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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

A DEFENCE OF *REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENTS.*

LETTER TENTH.

Republican Governments inimical to war and luxury.

The great corrupters of mankind have been war and luxury. Whether we conſider the expence they produce, the deſtruction of lives they occaſion, the diſeaſes they generate, the famines they give riſe to, the tyranny they eſtabliſh, or the proſtration of morality they cauſe, they may be denominated the ſevereſt ſcourges of the human race.

It is as much in the nature of a republican government to avoid or repreſs theſe, as it is in the nature of a monarchy to cheriſh and extend them.

The adminiſtrators of a republican government will be ſlow to engage in war, and ready to make an honorable peace, after war ſhall have become inevitable. They will be ſlow to make war from that check upon them which exiſts in the good ſenſe of the people. Few of the moſt ſucceſsful wars that have ever been waged have conduced even to the benefit of the triumphant nation. This fact will be ſo well underſtood among a free and enlightened people, that they will not be diſpoſed, for a ſlight cauſe, to incur the hazards and miſeries of war. So far, therefore, as the cauſes of war originate with them, they will rarely exiſt, becauſe, having no limited ends to anſwer, and being neceſſarily guided alone by the general good, they will not permit their paſſions to be played off for the advancement of ambitious and depraved rulers. "The ſpirit of monarchy," ſays Monteſquieu, "is war and enlargement of dominion: peace and moderation is the ſpirit of a Republic."

Neither will republics if diſpoſed, be prepared to ruſh heedleſsly into wars. Poſſeſſed of but an inconſiderable military force, they will not have at command the means of immediate aggreſſion. Before armies can be raiſed and navies equipped, time will have been afforded for conſideration and cool reflection, and many intervening chances ariſe of accommodation, unknown to governments where, in general, with an irrational phrenzy, the blow of hoſtility is often ſtruck before the declaration of its exiſtence is made.

In monarchies, the ſeeds of war are thickly ſown. The immenſe legions of ſtanding mercenaries, whoſe occupation is war, and whoſe expectations of wealth or glory ariſe altogether from the exiſtence of wars, will operate, with perpetual force, to their production. The energy and aggrandiſement of power, which the executive power always finds in wars, where their exiſtence depends upon his will, will alſo conſtantly tend to produce them; while in republican governments, where the declaration of war is an act of the immediate repreſentatives of the people, the oppoſite effect will neceſſarily follow. In ſhort, it is evident, that in republics, where the general welfare is the teſt of all meaſures, and where they can only ſtand ſo long as they are conſidered promotive of it, there will be the leaſt temptation to war: while in monarchies, where the glory of the king, and the intereſt of his favourites, are the great objects of rulers, there will exiſt the ſtrongeſt temptation.

"A new diſtemper, ſays Monteſquieu, has ſpread itſelf over Europe, infecting our princes, and inducing them to keep up an exorbitant number of troops. It has its redoublings, and of neceſſity becomes contagious. For, as ſoon as one prince augments his forces, the reſt of courſe do the ſame; ſo that nothing is gained thereby but the public ruin. Each monarch keeps as many armies on foot as if his people were in danger of being exterminated; and they give the name of peace to this general effort of all againſt all. Thus is Europe ruined to ſuch a degree, that, were private people to be in the ſame ſituation as the three moſt opulent powers of this part of the globe, they would not have neceſſary ſubſiſtence. We are poor with the riches and commerce of the whole world; and ſoon, by thus augmenting our troops, we ſhall be all ſoldiers, and be reduced to the very ſame ſituation as the Tartars.

"Great princes, not ſatiſfied with hiring or buying troops of petty ſtates, make it their buſineſs on all ſides to pay ſubſidies for alliances, that is, generally to throw away their money.

"The conſequence of ſuch a ſituation is the perpetual augmentation of taxes; and the miſchief, which prevents all future remedy, is, that they reckon no more upon their revenues, but in waging war againſt their whole capital. It is no unuſual thing to ſee governments mortgage their funds even in the time of peace, and to employ what they call extraordinary means to ruin themſelves; means ſo extraordinary indeed, that ſuch are hardly thought on by the moſt extravagant young ſpend-thrift."

Let us compare the ſtate of a pacific republic with a warlike monarchy. In the former induſtry is permitted without ſhackles or reſtraint to purſue the direction given it by human ingenuity, rewarding the individual and enriching the ſtate; in the latter it is ſubject to perpetual interruption and obſtruction. The conſequence muſt be a great pecuniary benefit to the former, and an equal detriment to the latter. Suppoſing one man in twenty to be under arms, and this is a moderate computation, there will be, in a monarchy, containing as many ſouls as the United States, ſixty thouſand individuals detached from the ordinary purſuits of life, the produce of whoſe labour may be eſtimated at ten millions of dollars a year. In addition to this loſs is to be added the expence of ſupporting them, and this, connected with the incidental expences of war, will amount to at leaſt twenty millions more. The annual loſs to the nation will therefore be equal to thirty millions. This will be equivalent to a tax upon every perſon, ſubject to taxation, of at leaſt thirty dollars a year. Well then may the philanthropic Fenelon ſay, "that war is the moſt dreadful of all evils by which Heaven has afflicted man."—

"It never fails to exhauſt the ſtate, and endanger its deſtruction, with whatever ſucceſs it is carried on. Though it may be commenced with advantage, it can never be finiſhed without danger of the moſt fatal reverſe of fortune.—With whatever ſuperiority of ſtrength an engagement is begun, the leaſt miſtake, the ſlighteſt accident, may turn the ſcale and give victory to the enemy.—Nor can a nation that ſhould be always victorious proſper: it would deſtroy itſelf by deſtroying others: the country would be depopulated, the ſoil untilled, and trade interrupted: and what is worſe, the beſt laws would loſe their force, and a corruption of manners inſenſibly take place. Literature will be neglected among the youth; the troops, conſcious of their own importance, will indulge themſelves in the moſt pernicious licentiouſneſs with impunity, and the diſorder will neceſſarily ſpread through all the branches of government."

In aggravation of theſe ſources of expence are to be taken into the eſtimate the deſolations produced by wars, the orphaned families, left as a burthen upon the ſociety, and the diminiſhed value of lands, in countries, where their value intimately depends upon the number of the cultivators.

Nor is this all; the very cauſes of injury to the warlike monarchy will be ſources of advantage to the pacific republic, of whom a greater demand will be made of her productions, which will at once advance her finances and quicken the induſtry of her citizens; ſo that often as much will be gained by the one as is loſt by the other.

Let any man the leaſt acquainted with numbers, purſue the pacific republic and the warlike monarchy through a ſucceſſion of years, and mark the comparative effect of their policy, whereby the one incurs an actual annual loſs of thirty millions, and the other derives from her loſſes a poſitive benefit, and he will ſee that while the wiſe policy of the republic leads her to ſolid proſperity, the mad policy of the monarchy muſt end in ruin.

A rational being, aloof from the paſſions that agitate nations, would, from this view alone, conclude that nations would as ſedulouſly avoid, as they in fact court wars. This would be the caſe did nations govern themſelves. But the world abounds with uſurpation, force has become a ſubſtitute for reaſon; and the only ſtudy of courts now is, not how to advance the intereſts of nations, but how to manage their concerns ſo as to enſure to themſelves the greateſt perſonal benefits. Nations, in the eyes of rulers, are as much their property, as mules are the property of their drivers; and if they are not depreſſed to a ſtate of inextricable ruin and annihilation, it is becauſe tyrants, alive to their own intereſt, have ſenſe enough to preſerve the ſources of their greatneſs.

This is only a delineation of the pecuniary effects of war. Its other effects are ſtill more important. It begets an inſolence of power in rulers that expoſes their ſubjects to every ſpecies of indignity and oppreſſion; it encroaches upon liberty and often deſtroys it; it breaks the ſpirits of the nation; it leſſens the love of labor by depriving induſtry of its legitimate reward; it converts fertile and ſmiling fields into barren and frowning deſerts; it deſtroys national tranquility and perſonal ſecurity; it ſcatters famine in one direction and deſolation in another; it robs the child of its father, and the wife of her only protector; and expoſes both to all the temptations of vice; in fine, it ſports with human lives as of no value, and with the happineſs of millions as unworthy of regard. It riſques all the felicity that nations poſſeſs for misfortune, miſery and ruin.

Yet this is the idol of ambition, the object of its warmeſt deſires, the end of its moſt ſtrenuous exertions. Even in the midſt of a nation, encompaſſed with every ingredient of felicity, rich in the fertility of her fields, in the extenſion of her commerce, and ſtill richer in the liberty of her citizens, the voice of this criminal paſſion dares to riſe in recommendation of war. And for what? For national honor, chimerical diſtinction! And this voice, in any other country but this, guarded by republican inſtitutions, would not have been lifted in vain. For in other countries the people would not have been conſulted; or not reſpected, becauſe not poſſeſſed of the means of making themſelves feared. But thank God! here they enjoy the means of making themſelves reſpected and feared too. Here they think for themſelves with calmneſs, and act with vigor. Their friendſhip is the ſhield, their reſentment the terror of rulers. Having realiſed the bleſſings of peace, and the miſeries of war, they will long, it is to be hoped, preſerve the one and avert the other.

Too lively an abhorrence of war cannot be implanted in the hearts of freemen. While our ſtateſmen and legiſlators adopt proper meaſures to avert it, our orators and poets, our public teachers, whether from the pulpit or the preſs, ſhould enliſt the energies of truth againſt it. Delineations of its horrid attrocities are every where to be found in the writings of the beſt and the greateſt men that ever lived. It has not only received the denunciation of the enthuſiaſt of liberty, but of all moral writers. Let theſe delineations be republiſhed & enforced by appropriate comments; and let the free citizen of a republic learn, from the experience of others, not only their misfortunes but his own happineſs.

Purſuing ourſelves the example recommended to others, we offer the following pictures drawn by two eminent artiſts in the political world: neither of whom can be charged with intentionally exaggerating their colours.

The firſt is by Dr. JOHNSON, who ſays:

"The life of a modern ſoldier is ill repreſented by heroic fiction. War has means of deſtruction more formidable than the cannon and the ſword. Of the thouſands and ten thouſands that periſhed in our late conteſts with France and Spain, a very ſmall part ever felt the ſtroke of an enemy; the reſt languiſhed in tents and ſhips, amidſt damps and putrefaction; pale, torpid, ſpiritleſs, and helpleſs; gaſping and groaning, unpitied among men, made obdurate by long continuance of hopeleſs miſery; and were at laſt whelmed in pits, or heaved into the ocean, without notice and without remembrance. By incommodious encampments and unwholeſome ſtations, where courage is uſeleſs, and enterprize impracticable, fleets are ſilently peopled, and armies ſluggiſhly melted away.

"Thus is a people gradually exhauſted, for the moſt part with little effect. The wars of civilized nations make very ſlow changes in the ſyſtem of empire. The public perceive ſcarcely any alteration but an increaſe of debt; and the few individuals who are benefitted, are not ſuppoſed to have the cleareſt right to their advantages. If he that ſhared the danger enjoyed the profit, and after bleeding in the battle grew rich by the victory, he might ſhew his gains without envy. But at the concluſion of a ten years war, how are we recompenſed for the death of multitudes and the expence of millions, but by contemplating the ſudden glories of paymaſters and agents, contractors and commiſſaries, whoſe equipages ſhine like meteors, and whoſe palaces riſe like exhalations.

"Theſe are the men who, without virtue, labour, or hazard, are growing rich as their country is impoveriſhed; they rejoice when obſtinacy or ambition adds another year to ſlaughter and devaſtation; and laugh from their deſks at bravery and ſcience, while they are adding figure to figure, and cypher to cypher, hoping for a new contract from a new armament, and computing the profits of a ſiege or tempeſt."

The other is by Edmund Burke, in giving an account of Britiſh cruelties in India.

"When at length Hyder Ali found that he had to do with men (ſervants of the Eaſt-India Company) who either would ſign no convention, or whom no treaty, and no ſignature could bind, and who were the determined enemies of human intercourſe itſelf, he decreed to make the country poſſeſſed by theſe incorrigible and predeſtinated criminals a memorable example to mankind. He reſolved, in the gloomy receſſes of a mind capacious of ſuch things, to leave the whole Carnatic an everlaſting monument of vengeance; and to put perpetual deſolation as a barrier between him and thoſe againſt whom the faith which holds the moral elements of the world together was no protection. He became at length ſo confident of his force, ſo collected in his might, that he made no ſecret whatever of his dreadful reſolution.—Having terminated his diſputes with every enemy, and every rival, who buried their mutual animoſities in their common deteſtation againſt the creditors of the Nabob of Arcot, he drew from every quarter, whatever a ſavage ferocity could add to his new rudiments in the arts of deſtruction; and compounding all the materials of fury, havoc and deſolation into one black cloud, he hung for a while on the declivities of the mountains. Whilſt the authors of all theſe evils were idly and ſtupidly gazing on this menacing meteor, which blackened all their horizon, it ſuddenly burſt, and poured down the whole of its contents upon the plains of the Carnatic. Then enſued a ſcene of woe, the like of which no eye had ſeen, no heart conceived, and which no tongue can adequately tell. All the horrors of war before known or heard of, were mercy to that new havoc. A ſtorm of univerſal fire blaſted every field, conſumed every houſe, deſtroyed every temple. The miſerable inhabitants flying from their flaming villages, in part were ſlaughtered; others, without regard to ſex, to age, to the reſpect of rank, or ſacredneſs of function; fathers torn from children, huſbands from wives, enveloped in a whirlwind of cavalry, and amidſt the goading ſpears of drivers, and the trampling of purſuing horſes, were ſwept into captivity, in an unknown and hoſtile land. Thoſe who were able to evade this tempeſt, fled to the walled cities. But eſcaping from fire, ſword and exile, they fell into the jaws of famine.

"For eighteen months, without intermiſſion, this deſtruction raged from the gates of Madras to the gates of Tanjore; and ſo completely did theſe maſters in their art, Hyder Ali, and his more ferocious ſon, abſolve themſelves of their impious vow, that when the Britiſh armies traverſed, as they did the Carnatic for hundreds of miles in all directions, through the whole line of their march they did not ſee one man, not one woman, not one child, not one four-footed beaſt of any deſcription whatever. One dead uniform ſilence reigned over the whole region."

FROM THE WESTERN SPY.

TO THE PRINTERS OF THE SPY,

Gentlemen,

As the U. States are ſoon to acquire the poſſeſſion of Louiſiana, it may not be unapt to offer you a few notes that principally relate to the Miſſouri. They were made with others, ſeveral years ago, while the writer was in Upper Louiſiana, and in the way of obtaining the beſt poſſible information concerning a region ſo little known to the world. VIATOR.

Cincinnati, Sept. 23, 1803.

THE Miſſouri, which ought to have taken the name of Upper Miſſiſippi, in preference to the ſmaller branch ſo called, has, according to the ſavages, its ſource in a chain of mountains, at no great diſtance from California. There is ſaid to be a conſiderable cataract near the ſource. Fifteen years before C— of St. Louis, (whom I ſhall have frequent occaſion to name) aſcended this great river, to the diſtance of 500 leagues, in a general direction of Weſt North-weſt. No other perſon before him had ever penetrated ſo far—and none perhaps have ſince ſucceeded that diſtance—ſo that the ſource remains yet unknown to all but the ſavages. Whatever, then, may be ſaid here of the river and country beyond this point, muſt be aſcribed to information derived from the remote Indians.

After running a courſe of two or three and twenty hundred miles, the Miſſouri diſembogues into the Miſſiſippi, in lat. 38, 74, N. being about 15 1-2 W. from Philadelphia, and five leagues above St. Louis des Illinois, capital of Upper Louiſiana. In aſcending this ſtream, we find all its larger branches uniting with it on the ſouthern ſhore—there being but few waters, and thoſe inconſiderable, that empty on the oppoſite ſide.

The current of the Miſſouri is extremely rapid, very muddy, and far more difficult to aſcend, than the Miſſiſippi. Its turbidneſs is occaſioned by a large river called, the Plate, which rolling impetuouſly for ſome diſtance through a ſandy deſart, ruſhes into the other, on its ſouthern ſide, about 200 leagues from its mouth. The turbulence and impurities of the Plate are now communicated to the water of the Miſſouri and deſcend, though diminiſhed, with the Miſſiſippi, down to the Mexican gulph. Above the Plate, the ſtream of the Miſſouri is ſaid to be clear and gentle, as is that of the Miſſiſippi, above the Miſſouri's mouth. And yet we are told, that all the waters which fall in above the Plate are muddy, except one, while all below it are clear. If this be true, it proves an aſtoniſhing degree of muddineſs in the latter. Travellers do ſay, that about a fourth part of its bulk is formed of mud and ſand—and ſo impetuous its ſtream, that although boats have ſometimes ventured down, yet none ever attempted to aſcend it.—From the name of this river, it would appear to be embarraſſed with ſhoals. The deſert through which the Plate takes its courſe, is ſaid to extend a hundred miles on both ſides; that it is made up of hills and plains, of arid ſand—that in high winds, vaſt bodies of ſand are taken up, and carried through the air, burying irrecoverably whatever they happen to fall upon—and that in this dreary tract, there is little or no vegetation, nor any animals to be ſeen, excepting a ſpecies of rabbit, and an animal of the goat kind*—Nor is it inhabited by any of the human race.

I have in my hands, the copy of an original M. S. map in the poſſeſſion of a gentleman there high in office. It embraces the whole of the Miſſouri and Miſſiſippi, with their waters and lays down (among other things) the various nations and tribes of ſavages, inhabiting thoſe extenſive regions. According to this map, the Plate extends ſouthwardly between 12 and fourteen hundred miles, interlocking its head waters with thoſe of la Riviere du Nord, [North River] down which ſtands the city of Santa Fe, where the Spaniards have valuable gold mines.

About two hundred leagues further up the Miſſouri, that is, beyond the Plate's mouth, there is a remarkable bend called the Grand Detour, concerning the extent and poſition of which my informants were not perfectly agreed; ſome making it deſcribe a circuit of 30 or 40 leagues; but Mr. C— in whoſe intelligence I place great confidence, affirms that it does not exceed eighteen leagues. Be that as it may—the beginning and end of this bend approach ſo near to each other, that a man can walk acroſs the neck between them in half a day—whereas it takes up 8 or 9 days to row up the ſtream, around it. Hence it would appear, that the ſtream here is by no means placid—and therefore an exception to what is ſaid before, as to gentleneſs of the current above the river Plate.—My map lays down this bend, as north of the general courſe of the river; but I have been told, it takes the oppoſite poſition.

In the neighbourhood of the grand Detour and about ten leagues from the river, on its northern ſide, there is a lofty volcanic mountain, which is frequently in a ſtate of eruption. This will account for the pumice ſtones ſo often found floating down the Miſſouri, and Lower Miſſiſippi. To this Volcano may be attributed a ſmart ſhock of an earthquake, felt at Kaſkaſkia, &c. at 3 O'clock, in the morning, January 8th, 1795, and which came in an apt direction from the mountain.†

The navigation of the Miſſouri is attended with difficulty and danger; danger from its numerous quickſands, and difficulty from the obſtinacy of the current. The quickſands lie ſometimes in ſhoal water, and ſometimes form dry

* *A deſcription of this goat-like animal, lately appeared in many of the public prints.*

† *Some years after the above was written, certain travellers proceeded to the mountain, and found it raging. They could not approach within a mile of it, for fear of ſuffocation from the ſulphureous fumes it ſent forth.*