



FRANCES E. BENNETT.

F E B

DUKE
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

Treasure Room

THE
COLERIDGE
COLLECTION

A
MORAL AND POLITICAL
LECTURE,

DELIVERED AT
BRISTOL.

BY
S. T. COLERIDGE,

OF
Jesus College, Cambridge.

————— To calm and guide
The swelling democratic tide;
To watch the state's *uncertain* frame;
To baffle Faction's *partial* aim;
But chiefly with determin'd zeal
To quell the servile Band that kneel
To Freedom's jealous foes;
And lash that Monster, who is daily found
Expert and bold our country's peace to wound,
Yet dreads to handle arms, nor manly counsel knows.

AKENSIDE.

Bristol:
PRINTED BY GEORGE ROUTH, IN CORN-STREET.

PRICE, SIX-PENCE.

1795

ADVERTISEMENT.

T. R.
821.72
C69 M1
A29

THEY, who in these days of jealousy and Party rage dare publicly explain the Principles of Freedom, must expect to have their Intentions misrepresented, and to be entitled like the Apostles of Jesus, "stirrers up of the People, and men accused of Sedition." The following Lecture is therefore printed as it was delivered, the Author choosing that it should be published with all the inaccuracies and inelegant colloquialisms of an hasty Composition, rather than that he should be the Object of possible Calumny as one who had rashly uttered sentiments which he afterwards timidly qualified.



MORAL & POLITICAL

LECTURE.

WHEN the Wind is fair and the Planks of the Vessel sound, we may safely trust every thing to the management of professional Mariners; but in a Tempest and on board a crazy Bark, all must contribute their Quota of Exertion. The Stripling is not exempted from it by his Youth, nor the Passenger by his Inexperience. Even so in the present agitations of the public mind, every one ought to consider his intellectual faculties as in a state of immediate requisition. All may benefit Society in some degree. The exigences of the Times do not permit us to stay for the maturest years, lest the opportunity be lost, while we are waiting for an increase of power. Omitting therefore the disgusting Egotisms of an affected Humility, we shall briefly explain the design, and possible benefit, of the proposed political disquisitions.

Compane

263861

Companies resembling the present will from a variety of circumstances consist *chiefly* of the zealous Advocates for Freedom. It will be therefore our endeavour, not so much to excite the torpid, as to regulate the feelings of the ardent: and above all, to evince the necessity of *bottoming* on fixed Principles, that so we may not be the unstable Patriots of Passion or Accident, or hurried away by names of which we have not sifted the meaning, and by tenets of which we have not examined the consequences. The Times are trying: and in order to be prepared against their difficulties, we should have acquired a prompt facility of adverting in all our doubts to some grand and comprehensive Truth. In a deep and strong Soil must that Blessing fix its Roots, the height of which, like that of the Tree in Daniel, is to "reach to Heaven, and the Sight of it to the ends of all the Earth."

The Example of France is indeed a "Warning to Britain." A nation wading to their Rights through Blood, and marking the track of Freedom by Devastation! Yet let us not embattle our Feelings against our Reason. Let us not indulge our malignant Passions under the mask of Humanity. Instead of railing with infuriate declamation against these excesses, we shall be more profitably employed in developing the sources of them. French Freedom is the Beacon, that while it guides us to Equality should shew us the Dangers, that throng the road.

The annals of the French Revolution have recorded in Letters of Blood, that the Knowledge of the Few cannot

cannot counteract the Ignorance of the Many; that the Light of Philosophy, when it is confined to a small Minority, points out the Possessors as the Victims, rather than the Illuminators, of the Multitude. The Patriots of France either hastened into the dangerous and gigantic Error of making certain Evil the means of contingent Good, or were sacrificed by the Mob, with whose prejudices and ferocity their unbending Virtue forbade them to assimilate. Like Sampson, the People were strong—like Sampson, the People were blind. Those two massy Pillars of Oppression's Temple, Monarchy and Aristocracy

“ With horrible convulsion to and fro”

“ They tugg'd, they shook—till down they came
“ and drew”

“ The whole Roof after them with burst of Thunder
“ der”

“ Upon the heads of all who sat beneath,”

“ Lords, Ladies, Captains, Counsellors, and
“ Priests,”

“ Their choice Nobility!”

MILTON. SAM. AGON.

There was not a Tyrant in Europe, that did not tremble on his Throne. Freedom herself heard the Crash aghast—yet shall she not have heard it unbenefited, if haply the Horrors of that Day shall have made other nations timely wise—if a great people shall from hence become adequately illuminated for a Revolution bloodless, like Poland's, but not, like Poland's assassinated by the foul Treason of Tyrants against Liberty.

Revolutions

Revolutions are sudden to the unthinking only. Political Disturbances happen not without their warning Harbingers. Strange Rumbings and confused Noises still precede these earthquakes and hurricanes of the moral World. In the eventful years previous to a Revolution, the Philosopher as he passes up and down the walks of Life, examines with an anxious eye the motives and manners, that characterise those who seem destined to be the Actors in it. To delineate with a free hand the different Classes of our present Oppositionists to "Things as they are,"—may be a delicate, but it is a necessary Task—in order that we may enlighten, or at least beware of, the misguided men who have enlisted themselves under the banners of Freedom from no Principles or from bad ones—whether they be those, "Who extol things vulgar"—and

"admire they know not what,

"And know not whom, but as one leads the other"—
or whether those,

"Whose end is private Hate, not help to Freedom,

"In *her* way to *Virtue* adverse and turbulent."

The first Class among the professed Friends of Liberty is composed of Men, who unaccustomed to the labor of thorough Investigation and not particularly oppressed by the Burthen of State, are yet impelled by their feelings to disapprove of its grosser depravities, and prepared to give an indolent Vote in favor of Reform. Their sensibilities unbraced by the co-operation of fixed principles, they offer no sacrifices to the divinity of active Virtue. Their political Opinions depend with weather-
cock

cock uncertainty on the winds of Rumor, that blow from France. On the report of French Victories they blaze into Republicanism, at a tale of French Excesses they darken into Aristocrats; and seek for shelter among those despicable adherents to Fraud and Tyranny, who ironically style themselves Constitutionalists. These *dough-baked Patriots* may not however be, without their use. This Oscillation of political Opinion, while it retards the Day of Revolution, may operate as a preventative to its Excesses. Indecision of Character, though the effect of Timidity, is almost always associated with benevolence.

Wilder Features characterize the second Class. Sufficiently possessed of natural Sense to despise the Priest, and of natural Feeling to hate the Oppressor, they listen only to the inflammatory harangues of some mad-headed Enthusiast, and imbibe from them Poison, not Food, Rage not Liberty. Unillumined by Philosophy and stimulated to a lust of Revenge by aggravated wrongs, they would make the Altar of Freedom stream with blood, while the grass grew in the desolated Halls of Justice. These men are the rude Materials from which a detestable Minister manufactures Conspiracies. Among these men he sends a brood of sly political Monsters, in the character of sanguinary Demagogues, and like Satan of Old, "The Tempter ere the Accuser" ensnares a few into Treason, that he may alarm the whole into Slavery. He, who has dark purposes to serve, must use dark means—Light would discover, reason would expose him: He must endeavour to shut out both—

or if this prove impracticable, make them appear frightful by giving them frightful Names : For farther than Names the Vulgar enquire not. Religion and Reason are but poor Substitutes for " Church and Constitution ;" and the fable-vested Instigators of the Birmingham Riots well knew, that a Syllogism could not disarm a drunken Incendiary of his Firebrand, or a demonstration *helmet* a Philosopher's Head against a Brickbat. But in the principles, which this Apostate has, by his emissaries, sown among a few blind zealots for Freedom, he has digged a pit into which he himself may perhaps be doomed to fall. We contemplate those principles with horror. Yet they possess a kind of wild Justice well calculated to spread them among the grossly ignorant. To unlightened minds, there are terrible charms in the idea of Retribution, however savagely it be inculcated. The Groans of the Oppressors make fearful yet pleasant music to the ear of him, whose mind is darkness, and into whose soul the iron has entered.

This class, at present, is comparatively small--Yet soon to form an overwhelming majority, unless great and immediate efforts are used to lessen the intolerable grievances of our poorer brethren, and infuse into their sorely wounded hearts the healing qualities of knowledge. For can we wonder that men should want humanity, who want all the circumstances of life that humanize ? Can we wonder that with the ignorance of Brutes they should unite their ferocity ? peace and comfort be with these ! But let us shudder to hear from men of dissimilar opportunities sentiments of similar revengefulness

vengefulness. The purifying alchemy of Education may transmute the dross of an ignorant man into virtuous energy—but what remedy shall we apply to him, whom Plenty has not softened, whom Knowledge has not taught Benevolence? This is one among the many fatal effects which result from the want of fixed principles. Convinced that vice is error, we shall entertain sentiments of Pity for the vicious, not of Indignation—and even with respect to that bad man, to whom we have before alluded, altho' we are now groaning beneath the burthen of his misconduct, we shall harbour no sentiments of revenge; but rather *condole* with him that his chaotic Iniquities have exhibited such a complication of Extravagance, Inconsistency, and rashness, as may *alarm* him with apprehensions of approaching lunacy!

There are a third class among the friends of Freedom who possess not the wavering character of the first description, nor the ferocity last delineated. They pursue the interests of Freedom steadily, but with narrow and self-centering views: they anticipate with exultation the abolition of privileged orders, and of acts that persecute by exclusion from the right of citizenship: they are prepared to join in digging up the rubbish of mouldering establishments and stripping off the taudry pageantry of Governments. Whatever is above them they are most willing to drag down; but alas! they use not the pulley! Whatever tends to improve and elevate the ranks of our poorer brethren, they regard with suspicious jealousy, as the dreams of the visionary; as if there were any thing in the superiority of Lord to Gentle-

man, so mortifying in the barrier, so fatal to happiness in the consequences, as the more real distinction of master and servant, of rich man and of poor. Wherein am I made worse by my ennobled neighbour? do the childish titles of aristocracy detract from my domestic comforts, or prevent my intellectual acquisitions? but those institutions of society which should condemn me to the necessity of twelve hours daily toil, would make my *soul* a slave, and sink *the rational* being in the mere animal. It is a mockery of our fellow creatures' wrongs to call them equal in rights, when by the bitter compulsion of their wants we make them inferior to us in all that can soften the heart, or dignify the understanding. Let us not say that this is the work of time—that it is impracticable at present, unless we, each in our individual capacities do strenuously and perseveringly endeavour to diffuse among our domestics those comforts and that illumination which far beyond all political ordinances are the true equalizers of men. But of the propriety and utility of holding up the distant mark of attainable perfection, we shall enter more fully towards the close of this address; we turn with pleasure to the contemplation of that small but glorious band, whom we may truly distinguish by the name of thinking and disinterested Patriots. these are the men who have encouraged the sympathetic passions till they have become irresistible habits, and made their duty a necessary part of their self interest, by the long continued cultivation of that moral taste which derives our most exquisite pleasures from the contemplation of possible perfection, and proportionate

proportionate pain from the perception of existing *depravation*. Accustomed to regard all the affairs of man as a process, they never hurry and they never pause; theirs is not that twilight of political knowledge which gives us just light enough to place one foot before the other; as they advance, the scene still opens upon them, and they press right onward with a vast and various landscape of existence around them. Calmness and energy mark all their actions, benevolence is the silken thread that runs through the pearl chain of all their virtues. Believing that vice originates not in the man, but in the surrounding circumstances; not in the heart, but in the understanding; he is hopeless concerning no one—to correct a vice or generate a virtuous conduct he pollutes not his hands with the scourge of coercion; but by endeavouring to alter the circumstances removes, or by strengthening the intellect disarms, the temptation. The unhappy children of vice and folly, whose tempers are adverse to their own happiness as well as to the happiness of others, will at times awaken a natural pang; but he looks forward with gladdened heart to that glorious period when Justice shall have established the universal fraternity of Love. These soul ennobling views bestow the virtues which they anticipate. He whose mind is habitually impressed with them soars above the present state of humanity, and may be justly said to dwell in the presence of the most high. Regarding every event even as he that ordains it, evil vanishes from before him, and he views with naked eye the eternal form of universal beauty.

Say why was Man so eminently raised
 Amid the vast creation—why ordain'd
 Thro' life and death to dart his piercing eye,
 With thoughts beyond the limits of his frame,
 But that the Omnipotent might send him forth
 In fight of mortal and immortal powers,
 As on a boundless theatre, to run
 The great career of Justice—to exalt
 His generous aim to all diviner deeds,
 To chase each partial purpose from his breast
 And thro' the tossing tide of chance and pain
 To hold his course unfaltering? else why burns
 In mortal bosoms this unquenched hope
 That breathes from day to day sublimer things
 And mocks possession?

—————would the forms
 Of servile custom cramp the patriots power,
 Would fordid policies, the barbarous growth
 Of ignorance and rapine bow him down
 To tame pursuits, to Indolence and Fear?
 Lo he appeals to Nature, to the winds
 And rolling waves, the suns unwearied course,
 The elements and seasons—all declare
 For what the Eternal Maker has ordain'd
 The powers of Man: we feel within ourselves
 His energy divine: he tells the heart
 He meant, he made us to behold and love
 What he beholds and loves, the general orb
 Of Life and Being—to be great like him,
 Beneficent and active.

On such a plan has a Gerald formed his intellect
 Withering by the rankly and tainted gales of a prison, his
 healthful looks down from the citadel of his integrity
 on his impotent persecutors. I saw him in the foul
 and naked room of a jail—his cheek was fallow with
 confinement—his body was emaciated, yet his eye spoke
 the invincible purposes of his soul, and his voice still
 founded with rapture the successes of freemen, forgetful
 of his own lingering martyrdom ! Such too were the illustrious
 Triumvirate* whom as a Greek Poet expresses it, its
 not lawful for bad men even to praise. I will not say that I
 have abused your patience in thus indulging my feelings
 in these strains of unheard gratitude to men, who may
 seem to justify God in the creation of man. It is with
 pleasure that I am permitted to recite a yet unpublished
 tribute to their merit, the production of a man who has
 sacrificed all the energies of his heart and head—a splendid
 offering on the altar of Liberty.

To the Exiled Patriots.

Martyrs of Freedom—ye who firmly good
 Stept forth the champions in her glorious cause,
 Ye who against Corruption nobly stood
 For Justice, Liberty, and equal Laws.

Ye who have urged the cause of man so well
 Whilst proud Oppression's torrent swept along,
 Ye who so firmly stood, so nobly fell,
 Accept one ardent Briton's grateful song.

For

* MUIR, PALMER, and MARGAROT.

For shall Oppression vainly think by Fear
 To quench the fearless energy of mind?
 And glorying in your fall, exult it here
 As tho' no honest heart were left behind?

Thinks the proud tyrant by the pliant law
 The timid jury and the judge unjust,
 To strike the soul of Liberty with awe,
 And scare the friends of Freedom from their trust?

As easy might the Despots' empty pride
 The onward course of rushing ocean stay;
 As easy might his jealous caution hide
 From mortal eyes the orb of general day.

For like that general orb's eternal flame
 Glows the mild force of Virtue's constant light;
 Tho' clouded by Misfortune, still the same,
 For ever constant and for ever bright.

Not till eternal chaos shall that light
 Before Oppression's fury fade away;
 Not till the sun himself be lost in night;
 Not till the frame of Nature shall decay.

Go then secure, in steady virtue go,
 Nor heed the peril of the stormy seas—
 Nor heed the felon's name, the outcast's woe;
 Contempt and pain, and sorrow and disease.

Tho' cankering cares corrode the sinking frame,
 Tho' sickness rankle in the fallow breast;
 Tho' Death were quenching fast the vital flame,
 Think but for what ye suffer, and be blest.

So shall your great examples fire each soul,
 So in each free-born breast for ever dwell,
 Till Man shall rise above the unjust controul—
 Stand where ye stood, and triumph where ye fell.

To accomplish the great object in which we are anxiously engaged to place Liberty on her seat with bloodless hands, we have shewn the necessity of forming some fixed and determinate principles of action to which the familiarized mind may at all times advert. We now proceed to that most important point, namely, to shew what those principles must be. In times of tumult firmness and consistency are peculiarly needful, because the passions and prejudice of mankind are then more powerfully excited: we have shewn in the example of France that to its want of general information, its miseries and its horrors may be attributed. We have reason to believe that a revolution in other parts of Europe is not far distant. Oppression is grievous—the oppressed feel and complain. Let us profit by the example of others; devastation has marked the course of most revolutions, and the timid assertors of Freedom equally with its clamorous enemies, have so closely associated the ideas, that they are unable to contemplate the one, disunited from the other. The evil is great, but it may be averted—it has been a general, but it is not therefore a necessary consequence. In order to avert it, we should teach ourselves and others habitually to consider, that truth wields no weapon, but that

that of investigation, we should be cautious how we indulge even the feelings of virtuous indignation. Indignation is the handsome brother of Anger and Hatred—Benevolence alone befits the Philosopher. Let us not grasp even Despotism with too abrupt a hand, lest like the envenomed insect of Peru,* it infect with its poison, the hand that removes it harshly. Let us beware that we continue not the evils of tyranny, when the monster shall be driven from the earth. Its temple is founded on the ruins of mankind. Like the fane of Tescalipoca the Mexican Deity; it is erected with human skulls and cemented with human blood,—let us beware that we be not transported into revenge while we are levelling the loathsome pile with the ground, lest when we erect the temple of Freedom we but vary the stile of architecture, not change the materials. Our object is to destroy pernicious systems not their misguided adherents. Philosophy imputes not the great evil to the corrupted but to the system which presents the temptation to corruption. The evil must cease when the cause is removed, and the courtier who is enabled by State Machinations to embroil or enslave a nation when levelled to the standard of men will be impotent of evil, as he is now unconscious of good. Humane from principle, not fear, the disciple of liberty shrinks not from his duty. He will not court persecution by the ill-timed obtrusion of Truth, still less will he seek to avoid it by concealment or dereliction.

J. H. Tooke

* The COYA, an insect of so thin a skin, that on being incautiously touched, it bursts, and of so subtle a poison that it is immediately absorbed into the body, and proves fatal.

J. H. Tooke on the morning of his trial wrote to a fellow sufferer in these words " Nothing will so much serve the cause of freedom as our *acquittal*, except our *execution*." He meant I presume to imply that whatever contributes to increase discussion must accelerate the progress of liberty. Let activity and perseverance and moderation supply the want of numbers. Convinced of the justice of our principles, let neither scorn nor oppression prevent us from disseminating them. By the gradual deposition of time, error has been piled upon error and prejudice on prejudice, till few men are tall enough to look over them, and they whose intellects surpass the common stature, and who describe the green vales and pleasant prospects beyond them, will be thought to have created images in vacancy and be honoured with the name of madman ; but

It is the motive strong the conscience pure
 That bids us firmly act or meek endure:
 'Tis this will shield us when the storm beats hard
 Content tho' poor had we no other guard !

BOWLES.

F I N I S.

17
The first of these is the name of the author of the work. It is
not known who wrote it, but it is believed to be the work of
some one who lived in the 17th century. The name of the author
is not mentioned in the title, but it is mentioned in the
preface. The name of the author is mentioned in the preface
in the following words: "The author of this work is not
known, but it is believed to be the work of some one who
lived in the 17th century." The name of the author is not
mentioned in the title, but it is mentioned in the preface.
The name of the author is mentioned in the preface in the
following words: "The author of this work is not known,
but it is believed to be the work of some one who lived in
the 17th century." The name of the author is not mentioned
in the title, but it is mentioned in the preface.

18
The second of these is the name of the publisher. It is
not known who published it, but it is believed to be the work
of some one who lived in the 17th century. The name of the
publisher is not mentioned in the title, but it is mentioned
in the preface. The name of the publisher is mentioned in
the preface in the following words: "The publisher of this
work is not known, but it is believed to be the work of some
one who lived in the 17th century." The name of the
publisher is not mentioned in the title, but it is mentioned
in the preface.

19
The third of these is the name of the printer. It is
not known who printed it, but it is believed to be the work
of some one who lived in the 17th century. The name of the
printer is not mentioned in the title, but it is mentioned
in the preface. The name of the printer is mentioned in
the preface in the following words: "The printer of this
work is not known, but it is believed to be the work of some
one who lived in the 17th century." The name of the
printer is not mentioned in the title, but it is mentioned
in the preface.

