

blance of immense wealth, conjured into existence by a *gigantic plan of swindling*; but, for a short time, illusive advantages, followed by lasting ruin; and that very soon they would feel nothing but wretchedness and remorse; that extreme misery which now wastes them, and of which their leaders in vain try to blunt the sensation by calling it *honourable want*.

And since some Frenchmen are not yet cured of this delirium, but still believe in the existence of what they call the *national fortune*, and expect the permanent possessions of their conquests; I will persist in asking them, what they rely on as the next expedient, when their *fruitful plate* of assignats is become absolutely *barren* by forced production? I will persist in asking them, what new sort of philosopher's stone they flatter themselves with being able to discover, and which may provide for the immense expences that they must incur till the period of an equitable peace.

But if I cannot compel them to acknowledge their approaching weakness, or excite among them a general cry for immediate peace; if they continue to listen to those of their senseless representatives, who never present them with the *olive-branch*, but to advise them to *bind it round the extended frontier of their expanded territory**; in that case I would address myself to that respectable Germanic confederation, which they wish to dismember; I would endeavour to demonstrate to the princes who are at the head of it, how entirely and deservedly France is exhausted; and would press them to warn their subjects against the insinuations of those writers who, influenced only by passions, preach up alternately war, discouragement, and despair; and who would now accept any truce offered them as a favour, though with

* *Freron*, the 20th of February 1795.