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THE TABLET.

No. CIII.

"An unblemished character gives great weight to the arguments of a public speaker."

AS the main design of public speaking is to convince an audience of the truth and importance of what is spoken, men frequently strive to effect this purpose by adding some adventitious force to the intrinsic merit of their speeches. It is commonly supposed that the best method to make forcible impressions on a public assembly, is to display an elegant, spirited elocution. Sentiments may be decorated with such brilliant, nervous expressions; arranged in a manner to give such a fine harmony of cadence, and pronounced with such grace and energy, as to inspire the mind with all the fascination of music. But the powers of persuasive oratory belong only to a few. And even where a person possesses them in the fullest extent, they will not always procure, much less preserve a substantial influence. A graceful elocution may retain its charms, and excite applause, long after the orator himself has ceased to be viewed with respect, and lost all his weight of reputation. It is one thing to be amused, and another to be convinced by the allurements of rhetoric. Men do not sufficiently contemplate that it is better to be believed than admired.

The success that attended the speeches of some of the ancient orators is generally ascribed to their extraordinary powers of eloquence. This is an opinion that deserves examination. It should not too hastily be concluded that those speakers derived their influence, solely from the superior excellence of their oratory. The popularity which mere eloquence begets can have no long duration, unless it is supported by a virtuous character. Virtue renders an eloquent man irresistible. The most celebrated orators of antiquity, it may be presumed, were not less distinguished for severe morals, than for splendid eloquence. They excited a general belief, by the uniform tenor of their conduct, that they were actuated by the most generous sentiments of patriotism. It cannot be doubted but the astonishing effects of their oratory were owing very much to the honest zeal, which their actions discovered for the honor and welfare of their country.

Purity of principles, both in public and private life, is the best foundation on which to erect a public character. This will not perhaps attract so much notice, or meet with so much flattery, as eloquence; but it will gain more real influence, and inspire more confidence. Splendor of talents may be gazed at, and admired, but unless they are united with unblemished morals they will not long be respected. Those whose opinions are most regarded, and whose advice the most pursued, are not men of the most captivating abilities. Gravity of temper and sobriety of manners will render moderate talents useful and respectable. It must be confessed that the art of oratory is highly worthy of cultivation, and an accomplished speaker has an advantage over those whose elocution is imperfect and disagreeable. But perfection in eloquence should not make men indifferent to solid attainments, and useful virtues. No force of capacity, no glare of acquirements can compensate for a stain on the moral character. If an eloquent man shews a levity of deportment, the hearers may to be sure compliment him for speaking charmingly, but they will declare, he does not himself believe a word of what he is saying. If his principles are suspected, or his manners licentious, his eloquence may still be applauded; but those who hear him, will express their sorrow, that a man who can speak so well, should act so perversely. In short, the world will learn to be guarded against the seducing effects of his rhetoric; and it will afford much amusement, while it can produce no conviction. Personal influence must give a man his principal weight in public life; and no one will long maintain personal influence, without a fair, unblemished character.

FROM THE CONNECTICUT COURANT.

Messrs. Printers,

I observe a correspondent of yours who appears in the Connecticut Courant of March 22, that seems to be a well meaning man, and judges pretty well so far as he is well informed; but I think he is illinformed, or at least uninformed, as to the reception our Representatives met with when they last returned. I thought it was very agreeable; perhaps it might be otherwise in his circle where they were uninformed. I think I had it from good

authority that our Assembly gave our Representatives under the old Constitution the same which they now have, and if it is too much, charge the blame where it is due. I believe it would be a new thing under the sun, at least in this State, for the public servants to give themselves less than the Assembly gave them. As to the salaries bestowed on the Judges, I believe the people in New-England in general think them too high—He should observe that the Western and Southern people are not so near upon a level as we are in New-England, and thence arise those high appointments. He should recollect if he ever knew it, that when we first began to oppose the Britons by arms, the Western and Southern people complained of the wages of our rank and file, and said rather than comply, they would fight it out without us; but when they considered that our young men of family were much superior to their grogsters, who would be likely to desert when the grog failed, and which really happened, they contended themselves with raising the officers wages.

As to his regretting that Congress should assume the state debts, I think he is as ill-informed about that matter as any other. I shall not set him right by public information. Let him enquire, and he will find that it is best for all the states, and this in particular, that Congress should assume all the state debts, without he is one of them that would have the state cheat their creditors, and drive them to complain to Congress, which they certainly will do if the state goes on as they have done, about which I shall forbear to mention particulars at the present.

AN OLD FREEMAN.

LONDON.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

JANUARY 16.

The Lords resolved to proceed in the trial of Warren Hastings, Esq. on Monday the 1st of February.

JANUARY 21.

This day his Majesty went in state to the House of Peers, and opened the business of the present session of Parliament, by the following most gracious speech from the throne:

My Lords and Gentlemen,

Since I last met you in Parliament, the continuance of the war on the Continent, and the internal condition of different parts of Europe, have been productive of events which have engaged my most serious attention.

While I see, with a just concern, the interruption of the tranquility of other countries, I have at the same time great satisfaction in being able to inform you, that I receive continual assurances of the good disposition of all foreign powers towards these kingdoms; and I am persuaded that you will entertain with me a deep and grateful sense of the favor of providence, in continuing to my subjects the increasing advantages of peace, and the uninterrupted enjoyment of those invaluable blessings which they have so long derived from our excellent constitution.

Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

I have given directions that the estimates for the present year should be laid before you, and I rely on your readiness to grant such supplies as the circumstances of the several branches of the public service may be found to require.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

The regulations prescribed by the act of the last session of Parliament, relative to the corn trade, not having been duly carried into effect in several parts of the kingdom, there appeared reason to apprehend that such an exportation of corn might take place, and such difficulty arise in the importation of foreign corn, as would have been productive of the most serious inconvenience to my subjects. Under these circumstances, it appeared absolutely necessary to take immediate and effectual measures for preventing the exportation, and facilitating the importation of particular sorts of corn; I therefore, by the advice of my Privy Council, issued an order for that purpose, a copy of which I have directed to be laid before you.

I have only further to desire, that you will continue to apply yourselves to those objects which may require your attention, with the same zeal for the public service which has hitherto appeared in all your proceedings, and of which the effects have been so happily manifested by an increase of public revenue, the extension of the commerce and manufactures of the country, and the general prosperity of my people.

The Lords being waited upon his Majesty with their address, which was as usual the echo of the speech, his Majesty was graciously pleased to return the following answer:

"My Lords,

"I receive with great pleasure your dutiful and loyal address.

"The first object of my wishes being the prosperity of my people, I cannot but express my satisfaction at receiving such strong assurances of your disposition to apply your attention to those important objects which I have recommended to your consideration."

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

JANUARY 22.

Mr. Wilberforce gave notice that he would, on Monday, move the house to resolve itself into a committee of the whole house on the slave trade, and that in such committee he would move for the appointment of a select committee to take examinations above stairs.

Thursday a commission passed the Great Seal, appointing Lord Kenyon, Speaker of the House of Peers, in the absence of the Lord Chancellor, in the room of Earl Bathurst, whose great age and disorder in the eyes, would not permit him to continue the office.

While his Majesty was this day going through St. James's Park in the state coach, a man dressed in scarlet, with an orange cockade, threw a stone, with intent, as is supposed, to strike his Majesty, but which fortunately only struck the panel of the coach; he was immediately seized and taken to Mr. Grenville's office, where he underwent an examination of four hours before Mr. Pitt, Lord Chatham, the two Secretaries of State, and Sir Sampson Wright, who committed him to prison. He proves to be the same person who about a fortnight since stuck up in the Court-yard, at St. James's, a foolish libel on his Majesty, signed "John Frith, Lieut. of the first Regiment of Royals."

CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

SATURDAY, MARCH 13.

The following should have preceded Mr. Gerry's speech in our last.

MR. AMES: The word *irredeemable* is made the subject of objection. It is said to convey a disagreeable idea, and to tend to excite popular prejudice against the debt, as it implies that the public agrees to be saddled with a perpetual burden of debt. In a land of ignorance, where the people are not in the habit, and have not the capacity to reason, it may be proper to pay regard to this objection. I have too much reverence for the sober thinking people whom we represent, to believe, that the mere sound of this word will work mischief, when their own enquiries will convince them that the substance is not only unexceptionable, but highly beneficial.

Making the debt *redeemable* will not redeem it. It puts not a farthing in the creditor's pocket: Making it *irredeemable* is no restraint upon the present or probable capacity of the public to redeem. It will not prolong the evil of a public debt a single day, but rather the contrary. All the money that can be provided for paying off the debt may still be employed for the purpose, tho' the *irredeemable* quality should remain.

The proposal to make the debt *irredeemable* is founded on the supposed gradual reduction of interest. But until the reduction has actually happened in a shorter period, or in a greater degree than is calculated, the paper will not bear a higher price than 100 per cent. While the debt is at par, or below par, the creditors will not refuse to receive their money. The public has also the right to redeem at the rate of one per cent. against their will. But the value will not rise to par while the rate of interest keeps up: The government will therefore have full employment for all its surplus revenue to buy up the paper at a discount. Surely, the government will not squander the public money to redeem the debt at par, when it is to be purchased at a discount. The latter is even more advantageous to the creditors. Buying at the market price in fact raises the price, and benefits those who do not sell. The greater the discount, the more paper a given sum will buy, and take out of the market. This not only raises the price, but increases the security of the unfold part. In these three ways, there is full exercise for the power of redemption, nor can it be supposed, that the *redeemable* quality of the debt will increase the capacity of the public to redeem, or shorten the duration of the debt. The contrary may be proved by attending to these facts.

The government in consideration of making the debt *irredeemable* is allowed 19 per cent. 100 dollars are to be lent, and 81 only to be funded. The aggregate of the sums saved to the public by this 19 per cent. is near 13 millions. The public is therefore paid beforehand for not redeeming. The right renounced is valuable to the creditors, as it has been formerly shewn, but of no value to the public. For the right to redeem is worth nothing, if the public has not the means to redeem; and if money can be found, it appears that it can be better employed to buy up the debt than to pay off. The capacity of the public is laid under no restraint. So far from it, 13 millions will be already redeemed. Perhaps in a dozen years the public would not pay off that amount; and if it should prove able, it will have 20 years according to the principles of the Report to buy stock on better terms than paying off. Those who say we can redeem faster, and will not be satisfied with the argument I have just urged, will please to remember that by making the entire debt *redeemable*, we shall have more to redeem—with an imaginary increase of the power will be an actual increase of the task to be performed. But will any one soberly assert that the public will probably have the command of more money than it can find persons willing to accept for their stock; and unless this is asserted, and really believed, I am sure the word *irredeemable* will not be struck out.

If then it is no burden to the public, is it any disadvantage to the creditor? If the debt is below par, the public will buy stock, and will not pay off the capital. If at par, the creditor will not thank government to do what he may get any individual, and in