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BY W. BURDON, A. M.

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the present contest as undertaken in their defence, or I should never lift my feeble voice to proclaim its justice and necessity. It has arisen, it is true, out of the former war; but in the manifold turnings and various complexions of human affairs, it is possible that the party which was originally *wrong*, may become *right* by a change of conduct, and dereliction of principle in their opposers. Such, in my opinion, is precisely the case at present. The French were driven into the late war to defend their own liberty,—and they are driven into the present, because they have attacked the liberty of all Europe! It is on these grounds that I mean to defend my consistency; and if any thing further were requisite, I might say that I have relinquished no principle which I formerly held: that if I have changed my opinion of Bonaparte, I have changed it from circumstances;—that I am actuated by no motive of private interest, future or present; and that, though it is certainly animating and satisfactory to think with the majority on any great question of public concern, yet even that motive could never have induced me to profess what I do not believe, to change my opinion without being convinced, or to approve openly what my heart condemned. The Treaty of Amiens is the farthest point to which we must look back to vindicate the necessity of the present war—and had the conduct of Bonaparte not changed

since then, there is nothing in that Treaty, according to my opinion, in itself impracticable; and had we believed him sincere in the article which relates to Turkey, Malta might have been as safely relinquished to any power but France, as if it had never been in our possession. But from the moment at which he threw off the mask with regard to his designs on Egypt and the integrity of the Turkish empire, from that moment it became the duty of ministers to refuse the ratification of an article so important, when the circumstances under which it was agreed to were materially altered; though it must be not only allowable, but defensible, for all men, in their conduct with each other, to act according to the appearances of things, and to give some degree of credit to the professions of each other, or the bonds of social confidence must be loosened, and the rights of society depend solely on savage force.— Ministers, at the time they signed that Treaty, believed it so much the interest of France, and the other powers of Europe to preserve peace, that they had no right to suppose Bonaparte could so soon display a hostile mind, or the rest refuse to guarantee the security of Malta, which was to be the pledge of pacific intentions, both from *them* and *him*: they were therefore not to be condemned for agreeing to that article as it stood, nor are they now to be con-

demned for refusing to ratify it under so important change of circumstances ; for even if they suspected it, they must have been culpable in having acted on such a suspicion, because there was every reason to suppose that Bonaparte was sincere in his desire of peace, since it was his interest to be so; and it is probable, that if he had not taken our ministers to be of a disposition more short-sighted, or more disposed to concede, he might not have thrown off the mask so early. It is fortunate, we trust, for our independence, and the happiness of Europe, that his ambitious designs were not longer concealed, or we might not have been so well prepared to oppose them—for to his impatience it is to be imputed that ministers so early took alarm, and demanded reparation for such unreasonable acts of aggression and hostility.—The change in Bonaparte's character, or the discovery of his rapacious ambition, which has produced such a change of circumstances as to justify a renewal of a bloody and expensive contest, is a matter by no means foreign to the decision of the present question, because on that change depends the nature of the present war. While his ambition was limited to making France the first power in Europe, such an ambition might have been patiently submitted to, as arising from the events of the late contest, or from the natural advantages and extent of European territory which France has long possessed; and any at-

tempt to limit that ambition, while it forbore to interfere with the independence of other nations, must have been considered as a mere struggle for superiority, which could never have been justified on the ground of necessity, or even of self-interest; — for, among the powers of the world, some *must* be superior to others; and those which refuse to submit to that which either nature or circumstances have produced, are guilty of disturbing the repose of mankind. But when the independence of other nations was attacked, to gratify the domineering spirit of an ambitious despot, and the tyranny to which France submitted as a refuge from anarchy, was imposed on the nations that surrounded her, a legitimate ground of complaint was afforded to any nation, who, with the spirit to be free, was actuated by the generous disposition of preserving freedom to others. How far such an interference is defensible, either upon the grand principles of justice, or the narrow consideration of self-interest, requires awhile to be considered. The civilized nations of Europe may be regarded as forming one great republic, in all that concerns the rights and independence of each; and whenever these are threatened by the preponderating influence of one or more in the great system, it becomes the duty of the rest to unite for the purpose of restoring that equality, which is the best security for the prosperity of the whole. On these

grounds, the *balance of power* is an intelligible and honourable principle, and on these alone a war may be defensible, when remonstrance and every other species of interference have failed. But these just and liberal principles do not often govern the cabinets of Europe, and provided they themselves are secure, there are few nations who will undertake to defend the security of others; yet this motive of supporting the oppressed, which in private life forms the most amiable part of the human character, is equally laudable in nations towards each other, and ultimately conducive to their own interest: for such ideas to become generally prevalent, is the best security against the violent designs of ambition or strength; yet, notwithstanding the generous nature of this principle, it must be acted upon with considerable limitations, such as the prospect of success, the feelings of the sufferer, or the extent of the injury; and had our ministers, with any probability of enforcing their demands, stipulated in the Treaty of Amiens for the independence of Spain and Holland, they must have merited the applause of Europe and of posterity: but the circumstances of the times were unfavourable to such an attempt; England was weary of the war; the other nations seemed to submit patiently to their fate, and all were anxious only for repose.

The situation in which Europe was placed at the signing the Treaty of Amiens, might have been safely acquiesced in, had not Bonaparte since discovered that he was not content with making France the first power in Europe, but was determined to dictate to England the terms of her connection with other nations; or, in short, to reduce her to insignificance, the more effectually to establish the control of France; and, that no spark of independence might remain throughout Europe, he dictated a constitution to Switzerland at the point of the sword, contrary to the stipulations of the Treaty of Luneville, and filled Holland with troops, to render her subjugation complete. Was it to be supposed that a nation like England, powerful in her resources, proud of her independence, and long accustomed to hold an elevated rank among the powers of the world, was to submit without remonstrance or struggle to such an arrangement, formed by the arrogant ambition of an upstart individual, and totally foreign to the long-established laws and customs of European nations in their dealings with each other? Impossible!—He must have known little of the spirit of our rulers, even supposing the spirit of the people totally subdued, to suppose that any statesman, bred and nourished in the maxims which have ever governed the conduct of Great-

Britain, could submit to such humiliating conditions.

The character of Bonaparte since he obtained the consulship for life, (the last stroke to the liberties of Frenchmen) has been so completely changed, as to make him appear almost the direct contrary of what he was before, and is now placed in so full a light, that hardly any thing more remains to be developed; and without he is compelled to submit himself to the control of circumstances, his power seems hardly compatible with the repose or independence of Europe. An immoderate love of ruling, not only over France, but over the world, is now the predominant feature of his character; and while there remains a single power to oppose his designs, he will be irritable, impatient, and insolent. That he is anxious for the prosperity of France cannot be doubted, because in that he sees the stability of his power; for whenever Frenchmen cease to believe that even his most daring projects of ambition have any other object than the aggrandizement of their country, they will no longer submit to his tyranny.

The acts of provocation and aggression which Bonaparte has committed against this country, are so fully and completely proved by the papers which ministers have laid before the great councils of the nation, that no lawyer could wish for a better

brief, nor any jury decide upon stronger evidence: though he wished to have it believed in his conversation with Lord Whitworth, and in many other parts of the negotiation, that he was averse to war, because it was his interest to be at peace, no one could be so wilfully blind as not to see that war was his ultimate object, though he might not be prepared for it at present. He has, however, done a service to England, for which she is indebted to him, since, by his inability to conceal his intentions, he has given her an opportunity to defeat them, for which she might not have been prepared, had he acted with more caution and duplicity; and he has opened the eyes of those who were the most disposed to believe him honest, either from inward rectitude or selfish interest: he has, it is to be hoped, united the nation to act like one man, in opposition to his base, treacherous, and tyrannical pretensions, and to exert every nerve in support of a war, the ultimate and legitimate object of which is to humble or subdue the most dangerous enemy to the liberties and repose of mankind. To deny that he has done every thing for France, is ridiculous; he has saved her from the base designs of an infamous coalition; he has not only preserved her independence, but regained her superiority; and he has promoted her prosperity by the vigor of his

administration; he has, in short, given her every thing that man could give, but liberty;—yet his conduct to other nations is, in every respect, conformable to that disposition which has induced him to withhold the liberties of France; and through the whole of his conduct since he became consul for life, and particularly in the course of the late negotiation, he has manifested a spirit of imperious arrogance, which though it cannot perhaps be resisted by France, is not to be borne by a free and independent country. To shew the futility and weakness of all the arguments by which he meant to persuade ministers of his disposition to peace, is neither useless nor difficult. His remonstrances against the licentiousness of the British press, evince his entire ignorance of our constitution, or a degree of arrogance unparalleled in the history of nations. His complaints against the exiled princes of Bourbon, and the other enemies of France, were completely answered by Lord Hawkesbury, in a manner which does him the highest credit, as becoming the calm dignity of an Englishman, contrasted with the irritating petulance of the angry Corsican.—With regard to every thing he said about Malta, it was totally irrelevant, till the Governments concerned in the guarantee of that island had signified their acquiescence, or England had received a compensation for his late acquisitions.—His conversation with Lord

Whitworth, furnishes one of the most curious diplomatic papers on record. Through the thin veil by which they are disguised, his intention of hostility to this country may be plainly seen; and it is evident he presumed strongly on what he conceived the passive disposition of the present ministry: it is no wonder therefore that the news of the message operated like a thunder-bolt upon him. His intentions with regard to Egypt are fully disclosed, and his affected moderation in not having actually taken possession of it, shews that he was only restrained by his wish to avoid a premature rupture, and resembles the argument of the wolf to the crane,—when he says, “You may be very thankful that I did not take your head off.” His insolent boast of putting himself at the head of an expedition to invade this country, was used as a threat to terrify us into compliance, which Lord Whitworth treated with becoming contempt, and the nation will do the same. The compliment to our fleet was intended to lull us asleep, ’till his own was prepared; but that day will never come, if Englishmen are prudent. His renewal of the demand for punishing the newspapers and dismissing the emigrants, is sufficiently irritating to the spirit of Englishmen; but not more so than the insolent moderation he affected, in telling us that he was not yet prepared for war,—and the

more insolent threat that we could hope for no allies on the continent. Such language, properly taken, was little calculated to soothe, — and shews that the temper of the man, rendered overbearing and arrogant by power, can submit to no restraint. Through the whole conversation he seems to have been most thoroughly off his guard; and while he threatens in one breath, attempts in the next to conciliate. It is evident he was irritated at being taken by surprise. To prove his sincere desire of peace, and the innocence of his intention towards Egypt, he should at once have consented to our keeping Malta; for if his designs are honest, why give so many indications to the contrary, and yet refuse that island as the pledge of his sincerity. — Whenever two men tell different stories about the same fact, it is plain that one of them must tell a lie: why then did he and his minister, Talleyrand, differ in their accounts of Sebastiani's mission? Because they both wished to disguise the truth, — and the reasons of neither were satisfactory: For, why should a man, whose errand was merely commercial, give so many military statements? and, allowing his purpose to be military, how did his report tend to contradict the strong facts which Sir R. Wilson, and, after him, Dr. Witman have asserted?

The modest intention of the chief consul, expressed in the last letter of General Andreossi, to restrain

himself to the internal administration of France, and give up the thoughts of extending her foreign possessions, is like the wolf telling the sheep, while his mouth is besmeared with blood, and his teeth grinning for slaughter, that he means to live peaceably at home upon grass, and destroy them no longer: but beasts of prey cannot so soon forget the taste of flesh. Ministers, in my opinion, acted with becoming prudence in not remonstrating against trifling grievances, such as the conduct of the commercial commissioners, the detention of vessels, &c. For, seeing the disposition of the French Government, they waited for further proofs of hostility, to make out a case which might convince the most incredulous, and subdue the most obstinate. It is not from the consideration of single facts, though each of them is sufficiently strong,—but from the aggregate of the whole that we must form our opinion of Bonaparte's hostility. The present war, then, it may be seen, arises out of that right which every nation has to maintain its own independence, and to ward off threatened danger. War is, no doubt, a barbarous mode of decision; but 'till nations are virtuous enough to agree upon some other mode of settling their disputes, it must be submitted to, rather than permit the wanton exercise of oppression and insult. If other proofs were wanting, besides those which amount to a ground of war, of the de-

terminated hostility of France to this country, they may be found in the letters of M. Fieeve, in the *Mercure de France*, and in other publications in the pay or under the influence of Bonaparte. Whoever does not acknowledge the difference between the late and the present war, must be impenetrably obstinate, or impenetrably stupid!

The means of success which belong to us, are next to be considered,—and these are not so much to be derived from our population and our wealth, as from the spirit and temper with which we come forward in the contest. Our ministers must stop at no half measures,—no indecisive attempts,—no ill-digested schemes of annoyance; they must be resolute, deliberate, and persevering in the efforts they mean to use against the enemy, and explicit in declaring the support they expect from the people;—they must not diminish the danger, nor abate our hope of success; they must lay aside all private jealousies, party distinctions, and interested considerations, in the appointment of those who are to conduct the operations of the war, and employ men of talents wherever they are to be found; the safety of the country is committed into their hands,—and if they misemploy our confidence, their responsibility, or even their punishment, will be no atonement for the calamity their country may sustain by their guilt. Let them trust for our means, both of c.

fence and defence, to our fleet alone,—without there is a probability, by a powerful co-operation on the continent, of rescuing the countries, so long enslaved, from the gripe of France:—but never let them deceive themselves or the people, with any vain and boyish hopes of marching to Paris, or conquering a country, which, from its local advantages, must be invincible. Let them proclaim the justice of their cause to the nations of the continent, and invite those who are tired of slavery to throw off the yoke. Let them profess, and seriously intend, to restore to every subject country, the right of choosing its own government; and then, if they are not either infatuated, or enslaved beyond the power of redemption—if both their means and their faculties are not bound by a spell of enchantment—if they are not irrevocably wedded to oppression and slavery,—they will awake from their slumber, ‘like a strong man refreshed with wine,’ and ‘rejoice as a giant to run his course.’ Germany, Russia, and Prussia, will join us in liberating the rest. Holland, Spain, Switzerland, and the Italian States, will be delivered from the yoke of French fraternity,—and France may enjoy her new territory according to the limits which seem fixed by Nature;—but let her power and her influence be limited within these bounds, nor let her restless ambition any more disturb the tranquillity of Europe: all which may be effected,

if Europe be true to herself and awake to her own interest. Let the despot of France be taught moderation, or let Frenchmen throw off the yoke of his tyranny; — let every means be used to open their eyes to the true state of the case, that they may no longer suppose they were forced into a war merely from our envy at their prosperity. Let every thing which relates to the conduct of our government be done with firmness, moderation and dignity, as becomes a people engaged in the cause of truth against imposture, against perfidy, and against tyranny.— When our government have acquitted themselves in this manner toward our own country and the rest of Europe, they may then commit the result to Providence, fearless (but not regardless) of the event: they may, with fervent confidence and self-satisfaction, say to the surrounding nations, We have done our duty to you and to ourselves: it is your's now to support us, if you value either security or liberty, if you have any regard for honour, if you respect the rights of humanity. The people of this country, if they wish to be saved from becoming a servile department of France, must come forth in support of their government with all their spirit and all their resources: Some ranks must give up their luxuries, and others their comforts: the poor give their *abl*, when they give their labour; but the rich give not half, when they pay their taxes. They must be in-

vited to contribute according to the utmost of their ability, not in the niggardly proportion of riches to poverty — for what is a tenth from one man, compared to what it is from another? The tenth (of property) taken from a great man's income, will hardly buy him a dinner, while the tenth taken from another man's, will hardly leave him one. In the last war Loyalty was a commodity which did not produce much money in the market: it is to be hoped, if Loyalty means to be true to ourselves, it will fetch more in the present.—Whatever speculative, or even practical differences of opinion, may exist among men of different parties, on many great constitutional points---on the question of Reform---of Establishments---of Toleration---and various other subjects, which will always divide the opinions of men in governments which have been long established; it is to be hoped that these will all be laid aside for the present, that nothing may disturb our unanimity, or palsy our efforts against the common enemy of our repose and liberty. Let us have no divided efforts, no partial contribution, no hanging back in the day of battle. Every man must come forward with his person or his purse, or with both; and then, if the population of the British Isles is fairly mustered and brought forth under able commanders, they may defy even an enemy

who should land upon our territory. The unanimity which might have been expected in the two Houses, has not appeared: I will not venture to tax the motives of Opposition, but happily their arguments were weak, and their numbers contemptible. The opinion of the Country is certainly not with *them*, and it is to be hoped they will not longer attempt to divide the sentiments of the people, when an union of hearts and hands is so highly requisite. Let them henceforth limit their exertions to the constitutional exercise of their privilege, by giving advice to ministers, and shewing their mistakes in the conduct of the war, if any should arise; but let them never be suspected of a design to fetter their operations by a captious opposition to their measures; let them never be suspected of being the friends of faction, or the friends of France.———Among other means of carrying forward the war, which seems likely to ensure us of success, that of destroying the French trade and navy, is, without doubt, the most powerful; for France knows that she has no other method of contending with us, and it is highly probable that if this is accomplished, she must, in a very short time, sue for peace, as the only means of saving her from ruin, by a repetition of those internal calamities which attended the revolution; and while nothing, in any shape like that, is likely to happen here, she will find that our means of subduing her

is not by an actual attack upon the country, which must be the means of uniting it, — but by external defeat, which will render the people discontented with their government, and divided among themselves. Another method, not less effectual, will be, if possible, to spread Addresses among the French people, containing a plain statement of facts, and mentioning those things particularly, which their own government have thought it proper should be omitted. The power of Bonaparte must, in fact, either be subdued or humbled; and if he be reduced to proper bounds, both in his conduct at home and abroad, not only France but Europe will have the utmost reason to rejoice. To animate the people in defence of their country, and to unite all parties, let ministers remove all restraints upon our ancient liberty, and moderately redress all grievances which may give ground for discontent. The great questions of Parliamentary Reform, Religious Toleration, and others of the like nature, must by no means be agitated; they require calmness, deliberation, and a state of peace:—but every complaint of lesser moment may safely be listened to, that the people may feel they have nothing to gain, and every thing to lose, by an adoption of French fraternity. The poor are certainly the least interested in the present state of things, because many of them

are ill rewarded for their labour, and can hardly be worse under any change of circumstances; yet even *they* must feel an attachment to a government purely British, in preference to that of a foreign foe.— They, however, who have a property and a stake in the country, will do well to consider the blessings they enjoy, and the privileges they have received from their ancestors: let them remember that these blessings were not procured by tame submission and fervile fear, but by vigorous and manly resistance to every encroachment on their birthright, whether from foreign or internal enemies; and that if they still wish to preserve these blessings entire, and to hand them down to their posterity, they must now summon all their resources,—not merely to subdue a foreign enemy, but to repel an insolent invader.— They must probably fight on British ground for British liberty: they must contend, with vigour and alacrity, for their property, their comforts, and their existence. We are rich in resources, if we have but the spirit to employ them—but let it never be supposed, that we are to be saved by the common efforts of taxation. Ministers must not be driven to the odium of forced loans and arbitrary impositions: the rich must voluntarily submit to privations, and part with their property to save their country, should the enemy refuse to yield 'till we are driven to extremities. But there remains a hope, that

Bonaparte, feeling he has every thing to lose, and nothing to obtain, but the gratification of his lawless ambition, may possibly submit to accommodate the present differences, without pushing either party to the extreme point. Should such be the case,—(and nothing is so likely to contribute to it as a vigorous shew of resistance),—we may yet be spared from unusual sacrifices:—but we must not hope to retire from the contest, even on the most moderate terms, without heavy expences, and some deprivation of comfort,—which a few years of prosperity, however, may possibly restore. Yet, should this hope prove vain, and our desperate foe be determined on our ruin or his own, we must bring forth our whole resources,—and we fairly may demand, from all ranks, a proportional exertion. The rich are, above all others, interested in the contest, and above all others furnished with the means of resistance; and we have a right to expect that *all* of them who were the advocates of the former war, and are equally so of the present, will act consistently with their professions, and be neither sparing nor tardy in their contributions—for *they* are, of all others, least able to bear a reverse of fortune. Other men, in the event of a total overthrow, may labour, may trade, may teach school, hire out their service, may do many things to procure a subsistence; but *they* who have been nursed and bred up in the lap

of indolence and luxurious pleasure, will find it very difficult to betake themselves to any active employment, which may save them from distress and poverty: they moreover may have the grievous mortification of seeing their splendid houses and their rich estates in the possession of others, to whom perhaps they may be compelled to sue for the wretched means of existence! They may lose their sumptuous banquets and their rich repasts,—their nocturnal amusements and their exquisite luxuries,—their costly garments and their numerous attendants!—They may be compelled to live on coarse food, to be coarsely clothed, and unattended! *They*, therefore, above all others, are interested in the defence of their country; and if they are niggardly in employing the means, neither *we* nor *they* can possibly be saved.

The consequences of defeat must be dreadful to all of us, whether we are to contend abroad or at home. In the first instance, it must be *humiliation* and *submission* to the terms of France; in the last, it must be entire *subjugation*. Our constitution, which, with all its defects, has produced many practical blessings, must be overturned to make room for *French fooleries*, for dumb councils and nominal orators, for consuls and pro-consuls, for prefects and prætors, for all the insulting mockery of *liberty*, and the essentials of *slavery*. These may suit a

people who are not worthy to be free, but they will never sit easy on the necks of Britons. Had the restraints which were imposed upon us by the late ministry not been removed by the present, we might have been better prepared to receive the yoke of French slavery—for we had little left, except our personal security, and that could only be purchased by the most degrading silence: but now that we are restored, in a great degree, to our rights, and ministers have shewn a disposition to moderate reform, we have an additional interest in preserving both our constitution and property from the attacks of French despotism. Their respect for the liberty of the press, is something more than an empty profession; and by forbearing to interfere in contested elections, and discountenancing the efforts of corruption and bribery, they are permitting an indirect Reform in the House of Commons, which (as all Reforms ought to be conducted) will be operated slowly and moderately. Among the other consequences of defeat will be a total subversion of property, and the total loss of personal security; for a tyranny more active, more vigilant, and more searching, was never exercised by one nation over another, than France has exercised over Holland: the fruits of our industry will henceforth be reaped by foreign hands; our wealth will be poured into French treasuries, and our liberty committed to

French preservation! The liberty of worshipping the *bloody Moloch* of Frenchmen, will be all they will leave us—the liberty of servile adoration to an unholy shrine!—A few months, or (at most) a year, will, I trust, reverse the gloomy prospect, and after a short but severe contest, leave us FREEDOM, INDEPENDENCE, and SAFETY!!!

MORPETH, May 29, 1803.

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