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A DEFENCE OF *REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENTS.*

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

The following enquiries have originated from the numerous attacks, recently made in this country on republican institutions. To the writer it hasbeen a matter of extreme astonishment, that principles, no less sublime in theory, than successful in practice, should have excited the least murmur among a people in the full enjoyment of liberty and happiness. He had hoped that the distinguished felicity of the United States, amidst the anarchy, slavery, and warfare of other nations, would have inspired gratitude to the author of all goodness, and have animated every heart with an affectionate attachment to the only principles on which rational liberty has ever been established. Instead of this, it would seem that in proportion to the increasing happiness, and expanding prospects of the country, men of mistaken or sinister motives have availed themselves of the universal toleration of opinion to depreciate the principles, form and administration of our governments, and open the way to the adoption of systems, whose uniform operation has been to aggrandise the few, and degrade the many. Thus it has been from the commencement of the world; in every period of which the profligacy of ambition has carried on its treasonable schemes against the happiness of nations. Some individuals there ever have been, some there are, and some there will always continue to be, who, not content with the enjoyment of equal rights, or with the honorable, open, and extensive field in which talents may virtuously exert themselves, will, secretly or openly, by stratagem or violence, according to the policy of circumstances, conspire against the general welfare, and aim at usurping uncontrolled power, that they may give a loose to the violent and sordid passions it gratifies. Good governments are established to guard against the machinations of these men, and liberty can only be preserved by the unceasing vigilance of the people. As it is under the cover of the night that the robber or assassin leaves his lurking place to prey on society; so it is, in periods of great security that the enemy of liberty often attempts the execution of his deep laid schemes.

Let us then, fellow citizens, be always on our guard. Though there may be now no sword drawn, or arm raised against our rights, the attempt is made, from one end of the land to the other, to depreciate and blacken all that the wisdom of man has devised for their protection. Success is rested on vitiating the public sentiment. Our enemies well know that if they corrupt the source, the streams will soon be polluted.

While the opponents of truth are so active, shall her friends be supine? Shall the happiness, the liberty, the glory of a nation inspire freemen with less ardor than is awakened in the bosom of ambition by its selfish and ignoble views?

Let others act as they may, my voice shall be raised in defence of our common rights. I do not promise you that I will enlighten your minds; but I offer you the feelings of a heart, pure in its love of liberty, and ardent in its devotion to our republican governments.

It was the intention of the writer to publish these enquiries in the form of a pamphlet. But, he has, on reflection, considered it most expedient to submit them to the public, in successive numbers, through a newspaper. The field they open is most extensive and interesting; he has but imperfectly explored a small part of it; the time at his command not admitting of that comprehensive view, or rigid arrangement, that its various aspects require. If, however, his remarks shall either strengthen the attachment of his fellow citizens to their systems of government, or attract the attention of genius and learning to the elucidation of the subject, he shall not have written in vain.

LETTER THE FIRST.

"The highest earthly felicity that a people can ask, or God can give, is an equal and well ordered commonwealth."—HARRINGTON.

IMPORTANCE OF THE NATURE OF GOVERNMENTS.

Of all the topics which excite a diversity of opinion, the most important is that which arises from various or dissimilar views entertained of the first principles of government. However this diversity of opinion may, to the eye of superficial observation, appear unconnected with those particular objects required by the general welfare, it would be no arduous task to shew that it constitutes the constant criterion by which the correctness of every leading measure is tried, and the actions of public agents graduated. Nor is its efficacy the less from the silence with which it operates; as the mighty stream flows not with a less impetuous course from the hidden and faintly discerned sources from which it springs. Insects of a day may enjoy the sunshine of the hour without reflecting on the storm that rapidly envelopes the horison; but man, whose proud prerogative it is to foresee evil and avert it, or good and pursue the means of attaining it, is called upon by every dictate of duty and interest to regard as of primary importance those convictions which, being early embraced and steadily practised, form the basis of his happiness or misery.

From these considerations, the radical laws of nations have ever had a decided influence on their stability, power, and happiness. This influence must continue while cause produces effect, and while man remains a rational being governed by fixed principles. Its empire too will extend with the prevalence of knowledge, as in proportion to the elevation of the human character, it will be governed by determinate principles.

Hence it is of the utmost importance that just ideas of government should be received; and as the American people have risen to a gradation of intellect equal to any of their fellow men, and are the supreme depositary of political power, it may be affirmed that on them it rests, by their principles and conduct, to decide, whether this last quarter of the globe shall retrieve the character and restore the happiness of the world, or sink it still deeper in vice and misery.

America has established a new empire in the annals of politics. Shaking off, as she believes, the prejudices of error and the chains of oppression, she has erected the REPUBLICAN SYSTEM. Is it that system of government which is most eminently calculated to promote human happiness? Or is it one of those deceitful visions that, under insidious smiles, masks substantial ills? Is it the child of fancy, the plaything of unsuspicious infancy, the rattle, which riper years despises? Or is it the vital principle of rational existence which time and experience will increase and strengthen? These are enquiries of vast interest. On their just solution depends, perhaps our own happiness, certainly that of our children, and, it may be, that of all mankind. Whether, therefore, we contemplate the subject, in the dignity of the abstract principles it involves, or in the practical application of them to the present or future state of the world, we shall find ample field for enquiry, and sufficient motive to pursue that enquiry with spirit. Local and temporary circumstances, moreover, add further incentives to the research. Opinions, however heterodox, have sprung up among us, that a republican government is unsuited to the condition of man; and that, however, we may struggle against the corruptions of other governments, we must ultimately, and at no distant period, exchange our proud sentiments of liberty for those chains that hold captive every other nation. If this is the voice of wisdom, pronouncing the oracles of truth, it is the duty of man, however humiliating the sacrifice of his pride, to yield obedience to power which he neither can or ought to resist.

But, before he puts on those fetters that shall place him beneath the rod of some mighty madman or fool, and which once imposed may never perhaps thereafter be broken, it becomes his duty fully and dispassionately to enquire what portion of freedom he may hope to enjoy, and what means he may rationally pursue for its attainment and security.

BONAPARTE.

Every thing that elucidates the character of the First Consul will be satisfactory to our readers. It has often been remarked, that, according to circumstances, he has been all things to all men. This trait of character is happily illustrated in the following conversation held by him, in the Pyramids of Egypt, with a number of distinguished Muftis and Imans, taken from a late Biographical account of him.

"*Bonaparte.*—God is great, and his works are marvellous. But we have here a grand production of the hand of man. What was the object of the individual who caused this pyramid to be constructed?

Suleiman.—He was a powerful king of Egypt, whose name it is said was Cheops. He wished to prevent the sacrilegious from troubling the repose of his ashes.

Bonaparte.—The great Cyrus commanded that, when dead, his body should be left in the open air, that it might return to the elements. Dost thou not think that he did better? Tell me, my friend, what is your opinion?

Suleiman.—(inclining himself) Glory to God, to whom all honor is due!

Bonaparte.—Honor to Allah! Who was the califf who caused this pyramid to be opened, and thus troubled the ashes of the dead?

Muhamed.—It is believed by some that it was Mahmoud, the commander of the faithful, who reigned, several centuries ago, at Bagdad; others say that it was the renowned Aaron Raschild—(peace to his manes!)—who expected to find treasures here: but when by his command entrance was made into this apartment, tradition says that he found mummies only, and this inscription in letters of gold on the wall:

The impious shall commit iniquity without recompense, but not without remorse.

Bonaparte.—The bread stolen by the wicked fills his mouth with sand.

Muhamed.—(inclining himself) These are the words of wisdom.

Bonaparte.—Glory to Allah! There is no other god but God; Mahomet is his prophet, and I am his friend.

Suleiman.—The salutation of peace to the envoy of God! Salutation to thee also, invincible warrior, favorite of Mahomet!

Bonaparte.—Mufti, I thank thee. The divine Coran is the delight of my soul, and the object of my contemplation. I love the prophet, and I hope, ere long, to see and honor his tomb in the holy city. But my mission is first to exterminate the Mamelucs.

Ibrahim.—May the angels of victory sweep the dust from thy path, and cover thee with their wings. The Mameluc has merited death.

Bonaparte.—He has been smote and delivered over to the black angels, Moukir and Quakir. God, on whom all things depend, has ordained, that his dominion shall be destroyed.

Suleiman.—He has extended the hand of rapine over the land, the harvests, and the horses of Egypt.

Bonaparte.—And over the most beautiful slaves, thrice holy Mufti. Allah has withered his hand. If Egypt be his portion, let him shew me the lease which God has given him of it: but God is just and merciful to the people.

Ibrahim.—O most valiant among the children of Issa!* Allah has caused thee to follow the exterminating angel, to deliver his land of Egypt.

Bonaparte.—This land was a prey to twenty-four oppressors, rebels against the Grand Sultan, our ally—(whom God turn to his glory!)—and to ten thousand slaves from Canada and Georgia. Adriel, the angel of death, has breathed upon them; we are come, and they have disappeared.

Muhamed.—Noble successor of Scander,† honor to thy invincible arms, and to the unexpected thunder which springs from the middle of thy warriors on horse.‡

Bonaparte.—Dost thou believe that thunder to be a work of the children of men? Dost thou believe so? Allah has placed it in my hands by his messenger the genius of war.

Ibrahim.—We perceive in thy works the great Allah who has sent thee. Couldst thou have conquered if Allah had not permitted? The Delta, and all the neighboring countries, resound with thy miracles.

Bonaparte.—A celestial car‖ will ascend by my command to the abode of the clouds; and the lightening will descend to the earth, along a metallic wire,** the moment I shall bid it.

Suleiman.—And the great serpent, which sprung from the base of the pillar of Pompey, on the day of thy triumphant entry into Scanderich,†† and which remained withered at the socket of the pillar; was not that also a prodigy effected by thy hand?

Bonaparte.—Lights of the age, you are destined to see yet greater wonders, for the days of regeneration are come.

Ibrahim.—May the divine unity regard thee with an eye of predilection, adorer of Issa, and render thee the support of the children of the prophet.

Bonaparte.—Has not Mahomet said, every man who adores God, and performs good works, whatever may be his religion, shall be saved?

Suleimon, Muhamid, Ibrahim, (together, inclining themselves).

He has said so.

Bonaparte.—And if, by an order from on high, I have moderated the pride of the vicar of Issa, by diminishing his terrestrial possessions, in order to amass for him celestial treasures, was it not rendering glory to God, whose mercy is infinite?

Muhamid.—(with an air of hesitation) The Mufti of Rome was rich and powerful; we are poor Muftis.

Bonaparte.—I know that you are poor: be without apprehension; for you have been weighed in the balance of Balthazar, and you have been found light. Does this pyramid, then, really contain no treasure that you know of?

Suleiman.—(his hands on his breast) None, my lord, we swear by the holy city of Mecca.

Bonaparte.—Unhappy, thrice unhappy those who seek for perishable riches, and covet gold and silver, which are like unto dust!

Suleiman.—Thou has spared the vicar of Issa, and hast treated him with clemency and goodness.

Bonaparte.—He is an old man whom I honor—(May God accomplish his wishes, when they shall be regulated by reason and truth!)—but he is to blame in condemning to eternal fire all the mussulmans:—Allah defend us from intolerance!

Ibrahim.—Glory to Allah, and to his prophet, who has sent thee into the midst of us to rekindle the faith of the weak, and to open to the faithful the gates of the seventh heaven!

Bonaparte.—You have spoken my wishes, most zealous muftis: be faithful to Allah, the sovereign ruler of the seven marvellous heavens; and to Mahomet his visir, who traversed all the celestial mansions in a single night. Be the friends of the Francs; and Allah, Mahomet, and the Francs, will recompence you.

Ibrahim.—May the prophet himself cause thee to sit at his left hand on the day of resurrection, after the third sound of the trumpet!

Bonaparte.—He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. The hour of political resurrection has arrived for all who groan under oppression. Muftis, imans, mullahs, dervises, and kalenders, instruct the people of Egypt; encourage them to join in our labours to complete the destruction of the Beys and the Mamelucs. Favor the commerce of the Francs in your country, and their endeavors to arrive at the ancient land of Brama. Let them have storehouses in your ports, and drive far from you the islanders of Albion, accursed among the children of Issa. Such is the will of Mahomet. The treasures, industry, and friendship of the Francs shall be your lot, till you ascend to the seventh heaven, and are seated by the side of the black-eyed houris, who are endowed with perpetual youth and virginity. Repose under the shade of Laba, whose branches present of themselves to true Mussulmans whatever their hearts may desire.

Suleiman.—(inclining himself) Thou hast spoken like the most learned of the mullahs. We place faith in thy words, we will serve thy cause, and God hears us.

Bonaparte.—God is great, and his works are marvellous. The salutation of peace be upon you, thrice holy muftis!"

* *Jesus Christ.*
† *Alexander.*
‡ *The flying artillery, which greatly astonished the Mamelucs.*
‖ *A balloon.*
** *The electric conducter.*
†† *Alexandria.*

HEROES.

As recent events have exhibited to the nation a number of distinguished *paper* HEROES, bent on hurrying us into war, it may not be unseasonable to lay before our readers, a portrait of such characters, which, though drawn in the reign of George the First of England, will, with little variation, apply to this country at this day. The character of other heroes is delineated; and, from the whole a proper estimate may be made of the claim they have to the applause of mankind. The writer is the celebrated TRENCHARD.

In fact the whole history of mankind shews that in no respect has public opinion more erred than in its estimate of true greatness. Dazzled by the splendor of lofty attainments it has too indiscriminately given to genius and talent the admiration alone due to virtue united with wisdom. Awed by the terrible characters of a military conqueror, it has bestowed on exertions of physical power, exercised in the destruction of the human race, the applause which should have been reserved for the protectors of the lives and the promoters of the happiness of mankind. Examine the records of nations, and you behold a succession of warriors, who fought not for the good, but for the injury of the human race; who, not content with covering the earth with desolation and carnage, ended their inglorious career with oppressing those whom they had sworn to protect.

"I design this letter as a dissertation upon heroes, who were at first a sort of brave disinterested men, that having more courage and prowess than others, went about doing good to others, and to all, at their own expence and danger. They established and reformed communities, and taught them laws, and punished those who violated justice and law: they destroyed public robbers and monsters, and the greatest of all public robbers and monsters, tyrants; and lived the patterns of virtue and useful valour.—Hence they were called heroes, a sort of middle beings, superior to other men, and akin to the gods.

"But so wild is the nature of man, and so impudent the nature of ambition, that whereas the primitive heroes were the bulwarks of society, and the preservers of men, those who pretended to succeed them, were the disturbers of society, and the destroyers of men; and such tyrants and monsters as the old heroes had destroyed, did themselves (impudently) set up for heroes. With the same modesty, superstition, which destroys religion, has, in the greatest part of the world, usurped the place of religion; tyranny, which is the extirpation of government, calls itself government: and thus arose persecuting priests and lawless kings. But so are words and the world amused; and with so much safety, and even applause, is mischief committed, when it has but a good name.

"*Alexander* deified himself, & *Cæsar* was deified by others, for being universal murderers; and *Coke* of *Bury* was hanged for attempting one murder: had he been at the head of a hundred thousand cut-throats, and murdered a million, he might have been recorded for a hero, his name been handed down to after-ages with eulogiums, and public declamations made in the schools upon his conduct and virtues.

"*Child*, the highwayman, robbed the mail, and was put to death; but, instead of the mail, had he robbed a nation, (I mean any nation but this,) he might probably have governed it; and, instead of hanging in chains, led a whole people in chains, and been dubbed an able statesman, and a faithful minister.

"Mischief is inseparable from the profession of a present hero, whose business and ambition is to multiply conquests, and consequently miseries, upon those whom he conquers. What a wild and inhuman spirit! to plague the world, in order to make a figure in it; to commit great villanies, for a good name; to destroy the peace and prosperity of mankind, to gain their esteem; and to shed their blood, to shew themselves fit to govern them! For none gain by such accomplishments of theirs, but their soldiers, whose lives too they throw away as wantonly as these take away the lives of others. The chief gainers therefore are only a few officers, servants, and trumpets, who are about their persons, and execute their will and rage for their own ends: and so, to glut a restless tyrant and his instruments, men and nations must be slaughtered or enslaved. This is the heroism, this the glory, of conquering!

"Such is the difference between the old original heroes and these their apes, who, by fraud, violence, perjury and restless cruelty, make war upon their subjects and neighbours; and by sacrificing the virtuous and the brave, or by making them their instruments to sacrifice others, and by distressing, exhausting, plundering and chaining, all push human misery as far as it can go. These are the wolves and tygers of the human race;