

and in fact are in the constant practical exercise of absolute sovereignty; when
the Government, instituted by the people themselves, claims no power but what
is immediately derived from the consent of the governed, and is administered
solely and exclusively for the good of the whole, where the laws are made by the
immediate agents of the people, and designed for the protection and security
of the rights, privileges, and possessions of all equally, and are subject at all
times to be altered, repealed or amended as may be agreeable to the will,
conducive to the interests, or promotion of the happiness of the people, there
can be no apology, there is no intimation or excuse for such commu-
tions, and their occurrence stains the character of the Government, and
wounds deeply the cause of equal liberty. If existing laws are defective,
if partial villainy can pervert their meaning, or elude their justice, surely
there is virtue and intelligence enough to amend such defects, and to devise
the means of bringing those who will practice wrong and injustice to legiti-
mate punishment; but let not the restraints, the security of the laws be
thrown off. How terrible is the condition of that community where
anarchy reigns! How much more of cruelty, wrong and injustice flows
from it than from the most despotic of governments! How poor and
all, having claims to virtuous motives driven from control or sacrificed
to fury! How completely is the voice of reason silenced, and every thing
useful or valuable, sacred or profane, prostituted, abandoned or destroyed, as
may suit the caprice, or be suggested in the wantonness of brutal force,
acting without virtuous motives and guided only by the principle of
evil! How natural, may almost inevitable, therefore, from these
horrors to the power most certain to afford effective protection! And
what power so effectual, when the people have forgotten their duty
to themselves, as a despotism! To this such things tend, and in this they
must ultimately terminate, unless a just abhorrence of them can be
kept alive among the great body of the citizens of the Republic, and
there shall be awakened and ~~phrased~~, in the bosoms of a majority of
the community, a sufficient sense of their fatal tendency, and a devotion
to our laws and institutions, which shall induce them promptly to
repress all similar attempts, and to aid in visiting the judgments of
the Law upon all who shall aim such fatal blows at the nature
and genius of our happy form of Government. Although all these strong
motives exist to induce the citizens every where to restrain and check
such excesses, and although we doubt not they will be generally
and acknowledged, yet we have seen they are not always sufficient
to bring the laws of peace and good order promptly into action in
such emergencies. Hope is too apt to blind us to the extent and
nature of remote dangers, and each one, busied about his narrow concerns,
and taking care of his individual interests, becomes
the time, forgetful of the great stake he holds in the common