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SKETCH of the POLITICAL STATE of AMERICA.

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THAT temptation to fraud and subterfuge, which the currency of a fluctuating medium presented, had a visible effect upon the morals of the community, and tended to destroy that reciprocal confidence, between the individual members which forms the great prop and cement of all society. It is by some supposed, that a state of war is ever productive of vice and immorality, by prejudicing the habits, and corrupting the manners of a people: Perhaps the reasoning is no further true, than by opening a wider field for exertion, and greater opportunity for the display of the powers of the mind, the latent seeds of vice are invigorated, and the prolific soil which covers them being loosened, they spring into view: Habits of dissipation naturally arise in armies, and among large collections of men, which the vigour of military discipline is sometimes unable to controul; and which in a country, whose citizens are also soldiers, are easily introduced among the great mass of the people. This was peculiarly the situation of America; and that indolence and inactivity, succeeded enterprise and exertion, which but ill became a young country, just emerged from a long and expensive war; and under the necessity of obtaining future support by her own industry, and without the aid of a rich parent.

Common danger no longer operating to direct the views, and draw the exertions of her several States to one common centre, a different scene soon opened to our view: The recommendations of Congress having lost the support of that zeal and enthusiasm, which had ever given them the force of law, soon served only to present repeated proofs of its declining power: The clangor of the trumpet, and the din of arms, had deprived most of the States of an opportunity to form those plans of civil policy, which require mature reflection, and a tranquil mind; and languor and indecision became the characteristic marks of their future deliberations; and the influence of those eternal rules of Justice, which do honor to a people, daily became more faint and weak, till the opposite principle, in many instances, prevailed, and to do the most wrong became the greatest object of emulation: For want of that protection and encouragement, which is derived from the fostering hand of a good government, our citizens were obliged to resort to the dominions of our late enemies, to pursue those plans of business, and obtain that support which their own country denied them. The blood of those heroes, who had fallen martyrs to freedom, grew pale to the imagination; and the expressive tear of the widow and the orphan, no longer communicated emotion: The wretch, crippled in the service of his country, was reproached for complaining; and the foreign and domestic creditor, called in vain upon our Gratitude, our Justice and Humanity—America, blush at the recital!—Our *Cæsars* and *Catalines* watched, with an eager eye, an opportunity to seize on the liberties of their country; and fell anarchy, with all her train of concomitant evils, began to stalk with gigantic strides over these confederated republics, and they were alarmed by all those convulsions and agitations, which like the sulphurous fermentations in the bowels of the earth, frequently threaten a dissolution.

Unhappy for America, the too benevolent a presumption upon the disposition of foreign powers, prevented her seeing sufficiently seasonably, the effects of their baneful policy, while too strong a reliance on her own virtue—a supposed competition of interests between the States, and inexperience in the conduct of national affairs, rendered the establishment of necessary regulations, of a general nature, impossible to be effected: While only reasoning upon the subject, and not till an almost total decay of trade—want of employment among her mechanics, and a general poverty of her citizens, had taken place, could she be prevailed upon to adopt those measures, and pursue those principles, on which her future prosperity and happiness evidently rested. AMERICANUS.
(To be continued.)

ANECDOTE of CROMWELL.

WHEN Cromwell was in Scotland with his troops, he went out one morning to see the country with only a few guards: a Scotch soldier, thinking to make himself remarkable by doing some great deed, fired at him from behind a dyke; but having missed his aim, Cromwell's guards were going to seize and kill him. "Let him alone," said Cromwell (no way discomposed,) and darting a look at the fellow—"You lubberly rascal, if any of my soldiers had missed such a mark, I would have tied him up to the halberds."

ON SLAVERY.

EXTRACT FROM "AMERICAN ESSAYS."

EVERY man in the United States, who is tolerably acquainted with the history of the late war, cannot be ignorant that many of the citizens of the Southern States, whose property principally consists in *Slaves*, have greatly and gloriously distinguished themselves during the war, in every act, quality, and principle, that constitutes a true Patriot: Let not the citizens therefore of the northern States presume to censure those deserving patriots, or vainly arrogate to themselves superior virtue, merely because from local, or other adventitious circumstances, they have never owned a slave. And now that those plundered Exiles are returned to their ravaged, and ruined possessions, and are gathering the poor scanty leavings of a cruel, rapacious enemy, can any man, without a blush, express a wish, to see those worthy fellow-citizens stripped of the poor remains of their once affluent fortunes, or even talk of the future surrender of their slender gleanings, without proposing, or rather providing an ample recompense? As I am not individually interested in favor, or against Slavery, farther than I consider it the cause of my fellow-men—so not having maturely considered the subject, I do not conceive myself qualified, at present, to treat upon it so amply as its importance seems to require, and shall therefore only venture a few cursory observations.

In defence of Slavery, it has incontrovertibly the sanction of numerous precedents, as it clearly appears from sacred and profane history, to have been authorized and practised from the earliest ages, and by the greatest nations, of which we have any accurate knowledge: The Egyptians, Phenicians, Jews, Babylonians, Persians, *Greeks*, and *Romans*, are recorded to have had large possessions in slaves: *Athens*, in the zenith of her glory, contained only twenty one thousand citizens, and four hundred thousand slaves.* In the most flourishing periods of *Rome*, there was a still greater proportion of slaves, and some individual citizens of *Rome* were said to have possessed thirty thousand slaves.†

When it is also considered, that the native subjects of Africa, as far as we are at present acquainted with the history of that country, hold their lives and property, in general, at the absolute will and disposal of their Princes, or Chiefs, and therefore may be said to be born slaves. We may rationally conclude, without supposing any natural inferiority, as some have lately pretended, that Negroes can more easily brook a state of Slavery, than any other nation we are at present acquainted with; and when we see, or hear of whole hecatombs sacrificed to the pride, or offered to the manes of some African Despot, and at the same time view the situation of slaves in general in the United States of America, it would seem, by a fair comparison, that the state of those Slaves was greatly meliorated by an exchange of masters: With these, let us at the same time compare the present state of the poor in the populous towns and cities of Europe, where passengers are continually shocked with the sight of thousands of wretches, superannated—diseased—without shelter—without food—without cloaths—without a friend—and without a MASTER, to whom they can look up, or on whom they have a rightful and legal claim for protection and support; thus destitute and forlorn, the situation of the Slave appears comparatively enviable; for as among rude and ignorant nations, age is generally more respected than among the more polished part of mankind, so the old and decrepit slave, on a plantation, seldom wants any comforts, which are in the power of his children (who are rarely separated from him) or his fellow-slaves to bestow. But when I review the actions of that renowned race of Demi-Gods on earth, the almost adored citizens of *Rome*, I cannot but exclaim, with no small degree of indignation, what were they? A race of Tyrants; of Masters: Their boasted FREE Government! What was it? A scene of shocking, disgraceful, degrading tyranny, and oppression: Where even their Mechanics, and Laborers, were denied the common privileges of men, and in many respects less regarded than the brute creation: And where the wealthy citizen† is said to have fed the fishes in his ponds with the flesh of his slaves: When I return from contemplating this horrid scene, and survey the no less pitiable condition of the wretched Slaves at this present day, in the English and Dutch colonies, where I behold a petty tyrant of an Overseer, lording it over his fellow-crea-

NOTES.

* Athenaus, lib. 6, cap. 20.

† Ibid.

† Vedius Pollis—Donat. ad Terentii Phorm. Act 2. Scene 1. See observations concerning the distinction of ranks in society. By JOHN MILLAR, Esq. page 229, in note.

tures, with whips of scorpions, and with rods of iron; glutting by turns his avarice, cruelty and lust; with every other hateful passion, in wanton, vile excess, upon those passive, injured, and defenceless victims, my soul recoils at the word SLAVERY; and while I pity the ignorant savage tyrants of Africa, I cannot forbear execrating the more enlightened, but more barbarous tyrants in America. Yet these men will pretend to own a common Father of all Mankind, and shamelessly deny that we are brethren; and they have the presumption to affect to believe that the great searcher of hearts pays a particular respect to the colour of the Skin. But it must be allowed, that in all societies, subordination and servitude are in some degree necessary—These naturally imply superiority and power: Power therefore cannot be supposed in itself unjust, but only the abuse of that power: A frequent change, or rotation of property, occasioned by the introduction of Commerce into many of the European States, has greatly checked this wanton exercise, or abuse of power; and in many of those States, has by degrees, totally abolished that villanage which existed in the primitive ages. Yet, as in all civilized states, an excess of poverty will be the inevitable lot of some, it may therefore naturally be expected, that the poor in general will experience a certain degree of dependence, and servility. And as it is not in the power of laws effectually to shield every individual from every species of oppression, so it is to be expected that some masters will maltreat their slaves, and some of the rich will oppress the poor; if the state of the poor may be supposed in some respects preferable to that of the African Slaves, yet I am of opinion, that in other respects it may sometimes be less eligible, unless we should allow an equal degree of sensibility to mankind in every state and condition, which opinion I cannot think, either reason, experience, or common observation will warrant: Be that as it may, all Europe evinces, that where there are no Black men, there must be white men to do the menial, and other servile offices requisite in society; or in other words, where there are no black slaves, there must be white slaves. But as slavery, however convenient, or even just, may not appear perfectly compatible with the opinions of Americans, as advocates for certain natural inalienable rights equally appertaining to all mankind, so it may be presumed, there are few owners of slaves, who would not freely make a large discount, in order to exchange that species of property; for such as would be more consonant to their feelings, and principles. But in what manner those slaves when manumitted, are to be supported, is a matter of vast importance to be previously considered, and adjusted; which will I fear be found to be attended with insurmountable difficulties, for however strange it may appear, it is nevertheless true, as has been proved in various instances, that there will be but a small proportion of the whole number of slaves, who will be able to provide for themselves, and therefore unless retaken into the same, or similar service, and state, will become a grievous burthen to the community; which in addition to the present numbers unemployed in America, and the price that justice will require to be paid to the owners for their manumission, will be probably more than we shall speedily be able to bear.

E. C.

MR. FENNO,

AS many persons are not possessed of any just ideas of the origin of those enormities, which have been perpetrated in the East-Indies by English adventures, the following, taken from an European publication, may be satisfactory to some of your readers, as it has been to

E. Z.

The Origin and Progress of the British Power and Oppression in India.

DURING the time of the Mogul government, the Princes of that race, who omitted nothing for the encouragement of commerce in their dominions bestowed very large privileges and immunities on the English East-India company, exempted them from several duties to which their natural born subjects were liable. The company's distrust or passport, secured to them this exemption at all the custom-houses and toll-bars of the country. The company not being able, or not chusing to make use of their privilege to the full extent to which it might be carried, indulged their servants with a qualified use of their passport; under which, and in the name of the company, they carried on a private trade, either by themselves or in society with natives; and thus found a compensation for the scanty allowances made to them by their masters in England. As the country government was at that time in the fulness of its strength, and this immunity existed by a double connivance, it was naturally kept within tolerable limits.