

## Short Review of the Declaration

### SHORT REVIEW OF THE DECLARATION.

In examining this singular Declaration, I have hitherto confined myself to what are given as facts, and alleged against his Majesty and his Parliament, in support of the charge of tyranny and usurpation. Of the preamble I have taken little or no notice. The truth is, little or none does it deserve. The opinions of the modern Americans on Government, like those of their good ancestors on witchcraft, would be too ridiculous to deserve any notice, if like them too, contemptible and extravagant as they be, they had not led to the most ferocious evils.

REVIEW. Little notice hitherto taken of the preamble to the Declaration.

IN this preamble however it is, that they attempt to establish a theory of Government; a theory, as absurd and visionary, as the system of conduct in defence of which it is established, is nefarious. Here it is, that maxims are advanced in justification of their enterprises against the British Government. To these maxims, adduced for this purpose, it would be sufficient to say, that they are repugnant to the British Constitution. But beyond this they are subversive of every actual or imaginable kind of Government.

Maxims advanced in it repugnant to the British Constitution, and subversive of all Government.

THEY are about "to assume," as they tell us, "among the powers of earth, that equal and separate

Such as, that all men are created equal.

"station to which"—they have lately discovered—"the laws of Nature, and of Nature's God entitle them." What difference these acute legislators suppose between the laws of Nature, and of Nature's God, is more than I can take upon me to determine, or even to guess. If to what they now demand they were entitled by any law of God, they had only to produce that law, and all controversy was at an end. Instead of this, what do they produce? What they call self-evident truths, "All men" they tell us, "are created equal." This surely is a new discovery; now, for the first time, we learn, that a child, at the moment of his

birth, has the same quantity of natural power as the parent, the same quantity of political power as the magistrate.

THE rights of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”—by which, if they mean any thing, they must mean the right to enjoy life, to enjoy liberty, and to pursue happiness—they “hold to be unalienable.” This they “hold to be among truths self-evident.” At the same time, to secure these rights, they are content that Governments should be instituted. They perceive not, or will not seem to perceive, that nothing which can be called Government ever was, or ever could be, in any instance, exercised, but that the expense of one or other of those rights. —That, consequently, in as many instances as Government is ever exercised, some one or other of these rights, pretended to be unalienable, is actually alienated.

That the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are unalienable.

THAT men who are engaged in the design of subverting a lawful Government, should endeavor by a cloud of words, to throw a veil over their design; that they should endeavor to beat down criteria between tyranny and lawful government, is not at all

Maxims incompatible with their own conduct.

surprising. But rather surprising it must certainly appear, that they should advance maxims so incompatible with their own present conduct. If the right of enjoying life be unalienable, whence came their invasion of his Majesty's province of Canada? Whence the unprovoked destruction of so many lives of inhabitants of the province? If the right of enjoying liberty be unalienable, whence came so many of his Majesty's peaceable subjects among them, without any offense, without so much as a pretended offence, merely for being suspected not to wish well to their enormities, to be held by them in duration? If the right of pursuing happiness be unalienable, how is it that so many others of their fellow-citizens are by the same injustice and violence made miserable, their fortunes ruined, their persons banished and driven from their friends and families? Or would they have it believed, that there is in their selves some superior sanctity, some peculiar privilege, by which those things are lawful to them, which are unlawful to all the world besides? Or is it, among acts of coercion, acts by which life or liberty are taken away, and the pursuit of happiness restrained, those are only lawful, which their delinquency has brought upon them, and which are exercised by regular, long established, accustomed governments?

In these tenants, they have outdone the utmost extravagance of all former fanatics. The German Anabaptists indeed when so far as to speak of the right of enjoying life as a right unalienable. To take away life, even in the Magistrate, they held to be unlawful. But they went no farther, it was reserved for an American Congress, to add to the number of unalienable rights, that of enjoying liberty, and pursuing happiness—

They go beyond the madness of all other fanatics

ness; —that is, if they mean any thing, —pursuing it wherever a man thinks he can see it, and by whatever means he thinks he can attain it: —That is, that all penal laws—those made by their selves among others—which affect life or liberty, are contrary to the law of God, and the unalienable rights of mankind: —That is, that thieves are not to be restrained from theft, murderers from murder, rebels from rebellion.

HERE then they have put the axe to the root of all Government; and yet, in the same breath, they talk of “Governments,” of Governments “long established.” To these last, they attribute some kind of respect; they vouchsafe even to go so far as to admit, that “Governments, long established, should not be changed for light or transient reasons.”

They allow Governments long established, should not be tanged for light reasons,

YET they are about to change a Government, a Government whose establishment is coeval with their own existence as a Community. What causes to they assign? Circumstances which have always subsisted, which must continue to subsist, wherever Government has subsisted, or can subsist.

Yet are changing a Government coeval with their existence, for no reason at all.

FOR what, according to their own shewing, what was their original, their only original grievance? That they were actually taxed more that they could bear? No; but that they were liable to be so taxed. What is the amount of all the subsequent grievances they allege? That they were actually oppressed by Government? That Government had actually misused its power? No; but that it was possible they might be oppressed; possible that Government might misuse its powers. Is there any where, can there be imagined any where, that Government, where subjects are not liable to be taxed more than they can bear?

Amount of their pretended grievances.



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