

"One great cause of error, is our making for granted that habits are right because they have been long established."

NOTHING exhibits the infirmities of human nature in a more striking, and at the same time, in a more melancholy view, than that one half of life is spent in lamenting the misfortunes, and correcting the mistakes of the other. The truth of this observation, derives a still greater force, when applied to communities. From whatever cause it happens, it is an evident fact, that legislators in most countries and ages, have been so perplexed by the operation of past laws, that they either forget, or have not leisure to make regulations, that shall have a better influence in future. By this means, they are often compelled, to act, like a man embarrassed with debt: He looks only for immediate relief, and lays the foundation of far greater trouble, than that from which he has been escaping. It may be well to enquire how this happens? The solution of the question is not difficult. It has been the misfortune of most legislators, that they have framed their measures more according to their own caprices and abstract notions of government, than according to the real circumstances of the people, who are to obey those laws. National prejudice is apt to be mistaken for national interest. It is commonly supposed that laws and regulations that are illy adapted to the opinions, the prejudices and the customs of a people, expose their authors to contempt; and increase rather than remove the disorders, for which they are calculated. The rule of government it is said, should never counteract the general opinion of the nation. These maxims, though generally true, should be practised upon with some precaution, and adopted under some restrictions. The secret plots of a cabal and the noisy clamours of a faction, are different things from the voice of a whole people. These should not be comprehended in the idea of popular sentiment. The general opinion of the community may often be proper, at the time it is established; but a change of circumstances happens more easily than a removal of prejudices. This cause constitutes one of the most arduous tasks of legislation.

As there should be a resemblance between national character and national laws, it is apt to be inferred that in loose disorderly times, the laws must wear a similar complexion. But the principle should not be carried too far. It only inculcates the impropriety of too suddenly attempting a public reformation from disorders. The work must be progressive and conciliating; not sudden and overbearing. Laws of too severe an aspect will irritate rather than reform. If these remarks are just and they really appear to me so, it is requisite that the prevailing spirit and manners of a country should be examined before it can be pronounced with certainty, what will be the most salutary and successful methods of governing it. When this knowledge is ascertained, it should be applied not only with prudence, but with honesty. It may be rashness for men to oppose with violence the current opinions of the day; but certainly if they believe them erroneous, it is dishonest not to attempt by suitable means to correct such errors.

It is an unfortunate fact, that men in public office are too apt to find their account in cherishing popular caprice. There lies a suspicion against the understanding or integrity of that administration which cannot carry into effect such measures as the public welfare requires, without fomenting a temper of disaffection, or instigating acts of disobedience. "A free and jealous people should be treated like a coy, capricious girl. If she does not at first consent, her humor must be watched; and if she is courted with a delicate kind of treatment, her obstinacy will in time subside."

In my next, the subject shall be illustrated, by remarks that are more obvious and definite.

From the FEDERAL GAZETTE.

IN the distribution of offices in republican governments the following circumstances should be attended to.

1. Qualification for the office, in knowledge, integrity and industry.
2. An irreproachable private character.
3. Former services to the state or country.
4. Family connection. A wife and children are the best securities a man can give for his good behaviour. If a man will not trust a woman with his happiness, a State should not trust that man with its liberty or property. Besides a single man by a very little labor may always maintain himself.
5. Regard should be had to a man's conduct in his former line of business; a lazy, careless or dishonest lawyer, doctor, merchant or mechanic, will certainly make a bad public officer.
6. A proper degree of respect should be paid to a man who has been unfortunate (without imprudence) in business. Bankruptcy in America, and Europe are different things. Paper money, tender laws, and funding systems have ruined some of the best men in our country; and had these evils continued much longer, they would not have left

a man to rule over us, or to execute an office, who had not been the subject of the bankrupt law, or of the act of insolvency.

7. In the distribution of offices, rulers should look out for the most suitable men to fill them: Modest men will not apply for them, and imprudent men do not deserve them. Perhaps an order from the President of the United States that the personal applicant for an office should never have one, might prevent much trouble, idleness and feurrility. It would moreover save the feelings of the supreme magistrate of the Union, who cannot serve every body, and therefore must often give offence.

TIMOLEON.

#### NATIONAL.

From the PENNSYLVANIA PACKET.

IT appears by the publications of this day, that the first object that has engaged the attention of the Representatives in Congress, is the revenue system, and the collection of duties by impost.

The arrangement of the financial affairs of the Union involves interest of so conspicuous a character, that it naturally claims the pre-eminence; for on the successful issue of this business depends the establishment of public credit, and all the train of benefits, of a public and private nature, that always accompany it.

The intention of this paper is to point out the similarity of situation in which we are placed, to that of the British in the reign of William.

The re-coinage of the silver had occasioned a great scarcity of specie—the opposition made by those who were averse to the revolution generated political feuds, which were attended with a general want of confidence in the government; the public securities, that had been emitted to those who had lent money, rendered services or furnished supplies, had depreciated, inasmuch that the callies, exchequer bills, &c. had fallen from 40 to 60 per cent. discount, and all loans to government were procured on exorbitant premiums. In this alarming crisis, the eloquence and abilities of Mr. Montague (than Chancellor of the Exchequer) saved the nation.

He had a computation made of the exact amount of all the obligations due by government, for which he procured specific funds, to be appropriated by Parliament for the payment of the annual interest; the surplus, if any, to be formed into a fund for the extinction of the capital. This grant, "to supply deficiencies, and raise the public credit," was unanimously entered into, by the Commons. See 8 and 9 William III. chapt. 20, section the first, which was the principal foundation of the public credit of Great Britain, and which is worthy the most serious consideration of every member of the House of Representatives.

See Parliamentary Debates, vol. 3, page 70.

The Tendency of such measures was to restore public credit, and establish it on the most permanent and respectable footing: Since that period, it never has been violated by Great Britain in a single instance. Indeed, the benefits that were derived from its support were the foundation of all her greatness; it occasioned immense sums of money to flow into that favored country, from all quarters, which by its continual increase and abundance so lessened its value, that the ministry were enabled to reduce the interest of the public debts (with the consent of the creditors) from 6 to 5 per cent. in the year 1717; from 5 to 4 per cent. in the year 1727; from 4 to 3 per cent. in the year 1750 to 1757; by which reductions an annual saving was made of £1,266,971 sterling.

But besides this advantage, the plenty of money animated and supported every branch of industry, and rendered the taxes a very easy burthen for the people to bear; the funded debt, from the facility of its transfer, became a representative of all alienable property, and thereby aided and increased the circulating medium.

From the day that such a system is adopted and pursued, we may date the commencement of the rising splendor of this country. Every palliative or plan that may fall short of this system, will only tend to the postponement of this glorious period.

A GRICOLA.

#### HUMANITY.

Extract from the proceedings of the association of Baptist Churches, met at Portsmouth-common, in England, May 14 and 15, 1788.

"AGREED, as an association, thus publicly to express our deepest abhorrence of the Slave Trade, and to recommend it earnestly to the ministers and members of our churches, to unite in promoting to the utmost of their power every scheme, that is or may be proposed, to procure the Abolition of a traffic so unjust, inhuman, and disgraceful; and the continuance of which tends to counteract and destroy the operations of the benevolent principles and spirit of our common christianity.

"Agreed, that the above Resolution be transmitted to Granville Sharp, Esq. Chairman of the Committee formed in London for the abolition of the Slave Trade, together with Five-Guineas as a small donation from our little fund, for the purposes of the said committee, and as a public expression of our hearty approbation of the generous cause in which they are engaged."

## GAZETTE of the UNITED STATES, A NATIONAL PAPER.

To be published at the SEAT of the FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, and to comprise, as fully as possible, the following Objects, viz.

I. EARLY and authentic Accounts of the PROCEEDINGS of CONGRESS—its LAWS, ACTS, and RESOLUTIONS, communicated so as to form an HISTORY of the TRANSACTIONS of the FEDERAL LEGISLATURE, under the NEW CONSTITUTION.

II. IMPARTIAL SKETCHES of the DEBATES of CONGRESS.

III. ESSAYS upon the great subjects of Government in general, and the Federal Legislature in particular; also upon the national and local Rights of the AMERICAN CITIZENS, as founded upon the Federal or State Constitutions; also upon every other Subject, which may appear suitable for newspaper discussion.

IV. A SERIES of PARAGRAPHS, calculated to catch the "LIVING MANNERS AS THEY RISE," and to point the public attention to Objects that have an important reference to domestic, social, and public happiness.

V. The Interests of the United States as connected with their literary Institutions—religious and moral Objects—Improvements in Science, Arts, EDUCATION and HUMANITY—their foreign Treaties, Alliances, Connections, &c.

VI. Every species of INTELLIGENCE, which may affect the commercial, agricultural, manufacturing, or political INTERESTS of the AMERICAN REPUBLIC.

VII. A CHAIN of DOMESTICK OCCURRENCES, collected through the Medium of an extensive Correspondence with the respective States.

VIII. A SERIES of FOREIGN ARTICLES of INTELLIGENCE, so connected, as to form a general Idea of public Affairs in the eastern Hemisphere.

IX. The STATE of the NATIONAL FUNDS; also of the INDIVIDUAL GOVERNMENTS—Courses of Exchange—Present Current, &c.

#### CONDITIONS.

I.

THE GAZETTE of the UNITED STATES shall be printed with the same Letter, and on the same Paper as this publication.

II.

It shall be published every WEDNESDAY and SATURDAY, and delivered, as may be directed, to every Subscriber in the city, on those days.

III.

The price to Subscribers (exclusive of postage) will be THREE DOLLARS pr. annum.

IV.

The first semi-annual payment to be made in three months from the appearance of the first number.

#### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Will be received in all the capital towns upon the Continent; also at City-Coffee-House, and at No. 86, William-Street, on the 1st of May, from which time at No. 9, Maiden-Lane, near the Olive-Market, New-York.

N. B. By a new Arrangement made in the Stages, Subscribers at a distance will be duly furnished with papers.

POSTSCRIPT.—A large impression of every number will be struck off so that Subscribers may always be accommodated with complete sets.

#### To the PUBLICK.

AT this important Crisis, the ideas that fill the mind, are pregnant with Events of the greatest magnitude—to strengthen and complete the UNION of the States—to extend and protect their COMMERCE, under equal Treaties yet to be formed—to explore and arrange the NATIONAL FUNDS—to restore and establish the PUBLIC CREDIT—and ALL under the auspices of an untried System of Government, will require the ENERGIES of the Patriots and Sages of our Country—Hence the propriety of increasing the Mediums of Knowledge and Information.

AMERICA, from this period, begins a new Era in her national existence—"THE WORLD IS ALL BEFORE HER"—The wisdom and folly—the misery and prosperity of the EMPIRES, STATES, and KINGDOMS, which have had their day upon the great Theatre of Time, and are now no more, suggest the most important Mementos—These, with the rapid series of Events, in which our own Country has been so deeply interested, have taught the enlightened Citizens of the United States, that FREEDOM and GOVERNMENT—LIBERTY and LAWS, are inseparable.

This Conviction has led to the adoption of the New Constitution; for however various the Sentiments, respecting the MERITS of this System, all GOOD MEN are agreed in the necessity that exists, of an EFFICIENT FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

A paper, therefore, established upon NATIONAL, INDEPENDENT, and IMPARTIAL PRINCIPLES—which shall take up the promised Articles, upon a COMPETENT PLAN, it is presumed, will be highly interesting, and meet with public approbation and patronage.

The Editor of this Publication is determined to leave no avenue of Information unexplored:—He solicits the assistance of Persons of leisure and abilities—which, united with his own assiduity, he flatters himself will render the Gazette of the United States not unworthy general encouragement—and is, with due respect, the public's humble servant,

JOHN FENNO.

New-York, April 15, 1789.

TWO YOUNG SPRIGHTLY LADS ARE wanted, as APPRENTICES to the Business of Printing.

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