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THE TABLET.

No. XCVII.

"Deceit discovers a little mind, which stops at temporary expedients without rising to comprehensive views of conduct."

WE often meet with persons who wish to pass themselves off upon the world, for something different from what they really are. Perhaps there are few people who, in all situations, are contented to be viewed in their true colors. Deception, however, will sooner or later betray itself; and no mask can be specious enough to prevent the characters of men from being ultimately tried by a genuine standard. Low cunning may tempt men into artifices that produce some temporary advantages; but such people soon finish their career of fame and influence. A man of mere cunning takes but a narrow view of the causes that lead to real prosperity. He imagines he has an acute discernment, and commences his plans of intrigue with alluring hopes of success. But fortunately for mankind, it generally happens, that before he has done himself much good, or others much hurt, he is entangled in a web of his own weaving.

There is a strange propensity in men to occupy a respectable station in life, in some easier way, than by deserving it. To rise gradually into distinction by regular steps of merit, does not comport with the ardor and impatience of an enterprising spirit. It is presumed by ambitious men that a more expeditious mode may be adopted, and that they may accelerate their object by putting on fallacious appearances. His head must be weak, who does not foresee the effect of such disguise; and his heart must be perverse, who does not detest the practice of it. When a person, on his first setting out in life, assumes a false character, it is a proof, either, that he has not confidence in his real one, or that he has a native predilection for duplicity. Candor and sincerity are the only safe ground, on which any one can tread, who means to preserve the respect and good will of his fellowmen. He may, to be sure captivate attention, and even gain some confidence and esteem by an artificial glare of conduct. But I appeal to the experience of every person who ever tried to promote his views, by tricks of cunning, and language of insincerity, whether he did not find that the end of all his efforts was disquietude and disgrace. No prudent man would venture, and no honorable man would wish a reputation so degrading and precarious.

It is impossible in the nature of things, that there should not be a want of consistency in the actions of a man, who commences his course in falshood. There are perplexities unavoidably attending every departure from truth, which will expose men, in spite of the most artful coloring, with which transactions of deceit can be glossed. The moment a man relinquishes truth and fair-dealing as a guide, he has nothing certain to direct his steps. For, when he is reduced to a shift, that requires a disavowal of his real motives, he must soon fall into contradictions. There is not dexterity enough in the faculties of the most sagacious man, to pursue a long course of duplicity, undiscovered. It is true some dark, mysterious men retain through life a considerable degree of influence. But it should be remembered these are generally a passive kind of characters, who rather may be said, not to act at all, than to act insincerely. They learn, by concealing their actual defects, a prudent line of demeanor that is a substitute for valuable qualifications. This negative reputation can be no desirable object for a man of vigor and enterprize.

Those who are ambitious to make a respectable figure in society, and take an active part in the momentous affairs of the world, should have too much spirit to be satisfied with a negative character, and too much honesty to wear a disguised one. They must not shrink from that scrutiny which exhibits their qualities in their most natural shades. If they will bear the examination of truth and reason, there is no danger but they will ultimately rise into distinguished notice. A man destitute of intrinsic worth, can not know himself too soon; for if he is destined to move in the inferior walks of life, it can be no consolation to him that he had artfully or accidentally reached a conspicuous station, which was beyond the sphere of his merit. I cannot close this number better than by presenting the reader with an extract from an elegant author, whose remarks on this subject are sprightly and pertinent.

"That darkness of character, where we can see no heart—those foldings of art through

"which no native affection is allowed to penetrate, present an object unamiable in every season of life, but particularly odious in youth.— If at an age when the heart is warm, when the emotions are strong, and where nature is expected to shew itself free and open, we can already smile and deceive, what is to be expected, when we shall be longer hackneyed in the ways of men, when interest shall have completed the obduracy of our hearts, and experience shall have improved us in all the arts of guile?"

ADDRESS of the SOCIETY of the CINCINNATI in the State of SOUTH-CAROLINA.

VOTED NOVEMBER 17, 1789.
To GEORGE WASHINGTON, President of the United States.

SIR,
POSSESSED of every feeling that can act on grateful hearts, the Society of the Cincinnati established in the State of South-Carolina, beg leave to congratulate you on the happy occasion which has once again placed you in a situation of rendering general good to their country.

Retired from the busy scenes of life, to reap the rewards of your virtuous acts, and to enjoy the glory you had already obtained, your fellow-citizens received you with exulting happiness; they saw in you the patriot-hero, the friend and saviour of their country; and with hearts filled with gratitude and affection, they invoked the All-wise-Dispenser of human events to render that retirement happy. The period, however, arrived when the abilities of the virtuous patriot were again to be called forth to assume a public character. A general political government was formed, by which the happiness of the country for whose liberty you had fought, was now to be established. To preside at the head of this new government, to establish it with permanency, the people sought, in the Great Washington, the virtues on which they could rely with safety, and from which they might expect to receive every benefit without alloy. They had experienced his abilities, they had experienced his integrity and his inviolable love for his country. Nor did they seek in vain. The same noble spirit which actuated you at the beginning of our late contest with Great-Britain, now operated.—You received and obeyed the summons; and although you should make a sacrifice, yet you nobly determined.—It was the voice of your country, in whose service every inferior consideration of ease and retirement must give place.

As citizens, we congratulate you, Sir, on this additional proof of your country's confidence. As soldiers who partook with you in many of the dangers and hardships which attended the general army under your command, we beg leave to express our warmest attachment to your person, and sincerest wish for your happiness and honor; and that we may, under your rule, supported by your amiable virtues, happily experience and long enjoy the fruits of a government which has for its basis, the GOOD of the PEOPLE of AMERICA. By order of the Society,
(Signed) WILLIAM MOULTRIE, President.

The PRESIDENT'S ANSWER.

To the STATE SOCIETY of the CINCINNATI in South-Carolina. GENTLEMEN,

FROM a conviction that the dispositions of the Society of the Cincinnati established in the State of South-Carolina are peculiarly friendly to me, I cannot receive their congratulations on the occasion which gave birth to their address, without emotions of peculiar satisfaction.

The interest that my fellow-citizens so kindly took in the happiness which they saw me enjoy in my retirement after the war, is rather to be attributed to their great partiality in my favor, than to any singular title I had to their gratitude and affection.

Notwithstanding I was conscious that my abilities had been too highly appreciated: yet I felt, that, whatever they were, my country had a just claim upon me, whenever the exercise of them should be deemed conducive to its welfare. With such feelings, I could not refuse to obey that voice which I had always been accustomed to respect, nor hesitate to forego a resolution which I had formed of passing the remainder of my days in retirement. And so far am I from having reason to repent of the decided measure I took, in the crisis of organizing a new general government, that I ought rather, perhaps, to felicitate myself upon having met the wishes, and experienced the assistance of a patriotic and enlightened people, in my arduous undertaking.

Always satisfied that I should be supported in the administration of my office, by the friends of good government in general, I counted upon the favorable sentiment and conduct of the officers of the late army in particular. Nor has my expectation been deceived. As they were formerly distinguished by their eminent fortitude and patriotism in their military service, during the most trying occasions, so are the same men now, mingled in the mass of citizens, conspicuous for a disinterested love of order, and a jealous attention to the preservation of the rights of mankind. Nor is it conceivable that any members of the community should be more worthy of the enjoyment of liberty, or more zealous to perpetuate its duration, than those who have so nobly and so successfully defended its standard in the new world.

I sincerely thank you, Gentlemen, for your expression of attachment to my person, and wish for my happiness and honor. On my part, I only dare to engage, it shall be my incessant study, that you may happily experience and long enjoy the fruits of a government, which has for its basis the good of the American people. G. WASHINGTON.

CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

THURSDAY, FEB. 25, 1790.

IN Committee of the whole House—The proposition for assuming the State Debts and the amendments proposed thereto by Mr. White, being under consideration.

(CONTINUED.)

Mr. GERRY in a speech of some length, combated the principle on which the motion was founded—it contemplated, he said, the debts in question as the debts of the states, while in fact they were the debts of the United States; for the states had contracted the debts as agents of the union—and it was well known, that a debt contracted by an agent was as binding on, as though it had been done by the principal; it being an established maxim, "qui facit per alium facit per se," there can be no distinction in equity then between a debt contracted by Congress, its quarter-masters, or other purchasing officers, and by a state employed by Congress; the creditors in each case being the creditors of the union. Mr. Gerry said, he had before stated, that the first army, although federal, was raised, supplied and paid by the states, till it was commanded by continental officers—that the states, on the

requisitions of Congress, had made good the depreciation of the pay of the army—had frequently supplied and recruited it, had at the request of Congress, assumed the debts of the union, by taking up certificates of purchases made by federal officers, by paying interest of the federal debt, and by various other modes, and one state (Pennsylvania) if he was not misinformed, had assumed to the amount of five million dollars of the federal debt due to her citizens, and placed this sum on the state funds. As the states then are indebted to their citizens, ought not these in equity to be paid by the United States, for property thus supplied them? When the citizens credited the states, the latter had all the resources of the union; they had the impost, excise, and sole right of direct taxation; for although Congress had the power of taxing states, they could go no farther, and that power could not be exercised from the want of a rule of apportionment required by the confederation, because the states could not form an estimate of their property as required by that compact: It must therefore be evident, as the citizens entrusted the states with supplies for the union, on the credit of certain state resources, and by the late revolution in the system of government, these resources are by the union in part alienated from the states to the federal government, which is the case of the impost; and as Congress are now extending their taxation, to another part, the excise, on which resources the state creditors principally depended, Congress are bound in justice and equity to provide for the payment of these debts contracted, at the request and for the benefit of the United States. They are bona fide debts of the union, and only differ from the federal liquidated debt in the form of the negotiation; perhaps it may be said, that the creditors having considered the states as debtors, have no legal claim against the United States. But should Congress act upon such an unjust and ungenerous principle, would not the state creditors have reason to consider the whole as a state trick or juggler to defraud them of their dues? And would they ever after rely on the faith of Congress? There can be no good reason then for the assertion, that the states can only be creditors, or in other words, that their debts can be only assumed, according to the proportions of the balances that may be due to them respectively on a final liquidation. Mr. Gerry said, the gentleman (Mr. White) had observed, that by adopting the first amendment, we should again open the door for state claims; that if it should remain shut, perhaps some injustice would take place, but if the doors should again be opened, there would be great uneasiness among some of the states. In answer to this Mr. Gerry conceived, that the states considered justice as the basis of their system of policy, and would never be opposed to a measure that would prevent injustice. If however, he was mistaken in this point; if the foundations of the state and federal governments were not laid in justice, he thought their career would be but short; but he had no apprehensions of this kind.

He observed, that Mr. White had said, in case of an assumption, some state creditors may accede to it, and others not; that of the latter number would probably be the citizens of Virginia, in which case she must pay her own creditors, and contribute to the payment of the debts assumed by the union. But where is the difficulty, says Mr. Gerry, in this case? Congress, considering the state creditors of Virginia as creditors of the union, will provide for them as for other federal creditors. And it will make no difference to the creditors, to the state, or to Congress, whether the latter pays the interest to the state, and the state to the creditors, or whether Congress pays it directly to the creditors. This seems too clear to be denied.

The gentleman has said, if the debts are assumed, Congress will fund, but not discharge them; whereas the states will do both. How, says Mr. Gerry, does it appear that Congress will be less disposed than the states, to pay off the public debt? The secretary in his report has an eye to a sinking fund; and there is no doubt of every exertion on the part of the union, to discharge the debt. True it is, the states, with the impost and excise, have made some progress in this business; but deprived of those resources, there will be less prospect of the debts being paid by the states, than by the United States. The debts of the states will now accumulate, as the federal debt did whilst the states had those resources.

The gentleman says, that if all the revenue from impost and excise is thrown into our hands, it will not be adequate, and we must resort to direct taxes, which would meet the disapprobation of all the States. But in answer to this, Mr. Gerry observed, that we have but little experience of the avails of the impost, and none of the excise, and can therefore form no judgment how far they are capable of improvement. One thing we know, that the impost is greatly injured by the State administration of excise, and we also know that the latter is eluded in a great measure in each State; so that under the federal administration of impost and excise, both would probably be much increased.

Mr. Gerry then mentioned the defalcations of excise; that the collection of it was generally supposed in Massachusetts, not to exceed 25 per cent. of what ought to be the amount, and stated the manner in which the payment of it was eluded. It is impossible, therefore, says he, at this time to determine whether those resources are or are not equal to the funds required. But suppose they are not, how does it appear that the States will be uneasy at direct taxation, if it is necessary to support public credit? I consider public credit as the main pillar of the government. If it is well established it will be more valuable than the mines of Peru; for it will command what resources you may want—and those can do no more: it will also command the confidence and attachment of your best citizens, which will be infinitely more valuable—will strengthen your government, and make it immovable. A government founded in justice is so great a blessing as that enlightened citizens, like those of the United States, will not only contribute their property, but will risk every thing in support of such a government. Mines may enable a government to procure an army of mercenaries but the power of these is not to be compared with that of good citizens, acting from principle. It cannot therefore be doubted, that if direct taxes are necessary to pay the just debts of the Union, and to support its credit, the citizens will submit to it.

If we refer to the propositions of the States for amending the constitution, there is nothing in them that justifies the contrary supposition; but I shall be always opposed to direct taxes till it shall appear that they are indispensably necessary.

The gentleman supposes that the assumption will lessen the influence of the States and elevate the general government, and has quoted my observation, that the States out of debt, would be out of danger: and not as gentlemen in the opposition conceived, in debt out of danger. To confute this doctrine, the gentleman has stated a case, and says, if owning an estate he owed money on it, he should think it more safe to take the estate into his hands and pay his debts with its incomes, than to mortgage his estate to another on his engaging to pay the debts.—But Mr. Gerry observed, that the resources for paying the State debts are taken from them, and the question in the case stated is, whether the owner of an estate who owed debts on it, would not expect that the person who occupied it should with the incomes pay the debts of the estate rather than leave the owner to pay them. In the case of a minor,