

Friends and Brethren, THE motives which have induced me heretofore to address you, and which now influence me, are to rectify some mistakes which many honest minded people have been led into, & prevent the bad consequences of them; & let truth before you, and thereby lay a foundation for a right judgment and a right conduct, in the important matters of the present day. I have no sinister ends to serve: my interest is connected and stands or falls with that of the public: and therefore I hope for your candid attention.

It has been given out, and is believed by many, that there would have been no attempt to stop the sitting of the Supreme Court at Springfield, had not the militia been called to support them: and the Governor as well as others has been blamed for that measure. But reason will inform us that when those who had stopped the sitting of the inferior Court, reflected on their precipitate and illegal conduct; they apprehended they should be indicted if the Superior Court sat: and the truth of the fact is, that several companies were insisted expressly to prevent the sitting of that court, long enough before the time of its session to have authentic accounts thereof sent to the Governor, and for him to take advice and send his orders to this country seasonably to call the militia. There are facts capable of the fullest proof. That it was the duty of all public officers, to whom authentic intelligence of these things came, to inform the governor; appears from the constitution, chap. 2. sect. 1. art. 12. compared with chap. 6. And that the Governor was not blamable, in ordering out the militia on this occasion, but acted agreeable to the constitution and his oath, will likewise appear to any who will read the constitution, chap. 2. sect. 1. art. 7. and chap. 6. And that he did not act rashly, but with prudence and the best advice, appears from his speech at the opening of the late session, and the evidence adduced in support of it.

From these positions I would infer, that people ought to be careful not to assert for truth, that which is false in fact; nor blame rulers while they are ignorant of the ground and reasons of their conduct. A proper jealousy and watchfulness to preserve our constitutional rights and privileges is a political virtue: but when executive rulers act according to known principles of law and constitution, (as it is, at first sight evident the Governor and subordinate officers did, in the case referred to) there a prompt obedience in the subject is an indispensable duty. How often are plots laid against the state which require the greatest secrecy and dispatch to countermince and frustrate them? how often do cases happen in almost all governments, when if the most salutary plans of rulers were publicly known, the good effects of them would thereby be prevented? It is not necessary that the subject should in all cases and at all times know the reason of the rulers conduct; in some cases it is not fit the subject should know till the end be accomplished. If the ruler calls upon the subject for that assistance or service which he is authorized to call for, and no more, his order ought to be cheerfully obeyed. There must be no such confidence placed in rulers, or no government can be supported. Such a jealousy of rulers as prevents obedience in such cases, destroys the foundations of governments; or at least weakens and

cuts the sinews of it, so as to prevent its good and salutary effects. The unhappy effects of such jealousy, and (so far as work) a supine neglect to obey orders, are too visible to need any mention. Should there be a similar call in future, I could wish that a sense of duty might excite a more prompt and general compliance. When we have appointed rulers to be watchmen and guardians of our rights and liberties, and they call us to defend them, is it, in that case, left to the discretion of each individual subject whether he will comply with the call or not? No: Reason, duty, the social bonds of our common interest and safety require a ready compliance. Weak therefore is the objection which some made against turning out at the late call, viz. "they feared that too many going on government side would be the occasion of shedding blood." If we reason from facts the cheerful turning out of the militia at Northampton a few years ago, and the spirited exertions of the officers and gentlemen then prevented the effusion of human blood: and so did the late spirited exertions of the best officers and gentlemen in the county, and of the worthy yeomanry who cheerfully obeyed orders of late at Springfield. The greater and more respectable the number which turns out to oppose insurgents, the less is the probability of battle. My countrymen; 'tis a redress of grievances which the insurgents have professed to aim at; I am willing they should have it, and would ever have joined with them in every proper measure to obtain it. We are informed that our General Court (the only proper body to redress public grievances) have not only been willing, but have done what was in their power to redress them. But we must not think the Court can free us from all difficulties: we must not think that we can be freed from the debt incurred by a long and expensive war without our own exertions; if they can point out the best methods of raising and applying monies for that purpose, they do well. We ought to wait till we are authentically informed what they have done. If any have not patience enough to wait for official accounts, we may determine that a redress of grievances is not their aim. We may also draw up the same conclusion if we find that the Court have honestly endeavoured to redress public grievances, and have in fact redressed any considerable number of them, and yet the insurgents show the same uneasy disposition as before. For rational men cannot expect that, in such a difficult day as this, every man's complaint and grievance will be redressed and removed at once. If the present Court have done something to redress grievances, let us chuse wife and honest men next election, and hope they will do more. In the mean time let us apply ourselves to honesty, frugality and industry, in patient expectation of better times: for that will make our own difficulties and those of our rulers less, and our own lives and theirs more comfortable. Let us study to be quiet and do our own business, and mark them which are contentious and unruly and despise government. Let us weigh things well in our minds, be calm and steady, and not surprised if things turn contrary to our expectations; but hope and trust in the mercy of God, who has hitherto delivered us from all our foes both foreign and domestic. In reliance upon whose beneficent providence I subscribe myself, the public's humble servant,

The FREETHINKER.

The Madrid Gazette, of Wednesday the 12th of July, relates, that the greatest rejoicings were expected throughout the whole kingdom of Spain, on account of the manifesto published by the Emperor of Morocco, to give liberty of trade, residence, and religion, to the different European subjects. It is, besides, no small consolation to a people long harassed by the piratical cruelties and depredations of the Moors, to consider themselves in a state of amity with those once inveterate foes, who have been plundering their ships and inflicting their coasts for above two hundred years. There are computed to be upwards of one thousand Spaniards, of all ranks, now in actual slavery in the dominions of Morocco, many of whom are persons of distinction, whose friends either would not, or could not, pay the exorbitant prices demanded for their ransom. Among these latter, is the Count d'Alquili, who was taken on his return from Malta, in a Leghorn vessel, about three years ago. This Nobleman's family offered the sum of ten thousand pistoles to the present Emperor, whose domestic slave he is; but it was refused. There is, however, no doubt but that the late accommodations will set all the Spanish subjects free, as soon as preliminaries can be settled, and no cause to dread the like disasters for the time to come.

Extra of a letter from Exmouth, Aug. 8. "An odd circumstance has happened here, which has created no small diversion. A few days ago a decent looking man, went through this town, imploring the assistance of the charitably disposed, with the tale of his having lived in great repute, from whence he went to America, and had been ruined by the war; in consequence of his being a loyalist; was just returned to England, and in his passage had lost his wife, who had left him five children. By this plausible story he received many liberal donations, and spent a very jovial evening at a public house with a young Journeyman taylor, with whom he was to sleep. They had not been long in bed, before this distressed dowder discovered herself to her bed-fellow to be a female; which sudden discovery so affrighted the young taylor, that he jumped out of the bed, and ran down stairs to the landlord, to whom he related the story, when they got a light, and went to the woman, who pretended to be so fast asleep that they could not awake her. The taylor then took his own cloaths, and was retired to another room; and in the morning the lady rose early, and after paying her bill, decamped in great haste, and has not since been heard of."

When the lady discovered herself to the Exmouth taylor, she said, in a gentle voice, "how will my snip rejoice when he hears that she, whom this day he took for masculine, is feminine!" The "Devil you are!" exclaimed the taylor, leaping out of bed, "then I will be quiet."

FOR SALE, At the Printing-Office in Northampton, The First, Second, and Third Part of Webber's Institute.

Strong's Almanack For 1787, to be sold by the gross, dozen or single, at the Printing-Office in Northampton.

A. L. S. O. Watt's Psalm-Primer, Blanks of most kind Writing-Paper, and a few copies of Col. Humphreys Poem.

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HAMPSHIRE GAZETTE.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1786.

NORTHAMPTON: PRINTED BY WILLIAM BUTLER, A FEW RODS EAST OF THE COURT-HOUSE.

To the MEMBER of the Hatfield CONVENTION,

SIR, I shall first take notice of some observations in your last number, and shall then attempt to shew you not only that the state is able to, & is ready to, pay the notes at a moderate rate, but that it may be done in a mode equally to individuals, and without a criminal failure of performing the public promises; and that it is clearly the duty and interest of the state to do it.

You have so often complained that the government cheated the holders, that I hoped you would propose, if the holders of the notes were to receive but a small part of their amount, that the holders should have the residue: but not a word of this. Your object therefore is not to relieve the persons defrauded, but to make some profit of the fraud.

At length your plan has appeared; the collectors are to take the notes at five shillings on the pound, allowing interest at that rate, and this you say will prevent their further depreciation. But had you any ground to affirm this?

Orders on the hard money taxes are sold for less than twelve shillings on the pound, and those drawn on the collectors of impost I presume are sold as low. The taxes granted to redeem the army notes, were granted in money, but provision was made that the notes should be received. The consequence you say is, that those notes are sold for six shillings on the pound. If your proposal should be adopted, what would prevent the notes falling to fifteen pence on the pound? Indeed they would, probably fall more in proportion below five shillings on the pound, than they now are: below twenty; for about 10-20ths of the notes, called army notes, are provided for in the taxes, and no other can be received; but by your plan all the notes may be received. Besides the government have never hinted a design to reduce the notes, they have often solemnly engaged to pay them; but if they reduce them to five shillings, the reduction is easy to one shilling; they can make it with half the remorse; and every one will expect it.

Your proposal is more laboured than was necessary if you had only stopped the payment of interest, the notes would have fallen to one shilling on the pound, without further trouble; and then one shilling would have been sufficient.

Although no interest is to be paid for several years, the government are to assure the original possessor of the notes, that they shall be paid the whole principal and interest. But can government give them stronger assurances than they have fifty times before? and can they live upon such an assurance several years without interest? Many of them have no other support; and all will be willing to get rid of a debtor, who is governed by no principle and subject to no law.

You propose, at some future period, to discriminate between those that ought to have the full value, and those who bought them at a discount; and confess, if the generality of the notes have now been sold, you have said nothing to the purpose. But why can't the discrimination be made now, that you may know whether you have said anything to the purpose or not? I can think of no reason for putting off unless it be to compel those who have not sold their notes to sell them, and thereby fit them for another selling.

You claim the character of an honest man; but although you confess the injustice of selling the notes, as all the government could do would be to give new notes, which would depreciate. Yet you propose to sale them to five shillings on the pound, and pay neither principal or interest at that rate, unless by taxes. You call the present mode of redeeming the notes at the nominal rate by taxes, cheating the public creditors, and yet modestly propose to redeem them by taxes at five shillings on the pound. Although you acknowledge that those who have not sold their notes should receive the whole principal and interest; yet you are not disposed to know who they are, until the debt is reduced within a very narrow compass; and in the mean time make no provision for them, except by taxes at five shillings on the pound. You are determined not to injure the government by your imprudence, but in almost every paragraph you

charge them with cheating and fraud, at a time when government is weakened and reviled, as much as even its enemies wish; and the fraud appears because they have not in all respects done as you would have them, although they perfectly know when, and for what the notes were given, and have before them all the acts and promises on the subject; and you are quite unacquainted with each of those points. If you expect that we allow you are honest, you ought in your turns to concede that you are not very discerning. If you would be thought a friend to government, you ought to speak of them in the language of decency: if your feelings towards them are really as bitter, as they are against the Old Republican, you must prudently conceal those feelings, and not treat them with unmanly abuse and insolent severity. You will consider that you stand forth as a champion; by giving the initials of your name, you appear to seek applause; and you ought not therefore to write in such a style that a man of sentiment will blush to be thought your correspondent.

A private man who is honest, pays his debt as soon as he can; if he cannot pay when the note is due, he designs to do it afterwards. And why should not the state act on the same principle, if they wish to support such a character. The people of this state have paid more towards the expence of the war, within the last five years, than the whole amount of our state notes; the pretence therefore that we are unable to redeem them, is groundless; if we can't do it in five years, we may take as much longer time as shall be necessary: but the mode of payment may be exceeding cheap to individuals, if they are inclined to avail themselves of it.

I before observed, that the state notes not provided for, amount to about 1,320,000l. they are now sold at a cheaper rate, than ever before, and may be purchased at four shillings and six pence on the pound; the last state tax was upwards of 300,000l. it will therefore follow, that if any man will now buy out a sum in silver, equal to the whole amount of his last state tax, in purchasing these notes, he will have his full proportion of them.

No one has supposed it would be dishonest or dishonourable for a man to purchase his proportion of the notes; if he obtains his proportion, it makes no great difference to him whether they are redeemed by being received in discharge of taxes or by payment of money; if they are receivable in taxes, he delivers his note, and his rate is crossed; if money only is receivable, he must collect the money and pay it, and immediately produce his note and receive the money again, in whatever manner therefore the notes are redeemed, the man who has his part of them is indemnified.

If the state redeems the notes as fast, and pays the interest as punctually as it can, it is guilty of no fraud. The state is to be considered as an individual party to a contract. Although private persons may sell the notes for a small part of their value, the state is no more criminal than if strangers did it. The only just way for the state to prevent it, would be to raise the credit of the notes; but that is out of its power, either to redeem them, or more punctually pay the interest.

When the notes were issued, government engaged in every instance that taxes should be levied to redeem them; if a tax is granted for that sole purpose, and my part of the tax is five pounds; and I have a note of that amount, is any injury done by the state, if they permit me to pay that note in discharge of my tax? You complain of this method as unjust, as many people are ignorant of the current value of notes, and are imposed upon: I confess it is attended with some difficulties, it produces in a very small degree, the same effects as a depreciated paper currency. In this case, the evil is only from a single transfer of the notes; in the case of paper money, the like evil happens a thousand times, in putting off the same debt; and the injury therefore would be a thousand times greater. It is likely you are appointed of the vote for a paper currency subject to a depreciation; but if not, you sit quietly without making any remarks upon it. But is not this training at a great and swallow-

ing a camel? Perhaps it is owing to the different degrees of respect you have, to the two bodies, by whom the two plans are respectively approved. However, the inconvenience complained of, may, I think, in a great measure be obviated: the town clerk or some other person in each town, might, with a very little trouble, inform himself and the other inhabitants the current price of the notes; or the printers, if they find it agreeable to their customers, would readily do it.

An objection has been made, that the notes will rise in their current value; that may be the case some time hence; but I think it is hardly possible they should rise from any great degree. Every year a new General Court is chosen; and such an opinion has been entertained even by some who have never sold their notes, of a disposition in many people to defraud the public creditors: that if the General Court should do all in their power, they would find it difficult for a long time to wipe off that disposition. But it may be prudent for every person, who has not his proportion, to buy them as soon as may be, for they may rise, and certainly no honest man can wish to have them any lower.

Many, it is said, are unable to purchase their proportion, even at the low rate of four shillings and six pence on the pound. But if they were seriously disposed to do it, few would fail in the attempt. If the people in this state had expended no more for imported articles in the year 1786, than they did in the year 1776, it is likely the sum saved, would have been sufficient to purchase all the notes of this state at their present price.

Your principal argument for reducing the notes, is drawn from the conduct of government, touching the old money; if that was wrong it ought not to be imitated: But you have not suggested, and I have never heard it suggested, that the state has not received the full value of all the notes given by the Treasurer; but was that the case with continental money I some of the later emissions, which were far greater than the first, came into circulation at a rate not better than forty for one: these bills mingled with the others, and rapidly diffused through many hands without discrimination; it was therefore thought extremely difficult to make a distinction that would do more justice than to consider them all alike.

The principal cause why the notes have been sold so low, has been, that the state could not be compelled to pay; otherwise state notes would have been sold as high as those of any town or individual. And shall we avoid paying our debts because we can't? a knave would do it, but I think an honest man would not. The happiness of the state depends upon the virtue and integrity of the citizens: but can we look for integrity in private persons, if the state by its example recommends to them not to pay their debts if they can avoid it?

In modern times, a state without credit is without security. This state is now in its youth, and resembles a young man just entering into life, whose character may be of more value to him, than the gain of a thousand tricks. Suppose a young trader, who was not twenty-one years old, should purchase of several merchants, a quantity of goods, and give his notes for the real value; some of them afterwards doubting of his honesty, should sell them at a considerable discount. The purchaser should apply for payment; the young man should tell him, I can't pay at present; but as soon as I am able, will pay according to promise: in such case his character for integrity would stand fair. But suppose he should say, you bought the notes at a low rate, you can recover nothing by law, but if you will take two thirds of what you gave for them, and take your pay when, and in what mode I think proper, I will pay you; otherwise I will pay you nothing. When the merchants who never sold their notes apply, our gentleman says to them, others have sold their notes at a low rate, and your goods were no better than theirs; but if you will take one third of the value, I will pay you in five or six years, otherwise you must wait till I am pleased to pay. Could such a young sharper have the least hope to succeed in