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MARYLAND MILITIA.

FIRST BRIGADE.

We are thankful to a correspondent in Cæcil, who furnished us with the following copy of an address from General PORMAN to the citizens composing his brigade. It will be read with that strict attention which it merits—with all the care which is due to sound and patriotic advice, flowing from a veteran of the revolution, and as being very applicable to our circumstances at this time. If we cannot have *a disciplined militia*, we must have *a standing army*. To decide which is preferable, is but to judge whether a man's rights and property are safer in his own keeping, or in the hands of a mercenary stranger. But, has not history settled this question? Did *ever* any country preserve its liberty, which resorted to an army or a permanent navy?——[Whig.

To the citizens composing the First Brigade Maryland Militia.

Appointed to the honorable station of cammander of the first brigade of Maryland Militia, at a period when our peaceful shores are threatened by hostile armaments, I cannot reconcile it to myself to enter upon the duties of my office, without calling the attention of my fellow citizens to the duty we owe to our country—and offering a public assurance of the line of conduct I mean to pursue; as well as an explanation of what I shall expect from every officer and soldier under my command.

Parade, though I shall not disregard it, will be to me a subordinate consideration. I will not interfere in the militia appointments in any manner—except when called upon by the executive. In such a case, I will, without favour or partiality, give my opinion of the qualification for the military service of the individual applying for promotion.

I will faithfully attend to, and embrace every opportunity of obtaining for you all the advantages which may be conferred upon any brigade in the state. If I discover particular merit and assiduities in any officer, from the colonel to the corporal, I shall faithfully report the same to the executive.

This preliminary view of the rules by which I shall be governed, will shew that it is my wish that the brigade should be something more than a nominal force.

Accustomed to militia in actual service, I know their irresistable power, when governed by the principles of a good discipline, and led by brave and enterprising officers—and notwithstanding it has been fashionable to undervalue such troops, yet if my own experience can give any weight to the opinion of men of no small renown, well disciplined militia will be our most effectual defence. A standing army has never been congenial to the feelings and genius of our country—and should be kept up only as a school of military science. We are placed at such a distance from the rival powers of Europe, that in fact, there is not any other use for one. But it does not follow, that if discipline is totally disregarded *elsewhere*, that *we* should remain ignorant of its best principles, and the most improved military tactics. The starts of phrenzy and desperation which so distract Europe, may in one shape or other, reach us, and disturb the tranquility of our weatern world.

Such intrusion must eventually be marked by their defeat and our aggrandizement—yet it will depend upon the correct knowledge we posses, upon the discipline, subordination, and enthusiasm of the militia, to give an immediate check to the hostile intruders, before they can let loose the dogs of war, and desolate our peaceful habitations.

No troops, either regular or militia, can ever expect success, without a knowledge of the tactics of their enemies—and a strict discipline under the most strict subordination.

I flatter myself that the first brigade of Maryland militia, will leave no means unemployed to be distinguished.

Steuben's system of exercise is now generally exploded, and admitted to be insufficient—and we must prepare our minds and our hearts, to receive the light of experience, purchased by the blood of millions. Many treatises are abroad—but although the perusal of them all may be useful after experience is gained, it is of the first importance to begin with correct works only. If officers, desirous of distinguishing themselve, and of being useful to their country, will devote a portion of their leisure hours to the study of such works as contain the principles of the new tactics, and practise in the first elements, were it only with ten or twenty men, and thus illustrate what is read, each succeeding page will become easier and more familiar—but to practise, and better understand the theory which they acquire from books, I recommend that there should be frequent meetings of the *non-commissioned officers* of every regiment, at some most convenient and central place—where the colonel, forming them into a company, to command in rotation according to their respective capacities, without respect to rank *for the time*—thus going through the duties of a company and battalion, they would soon acquire knowledge and the habit of command, at the same time. Gentlemen thus collected, to communicate and receive instruction, would soon become expert, and every officer would rejoin his company with enlarged ideas, and could with greater facility teach a system, which he had seen demonstrated. How far such meetings would be a source of mutual good will, and a school for that urbanity of manners, which, in all countries, is one of the most striking characters of the good soldier, is submitted, gentlemen, to your own reflections.

The objects of all discipline for military purposes are of two kinds, *defence* against assault, and *offence* against an adversary, in order to defeat him before he is prepared to assault. The greatest perfection of discipline, consists in such an uniformity of mind among the whole military force, that when called to act, they will act together, in the most simple manner, with uniform rapidity, and yet with the least labour to each man, that is practicable. For it will be at once seen, that the less fatigued a body of men are after an hour's action, the more able they will be to sustain another hour. The old exercise makes large wheelings of long lines, which increase labour and lose time; the modern discipline resorts to short divisions and diagonal lines; this constitutes one of the great differences between the old and the modern system; but no officer should expect good movements in the battalion, if the officers and men do not first learn to march in equal times, and in paces of two feet. Let me recommend the disuse of slow marches, at least until men understand marching in quick time.—Our militia want no knowledge so much as that of marching well—for if they but march well, manœuvering becomes the simplest thing imaginable; all the disorder that appears in militia manœuvres, arises from their not marching in equal pace and equal times.——I recommend these general truths, with a view that they may be pursued by study and practice.

Let me particularly insist on calling your attention to the importance of a branch of the military, too little attended to—the very sinews of every army are the non-commissioned officers; their qualifications have been too little respected, and the appointment to the rank of corporal or sergeant, has been, through a false and mistaken pride, thought degrading. Never was there a greater mistake, for as I have before said, they are the nerve and sinew of an army.—They should be selected from the most respectable, intelligent, and active young men of every company. The seamen have a saying, that those officers who come in through the *cabin windows* are not always best. The sentiment will apply to officers of every kind. Such young men as aspire to the first military offices of the state, or of the United States, should take their degree in the ranks, and make their way by merit, they will not experience any diminution of character by being respected as an excellent corporal or sergeant, and they will never be the worse officer for knowing subordinate duties. It is the high road to preferment, by which some of the greatest commanders of this military age have placed themselves in the same rank with the greatest generals of antiquity, and above most of them. The profession of arms is extremely mechanical, it is a perfect analysis, and you must begin at the lowest grade, to have a thorough knowledge of the system and the detail. Subordination should never be lost sight of, or any army carries within itself the certain seed of destruction. By subordination I mean, that every officer and soldier should strictly know and do the duty assigned to him, from the sentiment of principle and manly pride, and the language and deportment of officers and soldiers to each other, should be marked by the most respectful decorum, and with the happy means of preserving mutual respect, and reciprocal confidence, which is the soul of an army. It becomes, in a particular manner, the duty of the officers to encourage by their example, a becoming attention to preciseness and neatness on military parade, and to introduce some plan for uniforming the troops. The facility with which our raw materials can now be manufactured, gives me the hope that a small contribution from each company will enable them to appear in a neat and correct uniform at the next September review.

The military fines should be collected promptly, without favour or partiality—and scrupulously applied as the law directs. I feel convinced that they will be a most abundant source not only to provide music (which no company should be without) but even colours and arms.

It is not my intention to interfere with the state regulations—but I cannot help expressing my strong partiality in favor of *rifle corps*—a partiality acquired during our revolution, formed in witnessing their effects—and which has been confirmed by their wonderful success in many of the most tremendous conflicts of Europe since.

Well disciplined light troops in our country, are almost invincible—and to such troops, I promise to give every support in my power.

The laws, though they do not provide as much as is desirable, do not prohibit our doing all that we can for the promotion of military skill, or the service of our country. *Sharp shooters*, should not be confined to rifle companies only; *every soldier should be expert at the rifle*, and accustom himself to draw at the mark.

The law, by virtue of which we assemble, directs what returns are to be made, by whom, and at what periods. I trust that these duties will not be neglected by any officer of this brigade. A punctual attention to this part of our militia law, will enable me better to discharge my own duty.

I have, fellow citizens, addressed you upon topics common but interesting—hereafter, I hope to be better acquainted with the particular interests of my brigade—and, if found necessary, you shall hear farther from

THOMAS MARSH FORMAN,
Brigadier General

September 18th, 1811.

FROM THE ALBANY REGISTER.

COMMENTS
ON ARMED NEUTRALITY.
No. V.

The more we investigate the barbarous right of war, the more it appears that of all the governments who take up arms, none have a more honest, laudable and pious motive than those who wish to maintain by it a perfect system of neutrality, and that none ought to be more warmly supported by the people. Experience has taught, however, that it is more difficult to raise the spirit of a nation to consolidate such a pacific system, than to enflame their minds with the ambition of conquest, or to rouse their patriotism to repel an impending or a real attack. They think that neutrality is the total negation of war, and that the cause being good, and the intention just, its execution is easy. But how gross the mistake and how much to be blamed those who do not strengthen the arm of their rulers, to accomplish such a desirable object!

If the same exertions were made to avert war as those which become inevitable when war is at hand, very seldom that calamity would take place. A people acting for the sake of peace, with energy and prudence, would acquire respectability & political influence; each of the belligerents would court their government to prevent them from throwing their weight into the opposite scale; they even would claim their good offices for the mediation of peace, and the neutral powers, viewing in them also essential allies, would unite secretly or openly their interest with theirs for the preservation of their rights or the re-establishment of harmony among the belligerents.

But if neutrality is not armed, if it is not well organized in all its branches, if it is not severely executed and impartially observed "it sours your friends without gratifying their enemies," or as Polybius remarks, "it gives you no friends & takes away none of your enemies," (Neque amicos parit, neque inimicos tollit) and it exposes you to the ill usage of all the belligerents, and to the neglect of the neutrals.

No country has obtained more extraordinary advantages from a system of armed neutrality than the Swiss confederacy. Neutrality in that part of Europe, so peaceable and so happy, before France had crushed its independence into nullity, was a constitutional principle of its federative government. But instead of forgetting the obligations which they had contracted when they wanted help, the faithful Swiss supplied troops to those with whom they had capitulations for that purpose, and no one ever found fault with it, because they had a most excellent military system, and would never embark in any European war themselves, or suffer their best friends to violate the neutrality of their territory, which was for France a key to Italy and to the Austrian dominions, and for Austria a key to France.

The Poles, before they fell a victim to the triple ambitions of Russia, Prussia & Austria, had frequently attempted to maintain a system of armed neutrality; but their intestine divisions were so great and their constitution so bad, that the individual valor of their nobles, and the magnanimous efforts of their great lords, could never prevent the violation of their territory, and the prostration of their neutral rights, whenever the Russians or the Turks were implicated in the continental wars, and their disregarded neutrality has always brought more distress upon them than an open state of war.

The states-generals of the united provinces of the Netherlands, have been more fortunate in observing at different periods a system of neutrality; but they owed it entirely to the excellence of their navy, to the strength of their army, and to their attention in combining with the art of the engineer, the defensive means which nature had granted them.

Other powers, and particularly Sweden, Russia and Denmark, have equally been successful in establishing neutrality as the rule of their conduct, but none without a strict adherence to the fundamental principle, that governments to be respected must be respectable.—The weak and the defenceless must give up all pretensions to neutrality and meekly adopt Phocion's advice to the Athenians "*that if they were not the strongest, they ought to have the strongest for allies.* I introduce this opinion of that illustrious Greek Orator, to sooth, if possible, the feelings of Mr. Pickering and his friends, and to shew that the plot of an English alliance, offensive and defensive, which hath existed really if not formally when that gentleman was in office, and which he continues to promote in retirement, has some similarity with the sentiments of the disciple of Xenocrates.* In reality, as America, on account of her commerce, is in a great measure ruled by the sea, and as England rules the sea, she is with respect to the United States the greatest European power, not only by the strength of her navy, but by the immensity of commerce which spreads its roots like a corroding cancer thro' all the ramifications of their political body. France comparatively, is hardly a power of the second order in American affairs. She has lost her colonies, her navy is not yet regenerated, her commerce is passive, and the strongest nation prejudices coherent to the blood of Scotch or English *origin*, militate against her interest, and also against all those who owe her their birth.

Between the English & the French accordingly, agreeable to Phocion, the first are entitled to our alliance, because they are the most powerful by sea, they can injure the most our commerce, and they have among us thousands of loyal partizans, who at this very moment would glory to rally round their standards and hoist them on the Capitol at Washington. But far be from me the contumelious thought that we are not the strongest in our own country, and that we want any European alliance at all to be free and happy.

The physical strength of the United States, their incommensurable resources to create a powerful navy; the bold spirit of their seafaring men which would render them the most active and successful privateers; the valiant youth of their cities and villages, whose zeal for the study of military tactics, deserves so much praise; their hardy, rugged and brave yeomanry, who unite all the qualities required to form indefatigable soldiers. The wonderful number of their militia, which would enable them to turn a battalion into the field, easier than any European nation could bring a platoon against them. The flourishing situation of their agriculture, which never fails to offer an abundant surplus; and the astonishing progress of their arts, manufactures, furnaces, forges and powder mills, are as many nerves which being put in action, and combined with commercial & political auxiliary means, could inspire in the holders of the valuable ship timber land of Canada, in the possessors of the profitable fisheries of Newfoundland, in the wealthy proprietors of Jamaica, and other neighboring islands, as well as to the aspiring master of Peru and Mexico, a very prudent though very tardy regard for our neutral rights.

Great changes are working under the hand of God, on this continent, and our weight thrown in the balance of independence and liberty, could wean for ever the new world from the old, and leave the cabinets of London and Paris to repent of their orders, their decrees and their plundering system.

I am too well acquainted with the moderation and pacific views of the N. American people, to believe, in earnest, that the citizens now at the head of their government have any hostile views against either of the belligerents, and indeed if we are to judge of their secret intentions by their measures, it would appear that they have rather indulged too far the flattering hope of preserving peace and neutrality on honorable and safe bases. Unacquainted with the deep immorality of European politics, they have thought that justice and reason would finally prevail; but justice and reason have long ago put on the mantle of mourning in that part of the world. And it is only by a repulsion equal to the action, that we may henceforth expect to maintain our neutrality, between powers bent upon one another's destruction, who consider as lawful whatever war considers as useful, and have embraced that infamous old Roman maxim, that "amidst the arms the laws are silent." (Inter arma silere leges.)

Our defensive means are of two sorts, Military and Political—and if I have not conceived an erroneous opinion of the rights and duties of an American citizen, I shall submit, with civic confidence, my ideas on the application which could be made of those powerful restoratives, to raise us from a state of stupor to political life.

A martial attitude by land and by sea ought evidently to be the object of our immediate efforts, and I should recommend accordingly—

1. To form, as soon as possible, armies of neutrality to the north and to the south of our empire, with able officers, sedentary old troops of the line, and adjunct drafts of the Militia to serve only three months by rotation.

2. To concentrate, increase and improve our scattered flotilla, on the plan of the flotillas of Russia and Sweden, and station two divisions of those very useful armaments, with a sufficient number of transports, in the most convenient fortified harbours, at the two extremes of our sea shores.

3. To strengthen our naval force on the lakes, and subject to the requisition of government all the craft used for their navigation.

4. To repair and garrison, to the full complement of war, the most useful of our forts on the frontiers.

5. To arm a sufficient number of frigates and sloops of war to protect our maritime dominions, escort our national convoys to the friendly markets open to our trade, and if wanted, to form a junction with the flotillas.

6. To begin in earnest the building of men of war of the first and second rate, persevere with an invariable steadiness, in that national undertaking, *until we have a navy*, and provide by law for the selection, preservation and regeneration of ship timber, and the encouragement of the cultivation and manufacture of Hemp, and of all the arts useful to a Military navy.†

These are the summaries of the principal Military means which, as far as I am able to judge from my solitary retreat, could be attended with utility, beside those already in operation.

The political means do not all, by their nature, admit of a public investigation—I know several which might be highly serviceable; but I must content myself to suggest the propriety of

* Xenocrates was a philosopher of Athens, suspected of being bribed by the Macedonians, whose main spring to accomplish their object, was corruption. Phocion had imbibed from him impressions too friendly to that country for the independence of his own, opposed warmly Demosthenes, who thought the Barbarians of Scythia and the Persians less dangerous for the liberty of Greece, than the Greeks of Macedon devoted to royalty, and very influential at Athens by their connections, their manners, their commerce and their language.

† I am preparing a memorial on those subjects of political economy, for the society for the promotion of Useful Arts, of the State of New York, who have already begun to investigate them.