

If these observations are just; if civil rulers have the customs and manners, the religion and learning, and the lives and fortunes of their subjects in their power; then they will certainly be great and extensive blessings to their constituents, if they wisely and faithfully discharge the important trusts reposed in them. And for this reason, it is a very great privilege to a people, to have the right of choosing their best men to manage their best interests. It is indeed the sum of all their civil privileges. For without this, all their other privileges may be wrenched from their hands, and turned into engines to work their ruin. Through the mere want of this essential privilege, many great nations, who enjoy the most salubrious climates, the most fertile soils, and the most delicious productions of nature, live but one degree above complete poverty and wretchedness. It is a high and distinguishing privilege, which God has bestowed upon us, to choose such men from among ourselves, as will guide and govern us according to the integrity of their hearts and skilfulness of their hands.

This subject now suggests several reflections, which are pertinent to the present occasion of rejoicing at the return of national Peace.

1. No nation, who choose their own rulers, can be enslaved without their own consent. The privilege of election is the grand palladium of civil liberty. The great majority in every nation, are utterly opposed to slavery, and therefore, while they possess the power of choosing their own rulers from among themselves, they may always find men of wisdom and integrity, whom they may, if they please, safely invest with power and authority to guard their lives, liberties, and fortunes. Let their form of government be