

MINERVA; or, ANTI-JACOBIN.

TWO & A HALF DOLS. PER ANNO. Payable half yearly.

PUBLISHED (WEEKLY) BY WILLIAM BOYLAN.

TWO DOLLARS PER ANNO. Paid in Advance.

Vol. 8.]

RALEIGH, (N. C.) MONDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1803.

[No. 54.]

From the SPECTATOR.

A few weeks since, a writer under the signature of "A Hudsonian," exhibited his "political creed," in the Bee, together with a general invitation to have the errors, if any was discovered therein, pointed out "through the same channel."—Mr. Holt, by publishing it, gave at least his implied acquiescence in the invitation. Accordingly, a gentleman enclosed to Mr. Holt an answer for insertion in the Bee. Instead of publishing it, agreeably to his implied promise, the Editor by means of erasures, altered the address from "the Bee" to "the Balance,"—from "Mr. Holt" to "Messrs. Editors," & the signature from "Cato" to "Mark Anthony"—and then enclosed it in a wrapper to the Editors of the Balance. Of the merits of the piece, the Balance thus speaks—"This answer is a well written performance. It exposes in a striking and masterly manner, the fallacy of the "Hudsonian's" reasoning. It is calculated to wipe away the erroneous impression of that writer."

After publishing the circumstances, a sketch of which we have here given, the Editors of the Balance received a note from the writer of "Cato," requesting him to insert it in their paper. We present the note, together with the piece, which caused Mr. Holt to place himself in so curious a predicament; and we request our readers to give them a faithful perusal.

TO THE PEOPLE.

The opinion that "the national high court of impeachment, is sufficient to correct the errors of all the officers of our government who are impeachable," has been very lately confidently advanced, in answer to those who claim the right of investigating publicly the conduct of our rulers, and arraigning them at the bar of the people.—The argument is a short one, and, if correct, will certainly be productive of great pleasure to every lover of liberty. "If that court is sufficient," say the advocates of the powers that be, "then why should you federalists interfere; When the power of impeachment is preserved by your representatives, you are safe—the country is safe—liberty is safe. You must not presume to canvass the measures of government: You must not arraign the conduct of our rulers, because, in so doing, you interfere with the right of the court of impeachment. You assume a corrective power, which the constitution has placed in other hands."—This argument I believe to be wholly fallacious & pregnant with mischief; and observing that a correspondent of the Bee, had adopted the sentiment in its greatest latitude, & inviting any one, through the same channel to oppose it, I submitted the following piece to Mr. Holt. It was believed that, as Mr. Holt had sanctioned the invitation and made it his own, by publishing it in his paper, he would not hesitate to publish the answer. It was mentioned to me by a friend, to whom I shewed the piece, that Mr. Holt durst not publish it. I had, however, an honorable confidence in human nature, and believed that no man who made pretensions to any character, could be guilty of an act of such meanness, of such miserable dissimulation as I have now witnessed in this same Holt. The Balance of last week displays the baseness of his conduct. It is as far beneath animadversion, as he is beneath resentment. He was probably meant for a man—therefore I pity and dismiss him. But to the readers of that paper, it will be proper to lay one word—When an editor places himself in a situation, which deters him from publishing truth, does he deserve any confidence? When he fears to lay both sides of a question before his readers does he merit any support?—Do you, gentlemen, give him support with a design that he shall keep from you every thing but that which he extracts from the Aurora or Citizen, or which is coined by men whom he dares not disobey? If this paper shall fall into the hands of any one of you, he is earnestly requested to read the following observations—then to recur to the Balance of last week, and say if your editor any longer deserves your approbation—If, by any act of meanness without a parallel, he has not forfeited all title to candour, and if he does not richly merit

the detestation and contempt of all honest men.

CATO.

Mr. Holt,

In your paper of Tuesday last, "an Hudsonian" has given his political creed, and wishes that any error which may be seen in it, should be pointed out "through the same channel." The publication of this performance in your paper, I consider to be an acquiescence in the invitation. I shall, therefore, trouble you with a few remarks, in answer. In a government, depending for its permanence upon public opinion, it is of infinite moment that correct principles be established. And, if sentiment be publicly advanced, pregnant with mischief, it is the right, perhaps the duty of any individual, within the sphere of their circulation to oppose & correct them—I submit to you, therefore, the following sincere though dispassionate remarks upon the creed of an "Hudsonian," to which, I cannot doubt, you will give publicity.

The principal article of this creed is contained in the following words:

"I believe that the national high court of impeachment, as established by the Constitution of the United States, is sufficient to correct the errors of all officers of government, who are impeachable."

I ought to premise, that this doctrine has not until lately been advanced or heard of; that even during that period, which has been cautelessly stigmatized by the epithet "Reign of Terror," when the republicans were so highly alarmed at the alleged power and prerogatives of president Adams, at the unconstitutional ramparts raised around him, and the measures adopted to shield him from wilful and false slander, never did the federalists advance such an argument, in justification of their conduct. Nay, if during that period, it had been advanced, I am satisfied every one who called himself a republican, would have seen in it the seeds of a system calculated to destroy all executive responsibility in the people.

We should beware then, lest confiding too much in the men, who now manage our affairs, we yield a principle & establish a protection which bad men may use to the world of purposes. We should beware, lest in a paroxysm of joy and gratitude to our present rulers, we like the Dutch, who adored their princes, offer up our rights at the shrine of election.

If the argument be correct, the President's liability to impeachment is a consequence, it follows, conclusively, that the present mode of electing that officer, at stated periods, is idle & superfluous. For, of what use can elections be, if the electors are not permitted to be informed of the private and official behaviour of him whom they are to elect? If this "court of impeachment is sufficient to correct the errors of all officers of government," why are elections directed to be held at stated periods? or indeed why elections at all? Why not make him President for life, subject to removal by conviction on impeachment? Or, at least, why not take the right of election of President from the people, and lodge it at once in Congress? If "impeachment is sufficient to correct all errors of the President," as the creed imitates, why was not something like this done and the trouble and expense of his election, by the people saved? No—the judges who framed our constitution, thought otherwise.—They thought, and so they expressed their thoughts in the constitution, that although impeachment might grasp and punish the overt act, the maturity of crimes—still, some more silent, more sure, and perfect corrective was necessary to sweep away the first symptoms of corruption, to destroy every traitorous plot in embryo, and to establish a more perfect responsibility of the President to his constituents. Such a corrective is periodical elections.

The government of the United States, as of the individual states, is a government of the people. And the executive, which Mr. Jefferson has very properly termed the *monarchical department* of the government, has always been presented as peculiar for its fondness of power and consequently of making encroachments upon the rights, not only of the popular departments, but also of the people them-

selves. For the purpose of counterbalancing the influence, which by patronage and otherwise the president may obtain, the constitution has provided, that during the four years for which he is elected, he may be removed for mal-administration. At the termination of this period, it has also provided, that the people may either elect or reject him as they are pleased or displeased either with his public or private conduct, or both.—When congress exercises their right of impeachment, every enquiry is made, full investigation is had, before the President is convicted, removed, or acquitted.—And for the same reason, and by the same rule, that the Senate, when judging him on impeachment, should have complete and full information of his conduct, ought the people, when they exercise their right of ELECTING or REJECTING, to have correct information, to have the truth told them, that they may exercise that important right with propriety and safety. They should know the whole conduct of their President, the whole truth should be laid before them, which never can happen if truth itself is a libel, according to the doctrine advanced in the case of Croswell.

The President's liability to impeachment, therefore, is far from being a sufficient security, so far from being intended to shield his conduct from public investigation, is designed to render him more dependent upon the people. First, he is dependent on the people for an election for the term of four years. During that time, was there no such thing as an impeachment, he would be firmly seated in power and independent of his constituents. But by means of impeachment, he is every moment dependent upon them; for during that time, they, by their representatives, may impeach and remove him. And at the expiration of that time, if the people do not like his character or his measures, they may refuse to elect him.—Thus he is in every respect emphatically the man of the people.

But it is easily seen that by acceding to the principle, that IMPEACHMENT IS SUFFICIENT TO CORRECT EVERY ERROR of every officer who is impeachable—the people yield the right of investigating the conduct, of publishing, even the truth, of such rulers.

And it is as easily to be seen that if this right is withheld, the people can never exercise their right of electing their rulers.—And, surely, in such a state of things, the right of suffrage would not be worthy preserving. One check upon power, which the constitution has provided, would thus be undermined, its substance would be gone forever, and its form would exist only to remind us of our folly.

For Mr. Holt, let me ask your correspondent, for what is the President impeachable? For treason, bribery, and other high crimes and misdemeanors.—Suppose, then, the President should become a drunkard; suppose, he should give himself up to the gratification of his passions, and make the house furnished by the country, a theatre, the haunt of rakes and libertines; suppose, he should refuse all conversation with the grave men of our land, & fill his councils with profligate favorites, seditious foreigners, the refuse of other nations; suppose he should publicly profess infidelity, and patronize atheism; and thus, by his pernicious example, corrupt the morals & religion of the republic, whose only sure foundation is the people's virtue; suppose, he should remove from office the best men, and fill their places with the worst; suppose, by sowing the seeds of corruption in the legislature, and by availing himself of their ignorance and passions, and of his own extensive influence, he should induce them to pass laws, violating the constitution, and destructive to the public good; suppose, that with the consent of such a legislature, he should squander away millions of the public property. All these cases, and a multitude of others, impeachment cannot reach. What then is the remedy? If the truth cannot be told, if such conduct cannot be held up to the view of the people, either through the press, or through verbal discussion, or both, those evils can never be corrected. Crimes may be committed with impunity, destructive

of national honor, degrading to national character. The administration, exalted above the reach of popular investigation, secure from impeachment, would feel no restraint, would riot in licentiousness, feed on corruption, & there would be none to make them afraid.

Such is the inefficiency of impeachment, even when promptly and rigidly exercised. What then must it be, when we consider, that the president and his congress are generally of one party; and that it will seldom if ever happen, that they who perhaps participate in his iniquities, would become honest accusers or upright judges of their leader? Must it not be a mere shame, a thing of sound but not of substance? Shall I be answered that this state of things is imaginary, that it can never be realized? Let experience speak.

The republican party with you and your correspondent believed that Mr. Adams was guilty of the most atrocious crimes against his country. Not only, all the evils above supposed, but actual and probable crimes, and gross violations of the constitution, were charged upon him. The evils of his administration were declared to be intolerable; and accusations of unheard of crimes were published, repeated and reiterated—information that the day of Mr. Jefferson's election was hailed as the day of deliverance from Aristocracy, Corruption, Monarchy and Ruin.

Yet numerous as were the grievances complained of, enormous as were the injuries laid to be practised, high as the public execration actually was, no impeachment was ever moved for, no punishment was ever inflicted. No, the relief was immediately to the people.—I was the press, which enabled the party to raise such a turmoil in the country.

—And, by an unbridled use of the press, they obtained the victory.—If the President's liability to impeachment is sufficient to correct his errors, how happened it, in a state of things described, as so portentous of ill, THE PEOPLE, not the high court of impeachment, were resorted to. Why did it not avail to correct the alleged errors and crimes of the Adams administration. Your correspondent will probably answer that a majority of Congress were of the same party, had participated in his errors, and that, had impeachment attempted, they would have shielded and protected him. No other answer can be given by his accusers.—A detail completely exposes the error, the weakness, of your correspondents' creed. For if such a state of things has existed—and existed too, in the very infancy of our government, who shall say it will not again occur? Where then is the SECURITY of IMPEACHMENT?—Where do we find its SUFFICIENCY to correct the errors of our officers? No, if such a state of things, as the republicans represented, and now present, that of the Adams administration, should again occur, and the truth as yet not published, the administration, might progress in its iniquities with safety—our liberties be destroyed, and our all be gone, before a whisper of danger could reach our ears.

The liberties of all free nations have been subverted by those in whom the people implicitly confided. This important truth is stamped in glaring capitals, on the tomb stone of every departed Republic. The people, in a paroxysm of affection and gratitude, select some one who, as they believe, can do no wrong, lodge rights and powers in his hands, protect him from public investigation, and in some evil moment, when, with the lyren song of "The People," "The People," he has foothed their jealousy and passed their vigilance, he trenches himself in power and authority and sets at defiance all responsibility.—Ambition prompts the demagogue to court and flatter the people; and, by that courtship and flattery, the road to despotism is plain and certain. Thus Caesar became the despot at Rome. Thus the republic of England was subverted by Cromwell;—and thus, lately, Bonaparte has subverted the liberties of France.

We have nothing to fear from those we distrust; every thing from those we delight to honor. Of the former we think it the most brilliant of our privileges to speak and print as we like—of the latter we are assiduous to hide the faults.—But, when their tools demand,