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WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, 1791.

[Whole No. 214.]

TRANSLATED
For the GAZETTE of the UNITED STATES.

A DISCOURSE OF STEPHEN BOETIUS,

Concerning voluntary Servitude: Or the Anti-One.

(Continued from No. 4 of this Gazette.)

YOU sow the seeds of your fruits that he may reap the harvest: You furnish and adorn your houses, to provide materials for his robberies: You nourish your daughters, that he may have the means of satiating his luxury: You feed and cloath your children, to the end that he may most graciously please to lead them to his wars and conduct them to slaughter; that he may make them the ministers of his avarice, and the executioners of his vengeance: You break the constitutions of your bodies with labor, that he may fondle in delights, and wallow in his dirty villainous pleasures: You weaken yourselves to make him more strong and rough, to hold you in with a shorter rein. And from all these indignities, which even the beasts themselves would rather not feel, or would not endure, you may deliver yourselves, if you attempt it, not indeed in action, but in volition. Be resolved to serve no longer, and behold you will be free. I do not exhort you to pull or to haul, but barely not to lift and support, and you will see him, like a great Colossus, from which they have removed the pedestal, fall to the ground by his own weight, and crumble in pieces.

But certainly the advice of the physicians is wise, not to lay your hands on a wound that is incurable; and I am not prudently employed in attempting to advise the people, who have lost long ago all knowledge, and whose malady is evidently mortal, because they feel not the evil. Let us examine then, by conjecture, and see if we can discover how it is that this obnoxious resolution to serve has become so rooted, that it seems at present that the love of liberty is not so natural as the love of servitude.

In the first place, this is, as I think, beyond all doubt, that if we live with the rights which nature has given us, and the principles and doctrines that she teaches us, we shall be naturally obedient to parents, subjects to reason, and slaves to no man. Every one will be disposed to obedience to his father and mother, without any other admonition than that which his natural disposition will dictate. All men are witnesses, every one in himself and for himself, concerning reason, whether it is born with us or not; which is a question discussed to its foundation by the academicians, and touched by all the schools of philosophers. For the present, I shall not think myself mistaken in believing, that there is, in our human soul, some natural seeds of reason, which, cultivated by good council and conduct, manners and habits, may flourish in virtue: and, on the contrary, frequently, not being able to support itself against the vices which grow about it, being choked, becomes abortive. But certainly if there is any thing clear and apparent in nature, and to which it is not permitted us to be insensible, it is this, that nature, the minister of God, and the governess of men, has made us all of the same form, has cast us all in the same mould, to the end that we may all mutually acknowledge one another for companions, or rather as brothers. And if, in making the partition of the presents which she has given us, she has given some advantages of property, some powers of body or faculties of mind, to some more than to others—she has not however intended to throw us into this world as into a clove pasture, for the stronger to devour the weaker—she has not sent down here below the strongest and the most knowing, like robbers armed in a forest, to eat up the weakest. But we ought rather to believe, that distributing thus to some a larger portion, and to others a smaller, she meant to give room for the fraternal affection, that it might have opportunity for exercise; some having the power to afford assistance, and others, wants, to receive it. Since then this kind mother has given us all, the whole earth for a residence—has lodged us all in the same house—has moulded us all of the same clay, to the end that every one may behold himself or his own image in every other—if she has given us all in common this grand present of the voice and speech, that we may become better acquainted and more brotherly with each other, and make by the common and mutual declaration of our thoughts a communion of our wills—and if she has endeavored by all means to draw close

together, and tie more strictly the knot of our alliance and society—if she has shown in all things that she desired not so much to unite us as to make us one—we ought not to entertain a doubt but that we are all naturally free, since we are all companions; and it cannot occur to the imagination of any one, that nature has placed any in servitude, having put us all in company.

FOR THE GAZETTE OF THE UNITED STATES.

O D E S.

O D E IV.

JOHN PROFESSETH HIS DISINTERESTEDNESS.

CRITICS, Reviewers, by whatever name,
You shine recorded on the Roll of Fame;
Whate'er your titles, or whate'er your trade,
Your claim is equal to the Muse's aid.
A true republican her self,
Alike to her all titles and addresses:
From the poor idiotic elf,
To the proud monarch, she confesses,
Each living wight her care possesses.
This is the very case with JOHN;
For all he feels, for all he cares,
And with unwearied toil goes on
To make, of sense, all mortals fellow-heirs.
And here, with honesty of soul, professes
That, notwithstanding many envious guesses
Of what his motives and his wishes were,
With pure disinterestedness of spirit,
And charm'd, alone, with all Reviewers' merit,
He doth these several Hints, with labor hard, prepare.
In troth, dear Critics, I have nought to hope
Or from your wisdom, or your wit;
Alike regardless should the honest rope
Adorn your necks, or decorate your spit.
I've wrote no Book, profound in ancient laws,
Which claims your praises, or your smiles requires;
Nor does a Doctorate of Medicine, or Laws,
Fill me with Learning's never-dying fires.
Not only destitute of Title's aid,
To screen my Writings from contempt, and traffi,
But I despise all writing—as a trade—
And scorn, a hireling-scribler's beau, to flash.
Bede, unfortunate indeed for me,
This genius barren soil has given me birth;
Of weak faculties, and little you see,
Unblest'd with Trans Atlantic genuine worth.
Nay more, I ne'er the improving Ocean cross'd;
Ne'er drew in science on Britannia's wave;
Nor, sense inhaling as the vessel tofs'd,
Rode o'er the seas which fair Hibernia lave.
Nay, and my father boasts no foreign blood,
No Mac's, or O's, his progeny enrich;
Poor, but in virtue, and in doing good—
Which shield no native from the Critic's switch.
Now let the rabble, and the vulgar, cry
That JOHN is fee'd your merit to display,
And paid for Hints which, free, he doth supply.
I'll heed no more their clamors—no, not I—
No longer from my purpose will I stray,
But, in another Ode, my devours shortly pay.

JOHN.

Conclusion of an extract of a letter from London, to a gentleman in Salem, dated Jan. 3, 1791, begun in our last.

IT will readily occur to you that the extreme rigor of the Navigation Act in admitting no vessels to be British but such as are actually built within the dominions, is in this particular absurd as well as impolitic, as by increasing the cost of shipping it lessens the quantity and obstructs the design of increasing seamen—and that if government should relax so far as to allow the free purchase and use of vessels from the United States, the British nation would gain the most solid advantages—by having much cheaper vehicles they could afford to carry cheaper; and, carrying more—which necessarily must increase both shipping and seamen. But you will agree with me, that nations, like individuals, are not easily induced to give up old habits, even when acknowledged to be bad; and therefore that a very sudden change is not to be expected. But be this as it may, I think your investigation of the policy of our Navigation Laws must at last result in this—that as a system of naval strength and defence for this Island, nothing could be MORE WISE—but as a scheme of profit or gain in any country nothing can be MORE ABSURD. This conclusion being allowed, you will ask whether commercial restrictions are to be justified upon no other ground than that of providing and supporting a naval power? To this question I should answer, that there may be cases in which small, temporary or particular restraints upon any species of industry must be tolerated as the means of obtaining a greater, more permanent or general good. As the remedy how-

ever is violent and painful, we ought to be satisfied of the reality of the disease, and of its nature and extent, and also of the probability of a cure, before we submit to the application of it. I confess I don't readily think of any general system of commercial restraint that can be fully vindicated, except such as an aggrieved nation may form by way of retaliation upon an aggressor, with reasonable hope of obtaining redress. To retaliate upon an offending nation (with respect to them) can be no violation of justice. To recover and secure that equal freedom, which if enjoyed by all would be universally beneficial, and to which therefore on social principles all have a claim is certainly no unworthy object; but to render such a mode of pursuing it consistent with sound policy, there ought to be a good probability of pursuing it with success—but there's the rub." Our own history informs us of one experiment at least that had an unfavorable issue: we are told that, in the beginning of the reign of King Charles, France had laid such heavy impositions on our trade, that our annual loss was estimated at one and a half or two millions sterling. Partly with the hope of recovering this, and partly from animosity we retaliated by severe restraints on the commerce with France; but after much suffering, and finding no good effects at all from our restraints, in a succeeding reign we prudently took them off.

In tracing the progress of industry you will observe that "in every prosperous state the annual earnings of the people exceed their annual consumption." This excess in a regular course of things accumulates to an enormous amount—Whether it be small or great however is not of any serious moment; but it is of the last importance to society that there be a continual reproduction of something more than is immediately consumed. Now the constant endeavor of every individual to produce more than enough for his own consumption depends upon his being able to exchange the surplus for something he wants; and the more he can get for his surplus the greater will be his endeavors to increase that surplus. Let it be otherwise—and take away this inducement from the individual to produce more than his own wants require, and it must inevitably happen, if the people do not absolutely perish, they must at last suffer all the extremity of pinching want. To be sure therefore of never falling below the mark of a sufficiency, it is necessary to aim always considerably above it. Hence the advantage of a free, easy and extensive market cannot be duly appreciated, as it holds out to the individual an irresistible allurements to make his surplus as great as possible. All these things however will happen right in the ordinary operation of natural principles—no artificial system whatever can do as well. But perhaps you will urge that while such systems are practised by nations with whom you have intercourse, a sort of necessity is thereby created for you to do likewise. This observation, as relates to some nations, is satisfactory; but the thing abstractedly considered may be just, and yet impracticable—or it may be practicable and yet inexpedient: the disease may be more tolerable than the remedy—or the success may be too uncertain. Nations like individuals are, or ought to be, always laboring to make their own particular condition better. Like individuals, however, they sometimes lose sight of the abundant good things they possess, blinded by an intemperate zeal for something which they want, or imagine they want. The fundamental cause of this is useful—but this excess in the effect is pernicious. You commend the Shepherd, who, leaving in safety his ninety-nine sheep goes to seek for one that has strayed—but if to recover a small part of a single fleece only he should weary and expose his whole flock, you would condemn his want of prudence as well as want of sensibility.

Of all People I think you have the least occasion to try hazardous experiments in politics, you have the most ample natural resources, a full advantage of which you cannot be deprived by the contrivances of any foreign nation, unless your own imprudence and indiscretion should aid them. I mention this because I have seen among you eagerness for prohibitions or restraints on the commerce with this country—But as this business momentous, it is to be hoped you will deliberate coolly before you decide—count fairly the cost, and estimate truly the end of the undertaking before you begin it—these preliminaries b-