

[XXXVth Year.]

T H E

[No. 1727.]

MARYLAND GAZETTE.

F R I D A Y, FEBRUARY 18, 1780.

For the MARYLAND GAZETTE.

IT may be a just remark, that more enterprizes perish in the last stage of their progress, than in any other. The reason is, that men too soon believe themselves to have attained their purpose, and remit the vigour of their exertions. It may be the case with us in our exertions for the establishment of the independence of America. These are more remiss than they, formerly, have been, because we have flattered ourselves that the work is completed; that the enemy are discouraged, having become sensible that it is not in their power to reduce us; that a negotiation will be set on foot this winter, and peace infallibly concluded before the spring.

Our enemies, on the other hand, are not so sanguine; or, if they look for a peace at all, they expect it to begin with the relinquishing our independence. Their hopes are now higher than they have been for some time, both from their prospect of affairs in Europe, and on this continent. This is evident from their gazettes, in which, though the minister caules many things to be inserted, yet in these, the spirit of the people evaporates freely, and we can form a good judgment of the temper of the nation, their hopes or fears, their confidence or despondency, their thoughts of peace or resolution to continue war, as it is conveyed through this channel. A paragraph from a London paper of October 27, 1779, is as follows:

"The powers friendly to this kingdom have not opposed themselves to the house of Bourbon in the war in which she has taken part with our rebellious colonies, and the reason is, because our solicitations have not been so frequent nor so pressing as they might have been. Trusting to our strength solely, and to the recruits from Germany, we had hoped to have crushed the rebellion, and to have brought France to repeat of her perfidiousness; hence it is that we have made but slight applications to the States General, to Russia, and to other powers. It has been only during this summer, since the undecided contest of count d'Estaing in the West-Indies, and the inequality of the fleets in the channel, that it has appeared, that our maritime force is not so respectable as to awe our enemies with its usual superiority; but which, from the efforts that are making by lord Sandwich, the vessels that are building in the docks, those that are to be purchased from the states of Holland, and from other powers, there is reason to believe, we will, in a short time, be able to do. No one would have believed that France, in her exhausted state, could have fitted out a fleet so numerous in the period of a few years; and this, notwithstanding the petulance of those in opposition, must be a sufficient apology for the officer at the head of the marine, in hesitating to put the nation to the expence of a greater naval armament, which perhaps might not have proved necessary. But after all, affairs are far from being desperate. The vague notion has prevailed, that the power of Europe will well to the independence of America, and that for this reason they have con- nived at the policy of France and Spain in their proceedings. This is a mistake; it is less owing to their regard to the independence of America, than to the money of France, that these powers have been neutral so long. France has done more by her money, for half a century past, than by her arms. It is well known, that at this present time, her money has found its way to every court, and has kept them back from executing the real purpose of their hearts, in behalf of this island. This money cannot always last, nor will these powers always stand out; France has been under the necessity of borrowing twenty millions since the commencement of the war, to lend it to the Americans. The States General and the empress of Russia, not able to stand out any longer, against express treaty, will furnish the stipulated vessels and the number of troops, and it is to be hoped the next campaign will open with every prospect of success, and bring about a speedy termination of the war."

A paragraph in a paper of November 18, received by the way of the West-Indies, is as follows: "The French king begins to grow sick of the congress. He is now, as his countrymen say,

in malade in these politics; it is to be hoped it will cure him of that Don Quixotism so natural to rude ages and young minds, of setting nations free. Feeble as the countenance and protection of this monarch may be, it is from thence the rebellion derives its chief strength, and if this can be drawn off by the interposition of other powers, the independence of America will soon become dependent, and so many of the American heroes become dependent, that on "yonder mountains" there will not be bought sufficient from which they shall be independent."

It is pleasant enough to see these effusions of barbarism and malignity, especially when we know that they are harmless. But, without doubt, the king of England will leave no stone unturned to excite the powers of Europe against our ally, nor do we know what money and intrigue may be able to produce. It is the general advantage of these powers to establish our independence, but by cession of territories, in Europe, in the Indies, in Africa, and in America, we cannot tell what Britain may be able to accomplish. Mankind are more moved by present profit, than by remote, though great advantages. Whether the island of Great-Britain may be able to augment her marine proportionably to the exertions which, on her part, will be necessary, if the perfervers in her diabolical intention of cutting the throats of the people of this country, I cannot tell. But be these things as they may, it is our business, to consider what may happen, and not to remit our exertions, because we have contended five campaigns, and are not yet subdued.

Equal encouragement appears to be taken by the enemy from the situation of our affairs on the continent, as is evident from a paragraph in the Whitehall gazette, so late as the ad of November last, which is as follows:

"The rebellion in America perishes every day. Like a kite it has been supported with paper wings, but these have become too cumbersome, and the construction will soon drop. The army of the rebels, from the expiring of their temporary enlistments, and famine, and nakedness, and other causes, is reduced to 5000 men; their councils are degenerated, the militia is wholly neglected, the people having become tired of twirling about a rusty firelock. They have chased Monsieur Gerard from Philadelphia, and the new minister, the chevalier de la Luzerne, has been obliged to take up his residence at Boston; the bulk of the Americans cannot bear the alliance; and it is certain that they will in a short time, instruct the congress to break it off. All these circumstances promise a happy event to a new campaign, by which these deluded people will at length be brought to listen to reason."

That our councils are, in some degree, degenerated, is not impossible, if we consider that the first men have been called off to fill the executive branches of their respective governments; and that others, pursuing their own opinions in preference to that of the public, have become obnoxious. That our militia is neglected is also certain, and the observation of our enemies ought to be to us a memento of our duty. There is scarcely a firelock listed, nor are muster days attended to, from one end of the continent to the other. Where is that ardour for arms, that industry to be expert in the manual exercise and the field manoeuvres, which distinguished us at the beginning of the contest? It has departed, and has left nothing but the shadow of party politics and contention in its place. Does it not become the people of these states to emerge from these delinquencies, and to redress these evils? Let us begin at the source, not by reproaching public bodies, but by delegating the wisest and most capable men to serve us. We lay our hands across our breasts, and talk of peace, when verily there is no peace. At any rate it is the readiest way to obtain peace, to be prepared for war.

P A L I N U R U S.

* An expression of H. Laurens to governor Johnston.

To the PUBLIC.
THE policy, the delegates allege, depends on opinion; true, but if the opinion of the badness of the policy be founded on conclusive reasons, it must be admitted, that to confiscate

British property, in the manner they propose, must be bad policy. Whether this is really the case or not, will best appear from an examination of their reasons, in answer to that part of the senate's message which applies more particularly to the policy of the measure.

It is impolitic, say the delegates, to load their constituents with taxes, which they cannot raise without selling their property, and they think sound policy dictates the propriety of first selling that of their enemies. What, if the sale cannot be supported by the law of nations, the approved practice of the wisest and most civilized, and should, in the way proposed by the house of delegates, be contrary to our bill of rights, and the principles of the common law, would it then be good policy? May not this very measure heap heavier burthens on their constituents, if they should be taxed hereafter to repay the value of the property confiscated and applied? "But when once confiscated and applied, it cannot be restored." If a restitution of the identical property should be impossible, yet the value of it, I presume, may be paid to the present, or as they stile them, original owners; and this value must come out of the pockets of the people. The supposition is by no means inadmissible, even its probability, I think, may be supported by good reasons, and if so, the string of questions which immediately follow in their message, is as little to the purpose, as the song of Chivy Chate. That the other states have not confiscated British property, has been noticed in my first number, and that they confiscated the property of refugees to prevent its restitution, and not as a punishment for their treason, or enmity to their country, manifested by some unequivocal overt act, those states, I fancy, value their reputation too much, to admit. In opposition to the remark, "that want of resolution implies weakness, and from this timidity and half-way temper of our councils, the enemy may be encouraged to persevere longer than they otherwise would," I shall cite the sentiment of a judicious Roman, full as pertinent as the remark just quoted, "that counsels which at first view may appear crafty, or bold, are often difficult in the execution, and disastrous in the end." However, what is thought by one branch of the legislature to be an adherence to the principles of law, and of our constitution, should not be termed by the other timidity, although the opinion may be erroneous and too slightly taken up; if it be timidity, it is timidity on the right side, and no man, or body of men, need to blush at being stigmatized as timid, or fearful of doing wrong. But this timidity of the senate, from whatever motive it may have proceeded, is to have two surprising effects; it will encourage the enemy to persevere, and remind them of making that a preliminary, which might otherwise have escaped their notice. Here I do not know which to admire most, the very great penetration of the delegates, in making these wonderful discoveries, or the supposed forgetfulness of the enemy. They must indeed have very bad memories, to have forgot in so short a time, the solemn declaration of their last commissioners on this very subject. "If the property intended to be confiscated were to remain unalienated, and the bare suggestion might secure it to the (I presume I venture here to call them present, and not original) owners; it is possible (say the delegates) that the British court, to save appearances, might mention the matter; but when this property is applied and gone, that court will be entirely silent about it; having lost thirteen colonies, and the crown lands, it will not contend for an indemnification to retainers, and the disaffected from these states." To get rid of their importunity will be one inducement to that government for insisting on an article in the treaty of peace in their favour, and to hold out an encouragement to their partizans in any future revolution among their remaining colonies, will be another; France and Spain may not think the article quite so unreasonably as it appears to the delegates; nay, those powers may be well enough inclined to it, from one of the motives just mentioned; and it is presumed, France and Spain will have full as great a share in making a peace, as these states; even the latter would not act wisely in delaying that happy event, though only for six months, by objecting to such an arti-

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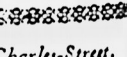
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