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THE TABLET.—No. XII.

"For when once a man is inured to the service of faction, he will expect to be paid as well for acting for, as for acting against the dictates of his conscience."

It may seem paradoxical to reproach a man for a contentious spirit, while it is acknowledged, that society cannot be held together, without the aid of faction. I will make two remarks, as a solution of this difficulty.—One is, that the chain of providential events is so connected, that opposite evils mitigate or destroy the tendency of each other; while many persons who take an agency in them, may be actuated by the most malignant motives. The other is, that though a certain portion of party spirit is essential, yet it should be subject to some bounds and restrictions; and as there is more probability that it will be carried to excess, than that it will be annihilated, our blaming it as a vice, or describing it as an inconvenience, may be a circumstance that will restrain some of its excesses.

In the natural world, we often denominate phenomena as evil, because their immediate and visible effects are so.—If we could view the whole scene, those parts that are represented as dark and horrid, would be found to contribute to the perfection of the whole. Tempests, tornadoes and earthquakes, are usually ranked among the most formidable natural evils. Such jars and concussions of the elements, however, are calculated to rectify disorders, which, by being let alone, would become more pernicious than their counteracting causes. Those who are within the verge of the disaster suffer an evil, which it was requisite should take place, to render the general blessing more complete.

It is my intention to present to the view of my young friend a character, which may serve as a specimen of one, on whom faction has wrought its full effects.—This will be more likely to make strong impressions, and to put him on his guard against undue exercises of party spirit, than merely to lay the subject before him, in remarks that are general and unapplied. There is a difficulty in accomplishing this task, resulting from the want of a complete original, by which a portrait can be formed. To remedy this defect, I have had an eye to several of the most distinguished party wranglers, that had fallen within my knowledge. By selecting different qualifications from different persons, and combining them into an aggregate, it delineates an image, not materially incomplete. No individual has furnished a sufficient share in the features of this character, to claim the right of naming it. Such a collection of qualities, however, should be personified, and for want of a better name, may be called FACTOTIUS.

It can be of no importance to tell from what parents he descended. His parentage and education were such as entitled him to the notice and esteem of his acquaintance. As his natural abilities rather exceeded mediocrity, and as his acquirements were handsome, his friends hoped that he would have been distinguished in almost any station of life. He had no vices, but what proceeded from a warmth and vivacity of spirit, and which did not indicate a bad heart. There was reason to believe that age and experience would correct the few irregularities he had discovered.

FACTOTIUS entered into public life with a reputation so fair and unblemished, that to say he wore the image of his Maker, would not impudently derogate from the divine attributes. His degeneracy was solely occasioned by the accidental circumstance of his falling into bad hands. As he had taken a residence in a different part of the country from that in which he had been born and educated, he must of course form new connections. A mistake in this respect laid the foundation of his future faults and misfortunes. He unintentionally connected himself with men, who were warmly engaged in party animosities. From a temper naturally unguarded and aspiring, he was inadvertently allured into a chase, the courses of which, his sagacity could neither foresee or elude. Though he had given the most flattering symptoms of a virtuous mind, yet his principles had never been confirmed by experience and habit. There is a critical point of time in the life of a man, from which the character takes its tone. FACTOTIUS was exactly in that period. Had he at that instant formed good connections, he had never become a bad man. His destiny was unfortunate, and he made a fatal pitch. In a very little time, he became a warm and decided partizan in all the disputes of the day. It is incredible how heedlessly he plunged into the depth of party rage and discord. He did not proceed through the regular

gradations from a good to a bad man: his change was almost instantaneous. His happiness at once deserted him, and his ideas of right and wrong suddenly dissipated.—This may happen, without any original ill intention in those who fall a victim to the fury of faction.

Thrown into a situation, where he was often called upon to oppose what is right and encourage what is wrong, FACTOTIUS had some conflict of emotions between former principles, and new temptations.—He was however wrecked with such an incessant ardour of temper and tumult of passions, as to put calm reflection out of his power, and soon became familiarized to the character he had assumed. The love of triumph, the hatred of opposition, and the enchanting hopes of being a distinguished partizan, led him a career that was no less tormenting to himself, than mischievous to society. So soon were all distinctions of virtue and vice broken down and levelled, that his old friends and connections, who did not coincide with his new objects and party views, suffered every thing that could result from violated confidence, or from a vindictive overbearing conduct. His enmities and attachments were all converted to party purposes.

Nor is this all—FACTOTIUS not only lost his rectitude, but his consistency: He became the most capricious, as well as the most abandoned of men.—In some cases, he would applaud and imitate what in others he would avoid and condemn; one while he would reprobate and persecute a character, whom afterwards he would take by the hand and patronize. Actions in no material respect different from what he himself practised, he would ridicule and detest in his antagonists. In short, there is no vice that can be lashed, and no folly that can be laughed at, which he would not represent as praise-worthy and decent in those who adhered to his cause.—On the other hand, the most worthy actions of his opponents were stigmatized with opprobrious epithets.

But all human affairs have their limits—FACTOTIUS could not always run such a race. His enormities were, from the nature of things, restrained to certain bounds: There was no new man for him to deceive, no new absurdity for him to commit.—His fall from the glare and popularity of gilded caprice and iniquity, into a state of infamy and neglect, was so rapid and unprogressive, as to form one of the most extraordinary events of his life. He was instantly forsaken. His name, which for a while was only mentioned with scorn and detestation, was in a few years so generally forgot, as never to be introduced but as a comparison for something extremely odious and destructive. So strong a contrast between his present and former fortune seems to have satisfied all feelings of revenge in his enemies. The natural dictates of humanity strove to silence further reproaches, and to allow his name the privilege of oblivion.

Such a character, and such a situation, a wise man will avoid for his own sake; and a good man, for the sake of other people.

EXTRACT FROM "AMERICAN ESSAYS."

STORY of HONESTUS and CONSTANTIA.

HONESTUS and CONSTANTIA were a happy pair, a virtuous sympathy allied their hearts: the sacred union was cemented, by constant, kind, reciprocal attentions: Constantia was fair and beautiful, as she was good: Her external charms captivated the rich Corruptus.—Honestus had embarked in an undertaking that required a loan—Corruptus instantly stepped forth, and in the pressing moment, offered him his purse—the artless Honestus gratefully accepted, and most cordially embraced the insidious friend:—But here the traitor missed his aim.

Constantia's virtues bore the stamp of Heaven, and kept pollution at an awful distance.—Raging alternately with disappointment and desire, at length Corruptus sullenly withdrew; but still resolved if possible, to gratify his mean revenge, and hellish lust.—The commercial enterprises of Honestus, terminated unfortunately—Corruptus saw and seized the flattering occasion, to screen his name, and hide the blackness of his hellish purpose: He artfully transferred the debt due from Honestus, to his petifogging and pander, one of that execrable tribe of canabals in London, who live on human prey: This faithful, callous tormentor, stripped the poor Honestus bare; consigned him to that vile terrestrial hell a gaol, there left him naked on a bed of thorns.—Who can unfold thy complicated woes, ye gloomy tenants of that dark abode! Who can grasp the wide-spread miseries issuing from that cruel source.—Constantia, large was thy portion of the bitter cup. In a dark corner of a naked hovel, exposed to all the rigors of inclement winter,

now behold, the late happy wife of the once affluent Honestus! Poor, cold, comfortless, sick, and forsaken! horror and speechless agony deformed that fair face, where all the graces once where wont to smile! Two infant daughters hanging on her knees, with piercing cries for bread, and their lost father, probing incessantly her wounded soul; close by her side in dumb distress, her hoary sire, fat looking resignation.—In this deplorable, defenceless state—THE VILLAIN'S PRECIOUS HOUR!—the false Corruptus enters, affects to curse the unfeeling monster, who could disturb the fair Constantia's peace; and with mock sympathy pretends that he was just informed of her distress, and had hastened with all the impatient ardor of a friend to offer her protection and relief: Still the fat dumb, motionless, transfixed! her eager eyes intent upon her children; with well dissembled grief, he next communicates the cruel fate of his dear friend Honestus; and said he intended to go immediately to him: Here Constantia looked up—and to offer him his services—a gleam of hope appeared once more to rouse her torpid soul, and with a feeble ray returned her eye—a faint suffusion of an hectic hue flushed on her lifeless cheek—She seemed to wish to smile: Rank with desire, the gloating lecher saw returning life, and eagerly approached to seize her hand; by chaste antipathy, she took the alarm; shrunk from the hateful and forbidden touch, and shook with horror; then flared at Heaven, and menaced fierce distraction: Her children screeched in wild affright, not knowing what they feared, and trembling clung for safety to their helpless mother.—The pious father felt the unfeeling wound, but now his palsied arms hung nerveless, a cumbersome useless load; he could no more than weep, and look again to Heaven.—Struck, but not softened at the melting scene, with conscious guilt, the sneaking friend retired.

After a long and awful pause, returning reason seemed again to dawn—the storm that rudely shook Constantia's gentle frame, gradually subsided into a pensive, calm, and settled melancholy; when with the softest voice of melting grief, she thus articulated; still persecuted by that cruel spoiler! I thought I had nothing left! Yes, still Virtue thou art mine! for thee am I once more pursued! if stripped of thee, I should be poor indeed! Lovely Virtue! with thee, and with my dear Honestus, how happy should I deem the humblest lot! thus blest, rich in content, I yet could tread some humble vale in sweet security, and blest all bounteous Heaven, unenvying and unenvied; but doomed to live bereft of either; how bitter even is my scanty bread! The keen reflection stung her to her soul, and choked her utterance.

In a few days, death mercifully closed this dreadful scene, and happily released the poor Constantia: This stroke of mercy, so far relieved the injured, wounded, and world sick Honestus, that he was soon removed from his prison to a mad-house, where in SWEET OBLIVION on his bed of straw, HE DREAMS HIMSELF A KING. Revenge could ask no more—There yet remained, to satiate lust, with an incestuous feast;—mark how the monster deliberately prepares the hellish banquet!

Corruptus took the friendless orphans, and with a more than parent's fondness cherished them; till with the unripe fruit, his rank, salacious, appetite was gorged; then with a cloyed indifference, coldly cast them to the common herd; and e'er they reached their teens, they joined the stale, forlorn patrolers of the Strand, who in nocturnal orgies seek relief, and know no other joys.

Such was the fate, of a worthy, virtuous family, all for no crime, who had they not been Britons, might probably have lived, to have been an ornament to their species, and an honor to their country.

Blush Britons! blush! and boast no more, of SUBJECTS SACRED RIGHTS.

O! 'twas an impious theft, to rob decrepit age of its sole prop! to snatch with sacrilegious hand, the only cordial that remained to qualify the bitter dregs of life!—To strip the virtuous, fond, and faithful wife, of husband, hope, protection, and support!—It was A DAMNING DEED, to pluck the harmless infants from the brooding wings of their fond, fostering parents; to blot fair, white-robed innocence, their only boon, with foul, indelible pollution; then throw the violated victims in the street, there to wander, houseless, helpless, hopeless, hungry, diseased, abandoned, naked, lost!

"Quis talia fando
Temperet a lachrymis?"

This eclipses all the glory, and annihilates the most essential benefits of the British Constitution, by thus involving misfortunes with crimes, and giving the wealthy villain absolute power over the unfortunate, and authorizing him, under the