarily have taken up the same line of policy which she had pursued under the Austrian princes, and must have connected herself as closely as ever with the states general, England and the Empire.

In demanding for the emperor the dominions which the Spaniards possessed in the Low Countries, and in Italy, the allies, it is true, would have aggrandized the power of the court of Vienna, but they would have augmented still more considerably the power of France. If the Spanish monarchy had not suffered any dismemberment, her first object always would have been to recover that which she had lost since the peace of the Pyrenees. In suffering, on the contrary, Italy and the Low Countries to fall from her hands, it becometh her to forget her old disgraces, and to be occupied with the new. It was proper that she should consider as her enemies the court of Vienna, England and the United Provinces, who had conspired her. It was requisite, as a necessary consequence, to throw herself into the arms of France. From thence these two powers would have

the same enemies, and the same interests, and France would possess, in some sort, all the strength which the allies have not been able to take from the court of Madrid. Let it be examined attentively, if it was not really to serve Spain, to limit her to itself, and to take away from her the foreign possessions, which had been a principal cause of her decline. Let it also be examined attentively, if it was in reality to augment the strength of the court of Vienna, to give it Italy and the Low Countries. Shall we always believe that the power of a state depends on the possession of a province, more or less? When once it possesses a certain extent of territory, to what purpose serve those provinces scattered on the one side and on the other, and which cannot mutually assist each other? It is to multiply frontiers, enemies, affairs, and embarrassments.

If they had set off from this point of view in the negotiations which were carried at the Hague, they would have spared to Europe one of the most cruel wars with which she has been afflicted. But an unjust hatred blinded all minds; a sort of routine took the place of policy; and all the world trembled for the ruin of a system of balance, of which there was not one person that had any just idea. They believed that this balance ought to be established on an equality of power between the house of Bourbon and the house of Austria, and that all would be lost if the one took an ascendant too considerable over the other; but this was a false principle. A thousand examples prove, that men are not friends from being of the same blood; an hostile may then acquire kingdoms for her princes, and not be more formidable to Europe. It is still further evident, that the dominant power may be brought down; the rival power may decline; both may ruin themselves at once, or successively, and take the place, the one of the other, and not in the mean time cause it to follow, that the liberty of other states shall be exposed to any danger; there will result from this only new interests, new alliances, and new ties. Shall we fear that there will be a great power, and that there will not, at the same time, spring up a rival power? It would be a fear the most ridiculous. These have been the reasonings of an able French writer; and Mrs. Macaulay, an English lady, reflecting on this subject, tells us, "that England was engaged in war for the idle pretence of fixing a balance of power, which in all probability would have been better settled if she had never interfered."

France, in this war, had neither the ministers nor the generals which had been heretofore the soul of her success; since the peace of Ryswick, she had not established any order in her finances; her people were exhausted, and she could not count much upon the allies which she had made to defend the rights of Philip V. It was evident that Portugal, the natural ally of France, while Spain belonged to a prince of the house of Austria, would become that of England and the United States, from the advancement of the Duke of Anjou to the throne. France, for many years before, was not so closely united to Sweden as she had been, and besides, the troubles which threatened the north, did not permit her to afford any assistance.

No one is ignorant of the losses of Louis XIV in this war, they were such, that he saw himself obliged to seek peace on the most severe conditions, which were nevertheless refused, and scarcely did the ministers consent to make one sacrifice, when new pretensions were advanced. "I have more evidence," says that monarch, in a letter which he writ to the governors of the provinces of his kingdoms, a readiness and desire to dissipate the apprehensions which my enemies affect to entertain of my power, and my designs, the more do they multiply their pretensions; so that now by the progress of new demands to the first, they have equally given me to see that their intention is only to extend themselves at the expence of my crown, the states neighbouring to France, and to open an easy view to penetrate into the interior of my kingdoms, as long as it shall be convenient for their interests to commence a new war. That which I claim and would be willing to accomplish, would not be yielded, even when

I should have consented to all the propositions which they have made; for they fix, at two months, the time in which I ought, on my part, to execute the treaty, and during this interval they pretend to oblige me to give up those places which they demand of me in the Low Countries, and in Alsace, and to raise those of which they demand the demolition. They refuse, on their part, to lay themselves under any obligation, but simply to cease hostilities until the first of August, reserving the liberty of acting then by the force of arms, if my grandson, the king of Spain, shall persist in his resolution to defend the crown which God has given him, and to perish rather than abandon a faithful people; who, for nine years, have acknowledged him their lawful king. A suspension of this nature, more dangerous than war, would throw peace at a distance, rather than advance the conclusion of it; for it would be not only necessary to continue the same expence for the support of my armies, but the time of the expence being expired, my enemies would attack me with the new advantages which they had drawn from the places where myself had introduced them; at the same time that I had demolished those which serve for ramparts to some of my frontier provinces. I pass over in silence the insinuations which they have made to me, to join my troops to those of the league, to force my grandson to descend from his throne, if he does not consent voluntarily to live from this time without possessions, and to reduce himself simply to the situation of a private person." When we consider these circumstances of the monarch, and the spirit of the allies, of which England was the chief, we must be sensible, notwithstanding our antient prejudices in her favour, that the British nation has been, at all times, like the animals and especially the mastiffs of her island, fierce and untractable in temper; warlike indeed, but never satisfied in exulting over a vanquished enemy. It is not necessary to be a Frenchman, says a writer of that nation; it is sufficient to be a man, to feel indignation for that fierce policy; and long ago there was not one person in Holland who had not had a soul generous enough to condemn it.

It was not until after many propositions and fruitless negotiations, on the part of France, that peace was finally concluded at Utrecht, April 13, 1713. A destructive war was thus finally composed, not owing to any moderation on the part of the allies, but to a change in the ministry of England. The duchess of Marlborough by some unguarded word, had lost the favour of her mistress queen Anne, and the lady Masham, by some other word expressed in a different way, had happened to please her. It is enough to make one despite the world, and to set down knowledge and ability, and even virtue, as empty names, when we consider that things are so constituted, that it may be in the power of the self love and caprice of one human mind, to give peace or war to ten nations.

THE HONEST POLITICIAN.

CHATHAM, December 21.

BY intelligence from New-York we learn that their maritime force at that post, consists of five ships of the line and six frigates; that 2000 troops are ready to sail to the southward under sir Henry Clinton, and 2000 under lord Cornwallis, their destination uncertain, but it is thought to amuse general Washington; yet, from an apprehension that count d'Estaing is on the coast, the sailing of the fleets are retarded.

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 4.

The following letter was found on board a vessel lately taken on her passage from St. Augustine to Antigua.

Copy of a letter from major-general Prevost, to the honorable vice-admiral Byron, dated at Savannah, in Georgia, the 9th September, 1779.

S I R,
As it may be of consequence to his majesty's service, that you should have every possible intelligence of the motions of the French fleet, I think it my duty, by this express, to acquaint

Ab. Mab. † Lett. to doc. Wil. Ab. Mab.