

MINERVA; or, ANTI-JACOBIN

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NO. II.

To the Editor of the *Charleston Courier*.

"And the LORD said unto me, arise, get thee down quickly from hence; for the people which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt have corrupted themselves; they are quickly turned aside out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten image."

IN my last, Sir, I observed that the man who would shut out from the councils of this country the advice of a citizen, cannot be a true republican. The first object of a republican government being to collect as far as possible the opinions and wishes of the people, it is evident that the exclusion of a citizen's voice where it can constitutionally be listened to, is in fact a kind of treason against the true republican principle. It would be well, however, if the anti-republican and intolerant spirit to which I have alluded were confined to one or even to a few. Unfortunately for this country it has become the principle of a whole party; of a party the strongest in the country; of a party which by one mean or other rules the union. The case of Major Butler is one of the most extraordinary of which the annals of democratic outrage and folly afford an example. In England, where the laws of the constitution might be more reasonably suspected of a capability to be strained to the exclusion of the voice of individuals from the legislative ear, the right of individuals of eminent wisdom to offer an opinion is never contested; and though his opinion may not be acted upon, the individual or his communication have been rarely, if ever, treated with disrespect. Not only corporate bodies offer their opinions, in the shape of petitions, to Parliament, but even single persons of distinguished eminence.

The celebrated Doctor Parr, another name for learning, gave his opinion to parliament during the late war, in the shape of a petition, praying for peace. It was not thrown, or even moved to be thrown under the table; but the question was put, and tho' his opinion was adverse to the measures of the administration, his petition was respectfully treated, and ordered to lie upon the table. Mr. John Horne Tooke sent in a petition which was not only from beginning to end an invective upon government, but a libel upon some parts of the constitution itself. The house however did not stain itself by offering insult to the man; they rejected the petition after some conversation, by passing to the order of the day. And newspapers lately received from Europe, shew us in the case of the venerable Mr. Hill, the barrister, that the voice of an individual, distinguished for nothing but his wisdom, can still reach the government, & be received with respect. Are Americans to be less free than Englishmen? Are American citizens to have less privileges than English subjects? If we take the professions of our democrats in answer, they will say, No—certainly not; but if we take their practice, it will say, Yes—assuredly Yes.

The questions on the present subject are: First—Has the Senator of this State a right to offer his opinion and to explain his conduct in Congress to those who sent him there? If he has not no citizen can have it; and if that be the case, government (whatever it may be styled upon paper, or called in toasts and the midnight orgies of caucuses) is no more a republic than Turkey, Barbary, or Russia. But truth says that every citizen, and above all, the congressional senator of the state has a right, as such, to be heard. From this then arises a second question—Is there now or has there ever been in the conduct or character of Mr. Pierce Butler any thing so bad as to disfranchise him of that right?—He may tie them to shew it. And the member who made the contemptuous motion to throw his letter under the table, ought to have been first prepared with some disfranchising charge against him. But no! the crime of Mr. Butler lay in the letter itself. He dared to think and hold language in contradiction to the opinions, or to speak much more properly, to the designs of the leading faction; and that was sufficient to disfranchise him, to destroy him, if that faction had its will. He revealed in it the black mysteries of the "secret, dark, and midnight hags," who are doing "a deed without a name;" those close contrivers of all harm, who are making the union legislature an instrument, a tool for the furtherance of a faction, and the accomplishment of their wicked designs. For daring to give utterance to his opinions, for daring to reveal that secret cabal; for daring to

point out the danger in which the constitution stood from the practices of that foul cabal? for daring to say that the senate of the United States was managed by a small junto, and of course, the voice of that junto substituted by trick, for the operations of the people's will, through their constitutional and legal organ; for daring to warn the state he represented against a measure which he considered destructive of its interests and independence, and for assigning his reasons for thinking so, he is to be all at once disfranchised of his rights as a citizen and a senator. Oh, Tom Paine, where are all your doctrines now?—Oh, "Rights of Man," how scurvily are you treated! your apostles and their disciples chuck you into a corner, to lie there till they have occasion again for you, and make you a cloak to their designs, a pandar to their will, like the adulterous Priest in the story, who casting off with contempt the sanctified habit under cover of which he made his way into the confession chamber of the wife of one of his flock, cried, "off with you—lie down there for a while Divinity!"

The plan which Major Butler has developed, or rather pointed at, that is to say, the management of the Senate by a junto, is, in fact and in essence, treason against the people, a violation of their rights, a larcenous robbery of the operations of their will—they who practise it are traitors to the state—they who know that it is practised, and conceal it, guilty of misprison of treason. Had Major Butler abstained on the late important occasion from disclosing it, he would have been so far inculpated. It was his duty to disclose it. Morally speaking, he had no discretion left to him on the subject. Had he failed to do it, his letter would indeed have deserved to be thrown under the table.

I have examined the rights of Major Butler to advise his constituents as inherited from his citizenship and imparted by his high office of senator. I will now consider them as they are derived from his experience, and his capacity to advise: and though it may appear superfluous to the people of this state, who ought to know them well, I will state his pretensions on that head, in order that they may, by a due comparison of them with what lies before their eyes on the other side, form an estimate of the relative weight and value of both. Major Butler may be considered as one of the parents of our glorious revolution. From the moment of its birth he was acquainted with its temper, its habits, its powers and capacities, its errors and perfections, its training up, its idiosyncrasy, and its growth under the federal constitution. He was a member of the national convention which formed that constitution. He was a member of the state convention by which it was afterwards adopted. He knew all that passed, all that was thought and felt by the contracting parties, the nature and purposes of all its provisions, and the mind and motives of the framers of it.

He knew that the state principle in it which Virginia wished to destroy, was one of its most valuable parts—was in short the sheet anchor of the independence of the small states.—The discussion in those conventions (in which he bore a share) were not erased from his mind; and he remembered that the provision which the late change in the constitution has destroyed, was a chief one of those instituted upon by the small states, and that it was highly prized by them as such. He knew its extinction would tend to extinguish the rights it was made to protect. He was convinced that it would completely put an end to all pretensions to state equality. He saw that Virginia was marching on to power, in long and rapid strides, before the rest; and feared she would soon attain complete dominion over the lesser states, by destroying that protecting principle. With such impressions on his mind, would Major Butler have done his duty, if he had abstained from communicating them to his constituents, as a preventative against the mischiefs with which the measure in contemplation was pregnant? Certainly not. In doing so he did no more than his bounden duty, and his communication was entitled to profound respect and cool consideration.

But was there any thing in the language of the letter, or in the manner of it, to vitiate or afford cause of defence to those high and mighty chiefs? Certainly not. Had he written it in dictatorial terms, or in the language of loftiness or presumption, there might have been some pretext for the outrageous procedure in question. But his letter is precisely the reverse. Though

manly and energetic it is highly respectful and decorous. But it was wormwood to the faction, because it breathed wisdom, integrity and truth. In it was ratsbane to them, because it developed their dark and deep designs; it struck the fanatics of the faction with horror, because Major Butler, who wrote it, stood erect and upright, and would not bend the knees to their influence, nor fall down and worship their molten image. Because he would not (to use the words of the Prophet Isaiah) "worship the work of his own hands, that which his own fingers had made."

I am called off for the present by business which I can neither avoid nor postpone; but you shall receive from me a few more of the sentiments of

A TRUE REPUBLICAN.

Mr. LIVINGSTON.

It is impossible, says the Port Folio, for any American, whatever may be the complexion of his politics, to read without the liveliest indignation, the letter of Mr. Livingston, in reply to the communication of the French minister of foreign relations.—It presents a picture of indiscretion, of absurdity, and of fervility, which has no parallel in the history of ambassadors.—Even in the conduct of the representatives of the enslaved, dependent, and debased states of Europe, we have observed nothing more derogatory to national dignity. As a pandar to the passions of the Corsican usurper, regardless of his 'sacred character,' as the minister of a neutral nation, our envoy has departed from the line of his duty, and in a manner, perfectly unexampled, volunteered a declaration, which impeaches of a crime the most atrocious, a nation, with whom we are in the bonds of friendship and amity. Whence proceeds the authority of Mr. Livingston to pronounce "that Mr. Drake, the British minister at Munich, has held a culpable correspondence with traitors, for objects which all civilised nations must regard with horror?" What entitles him at all to take cognizance of this affair? Admitting that the British ministry had instigated the assassination of the tyrant of France, it could not become a subject for the proper interference of an ambassador, unless expressly instructed by his court. But it is credible that even the weak and prejudiced mind of this old man could suppose, for a moment, that a government hitherto distinguished by its magnanimity, would descend to the pitiful expedient of assassination to remove its enemy? He could not be ignorant that though means of this base and grovelling description have been employed by the profligate jacobin, and the desperate usurper, that they would not be resorted to by the legitimate government of Britain, which is too strongly fortified by power to create the necessity and too firmly supported by virtue to yield to the adoption did that necessity exist.

We are, therefore, unable to explain, in any other manner, the motive of this extraordinary address, than by referring it to that abject subserviency to the views of the first consul which has marked uniformly the official proceedings of Mr. Livingston.—Deaf to the frequent calls that have been made on him to vindicate the honour, and to uphold the consequence of his country, he has allowed the arrogant upstart to multiply his aggressions without complaint, & to repeat his insults without remonstrance. The effect of this undignified conduct has been, that with the entire loss of the consideration with the French government, which his high official situation ought to have imposed, he has excited the contempt of every enlightened foreigner, and the execration at least of such Americans, as have had the mortification of witnessing the disgrace of their country in its representative.

Exceptionable as we consider the general tenor of Mr. Livingston's letter, there yet remains a part to be noticed, which we view as peculiarly reprehensible. Continuing the strain of adulation, which characterises the language of this singular paper, Mr. Livingston congratulates the despot on the preservation of his life, that his exertions may be prolonged to confirm the "happiness of the nation of which he is the chief; a happiness which is the result of his noble labours in the field of honor, and in the cabinet, and which is not yet sufficiently established, not to be deeply shaken by his loss."

And does really then the ambassador of the 'most free and enlightened nation on earth' avow to the world that the present military despotism of France is a condition

of happiness? Let us enquire what are those 'noble labours,' which Mr. L. so highly commends. Is it the achievement of that usurped power, which has enabled Bonaparte to tyrannise over his own country, to extinguish every spark of civil and political liberty, to subjugate, enslave, oppress, desolate and plunder, with more than Vandal rapacity, the fairest portion of Europe? Perhaps the massacre of those thousands of defenceless prisoners at Acre, in violation of a stipulation which expressly provided for the preservation of their lives; or the deliberate murder, by the administration of poison, of his wounded soldiers at Jaffa, may be those glorious exploits of the field, which our truly benevolent and republican minister applauds?

Had we accidentally met with this letter, without a signature, we should have been disposed to have ascribed it to a missionary from some petty vassal nation, who had long been habituated to cringe, to flatter, and to supplicate, or at least we could never have supposed that sentiments, such as it contains, could have proceeded from the minister of these free, sovereign, and independent states. On the whole, we very gravely recommend to Mr. Livingston, to abandon diplomatic life as soon as possible, and to return to the shades of this 'new country,' here to resume, with his friend Jefferson, the more harmless employment of deceiving his ignorant countrymen with the tricks and impositions of philosophical empiricism.

FALKLAND.

Mr. Carr in his work, entitled "A Stranger in France," relates the following anecdote of the famous governor Wall, who was not long since executed in England, and whose singular fate excited so much curiosity.

As I have alluded to the fate of governor W—, I will conclude this chapter by an anecdote of the terror and infatuation of guilt, displayed in the conduct of this wretched man, in the presence of a friend of mine, from whom I received it. A few days before he suffered, fatigued with life, and pursued by poverty, and the frightful remembrance of his offences, then almost forgotten by the world, he left the South of France for Calais, with an intention of passing over to England, to offer himself up to its laws, not without a cherishing hope that a lapse of twenty years had swept away all evidence of his guilt.

At the time of his arrival at this port town, the hotel in which madame H— was waiting for a packet to Dover was very crowded: the landlord requested of her, that she would be pleased to permit two gentlemen, who were going to England, to take some refreshment in her room; these persons proved to be the unfortunate Brooks, a king's messenger, charged with important despatches to his court, and Governor W—. The latter was dressed like a decayed gentleman, and bore about him all the indications of his extreme condition. They had not been seated at the table long, before the latter informed the former, with evident marks of perturbation, that his name was W—, that having been charged in England with offences, which, if true, subjected him to heavy punishment, he was anxious to place himself at the disposal of its laws, and requested of him, as he was an English messenger, that he would consider him as his prisoner, and take charge of him.

The messenger, who was much surprised by the application, told him that he could not, upon such a representation, take him into custody, unless he had an order from the duke of Portland's office to that effect, & that in order to obtain it, it would be proper for him to write his name, that it might be compared with his hand writing in the office of the secretary at war, which he offered to carry over with him. Governor W— still pressed him to take him into custody; the messenger more strongly declined it, by informing him that he was the bearer of dispatches of great importance to his court, that he must immediately cross the channel, and should hazard a passage, although the weather looked lowering, in an open boat, as no packets had arrived; & that consequently it was altogether impossible to take him over, but again requested him to write his name, for the purpose already mentioned. The governor consented; pens and paper were brought; but the hand of the murderer shook so dreadfully, that he could not write it, and in an agony of mind, bordering on frenzy, he rushed out of the room and immediately left the town.