

A considerable alarm was occasioned by the suddenness with which this subject was brought on, and the situation of the greater part of the members, certainly precluded any possibility of such a measure being immediately carried into execution.—It would far exceed my present limits to go fully into this subject.—I shall therefore touch on it but slightly.

The holding a number of our fellow-creatures in a state of slavery is certainly a conduct so opposite to humanity, and the principles of the religion we profess, that it appears impossible to say any thing seriously in its vindication—Yet custom has so far steered us against these sensations, that the practice still prevails, and interest seems as yet, to plead powerfully against any alteration.

The motives of the petitioners were certainly of a laudable nature, although it has been remarked, that few of them had any slaves in their possession.

But although great confusion might be occasioned by an immediate adoption of this measure, it certainly is a subject, which deserves the serious consideration of our Legislators, and happy must that man be, who can devise any mode, by which so many unfortunate wretches, may be restored to liberty and happiness.

A representation was made to the Assembly by a number of officers, who had been wounded in the service, setting forth, that by a late resolve of Congress they were deprived of the half-pay heretofore promised them, in consideration of their incapacity and misfortune, and praying relief from the State.

From the peculiar situation of these officers, the injustice which they complained of, and the very obvious propriety of their claim, it would seem almost impossible to conceive that any objections could be raised, or that the least murmuring or reluctance should cloud that cheerfulness, with which a *grateful people* ought to do justice to those by whom they had been so signally benefited.—Yet we find that in the passage of a bill for their relief, there were sixteen votes against it.

Happily for the applicants the greater number were possessed of more generosity.—Thirty-two members voted for it, and it was soon afterwards assented to by the Senate.

It appears to be strange and unaccountable, that Congress should ever have passed the act which was the subject of  
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