

MARYLAND GAZETTE.

T H U R S D A Y, N O V E M B E R 17, 1796.

Messieurs Green are requested to insert in their paper the piece signed A REPUBLICAN CITIZEN, From the RIGHTS of MAN.

TO THE PEOPLE OF MARYLAND.

W
 HETHER the address of Americanus to the citizens of the United States on the political character of Mr. ADAMS, drawn from his defence of the constitutions of government of the United States of America, is of Boston, agreeably to its date, of Tennessee, or of Virginia, according to its date, is of no great consequence to ascertain. But, thinking it just now material for the public to know, whether the maxims therein quoted, are fairly, or erroneously stated, I recurred to the book, and find I was not mistaken in my suspicion, on reading the address, that Americanus had tripped. Whether from design, or ignorance, those concerned will determine. Unfortunately for his party, he has been rather incautious in referring to particular pages of the book, in making his quotations. He charges Mr. ADAMS with saying in the 8th page of his first volume, that "a limited monarchy may be justly denominated a republic." On a careful perusal, I find neither the words, or the sentiment there; but, in the 12th page of the preface, speaking of the conduct of the Americans in forming their governments, are the following words: "Unembarrassed by attachments to noble families, hereditary lines and successions, or any considerations of royal blood, even the pious mystery of holy oil had no more influence, than that other of holy water, the people were universally too enlightened to be imposed upon by artifice; and their leaders, or more properly their followers, were men of too much honour to attempt it."

Several of the other quotations of Americanus are incorrectly taken, and all of them misapplied. Mr. ADAMS is charged with saying in page 110, that "wealth, birth, and family pride are respected by all people." Page 159, that "A commonwealth can no more consist of a people without gentry, than of a gentry without people." Page 360, that "Distinctions of poor and rich are as necessary as labour and good government; poor destined to labour, the rich, by advantages of education, independence and leisure, to superior stations."—Page 373, that "Men of property and family are fittest for public service." Page 375, that "Rich, well born, well educated, must be preferred to office, otherwise the people themselves will despise them."

These quotations were given no doubt to shew, that Mr. ADAMS was for establishing an aristocratical government alone, or, in aid of a monarchy; but, wherever expressions of this kind are introduced, they plainly appear to be for a very different purpose. They are to point out the necessity of forming such necessary checks, to prevent undue influence in any class of men, as are happily placed in our federal government *formed since the book was written*. The following extracts copied from the same volume, will remove all doubts, with the impartial reader, on the subject. Mr. ADAMS wishing to avoid the danger of placing the whole legislative authority in a single house, agreeably to the opinion of Mr. Turgot and other writers of his cast, judiciously displays the defects in the forms of a number of governments, modern as well as ancient, called republican. After giving the outlines of the form of the government of Biscay, (much celebrated as a democratic republic) and the manner of chusing the members of the legislative and the executive officers, all of which must be of noble families, he says, page 20, "Thus we see the people themselves have established by law, a contracted aristocracy under the appearance of a liberal democracy. Americans beware!"

Turning to the government of Glaris, one of the Swiss Cantons, he observes, page 29, "As the use of government is the greatest happiness of the greatest number, saying at the same time the stipulated rights of all; governments like these, where a large share of power is preserved by the people, deserved to be admired and imitated. It is in such governments that human nature appears in its dignity, honest, brave, and generous." After mentioning their valour in defeating an Austrian army of 15,000 with 400 men, he adds, "Such will ever be the character of a people, who preserve so large a share to themselves in their legislature, while they temper their constitution, at the same time, with an executive power in a chief magistrate, and an aristocratical power in a wise senate." Stating the power of the Tribunes under the government of Venice, Mr. ADAMS says, page 38, "their tyrannical administration, and their eternal discords, rendered a revolution necessary, and, after long alterations and many projects, the people having no adequate idea of the only natural balance of power among the three orders, determined, that one magistrate should be chosen, as the centre of all authority. The eternal resource of every ignorant people, harassed with democratical distractions, or aristocratical encroachments."

—Attending to the dreadful powers of the inquisition in the same government, he observes, page 67, "such are the happy effects of the spirit of families when they are not bridled by an executive authority in the hands of a first magistrate on one hand, or by an assembly of the people in person, or by an adequate representation, on the other."

Americanus labouring under an ardent anxiety to convict Mr. ADAMS of an attachment to a monarchical government, gives you a number of other quotations from his book, viz. that he says, page 206, "Kingly government best, Tyranny worst: no city is more wretched than that under tyranny, nor any more happy than that under regal power." In page 204, that "If the power of negotiation and of treaty be in one man, there can be no intrigue." Page 321, that "had Epaminondas lived to display his talents as a legislator, the world might have been blessed with an English constitution two or three thousand years sooner than it was." Page 324, that "limited monarchy the best government; superior to republicanism." Page 379, that "ministers of the executive only ought to be responsible."

By turning to the pages from whence these quotations are taken, the reader's indignation will rise, on seeing how partially they are copied, and how sophistically they are applied. In exploring the causes of the downfall of the ancient republics, Mr. ADAMS necessarily introduces the opinions of the philosophers, who flourished at those periods, and their sentiments are improperly given, in several instances, as his own. It appears they were brought forward to shew the fatal consequences of trusting the legislative powers of the government wholly in any single body of men, whether aristocratic or democratic, or in the hands of any one man. "Kingly government best, tyranny worst" are the sentiments of Plato, in treating of the tyranny that prevailed among the several ruling parties. Attention to the following extracts from the book already mentioned, will shew that this idea is not imaginary, and will discover the sentiments of Mr. ADAMS more fully on the subject of inquiry.

Reviewing the beauties and defects of the British constitution, and explaining how far the Americans have imitated it, he says, page 74, "they (the Americans) have not made their chief magistrates hereditary, nor their senators: here they differ from the English constitution, and with great propriety." "The agrarian in America is divided into the hands of the common people in every state, in such a manner, that nineteen-twentieths of the property would be in the hands of the commons, let them appoint whom they could for chief magistrate and senators; the sovereignty then, in fact, as well as morality, must reside in the whole body of the people; and an hereditary king, and nobility, who should not govern according to the public opinion, would infallibly be tumbled instantly from their places: it is not only most prudent then, but absolutely necessary, to avoid continual violence, to give the people a legal, constitutional, and peaceable mode of changing those rulers, whenever they discover improper principles or dispositions in them." Does this shew a disposition to introduce monarchy or aristocracy?

In page 87, examining the form of the Polish government, and pointing out its defects, he adds, "A free republic is the best of governments, and the greatest blessing mortals can aspire to."—"But there have been oligarchies carried to such extremes of tyranny, that the despotism of Turkey, as far as the happiness of nations is concerned, would perhaps be preferable. An empire of laws is a characteristic of a free republic only, and should never be applied to republics in general."

Page 91, "Among every people, and in every species of republics, we have eventually found a first magistrate, a head; a chief, under various denominations indeed, and with different degrees of authority, with the title of Stadtholder, Burgomaster, Avoyer, Doge, Confaloniers, President, Syndick, Mayor, Alcalde, Capitaneo, Governor, or King; in every nation we have met with a distinguished officer; if there is no example in any free government; any more than in those which are not free; of a society without a principle personage, we may fairly conclude, that the body politic cannot subsist without one, any more than the animal body without a head, (obviating the objection of Mr. Turgot) and, therefore, the Americans are not justly liable to censure for instituting governors."

Page 93, "In America there are different orders of officers, but none of men; out of office, all men are of the same species, and of one blood; why then are they accused of establishing different orders of men?"

Lamenting the slavery of the people under all the governments, he thus expresses himself; page 95, "after all, let us compare every constitution we have seen, with those of the United States of America, and we shall have no reason to blush for our country; on the contrary, we shall feel the stronger motives to fall upon our knees, in gratitude to heaven, for having

been graciously pleased to give us birth and education in that country, and for having destined us to live under her laws! We shall have reason to exult if we make our comparison with England, and the English constitution. Our people are undoubtedly sovereign; all the landed and other property, is in the hands of the citizens—not only their representatives, but their senators and governors, are annually chosen; there are no hereditary titles, honours, offices, or distinctions. The legislative, executive, and judicial powers, are carefully separated from each other. The powers of the one, the few, and the many, are nicely balanced in their legislatures. Trials by jury are preferred in all their glory, and there is no standing army. The *habeas corpus* is in full force. The press is the most free in the world, and, where all those circumstances take place, it is unnecessary to add, that the laws alone can govern."

Page 113. In his argument against a legislative body, consisting of a single assembly, he demonstrates, that the object (perfect equality) in view of those writers whom he opposes, would be defeated. "let us (says he) then reflect how the single assembly, in which our great statesmen wish all authority to be concentrated, will be composed. There being no senate, nor council, all the rich, the honourable, and meritorious will stand candidates for seats in the house of representatives, and nineteen in twenty of them obtain elections. The house will be found to have all the inequality in it that prevailed among the people at large. Such an assembly will be naturally divided into three parts."—In drawing the characteristics of the several parties, he displays the influence of each of them in the house, and it is on this occasion he mentions the respect and influence which men of "birth, wealth, virtue, and family pride" would acquire in such an assembly. The truth of this will more fully appear by the following passages copied from the same volume.

Describing the dangers which would result from having but one house, Mr. ADAMS says, page 121; "In what did such a confidence in one assembly end; in Venice, Geneva, Biscay, Poland; but in aristocracy and an oligarchy? There is no special providence for Americans, and their natures are the same with others." Again, page 131, "The nation that commits its affairs to a single assembly will assuredly find that its passions and desires augment as fast as those of a king; and therefore such a constitution must be essentially defective." Again, page 135, "Now if all authority is to be collected in one central assembly, it will have the whole power of division and choice; and we may easily conjecture what division and choice it will be. It will soon have possession of all the cakes, loaves, and fishes."

To avoid the certain evils which would flow from such an establishment, he, with ability, shews the necessity of having two branches to the legislature, that they may serve as useful checks upon each other; and cites the celebrated patriot, Harrington, page 159, who says, "An army may as well consist of soldiers without officers, or officers without soldiers, as a commonwealth consist of a people without a gentry, or a gentry without a people." These extracts plainly shew that Mr. ADAMS is carefully guarding against the danger which Americanus and his party wish you to believe he is endeavouring to promote.

In progression, page 281, he says, "It must be acknowledged that every example of a government which has a large mixture of democratical power, exhibits something to our view which is amiable, noble, and, I had almost said, divine. In every stage hitherto mentioned this observation is verified. What is contended for, is, that the people in a body cannot manage the executive power, and therefore that a simple democracy is impracticable; and that their share of the legislative power must be always tempered with two others, in order to enable them to preserve their share, as well as to correct its rapid tendency to abuse. Without this they are but a transient glare of glory; which passes away like a flash of lightning, or like a momentary appearance of a goddess to an ancient hero, which, by revealing but a glimpse of celestial beauties, only excited regret that he had ever seen them."

It is while he is deploring the tyranny and slavery under which ancient nations suffered from the want of those checks, for which he contends, in the several departments of their governments, he says, "It is much to be regretted, that Epaminondas did not live to display his talents as a legislator; the world might possibly have been blessed with something like an English constitution two or three thousand years sooner than it was." On comparing the quotation taken by Americanus, with the book, you will perceive it is imperfect (the words *something like* are omitted) and that it is viciously misapplied. The decided preference which Mr. ADAMS had given, in a previous passage, to the forms of government of the United States, to the British constitution, will satisfy every candid inquirer; he possessed unmovable objections to the latter, although he justly thought it superior to