

## LORD BOLINGBROKE.

**H**ENRY St. John, Lord Bolingbroke, was one of the most eminent among the publick men of the early part of the 18.th century in England; but his endowments and character presented a series of strange inconsistencies. With great ingenuity and knowledge, as a writer, and with great industry and ambition, as a statesman, he has left among his works some things which might serve as leading lights to mankind, some to mislead, and in his example many to corrupt. As a commentator on history, his systems are founded on the purest principles of liberty. As a practical statesman, he supported and often led a party who were labouring to bring back an arbitrary despotism. His ethical works breathe the spirit of the loftiest morality. His life was one of the most shameful excess. Shrewd, profound, and convincing, in his philosophy, when treating of high political and moral truths, he was vain, superficial, and illogical, when writing on the highest philosophy of all, the truths of revelation, which he endeavoured to impugn without showing reasonable grounds of doubt, or any probable system of his own to substitute. With the proudest notions of political honour he engaged England in a most dishonourable treaty, and with the most fervid courage, sometimes shewn in difficulty, he at last basely fled his country, when, for his own reputation and that of the cause he had supported, he should have stood the consequences of an impeachment which his own publick measures had brought upon him. "In this manner" says his biographer (Mallet) "lived and died Lord Bolingbroke;

Ο Ερρίκος Αγ. Ιωάννης, Λόρδ Βολινβρόκ, εἰς τῶν ἐπισημοτέρων πολιτικῶν τῆς Αγγλίας, ἤκμασε περὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς τῆς 18 ἑκατονταετηρίδος. Τὰ προτερήματα ὅμως καὶ ὁ χαρακτήρ του ἐσχημάτιζαν σειρὰν παραδόξων ἀντιφάσεων. Συγγραφεὺς εὐφύεστατος καὶ πολυμαθὴς, πολιτικὸς φιλοπονώτατος καὶ φιλοδοξότατος, ἄφησε μεταξύ τῶν συγγραμμάτων του πολλὰ πράγματα χρησιμεύοντα ὡς ὁδηγὰ φῶτα τοῦ ἀνθρώπινου γένους, ἄλλα τινὰ παρασύροντα εἰς ἀπάτην, καὶ κατὰ τὸ παράδειγμά τς, τείνοντα πολλοὺς νὰ διαφθείρουν. Θεωρούμενος μὲν ὡς ὑπομνηματιστὴς ἱστορίας, τὰ συστήματά τς ἐρείδονται ἐπὶ καθαρωτάτων βάσεων τῆς ἐλευθερίας, ὡς πρακτικὸς δὲ πολιτικὸς ὑπερασπίσθη, καὶ συχνάκις ἐτέθη ἐπὶ κεφαλῇς ἐνὸς κόμματος προσπαθοῦντος νὰ ἀνακαλέσῃ αὐθαίρετον Διεποτισμόν. Τὰ μὲν ἠθικά του συγγράμματα πνέουσι τὸ πνεῦμα ὑψηλοτάτης ἠθικῆς, ἡ δὲ ζωῆ του ἐστάθη μία σειρὰ ἐντροπαλῶν ὑπερβολῶν. Αγχίνους, βαθύς, καὶ ἐπιχειρηματικὸς εἰς τὸ φιλοσοφεῖν, ὅταν ἐπραγματεύετο περὶ ὑψηλῶν πολιτικῶν καὶ ἠθικῶν ἀληθειῶν· ἦτον δὲ μάταιος, ἐπιπόλαιος, καὶ ἀλόγιστος, ὅταν ἔγραφε περὶ τῆς ὑψίστης φιλοσοφίας, τῆς ἀληθείας τῆς ἀποκαλύψεως, τὴν ὁποίαν ἐπροσπάθησε νὰ πολεμήσῃ χωρὶς νὰ προβάλῃ ἐλλόγους προφάσεις ἀμφιβολίας, ἢ πιθανόν τι σύστημα ἴδιον, ἄξιον νὰ ἀναπληρώσῃ τὸν τόπον ἐκείνης. Καίτοι μεγαλοφρονῶν περὶ τῆς πολιτικῆς τιμῆς, ἠνάγκασε τὴν Αγγλίαν νὰ ὑπογράψῃ ἀτιμοτάτην συνθήκην, καὶ γέμων ἐνθέρμου ἀνδρίας, ἀποδειχθεὶς εἰς δυσκόλους περιπτώσεις, ἔφυγε τέλος πάντων μικρόψυχα ἀπὸ τὴν πατρίδου ὅτε, διὰ τὴν ἰδίαν αὐτοῦ ὑπόληψιν καὶ τῆς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ προστατευομένης ὑποθέσεως, ἔπρεπε νὰ ἀπαντήσῃ τὰς συνεπείας μιᾶς κατηγορίας, τὴν ὁποίαν ἐκίνησαν κατ' αὐτοῦ τὰ ἴδια πολιτικά του μέτρα. “ Κατ' αὐτὸν τὸν τρόπον, λέγει ὁ βιογράφος του ( Μάλλετ ), ἔζησε καὶ ἀπέθανεν ὁ Λόρδ

ever active, never depressed, ever pursuing fortune, and as constantly disappointed by her. In whatever light we view his character, we shall find him an object rather properer for our wonder, than our imitation; more to be feared than esteemed, and gaining our admiration without our love. His ambition ever aimed at the summit of power, and nothing seemed capable of satisfying his immoderate desires, but the liberty of governing all things without a rival. With as much ambition, as great abilities, and more acquired knowledge than Cæsar, he wanted only his courage to be as successful: but the schemes his head dictated, his heart often refused to execute; and he lost the ability to perform, just when the great occasion called for all his efforts to engage."

The following extract is taken from a short but eloquent Essay published by him in the form of a "Letter to a Noble Lord" on "The Spirit of Patriotism."

"The service of our country is no chimerical, but a real duty. He who admits the proofs of any other moral duty, drawn from the constitution of human nature, or from the moral fitness and unfitness of things, must admit them in favor of this duty, or be reduced to the most absurd inconsistency. When he has once admitted the duty on these proofs, it will be no difficult matter to demonstrate to him that his obligation to the performance of it is in proportion to the means and the opportunities he has of performing it; and that nothing can discharge him from this obligation as long as he has these means and these opportunities in his power, and as long as his country con-

Βολινβρόκ πάντοτε δραστήριος καὶ ἀκάματος, πάντα κυνηγῶν τὴν τύχην, καὶ πάντοτε ἀπ' αὐτὴν ἀπατῶμενος. Καὶ ὅποιονδήποτε τρόπον θεωρήσωμεν τὸν χαρακτῆρά του, τὸν εὐρίσκουμεν ὡς ἀντικείμενον ἀρμοδιώτερον θαυμασμοῦ παρά μμήσεως, μᾶλλον ἄξιον φόβου παρὰ σεβασμοῦ, καὶ ἐφελκόντα τὸν θαυμασμόν μας ἄνευ τῆς ἀγάπης μας. Ἡ φιλοδοξία του πάντα ἀπέβλεπε τὴν πρωτίστην ἀξίαν, καὶ οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἐφαίνετο ἱκανὸν νὰ εὐχαριστήσῃ τὰς ἀμέτρους ἐπιθυμίας του, εἰμὴ τὸ ἐλευθερον τοῦ νὰ κυβερνᾷ τὸ πᾶν χωρὶς ἀντίζηλον. Ἰσος κατὰ τὴν φιλοδοξίαν καὶ ἀξιότητα μὲ τὸν Καίσαρα, ἀλλ' ἀνώτερος ἐκείνου κατὰ τὰς ἐπικτήτους γνώσεις, ἐχρειάζετο μόνον τὴν ἀνδρίαν ἐκείνου διὰ νὰ κατασταθῇ ἐπίσης ἐπιτυχής· ἀλλὰ τὰ σχέδια τὰ ἀπὸ τὴν κεφαλὴν ὑπαγορευόμενα, ἡ καρδιά συχνάκις ἀρνείτο νὰ ἐκτελέσῃ· καὶ διὰ τοῦτο αὐτὸς ἔχασε τὴν ἀξιότητα τοῦ νὰ ἐκτελή, τὴν στιγμὴν ὅτε ἡ μεγάλη ὑπόθεσις ἐπεκαλεῖτο τὰς προσπαθήσεις του διὰ τὴν συμπλοκὴν.

Τὸ ἐφεξῆς ἀπόσπασμα ἐλήφθη ἀπὸ ἓνα σύντομον ἀλλ' εὐφραδὲς δοκίμιον, δημοσιευθὲν παρ' αὐτοῦ ὑπὸ τὸ σχῆμα "Ἐπιστολὴ πρὸς ἓνα Εὐγενῆ, περὶ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ Πατριωτισμοῦ.,,

"Ἡ ἐκδούλευσις τῆς πατρίδος δὲν εἶναι φκντασιῶδες, ἀλλὰ πραγματικὸν χρέος. Ἐκεῖνος ὅστις παραδέχεται τὰς ἀποδείξεις ἑνὸς ὁποιουδήποτε ἄλλου ἠθικοῦ χρέους, πηγάζοντος ἀπὸ τὴν κατάστασιν τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως, εἴτε ἀπὸ τὴν ἠθικὴν ἱκανότητα ἢ ἀνικανότητα τῶν πραγμάτων, πρέπει ἢ νὰ παραδεχθῇ αὐτὰς πρὸς ὑπεράσπισιν τοῦ χρέους τούτου, ἢ νὰ ὑποπέσῃ εἰς τὴν ἀτοπωτέραν ἀντίφασιν. Ὅταν ἀπαξ παραδεχθῇ τὸ τοιοῦτον χρέος ἐπισηριζόμενον ἐπὶ τῶν ἀποδείξεων τούτων, δὲν θέλει εἶσθαι δύσκολον νὰ ἀποδειχθῇ εἰς αὐτὸν, ὅτι ἡ ὑποχρέωσίς του εἰς τὸ νὰ ἐκπληρόνῃ τοῦτο εἶναι κατ' ἀναλογίαν τῶν μέσων καὶ περιστάσεων τῶν διδομένων πρὸς τὴν αὐτοῦ ἐκπλήρωσιν· καὶ ὅτι κανὲν πρᾶγμα δὲν ἐμπορεῖ νὰ τὸν ἀποφορτίσῃ τῆς ὑποχρέωσεως ταύτης, ὅταν αὐτὸς ἔχῃ τὰ μέσα ταῦτα καὶ τὰς περιστάσεις εἰς τὴν ἐξουσίαν του, καὶ ἡ πατρίς

continues in the same want of his services. These obligations, then, to the public service may become obligations for life on certain persons. No doubt they may: and shall this consideration become a reason for denying or evading them? On the contrary, sure it should become a reason for acknowledging and fulfilling them, with the greatest gratitude to the Supreme Being, who has made us capable of acting so excellent a part, and with the utmost benevolence to mankind. Superior talents, and superior rank amongst our fellow-creatures, whether acquired by birth, or by the course of accidents, and the success of our own industry, are noble prerogatives. Shall he, who possesses them, repine at the obligation they lay him under, of passing his whole life in the noblest occupation of which human nature is capable? To what higher station, to what greater glory, can any mortal aspire, than to be, during the whole course of his life, the support of good, the controul of bad government, and the guardian of public liberty? To be driven from hence by successful tyranny, by loss of health or of parts, or by the force of accidents, is to be degraded in such a manner as to deserve pity, and not to incur blame; but to degrade ourselves, to descend voluntarily, and by choice, from the highest to a lower, perhaps to the lowest rank among the sons of ADAM. to abandon the government of men for that of hounds and horses, the care of a kingdom for that of a parish, and a scene of great and generous efforts in public life for one of trifling amusements and low cares, of sloth and of idleness, what is it, my Lord? I had rather your Lordship should name it than I.,

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διαμένῃ εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν ἀνάγκην τῶν ἐκδουλεύσεών του. Αἱ ὑποχρεώσεις ὁμῶς αὐταὶ εἰς τὴν δημόσιον ἐκδουλεύσιν ἐμποροῦν νὰ ἀποβῶσιν ὑποχρεώσεις ἐπὶ ζωῆς εἰς ὑποκείμενα τινα καὶ ἀναμφιβόλως ἐμποροῦν. Ἀλλ' ἡ παρατήρησις αὕτη ἡμποροῦσε ποτὲ νὰ ᾔηται λόγος πρὸς ἄρνησιν ἢ ἀποφυγὴν τούτων; Ἐξ ἐναντίας πρέπει μάλιστα νὰ ᾔηται λόγος διὰ νὰ τὰς ἀναγνωρίσωμεν καὶ νὰ τὰς ἐκπληρώσωμεν μετὰ τὴν μεγαλητέραν εὐγνωμοσύνην πρὸς τὸ Ὑψιστον Οἶον, τὸ ὁποῖον μᾶς κατέστησεν ἱκανοὺς εἰς τὸ νὰ ἐκπληρόνωμεν θέσιν τοσοῦτον ἔξοχον, καὶ μετὰ τὴν μεγαλητέραν εὐνοίαν πρὸς τὸ ἀνθρώπινον γένος. Πνεῦμα ὑπέροχον, καὶ τάξις ἀνωτέρα μετὰ τῶν ὁμοίων μας, εἴτε ἀπὸ τὴν γέννησιν δεδομένη, εἴτε ἀπὸ τὴν σειρὰν τῶν συμβεβηκότων καὶ τὴν ἐπιτυχίαν τῆς εὐφυΐας μας, εἶναι προτερήματα εὐγενῆ. Καὶ λοιπὸν, ὅστις ἔχει αὐτὰ ἤθελε τάχα παραπενοθῆ διὰ τὴν ὑποχρέωσιν, εἰς τὴν ὁποίαν τὸν ὑποβάλλουν τοῦ νὰ περάσῃ ὅλην τοὺς τὴν ζωὴν εἰς τὴν εὐγενεστέραν ἀσχολίαν, τῆς ὁποίας εἶναι ἱκανὴ ἡ ἀνθρώπινος φύσις; Εἰς ποίαν ὑψηλοτέραν κατάστασιν, εἰς ποίαν μεγαλητέραν δόξαν ἐμπορεῖ νὰ ἀποβλέψῃ ὁ θνητὸς παρὰ ταύτην, τοῦ νὰ ᾔηται δηλονότι ἐφ' ὅρου ζωῆς τοῦ τὸ ὑποσήμερον τῆς καλῆς Κυβερνήσεως, ὁ χαλινὸς τῆς κακῆς, καὶ ὁ φύλαξ τῆς δημοσίου ἐλευθερίας; Νὰ ἐξορισθῇ ἀπὸ εὐτυχίσασαν τυραννίαν, νὰ ἐξωσθῇ διὰ τὸν χαμὸν τῆς ὑγείας ἢ τοῦ πνεύματος, ἢ καὶ ἀπὸ τὴν βίαν τῶν συμβεβηκότων, τοῦτο ἤθελεν εἶσθαι καταβιβασμὸς ἄξιος βέβαια ἐλέους, ὅχι δὲ καὶ κατηγορίας. Ἀλλὰ νὰ καταβιβάζωμεν τὸν ἑαυτόν μας, νὰ καταβαίνωμεν θεληματικῶς ἀπὸ τὰς ἀνωτέρας εἰς κατωτέρας, ἴσως δὲ καὶ κατωτάτην, μετὰ τῶν υἱῶν τοῦ Ἀδὰμ, νὰ ἐγκαταλείπωμεν κυβέρνησιν ἀνθρώπων διὰ κυβέρνησιν σκύλων καὶ ἵππων, φροντίδα βασιλείου διὰ φροντίδα χωρίου, καὶ σκηνὴν μεγάλων καὶ γενναίων ἀγώνων ζωῆς δημοσίου διὰ σκηνὴν ὀκνηρίας καὶ ἀεργίας, τὸ ἤθελεν εἶσθαι τοῦτο; Ἐγὼ ἀφίγω εἰς σὲ μᾶλλον, Κύριε, νὰ δώσῃς τὸ ὄνομα εἰς αὐτό.,,