

# Gazette of the United States.

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SATURDAY, MAY 25, 1793.

[Whole No. 425.]

FROM THE COLUMBIAN CENTINEL.

"OMNIUM PRIMUM RATIS TUERI PUBLICAM FIDEM."

L.V.

MR. RUSSELL,

It has been enquired by citizens anxious for the welfare of the country, and aware of the distress to which it must inevitably be reduced by a European war, whether we have not already pledged our faith so far as to preclude us from any present consideration of convenience or inconvenience, and whether we are not by our own voluntary engagement bound to take the part of the present government in France, especially in case the West-India islands should be attacked by Great-Britain.

By the eleventh article of the Treaty of Alliance with France, the United States guaranty to his Most Christian Majesty, the possessions of the crown of France in America. But the course of human events has either totally absolved us, or at least suspended the obligation of this clause, and it cannot be made even a plausible pretext for involving us in the present war. My reasons for this opinion are,

1. That the guaranty is to his most Christian Majesty, of the possessions of the crown of France. I ask, who is at this time his most Christian Majesty? A part of the French nation, and all the other powers of Europe will answer, he is the son or the brother of the late Louis the XVIth. The National Convention, and the present Republic of France will say there is no such man. The office and all its powers have been extinguished in the blood of the person with whom your contract was made. If the article binds us to either of the parties, the question, which of the two is entitled to claim the performance, is now a question to be settled by the event of a civil war, and neither party can call upon us to decide it for them.

2. That supposing the revolutions of France, are now completed, and a Republic firmly established, it may be doubtful, whether they have not by their change of government, dissolved this clause of the Treaty: I know it is a general principle of the laws of nations, that the rights and obligations of Treaties survive the internal revolutions of government, and therefore that the Republic of France may be entitled to the benefits of engagements contracted with the former monarch. But to this rule there are many exceptions; the first Constituent Assembly were so fully of this opinion that they thought the nation absolved from all such Treaties previously made, as might be injurious to their interests, and the present government have extended the principle much further, when as a justification for opening the Scheldt, contrary to the positive and express stipulation of many Treaties, they have formally denied the obligation of any compact, which was contrary to the natural Rights of Men. Upon speculative principles it may be very questionable how far the sovereign control of a French Republic, over islands at three thousand miles distance from them is consistent with such natural rights, and it would be difficult to mark the distinction which should prohibit every act of jurisdiction exercised by one nation over a river flowing through the territories of another, and at the same time allow a supreme authority over colonies placed by the hand of nature at so wide a distance from the metropolis.—The possessions of the crown of France, as guaranteed by our Treaty to his most Christian Majesty, appear to me to have formed a part of that Constitution of government which then existed in France; they were a part of the monarchy, and under the new government they can no longer be considered as possessions, in the same sense in which they were understood when the United States bound themselves to the guaranty.

3. Should both these grounds for the opinion I am supporting be considered as erroneous, and the clause in question be held as binding us to the French Republic, in the same manner as it formerly did to the King, it remains to enquire what was intended by the guaranty and what are the duties which it has prescribed to us?—During the administration of the royal government, had the authority of the sovereign been guided by the maxims of speculative freedom or of practical tyranny; had he provoked a rebellion in the islands, by oppressing the planters or by liberating their slaves; the guaranty in the treaty would not have bound us to assist him with our blood and treasures, in enforcing an absurd and unnatural Government against the perpetual resistances which it would necessarily provoke. Had the late King of France, like other Kings of whom we read in history, veiling his insatiate ambition, under some specious pretence of glory, of dignity or of safety, declared a wanton and unjustifiable war against any or all of the commercial nations in Europe, and had his possessions in America been conquered by his enemies in the course of such a war, he never could have called upon the United States by virtue of this guaranty, to repair the injuries of his folly, and to sacrifice themselves in support of

his pernicious projects. It is unnecessary to fatigue the public with the pedantry of quotations from the writers upon natural and political Law, but it may be laid down as an universal principle, that no stipulation contained in a treaty, can ever oblige one nation to adopt or support the folly or injustice of another.—In applying this principle, it becomes necessary to observe, that the administration of the French government over their colonies, since the first revolution of 1789 has been such as to keep almost all their islands in a constant state of rebellion and civil war; by the former of these calamities the slaves have been united against their masters; by the latter the masters have been divided against each other. From the chaotic mass of human passions, a collection of all the most violent and inflammable elements has been selected, and combined together; the torch of the furies has been applied to the composition; and the miserable islanders have been the victims of the fatal explosion.

To such a state of desperation have these devoted colonies been reduced, that a formal deputation as we are informed by the public papers have solicited for them the protection of the British government; and we are now told that this protection has been promised; that the King of Great-Britain, has agreed to take possession of these colonies and to hold them in trust for his most Christian Majesty, the power to whom the letter of our guaranty has promised the assistance of the United States. An arbitrary and oppressive system of administration compelled us to renounce the authority of Great-Britain, and France assisted us to maintain our honorable warfare. A similar evil, has driven some of the French colonies to a similar remedy; one of them has even attempted a Declaration of Independence, and all the others would doubtless have done the same, were they not profoundly sensible that the time is not yet come, for the Lion to lie down with the Lamb, and that the justice of their cause would avail them but little against the powerful injustice of their oppressors. But surely there would be something singularly absurd and iniquitous, to see the United States support the French in a plan of oppressive administration over their colonies, as a reward, for rescuing them from the oppression of Great-Britain. It would be such a total subversion of all moral and political consistency, such a covenant between virtue and vice, such a coalition of liberal freedom with despotic tyranny, as can scarcely be imagined without a confusion of ideas, or expressed without an absurdity of language.

4. The last ground upon which I consider this guaranty as dissolved or at least suspended, is, that by the act of the French government, it has been rendered impracticable. They have declared war against all the naval powers of Europe. What the event of that war will be, it is not given to man to foretell; but we cannot take a part with the French Republic, without uniting all the rest of Europe against us; which upon every rational calculation of probability, would be dooming ourselves to inevitable ruin and destruction. We are therefore commanded by a law, which supercedes all others, by that uncontrollable law of nature, which is paramount to all human legislation, or compact, to remain at peace, and to content ourselves with wishing that laureled victory may fit upon the sword of justice, and that smooth success may always be strewn before the feet of virtuous Freedom. MARCELLUS.

### EXTRACTS.

Written in 1790.—Translated from the French.

"FAR from saying to a people that nature has made all men equal, they ought to learn on the contrary, that she has made them very unequal; that one is born strong and another weak; that one is born healthy and another infirm; that all are not equally adroit and vigilant, and thus the master piece of well regulated society is to render equal by laws, those whom nature has made so unequal as to their means. By natural equality, we understand an equality as to rights, and not an equality in fact; since it is true that men are born with unequal means, and pass their lives in conditions very unequal, whatever liberty the country to which they belong may possess. A Shoemaker of ancient Rome was not the equal of Scipio, although he had naturally as much right as Scipio to be elected to offices in the Republic; they were both equal as to their rights, but unequal as to their means. It would be better, perhaps, to adopt the expression of civil equality, since all the citizens are protected by equal laws.—There is not, and there never will be any other equality among men.

ALL wise Legislators have added to the obligation of laws the ties of religion. They thought that they could not take too many precautions to establish among men subordination—that tutelary angel of the world.—But the philosophers of the present day, build their republics like Plato upon a stern theory.

They have in their imaginations an ideal world, which they wish to substitute for that which really exists.

TRUE courage has always consisted in boldly speaking against arbitrary power, whether of the Prince or of the People. It is when every body is awed to silence in the presence of a Despot—it is in the midst of slavery that a man ought to elevate his voice in favor of Liberty; but when a furious multitude all pursuing this same Liberty, and marking their footsteps with blood rife, it is then necessary to soften the voice, and to speak discreetly in favor of government, without which there is no liberty. In one word, courage at such a time consists in maintaining moderately our opinions, as it before consisted in boldly expressing them. The arbitrary power of an individual is despotism—that of many is anarchy. Nothing is more frequent than to find men of honor, who pride themselves in opposing the arbitrary authority of an individual: But before the power of a multitude every thing yields in a moment, and we obey without blushing. In short, it requires the most sublime courage not to flatter the passions of the people.

If there existed on earth a race of beings superior to man, they would sometimes be astonished at our conduct—but would laugh at our reason—Above all, in the great events of this world, our best efforts betraying so much imbecility, and our projects accompanied with so little foresight, would excite their pity. Human vanity must confess that there exists a kind of fatality which seems to amuse itself in giving the lie to our prudence, and at its pleasure baffles the councils of wisdom. It is to the shortness of our views, we must attribute this. If we could find out causes before we were alarmed by their effects, we could predict events with some certainty—but always compelled to ascend from effects to causes, man passes his life in reasoning on the past, complaining of the present, and trembling for the future.

BY a Constitution we understand a combination of the three powers, Legislative, Executive, and Judicial. A constitution is good when the three powers are combined for the property of the people, and the glory of the government: A constitution is bad, when these powers are confounded or are united in the same hands for the misfortune of the subject, or the debasement of the Prince, or the Magistrates. Every nation which is not savage, is a body politic, and artificial—the constitution gives it existence, the laws give it action.

FROM THE COLUMBIAN CENTINEL.

MR. RUSSELL,

It is with much pleasure I have observed in a perusal of Paris papers, as late as the 16th March, that a great degree of peace and order appeared to exist in that populous capital. I observed, in a paper of the 9th, that six Theatres were advertised as open on that evening for public exhibitions; and I think the following diary of the business done in the Commune of Paris, no bad index of the tranquillity of the city, viz.

CIVIL STATE.  
March 2d. Divorces 6. Marriages 25. Births 63. Deaths 36.  
3d. Divorces 5. Marriages 12. Births 91. Deaths 43.  
4th. Divorces 10. Marriages 29. Births 62. Deaths 69.  
5th. Divorces 6. Marriages 38. Births 56. Deaths 39, &c.

In this detail the civil state of the city is daily kept, and in my opinion, it is a very strong evidence that a great degree of order must reign in a place, where the administrators of the Police can keep so regular and particular an account of the civil circumstances which transpire in it.—Yours,

A FRIEND TO THE FRENCH.

May 1793.

### Foreign Intelligence.

CONSTANTINOPLE, Feb. 11. ACCORDING to the latest advices from the Archipelago, several vessels, under Russian colours, loaded with grain, have been taken by a French frigate.

Semonville's arrival is still retarded, and it is now believed that the Porte will follow the example of other powers, and refuse to acknowledge him.

Egypt is desolated by a cruel famine. At Cairo, the streets are filled with the dead bodies of the poor wretches who have fallen a prey to its ravages.—The Plague has again appeared on a sudden at Smyrna.

SWITZERLAND, Feb. 21.

The sovereign council of Berne resolved, after a long sitting of the 21st inst, to accede to the proposals made by the directory of Zurich, of recommending an official correspondence with M. Barthelemy, Minister of the French republic.

The cantons of Bazil, Schaffhouse, Appenzel, and the towns of St. Gallen, Biel, and Muhlhausen, also declared their adherence to the judgment of the Directory of Zurich.

The other states of the Helvetic Corps only waited the determination of Berne to follow its example.

STOCKHOLM, March 5.

The day before yesterday the young king, accompanied by the Duke Regent, set off for Upsal. Another voyage is already talked of in the approaching spring, towards the Finland frontiers, when an interview may have place between the Empress of Russia, our young Monarch and his illustrious Uncle.

WARSAW, (Poland) March 6.

The Russian ambassador has at length persuaded his majesty to make the voyage to Grodno. His excellency goes on before about the 9th, and his majesty is expected to follow towards the end of the approaching week.

H A G U E, March 23.

On the 21st inst. great part of the noble town-hall of Maastricht fell in. This is the consequence of the bombardment, which, it seems, was designed rather to destroy the city than to take it.

Thirty-nine pieces of cannon, taken from the French in the action of the 18th, were brought into Maastricht on the 24th. It is supposed that they must have lost in the different engagements from the 18th to the 22d, more than 60 pieces of cannon, and that they had 14 or 15 thousand men killed or wounded. The loss on the side of the Austrians is estimated at 6000.

O S T E N D, March 31.

The whole province of Brittany, except Nantes, is now in arms. The Paris papers state the number of revolvers at 40,000, but other accounts by private letters make them amount to 90,000 men. It is supposed that the reason of their stopping the mails by the way of Calais is, to prevent its being known in England, lest assistance should be sent to the revolvers. They are in possession of all the country round Brest and Rochelle.

L E Y D E N, April 1.

Head quarters of the Prussian army at Laubach, on the Hanscrue, March 24.

"We are encamped here at the distance of 2 leagues from Simeria, which is occupied by our troops. In a little time we shall advance against Cruetznaeh.

"Our van-guard, under the command of Col. Seculi, having fallen in with the enemy on the road, repulsed them the first day, on the second he was repulsed in turn, but on the 3d he beat the French, and drove them as far as Bingen. The loss on either side was trifling. As our corps was not sufficiently numerous, it retired to Stromberg. We should have been already masters of Bingen, had not a spy a native of Cruetznaeh, informed the enemy of our march. He has been arrested, and will soon suffer punishment.

"This day 4 Prussian regiments passed the Rhine at St. Goar, to join us. We are informed also, that several Austrian regiments of the army of Prince de Hohenlohe have quitted Treves under the command