

## PUBLIC OPINION.

PUBLIC opinion sets bounds to every government, and is the real sovereign in every free one.

As there are cases where the public opinion must be obeyed by the government; so there are cases, where not being fixed, it may be influenced by the government. This distinction, if kept in view, would prevent or decide many debates on the respect due from the government to the sentiments of the people.

In proportion as government is influenced by opinion, it must be so, by whatever influences opinion. This decides the question concerning a *Constitutional Declaration of Rights*, which requires an influence on government, by becoming a part of the public opinion.

The larger a country, the less easy for its real opinion to be ascertained, and the less difficult to be counterfeited; when ascertained or presumed, the more respectable it is in the eyes of individuals.—This is favorable to the authority of government. For the same reason, the more extensive a country, the more insignificant is each individual in his own eyes.—This may be unfavorable to liberty.

Whatever facilitates a general intercourse of sentiments, as good roads, domestic commerce, a free press, and particularly a *circulation of newspapers through the entire body of the people*, and *Representatives going, from, and returning among every part of them*, is equivalent to a contraction of territorial limits, and is favorable to liberty, where these may be too extensive.

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 THE UNION.
 

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## WHO ARE ITS REAL FRIENDS ?

**N**OT those who charge others with not being its friends, whilst their own conduct is wantonly multiplying its enemies.

Not those who favor measures, which by pampering the spirit of speculation within and without the government, disgust the best friends of the Union.

Not those who promote unnecessary accumulations of the debt of the Union, instead of the best means of discharging it as fast as possible ; thereby encreasing the causes of corruption in the government, and the pretexts for new taxes under its authority, the former undermining the confidence, the latter alienating the affection of the people.

Not those who study, by arbitrary interpretations and insidious precedents, to pervert the limited government of the Union, into a government of unlimited discretion, contrary to the will and subversive of the authority of the people.

Not those who avow or betray principles of monarchy and aristocracy, in opposition to the republican principles of the Union, and the republican spirit of the people ; or who espouse a system of measures more accommodated to the depraved examples of those hereditary forms, than to the true genius of our own.

Not those, in a word, who would force on the people the melancholy duty of choosing between the loss of the Union, and the loss of what the union was meant to secure.

*The real FRIENDS to the Union are those,*

Who are friends to the authority of the people, the sole foundation on which the Union rests.

Who are friends to liberty, the great end, for which the Union was formed.

Who are friends to the limited and republican system of government, the means provided by that authority, for the attainment of that end.

Who are enemies to every public measure that might smooth the way to hereditary government ; for resisting the tyrannies of which the Union was first planned, and for more effectually excluding which, it was put into its present form.

Who considering a public debt as injurious to the interests of the people, and baneful to the virtue of the government, are enemies to every contrivance for *unnecessarily* increasing its amount, or protracting its duration, or extending its influence.

In a word, those are the real friends to the Union, who are friends to that republican policy throughout, which is the only cement for the Union of a republican people ; in opposition to a spirit of usurpation and monarchy, which is the *mensurum* most capable of dissolving it.

March 31.

WHO ARE THE BEST KEEPERS OF THE PEOPLE'S LIBERTIES ?

*Republican.*—The people themselves.—The sacred trust can be no where so safe as in the hands most interested in preserving it.

*Anti-republican.*—The people are stupid, suspicious, licentious. They cannot safely trust themselves. When they have established government they should think of nothing but obedience, leaving the care of their liberties to their wiser rulers.

*Republican.*—Although all men are born free, and all nations might be so, yet too true it is, that slavery has been the general lot of the human race. Ignorant—they have been cheated; asleep—they have been surprised; divided—the yoke has been forced upon them. But what is the lesson? that because the people may betray themselves, they ought to give themselves up, blindfold, to those who have an interest in betraying them? Rather conclude that the people ought to be enlightened, to be awakened, to be united, that after establishing a government they should watch over it, as well as obey it.

*Anti-republican.*—You look at the surface only, where errors float, instead of fathoming the depths where truth lies hid. It is not the government that is disposed to fly off from the people; but the people that are ever ready to fly off from the government. Rather say then, enlighten the government, warn it to be vigilant, enrich it with influence, arm it with force, and to the people never pronounce but two words—*Submission and Confidence.*

*Republican.*—The centrifugal tendency then is in the people, not in the government, and the secret art lies in restraining the tendency, by augmenting the attractive principle of the government with all the weight that can be added to it. What a perversion of the natural order of things! to make *power* the primary and central object of the social system, and *Liberty* but its satellite.

*Anti-republican.*—The science of the stars can never instruct you in the mysteries of government. Wonderful as it may seem, the more you increase the attractive force of power, the more you enlarge the sphere of liberty; the more you make government independent and hostile towards the people, the better security you provide for their rights and interests. Hence the wisdom of the theory, which, after limiting the share of the people to a third of the government, and lessening the influence of that share by the mode and term of delegating it, establishes two grand hereditary orders, with feelings, habits, interests, and prerogatives all inveterately hostile to the rights and interests of the people, yet by a *mysterious* operation all combining to fortify the people in both.

*Republican.*—Mysterious indeed!—But mysteries belong to religion, not to government; to the ways of the Almighty, not to the works of man. And in religion itself there is nothing mysterious to its author; the mystery lies in the dimness of the human sight. So in the institutions of man let there be no mystery, unless for those inferior beings endowed with a ray perhaps of the twilight vouchsafed to the first order of terrestrial creation.

*Anti-republican.*—You are destitute, I perceive, of every quality of a good citizen, or rather of a good *subject*. You have

neither the light of faith nor the spirit of obedience. I denounce you to the government as an accomplice of atheism and anarchy.

*Republican.*—And I forbear to denounce you to the people, though a blasphemer of their rights and an idolater of tyranny.—Liberty disdains to persecute.

Dec. 20.