

The RIGHT CONSTITUTION of a COMMON-WEALTH EXAMINED,

(IN CONTINUATION.)

LET us now consider what would have been the fate of Æmilius, if Rome had been governed at this time by Nedham's succession of the people's representatives, unchecked by a senate. It is plain he must have given into the common practice of flattering, caressing, soothing, bribing, and cajoling the people, or never have been consul, never commanded armies, never triumphed. An example more destructive of our author's system can scarcely be found, and yet he has the inadvertence at least to adduce it in support of his Right Constitution of a Commonwealth. It has been necessary to quote these anecdotes at some length, that we may not be deceived by a specious show, which is destitute of substance, truth, and fact, to support it.

But how come all these examples to be patri- cians and senators, and not one instance to be found of a plebeian commander who did not make a different use of his power?

There is a strange confusion or perversion in what follows: "Rome never thrived until it was settled in a freedom of the people." Rome never was settled in a freedom of the people; meaning in a free state, according to our author's definition of it, a succession of the supreme authority in the people's representatives. Such an idea never existed in the Roman commonwealth, not even when or before the people made Cæsar perpetual dictator. Rome never greatly prospered until the people obtained a final mixture of authority, a slight check upon the senate, by their tribunes. This therefore, is proof in favor of the mixture, and against the system of our author.

"Freedom was best preserved, and interest best advanced, when all places of honor and trust were exposed to men of merit, without distinction." True, but this never happened till the mixture took place.

"This happiness could never be obtained, until the people were inflated in a capacity of preferring whom they thought worthy, by a freedom of electing men successively into their supreme offices and assemblies." What is meant here by supreme offices? There were none in Rome but the dictators, and they were appointed by the senate, at least until Marius annihilated the senate, by making the tribes omnipotent. Consuls could not be called supreme officers in any sense. What is meant by supreme assemblies? There were none but the senate. The Roman people never had the power of electing a representative assembly.—"So long as this custom continued, and merit took place, the people made shift to keep and increase their liberties." This custom never took place, and, strictly speaking, the Roman people never enjoyed liberty. The senate was sovereign till the people set up a perpetual dictator.

"When this custom lay neglected, and the stream of preferment began to run along with the favor and pleasure of particular powerful men, then vice and compliance making way for advancement, the people could keep their liberties no longer; but both their liberties and themselves were made the price of every man's ambition and luxury." But when was this? Precisely when the people began, and in proportion as they approached to, an equality of power with the senate, and to that state of things which our author contends for; so that the whole force of his reasoning and examples, when they come to be analyzed, conclude against him.

The eighth reason, why the people in their assemblies are the best keepers of their liberty, is, "because it is they only that are concerned in the point of liberty."—It is agreed that the people in their assemblies, tempered by another coequal assembly, and an executive coequal with either, are the best keepers of their liberties. But it is denied that in one assembly, collective or representative, they are the best keepers: it may be reasonably questioned, whether they are not the worst; because they are as sure to throw away their liberties, as a monarch or a senate untempered are to take them; with this additional evil, that they throw away their morals at the same time; whereas monarchs and senates sometimes by severity preserve them in some degree. In a simple democracy, the first citizen, and the better sort of citizens, are part of the people, and are equally "concerned" with any others "in the point of liberty." But is it clear that in other forms of government "the main interest and concernment, both of kings and grandees, lies either in keeping the people in utter ignorance of what liberty is, or else in allowing and pleasing them only with the name and shadow of liberty instead of the substance?" It is very true that knowledge is very apt to make people uneasy under an arbitrary and oppressive government: but a simple monarch or a sovereign senate, which is not arbitrary and oppressive tho' absolute, if such cases can exist, would be interested to promote the knowledge of the nation. It must, however, be admitted, that simple governments

will rarely if ever favor the dispersion of knowledge among the middle and lower ranks of people. But this is equally true of simple democracy: the people themselves, if uncontrolled, will never long tolerate a freedom of inquiry, debate, or writing; their idols must not be reflected on, nor their schemes and actions scanned, upon pain of popular vengeance, which is not less terrible than that of despots or sovereign senators.

An ESSAY on FREE TRADE and FINANCES.

Written by a citizen of Philadelphia in 1783.

(Continued from No. XL.)

TO escape the ruinous effects of this mode of supply, I think every exertion should be made to obtain our supplies at home; it is certainly very plain our country is not exhausted, it is full of every kind of supply which we need, and nothing further can be necessary, than to find those avenues from the sources of wealth in the hands of individuals, which lead into the public treasury, those ways and proportions that are most just, most equal, and most easy to the people. This is the first great art of finance, that of economy in expenditures, is the next. Any body may receive money and pay it out; borrow money and draw bills; but to raise and manage the internal revenue, so as to make the wealth of the country balance the public expenditures, is not so easy a task, but yet I think not so hard as to be impracticable; unless this can be done, the greatest conceivable abilities must labor in vain, for it is naturally impossible that any estate which can not pay its expenditures, should continue long without embarrassment and diminution, the load of debt must continually increase, and the interest will make a continual addition to that debt, and render the estate more and more unable every year to clear itself; but if the estate can pay its expenditures, it is the height of madness not to do it. If revenues can be spared sufficient to discharge the interest of the debt, so as to stop its increase, the estate may be saved, and a future increase of revenue may in time wipe off the principal; but no hope is left, if interest upon interest may continue to accumulate. And as the interest of every individual is inseparably connected with the public credit or state of the finances, it follows that this affair becomes a matter of the utmost concern and very important moment to every person in the community, and therefore ought to be attended to as a matter of the highest national concern; and no burden ought to be accounted too heavy, which is sufficient to remedy so great a mischief. It may be objected to all this, that the duties I propose are so extremely high, that first, *They will hurt our trade*: And second, *Can have no chance of obtaining a general consent*. To the first I answer—As far as this tax tends to lessen the importation of hurtful luxuries and useless consumptions, it is the very object I have in view; and it is so very light on all other articles, that the burden will be almost insensible. But as to the second objection—it is in vain to trifle with a matter of such weight and importance, or weary our people with small plans and remedies utterly inadequate to the purpose. In weighty matters, weak half assured attempts will appear to every one to be labor lost, and a ridiculous disproportion of the means to the end; it is better in itself, as well as more likely to succeed with the people, to take strong hold, and, with a bold firm assurance, propose something, which when done, will be an adequate and effectual remedy.—Our national debt, including the supplies for the present year, I am told, by the Financier's estimate delivered to Congress, amounts to about thirty-five millions of dollars, the annual interest of which will be some what above two millions of dollars, which, I think, may be raised by the tax I propose; tho' it is impossible to tell with much precision, what the proceeds of a tax will be which has not been tried, it is very plain that the proceeds will be large, and so calculated as to be almost wholly a clear saving, not to say a benefit to the country; and if there should be deficiencies, a small additional tax may be laid in the usual way to supply them. Our annual expenditures, on the peace establishment, may, I think, be reduced to a quarter or third of a million dollars, and perhaps, if our national debt was liquidated as it ought to be, a great saving might be made both of principal and interest; but the detail of these matters is in every one's power who has leisure and proper documents to make the calculations.—Without descending to minutiae, I only mean to examine the great principles of resource and mode of supply which is within our power, and give my reasons as clear as I can for adopting a practical trial. Such a practice would doubtless discover many things which no foresight can reach, and experience only can elucidate. It is an untrodden path which I recommend, and tho' it can not be perfectly known yet it seems to have such an appearance of advantage as deserves a trial. The expense and difficulty of collection will be no greater on the high tax I propose, than it would be on a trifling one, which would produce less than a

tenth part of the supply which this would furnish, and therefore, if it should be judged prudent to make the trial, I think it most advisable to take it up on such a large scale as will make it sufficiently productive, to become an object worthy of strong effort and persevering diligence, in order to give it full effect.

(To be continued.)

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES.

Began and held at the City of New-York, on Wednesday the Fourth of March, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Eighty-Nine.

An ACT for establishing the SALARIES of the executive OFFICERS of GOVERNMENT with their ASSISTANTS and CLERKS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That there shall be allowed to the officers hereafter mentioned, the following annual salaries, payable quarterly at the Treasury of the United States: To the Secretary of the Treasury three thousand five hundred dollars; to the Secretary in the department of State, three thousand five hundred dollars; to the Secretary in the department of war, three thousand dollars; to the Comptroller of the Treasury, two thousand dollars; to the Auditor, fifteen hundred dollars; to the Treasurer, two thousand dollars; to the Register, twelve hundred and fifty dollars; to the Governor of the Western Territory, for his salary as such, and for discharging the duties of Superintendent of Indian affairs in the northern department, two thousand dollars; to the three Judges of the Western Territory, each eight hundred dollars; to the Assistant of the Secretary of the Treasury, fifteen hundred dollars; to the Chief Clerk in the department of State, eight hundred dollars; to the Chief Clerk in the department of war, six hundred dollars; To the Secretary of the Western Territory seven hundred and fifty dollars; to the principal Clerk of the Comptroller, eight hundred dollars; to the principal Clerk of the Auditor, six hundred dollars; to the principal Clerk of the Treasurer six hundred dollars.

And be it further enacted, That the heads of the three departments first above mentioned, shall appoint such Clerks therein respectively as they shall find necessary, and the salary of said Clerks respectively shall not exceed the rate of five hundred dollars per annum.

FREDERICK AUGUSTUS MÜHLENBERG,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

JOHN ADAMS, Vice-President of the United States,

and President of the Senate.

APPROVED, SEPTEMBER the 11th, 1789.

GEORGE WASHINGTON, President of the United States.

THE NATIONAL MONITOR.—No. XX.

Be steady patriots to your public trust,

A fickle Legislature is unjust;

Perverse, capricious, positive and vain,

Should seraphs govern, grumblers would complain.

MANKIND generally acknowledge the necessity, and importance of government; but few will recognize their individual duty to support and defend the institution. As it originated in necessity, so its existence appears to be perpetuated more from that cause than from the reason and fitness of things. To what else can be imputed the uniform conduct of the civilized world with respect to this momentous concern. Men grow disgusted with old establishments, and clamor for new ones: They anticipate every blessing from change: But under the wisest institutions, the voice of discontent and sedition is heard. They give their suffrages for their best men, and immediately find fault with the work of their own hands—the agents of their own choice. This is not an exaggeration; experience has testified to its truth. To what shall we attribute this propensity, which militates so essentially with human happiness? It is owing to the versatility of human nature; a quality which requires all the wisdom, fortitude and address which can result from the best principles, and best experience, to counteract its baneful effects.

While the New Constitution was in its ratifying progress, this querulous temper discovered itself; for altho' the whole continent was groaning under the pressure of those evils which flowed from the inadequacy and weakness of the old confederation: And tho' the universal voice called for an alteration, yet as soon as the deliberations of that enlightened body of men, the chosen, confidential, tried patriots of America who formed the Continental Convention, were known, and the Constitution they had formed, was proposed to the people, the product of their labors was assailed, misconstrued and ridiculed; their motives were impeached; their characters traduced; their abilities depreciated; and their whole conduct in convention vitified. Which is the character among the whole, that escaped the venom of slander, and the poisoned arrows of defamation? While mankind continue what they are, a series of similar conduct may be expected.—There are many persons in every society who hold opinions hostile to all good government; there are others who are of so capricious and uneasy a disposition, that it seems as if they had sworn eternal enmity to candor and peace: There are others, whose evil dispositions delight in disorder and confusion. These classes, united to a numerous body of disappointed expectants, form the phalanx of opposition to "the Powers that be." From such beings, the wisest and best institution that ever existed, will meet with assaults;—and from attacking the form of the Government, the transfer of their evil offices is to the administration of it. It will therefore be of great consequence to the peace, freedom and security of the Union, that particular attention should be paid to the sources, from whence originate the insinuations, the slanders and clamors against public characters. This subject shall be pursued in a future number.

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