

# Gazette of the United States.

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THE TABLET.—No. XLI.

I am happy to be relieved from writing an essay for this number, by presenting my readers with the following speculation, put into my hands by a friend.

"It would be strange if men agreed in their ideas about titles, when there is no other subject of equal importance in which they do not disagree."

THE subject of addressing the President by a title has afforded ample materials for argument and conjecture. The question is not, however, whether by a legislative act a title shall be conferred on him, but whether the two Houses, or either of them, shall address him by any other style than that of President. Titles are supposed to be derived from courtesy and common usage: and in this form of the question the right of the two houses to address him by a title, is exactly on a footing with that of any other individuals: But is the usage a proper and safe one? Though the public curiosity in relation to this question has considerably abated, I infer from many late publications that it is not wholly extinct. The readers of the Gazette will not be much instructed, possibly, however, they may be amused, by an account of a conversation between two violent disputants on this point; I happened to be present, and will communicate the substance of their arguments.

The anti-title champion said, "that addressing by a title is anti-republican. A public officer, however elevated, is merely the servant of the people, and a title tends to make him a bad one.—For it creates in the people false ideas of the office, and stimulates the ambition and vanity of the officer: The progress is natural to the usurpation of the powers which are supposed to belong to the title. The people will be prepared by this mimicry of royalty for servitude, and the magistrate for usurpation.—Independently of the ill tendency of the usage, there is more simplicity and true dignity in forbearing, than giving a title.—The language of adulation has been strained till it has lost its meaning, and nothing makes the ridicule of it supportable, but the antiquity of the practice. It is applied to the little states which never had power, or have lost it. The titles of some of the German Princes are a burlesque upon dignity. High titles will require great salaries. The people will be more alarmed by this piece of arrogance than by measures of national policy which would affect their property and confer substantial strength on the government. The national authority is feeble and in no condition to try experiments upon the temper of the people. No title can be applied which will not be laughed at. The practice has descended to us from the Goths and other barbarous nations; and as this government is founded on reasoning and reflection, and rests for support on the good sense of a people the most enlightened in the world, it cannot be deemed necessary to address the President by a title.—Let the tyrants of Asia work upon cowardice and ignorance by the enchantment of sound."

The advocate of titles replied, "That the ancient republics did not depend on good sense alone;—They did more than we propose to do. A chief magistrate is but a man, and not always more respectable than many others. These wise and jealous defenders of liberty were not willing to trust the execution of the laws to one who could command no more veneration than those who were bound to obey them. They omitted no means to create a veneration for his official character. His person was declared sacred. Oaths and imprecations were added, and many of the rites of religion. He was attended by licitors, and with all the pomp of royalty: Yet at the end of the year this mighty consul retired to private life.

The State constitutions have actually given titles of higher import than any now in contemplation for the President. The people have not feared, nor suffered the loss of liberty in consequence.

We have no pretensions to the mock humility we have assumed. There is real arrogance in it. The nations of Europe will not expect us to teach them how to treat their supreme magistrates.

Are the people dishonored and degraded by addressing their President by a title or style of office? The reverse is true.

In a monarchy, the King is said to be the fountain of honor. The secret contempt of many for republican government, influences their opposition to any title derived from the people. We have been fond enough of titles, and long used to them, though not to such as are of popular extraction. A King, who is more than a lord, may create a peer; But for the people, who individually have no rank, collectively to bestow it, is offen-

sive to the pride of those who despise every thing which proceeds from their inferiors, and seems to the people themselves an awkward exercise of their prerogative. They are called, and really are, the fountain of power. Why is it less proper to call the people the fountain of honor? In a republic, the laws reign. The laws, then, must be made respectable: The office of administering them must be made so too. Over and above the influence of talents, men are honored for their power or wealth. A people which will not give money, nor trust power, may effect the same purpose by titles. The weaker the government, the more need of their aid. They are cheaper than money, and safer than the sword, and probably have more effect than both in gaining the respect of the rising generation. Nor let us fear danger from this. If, with a founding title, no real power is given, the man who wears it will not become dangerous to liberty. He is rather disarmed by it: Like the peacock, encumbered with his tail, he will be beaten by every dunghill cock. If, without a title, great power is given, the danger is the greater. Power is a serpent, they tell us, whose bite is deadly. Give him a rattle and the heedless passenger will have warning. The silent snake in the grass is more to be dreaded.

It is as proper to guard a republic against the contempt of its members, as the ambition of its officers. I would have the people free, and while they are so, I would have them respect themselves and their government; and believe that their free suffrages can make a man as honorable as a bit of parchment with a King's signet."

I was called upon to decide the controversy—and though I declined it, I was at length compelled to assume the judge.—

I declared that the utility of titles appeared to me to be very much exaggerated. A government really well balanced and well administered would not be despised if they should be refused. Nor, while elections continue to be free, will titles supply men in power with money to corrupt, and armies to crush the defenders of liberty.—Time will decide whether they are useful at all, and in what degree.

It would be difficult to say what title should be applied. Ridicule on one side and jealousy on the other, form a dangerous strait, through which those must pass who would import a title. It is probable that any which may be chosen will be a jest to one half the world, and a scare-crow to the other.

A M I C U S.

EXTRACTS.

"IN a free, well balanced government, how impotent must all warlike enterprizes prove, that are not sanctioned by the people in their representative assembly! Without money, the sinews of war, the designs of an insidious ambitious Executive must prove abortive.—A free representation of the people, which retains in its hands this GRAND MOMENTUM of the constitution, is a never failing bulwark to freedom."

"No people could be more tenacious of their freedom than the Swedes, till *Gustavus* the son of *Eric* ascended the throne—His manners were so amiable, his virtues so conspicuous, his government so just, and he made so popular a use of his powers, that his subjects never thought they could commit enough into his hands—But what was the consequence? His successors made his power a precedent for their own, without attending to the precedent of his administration.—This instance shews in the strongest point of view, how necessary, and how important a well defined constitution is to a free people."

A CORRESPONDENT observes, that "The first magistrate of our nation, when he gives a letter of Credence to the King of France, must give him the title of His Most Christian Majesty, with a long string of others: But when the King of France gives an Ambassador a Letter of Credence to the first magistrate of our nation, he must call him *Le Sieur George Washington, President of the United States.—An American Credence to Holland must be directed to Their High Mightinesses The Lords The States General of the United Netherlands: But a Dutch Credence must be directed, To de Heer George Washington, President of the United States.*"

"Our Credences to Spain must be directed to His Most Catholic Majesty: Spanish Credences to America, must be directed to — El Señor George Washington, President of the United States—"

This is American patriotism and national pride, is it?

American Credences to England must be directed to His Most Excellent or His Most Sacred Majesty, —British Credences to us, must be directed to Mr. George Washington, President of the United States.

This distinction must be known not only at courts, but by the nations—by the officers, soldiers and seamen of their armies and navies.

How many drubbings must you give them before they will respect Mr. as much as Majesty.

If titular distinctions have any influence, at all, upon human ears, methinks these are somewhat humiliating to the brave, daring and intrepid sons of American liberty.

That we can chastise all the nations of the earth if they affront us, to be sure cannot be doubted: But what shall we do with the debts and taxes, that will become necessary to this purpose?—Most men who hate honors, love money.

O.

NEW-YORK, SEPTEMBER 2, 1789.

SKETCH OF PROCEEDINGS OF CONGRESS.

In the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES of the UNITED STATES,

SATURDAY, AUGUST 29, 1789.

A MESSAGE was received from the senate with the bill to provide for the registering vessels, and to regulate the coasting trade—returned with the concurrence of the senate in the last amendments proposed by the house.

The engrossed bill for establishing the salaries of the executive officers was read a third time, a motion was made for its recommitment, which was lost—The *ayes* and *noes* being called for by Mr. LIVERMORE, on the question, Shall this bill pass? are as follow—

AYES.

Messrs. Ames, Baldwin, Benson, Boudinot, Brown, Cadwallader, Gale, Goodhue, Griffin, Hartley, Heister, Jackson, Lorraine, Lee, Matthews, Moore, Scott, Sedgwick, Sherman, Silvester, Smith, (M.) Smith, (S. C.) Sturges, Trumbull, Tucker, Wadsworth, Wynkoop.—27.

NOES.

Messrs. Coles, Floyd, Foster, Gerry, Grout, Hathorne, Livermore, Parker, Patridge, Van Rensselaer, Schureman, Seney, Sinnickson, Stone, Sumpter, Thatcher.—16.

The bill for suspending the operation of a clause in the collection law was read, and ordered to be engrossed for a third reading on Monday.

Mr. BOUDINOT presented a petition from the inhabitants of the County of Middlesex, New-Jersey, respecting a clause in the judicial bill now pending in the house, read and laid on the table.

In committee of the whole house, on the bill for establishing judicial Courts—Mr. BOUDINOT in the chair.

The third section was again under consideration.—The motion for striking out the whole clause was renewed by Mr. LIVERMORE.—The fate of this clause, said he, will determine the fate of the whole bill.—The greatest objection that I have to it, is, that it establishes two distinct systems of judicial proceedings in the United States.—He then stated certain cases in which there would be such clashing and interferences as would be attended with great difficulties—Suppose, said he, a person is in the custody of a State officer, and is at the same moment taken hold of by an officer of the federal court, what is to be done—is the man to be divided? This system may open a door to collusions in cases of debt—by having prisoners under pretences of arrest by the federal authority, violently forced from the hands of State officers.—If these difficulties can be got over, I shall think more favorably of the bill; but I do not see how they can be possibly—We have supported the Union for fourteen years without such courts.—The same or equal abilities may be found—justice may be as well administered as heretofore—I know of no complaints of any great consequence that have existed.—Some cases of capture have been carried to the court of appeals, but they have been very few.—He then adverted to the institution of courts of admiralty in favor of establishing which, he said, the expence will not be by a fiftieth part so much, and the advantage will be ten thousand times as great.

Mr. SMITH (S. C.) As much will depend on the determination of this question, it is necessary it should be well considered by all the committee.—It will not be easy to alter this system when once established: The judges are to hold their commissions during good behaviour, and after they are appointed, they are only removable by impeachment; consequently this system must be a permanent one; the committee will not therefore determine, that there shall be district courts, until they have reflected seriously on the consequences attending their vote.

After this point is settled, the next which occurs is the extent of jurisdiction, to be annexed to this court. This question is as important as the former; for it will be no less difficult than