

of time, are seldom changed, and that it requires more than an age after a revolution to produce an uniformity of opinion in the people. In England, a strong attachment to the house of Stuart continued, until the same principles and practices for which it had forfeited the crown were adopted by the present reigning family; and in Scotland the cause of the pretender was not relinquished until one half of the nation was slaughtered, and the other sold. Instances leading to the same conclusion have occurred in other countries, but I refer to these because they may be most generally known. In truth, mens political opinions are not made or altered by professions or oaths, they exist antecedently to any such professions, and will influence whenever an opportunity arises to shew them with a fair prospect of success.

That suffering disaffected men to qualify and practise as lawyers, will give them more weight and influence than they would have in private stations, I think can't be denied by any person who considers the means by which influence is acquired. Lawyers have business to do with many people; they are consulted in by their clients, who being governed in their private affairs by their advice, will be liable to be influenced in their public opinions. Frequent opportunities are given to lawyers, in a general and free intercourse with men, to insinuate their opinions upon subjects different from those which relate to their profession. Hence all governments have thought it necessary to have an assurance of the fidelity and attachment of practising lawyers. By admitting men really disaffected to practise the law, their characters bear the stamp of public authority and approbation, they are entitled to many privileges, and are considered in the light of officers of the courts, held by the authority of the state; by these means, every caution which their present situation holds out to the citizens, is removed, people will justly conclude, if the government gives licence to these men to hold a profession connected with the public; they may safely confide in them, and rely on them in every thing; and though the disaffected alone will not be able to shake our independence, yet when they are joined by their British friends, and are supported by men who dislike all government, and countenanced by those, who from injuries either real or supposed, hate the people of this country, they may make a party sufficiently strong to give a turn in favour of any internal commotion, or foreign invasion, which may tend to destroy that liberty which we now so happily possess in a free independent republic. I have been informed a British interest has already shewn itself in most of the states. We can have no reason to doubt but the first opportunity will be laid hold of by the king and people of England to regain the dominion over a country which they have resigned with so much reluctance, and if any change should take place in Europe, to deprive us of the protection of that power to whose generous support we in great measure owe our freedom, and the claims of Britain be revived with a powerful internal weight against our governments, the situation of this country will not be such as any friend to it would wish, though it may not be so hazardous as it has been at some periods during the last war. It is our duty, therefore, with particular attention, to consider every cause from which a British influence or power, unfriendly to our government, can arise, and to check it in the bud.

It must be allowed to be both just and wise in every government, in conferring and excluding from advantageous privileges, to make a distinction between those who have performed, and those who have neglected, their duty to the state in times of danger. Many of the lawyers of this state have shewn a steady attachment to their country throughout the contest, and have heartily joined their fellow-citizens in defence of common liberty; if those who have pursued a direct contrary line of conduct are now admitted to participate in every professional privilege and emolument, the people of the state may infer this lesson from the conduct of government, that no advantage is to be gained by assisting, nor disadvantage to attend neglecting to assist their country; and thus from public duty is separated that which the protefter will admit has a powerful influence on human actions—interest—and I would appeal to the sense of mankind, whether it is just that those who have not performed their duty in a long contest for liberty, and continue disaffected to a government established upon its principles, should share equally the emoluments of a profession connected with government, with those who have risked every thing in the cause of their country, and sacrificed their interest as lawyers in performing their duty as citizens.

If, according to the ideas of the protefter, there were any hopes of changing the opinions, desires and attachments, of the disaffected, by admitting them to privileges, it would be the most easy and agreeable way to destroy the seeds of an influence inimical to our government, and of uniting them with the well affected citizens in the pursuit of one common good; and, pursuing this idea, they ought to be admitted into all the offices of profit and trust, which I conceive would have been the next move in their favour, had the bill to exclude them from practising the law failed. But the supposed change of principles is too great and uncommon to be expected, the conversion too sudden to be sincere; and though it is good policy, in the beginning and first stages of a revolution, to endeavour to unite all men in one opinion, when this has failed of success, and men have taken a declared and decided part against their country, and their conduct for a length of time has fixed their characters, folly and credulity may be gulled by their after professions, but wisdom will never consider them as friends until they have given as strong proofs of their attachments as they have done of their aversion to the claims of their country, and policy, instead of blending them with the true citizens of the state, will mark them as objects of distrust. And let those, who, with the protefter, treat apprehensions of danger from a few disaffected lawyers as chimerical, consider, to the example and influence of how few men in the several states; may be traced that great and powerful disaffection in America, which more than once brought her to the brink of ruin in the course of the late revolution.