

conduct of every subject of the state. Our happiness in this particular is scarcely to be paralleled; What satisfaction must every truly good citizen feel, when he reflects on this our prosperous situation? When he considers the force of virtue and dignity, united with station and character, and the effects which do necessarily result from so happy a combination? By the influence of these, the difficulties which have hitherto obstructed a free declaration of sentiments on the most important occasions, are now happily removed. Liberty of speech hath taken place of formal punctilio, and expressions, which have heretofore been falsely deemed illiberal and abusive, have received the sanction of high breeding and refined taste; nay, what is infinitely more valuable, they have been proved to be the genuine, essential offspring of a constitution founded in freedom, and the very perfection of liberty and independence.

Providence, who furnished man with the power of speech as well as of thought, has been profusely bountiful in each particular. The moral law, which, as set forth in its long established system, hath been weakly supposed to have been intended as a restraint on both, is in most instances the mere creature of human invention, evidently calculated to abridge and depriv us of those most inestimable gifts of nature.

In the formation of societies those natural rights alone are given up, or are afterwards subject to be taken from individuals, which in any manner impede, or do destroy the good and well being of the whole. To deprive a single citizen of a right, which is not necessarily conducive to that end, is a manifest injury; it is an act subversive of the very purposes for which societies were formed, and therefore not to be exercised in any community. I speak in the language of freedom, and not of precedent. I am aware that many instances may be adduced against me of extraordinary exertions of power, and these supported by specious reasonings, in governments which have been reputed the most free, and in which the rights of the subject have in other cases been guarded, and preserved with the utmost vigilance and steadiness. But these instances serve rather to prove some original defect in the institution, or a vicious administration of such governments, than a right in them to interfere in or diminish the natural inalienable freedom of the subject.

It is a matter worthy of observation, that the first efforts of tyranny have ever been accompanied with attempts to destroy the important privilege of speech. The voice of an injured indignant complainant is grating to the ears of the oppressor. It becomes his interest to stifle the clamour, that his security may not be endangered by a publication of his oppressions. I know there are some men who think, and they allege among the rest custom and precedent in support of their opinion, that this right, like all other human privileges, is circumscribed, and confined within certain limits, and that all beyond these is unwarrantable excess. But custom and precedent require a foundation in reason. If they want this support, their authority will have little weight with a free and thinking man; and what reasons can justify and support a doctrine of such a nature?

Those governments which have endeavoured to impose restraints upon the freedom of the mind, have ever been deservedly esteemed the most slavish and despotic. Next to these may be ranked such as aim at a restraint on the liberty of the tongue. In the first instance the natural rights of men have seldom been called in question, or violated, except in matters of religion, where priests and fanatics have always claimed a privilege to domineer. In civil cases there are few instances of it. But what is even this great, this boasted right, if not united with the other. The very purposes for which they were both evidently intended, would be frustrated by a separation. That a man is free to think what he pleases, is a position founded in nature and reason; that he is also free to express his thoughts in what terms, on what occasions, and about what persons it may suit his humour to speak, is an undeniable consequence of the above maxim; for were it not so, of what avail would his former right be? It would be in most cases useless and unnecessary. Instead of an advantage, it would often prove a burden and a torment. There is a maxim with divines, that Providence hath made nothing in vain. To deny the truth of the foregoing positions, is little less than to arraign the merit and perfection of her noblest work.

Some men will think I have gone too far in asserting this right in so extensive a latitude.

Although the strict laws of nature may justify the exercise of it in its full extent, nay may seem to require it, yet the established rules of decency do certainly forbid a too liberal use of it. Here again I have to encounter prejudice, not reason. I am sensible there are certain terms in every language appropriated to the use of the vulgar. Custom hath confirmed their title to them, and it is deemed an infringement of their privileges in a person of higher breeding to assume a title esteemed unbecomingly theirs. But happily this prejudice is in a fair way of being removed. A defect in their title of exclusive use hath lately been discovered, and the practice of gentlemen of the first distinction and character will soon defeat the ill-founded claim of immemorial custom.

There is another mistaken notion, which prevails amongst men of a peculiar cast, and is supported on by them with much earnestness and warmth. They assert that there is a certain respect due to all public bodies; that in speaking of them, it is highly improper, and unjustifiable, to make use of what are termed abusive, injurious expressions; expressions that may tend to lessen their consequence and authority. The reasons given in opposition to the right of uttering our sentiments in this case with the same freedom, we may do in others, are curious, though I must confess not new. It is pretended, that the authority and energy of all public bodies of the deliberative kind, particularly legislative, depend upon their reputation for wisdom and integrity; that the confidence reposed in them, and the obedience paid to them, are ever proportioned to the supposed prevalence of these qualities; therefore an attempt of any kind to injure their character in these particulars, is a blow aimed at the very root of their power and existence; and that as there is a constitutional necessity for their endeavouring to continue their being and authority, in order to effect the purposes for which they were instituted, there is consequently an inherent right in them to enquire into, and by any means that may appear to them necessary, to prevent the effects of any attempts that have been or may be made, to diminish their authority, or that may in their consequences tend to that end. The opinions of sages in politics and law are cited to support this doctrine, and the absolute necessity of the thing urged in the most pressing terms and manner.

But how feeble are such arguments? The opinions of men however distinguished by their abilities, learning, and candour, however they may be venerated on account of their antiquity, and the respect which hath been shown them in all ages, and by all orders of men, may nevertheless be erroneous. The mere possibility of this is a proof that they are so, when contrary sentiments begin generally to prevail in a more enlightened age, and amongst men of more enlarged understandings. It is not my intention to compliment the present times, and the present generation. It is an acknowledgement due to their abundant merit; and I am sincerely of opinion, it we continue in the present rapid course of improvement in political matters, the science of politics will in a short time receive the finishing stroke of perfection. All that can be imagin'd, or said on the subject, will be exhausted. New principles, new reasonings adopted, and the whole system essentially altered. The uncommon advantages that must necessarily flow from a change to favourable to liberty, will quickly be experienced by all ranks of men, and government, which has heretofore been esteemed at best a necessary evil, will assume a new appearance, and be acknowledged as the choicest gift of heaven.

Jam redit & virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna,
Jam nova progenies coelo demittitur alto.
Such will be the happy consequences of an universal, unrestrained freedom of speech.

I do not know that I can better illustrate the foregoing remarks, than by referring my readers to the celebrated memoirs of the renowned P. P. parish clerk. They will there find the immense advantages the kingdom of Great-Britain derived from the lucubrations of a club of worthy statesmen who dared to think for themselves, and to speak their minds with a manly freedom; and although the parliament at first took umbrage at their behaviour which they term'd licentious, they afterwards recanted, and did them the justice to acknowledge their profound skill in matters of state; of this they were well convinced, say the memoirs, that whatever P. P. and his club afterwards devised, even that did they. This instance evinces the utility, as well as right, of delivering our sentiments without reserve, or respect of persons; for had it not been done in this remarkable case, Great-Britain

would for ever have lost the services of her P. P. and his club, and were it possible that the same principle would not prevail amongst us, this state might also run the hazard of losing the services of some future P. P. and his worthy associates.

E T E O C L E A

By his EXCELLENCY
THOMAS SIM LEE, Esq.
GOVERNOR OF MARYLAND,
A PROCLAMATION.
AT the request of the General Assembly of this state, I do hereby appoint Thursday the seventh day of December next, to be observed throughout this state as a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, agreeably to the recommendation contained in the annexed act of congress. G I V E N at Annapolis, this eleventh day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty.
THO. SIM LEE.
By his EXCELLENCY's command,
L. JOHNSON, junior, fec.
GOD SAVE THE STATE.

PROCLAMATION.
WHEREAS it hath pleased Almighty God, the Father of all mercies, amidst the vicissitudes and calamities of war, to bestow blessings on the people of these states, which call for their devout and thankful acknowledgments, more especially in the late remarkable interposition of his watchful providence in rescuing the persons of our commander in chief and the army from imminent dangers, at the moment when treason was opened for execution; in prospering the labours of the husbandmen, and causing the earth to yield its increase in plentiful harvests; and above all, in continuing to us the enjoyment of the gospel of peace:

It is therefore recommended to the several states to set apart Thursday the seventh day of December next, to be observed as a day of public thanksgiving and prayer; that all the people may assemble on that day to celebrate the praises of our Divine benefactor; to confess our unworthiness of the least of his favours, and to offer our fervent supplications to the God of all grace; that it may please him to pardon our heinous transgressions, and incline our hearts for the future to keep all his laws; to comfort and relieve our brethren who are any wise afflicted or distressed; to smile upon our husbandry and trade; to direct our public councils and lead our forces by land and sea to victory; to take our illustrious any under his special protection, and to favour our joint councils and exertions for the establishment of speedy and permanent peace; to cherish all schools and seminaries of education, and to cause the knowledge of christianity to spread over all the earth.

Done in congress, this eighteenth day of October, 1780, and in the fifth year of the independence of the United States of America.

SAMUEL HUNTINGTON, president.
Attest.
CHARLES THOMSON, secretary.

TO BE SOLD,
ALIKELY NEGRO WOMAN.
A about thirty years of age, with two children, one nine years old, the other about two months. She is an exceeding good cook, cake and paste maker. Apply to G. Watkins at Mr. Ogle's plantation, near Annapolis. / tf

Prince-George's county, Nov. 16, 1780.
WILL be sold by the subscribers, to the highest bidder, on the 30th instant, at Mr. Alexander H. Magruder's tavern, on Patuxent river, several hogheads of crop tobacco, the money to be paid on the day of sale, at which time the notes will be delivered. All those who have any claims against the estate of Mr. George Gantt, late of Prince-George's county, deceased, are once more requested to bring them in properly authenticated, that they may be adjusted by
HANNAH GANTT, executrix.
JAMES GANTT, executor.

STOLEN out of the house of the subscriber on Monday the 20th instant, a pair of elegant **SHOE BUCKLES**, inlaid with gold, of a large size, and of the newest fashion. A reward of one thousand dollars will be given to any person who will detect the thief, so that he may be brought to justice.
1 Balthazar GEORGE MANN.