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ADDRESS

BEFORE THE

MEMBERS OF THE TAUNTON LYCEUM.

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BY FRANCIS BAYLIES.
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J. H. EASTBURN.....CONGRESS STREET.
1831.

ADDRESS.

THE indulgence of my fellow citizens is great, I know, and I am compelled to draw upon it to the full extent of my credit.

It is impossible for me, at present, if ever, to come before you with an elaborated and finished address,—systematically arranged, with rounded periods, and sentences, which have been polished like a warrior's weapons, until they shine, and flash, and glitter and dazzle; but I must approach you in my every day dress, and shew myself as I am, “a plain blunt man, who speaks right on, and tells you that, which you yourselves do know.”

In short, my friends, I have not had time to prepare for this occasion; but if you will permit me to proceed in my desultory manner, you may pick out some truths from a mass of crudities.

I have a well founded claim on your indulgence, for you well know that in another place during the preceding month, I have been constantly, strenuously employed in doing your business; I appreciated the confidence manifested so repeatedly, too highly and too gratefully to neglect that business.

Having been a working-man in your employment so long, if I should not be thoroughly prepared for

the play which is now to be “enacted,” for your amusement, I trust you will accord some favor to an old, long tried and faithful servant.

It is awkward, I acknowledge, to speak so much of myself; yet the circumstances and the occasion must be my justification. I am the more induced to offer these preliminary remarks, because I well know the difficulties which a political orator at the present time is compelled to encounter. He must go forth armed at all points, and ready for battle. His path is beset by lions and serpents. He must encounter the roars of the one and the hisses of the other. To do a giant’s work, requires a giant’s arm,—to do it successfully is glorious, and it is glorious even to fail in the attempt.

It is a melancholy truth, in the history of man, that most governments have originated in force, and few by the consent of the people; few indeed there are, where the people acting either by themselves or their agents, have universally concurred in their establishment.

That the form of the government has a powerful influence in fashioning the character of the nation over which it is established is an unquestionable truth, but far greater is the influence of its practical administration.

This is exemplified in the history of the United States. The original form of the Government under which the American colonies were ruled was not only monarchical but despotic. The two most ancient colonies of North-America, Virginia, and Plymouth were founded in the reign of James I, and their settlement commenced at a period when the doctrine

that kings ruled by divine right was acknowledged by the whole world. The origin of these American colonies was in the darkest hour of the dark night of European despotism,—yet that hour was the harbinger of the day star of liberty. The spirit of religious freedom was then commencing its mighty work,—and when the people began to inquire into the reasons why one man should dictate to them the articles of their religious faith—it was an easy transition to the inquiry why one man should dictate the forms and the principles of their civil government—for on the theory of government as then understood all rights were derived from the crown, and whatever privileges the people enjoyed were derived from royal grants.

The eastern colonies of North America became practical Republics through the spirit of religious freedom,—and approached as near to perfect democracies, as was possible under their circumstances;—a perfect democracy, we all know, is not practicable unless over a territory so limited in extent, as to enable the whole people to act personally, in making the laws:—therefore it is, that the political power is entrusted to agents, chosen by the people, representing the people, and accountable to the people—and such governments are representative democracies. Such in fact though not in theory, were the New England colonies from their origin, to the vacation of their charters in the reign of James II:—and such Rhode-Island and Connecticut continued to be, after the accession of King William, although an essential change was then effected, in the government of Massachusetts. A royal Governor representing the Sovereign, superceded the Governors

chosen by the people, and then commenced in this province the contest between the advocates of popular rights, and the advocates of the powers of the royal prerogative, which found its crisis in the revolution, and its consummation, in the declaration of independence.

The mode of sustaining civil liberty in the United States, is a question, which it is the duty of every American statesman to look full in the face; if he shrinks from it, he is undeserving of a place in the public councils; if for popular favor, he professes doctrines apparently favorable, but really destructive to the principles of freedom, he is a political hypocrite. If the intentions are honest, mistakes ought to be pardoned, and eccentricities excused.—But let the wrath of the people fall upon him, who for the sake of power, distinction, or office, advocates principles which he knows to be wrong, and believes to be dangerous, and inflames popular excitement, to ruin honest men. If the demagogue usurps the patriot's place in the affections and confidence of the people, it is a certain evidence of the decay of public virtue.

One of the first duties of the patriot, is to warn the people against the influence of foreign example. That influence has engendered many bitter animosities, and wrought much woe. It is not for us to receive the lessons of liberty from abroad, from pretenders and imposters. It is not for us to be taught, when we are capable of teaching.

Although we have learned to view the political events of Europe with calmness if not with apathy,—with philosophic moderation and not under the excite-

ment of burning passions.—Although it is nearly certain that it will not be possible hereafter to stigmatise any party which may arise here, either as British or French;—for we have grown too great, we are too independent in feeling, as well as in fact, to permit ourselves in any crisis, to wear the badge of a foreign nation; yet there are lurking dangers, which are neither to be contemned nor concealed. We have that within us, which may be roused. The same air that is wafted by the zephyr, is driven by the whirlwind. Like those crazy but generous knights, who traversed the world to redress its wrongs, we may find ourselves unexpectedly tilting in the lists, with the chivalry of Europe. We have much curiosity. When the maelstrom of European politics begins to roar, we may approach so near, that it will require all our dexterity to shun the gulf. But at present, I trust we can examine the character of the recent revolutionary movements in Europe, without prejudices or partialities, and that we may be permitted to predict consequences, without incurring the imputation of foreign predelictions, or antipathies; if it were not so, no wise statesman, would permit himself to mistake a temporary clamour, for the popular voice.

With these preliminary remarks, I shall proceed to a fearless examination of the character of the recent revolution in France, and the commencing revolution in Great Britain. The discussion of these topics, in my opinion, is peculiarly appropriate, on this day. We cannot fail to profit by it, if we bring our minds, fully and fairly to the investigation of subjects, so peculiarly illustrative of political history, and political philosophy.

The recent French Revolution, although foreseen and predicted by some who look beneath the surface of politics, as an event likely to happen at some period, came upon the world like an earthquake in a still and tranquil day—like a tornado in the midst of a calm and sunshine. The first sensation was that of amazement. When the imagination is strongly affected, the other faculties of the mind are paralyzed—so it was at first with the American nation; from the central city to either extremity of our wide empire a simultaneous shout of triumph ascended to the heavens. A point of union was found for all—But this universal sentiment of approbation however creditable to our feelings, in my opinion does no great credit to our political sagacity. Perhaps I shall always be fated to stand alone, and to doubt when all others are convinced. Can it be that when I think I see on its periodical return the same comet which frightened my infancy. “which from its horrid hair shook pestilence and war,” blazing high in the heavens again, I am deluded by a phantom?

On the 24th of July, King Charles dissolved the Chamber of Deputies. On the 25th, he imposed additional restrictions on the Press. On the 27th, the Revolution commenced. On the 31st, it was terminated—the reigning King was expelled—the Duke of Orleans was placed at the head of the Government. A new ministry was appointed—the tri-colored flag of the first revolution displaced the lillies of the Bourbons—Fayette reappeared at the head of the National Guards—the chamber of Deputies although dissolved, resumed its powers, and the revolution was completed.

To form a just idea of its principles and of the probability of its ultimate success, it is necessary to examine the manner in which it has been conducted, the characters of the leading revolutionists, and the capability of the people of France to sustain a government of limited powers.

If a revolution commences in blood it is ominous of evil. The American people bore much, and suffered much, without dreaming of forcible resistance. For ten years, they remonstrated—they petitioned—they entreated—and until they were driven to the battle field their hands were unstained with the blood of a single enemy—and yet the people of Massachusetts endured far more oppression than the Parisians; the Boston Port bill—citizens shot down in the streets—the vexations of the custom house—the seizure of the military stores—the annihilation of the Provincial Charter, were far greater evils than the ordinances of the French King touching the press—yet we endured them all before we resorted to arms.

As in the first revolution, so in the second, the Swiss Guards were made the first victims. The Swiss Guards acting on the simple principle of fidelity to their engagements which bound them to protect the person of the King, maintained their faith, their principles, and their honor, and were butchered one by one—while the troops of the line under an oath of allegiance,—and subjects of the king,—as we are told, looked gravely on the slaughter of their foreign comrades, discovered no emotion, and made no effort to protect them, but yielded these republican soldiers to the sabres of the soldiers and

slaves of Napoleon; to the mob of well dressed printers and philanthropic gentlemen,—to the ruffian bands from the Fauxbourg St. Antoine who came forth from their foul and filthy lurking places, like famished wolves bearing their ancient pikes rusted with the blood of former victims—snuffing the taint of the carnage, and screaming for fresh blood.

The ostensible object of the revolution, was the restoration of the charter;—for this, the blood of seven thousand people was shed;—for this, Paris was made a battle field;—for this an ancient dynasty were driven into a hopeless, miserable exile;—and yet the first act, of the new rulers, was a greater violation of the charter, than any which had been committed by the king:—one hundred and ten peers, were deprived of their titles, and their places, whose rights were recognised in the charter. Had the evils which the French people endured under the charter, been oppressive and intolerable, then the right of complete revolution, of entire change would have existed, but that was not pretended. The object of the Revolutionists was the restoration of the charter—and while sternly avenging its violation on the King, they did not hesitate themselves to violate it in one of its most important provisions!

The charter was to be restored which had been violated by an infringement of the freedom of the press; and yet the persecution of the press, and of men, for freedom of speech by the new government, has been vindictive, vexatious, and tyrannical. Between February and May in the present year, there have been eighteen public prosecutions, against editors for libels, and against others, for disloyal ex-

pressions. One editor has been prosecuted for an article complaining of the ill treatment of the Catholic priests, and favourable to a general toleration :— another for saying that the charter of 1830, was not to become that great truth, which was promised in the days of the Revolution, by Louis Philippe.— Three persons were prosecuted for expressing sentiments favourable to Charles X. Two for railing against the national guards. The curate Le Fevre, for expressing his dislike to the King in a sermon. One person for saying, down with the ministers. Two for saying, down with the national guards, and down with the lamp-posts. Two for saying, long live Napoleon II. Several were prosecuted for a conspiracy, for having said, “the people were sovereign, and that all powers and authorities were subject to them,” that being the doctrine under which Louis Phillippe was called to the throne. One was prosecuted for censuring the Administration, and one for saying, “long live the Republic ;” and this is the government which has restored the freedom of speech and of the press !

The characters of the leading Revolutionists are important when investigating the character of the Revolution.

Gen. Girard appears on the front ground the champion of the rights of the people and of the rights of the press,—the instrument—the tool—the idolater of Napoleon. Where was his patriotic energy—his devotion to liberty—his attachment to the freedom of the press, when Napoleon banished a female and shot a printer for using the press, as the medium of bringing liberal opinions before the people ?

The bankers, La Fitte and Casimir Perrier also appear as principle actors in this terrific farce. Why come forth the money changers to mingle in this strife of armed men? They were disquieted with the steady course of the finances—they wanted fluctuations—they wanted to sell out and buy in, and to realise monthly, millions. They have no conception of the moral sublime of a revolution which changes a dynasty and affects a world. They consider a Revolution as a speculation. No matter if the streets of Paris are deluged with blood. The woes and the miseries of the people are nothing, if their money bags are filled. From the sublime to the ridiculous, is but a step. So said Napoleon, and he understood things well. Casimir Perrier, Prime Minister of France! One moment accepting a bill—then dictating a royal ordinance—now discounting a note, and now signing a treaty—now calculating the percentage, or rate of exchange between gold and paper—now drafting a code of laws for Algiers,—now moving a box of specie, now moving an army—now breaking a merchant, and now ruining a nation. The reign of the Bankers however is generally short. The Banker who was placed at the head of the revolution of 1789, was soon forced from his Bureau to his desk, from the Halls of State, to his counting room.

In the eyes of Americans the approbation of Fayette sanctions any cause. The purity and sincerity of this veteran son of liberty cannot be doubted. He is not even ambitious of power, but he has a passion for fame and notoriety. He seeks to drive the Chariot of the Sun, not indeed to set the world

on fire, but to shew himself to the world a skilful charioteer: to do this he may approach too near the earth, and while he thinks that nothing but beams of light are radiating from his car, he may find to his amazement that he has kindled a general conflagration.

Let us now pass to the apex of the revolutionary pyramid; the champion of popular rights—the citizen king—the young *Egalite* who ascends his throne by the double title of Representative of the Orleans branch of the House of Bourbon and as the representative of the Revolution, the revolution of liberty and equality,—who appeared in the first act of that tragic drama, and now assumes the chief part in the catastrophe.

Possessing millions, all recovered by the restoration, he boasts of having worn the glorious tri-colour, under which emblem his wealth was scattered to the winds and his head devoted to the guillotine. The Revolution made him a teacher of languages and mathematics—a fugitive and an outcast, the restoration made him (after the reigning family) the first prince of the blood, and the lord of princely wealth. It placed him at the foot of the throne, and enabled him to mount it over the prostrate form of the head of his House,

———“to whom he stood in double trust
As kinsman, and as subject,
Strong both against the deed.”

Much has been said of his virtues: virtues are always found in royal personages, except in such as have no thrones.

If the pupil of his father's mistress if the descendant of that infamous regent Duke, whose vices were not surpassed by the successors of Augustus, whose example tainted the age in which he lived, filled men with amazement and with doubts of the justice of Heaven, which permitted such a wretch to live and to reign, if one who was baptised in the blood of the first revolution, who had before him, a monster of portentous growth of profligacy, sensuality, meanness, dishonour, cowardice, treachery and murder in the person of a father—has resisted the influence of such examples,—we may indeed suppose that like the Saxon Princess he could walk unharmed over the burning ploughshares.

Already the meanest of the vices, ingratitude, has developed itself in its natural seat—a royal bosom. Already he speaks in the language of Bolingbroke to his illustrious patron and friend, to whom he owes his crown, the venerable Fayette.

“ O, Sir,

Your presence is too bold and peremptory,

And majesty might never yet endure,

The moody frontier of a servant brow.

You have good leave to leave us ; when we need

Your use and counsel, we shall send for you.”

I know it is the fashion of the times to place his virtues and qualities in triumphant contrast with those of his royal kinsman, to talk of the liberality of the one and the bigotry of the other. But let us examine this accusation of bigotry, which has been so often urged against the unfortunate Charles.

It is certainly not unbecoming, even in a Royal personage who has reached the age of seventy-three,

to be regular and devout in his religious practices, and to perform the duties required by his Church with zeal and punctuality. That the King was a sincere christian according to the creed of the Church of Rome cannot be denied. But because he practiced what he professed—which was the Christian religion as believed and practiced by half the christian world, is he to be reproached by a Christian people?

The only inquiries pertinent to this subject are these: Did he persecute men for their religious faith? Did he violate the laws to favour a sect? I defy any one to prove that the King violated the laws to favour the Catholics, or to oppress the Protestants:—if any fault has been committed it has been that of too much toleration, for under indulgence a monster, hunted from all civilized communities has found a refuge in France, and has breathed his poisons in Churches and in Palaces—a monster whose ambition aims not merely at the overthrow of human thrones, but of the throne of God!

Penal laws are necessary, unquestionably, in the government of society—but of all the checks on the inordinate passions and propensities of men, that of religion is the most effectual. Superstition is better than irreligion, for that at least is some check to the excesses of vicious passions. The belief of a future state where human crimes are to be examined and judged, has restrained the violence of the ravisher, and sheathed the poignard of the assassin. Under the influence of such belief the midnight incendiary has thrown away his firebrand. The ties of honor, the precepts of philosophy, the kindness and benevolence of natural temperament are but as feathers in

the tempests of the human passions. But the most ferocious, the most savage heart—the heart which has defied the tempest, the earthquake, and the fire, has melted into tears of penitence at the sound of the still, small voice. Hence it is that all wise statesmen and lawyers have always availed themselves of the influences of religion as a powerful instrument in controlling and repressing the disorders and violences of society.

If a community which neither professes to believe, nor actually believes in the existence of a Supreme Being, shall regard all the laws of moral and social obligation, do justice, practice self denial, endure privation, want, and suffering for the general good—then indeed human nature is changed, and a millennial state is preparing for man. The dreams of philosophy however have but little connexion with the sober realities of life, and man without religion will be as he has ever been, the slave, and the victim of his passions. Throughout the fair land of France the great majority of the people regard religion either with fanatical hatred (for atheism has its fanatics) or with scorn and ridicule, and it is made the subject either of malignant reproach or of gay derision. The heart of the Atheist is blighted—it is dead to every generous emotion—to every kindly feeling. Destitute of the moral sense he knows no distinction between virtue and vice—right and wrong—truth and falsehood.—Insensible to all human sympathies and all human affections, the indulgence of every evil, and malignant and ferocious passion, will be restrained by nothing but his fears or his interest. Like the deadly Upas, he taints the moral atmosphere, and thrives in the

midst of the desolation he has created. The enemy of all, like the Pirate, he raises the death flag and wars on the human race.

A community of Atheists would realise on earth the vision of hell—"a hell ringing with curses and blasphemies". Men would be changed to devils, and find their pleasure in tormenting each other. With them the shedding of blood would be sport—murder a pastime. The order of social life would be deranged. A wild and ferocious anarchy would succeed to law, to morality and to religion—civil society having no basis to rest upon would fall to pieces. If such a community, even were it composed of men as learned and intellectual as Hobbes or Spinoza, Voltaire or Volney, can be governed by equal laws, or by any power short of the sword—we shall be compelled to admit the existence of miracles, even if we deny the truth of revelation.

To return to the unfortunate King—I ask again where are the evidences of his bigotry and intolerance? The secrets of his heart—the breathings of his spirit, the wounds of his conscience were all laid open to the Archbishop of Toulouse. By his advice the King was governed, whenever the action of the royal prerogative was required in the affairs of the Church.—And who was this royal confessor, this keeper (so to speak) of the King's conscience?—Cheverus, formerly bishop of Boston. There can be no mistake as to him. He was our fellow citizen, almost forty years, and never was there a human being, who bore his high qualities so meekly, who was so little of the Churchman, and so much of the Christian;—so sincere, so humble, and so devout, so much enamoured

of virtue for its own sake, so grateful to the Creator, and so benevolent to his creatures. Like the early martyrs of the church, he would have died for his faith. Like the blessed Saviour whom he worshipped, he wept for the misfortunes of his fellow men, and felt and prayed for all. Amid the angry contentions of his protestant brethren, in the wild uproar of discordant passions, in the fierce strife between religious parties, he stood among us the disciple and preacher of peace, the friend and benefactor of his race. Such was the man who, in all matters touching Religion, possessed the most controlling influence over the mind of Charles X.

The next question in the course of this investigation is this;—can the present constitution or charter of France be sustained?

If the present race of Frenchmen, who never enjoyed a year of true liberty, can feel its true spirit, a spirit not to be created by casual circumstances, but by education and a course of moral discipline; it will prove that the moral laws, by which human nature is regulated, are not immutable.

A Democratic monarchy, for such is the present government of France, is certainly an anomaly. It seems to me, to be as incongruous as a lamb's head on the body of a lion. There is but one precedent. A Democratic monarchy was established during the first Revolution; and Louis XVI, was a spectacle for the ridicule of France. A constitutional King, yet destitute of influence or power, and a miserable prisoner in his own palace. In a monarchical government there must be an intermediate power between the King and the people, or else there is no stability

to the throne. A monarchy cannot be sustained without an Aristocracy ; an Aristocracy which spreads its roots throughout the nation,—based on ancient names, historical recollections, and vast wealth. A national clergy, may be a collateral support to the throne, but if the people are destitute of religion, or if they profess a religion different from that of the established church, it is a feeble one. There are it is true, in France, a body of men called Peers, but totally different from a true Aristocracy ; mere political jobbers, the creatures of an hour, enjoying neither the respect or the confidence of the people, and totally incapable of sustaining the throne in ordinary times, and in a crisis, an incumbrance, rather than a support. All sound civilians agree in the opinion, that a throne cannot be sustained without the support of a real Aristocracy, the elite of the nation for birth, talents and wealth. Of this truth Napoleon himself, who seemed to rule by his own sword, and the musquets of his soldiers, was convinced. “I ought, said he, to have attached the emigrants on their return ; I might easily have become an object of adoration with the Aristocracy. An establishment of that nature, was necessary for me. It is the real, the only support of monarchy, its guide, its lever, its point of resistance. Without it, the State is but a vessel without a rudder, a real balloon in the air. But the essence of Aristocracy, its talismanic charm, consists in antiquity, in age ; and those were the only things I could not create. The intermediate means were wanting.”

If the clergy cannot be sustained for the want of religion in the people, if a legislative Aristocracy

cannot be created for the want of the essential elements,—antiquity—historical names and wealth, if the monarch be destitute of that commanding genius, which when armed with the executive power, can sometimes uphold an ill constructed fabric of Government, how long will the present constitution of France endure? The next arrival may bring us the news of its overthrow. The latter days of this month may give us another revolutionary anniversary or it may happen on the 10th of August. That it will happen before another year be completed—I have little doubt. The shape which a new government may take is a question of much doubt. It may be that Napoleon II will mount the throne. It may be that the infant Duke of Bordeaux will restore the lillies of the Bourbons. But the probability is that a Republic with a constitution somewhat similar to that of the United States will be established. I have no hesitation in saying that such a government would be preferable to the existing one; but whether such a government can be sustained in France is a question of great doubt. If it be given into the hands of philosophers and philanthropists they will soon begin to dream of Utopia, and to torture their inventions in framing metaphysical plans of constitutions, founded on the abstract theory of the perfectability of man. These are the men who would embark on the revolutionary ocean in a high pressure steamer with corroded boilers.

If the government be placed in the hands of such, the aggressions of the Jacobins perhaps under a new name, but with the same principles, will be sure to follow. They will set fire to the social edifice, and

while it is burning, the philosophers will be discussing the nature of flame, and devising modes to extinguish it without application of water; during their deliberations, the building will burn down,—and sans-cullottes will howl, and triumph, and dance and rejoice among the warm ashes. Havoc, plunder and murder will be incorporated as legitimate principles in their code of government. The Goddess of Reason will ascend the new Jacobin throne. The Churches will be closed.

Last scene of all which ends this strange eventful history will be the man with the sword!—But if the government be entrusted to those who are better acquainted with man as he is, than with man in the abstract, who consider the human race, as human beings with passions, affections, sympathies, and moral and intellectual qualities;—not as mere machines, to which the application of mechanical power will give a certain and positive movement which shall always be equal and exact,—who consider them as more or less influenced by usages, customs and circumstances and not altogether by abstract theories; if such rulers to this practical knowledge should unite good intentions and enlightened wisdom, and if some great change should be effected in the religious character of the nation, a Republic may be sustained even in France. But it is a most fearful experiment. May God in his mercy avert his wrath from this brave, intellectual, vivacious, cultivated, polished and amiable people!

It was my intention to have treated the subject of the commencing revolution in Great Britain, somewhat at large; for a revolution it is, or will be: but I find myself constrained to keep within narrow limits.

I have already taxed your patience too severely, and I must curtail my remarks, although, I think the consequences of the British, will be more interesting to the world, than those of the French revolution. The scheme of reform if it succeeds will certainly unsettle the balance of the English Constitution. The existing organization of the House of Commons is as much a part of the system of government in Great Britain, as the King, the House of Lords, the Law Courts, or the Church. The derangement of either may prove the derangement of all ; and the disfranchisement of a borough may disturb the motion of the whole machine. The security of vested rights, once deemed so vital a part of the constitutional law of England, will be impaired, and may be destroyed.

From time immemorial we have heard the rotten borough system of Great Britain denounced as unjust, and subversive of all free principles—yet a rotten borough system is neither more or less, than an unequal representation of the people.

Let us see how we the enlightened people of old Massachusetts who have such a detestation to rotten boroughs, apply our principles to our practices. This very year, within three weeks the Legislature of our State by the voice of a large majority have taken the preliminary step to establish the rotten borough system, in the representation of our venerable Commonwealth, by giving to the people of Middlesex, Worcester, Old Hampshire and Berkshire with a population less by nearly thirty thousand than the remaining Counties a majority of thirteen in the House of Representatives, and establishing as a constitutional principle the right of the minority to legislate for

the majority. Depriving a part of the people also, of a right, anterior to the Constitution itself; the right of being represented, because they happen to reside in small towns. All this is done, not in submission to any ancient usage, not for the purpose of avoiding a greater evil, not in respect to prescriptive privileges and vested rights; but as an improvement in our constitution! Great Britain can defend the system which she is about to abandon, with far more forcible arguments than we can defend its assumption here.

In Great Britain the system of Parliamentary representation originally, was not very unequal. The inequality has been created by time, accident and uncontrollable circumstances. The power of electing members of the House of Commons was not considered originally as a right or even a privilege, but a burthen, and many petitions are now on the files of Parliament, not only from boroughs, but from Counties praying to be released from this political obligation. But such is, or was, the chymical elasticity of the British Constitution, that it transmuted an original burthen into a high privilege, and transformed an imposition and hardship into a popular right.

The House of Commons, so far as England is concerned, became fixed on its present basis during the reign of Charles II. On that basis it has remained with little variation to the present day. About the same period the nation became divided between the two great parties of Whigs and Tories. The Whigs being regarded as the advocates of liberal, and the Tories of arbitrary principles. Yet their positions have been frequently reversed. The Whigs in pow-

er have frequently practiced the most barefaced corruption, and have been the unblushing advocates of the most odious powers of the royal prerogative, while the Tories, out of power, have been the efficient defenders of popular rights and civil liberty.

The late dissolution, will throw into Parliament a decided majority of Whigs. The King sustains them, and the popular feeling runs like a torrent in their favour. Parliamentary reform, is the question on which the two parties ~~divide~~. To this, the Whigs are pledged; and the Tories view it as a measure which will ultimately subvert the constitution.

The argument on this question has been much perplexed, by confounding the abstract rights of man in a state of nature, with the social rights as regulated by the institutions of society. None have a natural right to govern others: that right is a creature of society: government and laws are creatures of society, and restrictions on the natural rights of man. Yet we are eternally discovering oppressions and injustice in the social regulations, because they necessarily conflict with natural rights. The reformers in England seem to be proceeding on the theory of abstract rights, without regarding the obligations of the social system; and this, in my apprehension, was the grand mistake of the revolutionists of France.

If under a particular social system, great abuses, great oppression, great unhappiness, and great misery, should fall upon the people, the remedy will be found in the right of revolution. The only question will be as to the degree of the evil, and the expediency of forcible resistance. It is a serious affair to change the fundamental principles of the constitution of a nation.

There is however but little doubt, that the plan of reform submitted to the last, will succeed in the present Parliament. At this point of reform, the Whigs will be disposed to stop. Having disfranchised forty or fifty Tory boroughs, and added several new members to Whig counties and cities, their predominance in the national councils will be secured, and the Tories, the old Church and King party, as to political influence, will be annihilated. Having effected all their party purposes, the Whigs will be anxious to preserve the remaining institutions, and will endeavour to prevent any further alteration in the constitution of the Parliament.

But they will soon find amongst their munitions of war, the materials of their own destruction. They will find that they have nursed in their own ranks, as a sort of inferior coadjutors, or rather as Helots, to do their worst work, a party, who, like the maddened elephants, will trample on their keepers; who will spring into power, with all the hardihood, and terrific energy of the French Jacobins; who will turn their policy upon them with dire success, and conquer them with their own weapons.

“So the struck eagle stretched upon the plain,
 No more through rolling clouds to soar again,
 View'd his own feather on the fatal dart,
 And winged the shaft that quivered in his heart:
 Keen were his pangs, but keener far to feel,
 He nursed the pinion which impelled the steel;
 While the same plumage that had warmed his nest,
 Drank the last life drop of his bleeding breast.”

When the right of suffrage shall be extended in the manner proposed in the Reform Bill, the great

body of the people will be admitted to a participation. The Radicals of the Parliament now so few in numbers, and so contemptible in influence, will then become the real Tribunes of the people. The gradations of property, once so regular as to ensure perfect security against internal convulsions, have become fearfully abrupt. The nation is now divided into two classes, and two classes only—the most alarming division that can exist—the division of rich and of poor, and the poor outnumber the rich in the proportion of a hundred to one. This state of things presents many advantages to those who are bent on complete reform. And this argument can be used by the Radicals with great plausibility. If natural rights are to supercede the social compact, what disposition shall be made of property. Property is as much a creature of social regulation as a Borough. If you can take from A his right of suffrage, why not from B his manor or his farm? The social regulations are now working a greater inequality in property, than in civil and political privileges, creating monopolies, giving to the few the means of luxurious enjoyment, entailing on the many, want, ignorance, vice, and pauperism.—The laws have protected individual property for the common benefit of society. If the peace and happiness of society are not secured, let us reform, let us equalize, let us fix a maximum. Hitherto much has been gained for the Whigs, but nothing for the people. The Reform shall go on, we will have our Parliaments annually chosen. We have the same power to fix the time for which members of Parliaments shall be chosen, as the numbers to be chosen. If we have a right to alter the constitution of the House of Com-

mons, we have an equal right to alter the constitution of the Executive Department. Our Chief Magistrate shall be elected, we will have no hereditary Legislator. The idea that a man is born a Legislator is absurd. The Teachers of Religion shall trust to Providence for support, and not to tythes and sinecures. Shall the Dignitaries of the Church be permitted to live in Palaces and to revel in wealth and luxury, when the Author of our religion had not where to lay his head?

The people are sovereign, and they shall exercise their sovereignty—they shall rule—and rule they will. England will become a Republic—perhaps after a civil war. I will not venture to predict the period of its duration, or the time of its termination. There is a God above, and he is a God of mercy!

To use the words of Jefferson. “During these throes and convulsions of the ancient world, during the agonising spasms of infuriated man, seeking through blood and slaughter his long lost liberties, will it be surprising if the agitation of the billows should reach even this distant and peaceful shore?” No, it will not be surprising. We shall view the struggles and changes of Europe with an intense and burning anxiety. Every gale will waft to us, the news of some new convulsion; it is not in our nature to view such struggles with indifference; every feeling of our hearts, will be in a state of continual excitement. It is against this sensibility that we ought to guard. We have experienced enough of European revolutions. We have gone too far in our predilections and antipathies to foreign nations. Let the parties there, fight their battles on their own ground, and not disturb the tranquil firesides of America.

Our happiness is too precious to be thrown away. Let our land be the asylum of the fugitives. Let our arms, be always open to receive the wandering children of misfortune, of whatever tongue, of whatever party. They will do us no harm. The son of a King, is a Postmaster in Florida. A king who has worn two crowns, is a peaceable citizen of New Jersey. Let us keep out of this strife, let us mingle in none of its feuds. We have nothing to do with the balance of European power. If our rights are assailed, let us seek our redress, "peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must." If our honour is assailed, let us fight.

We are scarcely sensible of the happiness of our condition. We are not made to feel the existence of our national government by its exactions, or by the array of force and arms; it touches us with the lightness of a feather. Some changes in office sometimes happen, and we hear much of the spirit of reform, but it is an impartial spirit to say the least; it visits friends as well as foes. The President and the Vice President may quarrel, the integrity of the unit may be destroyed, the fashionable society of Washington may be thrown into a flutter by the follies and vagaries of a female, the Secretaries may abuse and challenge each other, the Seer of Pennsylvania, may have a sort of Highland second sight of assassins; what then, no treason is committed, excepting treason against the English language, and the rules of grammar. The nation goes on prosperously, happily; the quarrels of Presidents, Vice Presidents, and Cabinets, cannot seriously affect the happiness of twenty individuals; they are scarcely worth a moment's thought.

But there are subjects worthy of all our thoughts,—our national interests.

Let us cultivate all our resources, let us spread our canvass on every sea; let us push our commercial enterprise to the ends of the earth, “saying to the North, give up, and to the South, keep thou not back;” let us drag up riches from the depths of the ocean, and turn even the polar ices into gold.

Let us protect our domestic industry; let us guard our own manufactures from foreign competition; from foreign animosity. That interest is vital, it must be protected; it would be a violation of national honour, of public faith, to abandon the manufacturers, after repeated and solemn pledges, that they should be sustained, so far as protecting duties can sustain them. If an administration, can be frightened from their settled policy by threats of nullification, they are unworthy of the support of the people. Let us hope better things.

Our destiny is in our own hands,—we may be the mightiest, or we may be the meanest nation, that ever existed.

The swelling tide of our population is covering every Prairie of the West, every green hill of the North; it will flow from ocean to ocean. Then let us give the wings to enterprise, and essay the conquest of time and space. Canal boats shall ascend summit levels, on mountains; and our people, and our productions, shall be borne along our stupendous railways, with a speed that shall literally outstrip the winds.

Away with that sullen jealousy, that scowling envy, with which we too often regard the sons of ge-

nus, the men of talent ; let us cherish them, as we would cherish the vital blood of our bosoms ; for through them we may win the meed of fame, in every department of human knowledge, and place the monuments of our glory, on rocks of Adamant.

Above all, let us reject all foreign interference. If wars should disturb and desolate Europe again, if France and Great Britain, should engage in another contest for superiority, let our position be neutral ; not the neutrality of feebleness, but of strength.— Not the neutrality which would crouch to both, and permit the flags of both to insult our sovereignty, but that neutrality which is conscious of the power to defend itself. Which while rejecting with equal indignation the cross of St. George, and the tri-color of France, would raise the stars and stripes aloft, the banner of Liberty ; like the Labarum of Constantine, bearing upon its ample folds, these immortal words, emblazoned in characters of living light, “by this sign thou shalt conquer.”

NOTES.

A.

THE author knows that there are some who have no desire to understand his real opinions ; but if impressions unfavourable to him can be produced, they are willing to seize upon insulated expressions—detach them from their connexion, and pervert their meaning.

Knowing this, he is not surprised to learn that he has been denounced as an enemy to the principle of equality in popular representation.

He meets this denunciation by referring to his course in the Legislature of Massachusetts, during the last three years. Although in a minority, he sustained, as well as he was able, the principle of equal representation, because he considered that, as one of those original principles for whose security the Constitution itself was founded ; and that a departure from an ancient usage, which was right in theory also, for the purposes of convenience only, could not be defended on the ground of expediency or justice.

He has expressed doubts as to the expediency of the projected reform in the Constitution of the British House of Commons. His doubts remain.

He has said that this plan of reform is a departure from fundamental principles, and will be followed by further innovations which may lead to an entire subversion of the British Constitution.

He repeats it.

Yet these admissions do not justify even a presumption that he is favorable to an unequal representation, either in theory or practice.

He thinks that a statesman must be deluded, if he supposes the same principles and forms of government to be equally applicable to all nations. If he supposes that a Republican Government can be sustained in Russia, over a people who had been serfs and slaves, he is in as great an error as one who thinks that a King and House of Lords can be introduced into the Government of the United States.

Therefore, in discussing principles of government, the question is not whether a particular form is the most perfect in the abstract, but whether that is the form best adapted to secure the happiness of the people upon whom it is to be imposed.

The Catholic disabilities, the beer tax, and the income tax, in time of peace, were evils which, perhaps, would justify the complaints of the people of Great Britain. These evils are removed or greatly palliated; and if any remain, arising from the legislation of Parliament, and not from the Constitution itself, the proof that they are a consequence of Borough representation is not made out: therefore, the Borough representation is to be considered, as yet, an abstract and theoretical, and not a practical evil. There is not even an apparent necessity to justify an experiment so hazardous as disfranchisement.

The origin of the British House of Commons defies the researches of the historian. Some look to the Heptarchy,—and some to the reigns of the early Norman Kings. It has existed time out of mind. The number of the members, and the duration of the Parliaments, depended, originally, on the pleasure of the King. His writs were issued to Counties, Cities, and Boroughs: Boroughs were sometimes overlooked. It was not until the reign of James I, that the Universities became incorporated in the general system of representation. Charles I. consented to a law by which the dissolution of Parliament was made to depend on themselves; and the Parliament continued to sit until they were expelled by the bayonets of Cromwell's soldiers,—Cromwell himself, being commanded by the Lord to perform the great work of subverting the Constitution of England.

Previous to the Restoration, seventy-two boroughs had been disfranchised; “that was to say, the crown had ceased to summon them, at the general elections, to return Burgesses to the

House of Commons." After the Restoration, thirty-six petitioned Parliament to be restored to their ancient privilege ; this was done : the other thirty-six made no application, and lost the right. The obligation to elect Burgesses had been previously deemed a burthen, and not a privilege. At this period, the Constitution of the House of Commons, with respect to representation, became permanent ; and has existed in the same shape, (with slight variations) to the present day. This privilege became valuable : its value has been constantly augmenting ; and the price of real estate, wherever the privilege exists, has been greatly increased. Most of the great men, who have risen to eminence in Parliament, during the last century, have made their way to distinction, through the Boroughs.

In 1783, Mr. Pitt introduced a plan of Reform into Parliament, which proposed an addition of one hundred members to the County Representation, but not any disfranchisement of the Boroughs.

In 1785, then being Prime Minister, he renewed the attempt in another shape ; proposing to add seventy-two to the number of the County members, and to disfranchise thirty-six Boroughs by their own consent, on their own application, and for a remuneration in money to be paid from a fund to be created for that purpose. He also proposed that every Borough should be disfranchised if it could be proved that a majority of its voters had been bribed, the honest voters being permitted to vote in the County on their Borough qualification.

William Pitt, bold as he was, and able as he was, in the plenitude of his power, had not the hardihood to propose the disfranchisement of a Borough, without consent and remuneration ; unless as a penalty for bribery and corruption. He saw the danger of unsettling the foundation of property and civil privileges, which had been secured by the laws and practises of England.

A system of government may be simplified in explanation, by comparison with another, of a similar character, with which we are familiar.

In Rhode-Island, a system of representation was established about the same period in which the English system became permanent ;—a system originally equal ; but now, from time,

circumstances, and accident, unequal,—a system presenting some analogies to the English Borough system ; for instance :

Newport, with less than half the population of Providence, has, six Representatives. Providence only four ; Portsmouth, has four ; and many other Towns with a population double and triple, have only two. Jamestown with a population less than five hundred, has two, and several towns, whose numbers are but little less than five thousand have no more.

If a constitution was now to be established in Rhode Island, for the first time, the present basis of representation would be rejected, and that of population adopted.

But if the existing constitution has been equal to the exigencies of the State,—if ~~a~~ civil and religious liberty and property have been well secured,—if justice has been well administered, if the general welfare and happiness of the people have been promoted, why should the Rhode Islanders change that constitution, and put so much positive good in hazard, to attain a theoretic equality ? If it be answered, that the inequality of the representation of Newport and Providence shews the injustice of the system and is a sufficient argument to justify a change, it might be said with propriety that an argument drawn from the condition of these towns carries its own refutation ; for Newport has advanced but little for a century, and Providence is one of the most thriving towns in New-England. Whenever the people of Providence shall feel the evils of bad government by an invasion of their rights and privileges, and shall be able to trace such evils to an unequal representation, then they would have an unquestionable justification for seeking a change.

The following are the views in brief, which the author takes of this question.

There is no precise and exact model from which constitutions can be fashioned.

All constitutions must be framed with a view to the habits, usages, course of education, degree of knowledge, circumstances, sympathies and connexions of the people over whom they are to be established, and these not being the same in any two nations, a constitution well adapted to the one, would be impracticable in the other. Even in this union there are no two states with similar constitutions. Rhode Island would be

uneasy under the constitution of Massachusetts, and Massachusetts under that of Rhode Island ; neither, would endure the constitutions of Virginia, South Carolina, or Tennessee, nor would those States endure theirs.

Equality of representation is to be preferred in the abstract, and always where it has been the usage.

Amongst a people, who have thriven, and have been well protected in their civil, religious, and personal rights under a particular form of government, an attempt to obtain another, even if it be in theory more perfect, is dangerous, and particularly so in Great-Britain because the constitution of that nation, existing altogether by prescription, the Parliament being sovereign, and the boundaries of power not defined, in an instrument of Government, if changed in an essential part, the whole fabric of the government would be endangered : this partial change would supply the authority of precedent to justify entire change, and further innovations would be rendered comparatively easy. The evils arising under the British Constitution are not so great, as to justify a change so great. If under the existing constitution great and intolerable evils should have sprung up, productive of tyranny and oppression and rendering person and property insecure, then the right of complete revolution would follow, and there is a well grounded apprehension that this innovation will produce that state of things which would justify a revolution, by rendering property insecure at first, and then civil liberty : neither does it secure its professed object, it enables a party, not the people, to secure for a time at least, the enjoyment of political power ; privileges which the people were told were usurped from them, are not restored. The Duke of Devonshire saves his five close Boroughs, and Lord Fitzwilliam four out of his five : the influence of the Aristocracy is not curtailed, it is strengthened (temporarily at least) by destroying the antagonist power : it is transferred from Tory Lords and wealthy Commoners, to the Lords and wealthy Commoners of the Whigs, but in so doing, the "standing place" to Archimedes has been supplied, and when the Radical lever begins to shake the Whig Temple, the Whigs may call upon the Tories for help, but they will find that Sampson is bound and shorn of his locks.

B.

The author is aware that a single word in excuse of Charles X. will not be received very graciously, at the present moment, in America. But there were no special prejudices against him here until he was dethroned: since then, he seems to have been pursued by the hue and cry of the whole world. Even the English press,—which once was disposed to treat all unfortunate strangers, who sought an asylum in England, with decent respect, and exhibited some commiseration and sympathy for misfortune,—has permitted itself to be made the medium of malicious jeers, and pitiful ribaldry upon this unfortunate and aged King and his family, and it even seemed to display a savage exultation at the prospect of his arrest for debt! Are the common sympathies of human nature to be denied to fallen royalty? Whatever his faults may have been, this sorrow-stricken king was true to his friends and grateful to those who had rendered him services. He had the enterprise to undertake and bring to a successful termination the expedition against Algiers, and the whole Christian world owe him some gratitude for suppressing a nation of pirates, who plundered the commerce of the universal world and inflicted the most cruel slavery upon their christian prisoners. He was an early friend of America. He was the brother of Louis XVI, and the tenant of his throne is the son of Philip Egalite!

He trusts that it will not be placed to the score of aristocratic propensities, if he, as an American, should feel and express some sympathy in the fate of the Dutchess of Angoulemé, the only surviving offspring of Louis XVI, and Marié Antoinette, the benefactors of America. If he should lament the unparalleled misfortunes of a female, who may well be denominated “the child of misery”—whose face has never worn a smile, and whose heart has been a perennial fountain of grief; who in her infancy shared the horrible imprisonment of her parents; who saw them dragged by ruffian hands to the Guillotine, and heard the savage yells of joy, which announced the completion of that bloody catastrophe, which made her an or-

phan ; who saw a double murder perpetrated upon her only and infant brother, the murder of mind, and of body, under circumstances of cruelty, till then unknown, and appalling to think of ; whose youth was spent among strangers, far from the land of her birth, in wretched exile ; who had scarcely tasted of prosperity, when she was driven from her country, and after another restoration, to fill the cup of her sorrow to overflowing, she is compelled to endure another exile, and again to wander through the world, on another pilgrimage of woe. The daughter of a mighty monarch,—the wife of the heir apparent, of a mighty monarchy,—the grand-daughter of the most illustrious woman of her age,—it would have seemed, that the path of her destiny, would have led her through “the pleasant places,” yet the hand of a sinister fate, has pressed heavily and steadily upon her, almost from her birth ; the crown seems to fly from a head, which like that of Margaret of Anjou, seems destined to bend beneath the weight of eternal disasters. Her high and heroic qualities, extorted the admiration of Napoleon himself ;—and yet the last and only hope which consoles the desolation of her heart, is in that quiet place, “where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.”

The author admits that Charles X, and his ministers, had no perception of the actual state of affairs in the city of Paris, at the time of the Revolution :—that they should have remained in complete ignorance of a wide spread conspiracy to effect their overthrow, whenever a decent pretext should be found, indicates a miserable lack of sagacity. He who supposes the Revolution to have been the effect of a spontaneous ebullition of popular feeling, has but little knowledge of the mode of producing Revolutions in Paris. He who supposes that the bankers La Fitte and Casimir Perrier, could have placed themselves at the head of this Revolution, and filled in succession the places of prime ministers, solely on the ground of eminent talents, and exalted patriotism, must think meanly of the wisdom and sagacity of Frenchmen.

ERRATA.

Page 14....line 14, dele “*the*,” before the word *burning*.

“ 16....line 6, for “*Lawyers*,” read “*Lawgivers*.”

“ 31....line 13, dele “*a*.”