

America, theories founded upon the practically inapplicable experience of the old world. So far am I from ascribing to the republican constitution of the United States their present prosperity, that, on the contrary, I look upon the continued existence of republicanism there as entirely owing to the spirit of emigration, and the field which exists for its exercise. I have no notion that the republicanism of the United States is to be permanent—no idea, if the energies of the American people should be turned in the direction of serious war, or active interference with foreign politics, that republicanism would stand the test. It is upheld by what would equally uphold a wisely administered despotism, or a limited monarchy, by the presence of universally diffused comfort, universal recognition of civil rights, and by the absence of public danger, and of the necessity for concentrated and combined effort.

The government of Napoleon, had it been peaceable, would have given more of prosperity to France than the wildest dream of republicanism. The constitution of England, throughout her glorious history of freedom, preserved to her people prosperity in the midst of the devastation of Europe, security in the midst of appalling danger, and might, majesty, and dominion, as the fruit of deadly conflict. Russia, in the one aspect of progress, is more like America than any other country; yet its prosperity is probably owing to a pure despotism. Peter the Great ordered 200,000 men to prepare the foundation of St. Petersburg; it was done, though 80,000 perished in the task. St. Petersburg was built by this means in the swamps of the Gulf of Finland, in a latitude eight degrees north of the nearest point of Hudson's Bay. America might have been settled, and New York built, under the dominion of a sovereign like Peter, or of one much inferior, but I question much if St. Petersburg would have been built under a Russian Republic. I like free institutions myself; partly because, in the history of the world, countries possessing them have generally prospered; I like them because personal liberty and civil rights are by them secured; I like them because, though the wisdom of the many may not always equal that of the few, yet great oppression, and great public evils, with free institutions, never are perpetuated; I like them, moreover, because of the moral elevation of character which a portion of self-government bestows upon a whole people; but I value them for what they really bestow. I wish to see them in the form of permanency and strength, with capacity for national exertion. I think them more secure, more permanent, more readily adapted to all changes of circumstances, in the form of a limited Monarchy than a Republic; and I think, moreover, that the United States of America owe more of the blessings they enjoy to what they have retained of British law and of the British constitution, than they do to anything new they have imported into it in the formation of their new system. Therefore, I repeat, that I cannot admit their progress as a nation to be owing to any such importation. It was founded on their possession, in peace and security, of a large unpeopled country—in their own individual enterprise, which made them disperse and occupy land as far, and as fast, as they could—and in the inducements which this state of things held out to Europeans individually less self-reliant and