

FROM WILMINGTON MIRROR.

### ON AMBITION.

Ambition, or a desire of attaining uncontrollable power, is the most unhappy passion of the human mind. It admits of no gratification from indulgence, but is as insatiable as death itself. *Otway* describes it accurately, when he says,

"Ambition is a lust that's never quenched,  
Grows more inflamed, and maddens by enjoyment."

Regardless of the happiness he destroys or the misery he creates, the mad votary of ambition prostrates truth, reason, and justice before the object of his adoration. Real and attainable happiness is sacrificed to that which is imaginary. Striding from one degree of elevation to another, still grasping at some object suspended above his reach, he is impelled forward without noticing the height to which he is arrived, till some false step, some sudden whirlwind, or some treacherous hand, precipitates him from the dizzy eminence, into irretrievable disgrace and contempt.

Though ambition be not always fatal to the life, it uniformly is so to the peace of those on whom it operates. Of this truth, history, observation, and experience, must have informed every one, who attends to their intelligence.

*Cæsar*, the crafty aspiring Cæsar, who basely fought to enslave the country which had given him birth and freedom, and converted the arms with which he had been entrusted to defend her from foreign aggression, into weapons of domestic usurpation, was arrested in his rapid career to absolute control, by the truly dagger of an injured freeman.

*Alexander*, with his invincible phalanx, conquered the whole of the then discovered world, and traversed the Lybian deserts in search of foes to vanquish. His victories ceated with his foes. He was yet unsated with conquest; and like a petulant child, when crossed in its humor, sat himself down and wept that he had no more worlds to conquer. Disappointed in his favorite pursuit, he abandoned himself to luxury and intemperance, became the terror and destroyer of his best friends, and sunk into a narrow grave despised and hated.

*Charles V.* of Spain, after having spent near 30 years in the gratification of his immeasurable ambition—wearing with the incessant toils, and sickened with the deceptious pleasures it produced, resigned the crown and sceptre at the age of 56, to his son *Philip*; and sought for happiness, where only it can be found, in the bosom of retirement and practice of piety.

*Charles I.* of England, scorning to be bound by law or precedent, strove to render himself perfectly absolute, and made the good of his subjects, if any, but a secondary motive. His ambitious career was terminated on the scaffold, in pursuance of a sentence awarded by those very people whose rights he had sought to infringe, and whose power he had affected to despise.

*Cromwell*, whose zeal in opposing the tyranny of Charles, had been requited by his grateful citizens with power and honor, basely took advantage of that favorable disposition, to raise himself to supreme control. Attended by two or three hundred mercenaries, he with indignity expelled the representatives of the people from the place of their deliberation, and actually exercised that arbitrary power, which he had just sent his monarch to the scaffold for aspiring to. His enjoyment of his surreptitious greatness, was, however, of short duration. An officer of his, who still cherished the love of liberty, wrote a pamphlet, entitled "Killing no Murder," in which the self-created Protector was a striking and disgusting character. *Cromwell* read it, and was never known to smile after. Conscious of the treachery and enormity of his conduct, dreading the resentment of an injured and insulted people, he was incessantly trembling with fear, and mistrusting his most intimate friends and faithful servants. His mind was in continual perturbation, and his body soon caught the mind's infec-

tion. A slow fever, succeeded by a tertian ague, put a period to his life, while yet in the vigor of manhood.

Innumerable instances of the same kind might be cited, to establish the fact that ambition, when not subservient to reason, or directed to the general welfare, renders its possessor unhappy while he lives, and frequently hurries him to a premature death. But with the following instance, I shall conclude the present essay; beseeching my readers to repress that soaring which would mount to glory or power at the expense of their own virtue and repose, and the happiness of their fellow creatures.

*Cardinal Wolsey*, the favorite and prime minister of *Henry VIII.* of England, had long served, and but too faithfully, the king his master. Under the royal auspices he had amassed an immense fortune, and eclipsed the king himself in the magnificence of his palaces, furniture, and equipages. He was the real sovereign of England, and was making every exertion to get himself elected to the Papal chair, that he might wield the destinies of Europe. Unfortunately for him, he dared to cross the king in a favorite point, and found himself in an instant hurled from the height of power and affluence, to the lowest penury and disgrace. The charm was now broke, and those who had before courted, flattered, and caressed, with a very few exceptions, now deserted, and betrayed him. He was impeached of high treason, and was on his way to stand his trial, or rather to receive his sentence, when he was seized with a disease, which terminated his life.

*Shakespeare*, in his *Henry VIII.* has supposed the fallen *Wolsey* to be the speaker of the following pertinent and impressive lines—

"Farewell, a long farewell, to all my greatness! This is the state of Man; to-day he puts forth the tender leaves of hope, to-morrow blossoms, and bears his blushing honors thick upon him. The third day comes a frost, a killing frost, and nips his root.—I have ventured, like little wanton boys that swim on bladders, these many summers in a sea of glory, but far beyond my reach. My high-blown pride at length broke under me; and now has left me weary and old with service, to the mercy of a rude stream that must forever hide me!"

CIMON.

### CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES.

#### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

##### SEDITION ACT.

Speech of MR. HARPER concluded.

So much, Mr. Chairman, for the objections exercised under this law, and for the objections to its expediency.

As to the question of constitutionality, it has been waved by gentlemen very properly in my opinion; and I certainly shall not enter into it. The constitutionality of the law has been, on many former occasions, triumphantly established by arguments to which not even the semblance of an answer has been given. Indeed, sir, I have never so lowly appreciated the understandings of those who have clamored about the unconstitutionality of this act, as to suppose that they themselves believed in their objections. I have ever considered those objections merely as instruments for working on the public mind, as party expedients for exciting discontent against those in power, and paving the way for their dismissal. I have ever considered the constitutionality of the sedition act as a mere stalking horse, behind which to fight the administration. I believe that it has always been so considered by those who have used it; by those who have most gladly grasped, and most industriously wielded, a weapon whereby they hoped to demolish the power of their political adversaries, and open the way for their own. Hence, sir, and hence alone, the odious epithets which have been heaped upon it, and the tales fabricated about oppressions exercised in the course of its execution. Hence the charge that Congress had no

power to make a provision, which rests on the same principle whereon are founded nearly one third of the laws in our code, and which cannot be distinguished, and has never been attempted to be distinguished, from the first section of the same act; the section against seditious meetings, about the constitutionality of which a doubt has never been raised.

We are told, sir, that the people have condemned this act; that the people, as one gentleman has eloquently expressed it, "have declared their disapprobation in a voice of thunder." Sir, gentlemen deceive themselves. They have indeed thought this reason a good one; and have proved that they thought so by the industry wherewith they have used it. But they greatly over-rate its effects, which they measure by the erring standard of their own zeal. Let it be remembered, that this act was passed in the spring of 1798, and in the summer and autumn of that year, and the spring of the next, when the clamor against this law was fresh and high, the American nation was called upon to express by a general election, its sense of the conduct of its representatives. Let it be remembered, that the persons who were instrumental in passing this law, never received higher or more general proofs of the approbation and confidence of their country, than in this election. A change, gentlemen say, has since happened. If this change be any thing more than apparent, or at most a temporary fluctuation in popular sentiment, it is owing to far other causes than the sedition act; causes which need not now be discussed. Suffice it to say, that this act has received the highest and most repeated proofs of approbation on the part of the American nation; and that, industriously and kept up, that clamor has not been extended beyond certain parts of the country.

We are called on, sir, for the reasons why this act should now be continued. I will give my reasons most freely. Whether they be the same with those which actuate the conduct of other gentlemen, I know not; but in my mind they deserve all consideration. I wish to revive this law, sir, as a shield for the liberty of the press and the freedom of opinion; as a protection to myself and those with whom I have the happiness and the honor to think on public affairs, should we at any future time be found by the imbecility or the mistakes of any future administration in this country, to commence an opposition against it; not a factious, profligate, and unprincipled opposition, founded on falsehood and misrepresentation, and catching at the passions and the prejudices of the moment; but a manly, dignified, candid and patriotic opposition, addressed to the good sense and virtue of the nation, and resting on the basis of argument and truth. Should that time ever arrive, as it may arrive, though I earnestly pray that it may not, I wish to have this law which allows the truth to be given in evidence on indictments for libels; I wish to have this law as a shield. When indicted myself for calmly and candidly exposing the errors of government and the incapacity of those who govern, I wish to be enabled, by this law, to go before a jury of my country, and say that what I have written is true. I wish to interpose this law between the freedom of discussion, and the overbearing sway of that tyrannical spirit, by which a certain political party in this country is actuated; that spirit which arrogating to itself to speak in the name of the people, like fanaticism arrogating to itself to speak in the name of God, knows neither moderation, mercy nor justice; regards neither feeling, principle nor right, and sweeps down, with relentless fury, all that dares to detect its follies, oppose its progress, or resist its domination. It is my knowledge of this spirit, sir, of its frantic excesses, its unfeeling tyranny, and its intolerable revenge, that makes me anxious to raise this one mound between its fury and public liberty; to put into the hands of free discussion, one shield against its darts. This shield, I have little doubt, will, at length, and perhaps very soon, be torn away, for the spirit of which I speak, goaded by

conscious inferiority, stimulated to madness, by the envy of superior talents, reputation and virtue, knows to brook no check upon its rise, no censure upon its excesses: but I will not sanction my own death by my own voice. I will not yield one barrier to freedom and the right to opinion, while I can defend it. I regard this law as such a barrier, feeble perhaps, indeed, and ineffectual to check the progress of that tyrannical spirit which even now can scarce restrain its rage; but though feeble, yet dear to freedom, and never to be abandoned by freedom's friends. And in order to keep up this barrier to the last, I shall now, while I may, vote for the continuance of that law, which mitigates the rigor of the common law in this respect, and protects the liberty of the press and of opinion, by enacting that the truth may be given in evidence on indictment for libels against the government.

### LAW OF KENTUCKY.

An Act for settling and improving the vacant lands of this commonwealth.

Approved December 20, 1800.

Whereas it is represented to this assembly, that there is still in this state large quantities of vacant land which by being occupied by the citizens thereof, whose interest it may be to hold it, or by any citizens of the United States or foreigners, who being thereby encouraged to reside thereon, will greatly add to the population, wealth and consequence of this state.

Sec. 1. Be it enacted by the general Assembly of this commonwealth, That it shall be lawful for any free person of the description aforesaid, above the age of eighteen years, to improve, occupy and hold of the vacant lands aforesaid, four hundred acres: provided that he or she actually settles and resides thereon; provided that no person who now holds any land obtained by certificate under any act of the assembly of this state, for encouraging and granting relief to settlers south of Green river, shall be authorized to appropriate, under this act, more than two hundred acres, in addition to the quantity he may have acquired under the laws aforesaid.

Sec. 2. Be it further enacted, That where any person shall hereafter settle himself on any vacant land aforesaid, he shall, within three months after such settlement, apply to the court of the county in which such settlement is made, and upon proving to them that he has actually made such settlement, be entitled to a certificate for the quantity of land to which he may be entitled to, under this act, including such settlement in which said certificate shall be contained, a special location, describing as accurately as may be the land contemplated to be included in said certificate, a duplicate of which said certificate shall be made out by the clerk and delivered to the claimant; who shall pay to the said clerk one shilling therefor.

Sec. 3. And be it further enacted, that the person obtaining such certificate, shall within twelve months after the date thereof, upon producing the same to the register of the land office, and paying to the treasurer at the rate of twenty dollars per hundred acres, shall be entitled to a warrant for the same, in which warrant shall be contained the location as specified in the certificate, for which warrant the proprietor shall pay to the register twenty-five cents.

Sec. 4. And be it further enacted, that the said warrant shall be located within six months after the date thereof, with the surveyor of the county in which the lands may lie in the words of the certificate, and shall cause the same to be surveyed within twelve months thereafter, for which a patent shall issue upon paying the usual fees, as in other cases.

Sec. 5. And be it further enacted, that no location or survey which shall be made in virtue of this act, shall in its length exceed its breadth more than one-third, unless interrupted by prior claims only.

Sec. 6. And be it further enacted, That in all contests by settlers under this act, those who first did actually and bona fide