

I might propose more questions of this kind; and when the necessity comes, they will rise thick enough upon us, and we must then encounter them all; for the sake of AMERICAN LIBERTY; which I would never desert but with my life. But I am sure that the author of Common Sense, who labours to prove that the necessity is already come, offers nothing on this head that can give much satisfaction to the public in general. Trusting, however, that in the preceding part of his work, he has levelled the English constitution to the dust, together with all our American constitutions, which are formed on similar models, and that he has thereby led us past the Rubicon, he may flatter himself that we will more readily follow his future direction, and adopt what plans he may offer. But I chuse to examine for myself, and having dispatched his main argument for independence, which he founds on the necessity of foreign assistance, I proceed to consider some other parts of his work.

His first notions on the origin of government and monarchy, appear to be the strangest medley of inconsistencies and contradictions which were perhaps ever offered to the common sense of any people, and calculated only to mislead those superficial readers, who are content to believe as they go, without comparing one part of a writer's doctrine with another.

"Society, says he, is produced by our wants, and government by our wickedness; the former promotes our happiness positively, by uniting our affections; the latter negatively, by restraining our vices. Government, like diets, is the badge of lost innocence; the palaces of kings are built on the ruins of the bowers of paradise."

If the author meant only by this to tell us, that if all men were perfectly virtuous, and followed the pure dictates of right reason, human governments would have been unnecessary, then I could subscribe to his doctrine and might have paid him a compliment for cloathing an old truth in a spruce metaphor. But if he meant to prove that monarchies were any more founded on the ruins of paradise than republics, he ought in consistency with himself to have shewn us -- that, after Adam was expelled from paradise, he and his descendants, as soon as they were "four or five" strong, and "able to raise a tolerable dwelling in the wilderness" -- were found erecting some sort of palace for him as their king; and that, after this example, all future governments were built in the first ages. But our author shews us no such thing. On the contrary, when he speaks of the manner of "peopling the world," and frames a government out of the state of nature, the first idea he presents us with is that of a pure republic.

"Some convenient tree, says he, affords a state-house, under the branches of which the whole colony may assemble to deliberate on public matters." -- They proceed, as their numbers increase, to improve this constitution, and devise checks, that "the elected may not form to themselves an interest separate from the electors." -- On these checks ("not on the unmeaning name king") depends "the strength of government and happiness of the governed."

How can this be reconciled to what follows? The author has told us that all government, "being at best but a necessary evil, promotes happiness only negatively, by restraining (viz. the king) our vices; and in erecting his early republic, he contrives his checks accordingly; but (in the next breath) directly forgets himself, and says that no power, which needs checking, can be from God." Thus, by his own argument, God has as little to do with the powers of government in the republican as in the monarchical form. But further, least his readers should also forget themselves, and be carried away by his first assertion, -- that "the palaces of kings were built on the ruins of paradise;" he takes care to tell us, and backs it with the authority of "scriptural chronology, that in the early ages of the world there were no kings;" that the evil himself, in those ancient times, was but a dull fellow; and that, although "government by kings was his most prosperous invention for the promotion of idleness;" he was a long while in hammering it out; which is but a poor compliment to Satan's cunning! For being a king himself from the beginning, he might have hit upon it sooner. But I leave our author to make his own apology to his infernal majesty, if he be of his counsils; for I have no business to interfere between them.

It is sufficient to shew what use he makes of his Common Sense, at the very outset, in retuting his own first doctrine, and proving to demonstration that instead of palaces for kings, state houses for whole colonies were built on the ruins of paradise; nay more, that these ruins, in the case of the Jews, were near three thousand years tolled up and down into various forms, before they were converted into royal edifices! -- That I have not misrepresented our author in this argument, his own words will shew. "Near three thousand years passed away, from the Mosaic account of the creation, till the Jews, under a national delusion, requested a king. Till then, their form of government (except in extraordinary cases, where the Almighty interposed) was a kind of republic," &c.

He proceeds, in the next place, to persuade us that he is as well acquainted with the secrets of Heaven as the devices of Hell, concerning the origin of kingly government; and that the Almighty consented at last to this "most prosperous invention of Satan," in mere wrath and vengeance against the Jews, as a greater punishment for their ingratitude than could have been inflicted upon them by any other human form of government. There never was a greater perversion of scripture than our author has been guilty of in his endeavours to establish this part of his argument, as every man of common understanding, who has his bible in his hand, may easily perceive.

The bounds prescribed for this letter will not suffer me, at present, to point out his misrepresentations, and to shew how he sets himself up, not only against the plain letter of scripture, but the universal sense of wise and holy men of every age. It is not consistent with my principles to say one word in favour of the divine right of Kings; nor do I believe a word of what others have said in its favour. As little do I believe what has been said concerning the divine right of republics, or any other human forms of government. But the question is, whether God hath particularly reprobated any of them? For my part, as the author has set me the example of examining scripture on this head, I cannot find any modern kings particularly rejected by Heaven, but MOUNSIEUR the KING of FRANCE. It is in the 14th chapter of Ezekiel, and I am sure our author, who is so deeply versed in scripture, could not have

overlooked it, if it had not been for the treaty he proposes with this king. The reader will readily allow, that the application is much more natural than that which he has made of the 5th chapter of the first book of Samuel.

"Son of man, set thy face against MOUNSIEUR (Heb. MOUNSIEUR, or MONSIEUR) and prophesy against it (Heb. him) and say unto him, thus saith the Lord God, Behold O Mounther or Mounsieur, I am against thee -- because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel: (that is, the French protestants) by the force of the sword. -- Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord God, I will prepare thee unto blood, and blood shall pursue thee. -- Sith thou hast not hated blood, even blood shall pursue thee. -- Thus will I make MOUNSIEUR, or MONSIEUR, most desolate -- because thou hast said these two nations, and these two countries [here Britain and America are clearly pointed out] shall be mine, and we will possess it -- whereas the Lord was there -- as much as to say, you shall not have these two countries, Monsieur! the Lord intends them for his own use -- they shall be free protestant countries.

The reader may peruse and apply the remainder of the chapter which he may do as well as the author of Common Sense; and, some may say, perhaps as well as

C A T O .

C A M B R I D G E , March 23.

The freeholders and other inhabitants of the town of Bolton, qualified as the law directs, have been notified, by the select-men to meet at the Rev. Dr. Chauncy's meeting house to-morrow, to choose town-officers for the year ensuing, and to act upon all such matters and things as may properly come before the town.

The commissioners appointed by the court of Great-Britain, to treat with the colonies on the subject of settling the present disputes, it is said, sailed from England about the 10th of January bound to Philadelphia. Some reports, by the last packet from England, say, large bodies of foreign troops may be expected; others say, none will come, the French king having declared to the British court his intention of taking an active part in favour of America, so soon as Great-Britain shall take into her service any foreign troops.

N E W - P O R T , March 25.

The ministerial fleet on this station, about a fortnight past, took a double decked brig in Narraganset-bay, belonging to this place; they took off her upper deck, and fitted her with 8 or 10 guns; and last Wednesday and Thursday the whole fleet, consisting of the ships Roie, Glasgow and Swan, two brigs of 8 or 10 guns each, 3 armed tenders, and a large transport snow, sailed on a cruise, and next day in the afternoon returned again, with two prize sloops, both from Connecticut, one bound to the West-Indies, and the other to the eastward, loaded with provisions.

N E W - L O N D O N , March 25.

A vessel has arrived here from South-Carolina, by whom we learn, that 3 or 4 British ships are at Georgia, who had landed 3 or 400 men, who joined the Tories, and had drove the sons of liberty out of the town (Savannah) but that some thousands of men had marched from Charlestown, to their assistance.

N E W - Y O R K , April 1.

Thu day about one thousand rifle men arrived here from Bolton; and Saturday last brigadier general Heath, with Sark's, Webb's, Bond's, Petterion's and Gretton's regiments, arrived here from the same place, by way of New-London.

Part of col. Dayton's battalion from Elizabeth-town, and several companies from Connecticut came to town last week also; so that we now have here about eight thousand men.

April 3. by letters from Montreal we are informed, that the troops were coming in very fast, and filing off for Quebec in great spirits, not doubting of being able shortly to reduce that place; as by deserters daily coming out, their situation was known to be very bad, on account of fuel, &c. so that they are burning the lower town, in order to save the upper; and that many of the inhabitants are compelled, much against their will, to take up arms, and wish to be relieved.

On Saturday last arrived here from Cambridge the hon. brigadier general Heath, with about 3000 of the continental troops under his command. It is said, that the hon. major general Putnam, is also on his march for this place with his brigade; and that the king's troops and fleet sailed from Nantasket last Thursday.

The following is a true list of the stores, &c. left in Bolton by the ministerial troops on evacuating that place.

- 100 pieces of cannon in the town, from 9 to 32 pounders.
- 100 ditto at the castle.
- 4 mortars, 13 and a half inches, two of them with beds weighing 5 tons each.
- 2500 chaldrons of sea-coal.
- 25000 bushels of wheat.
- 1300 bushels of barley.
- 600 bushels of of oats in one store.
- 100 jars of oil, containing one barrel each.
- 150 horses marked G. R.

A number of cannon and mortars have been since discovered in the water.

By a gentleman from New-London we are informed, that an express had arrived to governor Trumbull, with an account of the surrender of Quebec to the continental forces.

Last night a number of our troops went and set fire to all the buildings on Redrow's island, where the men of war were intrenching and fortifying it for an asylum for the Tory refugees, burnt and brought off all their intrenching tools with a large number of white flints and great coats, &c. likewise an abundance of poultry of all sorts; the Asia fired on our people, but not one man either killed or wounded.

Last night a barge full of fire-balls, and to be from the man of war, landed and endeavoured to set fire to the air furnace, but they were timely discovered before much damage was done.

The following odd affair happened at Stratford on the 10th of March last: a child of Mr. Edwards; of

that place, was baptized by the Rev. Mr. _____ of Norwalk, and named THOMAS GAGE; this alarmed the neighbourhood; and on the 17th, an hundred and seventy young ladies formed themselves into a battalion, and with solemn ceremony appointed a general and the other proper officers to lead them on; then the petticoat army marched in the greatest good order to pay their compliments to THOMAS GAGE, and present his mother (the nymphs ought to have deferred this part of the business a few days, say our correspondents) with a suit of raiment and feathers; but THOMAS's fire having intelligence of their expedition, he & his friends kept them from entering his house, so that the female soldier returned to head quarters, without effecting what they intended, and disbanded themselves.

P H I L A D E L P H I A , March 27.

By a letter from Jamaica we learn, that the schooner Providence, capt. Smith, and sloop Dove, Bull, of Rhode-Island, were taken by the Aqueduct, the Polly Sands, of New-York, by the Quiret and the sloop Effy and Handiah, capt. Bell, of Virginia, with two schooners belonging to North-Carolina, were all taken off Cape Nicholas Mole, loaded with mearles, &c. The captains of the vessels taken were confined on board, the flag ship at Port Royal, but they have within these few days moved to their respective corps, which has been granted, and they are now allowed to go about: there is no saying when the vessels are to be liberated, the custom-house officers and the captains of the men of war are likely to have some dispute about these captures. The American houses here are relieved to give the captains of these vessels every assistance.

By express from Lewis-own we learn, that on Monday evening; a sloop of war and her tender came into our capes.

Extract of a letter by the packet, Dec. 23, 1776.

"Lord George Germaine has insisted himself into the ministerial cause; he is esteemed, in point of abilities, inferior to none in the nation (he is greater in the cabinet than in the field) he appears sanguine of success, and declared in his first speech as minister, that "such terms should be offered to America as she might receive with safety, and such as Great-Britain might offer without depreciating her dignity; if, after that, they should continue rebellious, he pledged himself (vauntingly) to the house, that he would find men and money abundantly sufficient to reduce them;" -- he said, "upon these terms he came into administration, and he was determined to act accordingly."

Extract of a letter from St. Eustatia, March 16.

"The men of war are taking prizes daily. They took a few days ago from Providence, Rhode-Island, a cargo of 3000. on board. A gentleman in St. Eustatia received a letter from his friend in Martinico the day before yesterday, informing him of advice from France, that 36 ships of the line and frigates were waiting, all prepared for an expedition, but their destination was kept a profound secret."

By a letter, of the best authority, from Cambridge, dated March 25, 1776, we are informed that the ministerial troops have blown up, burnt and demolished the castle totally; that they have been in Nantasket road ever since their embarkation; their stay there is judged necessary to prepare for sailing, as neither the vessels themselves, nor, as loaded, were fit for the sea, being loaded in great haste and disorder; this account is confirmed by a deserter, who says they have yards, booms, bowsprit, &c. to fix. Some conjecture they mean to give the provincial troops a parting blow, as their whole force is now collected, 15 vessels having arrived with troops from the West-Indies since their flight from Boston. Six regiments of the continental troops have marched to New-York; ten regiments of the militia were to be discharged the first of April. As soon as the fleet had sailed from Nantasket general Washington proposed setting out for New-York. The provincial troops are now fortifying Fort-Hill, and demolishing the lines on Roxbury neck, which are a defence against the country only.

Extract of a letter from London, Dec. 14.

"In spite of the influence of addresses America gains friends every day, and I hope the spring may produce the olive-branch, instead of the destructive sword, and that the intercourse between America and England may very soon be established on constitutional and lasting grounds."

W I L L I A M S B O R O , March 29.

There is a report that general Clinton is arrived at Cape Fear, North-Carolina, with the troops he brought with him from Boston, and that he has been since joined by 12 or 1500 from England or the West-Indies. We likewise hear that the provincial troops are in motion, and marching from all quarters to attack him; so that we may soon expect to hear of another battle in that province, which we hope will prove equally glorious to the American arms as that which was, but a few weeks ago, so successfully fought by the brave col. Caswell. The account of general Clinton's return from North-Carolina, and sailing out of our capes again, was inserted in the last Gazette from the information of some gentlemen from Hampton; the Kingfisher, with a number of tenders, and some prizes they had taken, having been mistaken for the Mercury frigate and the transports which went out with general Clinton, who, after sending up the prizes to Norfolk, went out again upon another piratical cruise.

Advice was received, a few days ago, that the continental fleet had taken and carried off from Providence, one of the Bahama islands, upwards of 100 pieces of cannon, and a small quantity of gunpowder, with which they set sail for the continent. The English governor, a little before the fleet's arrival, found means to send away a chief part of the ammunition, military stores, &c. &c.

This day his excellency CHARLES LEE, Esq. major-general in the continental army, arrived at head quarters in this place, to command of the Virginia troops, attended by O. W. A. and Lewis MORRIS, Esqrs. his excellency's aids-de-camp, his secretary, Mr. NOURSE, Mont. LE BRUN, engineer, and the rest of his suite.