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[No. C.]

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## THE TABLET.—No. C.

“Fortune maintains a kind of rivalry with wisdom.”

TO discover precisely the causes of the different degrees of success which attend the affairs of men, is beyond the reach of human sagacity. There is such a blend of good fortune and good management requisite to maintain a prosperous course in life, that it is impossible to determine to which of them, a man is principally to ascribe his prosperity. A great part of what is usually called good luck, among men, is nothing more than the effect of measures dictated by a sound judgment; and a great part of what is denominated bad luck is merely the result of folly or neglect. The few extraordinary instances, where men are suddenly elevated or depressed by a contingency which their agency did not controul, should neither cherish the hopes of the foolish and indolent, nor damp those of the prudent and industrious.

A prize in a lottery, or the death of a rich friend may throw a worthless fellow into affluence; but such a circumstance furnishes no argument that Providence usually bestows its blessings, where they are not deserved. Nor, on the other hand, where the substance of a diligent man is accidentally destroyed by fire or tempest, can it be inferred that diligence is not ordained in the constitution of nature, as the common road to wealth and distinction. Extraordinary events do not authorize general hopes or fears. There are in the natural world appearances which sometimes work against the usual course of things, but they never defeat the general tendency of the established laws of nature. In the moral world likewise we often behold occurrences that seem to contradict the idea that Providence regulates the affairs of men by a well-ordered economy, that depends for its success, principally on human agency.

That kind of rivalry which fortune maintains with wisdom, should operate upon men so as to stimulate their efforts, and improve their circumspection. The lucky contingencies which render the progress of some persons so smooth and prosperous are owing more than is commonly supposed to just calculations, and persevering application. It is true, that many circumstances occur where the effect of personal agency is not visible; but still there may be some remote connection between causes that appear hidden, and those that are obvious. The chain of events is connected in such a manner, that we can never know exactly the power that binds or separates the links. We can however distinguish enough to satisfy a reasonable mind, that in the ordinary run of affairs, happiness is united with virtue; and interest is promoted by an attention to duty.

From the Virginia Independent Chronicle.

TO NEW-ENGLAND, NEW-YORK, PENNSYLVANIA and CAROLINA.

DEAR SISTERS,

I HAVE seen your familiar epistle, and really I thought it must be the production of some enemy to the whole family. Under these impressions, I expected to see you all in an uproar, calling on the printer for the author. I conceived that your own credit, as well as the reputation of the family, required it; but by your silence you have convinced me that it is your own. Ah sisters! however treacherous your memories are, the world recollects when your cries of murder, rape, starve, reverberated from pole to pole, and it is with a bleeding heart I recollect what numbers of my sons fell in your defence. What can my dear sisters mean? Why am I twined in the teeth with many of my farms being untenanted, that I boast of the largeness of my purse, and such envious, malicious raving, as sheweth what tergiversants my sisters are. I can tell them that so many of my farms would not have been untenanted if great numbers of my sons had not fallen in their defence. And as for my being in debt, it is a proof that I have had credit; little thanks are due to those who never had credit that they owe nothing. But I suppose my sisters think they have cured all by their great condescension in allowing some merit to my son George. To be sure they shall have credit for that, but I can tell them that my sons Dickey, Bill and James, too, are not to be brow-beaten or frightened by any of their blustering boys. I once thought that some of you my dear sisters, were very religious; but methinks you seem disposed to convince the world that it is otherwise. Your levity, your wit and freedom with omnipotence is big with impiety. It is blasphemous, and would have exposed strict civilized heathens to capital punishment. What do my sis-

ters want? They have shared my bread with me when they were in want. I have given up a most important and valuable part of my farm for the benefit of the whole family. Has any of my sons begged favors and courted exalted places and high employments? Where is it that the aching heart is throbbing for founding titles? And where does the sentiment of well-born originate? Where is the thirst for the distinction of birth and blood, which has made tyrants and oppressors of a few, while the multitude drag ignominious chains? Look at home, my dear sisters, before you upbraid me. You may if you please, make a comparison between the best of your sons and mine during the conflict, when all our farms were proscribed. And you may, if you please, add to my disgrace, by publishing a true state of the expenditure from each of our purses to pay the public debt, and to support the copartnership, this, as things are now organized, is easily done, and this will fairly shew whether a local, partial, and parsimonious spirit did not govern in the clamor upon the proposed tax upon m\*\*\*\*s.

Ah, sisters! my sons are in a great measure proscribed from a right to take any of the lands which I threw into the common stock. You will retort that my sons will not come because they must not bring their negroes.—Ay sisters! this is against the copartnership—the interest of the company requires that the land should be free at least to all the parties—but while my sons are kept from the market, your sons may perhaps purchase cheaper, and you have the choice of land more in your power. What allow the iniquitous the abominable slave trade to be carried on under the law of the land in some places, and proscribe others from a right to bring their property with them, when perhaps the intention and design that many would have in going there would be to enable them to emancipate their poor slaves with propriety.—So it is urged that a poor ignorant slave who has not learned to provide for himself, and is totally ignorant of the arts which a designing world will impose upon him, is in a better condition under the care of a good master than he is like to be in on his own account.

VIRGINIA.

## CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

TUESDAY, MARCH 9.

THE proposition for assuming the State debts being under consideration.

Mr. SHERMAN. As the Secretary has given us the necessary information respecting the provision for payment of interest on the State debts—the assumption it is to be presumed will be agreeable to the States in general; having them all placed on one footing, and one system of revenue pervading the union—the resources will be brought forward with more justice and equality, with more certainty and effect, than on any other plan—and the belief that this measure will be agreeable to the people is strengthened by the idea that the States are averse to excises—without which no provision can be made (except dry taxes) to pay the State creditors their interest; the subject has been fully discussed and I think that we are now prepared for a decision, and I cannot but hope that we shall adopt the proposition before the committee.

Mr. Bland said he had long been convinced that the proposition before the committee involved a question of the utmost importance to the peace, honor and tranquility of the United States. It is the gordian knot of indissoluble union, every plea of justice, policy and equity loudly call upon us to adopt the measure—and whether we do or not at the present time, certain it is, the time will come when we must do it. The State creditors have an equal claim with those of the union—but if their demands are not attended to, it they should be left without any provision for the interest on their securities—that speculation which has been so much reprobated by this house, will come in upon us like a flood—the State securities will be depreciated to the lowest ebb, and the creditors reduced to total despair of ever obtaining justice from their country. He thought that every possible degree of attention had been paid to the subject—that it had been thoroughly investigated, and he hoped the committee would now come to a decision, the affirmative of the proposition should receive his hearty concurrence.

Mr. Page was opposed to the proposition, as it involved the necessity of direct taxes and excises—these he was afraid would serve to revive the ancient jealousies of the States; those jealousies appeared to be subsiding and dying away; but this measure will have a direct tendency to revive them—besides it will confirm the predictions of the enemies of the constitution, when they asserted that the general government tended to a consolidation, and would eventually swallow up the State governments—he added many other remarks and wished that the proposition might be passed over.

Mr. Bland rose to reply to some observations which had fallen from his Hon. colleague—he was surprised to find any gentleman so squeamish at this time of day on the subject of direct taxes—before the adoption of the constitution this squeamishness might have been proper; but since the ratification, all observations of that kind appeared to be entirely out of season. It appeared to him from the first that the adoption of the constitution would necessarily absorb all the efficient revenue of the United States.

This being the case, in what situation will you leave the creditors of the State governments? He then adverted to the particular merits of the State creditors, and said that the State debts were in fact the debts of the United States—he replied to sundry observations of Mr. Jackson who had informed the house that Georgia had called in its securities and sunk them, and said that the gentleman's account of the fate which attended the securities of the State of Georgia, was directly in favor of the assumption—for it

evidently shewed that the creditors of the States could not depend on receiving justice at the hands of the State legislatures; on the whole, he observed that he had waited to hear arguments in opposition to the measure which should carry conviction to his own mind—hitherto he had not heard any such arguments, and therefore he should consider himself fully justified, on the principles he before advanced, in voting for the assumption.

Mr. Page made some observations in reply to Mr. Bland, and observed that the observations he had offered were not the result of squeamishness, they were founded on facts and experience, which he thought fully justified the apprehensions he had expressed.

Mr. Scot rose and said, that he was well aware that adopting the proposition would operate in favor of some States, to the certain prejudice of others, and it would be well if a day of retribution could be fixed, that might equalize the business; but he could not look forward to that day—he feared it would never arrive; yet, under the impression that it was a great national effort, and that the State debts were incurred in the common cause of the union, he would vote for the proposition.

Mr. Lee was opposed to the proposition, and for the following reasons. He said he did not see the necessity of inflicting upon the assumption of these debts at the present moment. He had no doubt of the justice and policy of the measure, if it could be effected on equal and just principles, but if the assumption was not made on such principles, it would operate in such a manner as to countenance oppression, and disturb the public harmony. It is well known, Mr. Speaker, said he, that the exertions of the several States have been very unequal, and it is as well known that our present resources are also unequal to the public demand: Sir, we must extend our resources to make provision for the present debt of the union; we must extend them still further if we assume the State debts; and whatever system of taxation may be proposed, it will require two or three years to bring it into any thing like an effectual operation. He thought the most eligible mode of proceeding, would be, to adjust the accounts first, and after such adjustment to pledge the faith of the union that they would assume the State debts after the general account was liquidated and settled. He wished to know, he said, whether any inconvenience could arise from pursuing a line of conduct so rational in itself? Gentlemen had asserted, and he saw no reason to doubt their assertion, that these accounts might be settled in the course of two years, in which opinion the respectable officer coincided, who was the author of the proposition; do gentlemen expect, continued he, that the necessary resources can be provided in a less time than two years, there could be no one of information that could entertain the idea. If then, the accounts could be settled within the time that should be allowed for the provision of the resources upon which these debts were to be funded, he asked, whether it would not be more prudent, as well as more likely to give general satisfaction, to make a provisional adoption, or pledging the faith of the government to assume the debts at the expiration of two years. He should therefore vote against the original proposition, which, if negatived, he would then move a resolution in substance to what he had expressed.

Mr. Vining. After the very full and able discussion, which this important question has received, it is with diffidence and reluctance that I venture, especially after my long but unavoidable absence from the house, to obtrude myself at this time on the committee. When I reflect, however, that this absence has been employed in pursuit of the best information which could tend to guide and assist my judgment, I feel some relief from my embarrassment. In viewing this subject as an abstract question of finance, and merely relative to the individual States, I confess I behold it as in some degree operating injustice, and, in its effects, unequal; but when I consider it in a more national point of view, as diffusive of general advantages, and favorable to, perhaps the permanency as well as the interest of the union; I am compelled to yield small local regards to a more enlarged and extensive policy. But, continued he, in estimating those local sacrifices I would endeavor to compare the value of the object together with the certainty of attaining it, with the consideration which is as an equivalent offered. In the present case some sacrifices are to be made at the altar of accommodation and general convenience: By the state which I have the honor to represent, those sacrifices will in proportion, be very great. She has not only provided for the interest of her particular debt, but has made considerable progress towards the payment of its principal. This places her in a peculiar situation; and, unless some modification should be ultimately made, it might be considered as somewhat oppressive and unjust. But as for this modification, as far as it regards this peculiar case, I shall wait with a firm reliance on the justice and accommodating spirit of the house, until the bill shall be introduced; when, I trust, such provision will be made as will comport with the true interests of the United States. I confess, Sir, in the contemplation of this subject so many difficulties appear on every hand, that I yet feel myself at a loss how to determine; or to what sources to apply for safe information. I find the public mind influenced by so many and in such opposite directions, that I find it difficult, if not impracticable, to furnish myself with any guide from thence which can either solve my doubts or lead me to a satisfactory conclusion. The opinions of intelligent individuals are equally various and fluctuating: Thus situated I feel as if I were on a precipice surrounded with imminent dangers, and where a single false step might prove forever fatal.

In this dilemma, continued Mr. Vining, all that is left me, is fairly to balance, as far as my mind is able to embrace them, the inconveniences with the advantages on both sides, and from the result to form the best determination in my power. I believe, that on principles of strict and rigid justice the assumption of the State debts would be inadmissible; but there are cases in politics, as well as in jurisprudence, where the *summum jus* would be *summa injuria*; and there are instances also in politics where partial evil may be considered as universal good, and, if there ever was a case of this kind, perhaps it is exhibited in the one now before the committee. I am also convinced, that a very considerable part of the debt which we are about to assume, has been in many instances improvidently, in some, unjustly incurred. The union has been charged with expences, the benefit of which has been solely appropriated to individual States; and I sensibly feel, Sir, that considerable disadvantages must necessarily arise to the meritorious and complying parts of the union to the benefit of those which have not been so forward. It is also a painful anticipation to me, that by this measure a direct taxation may be ultimately superinduced, in order to enable us to fulfil the engagement we now undertake; but I look upon this as a speculative point, and place it at all events, at a very distant period, and even should our apprehensions upon this subject be realized, I find great consolation from the facility of payment which such an increased circulation will immediately produce, and from a policy which I sincerely believe will contribute to the harmony of the union.

Upon the whole, Sir, as far as an unfinished consideration of this important subject will allow me to go—from the general and extensive influence and affection which will immediately arise from