

THURSDAY, MAY 24, 1781.

For the MARYLAND GAZETTE.

THE charter of every citizen in a republic, to examine, censure or approve those entrusted with the powers of government; and the judicial, executive and legislative, are all subject to his inquisitorial jurisdiction. In a popular government, every man claims to be a politician, and though I am not acquainted with the great questions, which I have read of, and which have, for a century, engaged the attention of the wise politicians in Europe, the balance of trade, and the balance of power, yet I can plainly discover, that our great political machine is ill conducted, and that our affairs are reduced to a disgraceful extremity. We have neither money, or credit, and our rulers seem quite indifferent, and uninterested in the matter. They can truly say, we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and we have left undone those things which we ought to have done. To raise, feed, cloath, and pay, a respectable army, would be the most probable and effectual means, with the blessing of Providence, to defend our liberties, save our country from devaluation, and secure our independence. This cannot be effected without money (I mean the precious metals, gold or silver) or credit. Of specie, there is not sufficient within the thirteen states, and no laws can extract it out of the pockets of the owners. One ounce of public credit, is of more real value to a state, than a ton of gold. The credit of a government, like that of an individual, depends on its ability and integrity; if either is suspected, no temporary expedients will gain confidence, or induce the suspicious to entrust their property to its faith and honour. Public faith, once violated, like a lady's honour, cannot be restored; and even to be forgot the same remedies must be applied, time, penitence and reformation. Nothing but necessity, and that the most absolute and self-evident, can excuse a breach of public faith. Our affairs were very alarming, and our paper money in very low credit, before the resolve of congress of the 18th of March 1780. Many men were of opinion, that it was just and necessary for congress to adopt that measure; and some contended, that there was no breach of public faith. I ever was of a different sentiment. The congress emissions, compared with gold, in March 1780, were of the value of one for forty; they are at this time; one for eight hundred. The effects therefore of the measure, are visible to the meanest capacity; and it is observable that the whigs were the greatest sufferers by it. In five years the continental money depreciated forty for one, and in the last fourteen months, it further depreciated seven hundred and sixty for one. If necessarily be admitted to excuse congress, the same cause cannot be assigned for the breach of faith by our legislature. Their act of calling in our act of assembly and convention money, was an unnecessary and wanton violation of their plighted faith; dictated by passion, party, and faction. Vile calumnies were suggested, and the basest slanders circulated, to urge the credulous and weak to adopt a measure, from which we daily experience the most distressing and fatal consequences, and which, unless speedily removed, will prove the destruction of our cause, and the loss of our independence and freedom. This is the time for reflection, and a cool dispassionate consideration of our

past, and what shall be our future conduct. I hope the hour of our folly is past. The principle suggested for the exchange of our new paper dollar for forty old, was this; that the money had depreciated by common consent, and by the consent of the owners; and that no injury was done by giving them the value of the money in their hands. That this principle was false, might not be obvious to every one, but there is no man who did not readily discover, that it would equally apply to every future emission, and therefore at once all confidence in our government was pulled up by the roots. From what other cause has the state money depreciated? From what other cause have the people refused to lend their money, or property, to the state; though the premium offered was very liberal? The fund for the redemption of the state emission is unquestionably sufficient, and the property pledged will sell for more gold and silver than the £.50,000 issued on its credit; and yet it has already sunk more in value, in ten months, than the continental emissions in the three first years of the war. One silver dollar will this day purchase eight state dollars. It cannot be owing to the quantity, and we have no tender law, it can only flow from an universal want of confidence in our legislature. What a disgraceful, humiliating thought! The common people reason thus, if the late assembly and convention money, which the public passed as gold and silver, because it afterwards depreciated, the present, or some future assembly, may call in and exchange the new emission upon the same principle. If the rulers of any people are wise and virtuous, their actions will be prudent, just and honourable, and the people they govern will be esteemed, as possessing their virtues. It is an old, but true observation, that the people are generally to be judged of by the character of their governors. Some mode must be adopted to give a real, permanent value and credit to our paper money, or we shall be unable to recruit, or maintain our army. Confidence must be secured to the promises of our assembly, for on credit alone can we carry on the war. Can any situation be more disgraceful and dishonourable, than that the constituents will not give credit to the promises of their representatives? It might be justly concluded, that the people, in general, condemn their conduct. Indeed the very men who were so noisy and clamorous, and who were the most ignorant of the two houses, will not give credit to the new money, or receive it, but at the highest depreciation. Their insignificance alone can save them from the pen of the historian, who would otherwise brand them with the infamy they so justly merit. Our legislature must learn to be honest, at least appear to possess that virtue, before they can ever expect any reliance to be placed in their plighted faith or honour. Party, cabal and faction will ever destroy any state; union, wisdom, and integrity, can alone restore our affairs, and give confidence to government.

CENSURE.

THE conduct of the second Maryland regiment, at the action of Guilford, has been compared with the behaviour of the first, and various reasons assigned for its misconduct. It is reported that an officer of rank and reputation has imputed their misbehaviour to the want of officers, there being only eight to six companies. The late retreat of our

troops from before Camden is imputed to the same cause. If this be true, there must be a neglect of duty somewhere. A great number of our officers are within this state. The military character of our troops stands high, and ought to be preserved. Ought not the assembly to enquire into the above facts?
CIVILS.

SPAIN; Camp at St. Roch, Nov. 30.

ATRENCH or way of communication was begun on the night of the 23d, and continued every night since, to secure the passage of troops from the line to the new battery of St. Charles; the work has advanced 138 fathom already, notwithstanding the bad ground obliged the workmen to use fascines. The place keeps up a constant fire with cannon and mortars; the damage we have sustained amounts to 4 men killed and 6 wounded, and some workmen who have received contusions.

PARIS, Dec. 31. The declaration of war, by England, against Holland at first astonished us; but we now perceive it to be an act of despair; this power now plays "quit or double." It is more glorious for her, if she must sink, to sink under the weight of all Europe. We doubt not but she will procure present advantages by this rupture with Holland, but in the end she has one enemy more, who has great resources in her population and riches, will openly supply our marine, and by taking a Danish Squadron in her pay (as is reported) can destroy the commerce of Great-Britain in the north.

They speak of a treaty concluded and signed by the king of Prussia, Russia and France, to maintain the system of pacification by land, as they strove to establish it by sea.

LONDON, January 9.

Sunday last the admiralty office received a confirmation of the accident, which happened to the Thunderer of 74 and Stirling Castle of 64; they were lost in the terrible storm of which so much has been said, and will yet be said; commodore Walsingham was on board the Thunderer.

The Hollanders have lost many vessels, since the publication of our last manifesto; but they have so many thousands to lose, that they are not yet affected with this loss. Yet it is very possible and even very probable, that by force of repeated losses, the sensibility of the Dutch nation will be roused from its lethargy, and that the populace will then render us that justice which the states general have refused; we demand as reparation of the insult offered us by the treaty of Amsterdam with the Americans, but the punishment of the rash M. Van Berkell, a requisition as just as moderate.

According to a note given by the Dutch ambassador, in the course of the administration of the marquis of Rockingham, this nation had then in our funds 56 millions sterling; it appears from the most exact calculation, that since this epocha, it has placed there 13 millions more; it has then at this time 69 millions in our funds; an object of such importance for this republic, that the idea of war with us must needs carry terror into the bosoms of all its inhabitants.

Although 545 commissions against the Dutch have already passed the great seal, the demand for them is so great that the offices have scarce time to breathe.

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