

FOREIGN CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE LIBERTIES OF THE UNITED STATES – PREFATORY REMARKS.

By Samuel F. B. Morse

PREFATORY REMARKS.



Samuel Morse

THE following Numbers written for the New-York Observer in the beginning of the year 1834, and during several weeks of confinement by indisposition, have been, perhaps, more extensively copied into the religious journals of the different Christian denominations than any communications, (with perhaps a single exception,) of the same extent since the establishment of religious newspapers; and although the subject matter is almost altogether political, giving proofs of a serious foreign conspiracy against the government, yet the writer is not aware that a single secular journal in the United States has taken the pains to investigate the matter, or even to ask if indeed there may not be good grounds for believing it true. The silence of the secular press on a subject which has roused the attention of so large a body of the Protestant community may indeed be accounted for in part, perhaps altogether, from the all engrossing election contests which have agitated the country from one extremity of the land to the other; for the writer would certainly be very reluctant to adopt the belief, which has repeatedly been urged upon him by many, that the secular journals dare not attack Popery; he will not believe that dare not ever stood in the way of the duty of any patriotic independent conductor of the American press. Footnote: A friend to whom this part was read smiled, and said "you are sufficiently guarded in your language, but how many patriotic independent conductors of the American press are there? Can you name one?"

At the solicitation of many citizens without distinction of religious denomination or of political party, the writer has consented to collect the numbers into a pamphlet, adding notes illustrative of many matters which could not so well have been introduced into the columns of a newspaper.

That a vigorous and unexampled effort is making by the despotic governments of Europe to cause Popery to overspread this country, is a fact too palpable to be contradicted. Did not official documents lately published, put this fact beyond dispute, yet the writer had personal evidence sufficient to convince him of the fact and of the political object of the enterprise, while residing in Italy in the years 1830-31, from conversations with nobles and gentlemen of different countries, with the officers of various foreign

governments, visiting and resident in the Roman and Austrian states, and with priests and other ecclesiastics of the Roman faith. Sometimes it was hinted to him as a check to too sanguine anticipations of the triumph of the experiment of our democratic republican government; sometimes it was told him by the former class in a tone of exultation that a cause was in operation which would surely overthrow our institutions and gradually bring us under a form of government less obnoxious to the pride, and less dangerous to the existence, of the antiquated despotic systems of Europe. In addition to these hints to the writer, concerning the efforts making by the governments of Europe to carry Popery through all our borders, other American travellers will testify to similar hints made to them. By one I am permitted to say, that the celebrated naturalist, the late Baron Cuvier, known also as a zealous Protestant, inquired of him with marks of concern, if it were indeed true that Popery had made such progress in the United States, as to cause the exultation (which it seems was no secret) among the legitimates of Europe. And again, that a distinguished member of one of the Protestant German embassies, in Rome also made similar inquiries of him, having heard much boasting of the progress of Popery in the United States, adding this pertinent remark, "they will be hammer or nails, Sir, they will persecute, or be persecuted." These facts may be of so much importance in aid of the other proofs of a conspiracy which these numbers unfold, as to show that among the various higher classes of Europe the enterprise of a Popish crusade in this country is not only a subject of notoriety, but is viewed with great interest, and is considered as having a most important political bearing.

In the following numbers the writer has chosen to rest the evidence of conspiracy mainly on official documents published in Vienna, because they have been translated and published, Footnote: In the New-York Observer, of the months of January, February, 1834. and are within the reach of any citizen of the country who chooses more closely to examine them. He has also availed himself of facts in the operations of Popish agents in this country, so far as their workings have been occasionally revealed.

The writer will add in conclusion, that he writes not in the interest of a sect or a party, for the question of Popery is not identified with either political party. He has lived too long in foreign countries to be able to identify himself with the local interests of mere party at home, whether in religion or politics. The great democratic features of his country's institutions, as contradistinguished from the despotic, monarchical and aristocratic systems of Europe, were admired by him as they appeared more boldly relieved, viewed from abroad in such striking contrast to all around him; and he is thoroughly persuaded that these democratic institutions, if suffered to have their unobstructed course, unobstructed except by the natural checks of education and religion actively and universally diffused and sustained, are more favorable to civil liberty and to the final triumph of truth, and consequently to human happiness, than any other civil institutions in the world. The writer entertaining these views has deemed it an imperative duty, at any sacrifice, to warn his countrymen, of a subtle enemy to the democracy of the country, and to conjure them as they value their civil and religious institutions, to watch the Protean shapes of Popery, to suspect and fear it most when it allies itself to our interests in

the guise of a friend.

Mistrust of all that Popery does, or affects to do, whether as a friend or foe in any part of the country, is the only feeling that true charity, universal charity, allows us to indulge.

NEW-YORK, January, 1835.

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