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THE TABLET.—No. LXXI.

"Suspicion, for the most part, proceeds from some self-defect."

To be of a suspicious temper is not always incompatible with the character of a wife or a virtuous man. Such a temper, however, more generally characterizes persons who are weak or vicious. A man of knowledge and integrity may have perceived, in his intercourse with society, so many instances of deception, and experienced such a variety of misfortunes, that all human affairs, wear in his view, some appearance of uncertainty. When, from such causes a man guards himself against the ignorance or dishonesty of those with whom he is connected, it may be denominated circumspection rather than jealousy. His distrust is not without some foundation in the general reason of things. It is the effect of reflection and experience, rather than passion and prejudice. It operates uniformly, and does not unreasonably discriminate particular characters as objects of suspicion. Though this kind of caution often has the complexion of jealousy, when exercised towards individuals, yet it is not meant to indicate specially any bad opinion of them. Nothing more can be inferred from such habitual precaution in any person, than that he is sensible there are vices and imperfections more or less incidental to all men; and that the best way to escape the snares of the wicked is to carry a vigilant eye over the whole of mankind.

The suspicion of low, uninformed minds, is of quite another nature. It selects individuals as objects of prey without any reason, and condemns them without mercy or trial. It so often imagines evil without any proof as to render a person wretched in himself and dangerous to his friends. When suspicion operates in this manner, it denotes weakness or vice. Sometimes people suspect others of bad intentions from an ignorance of the motives and restraints which their character and situation are calculated to impose. And sometimes men feel such depravity of heart, as to imagine that others are too much like themselves not to practise the mischiefs, which are in their power.

Such low minds are most apt to harbor suspicions against persons in public office. It is not remarkable that a man, utterly unacquainted with the inducements that a responsible character feels to discharge his duty, should suspect that he will be regardless of the interest or honor of his constituents. Nor must we be surprised, that vicious, unprincipled men excite clamors among the people against their rulers; for a dishonest man acts consistently in apprehending from others the evils which he would commit, were he in their situation. To indicate mistrust over those we employ is apt to make them lose their sentiments of honor, and to weaken the effect of responsibility. For when a man knows he is suspected, he becomes familiarized to reproach, and the sting of it is taken away. It is highly expedient to impose checks on persons employed in public business; but an oversight that looks like jealousy, will be more likely to make good men bad, than to reform those who were bad before.

FROM THE AMERICAN MERCURY.

THE OBSERVER.—No. VIII.

On the means of preserving Public Liberty.

WHEN a system of national freedom hath been established by great exertions, it becomes an interesting enquiry how it shall be best preserved. The speculative Philosopher, and the practical Statesman have united their endeavors to answer this question.

A natural thirst for power in the human mind, with the emoluments springing from authority, tend to a general encroachment on the rights of human nature.—Even patriots and honest men have their weakness, passions, and appetites, and in little instances may be tyrants, while they wish for general freedom.

Many systems have been formed which in theory appear almost perfect—many checks have been devised; still there are, and we must expect there will be, abuses of power, until the nature of man is delivered from its present imperfections. In every state, some person or persons must be representatives of the public, in whose hands the power of the whole is lodged, for general protection; and without this investiture of public authority, to restrain and punish, the wicked will be a scourge to all within their reach; and it is also possible, that the very persons who are clothed with public power, may become cruel and unjust. Without power in some national head, anarchy will be the state of man, every one will retaliate and abuse as his passions dictate, which is the worst of

tyrannies: With power the rulers of a nation may do injury, for man is frail—great men may misjudge—good men may fall.

To give any man unlimited power, is a greater temptation than ought to be placed before a frail being: at the same time, placing too many checks on rulers is in effect dismembering the body, and destroys its energy of action and of defence, both against foreign enemies and its own evil subjects. So far as we may judge from American experience, a nation of freemen, in modelling their government, are more apt to err in overlimiting, than in giving too great scope to the power of rulers.—In both cases the consequence is nearly the same; for when the citizens find their constitutional government cannot protect and do justice, they will throw themselves into the hands of some bold usurper, who promises much to them, but intends only for himself; and in this way very many free states have lost their liberties. The forming a constitution of government is a serious matter—the spirit of deliberation and concession, with which it hath been taken up by the citizens at large, and thus far carried into effect, is a new event in the history of mankind. The present constitution of the United States, appears to embrace the essential principles both of freedom and energy in national operations; still very little dependence is to be made on this Constitution, as a future safeguard to the American liberties.—I would by no means undervalue those systematic productions, which we call the Constitutions of the several States, and of the Union—they express our present ideas of the rulers' power and duty, and the subjects' rights—they are a written basis on which national habits will be formed, and in this way will cherish sentiments of freedom and retard the rise of oppression—on these your children will look as maxims of their fathers' wisdom; but if they have no other protection, the lust of those who have opportunity will undermine their privileges. Every generation must assert its own liberties; and for this the collective body of the people must be informed. A general diffusion of science, in every class of people, is the true cause of that new series of events which have taken place in the United States. In every other country, a great proportion of the people are unacquainted with letters.—In several great and civilized kingdoms of Europe, it is but a comparative few who can read and write. The vast number of well meaning and ignorant people, become instruments of superior policy, to oppose every effort of national freedom; but in America there is no order or great number of people, who can be made subservient to such ungenerous purposes.—The late war, was a war of the people—general information convinced them of its justice and that their all was endangered; hence sprang their unanimity, exertion and patience; and a traitor could in no part of the country find either asylum or aid.

The formation of our present government, by the deliberation of three million of citizens, is the highest evidence of, and the greatest effect we have yet seen from general information.

The same causes which have given you victory, and a constitution, combining the rights of man with the powers of government, will certainly be sufficient to preserve national liberty, and make your children as free as their fathers. A few enlightened citizens may be dangerous—let all be enlightened, and oppression must cease, by the influence of a ruling majority—for it can never be their interest to indulge a system incompatible with the rights of freemen. Those institutions are the most effectual guards to public liberty, which diffuse the rudiments of literature among a people.

Let the most perfect constitution finite wisdom can devise, be adopted; if succeeding generations become ignorant—if a large part of the people are destitute of letters, their precious patrimony will be cheated from their hands—not perhaps, by violence, but by a course of artful measures, against which ignorant men have no defence.

A man declaiming for liberty, and suffering his children to grow up without education, acts most absurdly, and prepares them to be licentious, but not free.

The road to preferment is open to all, and the common citizen may see his children possess the first offices of State, if endowed with genius, honesty, and science—having such incentives to fidelity, the remiss parent is unpardonable. As the best preservative of national liberty, the public ought to patronize institutions to instruct the children of poor people—for, give them knowledge, and they will never be the instruments of injuring mankind. A few incautious expressions in our Constitution, or a few salaries of office too great for the contracted feelings of those who

do not know the worth of merit and integrity, can never injure the United States, while literature is generally diffused, and the plain citizen and planter reads and judges for himself.

The American Legislature could not do an act more favorable to general humanity, liberty and virtue, than to endow the Universities, rising in almost every State, with such funds in the unlocated territory, as would enable them to furnish the best means of instruction, and at an easy rate, to the sons of those who have moderate wealth. Diffuse science through all grades of people, and it will forever vindicate your rights, which are now well understood, and firmly fixed. Science will do more than this—it will break the chains, and unbolt the prison doors of despotism. At the present moment, France is an instance of its influence: The wealthy subjects of that country are become enlightened, and thus determined to be free—O France! I love thee, and thy sons. When my nightly supplication forgets to ask a blessing on thy great exertions, and on thy councils, I shall lose my claim of being a christian.—August Empire! Many of thy sons are among the learned: How often have I drank improvement and pleasure from their pens; but I fear, I greatly fear, that the vast mass of thy subjects are not sufficiently informed in the nature of freedom, to receive from Heaven and preserve so rich a gift.

FROM THE MASSACHUSETTS CENTINEL.

OF FRANCE.

TRANSLATED FOR THE CENTINEL.

L'ORIENT, Oct. 15.

Extract of a letter from Mons. de Ville le Roux, to his Constituents at l'Orient, dated Paris, Oct. 5.

I ARRIVED at Versailles, having passed without hindrance through the body of women—This day I found the Assembly deliberating on the King's answer respecting the Bill of Rights, and the Constitution decreed by us.

I shall now only inform you, that when the Duke de Liancourt saw it, and the debates that followed, he assured Mr. Kervegant, that he had seen the King previous to his coming to the Assembly, and that his Majesty had said, That "the National Assembly shall be satisfied with him that day. I have accepted, purely and simply, the articles of the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. We understand one another. They wish for what is right, and so do I. And I now leave you to go to the chace."

From the immense number of people that appeared, I apprehended, that the body of women were on their way: In approaching the avenue, I found the Life-Guards on horse-back, with sword in hand.—I trembled for them, as they had aggravated the hunger of the people, by giving a splendid repast some days before, where a profusion of every kind of food was seen.—I thought force was not a proper remedy to oppose to a body of women, that were to be calmed by more gentle means: That the barrier, however strong, would not shut them from the avenue of the throne—for the event proved that it was ineffectual. They entered into the King's apartments, where he received them with affability, and promised he would issue new orders for a fresh supply of provisions.

While all the preceding circumstances were taking place, we held the session at the Assembly. The deputies of the Parisian women, having a speaker at their head, demanded the entrance of the hall—they were accordingly introduced at the bar, and told their complaints. The debates then turned upon devising a method for the better providing provisions for Paris—every one was proposing his ideas—when a multitude of women presented themselves at the door, and were distributed by classes into the different seats, and by degrees introduced themselves into the galleries.—The deliberations continued notwithstanding, a great part of which were applauded.—When the decrees passed, a number of women spread themselves over the Hall, and occupied the Clergymen's seats that they had left vacant.

We were upon the point of retiring, when the President announced to us that the King had purely and simply accepted the Bill of Rights, and the articles of the Constitution. We were then once more informed that the King's conscience had been surprised. I left the room—the women and a number of deputies still remaining.

Several reports having circulated that the King was preparing to depart for Paris, and the National Assembly not having received any official accounts thereof, they resolved, that the person of the King and they were inseparable. A deputation of 36 were named to inform the King of it. Two of us were dispatched to the King to know whether his determination was to leave Versailles