

FOREIGN CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE LIBERTIES OF THE UNITED STATES.

CHAPTER VI



Samuel Morse

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- The priests must be propitiated-By what means-This influence easily purchased by the demagogue
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- Their bargain for the suffrages of this priest-led band-A church and state party
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- The newspaper press favors this foreign attack- From its want of independence and its timidity
- An anti-republican fondness for titles favors this foreign attack
- Cautious attempts of Popery to dignify its emissaries and to accustom us to their high-sounding titles
- A mistaken notion on the subject of discussing religious opinion in the secular journals favors this foreign attack
- Political designs not to be shielded from attack because cloaked by religion.

I WILL continue the consideration of some of the points in our political system, of which the foreign conspirators take advantage in their attacks on our liberties. We have seen that from the nature of the case the emigrant Catholics generally are shamefully illiterate, and without opinions of their own. They are and must be under the direction of their priests. The press, with its arguments for or against any political measure, can have no effect on minds taught only to think as the priest thinks, and to do what the priest commands. Here is a large body of ignorant men brought into our community, who are unapproachable by any of the ordinary means of enlightening the people-a body of men who servilely obey a set of priests imported from abroad, bound to the country by none of the usual ties, owing allegiance and service to a foreign government, depending on that government for promotion and reward, and this reward too depends on the manner in which they discharge the duties prescribed to them by their foreign master; which is, doubtless for the present, to confine themselves simply and wholly to increasing the number of their sect and the influence of the Pope in this country. It is men thus officered and of such a character, that we have placed in all respects on a level at our elections with the same number of native patriotic and

intelligent citizens.

The Jesuits are fully aware of the advantage they derive from this circumstance. They know that a body of men admitted to citizenship, unlearned in the true nature of American liberty, exercising the elective franchise, totally uninfluenced by the ordinary methods of reasoning, but passively obedient only to the commands of their priests, must give those priests great consequence in the eyes of the leaders of political parties; they know that these leaders must esteem it very important that the priests be propitiated. And how is a Catholic priest to be propitiated? How, but by stipulating for that which will increase his power or the power of the church, for be it always borne in mind, that they are identical. The Roman church is the body of priests and prelates; the laity have only to obey and to pay, not to exercise authority. The priest must be favored in his plans of destroying Protestantism, and building up Popery. He must have money from the public treasury to endow Catholic institutions; he must be allowed to have charters for these institutions which will confer extraordinary powers upon their Jesuit trustees; Footnote: One College at the West under Austrian influence. The following fact illustrates the dangerous, successful intriguing spirit of the Jesuits, and the culpable negligence of one of our state legislatures (that of Kentucky) who has thus suffered itself to be the dupe of Popish artifice. "St. Joseph's College, at Bardstown, Kentucky, was incorporated by the State Legislature in 1824. The Bishop of Bardstown is Moderator, and five Priests are Trustees. And there is this provision in the charter: "The said trustees shall hold their station in said college one year only, at which time the said moderator shall have the power of electing others, or the same, if he should think proper, and increase the number to twelve, and this power may be exercised by him every year thereafter, or his successor or successors to the Bishopric; and in case of the removal, resignation or death of either of the said trustees, his place may be supplied by an appointment that may be made by the said Bishop, or his successor or successors, who may also become moderators in the institution, and act and do as the said B. J. Flaget is empowered by this act to do."

The Bishop of Bardstown, in a letter to a friend in Europe, dated February, 1825, says:-"Our Legislature has just incorporated the college. The Bishops of Bardstown are continued perpetually its moderators or rectors. I might have dictated conditions, which I could not have made more advantageous or honorable; and what is still more flattering is, that these privileges were granted almost without any discussion, and with unanimity in both houses."

Now the Pope it is well known appoints all Bishops. Here then is one college in the country already placed in perpetuo under the exclusive control of the Pope, and consequently for an indefinite period under that of Austria!! he must be permitted quietly to break down the Protestant Sabbath, by encouraging Catholics to buy and sell on that day as on other days; in one word, he must have all the powers and privileges which the law or the officers appointed to administer the law can conveniently bestow upon him. The demagogue or the party who will promise to do most for the accomplishment of these objects, will secure all the votes which he controls. Surely there is great danger to our present institutions from this source, and men as

skilful as are the Jesuits we may be sure will not fail to use the power thus thrown into their hands to work great mischief to the republic.

The recklessness and unprincipled character of too many of our politicians give a great advantage to these conspirators. There is a set of men in the country who will have power and office, cost what they may; men who, without a particle of true patriotism, will yet ring the changes on the glory and honor of their country, talk loud of liberty, flatter the lowest prejudices, and fawn upon the powerful and the influential; men who study politics only, that they may balance the chances of their own success in falling in with, or opposing, this or that fluctuating interest, without caring whether that interest tends to the security or the downfall of their country's institutions. To such politicians a body of men thus drilled by priests, presents a well fitted tool. The bargain with the priest will be easily struck. "Give me office, and I will take care of the interests of your church." The effect of the bargain upon the great moral or political interests of the country, will not for a moment influence the calculation. Thus we have among us a body of men, a religious sect, who can exercise a direct controlling influence in the politics of the country, and can be moved together in a solid phalanx; we have a church interfering directly and most powerfully in the affairs of state. There is not in the whole country a parallel to this among the other sects. What clergymen of the Methodists, or Baptists, or Episcopalians, or of any other denomination, could command the votes of the members of their several congregations in the election of an individual to political office? The very idea of such power is preposterous to a Protestant. No freeman, no man accustomed to judge for himself, would submit even to be advised, unasked, by his minister in a matter of this kind, much less dictated to.

Connected with these evils, and assisting to increase them, we have a Press, to an alarming extent, wanting in independence. Most of our journals are avowedly attached to a particular party, or to particular individuals, they are like council retained for a particular cause; they are to say every thing that makes in favor of their client, and conceal every thing that makes against him. Does a question of principle arise, of fundamental importance to the country?-the inquiry with a journal thus pledged is not, how are our free institutions, how is the country affected by the decision, but how will the decision affect the interests of our particular party or favorite? How few are there among our newspaper editors who dare to take a manly stand for or against a principle that affects vitally the constitution, if it is found to bear unfavorably upon their party or their candidate? A press thus wanting in magnanimity and independence is the fit instrument for advancing the purposes of unprincipled men; and editors of this stamp, and they are confined to no particular party, whether they have followed out their conduct or not to its legitimate results can easily be made the tools of a despot to subvert the liberties of their country.

Again we have, still unsubdued, some weaknesses: (perhaps they belong to human nature,) of which advantage may be taken, to the injury of our republican character, and in aid of despotism, and which may seem to some too trivial to merit notice in connection with the more serious matters just

considered. One of these weaknesses is an anti-republican fondness for titles; Footnote: Glory-giving Titles. One of the plainest doctrines of American Republicanism, which is essentially democratic, is, that mere glory-giving titles, or titles of servility, are entirely opposed to its whole spirit. They are considered as one of those artificial means of kingcraft by which it fosters that aristocratic, unholy pride in the human heart, which loves to domineer over its fellow-man, which loves artificial distinction of ranks, a privileged class, and of course which helps to sustain that whole system of regal and papal usurpation which has so long cursed mankind. If such titles are to some extent still acknowledged in this country, they have either been thoughtlessly but unwisely used as mere epithets of courtesy, or they are the remains of old deep-rooted foreign habits, which, in spite of the uncongenial soil to which they have been transplanted, still maintain a sort of withered existence. It now, however, becomes a serious inquiry, whether this practice, hitherto seemingly unimportant, may not be attended with danger to the institutions of the country. For Popery, it appears, is already taking advantage of this, as of all other weaknesses in our habits and customs, to introduce its anti-democratic system, and this too while it manifests in words great zeal in defence of democratic liberty. Let the democracy look well to this.

Is it asked, to what extent should titles or names of distinction be abolished throughout the land, the answer is plain. Every title that merely designates an office, is perfectly in accordance with our institutions, such as President, Secretary, Senator, General, Commodore, &c. So are letters after a name which designate the office or membership in a society, but titles of reverence, titles which imply moral qualities, such as Your Excellency, Your Honor, The Reverend, Rt. Reverend, Honorable, &c.; and letters which imply moral or intellectual superiority, I think it must be conceded are now not only useless but dangerous. There needs no law to abolish these gewgaw appendages to a name; they must be left to the good sense of the individual who uses them, to discontinue them; and fortunately they generally belong to intellectual men, who have minds capable of discerning the remote evils to which the practice leads, and patriotism enough to make a greater sacrifice than this occasion calls for to avert dangers which threaten their country.

Will it be said that this is a little matter. Nothing is of little consequence that may endanger, however remotely, the civil liberty of the country. Nay more, no practice is unworthy of reform, which continued may aid by its example in the surrender of Religious liberty into the hands of Popery. and whoever has lived in the old world, and knows the extraordinary and powerful influence which mere titles of honor exercise over the minds of men, and their tendency to keep in due subjection the artificial ranks into which despotic and aristocratic power divide the people, subduing the lower orders to their lords and masters, will not think it amiss in this place to draw attention to the subject. Republicans as we are, I fear we are influenced, in a greater degree than we are aware, by the high sounding epithets with which despotism and aristocracy surround their officers, to awe into reverence the ignorant multitude. A name having half a dozen titles for its avant couriers, and as many for its rear guard, swells into an

importance, even in the estimation of our citizens, which the name alone, and especially the individual himself, could never assume. Let Mr. Brown, or Mr. Smith, or any other intelligent, upright, active citizen, be elected president of a benevolent society, does he excite the gaze of those who meet him, or inspire awe in the multitude? No one regards him but as a respectable, useful member of the community. But let us learn that a gentleman, not half as intelligent, or upright, or active, is to land in our city who is announced as the "Most Illustrious Archduke and Eminence his Imperial Highness the Cardinal and Archbishop of Olmutz, RODOLPH, (this last is the gentleman's real name) Highest Curator of the Leopold Foundation," and although not half as capable in any respect as Mr. Brown, or Mr. Smith, or ten thousand other honest, untitled citizens among us, I very much fear that the Battery would be thronged, and the windows in Broadway would be in demand, and the streets filled with a gaping crowd to see a man who could have such a mighty retinue of glittering epithets about him. Yet this title-blazoned gentleman holds the same office as Mr. Brown or Mr. Smith. Poor human nature! Alas, for its weakness? Footnote: There is reason to believe we are reforming in this particular, for we have now titled foreigners, respectable men, travellers in the country, and our press no longer lends itself to announce their unimportant presence or movements.

Who is not struck with the difference of effect upon the imagination, when we describe a person thus : "Mr. --, a good-hearted old gentleman, rather weak in the head, who finds in the manufacture of sealing-wax one of the chief and most agreeable employments of his time," and when we should describe a man thus: "His Imperial Majesty FRANCIS I., Emperor of Austria, King of Jerusalem, Hungary, Bohemia, of Lombardy and Venice, Dalmatia, Croatia, Sclavonia, Galizia, and Lodomeria, Archduke of Austria, Duke of Lorena, Salsburg, Styria, Carinthia, and Carniola, Grand Prince of Transylvania, Margrave of Moravia, Count Prince of Hapsburg, and Tyrol," &c. &c.-and yet these two descriptions belong to one and the same individual.

There used to be a sound democratic feeling in the country, which spurned such glosses of character and frowned out of use mere glory-giving title. Austria, however, is gradually (as fast as it is thought safe) introducing these titled gentlemen into the country. Bishop Fenwick, a Catholic priest, is "his Grace of Cincinnati," Mr. Vicar-General Rese, another priest, is only "his Reverence," and Bishop Flaget, and all the other Bishops, are simple Monseigneurs, this title in a foreign language being less harsh at present to republican ears than its plump, aristocratic English translation, "My Lord Bishop of New-York," "My Lord Bishop of Boston," "My Lord Bishop of Charleston," &c. &c. &c. As we improve, however, under Catholic instruction, we may come to be quite reconciled even to his Eminence Cardinal, so and so, and to all the other graduated fooleries, which are so well adapted to dazzle the ignorant. The scarlet carriage of a Cardinal, too, bedizzened with gold, and containing the sacred person of some Jesuit, all scarlet and humility, as is at this day often seen in Rome, may yet excite our admiration as it rolls through our streets, and even a Pope, (for in these republican times in Italy, who knows but his Holiness may have leave of absence,) yes, even a Pope, a Vicegerent of God, the great divinely appointed appointer of Rulers, the very centre from which all titles emanate, may possibly in his scarlet

and gold and jewel- decked equipage, astonish our eyes, and prostrate us on our knees as he moves down Broadway. To be sure some of his republican friends, now in strange holy alliance with his faithful subjects here, might find their Protestant knees at first a little stiff, yet the Catholic schools which they are encouraging with their votes and their money and their influence, will soon furnish them good instructors in the art of reverential gesture, and genuflexion.

Again, there are some minds of a peculiarly sensitive cast, that cannot bear to have the subject of religious opinion mooted in any way in the secular journals. They use a plausible argument that satisfies them, namely, that religion is too sacred a subject to be discussed by the daily press. I agree to a certain extent, and in a modified sense, with this sentiment, but it should be remembered that all is not religion which passes under that name. The public safety makes it necessary sometimes to strip off the disguise, and show the true character of a design which may have assumed the sacred cloak, the better to pass unchallenged by just such feeble hearted objectors. Were such objections valid, how easy would it be for the most dangerous political designs, (as in the case we are considering,) to assume a religious garb, and so escape detection. The exposure I am now making of the foreign designs upon our liberties, may possibly be mistaken for an attack on the Religion of the Catholics, yet I have not meddled with the conscience of any Catholic; if he honestly believes the doctrine of Transubstantiation, or that by doing penance he will prepare himself for heaven, or in the existence of Purgatory, or in the efficacy of the prayers and masses of priests, to free the souls of his relatives from its flames, or that it is right to worship the Virgin Mary, or to pray to Saints or keep holy days, or to refrain from meat at certain times, or to go on pilgrimages, or in the virtue of relics, or that none but Catholics can be saved, or many other points; however wrong I may and do think him to be, it is foreign from the design of these chapters, to speak against them. But when he proclaims to the world that all power temporal as well as spiritual exists in the Pope, (denying of course the fundamental doctrine of republicanism;) that liberty of conscience is a "raving," and "most pestilential error," that "he execrates and detests the liberty of the press;" when his intolerant creed asserts that no faith is to be kept with heretics, (all being heretics in the creed of a Catholic who are not Catholics,) and many other palpable anti-republican as well as immoral doctrines, he has then blended with his creed political tenets that vitally affect the very existence of our government, and no association with religious belief shall shield them from observation and rebuke. It would indeed be singular if these mere "ravings" (the Pope's phrase is appropriate here,) subversive of the fundamental principles of our government, should be shielded from exposure because misnamed religion. If incendiaries or robbers should ensconce themselves within a church, from the windows and towers of which they were assailing the people, the cry of sacrilege shall not prevent us from attempts to dislodge them, though the walls which protect them should suffer in the conflict.

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