

The RIGHT CONSTITUTION of a COMMON-WEALTH EXAMINED.

(Continued from our last.)

NO controversy will be maintained with our author, "that a free state is more excellent than " simple monarchy, or simple aristocracy." But the question is, What is a free state? It is plain our author means a single assembly of representatives of the people, periodically elected, and vested with the supreme power. This is denied to be a free state. It is at first a government of grandees, and will soon degenerate into a government of a junto or oligarchy of a few of the most eminent of them, or into an absolute monarchy of one of them. The government of these grandees, while they are numerous, as well as when they become few, will be so oppressive to the people, that the people, from hatred or fear of the gentlemen, will set up one of them to rule the rest, and make him absolute. Will it be asked how this can be proved? It is proved, as has been often already said, by the constitution of human nature, by the experience of the world, and the concordant testimony of all history. The passions and desires of the majority of the representatives in assembly being in their nature insatiable and unlimited by any thing within their own breasts, and having nothing to controul them without, will crave more and more indulgence, and, as they have the power, they will have the gratification; and Nedham's government will have no security for continuing free, but the presumption of self-denial and self-government in the members of the assembly, virtues and qualities that never existed in great bodies of men, by the acknowledgment of all the greatest judges of human nature, as well as by his own, when he says, that " temptations " of honour and profit are fails to big for any " human bulk." It would be as reasonable to say, that all government is altogether unnecessary, because it is the duty of all men to deny themselves, and obey the laws of nature, and the laws of God. However clear the duty, we know it will not be performed; and therefore it is our duty to enter into associations, and compel one another to do some of it.

It is agreed that the people are the best keepers of their own liberties, and the only keepers who can be always trusted; and therefore the people's fair, full, and honest consent, to every law, by their representatives, must be made an essential part of the constitution: but it is denied that they are the best keepers, or any keepers at all, of their own liberties, when they hold collectively, or by representation, the executive and judicial power, or the whole and uncontrouled legislative; on the contrary, the experience of all ages has proved, that they instantly give away their liberties into the hands of grandees, or kings, idols of their own creation. The management of the executive and judicial powers together always corrupts them, and throws the whole power into the hands of the most profligate and abandoned among themselves. The honest men are generally nearly equally divided in sentiment, and therefore the vicious and unprincipled, by joining one party, carry the majority; and the vicious and unprincipled always follow the most profligate leader, him who bribes the highest, and sets all decency and shame at defiance: it becomes more profitable, and reputable too, except with a very few, to be a party man than a public spirited one.

It is agreed that " the end of all government " is the good and ease of the people, in a secure " enjoyment of their rights, without oppression;" but it must be remembered, that the rich are people as well as the poor; that they have rights as well as others; that they have as clear and as sacred a right to their large property, as others have to theirs which is smaller; that oppression to them is as possible, and as wicked, as to others; that stealing, robbing, cheating, are the same crimes and sins, whether committed against them or others. The rich, therefore, ought to have an effectual barrier in the constitution against being robbed, plundered, and murdered, as well as the poor; and this can never be without an independent senate. The poor should have a bulwark against the same dangers and oppressions; and this can never be without a house of representatives of the people. But neither the rich nor the poor can be defended by their respective guardians in the constitution, without an executive power, vested with a negative, equal to either, to hold the balance even between them, and decide when they cannot agree. If it is asked, When will this negative be used? it may be answered, Perhaps never: the known existence of it will prevent all occasion to exercise it; but if it has not a being, the want of it will be felt every day. If it has not been used in England for a long time past, it by no means follows that there have not been occasions when it might have been employed with propriety. But one thing is very certain, that there have been many occasions when the constitution would have been overturned since the Revolution, if the negative had not been an indubitable prerogative of the crown.

It is agreed that the people are " most sensible

" of their own burthens; and being put into a " capacity and freedom of acting, are the most " likely to provide remedies for their own relief." For this reason they are an essential branch of the legislature, and have a negative on all laws, an absolute controul over every grant of money, and an unlimited right to accuse their enemies before an impartial tribunal. Thus far they are most sensible of their burthens, and are most likely to provide remedies. But it is affirmed, that they are not only incapable of managing the executive power, but would be instantly corrupted by it in such numbers, as would destroy the integrity of all elections. It is denied that the legislative power can be wholly entrusted in their hands with a moment's safety: the poor and the vicious would instantly rob the rich and virtuous, spread their plunder in debauchery, or confer it upon some idol, who would become the despot; or, to speak more intelligibly, if not more accurately, some of the rich, by debauching the vicious to their corrupt interest, would plunder the virtuous, and become more rich, until they acquired all the property, or a balance of property and of power, in their own hands, and domineered as despots in an oligarchy.

(To be continued.)

An ESSAY on FREE TRADE and FINANCES.

(Continued from No. XXX.)

WHEN single persons or parties counteract the laws, and disturb that peace and order of government which is established by general consent, and in which there is a general persuasion that the security of every individual is concerned, there will be no difficulty in making such examples of punishment, as shall be sufficient to curb those turbulent and factious spirits, more or less of which may be found in every community, and which would become intolerable if not kept under a rigorous restraint. In all cases of this sort, the righteous severities of government will be approved, supported, and even applauded by the general voice. Yea, if we were to suppose that the general opinion was wrong in any particular matter of importance, yet it is plain, that vicious opinion could not be controuled by force; it must continue till the ill effects of it shall produce a general conviction of its error, or till the people can be convinced by reason and argument of the danger of such an opinion, before the ill consequences are actually felt, in both which cases the people will turn about fast enough of their own accord, and the error will be corrected most effectually, and with ease, and without any danger of disturbing the public tranquility. Opinions indeed of a dangerous, hurtful nature, may spread among the people, and when they become general, are to be considered as great public calamities, but admit of no remedy but that which they carry with them, and which will prove effectual in the end, viz. their own evil tendency, and therefore must be let alone, like inundations, which however calamitous, whatever waste and destruction they make, cannot be controuled, any attempt to stop their force, increases their violence and mischief; they do least hurt when they are unmolested, and are suffered to drain themselves off in their own natural channels: In short, there is no forcing every body, and therefore I reject, with abhorrence, every idea of governing a country by a standing army, or any other engines of force. I consider every plan of this kind as a departure from the true principles of government, as destructive in its consequences, as absurd, and ineffectual to its own ends; for such a government, whenever it has been tried, instead of promoting the peace, security and happiness of the state, has generally been found to have operated by way of tyranny and oppression.

It appears from all this, that the true art of government lies in good and full information of the facts to which its ordinances are to be accommodated, and in wisdom in adopting such institutions, laws and plans of operation, as shall best suit the state and true interest of the people, and acting openly, fairly, and candidly with them. You may as well attempt, by finesse, to cheat people into holiness and heaven, as into their real political interests. There are people scattered over the whole nation, who understand the great interests of the community and the wisdom of public measures, and are as firmly attached to them as those who sit in the seat of government, and who are always dissatisfied; and their confidence in the public councils is lessened, when they observe public measures are adopted, which they do not see the use of, and the ends for which they are calculated, and of course little mystery and few secrets are necessary in government. Let the administration be such as will bear examining, and the more it is examined the better it will appear.

In such a mode of administration as this, if burthens that are really heavy are necessary for the public safety, they will be cheerfully taken up, and patiently borne by the people without endangering the public tranquility.

(To be continued.)

" Conversing with your sprightly boys,
Your eyes have spoke a mother's joys!
With what delight I've heard you quote,
Their sayings in imperfect note!
I grant in body and in mind,
Nature appears profusely kind;
Trust not to that; act you your part,
Imprint just morals in their heart:
Impartially their talents scan,
'Tis EDUCATION FORMS THE MAN."

GAY.

EDUCATION is universally acknowledged to be a subject of the greatest importance to society.—The fate of individuals, and of States is inseparably connected with those institutions, which have special reference to this object.—When the public mind is so impressed with this idea, that wise, and salutary establishments are formed to diffuse the rays of knowledge and virtue among all classes of citizens, Hope can scarcely soar too high in its anticipations—the succeeding generation will be composed of kind parents, good neighbours and peaceable industrious citizens.

Education creates almost as great a difference between man and man, as there is between rational and irrational beings.—This is an observation that every person makes, who contemplates characters with any degree of attention.—Riches give importance, but never inspire respect—and may we not suppose the time will come, when their only intrinsic advantage will be thought to consist in affording more competent means for the acquisition of science.

The author of my motto has beautifully sketched the outlines of that pleasing, parental partiality, which fancies it sees the budlings of genius, and the prefaces of wisdom in the infantine prattle of its offspring—he however cautions against trusting to early appearances—it is true that nature must sow the seed, but culture only, can bring it to perfection.

" 'Tis education forms the man"—and the patriot too.—It is necessary in order to keep up a spirit of freedom and love to their country, that early principles of public virtue and patriotism should be imbibed by the rising generation.—These constituted part of the education which the youth of some of the ancient republics received; and though we would by no means quote them as a general example for the enlightened citizens of the American nation, yet in this particular they are certainly worthy of imitation. I cannot conclude this number so well in any other manner, as in the words of His Excellency the Vice-President of the United States in the third volume of his Defence of the Constitutions of the United States—he says,

" The instruction of the people, in every kind " of knowledge that can be of use to them in the " practice of their moral duties, as men, citizens, " and Christians, and of their political and civil " duties, as members of society and freemen, " ought to be the care of the public, and of all " who have any share in the conduct of its affairs, " in a manner that never yet has been practised, " in any age or nation. The education here intended is not merely that of the children of the " rich and noble, but of every rank and class of " people, down to the lowest and the poorest. " It is not too much to say, that schools for the " education of all should be placed at convenient " distances, and maintained at the public expence. " The revenues of the state would be applied infinitely better, more charitably, wisely, usefully, and therefore politically, in this way, than even in maintaining the poor. This would be the best way of preventing the existence of the poor. If nations should ever be wise, instead of erecting thousands of useless offices, or engaging in unmeaning wars, they will make a fundamental maxim of this, that no human being shall grow up in ignorance. In proportion as this is done, tyranny will disappear, kings, and nobles will be made to feel their equitable equality with commoners, and commoners will see their interest and duty to respect the guardians of the laws; for guardians they must have as long as human nature endures. There is no room to doubt that the schools, academies, and universities, the stage, the press, the bar, pulpit, and parliament, might all be improved to better purpose than they have been in any country for this great purpose. The emanations of error, folly, and vice, which proceed from all these sources, might be lessened, and those of wisdom, virtue, and truth, might be increased; more of decency and dignity might be added to the human character in high and low life; manners would assist the laws, and the laws reform manners; and imposture, superstition, knavery, and tyranny, be made ashamed to show their heads before the wisdom and integrity, decency and delicacy, of a venerable public opinion."

A SCRAP.

VICIOUS habits are so great a stain to human nature, and so odious in themselves, that every person actuated by right reason, would avoid them, though he was sure they would always be concealed both from God and man, and had no future punishment entailed upon them.