

THE REGISTER.

Printed and published every Wednesday at three dollars in advance. Subscribers who do not pay in advance, will invariably be charged four dollars.

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enjoy these blessings themselves, but they wished their children to enjoy them likewise; and they knew that this could only be effected by imitating the Deity in his work; hence they established mementoes, that continually reminded their posterity of the character of their political blessings—the tenure by which they held them, and the toil, sweat and blood expended in their vindication.

Yes, my fellow-citizens, our venerated ancestors were unwilling that the glorious principles of the Revolution should dwell in hearts that had not one patriotic impulse to nourish their growth, and ensure their perpetuity. They were unwilling that the blood which streamed from the devoted adherents of those principles, should be shed without raising one sympathetic tear of grateful remembrance. They were unwilling that the prayers of widowed and motherless women—widowed and motherless by their impassioned devotion to those principles, should go to the Heavens in vain and find no home in the recollections and in the hearts of their children.

They wished to impress upon their posterity a sense—a deep sense of the labor and difficulties that attended the generation and accomplishment of republican principles. It is to observe an institution they themselves established—it is to commemorate the ostensible birth day of those principles that we are met together this day. It behooves us, fellow citizens, on this great national day of jubilee—this Sabbath of the year—to lay aside petty strifes, party contentions, worldly cares, and give ourselves up to the patriotic commemoration of the era, not only of the political disfranchisement of America, but as I fervently hope and trust in Heaven, the ultimate enfranchisement of the whole world.

Let the living floods of happy freemen that move in our valleys and bustle in our cities, send up their voices in one sound of attestation. Let the prostrate forests of the West attest their effects—let our canals, rail-roads and manufactories attest their effects. Let our wide spread commerce whose sails are kissed by the breezes of every land, bear witness to their effects; and more than all, let your own souls, filled with knowledge—filled with liberal principles—filled with indomitable enterprise, be living evidences of their beneficent effects.

Fully to understand the blessings incident to republican or rather democratic principles, (for the two are nearly synonymous, and the last most generally used in common parlance,) it seems to me best to contrast them in their consideration, with conservative principles; by conservative, I mean monarchical and aristocratical principles—principles anti-democratic.

Physical wants and necessities are incident to the nature of man; and before all things else demand the care of government; and as the very subsistence of every species of government is also, lately founded upon the fulfillment of this duty, its fulfillment is common to all.

Men have not only physical wants, but artificial wants, generated by custom, habit and fancy, which are almost as importunate and pressing in their demands; and the satisfaction of which is almost equally essential to their happiness. These artificial wants, wealth alone can satisfy—so the promotion of wealth is the chief object of the operations of every government that rules a civilized country. The advancement of a nation to wealth is best accomplished by just, equal and stable laws.

There is much truth in this, but cannot we democrats retort that immovability is an insuperable obstacle to acquisition as change. If democrats are trying new experiments, and changing when they ought not to change, do not conservatists persevere in old policies, ill adapted to the times, and cry stand still, when reason dictates change? So the contest is reduced to the inquiry, which of the evils do you prefer? To which is incident more good than evil?

Weight depends likewise (say conservatists) upon just and proper laws.—And such can only proceed from wisdom, which is the peculiar attribute of conservatism. The line of demarcation between a man's rights and his neighbors, is so difficult to be distinguished, that the keenest and most gifted intellect often errs in judgment.

The conventions of society are so complex; its relations so multifarious, that even the quick eye of genius itself cannot clearly thread its way through the intricate labyrinth. Each occupation of life must have its own peculiar laws; each relation must be determined by regulations of its own character. Not only must the relations of different genera be resolved, but the relations of the species of the genera, and the individuals of the species. Rights are interwoven within each other; and assume all the different aspects that the inexhaustible variety of circumstances present. It is the office of rulers to determine the laws that govern these complex and multifarious relations. Can ignorant men fulfil this office? Can the people then, the mass of whom are always ignorant? Democrats believe that wisdom is the inspiration of ignorance—that the best judges are the mass; and the best rulers those who are most fervid in their love of democracy. They

never inquire whether a candidate for ruler is wise or virtuous, but whether he is a democrat. Does democracy give knowledge and integrity to a man? Does the name of democrat, necessarily imply that he is not a fool? Is democracy instead of reason the test of truth? None are good laws but those that are democratic, shouts out the dogmatical blockhead. A ruler to perform well his duties should possess knowledge—should have a keen, comprehensive, and discriminating mind—should be able to penetrate into the truth, and understand the philosophy of things, but democracy embraces in its very name all these. I am a democrat! shouts out the political demagogue—therefore you must elect me. I have no other claims I can lay before you, neither wisdom, nor talents nor honesty; but I can lay before you what is infinitely better—a democratic heart. Yes! a heart that has ever been constant to you—whose every throb has been for the good cause, save some indignant throes at the mention of rascally kings and aristocrats. "O! people woe! you elect such a good democrat?"

See how completely the master idea usurped possession of the republican soul—how it has swallowed up all other ideas, and destroyed all their relative importance. How can you expect wisdom from democratic principles, when a favorite sentiment has thus usurped the place of Nature, and made instead of her, the test of all political opinions? Correct judgment is the offspring of the calm and clear sunshine of the mind, not of the wild storms of passion and prejudices. Conservatism is exempted from these passions and prejudices. Its rulers are lifted high above the influence of the mass.

Men who are chosen for their wisdom and worth, not for their opinions, many of whom are hereditary rulers, and whose absorbing object of life is political knowledge. From such men only can you expect just and proper laws.

There is some truth in all this, and much caricature. But cannot we democrats deny that exemption from passion and prejudice the conservative claim? There may be individual prejudices in monarchs and nobles, as well as in the multitude. They have too, their master idea, which lords it as completely over their souls, as democracy, does over the souls of democrats. This master idea may be love of conquest—it may be self-aggrandizement. This last is most universal in its existence.

It is a law of nature, that the class of a community holding the Legislative power will legislate for itself irrespective of the interests of other classes. If legislation benefits at all the last, it is the unforeseen and accidental consequences of laws intended for the interest of the first. Allowing then wisdom to conservative rulers, whose is its advantage when so small a portion of community as a particular class is benefited? Can just and proper laws proceed from such rulers? They may be just and proper in regard to themselves, in their relations with one another, but they must necessarily be unjust and wrong in regard to all others. Even Britain, whose conservatism is of the least odious character—whose aristocracy is so universal as to embrace the whole of her landed and commercial classes, yet even she has the mass of her inhabitants pressed down by as severe burdens as the patience of slaves can endure. The mass are virtual slaves to the few—every individual moment of their existence must be sacred to the acquisition of a scanty subsistence. They are chained down, (if not slaves in law, slaves in circumstances generated by law) to the soil or to the machine.

Every country governed by conservative institutions, is either a country of lords and serfs, or land-lords and tenants. This distinction must be preserved, or conservative institutions cannot be preserved.

France abolished the chief support of her conservatism, her primogeniture laws, her restrictions on the freedom of the press, &c., and France now is a monarchy only in name. A standing army, and an established church alone preserve its forms. Patriots are looking sanguinely and steadily for the period when even these shall be swept away in that besom of destruction fated to end all conservative institutions.

of its subjects passed down by penury and want.

It is a fact, that the greatest of Britain's statesmen owe their importance to the democratic features of her constitution—their origin proceeding in almost every instance from obscurity and poverty. Doubtless still greater merit would have adorned her councils had it not been for the influence of her conservatism, making rank rather than worth, the test of promotion. Democracy dispels these influences—rank and wealth fly from her presence. Equality is the fond nursling of her hopes.—Though political opinions may be the test of her choice, riches and titles are not; and generally she chooses, those of the most merit embraced in her favorite politics; and those that are embraced constitute the whole people.

Where political institutions open the avenues of distinction to all, is it not more probable that they will secure wise rulers, than where the choice is confined to the narrow range of a particular class? And where the management of those institutions can only be reached by industry and self-education, is it not more probable that wisdom will distinguish that management, than where the artificial circumstances of wealth and rank are standards of qualification?

Besides: Democracy is not incompatible with slight conservative restraints. It is true she is jealous of conservatism, but in no instance does that jealousy degenerate into absolute abhorrence, where conservatism is founded upon her principles.

The American federal, and the State constitutions have many conservative features which secure all conservative advantage without their attendant evils. The Federal Senate is a conservative feature, for its election proceeds from State Legislatures, not from the people in their individuality. The federal judiciary is conservative, for its members are almost wholly independent of the people both in tenure and term of office. The veto power of the federal, and some of the State Executives, is eminently conservative. If wisdom and stability of law, are the particular attributes of conservatism, will not conservative principles scattered among American democratic institutions, secure those advantages? Although Senators are chosen on party principles, still the predominate party of the State Legislatures is apt to choose the wisest of its partisans. This is necessary to sustain the credit of the party, and advance its measures. This is not mere speculation, but it is speculation embodied in reality. It is well attested by disinterested testimony that the United States Senate is now, and ever since its existence has been the assembly of as much, if not more political wisdom and worth as any other deliberative body in the world. It is true there are a few brilliant instances of eminent abilities in conservative councils, but the mass of their members will not sustain comparison with the Senate, and many other American Legislative assemblies. And will not the principle that governs many of the States' Judiciary, and the federative Judiciary particularly, insure as much judicial independence, ability, and integrity as the systems of pure conservatism? And will not the veto power secure, if not as great stability of law as conservatism, yet as great as nature and reason would demand. If a party becomes triumphant, and elevates its partizan to the dignity of federative Executive, admitting that he be faithful to the principles of his party, no after revolution of public sentiment can change that party's measures at least for four years. The interposition of the Executive veto will for that period prevent all repeal, all alteration.

But conservatists will cry, you are stealing my principles; you are appropriating to the use of Democracy virtues that do not belong to her.

This I deny. These institutions they may for the sake of distinction be denominated conservative, and partake somewhat of their nature, yet owe their existence to, and are most deeply imbued with the spirit of democracy. They are only the mode in which democracy expresses herself. Democracy is their living principle—if she withheld from them her support for a moment, they would fall with their own weakness. The conservatism of America depends upon the

public sentiment which democracy forms and regulates. Besides, American conservatism is not absolute or hereditary, but is only an indirect way prescribed for the action of Democracy. Every thing proceeds from, and must ultimately be referred to the will of the people. The people elect their Executive—and elect the electors of their Senate and Judiciary. The people can impeach and remove each one of them from office.—Is this the conservatism of Europe?

Thus we see, fellow-citizens, that the just, proper and stable laws, essential to wealth; are the far more legitimate results of Democratic than conservative institutions. But there is one circumstance that is more efficient in the production of wealth than even just, proper and stable laws; and that is the individual character of the people. The energies and capacities of the individual man of the people, does far more than the general influences of any laws. Individuality is seldom developed in conservative countries; and the more pure the conservatism, the greater the influences that operate against development. Where the people have no voice in the political councils of their country—where their rulers are independent of their will and sentiments, they have few inducements to intellectual and moral exertion; and feel little more interest in political movements than the slaves feel in the regulations of their masters.—Like slaves they are habituated to servile dependence upon their rulers. Their rulers think for them, feel for them, and act for them. The philosophic De Tocqueville I remember, remarks, that he observed in conservative countries such an apathy among the people, that a magnificent work of public architecture might fall to the ground for the want of a pillar to support it; that a criminal might fly through them in safety for want of an apprehender; that a nuisance might endanger the health of a whole community for want of a little industry in its removal. The people wait for, and expect the officers of government to do what they could so much more easily, quickly and cheaply do, so abject is their dependence. This is not the case in democratic countries, every individual is a freeman; and as such, thinks himself a part of the government. He would suffer the reproaches of his conscience and patriotism to allow the decay of a public work, the escape of a criminal, or the sufferance of a nuisance under his eye, without an attempt to remedy the injury. Every individual freeman of the nation regards himself as one of the officers of government, and bound in conscience to fulfil his duties. He would strip his shirt and go to work, when the menial of conservatism would fold his arms, and draw out wait for the government. Can there then be those capacities—those productive powers of wealth in the conservatist whose dependence is so servile, that are in the democrat whose self-dependence is so absolute? The question carries its answer with it. Conservative institutions are blasting in their influence on commerce—for they foster monopolies and exclusive privileges. The advantages of commerce are confined to the few—the mass seldom feel their influences.—Equality, which is the soul of democratic institutions, frowns upon all exclusive privileges. The privileges allowed to one are allowed to all. This is eminently favorable to the production of wealth.

Admit that conservatism is equally favorable to the promotion of wealth as democracy, of what advantage is that wealth to the people. It is confined to the privileged few—the mass pine away in penury and want, and their sufferings are rendered more acute from the consciousness that they are starving in the midst of plenty—that they are wearing out the energies of their bodies and minds to feed a few puffed up luxurious voracious.

The great principle of Democracy is, "the greatest good for the greatest number," but the fell spirit of conservatism cries out, "Happiness for the few, sweat, toil and despair for the many."

That intellectual enlightenment and moral improvement is the moral state of society, or the state in which it ought to be, is a truism completely established by one's own consciousness and reflection; independent of the almost demonstrative arguments of the philoso-

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