

He that silleth his land, shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain persons, is void of understanding.

Proverbs, 11 chap. 12 verses

Messrs. ADAMS & NOURSE,

THAT we are not to expect a state of private or public happiness, which is absolutely perfect in the present world, appears to be universally agreed; but it never was more strikingly verified than with respect to the people of this Commonwealth.

We have passed through scenes of great public and private distress in defending our liberties from the attacks of arbitrary power; our blood and our treasure have been profusely poured out in order to purchase the freedom and independence, in the enjoyment of which we may now glory. In forming the constitution of our government, we made use of the collected wisdom and experience of ages; we proceeded calmly, coolly, deliberately, the people had the most ample recognition of their sovereignty, and they solemnly adopted this constitution: in the sight of God and the world, they declared that they would for a certain term be governed by it, that they would not attempt to infringe or to alter it.

That it is popular; that the subjects of the state have every controul over their rulers, which is compatible with a state of Government, must be acknowledged upon all hands. Once every year, every man returns to a private station, he stands upon the same ground with his fellow citizens, and depends for his re-election entirely upon their pleasure. In a government thus constituted, the prevailing sentiments of the people must have their influence upon every public measure, and their interests must be carefully guarded, because the interests of their rulers cannot become distinct from those of the people. And if there is any danger, it arises from the probability of governmental measures being influenced by too great an attention to popular notions. Nothing but a sense of duty, of clear and absolute necessity, can tempt any public man to contradict the sentiments of the people at large. We have no monarch, whose smiles are to be courted, no treasure with which men may be bribed to deviate from their duty.

And yet, strange to tell! Many of the towns in this Commonwealth are complaining of grievances, and grievances from government too! Their own rulers, whom they themselves raised to power, in the course of six months have become their oppressors, and their distinguished patriots are summoning conventions to consider of grievances, and procure their redress.

Did these conventions proceed merely from the luxuriance of the tree of liberty so deeply rooted in America; were they the ebullitions of temporary uneasiness, and calculated only to separate and discharge those humours which every corporate body will collect, I should consider them as not dangerous; I should view them as convulsions which tended to keep our political air in motion; and thus to preserve its elasticity, and should smile at them, as I do at the little pettish capricious humours of my children.

But I do seriously believe them to be excited, supported and encouraged by the emissaries of that nation to which we were formerly subject. They could not conquer us in the field, and they mean now to attempt our disturbance and ruin by exciting commotions, which tend to destroy

the energy of our government, and render it contemptible. To the needs of some, to the passions of others, to the disappointed ambition of more, they address themselves, and endeavour to destroy their attachment to our present constitution. They know full well (and I would to God their deluded followers would realize the thought) that if we cannot support our present constitution, we must resign ourselves to the government of some foreign master; and they hope yet to triumph in the destruction of American liberty. These are the motives, I doubt not, of many who have fomented these convulsions, and led honest, but unsuspecting men astray, from the path of their public duty.

In every community there will be some persons who had rather get their living in any other way, than be obliged to obtain it by their industry. To these men, seasons of commotion are favourable; at such seasons they become important; they flatter themselves that they are respectable, and they generally for their services obtain some pecuniary rewards. Men of this character would instantly fall in with the designs of the emissaries, whom we have mentioned, and labour to promote their views. It would be well, if the sober part of the community would attend to the text of scripture which is the motto of this paper, and avoid the censure which their following these persons will bring upon them.

I heartily wish that my countrymen would coolly reflect upon the characters of those persons, who have been the most forward to subvert the present constitution, by promoting county conventions. Are they not persons who have been disaffected to the cause of their country in the late contest, or else men of desperate fortunes, who are in debt and want to avoid the payment of their debts? Are they encouraged by steady, honest men, who in times of public trial and difficulty, have acted in uniform part? Are they promoted by those who have any thing to lose by popular convulsions, or by the subjugation of their country? Is it not a known fact, that a true and faithful answer to these questions cannot be made without bringing the fowers of this conventional sedition into contempt?

I mean not to reflect upon any man, merely because he is poor, or to intimate that every one who has favoured these meetings is of this designing character. Our ears have been ready to listen with eagerness to the cry of liberty, and to take the alarm at the most distant encroachment upon our rights, and from this principle some may be drawn aside with good intentions, to do wrong things; but I ask, whether men of desperate circumstances, who are afraid of a state of law and order, and whose existence depends upon eluding the just demands of their creditors, are disinterested enough to be consulted in the question, whether law and order shall still subsist in the community? Will men of property and weight put themselves under the conduct of those persons who so notoriously are governed by selfish, if not dishonest motives? Are these proper leaders for a wife and sober people, and have the people any right to expect that they will pursue the public interest, when it directly militates with their own?

The writer of these remarks, loves his country. He has beheld the scenes of blood shed and confusion, through which it hath waded to the present happy day. His heart warms, when he reflects upon the state of glory and felicity to which it

may arrive, and he deprecates its being left to throw away blessings, for which other nations pine and languish in vain. He cannot bear the idea of the triumph and insult which the ruin of our constitution and liberty, will give to our enemies. From these motives, and from these motives only, he hath been influenced to address the public. Was he known, it would appear, that he has been warmly attached to the cause of his country, through every period of the late contest; it would appear likewise, that he had no place under government, and that he did not hold himself eligible to any office in it. A pure regard to the dignity and happiness of his country, hath led him to lay these considerations before the public, and should they tend to do any good, he may continue the subject, and endeavour to point out some methods, which will tend to crush this dangerous spirit, and preserve us, that liberty, which we have so dearly purchased.

PUBLICUS.

NEW-YORK, August 31. The following most curious hand-bill advertisement, was sent enclosed in a letter to a gentleman in this city, by the last London vessel.

Beads taken off, and Regifurd! By ISAAC FAC-TOTUM, Barber, Peri-wig maker, Surgeon, Parish clerk, School marster, Blacksmiths and Maa-and-wife, SHAVES for a penny, cuts hare for ten pence, and oyld and powdrid into the baggin. Young lads gently Educated, Lamps lited by the hear of quarter. Young gentlemen also tair Grammer language in the neatst manner, Gramrate care takin of their morals and spein. Also, Salme singing and horse Shewing by the real maker! Likewise makes and Mends, all sorts of Butes and Shoes, teaches the Ho! boy and Jewsharp, corns, bleeds On the lowes Terme; Clifters and Purgis at a penny a piece. Gwittitions and other dances tant at home and abroad. Also deles holefale and retail... Pirfumerry in all its branchis. Sells all sorts stahinory wair, together with blacking balls, red herrins, ginger bread and coles, scrubbing brushes, trizle mouse traps and other sweetness, Likewife Godfathers Cordiel, Red nutes, Tatoes, sallages and other gardin stuff.

P. S. Teaches Joggfery, and then our landish kind of things... A Bawl on Wensdays and Frydays, All performed by me

ISAAC FAC-TOTUM.

To be heard of at my warehouse the Little St. No. 42, within Bishopgate. Where you may be sav'd with the best Tobacco by the ream, quire, or single sheet.

N. B. Also, likewise, Bewary of Counterfeits? for such is abroad.

I is the only original inventor that manoufest Licker to much in wog calld Cuckold's Cumfert or arts health. If you wont believe me--ax the landlord and he will GIVE you a Glafs to Taste, if you must give him the money for a first tho.

To be Sold or Exchanged for FLAX-SEED, A large quantity of Coarse SALT, At the Store of SOLOMON ALLEN, opposite the Meeting-House, in Northampton, on the best terms. Sept. 13, 1786.

HAMPSHIRE GAZETTE.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1786.

NORTHAMPTON: PRINTED BY WILLIAM BUTLER, A FEW RODS EAST OF THE COURT-HOUSE.

The following is a Copy of a CIRCULAR LETTER from the Inhabitants of Bolton to the several towns in this Commonwealth.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS,

THE Inhabitants of the town of Bolton can never remain the unconcerned spectators of the distress and calamity of their fellow citizens in any part of the Commonwealth.

Your generous friendship to us, evinced as well by your liberal donations as otherwise, when we were particularly suffering in the great cause of our country, can never fail to warm our hearts with the highest sentiments of friendship for you; and we are persuaded that the exertions we were then called to make, for our common safety, have yet a place in your kind remembrance.

Thus united, we conceive, in sentiment and affection, as well as in interest, with that cordiality which must ever well subsist among a virtuous and enlightened people in a free country, we take the liberty to address you on those contingencies which have so widely spread within the Commonwealth. You will suffer us to reason on this occasion with a freedom which is the part of sincere friendship; for we do assure you, that our country can never feel a political or civil evil which we will not cheerfully bear a part of, and our joint exertions can obtain a constitutional redress.

We do not conceive it to be our duty to decide whether the grievances, mentioned by the convulsions in some of the counties in the state, really exist or not; but we beg leave to submit to your dispassionate and candid decision, whether, if they have a real existence, the tumultuous methods adopted by some assemblies of men within the government, are the proper measures to obtain redress.

When we dissolved our connection with the empire of Britain, we then (politically speaking) had it in our election to remain in a state of nature, or to obtain for ourselves such form of government as we chose. We were then in a state recognized by the first article of the declaration of rights. "Free and equal," and nothing but our own voluntary consent, given in a solemn compact, could reduce us to a form of civil government. It required no great share of wisdom, however, to discern, that unless we threw ourselves into that state, we could neither defend ourselves against a foreign invasion, or be preserved from the depredations of wicked and abandoned men amongst ourselves. Therefore, "the people inhabiting the territory," called the Province of Massachusetts-Bay, by a voluntary association, formed a social compact; and, in a solemn appeal to the great Legislator of the universe, "the whole people covenanted with each citizen, and each citizen with the whole people, to be governed by certain known and established laws, for the common good and security of all." By the same solemn compact the powers of legislation, and the authority for the due execution of the laws, were provided and established; and we then did, and as yet do conceive, that all was done with such caution and restrictions, that no man, or body of men, who shall oppress or invade the rights of the smallest individual, can pass with impunity. In the same compact, the people solemnly agreed to support the constitution for the space of fifteen years; and made ample provision for the revision of it at the end of that period, if it then should be thought necessary. There is no objection, either high or low, within the Commonwealth, who does not derive his whole authority from the people, and who is not amenable to a proper and adequate tribunal for his conduct.

There are indeed evils which are common to the whole human race, founded in the depravity and imperfections of mankind; and there are others, the unhappy lot of some countries, arising from their situation, or the deep-rooted habits of the people possessing them; both which are alike incapable of being cured by any acts of government, or exertions of human power, but must be left to the accidents and changes of time for a remedy. Should corrupt and designing men inflame the spirits of the people to demand their rulers, the removal of such evils, their

own reflections would sooner or later point them to their mistake.

If grievances have arisen in the government, surely the voice of the people may be taken without using to arms; and no one can wish to dissolve our happy constitution, unless another is substituted in its place; for a state of anarchy is to be dreaded above all other calamities, because there is no evil which it does not involve. But to us, as we shall take leave by and by to submit to your consideration, consequences would flow from such a state which would cause each true American, within the Commonwealth, even to regret that he had ever tasted the sweets of civil freedom.

If the citizens of the state labour under grievances which can be redressed by the acts of the legislature, we conceive that their privileges in this case can never be enlarged, for the General Court are chosen annually by the people; and though in one year our complaints are not attended to, yet we can in the next reasonable place men in power who will address our reasonable expectations; and we are constrained to say, that we are ignorant of the time when the representatives of the people in this state have not duly attended to the instructions of their constituents. Some towns have indeed given instructions contrary to the sentiments of the majority of the state, and they therefore have not succeeded; but is not this always the case, when in society the compact is for the minority, to submit to the majority? Let the majority be ever so much in the wrong, is there any remedy, within the reach of nature, compatible with the ideas of society and government? To say, the majority shall not govern, is saying, either that we will reduce ourselves to a state of nature, or reject the ideas of civil liberty, establish a despotism, and be subject to the sovereign pleasure of one man.

We then beg you to consider, whether instructing our representatives, who serve us in the legislature, is not our great remedy against any ill we suffer, and which are within the compass of human power to redress.

As we have taken leave to hint to you the mode in which, under the government established by our commonwealth, we conceive all grievances ought to be remedied; we will now beg your patience, and earnestly solicit your candour, while we mention some of the consequences which we think must flow from a continuance of the present constitution. As an introduction to this part of our address, we will take a retrospective view of our late situation, and compare our present with that in which we should have been, had not the noble exertions of America, in defence of the dearest rights of mankind, prevented it.

Taxed by Great-Britain, unconditionally and illegally, the quantity demanded was not the object of the important stand then made—but the obvious intention of reducing to absolute slavery, to a Prince on an island at three thousand miles distance, the people of a whole continent, demanded an opposition worthy of the blood and treasure expended in it.—Our public assemblies in towns, and elsewhere, were prohibited; and every precaution taken to deprive us of social pity and joint complaint—a standing army, cruelly hostile to us, well from their deep-rooted prejudices as the sanguinary nature of their errand, supported at our expence, was employed to prostrate us before each haughty minion who chose to insult and plunder us.—Where then was the dignity of man? and where, had they succeeded, could the heaven-born idea of civil freedom been entertained? even a fight for the sweets of liberty would have been treason! How reverse of this is our now happy situation? subjected to no laws, but such as are made by a legislature of our own election, agreeably to the form of government established by our own consent, taxed by our representatives only, and controuled by no authority but what is derived from ourselves.

While we contended for a jewel of this immense value, still invaded on every side by the scourging arm of despotism, how solemnly did we appeal to that Being who sees the inmost recesses of our hearts? and how fiercely did we pledge our lives and fortunes to each other, and

to our Congress, in the glorious contest?—And shall we now accomplish the wishes and fulfil the predictions of our enemies, in meekly receding from all our engagements?

Is it possible that any considerate man should suppose that we, as a people, ought to, or can be excepted from the calamities incident to human life? Were we not at all times aware that there is no medium between a state of government and a state of nature? and that the latter is at all times a state of war, where no man has a property in even the produce of his own labour, but only a precarious possession, maintained by force? Ourselves, any among us, vainly believe that we could enjoy the blessings of government without an expence attending it? As well might they expect that the earth would yield her fruits without labour and pain.—The unalterable laws of nature have fixed it, that the path to political, public or private happiness is directed along through industry and frugality; and we surely ought to submit to the common lot of humanity without repining, because it is one of the first dictates of religion.

We are very sensible that the habits of luxury contracted in the late war, from the vast quantity of goods imported, and the too great profusion of money, together with receiving and giving unlimited credit, have involved many families in distress, and have much diminished our abilities for paying those just debts, contracted in the day of our trouble, as the price of our freedom;—but shall we, because many of us are now distressed, entail ruin upon our posterity? let us lay aside the despicable, fashions and expensive superfluities of the day; be sober, temperate and industrious; and, by the blessings of propitious heaven, we shall soon retrieve our circumstances, and establish our public credit.

When we consider the nature of the present constitution, it presents to us the very important question; whether we shall exist as a nation upon the earth? for we are by no means ignorant that Congress by our consent, and to our inexpressible joy and satisfaction, procured from our allies a loan of specie, the interest whereof we are obliged annually to discharge.—The shutting up of the courts of justice, preventing the due execution of the laws, and arresting the collection of public taxes, annihilates our government, and loudly proclaims to our foreign creditors, their total insolvency. Should their lenity and patience, supported by a hope of our reclaiming ourselves, and correcting our errors, keep their sword in the sheath, yet we may have an enemy who will embrace the unhappy moment, should there ever be one when he finds us without resources, without credit, and without an ally, and deeply revenge himself for the disgrace his arms have sustained. Were there any among us so depraved as to wish to return to the domination of Great-Britain, they may easily perceive that the nations of Europe would never permit such an union of power, but divide us amongst them. Our feelings would indeed, upon such an occasion, point us to a remedy, perhaps less disgraceful, the establishment of a domestic instead of a foreign despotism; supported by a standing army, maintained by our own soil, to awe us into such a submission that every idea of freedom shall be finally and totally eradicated.

When we have seen the patriot clothe his eyes in death, with genuine and rupture committing his posterity to the arms of liberty, shall we see others agonizing in their last moments at yielding their children to the chains of slavery? Forbid it, that spirit of freedom, which has so long animated and enlightened America! Forbid it, Heaven.

Finding that his Excellency the Governor, pursuant to the duties of his office, by advice of Council, has called upon all the good people of the state to lend their aid in preventing the impending ruin, we can do no less than recognize anew our solemn engagements to support the government we have so lately and deliberately established; and we feel ourselves assured, that our numerous, well affected fellow citizens, in every town, will their their readiness to join in an effort so clearly pointed out, as the first duty in society.