

# MARYLAND GAZETTE

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1781.

To the PEOPLE of MARYLAND,



THE senate, and the house of delegates, having disagreed about the terms, upon which bills of the last emission ought to be received at the treasury, the law it is said, must take its course.

demption will then take place. Men of affluence are not always restrained by a sense of duty; nor are they by any means the most remarkable for sacrificing private interest to the public good.

property, unless he can procure them at a value inferior to the rate established at the treasury, and bring them in, before that rate can be altered—he will not pay them at all, at the rate of 4, or 3, or even 2 for 1, if he can by any other means make his payment; because he will conceive it more advantageous to reserve them till 1785, and convert them into gold and silver—As it is notorious, that British property was sold for 2 or 3 times the value, he can adopt no better method of saving himself from the consequences of an imprudent contract—But many purchasers will not exert themselves to make payment at all—they will rely on the generosity of the state to release them from a ruinous engagement—The legislature, "to punish their iniquity, to be consistent, and to show that it is determined to preserve its credit," must reject their petitions, an execution must issue at the stated time, and the money due on such bonds shall be levied in specie, or the said bills to the actual value thereof." Of specie, it is said (perhaps with truth) there are not 30,000 pounds in the state—Of bills there is not enough to pay for the property sold, if even taken at par—it is very improbable that the possessors of the bills will part with them at the discount of 2, 3, or 400 per cent. for property taken in execution, unless that property is sold amazingly cheap, or unless they disregard the plighted faith of government, and see the glaring impossibility of redeeming so many hoarded bills with gold and silver.

I am not disposed to cavil about the meaning of the words "actual value"—I am willing to adopt the general construction—but how is the actual value to be ascertained, since the act is by no means explicit with respect to the mode? The treasurer does not conceive himself authorized to assume the office of an arbiter between the government and its debtors—it would indeed be extraordinary if he did, as no legal authority can be constituted without words—There is fortunately a defect in the law, which I account for, partly from the extreme difficulty of adjusting a plan, and partly from a fond belief, that under such excellent provisions, the bills could not depreciate—the latter part of the hypothesis, although it does little honour to their discernment, must be admitted to protect the authors of the law from a very heavy charge; for if the treasurer receives 100 pounds in these bills for a debt of 50 pounds, it is evident, the state has sunk 50 pounds, without redeeming it, and the loss has fallen somewhere—Sagacious men may consider this operation of the law as only depriving speculators of their unlawful gains, and that depreciation is a convenient tax for discharging great part of the debt, without exciting the murmurs of the people—they may also perceive another peculiar excellence in this mode of taxation—the most respectable members of the community, the gentlemen of opulence, may contrive to escape the burthen, and even come in for a share of the profit—But if any man dare openly avow the principle, his heart is depraved as his understanding, and both are objects of contempt and detestation.

Receive the bills at par, and you will have many more interested in their depreciation—you will have all the purchasers of British property.—With all my heart—they will be interested in the same manner; as the buyers of every commodity brought to market are interested in keeping down the price—if the quantity is unequal to the demand, not all the combinations, or multiplied arts of the buyers, can diminish the price—the property assigned for the redemption of the bills, which has already been sold, amounts to more than the sum emitted.—The possessors of the bills are sensible of their advantage—they will be in a condition rather to impose, than receive terms, and nothing I conceive can prevent their commodity from continually rising in value.

Almost every man in the state is a possessor of the bills, and a great majority is *now* interested in their appreciation.—Very true—it was equally the interest of a majority to appreciate the old continental bills—the monster Opinion was against them, and the thing could not be done—Experience might by this time have convinced men, that opinion is not to be directed by the legislature—Of what effect have been tender laws, penalties, oaths, and associations? Every thing conveying the idea of constraint has made the matter worse—Opinion will be free, and, as it depends not upon the principles of reason, a politician can do no more than form a probable conjecture; if he finds himself deceived he should change his ground.—In the beginning of the month bills were at 4 for 1, at present they do not circulate—No body will touch them, unless he can get them at 3 or 4 for 1—Ought not these things to have some influence in deciding the important question between the two branches of the legislature?

Supposing the quantity of specie in the state not to exceed the sum just mentioned, no man in his senses will deny, that if a great part of these bills are hoarded, it will be impracticable to redeem them with gold and silver, unless these precious commodities should flow into the state through channels, which at present do not exist—there is then a necessity for taking away the inducement to hoarding, which must be practised so long as the general opinion depreciates the bills, and enterprising men dare speculate on the faith of government. I repeat it again and again—that by receiving at par you produce a competition, which, in the nature of things, cannot fail to restore "that value, which considered merely as promissory notes payable at a future day, they ought to bear"—this being done, where is the motive for laying them up. I am deeply interested in the business of appreciation—I have bestowed great attention on the subject, and can offer no plan equal to that proposed by the house of delegates—I have indeed heard of none, except the *detested* scheme of a tender law; and until gentlemen of superior intelligence shall descend to impart new lights, I shall think it absolutely necessary to adopt the proposition of the house of delegates. The matter is so plain to my understanding, that the reasonings of much abler men, who maintain an opposite opinion, have not convinced me of error. Annapolis, December 3, 1781. A.C.H

If the provision was "intended to prevent depreciation," why not repeal it, when the experiment has evinced its futility? "Oh! but if the general assembly goes on for ever enacting and repealing, there can be no dependance on them." I admire the man, who will sacrifice a valuable consideration for the sake of consistency—to be perfectly consistent, is not agreeable to human nature—to change an opinion, without a change of circumstances, betrays indeed a levity and want of thought; but to perlevers in short-sighted schemes of policy, much oftener bespeaks a littleness than an elevation of soul.—So much for the objection against inconsistency.

Extravagant ideas are entertained with respect to speculators—"they can do as they please with paper money; they have secret combinations and plans; they will engulf the British property; they have hitherto indeed been moderate in their depreciation of the red money; but it was only to induce the assembly to adopt the resolve of the house of delegates."—I will not affront men of understanding by the imputation of such opinions—I shall only observe, that if the power of speculators extends so far, they may depreciate the bills to 2 for 1, and then bring them back to 3 for 1, and at that rate pay them into the treasury.

Converte with people of every condition—they perceive the advantage of preserving public faith.—Some zealous advocates have advanced an extravagant position, that "the honourable senate, by rejecting the resolve, has manifested a disposition to restore and preserve the credit of government."—The true business is to convince the people, that if any of the bills shall be brought to the treasury after December 1784, for the purpose of exchange, they shall be redeemed with specie, before the 31st of June 1785.—How, in the name of policy, does the dissent tend to produce this conviction? It has already produced an opposite effect, by holding out the idea, that it is just to emit bills as specie, and call them in at the passing value—almost every plain undesigning man declares he will have nothing further to do with them; and four dollars in paper can now scarcely command one of silver—This is the time for a speculator, who can risk his property on public faith, to make the strongest pushes—he must nevertheless take care to observe some reasonable limits, or a method may hereafter be fallen upon to crush his daring hopes—however, for his consolation, he will have a common cause with gentlemen of property who can afford to sell the produce of their farms and plantations for these bills—it may sound odd—but these are the men, that can speculate with the greatest advantage, and even without incurring the opprobrium of the character.

After a series of destructive experiments, it was unreasonable to expect mere bills of credit to pass as paper money—they have done a great deal—they have *apparently* answered the same purposes as specie—they have discharged specie debts and the treasury still emits them as specie. Whether this is owing to the confidence or distrust of the people, he that has last received them, is best qualified to answer. In a recent publication I insisted on the obligation government was under to make what it passed for money as nearly equal to money as possible.—I will not stain my paper with the ungenerous, shallow, remarks, which have been since made on the subject—I still insist on the proposition, and neither the decisions, nor arguments of any man, or set of men, have convinced me, that I was wrong in suggesting the propriety of government's receiving its bills as specie.

From the New-York Royal Gazette, of November 24, 1781.  
S I R,  
I AM directed to send you the enclosed letter from lieutenant-general earl Cornwallis, to his excellency the commander in chief, which you are desired to publish in your next Gazette. I am your obedient servant,  
Nov. 25, 1781.  
OL. DELANCEY,  
adjutant-gen.  
Mr. James Rivington, printer, &c.  
York-town in Virginia, Octob. the 20th, 1781.

If government receives the bills at their actual value, no body will be interested in their depreciation.—A plain case will evince the mistake—A gentleman worth 10,000 pounds has passed his bond for 1000 payable at a future day—the obligee, being pressed by necessity, offers this bond to sale—is not the purchaser benefited by getting it for less than 1000 pounds, and for every pound, he gives less than 1000, is he not a pound the richer? There cannot be a plainer case, and it is the interest of every man, to depreciate the bills of credit, who can lay them up till 1785, provided a fair re-

Let us suppose the parliament of Great Britain to enact, that if bank notes should pass at a value inferior to the sum expressed, they should be redeemed by the bank, at their passing value—What would be the consequence?—not another note would issue—those already in circulation would return, and, in less than ten days, the bank would be ruined. Could it be expected that holding forth the idea of receiving at the actual value would be less fatal to mere bills of credit? So long as this provision remains, there will be a general persuasion, that the same rule will be adopted at the final redemption. Gentlemen of warm passions and conscious integrity may resent the insinuation—they are determined to comply strictly with their engagements. Let me then enquire what difference it makes to the public, whether these bills are sunk by receiving them at par immediately, or by giving gold and silver in exchange 2 1/2 years hence? I can inform them of a material difference—it is no less than this—if government does not receive its bills as specie, it will be unable to perform its engagements; for not a single bill except those already in the hands of the purchaser will be paid for British

S I R,  
I HAVE the mortification to inform your excellency, that I have been forced to give up the posts of York and Gloucester, and to surrender the troops under my command, by capitulation, on the nineteenth instant, as prisoners of war, to the combined forces of America and France.  
I never saw this post in any favourable light. But when I found I was to be attacked in a so unprepared a state, by so powerful an army and artillery, nothing but the hopes of relief would have induced me to attempt its defence, for I would rather have attempted to escape to New-York, by rapid marches from the Gloucester side, immediately on the arrival of general Washington's troops at Williamsburg, or I would, notwithstanding the disparity of numbers, have attacked them in the open field, where it might have been just possible that fortune would have favoured the gallantry of the handful of brave troops under my command.

\* The second figure of the date was not legible.