For the FEDERAL GAZETTE.

To the Public and the Members of the honorable Thespian Choir.

Non ignara mali miseris succurrere disco.

IN the earliest ages, that desire that mankind had of celebrating and relating in poetry the magnanimous atchievements, undaunted bravery, and moral virtues of of their heroes, seemed inherent, and was evidently the parent of dramatic performance. Its origin is so noble, and its tendencies were so beneficial to civil society, that if it was possible to preserve it in its primitive purity, it might justly be deemed the great bulwark and promoter of human knowledge; but unfortunately it is, has, and ever will be abused; yet this is no reason that it should be condemned altogether.

Chivalry had an illustrious and noble birth, yet in the space of but a few centuries it became corrupted, and the cloak of every vice and diabolical machination. Man from his infancy seems intuitively to seek a superiority among his species, and this zeal if not restrained in embryo, may gradually increase to such a degree, that his whole system becomes invigorated, his active faculties unrestrainable, and if in the least encouraged, no object in nature is capable of smothering that emulation, or of impeding his great design of immortalizing his name, or arriving at the very pinnacle of popular fame. This eagerness for preeminence, we grant, is often attended with pernicious consequences, yet as one grade in civil society is altogether incompatible with human nature, its ill tendencies must be overlooked, and we cannot do otherwise than admire that which is attended with such a multiplicity of advantages to mankind in general.

If that emulation which is naturally excited in our breasts at the celebration of the conspicuous and illustrious deeds of our fellow-creatures was destroyed, a lethargic and supine stupor would, to a great degree, pervade the mind; the mental faculties in a measure lie dormant; the powers of invention, judgment and description lie latitant, and unless the object is snatched from that cold phlegmatic humor, which would greatly impair his every power, he may live a burden to himself, and of no manner of utility to his fellow-creatures, the great design for which he was created; he lives neglected and unknown; suffers uncondoled, and lastly, dies unlamented. Seeing then the great necessity of nourishing an emulous mind, as also an activity and sprightliness of disposition, (as it certainly has ultimately a great tendency to the cultivation of the moral, corporeal and intellectual virtues) I hope all will coincide with me in opinion that a desire for preeminence and a thirst after fame is at all times commendable.

If the renowned Athenian orator, Demosthenes, had permitted himself to be brow-beaten and overawed by his envious competitors and rivals for fame, we should never have had such an example of indefatigable industry, unprecedented eloquence and unparalleled perseverance and patience; his contemporaries also would have been deprived of the beneficial results of his great genius. No! too noble minded to be affected with their repartees and contumelious scoffs, he surmounted even nature's impediments, and perceiving his gradual improvement, a noble emulation seized his breast, and after long perseverance, like a true son of Job, became the admiration and astonishment of the then civilized world.

There has been no nation, however uncultivated and illiterate, but what by some means or other perpetuated the memory of the heroism and magnanimity of their chiefs. During the first stage of society, when men had but few ideas to convey, and those simple, symbols, hieroglyphics or any thing emblematical of the object, passion or action sufficed; thus, a certain hieroglyphic conveyed the idea of a lenient, mild and virtuous prince; another, that of a ferocious, cruel and tyrannical one—but as the world increased in popularity, men's ideas consequently increased, and became more complex; hence originated letters, with which we now convey our ideas with so much ease and facility. Society took from this era a sudden rise: the virtues of their princes were eulogized in public theatres. This naturally created an emulation, and each strived to be numbered as one, to have the glory of having their actions and atchievements publicly commended and with honor handed down to posterity for their admiration and esteem. The liberality of the ancients in conferring rewards and honors on the worthy, is a distinguished and laudable trait in their character—it tended much to the improvement of their morals, as also of the art of war and peace, agriculture, architecture, and in fact every pursuit that advanced the arts and sciences, in which it is well known they so much excelled. The Grecians, and particularly the Athenians, were extravagantly fond of theatrical entertainments, the reason of which is clear. No people ever evinced such a passion for eloquence, taste for the fine arts, justness of sentiments, and eloquence of language as they, and nothing contributed more to their increase than dramatic writing and performance.

Euripides, Eschylus and Sophocles must be ever held in high estimation, as they were the first that gave it a polish and brought it to a great state of refinement and public utility; in fact I can say no more of dramatic performance than that it was the parent of eloquence, correctness of style, and the great promoter of human knowledge.

All candid, impartial and thinking minds cannot but admire the excellent, laudable and charitable design, each and all of the members that compose your honorable body, have in view. Confident that charitable motives alone, uncontaminated with a thirst of fame, or a desire of shewing yourselves eloquent and skilful in the buskin, has induced you to form yourselves into a body for the purpose of performing, for the relief of the poor and indigent, and depend upon the liberality and generosity of a feeling public. And as the custom of celebrating and perpetuating the memory of our great men, by dramatic writing and performance has long since died away, and the theatre greatly depreciated from its ancient estimation, I trust and hope, that the noble and charitable design you have in view, will answer as a substitute; and that our citizens may be filled with that zeal and ardor to encourage an infant institution, that the Athenians had of celebrating their heroes. If they take into consideration (as no doubt they will,) the helpless and forlorn situation of many of our fellow-creatures in this city, no shed to protect them from the chilling nocturnal northern blasts---no bread to satisfy the cravings of a ferocious appetite---no shoes to protect them from the fleecy ice, and no cloaths to cover their infant babes, who alas! from their birth, are declared the children of misery, and destined during their stay in this world of tribulation, to be rocked in the cradle of affliction. Are not these ideas of generous citizens, enough to melt you? Ought not those scenes animate your breasts with resolutions, to snatch those children of wretchedness from their deplorable situation? Surely they are. Consider blind fortune's erratic wheel, may suddenly turn---affluence may be converted to poverty, and ease and contentment, to wretchedness and woe. Picture to yourselves, instead of a downy pillow, the cold and humid earth; instead of the dainties and superfluities of this life, barely the necessaries of it. Is it not nature? Ought it not to be the first principle that animates our breast, to succor and alleviate the wretched? Is it not most fit that we should dispense with some of those superfluities and unnecessaries, and endeavor to restore something more similar to an equality? Surely it is. None can or will deny it. That the public may take these things into consideration, and reflect that, what is given to the needy with a good intention, is given to God, who returns it with a manifold increase, is my sincere wish. And that the motives that now warm the breasts of those honorable members of the Thespian Choir, may be forever the primum mobile of all their actions, is the sincere and ardent wish of their friend and admirer.

ESCHYLUS.

INTERESTING DEBATE.

Mr. ROSS's SPEECH

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

Wednesday, February 16, 1803.

After the reading of two or three bills, on which there was no debate, Mr. Breckenridge moved to have the galleries cleared, and the doors closed, which was done accordingly.

At one o'clock, the doors of the senate were opened, and in a few minutes afterwards

Mr. Ross rose and said, That two days ago he had the honor of stating some of his opinions to the senate respecting the alarming condition of our affairs upon the Mississippi: That in a very interesting part of his enquiry he had been called to order: That the vice-president had expressly determined him to have been in order, and also declared that there was no confidential information before the senate relating to the late aggressions upon our rights in the Mississippi: Yet notwithstanding this declaration of the vice-president, as explicit as it was correct, Mr. R. said, the doors were actually closed and all further public discussion at that time prohibited. Yesterday the doors were again closed. He said it would be well recollected, that when this extraordinary measure was resorted to, he had given notice that he would not proceed further in this discussion while the doors were shut, and that he would resume it whenever they should be opened. From that time to the present he had remained silent, but now, when a majority of the senate had resolved that this discussion should be public, he would proceed to finish the remarks he had intended to make and then offer his resolutions. He could not, however, avoid expressing his acknowledgments to the majority of that body, who had decided that this debate would be public, for, although some gentlemen might be desirous to stifle, and smother in secrecy, an enquiry like the present, he firmly believed that there would always be firmness and independence enough in that house to meet in public the investigation of every subject proper for public deliberation.

Mr. R. said he would not return to a repetition of what he had formerly stated, it would be sufficient to mention, that he had urged the importance of our rights in the navigation of the Mississippi founded in nature, and acknowledged by compact: This was the great and the only highway of commerce from the western country to the ocean: That the Spanirds after a long execution of this treaty, have now flagrantly violated it, and shut us out from all intercourse, and from the right of deposit: That they have plundered our citizens upon the ocean; carried our vessels into their ports and condemned them without the semblance of a trial: Our seamen have been cast into prison, and our merchants ruined: Thus assailed upon the ocean, and upon the land by a long course of oppression and hostility without provocation and without apology, he knew but one course we could take which promised complete redress of our wrongs: Experience had proved, that compact was no security; the Spaniards either cannot or will not observe their treaty. If they are under the direction of a stronger power who will not permit them to adhere to their stipulations; or if they of their own accord inflict these indignities under a belief that we dare not resent them, it was equally incumbent on us to act without farther delay. The aggressors are heaping indignity upon you at your own door, at the very borders of your territory, and tell you, at the same time, they have no right to the country from whence they exclude you. If they act thus without right why not enforce yours by taking possession? Will you submit to be taken by the neck and kicked out, without a struggle? Was there not spirit enough in the country to repel and punish such inheard of insolence? Is not the magnitude of the interest at stake, such as to warrant the most vigorous and decisive course which can express public indignation? Go then, take the guardianship of your rights upon yourselves, trust it no longer to those who have so gresly abused the power they have had over it—Reinstate yourselves in the possession of that which has been wrested from you and withheld by faithless men, who confess themselves no longer the owners of the country over which they are exercising these acts of injustice and outrage. Negociation may, perhaps, be wise, but this is the effectual measure to support it; when it is seen that you have determined to support your just demands with force—that you have already taken inty your hands an ample security for future security and good behavior, your ambassador will be respected and attended to. But what weight will his remonstrances have in any country of Europe, when they hear of no military preparations to vindicate your pretensions, when they learn that you have been chased out of a possession confessedly your right, that you have been insultingly told, begone, you shall not buy, you shall not sell, you are such a nuisance we will have no intercourse with you!

Where is the nation, ancient or modern, that has borne such treatment without resentment or resistance! Where is the nation that will respect another that is passive under such humiliating degradation and disgrace? Your outlet to market closed—next they will trample you under foot upon your own territory which borders upon theirs! Yet you will not stir, you will not arm a single man; you will negociate! Negociation alone under such circumstances must be hopeless. No—Go forward, remove the aggressors, clear away the obstructions, restore your possession with your own hand, and use your sword, if resistance be offered: Call upon those who are most injured to redress themselves—you have only to give the call, you have men enough near to the scene, without sending a man from this side the mountains—force sufficient, and more than sufficient, for a prompt execution of your orders. If the money be an object; one half of the money which would be consumed and lost by delay and negociation, would put you in possession. Then you may negociate whether you shall abandon it and go out again.

You may also then negociate as to compensations for the spoliations upon your trade. You will have ample funds in your own hands to pay your merchants, if the Spaniards continue their refusal to pay. You will have lands to give which they will readily accept, and assist in defending. In this way they may all be indemnified; by negociation there is little hope that they ever will.

It may be said that the executive is pursuing another and a very different course. The executive will certainly pursue the course designated by the legislature. To the congress has been confided the power of deciding what shall be done in all cases of hostility by foreign powers. There can be no doubt that, by the law of nature and nations, we are clearly authorized to employ force for our redress, in such a case as this: That we have a just right to take such measures as will prevent a repetition of the mischief and afford ample security for the future quiet enjoyment of the violated right. If we leave it entirely to the executive he can only employ negociation as being the sole means in his power. If the right be not abandoned what is to be done? I know, said Mr. R. that some gentlemen think there is a mode of accomplishing our object of which, by a most extraordinary proceeding, I am forbidden to speak in this house, I will not, therefore, touch it—But I will ask honorable gentlemen, especially those from the western country, what they will say on their return home to a people pressed by the heavy hand of this calamity—when they inquire, what has been done?—What are our hopes? How long will this obstruction continue? You answer—we have provided a remedy, but it is a secret!!! We were not allowed to speak of it there, much less here—It was only committed to confidential men in whispers, with closed doors: But, by and by, you will see it operate like enchantment—It is a sovereign balsam which will heal your wounded honor—It is a potent spell, or a kind of patent medicine which will extinguish and forever put at rest the devouring spirit which has desolated so many nations of Europe. You never can know exactly what it is—nor can we tell you precisely the time it will begin to operate—But operate it certainly will, and effectually too!!! You will see strange things by and by, Wait patiently, and place full faith in us, for we cannot be mistaken.

This idle tale may amuse children. But the *men* of that country will not be satisfied—They will tell you that they expected better things of you, that their confidence has been misplaced, and they will not wait the operation of your newly invented drugs; they will go and redress themselves.

I say also let us go and redress ourselves, you will not have the whole nation with you. On no question since the declaration of independence has the nation been so unanimous as upon this. We have at different times suffered great indignity and outrages from different European powers; but none so palpable, so inexcusable, so provoking, or of such magnitude in their consequences as this. Upon none has public opinion united so generally as this. It is true we have a lamentable division of political opinion among us, which has produced much mischief, & may produce much greater than any we have yet felt. On this question party spirit ought to sink & disappear. My opinions are well known, & are not likely to change, but I candidly, and with all possible sincerity, declare, my conviction to be clear that there will not be a dissenting voice in the Western country if this course be taken;—that so far as my own abilities go, they shall be exerted to the utmost to support it; and I know that my friends on this floor with whom I have long thought and acted, have too high a regard for the national honor, and the best interests of their country to hesitate a moment in giving the same pledge of their honest determination to support and render these measures effectual, if taken;---call them ours, if you please, we take the responsibility, and leave the execution of them with you. For as to myself or my friends, no agency is wished except that of uniting with you in rousing the spirit, and calling out the resources of the country to protect itself against serious aggression, and the total subjection and loss of the western country.

If you pursue this advice, and act promptly and boldly upon it; if you take possession, and prepare to maintain it; from the very unanimity displayed you will have no war---you will meet no resistance. Indeed, a war may be said to be already begun, for hostility of the worst kind on one side has been long in practice upon us, and our retaliation or resistance will be justified on every principle which has governed the conduct of nations. If the Spaniards resist you in taking possession of what by treaty they have acknowledged to be yours, and what they now confess does not belong to them; the war certainly begins with them. Under all these circumstances, with these offers of support, could gentlemen doubt, could they venture to cry peace, peace, when there was no peace, but a sword!

Mr. R. entreated gentlemen to view and consider his proposed resolutions with candor. He declared his intentions to be solely the attainment of an object, the loss of which would destroy the country where he resided, and hazard the union itself. If gentlemen thought the proposed means inadequate, he would agree to enlarge them with cheerfulness; all that he wished was that effectual means be voted and employed in this golden moment, which if lost, never would return.

He said he would delay the senate no longer than to present his resolutions, and give notice that he would move to have them printed and made the order of the day for some future day. For, as gentlemen had consented that this business should be no longer a secret, they would now become the subject of ample and able discussion.

After reading the resolutions, Mr. Ross said, I will now move these resolutions and if gentlemen on the other side shall be disposed to give to the president greater power, I will cheerfully join them in extending it as far as they may think necessary to the accomplishment of the object.

Mr. Wells rose and seconded the motion.

Mr. Ross moved that that the consideration of the resolutions be the order for Monday.

Mr. Nicholas rose and said he wished to make one or two observations in reply to ——

The vice-president interrupted him and said that if those observations were intended to apply to the question whether the resolutions should be the order for Monday, they would be proper, otherwise they would not be in order.

Mr. Nicholas said he did not wish to go into any discussion of the merits of the resolutions. He merely wished to remark, that the course pursued by the gentleman upon this occasion was altogether new and extraordinary. I presume, said he, that the gentleman expects to derive some advantage from the adoption of this course. If so, he is quite welcome to any advantage which he can gain. I believe that the American people are too enlightened and too well informed to be deceived by any thing which has been said, or by the novel course which has been pursued. It is usual, when any business of such importance is about to be introduced, to give some previous notice, in order that gentlemen may be prepared to discuss the subject. Why the gentleman has thought proper to depart from it in the present instance I cannot pretend to say. However, all that I think important to say at present is in reply to the assertion, that we are not informed of the intention of———

The vice-president again interrupted him and said that the question before the senate was, whether the resolutions should be the order for Monday. Upon that question, no remarks in reply to the gentleman from Pennsylvania would be admitted. If gentlemen were disposed to discuss the resolutions or to reply to any arguments which had been advanced by the mover, the regular method would be to negative the motion, and then the whole subject would again be open.

Mr. Ross said he did not wish to preclude any observations which any gentleman might be disposed to make, and if the gentleman from Virginia wished to reply to any thing which he had said, he would withdraw the motion and give him an opportunity.

Mr. Nicholas said he had no wish upon the subject, and would say nothing more.

Mr. Wright said he hoped it would not be the order for Monday; and as the genman had been indulged with an opportunity of advancing his sentiments at large upon the subject, he presumed it would be in order for him to notice some of the most extraordinary of——

The vice-president said it would *not* be in order, unless the present motion was first negatived.

The question was then taken and carried in the affirmative; and the senate adjourned.

IN SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

February 25, 1803.

The senate resumed the consideration of the resolutions respecting the indispensable right of the United States to the free navigation of the Mississippi, together with the proposed amendment thereto, and a division was called for and the question was taken on striking out the first resolution, offered by Mr. Ross.

It passed in the affirmative—Yeas 15—Nays 11.

The yeas and nays were as follow:

YEAS—Messrs. Anderson, Baldwin, Bradley, Breckenridge, Clinton, Cocke, Ellery, T. Foster, Jackson, Logan, S. T. Mason, Nicholas, Stone, Sumter, Wright—15.

NAYS—Messrs. Dayton, Hillhouse, Howard, J. Mason, Morris, Olcott, Plumer, Ross, Tracy, Wells, White—11.

On the question, shall the remaining resolutions be struck out, it passed in the affirmative—Yeas 15—Nays 11.

The yeas and nays on this question were the same as on the above question.

The question on the resolutions of Mr. Breckinridge was then taken and carried unanimously in the affirmative—Yeas 25—as follow:

YEAS—Messrs. Anderson, Baldwin, Bradley, Breckenridge, Clinton, Cocke, Dayton, Ellery, T. Foster, Hillhouse, Howard, Jackson, Logan, S. T. Mason, S. Mason, Morris, Nicholas, Olcott, Plumer, Ross, Stone, Sumter, Tracy, Wells, Wright—25.

Messers. Breckenridge, Jackson & Sumter, were appointed a committee to bring in a bill or bills pursuant to the above resolutions.

On Friday, Mr. Breckinridge reported a bill conformably to the resolutions.

LEGISLATURE OF NEW-YORK.

In Senate, February 14.

Resolved, as the sense of the legislature, that the following amendments ought to be incorporated into the constitution of the United States, as a necessary safe guard against pernicious dissentions in the choice of a president, and vice-president, and as the most eligible mode of obtaining a full and fair expression of the public will in such election.

1. That the state legislature shall, from time to time divide each state into districts, equal to the whole number of senators and representatives from such state in the congress of the United States, and shall direct the mode of choosing an elector of president and vice-president, in each of the said districts, who shall be chosen by citizens, having the qualifications requisite for the electors of the most numerous branch of the state legislature, and that the districts so to be constituted, shall consist as nearly as may be, of contiguous territory, and of equal proportion of population, except where there may be any detached portion of territory, not of itself sufficient to form a district, which then shall be annected to some other portion nearest thereto, which districts, when so divided, shall remain unalterable, until a new census of the United States shall be taken.

2. That in all future elections of president and vice-president, the persons voted for, shall be particularly designated, by declaring which is voted for as president, and which as vice-presidenr.

Resolved, That the senators and representatives of this state in the next congress, of the United States, be and they are hereby requested to use their best exertions for obtainieg the adoption of the above amendments or other amendments substantially equivalent.

Resolved, That his excellency the governor be and he is hereby requested to transmit a copy of the preceding resolutions to the senators and representatives in the next congress from this state.

[Concurred in by the house of assembly.]

NEW-YORK, February 25.

Arrived, (and mentioned yesterday) the fine coppered brig Pennsylvania, captain Shaw, of Philadelphia. This ship failed from the Capes of the Delaware, on the 15th instant, with a valuable cargo of ginseng, wine, &c. and 140,000 dollars in specie, bound to Canton. The next day after she left the Capes, during the late gale, she sprung aleak, had her quarters knocked in, lost all her loose spars, jolly boat, &c. and what rendered their situation extremely critical, was, that five of her crew were frost bitten, and unable to give the least assistance. When the leak was discovered, there were nine feet water in her hold; and, after she was freed she made from seventeen to twenty inches water every half hour, having started timbers both fore and aft. The Pennsylvania, belongs to the house of Wilcox and others, of Philadelphia. One of the owners is on board, through whose exertions, aided by the officers, the vessel was kept from sinking.

Arrived, (and mentioned yesterday) the