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(The) pantisocracy on the Susquehanna.

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Thesis

THE PANTISOCRACY ON THE SUSQUEHANNA

by

Katherine Bacon
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The Pantisocracy on the Susquehanna

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Possible Sources of Inspiration

Since the dawn of Man's first age of reason, those of philosophic trend have dreamed of an ideal state where kindred souls might assemble to enjoy lofty thoughts and simple living; where passion should be entirely subjugated to reason. Plato's "Republic" conceived before 347 B.C. is one of the first examples. In his "state" the Philosopher would reign supreme to delight the old and to train the young. Then, about 1350, Sir John Mandeville discoursed upon a similar theme in his essay on "Bees", and Sir Thomas More's dream of "Utopia" was given to the world in the early 16th century, wherein he described the island on which was to be found the "utmost perfection in laws, politics and social arrangements".[1]

The French writer and statesman, Michel de Montaigne, projected a kindred idea in his "Essais", published in 1580. At about that time, Sir Francis Bacon also subscribed to the plan in his "New Atlantis", wherein he tells of being wrecked on an imaginary island, in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, where he finds an association for the cultivation of natural science and the promotion of arts.

Again we turn to France, and find Jean Jacques Rousseau whose "Social Contrast", published in 1762, and his various "Discourses" profoundly influenced all succeeding thought, very especially in England. A little later, in 1793, Thomas Godwin's "Political Justice" was produced in England, and aroused much interest.

1-Standard Dictionary of Facts-p.385

Thus it appears, that the dream of an ideal commonwealth is age-old, and is bound to be revived from time to time. Such a dream, Robert Southey doubtless had in mind on May 11, 1794, when he wrote "O, for emancipation from these useless forms, this useless life, these haunts of intolerance, vice and folly!--Either in six months I fix myself in some honest way of living, or I quit my country, my friends, and every fondest hope I indulge, forever. The visions of futurity are dark and gloomy, and the only ray that enlivens the scene, beams on America".[1]

Background of Southey's Idea

That Southey's dreams of the future were built upon some of the previously mentioned dreams of the past, is attested by his correspondence and by records from the register of the Bristol Library Society. He referred often to Rousseau, Plato, and also Plotinus' project for an ideal commonwealth. Plotinus requested the emperor, Gallienus, to "give him a ruined city of Campania, which he might rebuild and people with philosophers, governed by the laws of Plato, and from whom the city should be called Platonopolis.--'The design', says Southey, 'would certainly have proved impracticable in that declining and degenerate age.--Yet I cannot help wishing the experiment had been tried; it could not have been productive of evil, and we might at this period have received instruction from the history of Platonopolis'."[2]

The Register of the Bristol Library Society which I have mentioned, shows where the poet went for further encouragement and practical suggestion. On Nov. 1, 1793, he

1-Letters and Correspondence of R. Southey-p.71
2-Life of R. Southey-Waller-p.120

took Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations"; on Nov. 25, Godwin's "Political Justice"; on Nov. 27, Gilpin's "Forest Scenery;" and on Dec. 9, "Political Justice", again. Very evidently, the last named book made a great impression on him. In addition to these, in 1792, Brissot's "Nouveau Voyage dans les Etats-Unis de L'Amerique Septentrionale" was translated into English. While there is no written record, it is probable that Southey had read this work before Brissot was executed as a Girondin in Oct, 1793, for he revered Brissot as his particular hero and martyr.[1]

For several years previous to this time, some of the ardent French republicans, including Crevecoeur and Claviere had been endeavoring to establish a "Gallo-Americaine" Society to establish closer relations between France and the United States and it was they who subscribed the funds to send Brissot to America to investigate the opportunities of the new country for Frenchmen who might wish to invest money there, to emigrate thither from France, or even to establish somewhere in the regions then open for new settlements, a Utopian colony of democratic reformers and philosophers.-- Brissot landed in Boston in July, 1788 and thence travelled thru Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. The Americans were mainly engaged in agriculture, they were virtuous, and they had a republic. Brissot was so enamored of all this that he planned to settle with his wife in Pennsylvania and sent for his brother-in-law to join him there, but in less than a year, upon the news of the calling of the States General, he returned to France.

1-Waller, p.123

Though all his schemes for emigration were then submerged in the flood of the revolution, the book in which he depicted them so ardently probably added not a little to the confidence and enthusiasm of Southey, possessed of dreams of his own, only a little, if at all, more impracticable.

Previous Example

It is interesting to note, however, that Brissot's enthusiasm infected others of his countrymen, and several officers of Lafayette's command who had seen service in America, organized the Asylum Company on April 22, 1794. In the previous year, they had negotiated with Robert Morris and John Nicholson to purchase a vast tract of land in what is now Bradford county, Pennsylvania. Thirty houses, a church and theatre were laid out on the Susquehanna. The beginning was brave, but doomed to failure, and the project was moribund when the Duke de la Rochefoucauld visited the locality two years later.--[1]

BEGINNINGS OF THE MOVEMENT

In a letter to Horace Bedford written on Nov. 13, 1793, Southey wrote, "If this world did but contain ten thousand people of both sexes, visionary as myself, how delightful would we re-people Greece, and turn out the Moslem. I would turn crusader and make a pilgrimage to Parnassus at the head of my republicans and there reinstate the muses in their original splendor. We would build a classic temple to Eleutherian Jove from the quarries of Paros-- replant the grove of Academus, aye and the gardens of Epicurus, where your brother and I would commence as teachers".[2]

1-George MacLean Harper"Coleridge and the Susquehanna" Nation 95:330
2-Haller-p.121

Plan of Cowley

Such a scheme was pure fantasy, but a more sober suggestion and perhaps possible of fulfillment came to him almost immediately as he wrote-"It was the favorite intention of Cowley to retire with books to a cottage in America, and seek that happiness in solitude which he could not find in society. My asylum there would be sought for different reasons (and no prospect in life gives me half the pleasure this visionary one affords). I should be pleased to reside in a country where men's abilities would ensure respect; where society was upon a proper footing, and man was considered as more valuable than money; and where I could till the earth, and provide by honest industry the meat which my wife would dress with pleasing care--".[1]

Plan of Southey

On Dec. 14, 1793, Southey wrote to his friend Bedford, "Now, fancy only me in America; imagine my ground uncultivated since the creation, and see me wielding the axe, now to cut down the tree, and now the snakes that nestled in it. Then see me grubbing up the roots, and building a nice snug little dairy with them: three rooms in my cottage, and my only companion, some poor negro whom I have brought on purpose to emancipate. After a hard day's toil, see me sleep on rushes, and, in very bad weather, take out my casette and write to you.--Do not imagine I shall leave rhyming or philosophizing; so thus your friend will realize the romance of Cowley, and even out-do the seclusion of Rousseau: till at last comes

1-"Life of Robert Southey", by Dennis-p.86

an ill-looking Indian with a tomahawk, and scalps me,-a most melancholy proof that society is very bad, and that I shall have done very little to improve it! So vanity, vanity will come from my lips, and poor Southey will either be cooked for a Cherokee or oysterized by a tiger".[1]

Southey's interest in America

At this time, Southey was engaged to marry Edith Fricker; he had nothing to marry upon, as he was dependent for his support upon the kindness of an Aunt. He desired some means of gaining a livelihood, and his only experience was in the field of letters, uncertain and unstable in financial returns. The only opening for him seemed to be in the Church-or in America. His revolutionary and heretical views precluded him from the former-and it was in an unhappy and unsettled frame of mind that he journeyed from Bristol(where he had stayed several months to be near Edith) back to Oxford in March 1794.

THE FORMATION OF PANTISOCRACY

Coleridge arrived at Oxford

It was there that an event of moment took place, for a young man of twenty-two, Samuel Taylor Coleridge by name, chanced to arrive and visit his friend Robert Allen: Allen, a friend of Southey's, introduced the two poets, and there was an immediate magnetic attraction of each for the other. Coleridge's course of life had no direction at this time; Wearied of the college routine, with a sudden thirst for adventure he had enlisted in a regiment of dragoons, under the name of Silas Titus Comberbach (using his own initials if no more). He made a poor dragoon

1-Waller-p.125

but a good messmate". He could not care for his horse and accoutrements conspicuously well, but he could tell good stories, write letters for his illiterate companions and tend the sick. There he was popular, and the missing undergraduate was tolerably happy as a dragoon, until he was recognized in the streets as a student. His discharge was procured by his elder brother and some friends, and Coleridge returned to Cambridge somewhat in disgrace, as his escapade was exaggerated by those relating it.

With this immediate background, Coleridge was longing for a change in the status quo-and the meeting with Southey was fraught with great possibilities . "It was like the magnet to the steel, or, say, tender to the match. These inflamed spirits lost no time in setting each other afire. 'Allen is with us daily', writes Southey, 'and his friend from Cambridge, Coleridge----He is of most uncommon merit -of the strongest genius, the clearest judgment, the best heart'."[1]

When Coleridge soon left to go on a walking tour thru Wales, he wrote to Southey, proclaiming his dissatisfaction with University life. Southey was of the same mind and left Oxford without waiting for his degree. On the return of Coleridge, the two new friends met and sojourned at Bristol. There they met Robert Lovell, a Quaker and also a poet, who was soon to marry one of the six Fricker sisters. In due course of time, Coleridge further allied himself to Southey and Lovell, by likewise asking a Fricker to be his

1-S. T. Coleridge-Campbell-p.30

life partner--Sarah, was his choice.

Of course Southey introduced his dreams of an ideal community, a new Utopia, and Coleridge was enthusiastic in his support of them. Together they attempted to work out a practical plan, and the result was Pantisocracy---The name denotes the equal government of all. Allied to this Pantisocracy was Aspheterism, which meant the generalization of individual property.

THE CHOICE OF AMERICA

That Southey's gaze was toward America, we know. Therefore it may be interesting and pertinent to read of Coleridge's opinion of America. In Section XII of his Essays-as edited by his daughter one may read, "British America is England with elbow room, and doubly free."-- He claimed, moreover: that there were three great "wants" in America. The first was an "absence of abject poverty in the mass from the abundance of productive space relatively to the population." The second was in the mind of the people where one observed an "absence of prejudice closing the avenues of truth", and his third observation was regarding the state of society, where one found the "absence of a civilization of effeminacy and corruptness akin to that of the Roman Empire in its decay; sophistication in matters of intellect and taste---a feeble fastidiousness which contracts the mental physiognomy into a perpetual sneer, and spreads such a chilling atmosphere, that friends seem under a compact to conceal from each other every particle of their real mind under a glazed coverlet of comfortless

politeness (as in England). In America, in consequence of this happy want of ultra-civilization, and excessive refinement, moral qualities are more highly rated. Yes! America has doubtless grand and noble prospects before her, though her judges do sit wigless on the judgement seat."[1]

Coleridge admired Washington and America

Coleridge also idealized George Washington highly, and in Section XIII of the same essays we find his daughter writing, "I cannot take leave of the Americans and my father's opinion of their high advantages without referring to Washington to whom he has paid an overflowing tribute in one of his Letters to the Spaniards. Washington was not a hero like Caesar and Alexander, conquerors intent on exalting themselves alone; nor like Cromwell nor Cariolanus whose course was of a mixed character. He alone of all men whom history presents to us, was absolutely uncorrupted by possession of supreme power; and this preeminence of goodness; which distinguishes him to the imagination amid the crowd of laurelled heroes, by a saintly halo, is recognized and celebrated by my father, who wrote on having seen Greenough's statue of Washington,-- 'You could not but feel that no cloud of mortal passion had ever dimmed the glory of the character here idealized in marble, and that the soul had risen above the strife of self-will, and the tumult of human frailties into the serene atmosphere of duty and of Christian heroism.'"[2]

From Coleridge's contribution to "the Watchman" are culled these words under the heading of The American States. "It has ever been our opinion, that in England the people are

1-"Essays"-Coleridge-p.lxxvi
2-"Essays"- " -p.lxxx

better than the government: in America, the government is better than the people."[1]

It is evident that Coleridge had inquired widely into the further practical advantages of America and after being infected by Southey's idea, he seemed to take the initiative, and outstrip the former in his zeal--He records in his "Biographical Epistles," that upon Southey's enthusiastic recommendation he read Godwin's "Political Justice."[2]

THE CHOICE OF THE SUSQUEHANNA

Joseph Cottle in his "Reminiscences of Coleridge and Southey," maintains that the banks of the Susquehanna were decided upon as the goal of the adventures because of its sweet-sounding name.[3] That seems hardly probable, since much must have been heard about that locality previous to this time. As we have previously mentioned, the French emigres in the Asylum company established their colony there in April, 1794, because of Brissot's glowing report.

Then Dr. Joseph Priestley had settled in Northumberland, Pennsylvania, near the Susquehanna three years earlier than this, in 1791. He had returned to England, but was willing to venture forth again with this new land, as his name was on the list of recruits. His personal experience must have had weight.

Report of American Agent

Some years previously, in 1787, William Cooper, father of James Fenimore Cooper, had founded Cooperstown on Lake Otsego, the headwaters of the Susquehanna and had acquired vast tracts of land in that vicinity which he exploited for many years as a great real estate

1-"Essays"-Coleridge-p.169
2-"Biographical Epistles" II-p.204
3-p.16

venture. It is possible that Coleridge had met one of these agents for he wrote to Southey on Sept. 6, 1794, "Every night I meet a most intelligent young man who has spent the last five years of his life in America and is lately come from thence as an agent to sell land---He says 2000 pounds will do; that he doubts not we can contract for our passage under 400 pounds; that we shall buy the land a great deal cheaper when we arrive in America than we could do in England; that twelve men may easily clear 300 acres in 4 or 5 months; and that, for $600, a thousand acres may be cleared and houses built on them. He recommends the Susquehanna, from its excessive beauty and its security from hostile Indians. Every possible assistance will be given us; we may get credit for the land for ten years or more as we settle upon. That literary characters make money there, etc. etc. He never saw a bison in his life, but has heard of them;---The mosquitoes are not so bad as our gnats; and, after you have been there a little while, they don't trouble you much."[1]

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

With each acquisition of additional information, Coleridge's enthusiasm increased. Only a few days after writing the preceding letter to Southey, he addressed the following words to his partner in the venture; dating them at ten o'clock on Thursday morning, Sept. 18.

Coleridge's letter to Southey

"Well, my dear Southey! I am at last arrived at Jesus(College). My G-! how tumultuous are the movements of my heart! Since I quitted this room

1-"Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey"-p.74

what and how important events have been evolved! America! Southey! Miss Fricker!---Pantisocracy! Oh! I shall have such a scheme of it! My head, my heart are all alive. I have drawn up my arguments in battle array; they shall have the tactician excellence of the mathematician, with the enthusiasm of the poet. The head shall be the mass; the heart the fiery spirit that fills, informs, and agitates the whole---Caldwell has been laughing at me. Up I arose, terrible in reasoning. He fled from me. He told me that the strength of my imagination had intoxicated my reason, and that the acuteness of my reason had given a directing influence to my imagination."[1]

At this point, it may be of value to see the prime movers of the venture thru the eyes of the book-seller, Mr. Joseph Cottle, who was so indispensable to them, and whose criticism holds particular interest because he was himself only twenty-three at the time.

Lovell describes the plans "At the close of the year, 1794, a clever young man, of the society of Friends, of the name of Robert Lovell, who had married a Miss Fricker, informed me that a few friends of his from Oxford and Cambridge, with himself, were about to sail to America, and, on the banks of the Susquehanna, to form a Social Colony, in which there was to be a community of property, and where all that was selfish was to be proscribed. None, he said were to be admitted to their number but tried and incorruptible characters, and he felt quite assured that he and his friends would be able to realize a state of society free from the turmoils

1-"Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey"-p.74

that then agitated the World, and to present an example of the eminence to which men might arrive under these unrestrained principles. He has paid me the compliment of saying that he would be happy to include me in the select assemblage who, under a state which he called Pantisocracy, were, he hoped, to regenerate the whole complexion of society; and that, not by establishing formal laws, but by excluding all the little deteriorating passions, injustice, 'wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking', ----thereby setting an example of 'Human Perfectability'.

Cottle is skeptical "Young as I was, I suspected there was an old and intractable leaven in human nature that would effectually frustrate these airy schemes of happiness, which had been projected in every age, and always with the same result.

"'How do you go?' said I. My young and ardent friend instantly replied, 'We freight a ship carrying with us ploughs and other implements of husbandry'--I forbore all references to the accumulation of difficulties to be surmounted, and merely inquired who were to compose his company. He said that only four had as yet absolutely engaged in the enterprise; Samuel Taylor Coleridge, from Cambridge;(in whom I understood the plan to have originated:) Robert Southey and George Burnet, from Oxford, and himself. 'Well! I replied, 'when do you set sail.' He answered, 'Very shortly.'[1]

"One morning, shortly after, Robert Lovell called on me and introduced Robert Southey. Never will the impression be effaced, produced on me by this young man. Tall, dignified

1-"Reminiscences"-Cottle-p.2

possessing great suavity of manners; an eye piercing, with a countenance full of genius, kindliness and intelligence, I gave him at once the right hand of fellowship and to the moment of his decease, it was never withdrawn.

"I must now make a brief reference to George Burnet, who in this epidemic delusion had given his sanction to, and embarked all his prospects in life on this Pantisocratical scheme. He was a young man about the age of 20; the son of a respectable Somersetshire farmer, who had bestowed upon him his portion, by giving him an University education as an introduction to the Church, into which he probably would have entered, but for this: his transatlantic pursuit of happiness. His talents were not conspicious, but his manners were unpresuming, and honesty was depicted on his countenance.

"After some considerable delay, it was at length announced that on the coming morning, Samuel Taylor Coleridge would arrive in Bristol, as the nearest and most convenient port; and where he was to reside but a short time before the favoring gales were to waft him and his friends across the Atlantic. Robert Lovell at length, introduced Mr. Coleridge. I instantly descried his intellectual character; exhibiting as he did, an eye, a brow, and a forehead, indicative of commanding genius. Interviews succeeded, and these increased the impression of respect.---

"I introduced them to several intelligent friends, and their own merits soon augmented the number, so that their acquaintance became progressively extended, and their society

coveted. Bristol was now favored as a very pleasant residence, and though the ship was not engaged, nor the least preparation made for so long a voyage, still the delights and wide-spreading advantages of Pantisocracy formed one of their everlasting themes of conversation,"---

Interesting information from Lovell

"It will excite merely an innocent smile in the reader at the extravagance of a youthful and ardent mind, when he learns that Robert Lovell stated with great seriousness, that, after the minutest calculation, and inquiry among practical men, the demand on their labor would not exceed two hours a day; that is for the production of absolute necessaries. The leisure still remaining might be devoted, in convenient fractions, to the extension of their domain, by prostrating the sturdy trees of the forest, where 'lop and top', without cost, would supply their cheerful winter fire; and the trunks when cut into planks, without any other expense than their own pleasant labor, would form the sties for their pigs, and the linnies for their cattle, and the barns for their produce; reserving their choicest timbers for their own comfortable log dwellings. But after every claim that might be made on their manual labor had been discharged, a large portion of time would still remain for their own individual pursuits, so that they might read, converse, and even write books."[1]

DIFFICULTIES IN THE PATH

Beautiful as that anticipation might be, however, the first and immediate obstacle to be surmounted was the need of money. Previous to this time, Southey had been supported

1-"Reminiscences-Cottle-p.6

by the largesse of a wealthy Aunt, Miss Tyler, but she had no sympathy with the proposed adventure and even turned Southey out of her house into the rain on Oct. 17, when he revealed his plans to her. Then both Coleridge and Southey engaged to deliver a course of lectures;each speaking on alternate evenings to raise money. Each was to write as much poetry as possible for publication, and Mr. Cottle promised to help them as far as he could.

Disagreement on Slavery

Another difficulty or difference of opinion arose which caused much heated correspondence. Miss Tyler had a negro servant called Shad. He had endeared himself to both Coleridge and Southey and they planned that he should go with them, but they were not agreed on as what his status should be. Southey evidently intended that Shad continue as a servant. Coleridge felt there should be no servants, and continued in the letter from which I have quoted above with these words underscored--"Shad goes with us. He is my brother."[1] Then, in the letter written to Southey on Oct. 21, one reads"I was vexed and alarmed by your letter concerning Mr. and Mrs. Roberts, Shad, and little Sally--Shad's children will be educated as ours, and the education we shall give them will be such as to render them incapable of blushing at the want of it in their parents.---Let them dine with us and be treated with as much equality as they would wish, but perform that part of labor for which their education has fitted them.---Southey should not have written the sentence-(suggesting that there be servitude in the colony) The inference is that the scheme of Pantisocracy is impracticable,

1-Coleridge-"Letters" Vol.I-p.82

but I hope and believe that is is not a necessary inference."[1]

Duties of the Women

There upon follows the practical suggestions of Coleridge as to how the necessity of a servant class may be obviated. This passage also reveals his ideas of the household management to be instituted, in an interesting light. "If Mrs. Lovell and Mrs. Fricker go with us, they can at least prepare the food of simplicity for us. Let the married women do only what is absolutely convenient and customary for pregnant women or nurses. Let the husband do all the rest,-and what will that be? Washing with a machine, and cleaning the house. One hour's addition to our daily labor, and Pantisocracy in its most perfect sense is practicable. That the greater part of our female companions should have the task of maternal exertion at the same time is very improbable, but thought it were to happen, an infant is almost always sleeping, and during its slumbers, the mother may, in the same room, perform the little offices of ironing clothes or making shirts."[2]

Women not in full Accord

Even though their duties have thus been made plain, the women while entirely necessary (as only married people were to go) appear to have been somewhat of an handicap, and in this same letter, Coleridge writes- "But the hearts of the women are not all with us. I do believe that Edith and Sarah (Fricker) are exceptions, but do even they know the bill of fare for the day,-every duty that will be incumbent upon them?"[3]

The subjects of servitude and women were evidently discussed throughout the Fall, for in Nov. (1794) Coleridge

1-Coleridge "Letters" Vol.I-p.90
2- " " Vol.I-p.91
3- " " " " "

again wrote to Southey in part, as follows, "My feeble and exhausted heart regards with a criminal indifference the introduction of servitude into our society; but---oxen and horses possess not intellectual appetites, nor the powers of acquiring them. We are, therefore, justified in employing their labor to our own benefit: mind hath a divine right of sovereignty over body, but who shall dare transfer 'from man to brute' to 'from man to man.' To be employed in the toil of the field while we are pursuing philosophical studies--can earldoms or emperor ships boast so huge an inequality? ---A willing slave is the worst of slaves'. Besides, I must own myself incapable of perceiving even the temporary convenience of the proposed innovation. The men do not want assistance, at least, none that Shad can particularly give; and to the women-what assistance can little Sally, the wife of Shad, give more than any other of our married women? Is she to have no domestic cares of her own? No house? No husband to provide for? No children? Because Mr. and Mrs. Roberts are not likely to have children, I see less objection to their accompanying us. Indeed, indeed, Southey, I am fearful that Lushington's prophecy may not be alto-gether vain. 'Your system, Coleridge, appears strong to the head and lovely to the heart, but depend upon it, you will never give your women sufficient strength of mind, liberality of heart, or vigilance of attention. They will spoil it.'"[1]

As the additional problems of servitude and feminine opposition arose the original difficulty of lack of capital

1-Coleridge "Letters" Vol. I-p.96

had not been surmounted. The literary endeavors had not brought adequate returns. Then there was a possibility of a war with America under discussion, in which event it might be necessary to sail from Hamburg;and even then there was the risk of being searched on a neutral vessel--another prop to the objections of the women.

THE PROPOSED COLONY IN WALES

What should they do? Southey offered a solution- Why not establish a colony in Wales? Similar advantages could be derived and the expense and inconvenience of travel be avoided.

Coleridge acceded reluctantly

Reluctantly Coleridge acceded and on a Monday morning, in Dec.(1794) wrote to Southey as follows: "Southey, I must tell you that you appear to me to write as a man who is aweary of the world because it accords not with his ideas of perfection--- For God's sake, my dear fellow, tell me what we are to gain by taking a Welsh farm. Remember the principles and proposed consequences of Pantisocracy, and reflect in what degree they are attainable by Coleridge, Southey, Lovell, Burnett and Company; some five men going partners to-gether. In the next place, supposing that we have proved the preponderating utility of our aspheterizing in Wales, let us by our speedy and united inquiries discover the sum of money necessary, whether such a farm with so very large a house is to be procured without launching our frail and unpiloted bark on a rough sea of anxieties. How much is necessary for the maintenance of so large a family-eighteen people- for

a year, at least?

"I have read my objections to Lovell-If he has not answered them altogether to my fullest conviction, he has, however, shown me the wretchedness that would fall on the majority of our party from any delay, in so forcible a light, that if 300 pounds be adequate to the commencement of the system, (which I very much doubt), I am most willing to give up all my views and embark immediately with you.

"If it be determined that we go to Wales, (for which I give my vote) in what time? Mrs. Lovell thinks it impossible that we should go in less than three months. If this be the case, I will accept of the reporter's plan to the 'Telegraph', live upon a guinea a week and transmit the balance."[1]

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

Financial condition bad

At the end of three months, nevertheless, they had not realized their hope, and the next Spring, Dame Fortune had not seen fit to shower wealth on the idealistic adventurers, nor yet even the small amount necessary for their daily sustenance, and Mr. Cottle records their financial plight. "The solicitude I felt, lest these young and ardent geniuses should in a disastrous hour, and in their mistaken apprehensions, commit themselves in this their desperate undertaking, was happily dissipated by Mr. Coleridge applying for the loan of a little cash--to pay the voyager's freight? or passage? No lodgings. Never did I lend money with such unmingled pleasure; for now I ceased to be haunted night and day with the spectre of the ship! the ship! which was to effect such incalculable mischief!

1-Coleridge "Letters" Vol.I-p.122

The form of the request was the following:

'My dear Sir:

Can you conveniently lend me 5 pounds as we want a little more than 4 pounds to make up our lodging bill, which is, indeed, much higher than we expected: seven weeks and Burnet's lodging for 12 weeks, amounting to 11 pounds.

Yours affectionately,

S. T. Coleridge'

"Now an effectual barrier manifestly interposed to save them from destruction. And though their romantic plan might linger in their minds, it was impossible not to be assured that their strong good sense would eventually dissipate their delusion."[1]

Southey invited to travel in Portugal

No change in plans was mentioned, however, until Coleridge wrote a letter to Southey in the following Oct. In the meantime, Southey had received an invitation from his uncle the Rev. Herbert Hill, that he accompany him on a trip to Portugal for six months, and he accepted. That sounded the death knell of Pantisocracy and threatened to destroy forever, the friendship of the two chief promoters.

PANTISOCRACY ABANDONNED

Coleridge married

On Oct. 4,(1795) Coleridge married Miss Sarah Fricker, and settled in a cottage at Clevedon, "a village, happily on the banks, not of the Susquehanna, but the Severn." according to Mr. Cottle.[2] This Editor friend implies that Coleridge had also, by now, abandonned his cherished palns "by implication rather than by direct

1- "Reminiscences" Cottle p.8
2- " " p.29

avowal",[1] but he placed all the blame on Southey as he wrote to him at great length on Friday morning, Nov. 13,- the day before Southey's departure, and, incidentally, the day before Southey was married secretly to Edith Fricker,(whom he left at the church door to take the stage coach for Falmouth.)

Coleridge blames Southey

In this long and exhaustive missive Coleridge reviews the whole story of Pantisocracy and bitterly chides Southey for playing traitor to the cause which both had espoused so ardently, as he also writes an unparalleled eulogy: "Southey, I have lost friends due to epistolary neglect, but you are lost to me because you are lost to virtue. As this will probably be the last time I shall have occasion to address you, I will begin at the beginning and regularly retrace your conduct and my own.----In the month of June, 1794, I first became acquainted with your person, and character. Before I quitted Oxford, we had struck out the leading features of a pantisocracy. While on my journey through Wales, you invited me to Bristol with the full hope of realizing it. During my abode at Bristol the plan was matured, and I returned to Cambridge hot in the anticipation of that happy season when we should remove the selfish principle from ourselves and prevent it in our children; by an abolition of property; or in whatever respects this might be impracticable , by such a similarity of property as would amount to a moral sameness, and answer all the purposes of abolition. Nor were you less zealous, and thought and expressed your opinion, that if any man embraced our system, he must comparatively disregard his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and

1- "Reminiscences" Cottle p.78

sisters,-Yea and his own life also, or he couldn't be our disciple,---

"Your letter to Lovell in answer to some objection of mine to the Welsh scheme, was the first thing that alarmed me--I wrote you a friendly reproof, and in my own mind attributed this unwonted style to your earnest desires of realizing our plan, and the angry pain which you felt when any appeared to oppose or defer its execution. However, I came over to your opinions of the utility, and, in course, the duty of rehearsing our scheme in Wales, and so, rejected the offer of being established in the Earl of Buchan's family--

"We commenced lecturing. Shortly, you began to recede in your conversations from those broad principles in which pantisocracy originated--I opposed you with vehemence,--and once you confessed to me that you had acted wrong. But you relapsed; your manner became cold and gloomy, and pleaded with increased pertinacity for the wisdom of making Self an undiverging Centre--At Chepstov, your conduct renewed my suspicions, and I was greatly agitated--But in Peircefield Walks you assured me that my suspicions were altogether speculative, and that you would certainly go into Wales. I was glad and satisfied--But alas! a short time passed ere your departure from our first principles became too flagrant--Your private resources were to remain your individual property, and everything to be separate except a farm of 5 or 6 acres. In short we were to commence partners in a petty farming trade. This was the mouse of which Pantisocracy was at last safely delivered. I received the account with indignation and un-

utterable contempt--I did not condescend to waste my intellect upon them; but in the most expressive terms I declared to George Burnet my opinion 'that you had long laid a plot of separation. (Later)--In fine you left me fully persuaded that you would enter Holy Orders--I said that your conduct in little things had appeared to me tinged with selfishness, and George Burnett attributed and still does attribute, your defection to your unwillingness to share your expected annuity with us.--I shall revert to your first letter, and here you say:-the plan you are going upon is not of sufficient importance to justify me and myself in abandoning a family who have none to support them but me.' The plan you are going upon! What plan was I meditating save to retire into the country with George Burnet and yourself and taking by degrees a small farm, there be learning to get my own bread by my bodily labor-and then to have all things in common-thus disciplining my body and mind for the succesful practice of the same thing in America with more numerous associates--and was not this your own plan-the plan for the realizing of which, you invited me to Bristol--When you said that, if the others left it, you, and George Burnet and your brother would stand firm to the post of virtue? Saving Lovell, our number was the same, yourself, and Burnet and I. Our prospects were only our uncertain hope of getting thirty shillings a week between us by writing for some London paper-for the remainder we were to rely on our agricultural exertions. And as to your family, yourstood precisely in the same situation as you now stand. You meant

to take your mother with you and your brother.--And where indeed, then would have been the difficulty? She would have earned her maintenance by her management and savings--But when you broke from us, our prospects were brightening: by the magazine, or by poetry we might and should have got 10 guineas a month---You do not now mean to study the Law, but to maintain yourself by your writings and on your promised annuity.---Could you not have done the same with us?

"O selfish, money-loving man! What principle have you not given up?---Last of all, perceiving that your motives vanished at the first ray of examination---Your last resource was to calumniate me.---My indolence you assigned to Lovell as your reason for quitting pantisocracy. Supposing it true, it might indeed be a reason for rejecting me from the system. But how does this affect pantisocracy, that you should reject it. And what has Burnett done that he should not be a worthy associate?. He who leaned on you with all his head and with all his heart; he who gave his all for pantisocracy, and expected that pantisocracy would be at least bread and cheese to him. But neither is the charge a true one---

"Enough! I heard for the first time on Thursday, that you were to set off for Lisbon on Saturday morning. It gives me great pain on many accounts, but principally that those moments which should be sacred to your affections may be disturbed by this long letter. Southey, as far as happiness will be conducive to your virtue, which alone is

final happiness. May you possess it! You have left a large void in my heart. I know no man big enough to fill it. Others I may love equally, and esteem equally, and some perhaps I may admire as much. But never do I expect to meet another man, who will make me unite attachment for his person with reverence for his heart and admiration of his genius. I did not only venerate you for your own virtues, I prized you as a sheet anchor of mine; and even as a poet, my vanity knew no keener gratification than your praise. But these things are passed by like as when a hungry man dreams, and lo! he feasteth, but he awakes and his soul is empty. May God Almighty bless and preserve you! And may you live to know and feel and acknowledge that unless we accustom ourselves to meditate adoringly on Him, the source of all virtue, no virtue can be permanent.

"Be assured that George Burnet still loves you better than he can love any other man, and Sara would have you accept her love and blessing; accept it as the future husband of her best loved sister. Farewell!

S. T. Coleridge"[1]

Thus died a dream, impractical, yea, impossible, but idyllic and beautiful. Reason finally re-asserted itself and Cottle wrote, "Views and times alter, and these richly endowed young men, in after life, were prompt and amongst the first to confess the fallacious schemes of their youth; but at this time, the pleasurable alone, occupied their field of vision, and confidence never stood more unencumbered with doubt."[2]

1-Coleridge "Letters" Vol.I-p.137
2-Cottle "Reminiscences"-p.6

"Edmund Seward", we read, "was the first to perceive the impracticability of the scheme. He observed that there was too great a natural disparity in the individuals that were to compose this community for it long to exist upon the basis they had established. He felt that they were hunting after a shadow, and were staking their all upon a single throw. The opinions of Southey, Coleridge, and himself, differed in some of the most essential points; and until there was a greater uniformity,--a perfect uniformity in their moral being was necessary,--it was evident to him that the equality, the fraternity, and the liberty they wished to create, were altogether ideal. Discussions, he was satisfied, would arise of such a character as must destroy eventually the harmony of their society; nor could it be otherwise, whilst there were some ambitious to govern and others indisposed to submit. He shrewdly suspected, that if it were not the Quixotic frenzy of romance that impelled them, it was a disquieted spirit, a disaffection to society ill-grounded, and that they would too soon, and to their serious disappointment, learn, '*Caelum, non animum mutant, qui trans mare currunt.*'"[1]

PREVIOUS CONVERTS TO THE PLAN

The complete roster of those at one time committed to the plan is unavailable.--That the group numbered about twenty-seven we read in the *Life of Southey* by Waller, and included in addition to the four leaders,-Edith and Sarah Fricker, Edmund Seward, George Dyer, Heath, the apothecary, Dr. Priestly and Favell and LeGrice.[2] The last two were classmates of Coleridge, and are said to be the only converts he, personally, secured. By Christmas of 1794, they anticipated

1-Browne "Life of Robert Southey"-p.40
2-p.182

sailing in the following March, but Fate decreed otherwise.

As we conclude this account of youths' young and evanescent dream, we append a sonnet written by Favell, in which he embodied the hopes and sentiments of the Pantisocrats, "visionary", indeed, yet futile:

"No more my visionary soul shall dwell
on joys that were; no more endure to weigh
The shame and anguish of the evil day,
Wisely forgetful! O'er the ocean's swell,
Sublime of Hope, I seek the cottage dell,
Where Virtue calm with careless steps may stray,
And, dancing to the moonlight roundelay,
The wizard Passion wears a holy spell.
Eyes that have ached with anguish, ye shall weep
Tears of doubt-mingled joy, as those who start
From precipices of distempered sleep,
On which the fierce-eyed fiends their revel keep,
And see the rising sun, and feel it dart
New rays of pleasure trembling on the heart."[1]

1-"Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey"-p.75

The Pantisocracy on the Susquehanna

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