

GREENSBOROUGH PATRIOT.

"THE IGNORANT AND DEGRADED OF EVERY NATION OR CLIME MUST BE ENLIGHTENED, BEFORE OUR EARTH CAN HAVE HONOR IN THE UNIVERSE."

VOLUME I.

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COMMUNICATIONS.

*But will remember, if you need it, please,
To press your point with modesty and ease.*

FOR THE GREENSBOROUGH PATRIOT. NORTH-CAROLINA, No. IV. INEQUALITY OF REPRESENTATION, &c.

"The less, the great, set social order,
That touching one, must strike the other on."—Pope.
Mr. Editor:—I regret to occupy your columns, to abuse your kindness, and to weary the patience of your readers, on a subject which, to most, must sound like a twice told tale.
Vexing the dull ear of a drowsy man."

But if ever we commence the grand work of reformation, we must begin at the base, and found our work upon a rock. It would be folly to erect a splendid edifice on a badly constructed, and tottering old foundation. If it is our design to have republican laws, administered by republican notaries, it is requisite we set out with republican first principles. At the root be aristocratical, the tree cannot be republican; if the tree be aristocratical, it cannot bear republican fruit, any more than a corrupt tree, will bring forth good fruit.

That majorities shall govern is a republican axiom, and I believe the basis of all popular governments. By a majority, I understand the greatest part or number. Another republican maxim is, that all men, who are equally bound by the laws, shall enjoy an equal participation in their enactment; or, in other words, that all men are equal. But our Constitution provides that N. C. shall be governed by a majority of counties; yet these counties, in mere arbitrary divisions of the State, without regard to equality of territorial contents, or of the number of inhabitants. It is provided that each of these divisions shall send an equal number of representatives to the legislature; and it happens that the greater part of these counties are small, or thinly inhabited; whence it comes to pass, that a minority of the people supply a majority of the Representatives in the General Assembly. In that body, as it ought to be, were other things equal, the majority rules. Hence it is, that the influence or weight, which one man has above another, in making the laws of the State, by which all are to be governed, is as one to two, three, four, five, &c. according to the population of the county he may chance to inhabit. This is neither equal, nor republican; but it is a sore vexation, and a flagrant injustice. Seeing a majority are deprived of their just privileges by this defect in our constitution, to suffer it as a degradation; and, when the sufferers shall know the extent of their wrongs, and that the means of peaceable redress are in their power, patient endurance will become pusillanimity.

The Constitution provides that every county shall send their Members to the General Assembly, and each of several towns a Delegate to the House of Commons. This makes the Legislature a large, unwieldy body, and the expense of Government enormous; the more especially as the Sessions are annual, and very protracted. This is an evil which might be remedied by lessening the representation, by shortening the time a Session shall hold, or by holding only biennial, or triennial Sessions. Both houses might be reduced to half their present number, without diminishing their capacity for doing justice to the whole State, provided they were chosen upon equitable principles. The term a Session should continue might safely be abridged to one half the time, to which they are prolonged. Once in five or seven years, a Session might be protracted to a greater length; as, thus often, it might be necessary to legislate on matters of greater importance. But half the common length would be quite adequate to meet all the exigencies, of incorporating academies, libraries, and lodges; of legitimating children, and restoring delinquents to credit; of establishing new turnpikes, roads, bridges, &c. Meantime two great points would be obtained, viz: the saving of a vast expense, and the prevention of redundant legislation. For whilst the members of the legislature are lounging about the metropolis, dallying in *gremis mercatorum*, playing at cards, attending diversions, eating high seasoned dinners, drinking cogniac and Madiera, and singing merrily the tune of three dollars a day, a show of business must be maintained. Hence, the property, the persons, and the very lives of their constituents, are jeopardized; for no one, except a lawyer, can keep

the thread of this eternal coacting, amending, altering and repealing of laws; so as to know when he is doing a lawful or an unlawful action.

The objects of Government are said to be two; the preservation of the citizen's person from violation, and the preservation of his right in property. The lower branch of the Legislature is denominated the popular branch, is chosen by the people generally; and is, therefore, considered the especial guardian of personal rights; whilst the other branch is chosen by freeholders only, to be the especial guardians of personal right in property. This precaution, as taken by our Constitution, appears to me to be absurd, unnecessary in toto, and calculated to give the preponderance to the wrong scale. It is absurd, because there seems to be no reason why real estate should be more firmly guarded, than an equal amount of personal property. It is totally unnecessary, because in a well regulated and free government, a majority of the people will possess property of some kind. A regard for this will prevent them from entrusting legislative power to one, who has neither property, nor well tested probity. If he possess property, it is a security that he will not meddle injudiciously with that of others; if he have honesty, his sense of justice will be a sufficient pledge. It gives a preponderance to the wrong scale, for, by granting extraordinary immunities to the possession of property, it intimates that the whole business and merit of our lives, consist in the accumulation and monopoly of wealth; and that the whole design of government, is to secure this monopoly; whereas the bias or impulse ought to be given to virtue; and, if any are abridged in their privileges, it should be those, whom moral depravity has disqualified from exercising them with discretion. Show me a virtuous people, enjoying liberty and equal rights, and I will ask no further pledge for industry and frugality.

Though I have above, as it is the privilege of any citizen to do, suggested several amendments to the Constitution and laws, where their features appear anti-republican, or burdensome; yet our chief complaint is, that the Representatives of a minority of the people form a majority in the Legislature of the State. To remedy this, we insist on the calling of a Convention, as indispensable.

Polydore.

SELECTED.

*But 'tis the sad condition, and almost true,
Whatever we write, we bring forth nothing new.*

INSCRIPTION.

Delivered at Chapel Hill on Wednesday, June 24th, 1820, according to the annual appointment of the two Literary Societies, belonging to the University, by WILLIAM HOOKER, A. M. Professor of Ancient Languages in the University.

(Conclusion.)

We touch upon the dangers to be apprehended from the admixture of strangers among us. Happily this danger will grow less with the lapse of time. The original emigrant becomes a much more harmless citizen than he was in his own country. Oppression and poverty may have rendered him a dangerous revolutionist there, but the easy circumstances in which he soon places himself here transform his character, and attach him to the hospitable land that has sheltered him an asylum in its bosom. If he leaves children after him, they constitute a most valuable species of population, possessing the improvement brought from older countries with the patriotism of natives. Beside, the influx of foreigners must abate, as our territory is filled with indigenous multitudes. And it is to be hoped, that the example of our institutions, together with the progress of political philosophy, will more & more meliorate European governments, teaching sovereigns that it is their true interest to respect each other's rights & to make their subjects happy. As such benign changes take place, the inducements to emigration will subside, and thousands of restless malcontents, who now sigh for distant fields beyond the Atlantic, will then seek that happiness at home which they before thought was only to be found in the new world.

Against the danger that threatens us from servile insurrections, it surely becomes a wise people to make timely provision. If no fears were awakened by growing numbers and incurable discontent, still, the necessary degradation, and invisible viciousness of so large a proportion of its inhabitants, would demand remedial measures from a humane enlightened nation. That slavery is the baneful parent of the vilest morals, every virtuous family in the southern country knows full well and deplors that it holds within its own walls a fountain of moral poison, which in spite of the most watchful care is continually diluting around its baleful influence and infecting the health of all the household; while public testimony to the same moral fact is furnished by every jail and gibbet in the land. Many of the state governments have awakened to the importance of this subject, and we may hope that the progress of political wisdom and an increasing sense of the magnitude of the evil, will enlist the remainder who now stand back in indifference or despair, until at length unanimity shall be effected, by which the collective wisdom and resources of the nation shall be put into action for the extermination of the bitter root from our soil.

A survey of the multiplied blessings which already crown our land, might seem sufficient to beget a perfect contentment and that all we shall ask of Heaven, is a continuance of the same condition. But it is certain we are not satisfied with our present attainment; and perhaps this restless desire of some

living better was implanted in communities as it is in individuals, to prevent the stagnation of human affairs and to stimulate our nature to its highest capacities of improvement. Our country, rapidly as it has advanced, has not advanced rapidly enough for our ambition. In many respects we are far below the nations of Europe, and we cannot wait with patience until the gradual progress of time shall place us on a level with them. We pant for "more space in the world's thought." Our homely domestic joys, our humble, quiet, unostentatious happiness, seems tame and insipid. We sigh for some more splendid fortune. We want the world to ring with our renown—to talk with admiration of fields won by the valour of our troops, of tonnas and fleets demolished by the thunder of our navy, of charming senates angling with breathless rapture on the tongues of our orators, of the sublimity of our poets, the erudition of our scholars, the profound wisdom of our jurists and philosophers. We want to see shining cities line all our streams, the whole face of our land smiling like a cultivated garden, paved roads and canals intersecting every district, and universal wealth, like a mighty river, rolling its tide from one extremity of the empire to the other. Some of these are legitimate and laudable objects of ambition, while others are purchasing at so dear a rate that a desire after them is one of the most unfortunate passions that can enter the breast of a nation. Are we smitten with a passion for glory, that noisy goddess, who drives her flaming chariot over the earth, delighted with the roaring of her own wheels and the gaze which she attracts? We forget that the period of a nation's greatest glory is not the period of its greatest happiness. Its years of tranquil enjoyment roll on unnoticed. Those are too tame a theme for the historic muse, who loves to record daring achievements of our struggles of terrific passion, and tragical scenes of suffering. On these she lavishes her powers of description, on these she expatiates at length while she passes over with brief and careless notice a much longer space of a nation's existence, unsignalized by striking events, but spend in happy repose. Thus a river may flow on with deep and quiet current for hundreds of miles, the convenient thoroughfare of the whole population, and yet never appear in the columns of a newspaper, or be honoured with a poet's song; but if in its progress it chances to dash its waters over a precipice and from a frightful cataract, that single spot absorbs all attention and wins renown. The words of the poet are but too well verified by the history of nations as well as of individuals, that

"The path of glory leads but to the grave".

Great talents are called forth only by great exigencies. In ordinary times, they slumber unknown, or expend themselves in quiet schemes of domestic usefulness. And shall we regret that no calamitous event occurs to throw these talents into bolder prominence? Shall we wish a whole nation's mighty body to writhe in a convulsive fit, that we may have the pleasure of seeing the actions of its large muscles?—Let us remember too, that the same trying times which provoke into public view talents that are valuable, also rouse those that are noxious. If an inglorious tranquility deprives us of the light which we should receive from sublime exhibitions of virtue, it may save us the pain and the horror of witnessing gigantic powers employed only to destroy. Who of you could desire a volcano to burst forth in our neighborhood because perchance it might send forth from its bowels some lumps of gold? Do we pant for military renown? Alas! let us consider what rivulets of blood must be shed to nourish the laurels of a single hero. Let us cast our eyes on Rome in the days of her Julius and her Cato, on France in the days of her Louis XIV and her Napoleon, on England during the campaigns of her Marlborough and the exploits of her Nelson. Would America be willing to earn such celebrity at such an expense, and pore out like water, the blood of her sons and the tears of her daughters, merely that she might boast of a few splendid victories? Heaven defend us from such accused ambition, and such "bad eminence" in the production of misery.

Do we burn with emulation to give birth to illustrious orators? These too, are the product of a nation's throes. It is impending dangers, it is keen suffering which alone can furnish the requisite subjects, or kindle the requisite passions for the display of eloquence. The brilliant thunderbolt is the child of the storm. When was it, let me ask again, that appeared the immortal speakers who have illustrated their respective countries, in ancient and modern times? Greece heard not the thunder of her Demosthenes till the Macedonian conqueror was on the march with chains in his hands to put about her neck; nor did the tongue of Cicero utter its most powerful notes till his country trembled or smarted under the treasons and spoiliations of Cataline, Verres and Anthony. France never knew what it was for the voice of a popular debater to command the bayonets of a nation till the concussions of her Revolution struck out the corruscations of Mirabeau. And when was it that the British parliament bowed to the resistless force of human speech, and every Englishman, yea, every descendant of englishmen, gloried in the claim,

"That Chatham's language was his mother tongue".

It was when the British fleet was battering down our towns, and the British legions were carrying havoc through our fields, when the bloody trophies of the Indian tomahawk were shamelessly leagued with British arms, that the indignant spirit of Chatham electrified the senate of his country with such bursts

of overpowered eloquence as it had never known before, and perhaps will never hear again. When was it that the peo of Burk ruled the free minds of his countrymen, like the wand of a magician? It was when the frightful apparition of the French Revolutions, starting up by his side, awakened his courage that he snatched the heart of prophecy and of exhortation, & poured upon the ear of his country such a soul-subduing song, as bound in train the passions of his race till the season of danger and intonation was over. To come to ourselves if the American bosom has ever heaved the powerful strokes of senatorial eloquence, it was when the expected horrors of war and servitude fired the hearts and the lips of our Henry and our Ames.

Let us not therefore sigh because our Congress hall does not continually ring with strains such as the noblest effusions of Greece, Rome and England. Our race of great men is not extinct, or so nearly so, as we might when their voices are not heard in the Council. It would be an enormous mistake to suppose that all the eloquence and all the wisdom which we own, is collected in our Congress, or that those either in Congress or out of it who make the most noise, are the most important personages of our nation. To borrow an illustration from Mr. Burke, let us not imagine, "because half a dozen grasshoppers make the field ring with their importunate chink, that they are therefore the only inhabitants of the field, while thousands of the great cattle repose beneath the shadow of the oak, and chew the cud in silence." It is perhaps as well or better for our country that in her tranquil days, her great men should be distributed through various parts of the empire, than collected at the metropolis. Our national debates may be less splendid, the world's gaze may be less attracted but perhaps the nation is a gainer. These remarkable characters are the salt of the republic, whose utility depends not on its accumulation in one spot, but on its diffusion. They spread a wholesome seasoning through the general mass. While they are quietly engaged in the pursuit of private life, they are the ornaments of their several neighbourhoods; they diffuse around them the mild radiance of civic virtue, and are the focus of light and heat to their little spheres—at the bar, on the bench, or in the pulpit maintaining the laws and watching over the morals of their country, setting an example of honor, intelligence & patriotism in the midst of their fellow citizens correcting their erroneous opinions, liberalizing their narrow minds, staying their headlong passions, teaching them to appreciate the blessings of a free government, producing among them the improvements of the age, stirring them up to generous enterprises, forming and fostering seminaries of learning; a nation's lighting up new souls to illuminate their country when their own last beams shall have sunk in the west. They may, too, without appearing in Congress, be pushing forward the general well being of the Union by leading useful measures in the Legislatures of the several States. If a true public exigency call for their services, they are ready at the summons of their country, to guide her councils or to wield her sword.

But I said there were legitimate and laudable objects of our ambition. These are the culture of our native soil and of our native mind—the bringing to the highest pitch of beauty the face of our country and the intellect and morals of our citizens.—It is these the aims of American ambition. Let us hold without envy to others the glory of having slaughtered more thousands of our fellow men than we have; of being more shrewd than we in the intrigues of diplomacy. Be it ours by industry, frugality and the aid of art, by a diligent improvement of the blessings of peace and freedom, to make every part of our land smile like the garden of Eden—pressing from the earth's full bosom the greatest possible amount of nutriment for the increasing millions of her children, and, by every facility of transportation, to send the proceeds of our labor with ease and readiness from the mountains to the ocean and from the ocean to the mountains—these are achievements which we may attempt and hope for without guilt and without presumption—victories over impassable nature—the lights of science detecting, and the arm of industry wielding, all latent faculties of nature, till the application of the inanimate as well as the animated world to the will of man, shall make good the charter allowed him by heaven, of "having dominion over the works of God's hands."

But there is yet a nobler subject than the surface of the earth for us to meliorate and polish—the cultural mind. It seems to be an admitted doctrine, that the best guarantee we can have for the permanence of our free institutions, is the intelligence of our people; that the more light they have, the better will they appreciate and the more zealously defend, the precious inheritance bequeathed us by our fathers. Proceeding on this principle, most if not all of the members of our confederacy have taken some measures for the promotion of education; some indeed have got greatly by the start of others in this race of honor, and are now reaping the fruits of it in those liberal and magnificent public works to which public intelligence will infallibly give rise—while some are left at a mortifying distance behind, retarded by the heavy clogs of ignorance and social parsimony. Make a people intelligent, and you make them enterprising. They learn that a judicious expenditure of public money is the truest economy, the best art of growing rich. But an ignorant community, with the cry of a miser, will be stretched upon its useless board, not having the heart to take from it, and not being by its poverty, put to the necessity of growing at