

If they had a liberty to change their natural freedom into a voluntary subjection, there is stronger reason that they may change their voluntary subjection into natural freedom – since it is as lawful for men to alter their wills as their judgments.

Certainly it was a rare felicity that all the men in the world at one instant of time should agree together in one mind to change the natural community of all things into private dominion. For without such an unanimous consent it was not possible for community to be altered. For if but one man in the world had dissented, the alteration had been unjust, because that man by the law of nature had a right to the common use of all things in the world, so that to have given a property of any one thing to any other had been to have robbed him of his right to the common use of all things. And of this judgment the Jesuit Ludovicus Molina seems to be in his book *De Justitia*, where he saith, '*si aliquis de cohabitantibus*, etc. If one of the neighbours will not give his consent to it, the commonwealth should have no authority over him, because *then*⁴⁶ every other man hath no right or authority over him, and therefore can they not give authority to the commonwealth over him'.

If our first parents, or some other of our forefathers did voluntarily bring in property of goods and subjection to governors, and it were in their power either to bring them in or not, or having brought them in to alter their minds and restore them to their first condition of community and liberty, what reason can there be alleged that men that now live should not have the same power? So that if any one man in the world, be he never so mean or base, will but alter his will and say he will resume his natural right to community, and be restored unto his natural liberty, and consequently take what he please and do what he list, who can say that such a man doth more than by right he may? And then it will be lawful for every man, when he please, to dissolve all government, and destroy all property.

Whereas Grotius saith that by the law of nature all things were at first common [Grotius 1, i, x, 7] and yet teacheth that after property was brought in it was against the law of nature to use community [Grotius 1, i, x, 4], he doth thereby not only make the law of nature changeable, which he saith God cannot do, but he also makes the law of nature contrary to itself.

OBSERVATIONS^a
UPON
Aristotles Politiques,
TOUCHING
Forms of Government,
Together with
DIRECTIONS
FOR
OBEDIENCE TO GOVERNOURS
in dangerous and doubtful Times.

SOPHOCLES.

'Αναρχίας γὰρ μείζον οὐκ ἔστιν κακόν;

[Antigone 672: what evils are not caused by anarchy?]

PLATO.

'Ο βασιλεὺς ὡς θεὸς ἐξ ἀνθρώπων.

[the king is as a god amongst men]

THE PREFACE

In every alteration of government there is something new, which none can either divine or judge of till time hath tried it. We read of many several ways of government. But they have all, or most of them, been of particular cities, with none or very small territories at first belonging to them. At this present the government of the Low Countries and of Switzerland are not appropriated either of them to any one city. For they are compounded of several petty principalities which have special and different laws and privileges each of them. Insomuch

^a [Copy-text for the *Observations* is the first edition of 1652 (Wing F921), referred to in the notes as 52A. Where the notes record readings or omissions in this edition, the text is taken from the editions of 1679 (Wing F913 and 914), referred to as 79. A manuscript exists of some of the *Directions* – see below p. 281, n. 7].