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THE TABLET.—No. CVII.

“Wrong headed blockheads when they help intend,
Plague while they serve, and hurt while they befriend.”

I AM of the opinion that people sustain more inconvenience thro the ignorance and folly, than they do thro the malice or treachery of those with whom they are concerned. It is much easier to counterwork the actions of bad men, than of weak ones. Knaves may be restrained by a variety of checks, from doing the mischief which they meditate, and may be punished for the crimes they actually commit. The whole world is, as it were, armed against their enormities. But there can be no effectual precaution against the mismanagement of fools. Their mistakes indicate no perverseness of heart, and can neither deserve punishment or excite resentment. How can we reproach a man when he meant us no harm? How can we guard against his errors, when he has not discernment to escape them himself?

It too often happens, that we impute miscarriages to the bad intentions of those we employ. We do not so readily suspect that men judge or calculate wrong, as that they intend wrong. But the fact is otherwise; and it will be found, upon a critical examination, that error of judgment is the main source of public as well as private disorders. There is hardly a more common character in society than that of a marplot. This sort of people are the more dangerous, as they seldom attempt to do a good turn, which does not terminate in a real disadvantage. Their zeal to serve us makes us accept of their services; and when they have committed one mistake, they are so sorry for it, that we let them run into more blunders to atone for what are past.

A marplot is most vexatious in public transactions; because it then is more in his power to betray stupidity without incurring contempt, and propagate error without risking detection. In public affairs there is a great diversity of opinion; and in questions of a speculative nature, declaimers of folly screen their impotency under professions of patriotism. The appearance of patriotic zeal is too fascinating not to give popularity to the man who discovers it. Thus it happens that weak men, who are a perpetual marplot upon the plans of the prudent and knowing, insinuate themselves into the public confidence. This is an inconvenience that all countries and ages have experienced. There is no possible remedy against it. People will listen to those whom they suppose to be their friends; and it is peculiarly the character of a marplot to be officious in offering his good services. He must be employed because he means well, and he will do hurt, because he has not discernment enough to do good. It would be a fortunate circumstance in the management of public affairs, if mankind looked more to the qualifications of those to whom they committed their concerns. If men have understanding they will seek the public prosperity, because it is their interest to do it; but if they are destitute of capacity they will counteract the public weal, because they can never know in what it consists. A wrong headed man, however honest he may be, cannot be supposed to concert proper measures, since it is obvious that reason and propriety can never assimilate with his character. Whatever he suggests will be tinged with the quality of the fountain, from which it flows. Wise men only can conceive wise institutions.

POLITICIANS.

NO country, perhaps, in the habitable globe, contains so many government amenders and declaimers on the subject of Constitutions, as the United States.—Every man seems to think himself born a Legislator, and is generally so tenacious of his own darling sentiment, that unless it is adopted, he is continually complaining. But this TRUTH, advanced by the SOLOON of our country, ought to be known:—That the experience of the world hath shewn, that a person “may defend the principles of liberty, and the rights of mankind with great abilities, and yet after all, when called upon to propose a plan of Legislation, he may astonish the world with a signal absurdity.

AGRICULTURE.

THE great and important subject of agriculture, having been recommended to the notice of the national Legislature, by the President of the United States; it will doubtless arrest their attention—and is there any thing of more consequence to the prosperity, wealth and independence of the United States? The present appears to be the crisis when the cultivators of the soil, should receive the tokens of Legislative patronage.—Manufactures are the offspring of agriculture—and must form the basis of all profitable speculation.

PROSPECT OF NORTH-BRITAIN.

By DR. MITCHILL.*

THE Scotch are very proud of their Lock-Lomond. And truly the lake with its contained islands, and neighboring mountains, exhibits a mingled scene of beauty and sublimity. From the summit of the lofty Ben-Lomond, there is the grandest prospects I ever enjoyed. Fortunately, when I was on it the weather was so serene and the atmosphere so free from clouds, that one of my companions who had ascended the mountain more than a dozen times, said he had never had so fair a view of the surrounding objects. Southward the lake with its twenty islands, the village of Luss, the mansions of Camstraddon and Bonhill, and beyond Smollet's sumptuous monument beside the river Leven, the town and castle of Dunbarton and the Firth of Clyde appeared beautifully in view; further than these, port Glasgow, Greenock, the islands of Bute and Arran and the Craig of Ailsa, together with a part of Ayre-Shire and the Atlantic Ocean, lay fairly displayed. Westward, beside Lock-Long and Lock-Fyne, several of the Hebrides were visible, and in particular the heights of Isla, the Paps of Jura and the mountains of Mull could be clearly discerned. Northward the stupendous Highlands, extending in the Shires of Perth, Breadalbane and Argyle, away toward Lochaber and Inverness, as far as the eye could comprehend, afforded a sight of rude grandeur and wild sublimity, that delighted beyond description. Eastward, Lock-Ard, Enrick-water, Lock-Law, the city and castle of Stirling, the hills of Fyfe-Shire, the river Forth and the arm of the German Sea were plainly seen; and had there not been a hazy portion of air a little toward the South, it was judged that the castle of Edinburg, Salisbury Craig, the Calton and Pentland hills, and Arthur's seat might have been descried.”

* This gentleman is preparing a set of Experiments to try the qualities of the different kinds of timber, and of different preservative varnishes, in resisting the salt-water pipe-worm. His bust has been inscribed with the following verse, composed, as is thought by the Roman NAUTIUS—
Latima Natura nitide penetralia pandit.

FOR THE GAZETTE OF THE UNITED STATES.

“Admiration and acquaintance are incompatible.”

I Would question the reality of this, for the honor of our species, when taken literally—and I am induced to think it will not hold good as a general truth, even with the necessary exceptions, which in all general rules are admitted. If human nature admits not of perfection, yet it is not so wholly depraved as to exclude both from sentiment and conduct, every thing noble and meritorious. Any thing intrinsically excellent inspires us with admiration—and tho there are comparatively few persons possessing the essentials for this, we are not in consequence justifiable in asserting that none have them. It requires a considerable proportion, no doubt, of amiable qualities to counter-balance the numerous propensities to folly, and the many actions which deserve the epithet of littleness. Still he who admits the above position as sufficiently evident, holds a doctrine extremely self-debasing. For depreciate the supposed excellence only of human nature, and you eventually humble that desire of eminence of which few, very few are wholly divested. Who would make vigorous exertions to acquire what is beyond the sphere of possibility?

Tho I cannot boast of long experience in the ways of the world—yet what I have had is convincing of the contrary. If the greater part of mankind are void of properties that can stand the scrutiny of acquaintance without destroying admiration, yet I firmly believe there is a number bearing a proportional relation to the whole mass of people as that of persons eminent in Arts and Sciences to those unskilled therein. Experimental knowledge is of superior influence in most instances. It can scarcely be questioned that Collegiate acquaintances are of the highest intimacy and give a great opportunity for discovering not only the abilities, but also the amiable qualities of the mind. Perhaps more so than most other situations. The disposition is then formed for communicativeness, being untaught in the ways of deception and unfoured by disappointment—I have been on intimate acquaintance with some, whose excellence, far from vanishing, was such as to increase my admiration. This inclines me to believe intimacy the touchstone by which we may distinguish real

from apparent merit. Nor would I apprehend an enquiry after a person possessed of real and intrinsic excellence, equally romantic with researches after the philosopher's stone, or attempts to balloo it to Luna. The inculcation of this doctrine is also destructive of considerable happiness as it tends greatly to lessen the felicity of social connections. A propensity for admiration is implanted in every breast—Who would risque the loss of this by associating intimately with those he regarded? If fully convinced it would destroy or even lessen their reciprocal good opinion?

The married state, particularly when hearts congenial are united, is perhaps the situation where the most complete happiness exists—and mutual love can (I would fain hope) subsist in this State where the closest intimacy must necessarily be formed. What is love, but admiration raised to its highest pitch—and when it arises from real excellence, it can stand the test of acquaintance.

Upon the whole we may safely conclude that the idea in the motto is not strictly true, and that admiration and acquaintance are not incompatible.

Our ideas of excellence are only comparative, originating from what we find in human nature—if it did not exist there, from whence is the idea derived? ARISTIDES.

CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

TUESDAY, MARCH 30.

The proposition for assuming the state debts under consideration.
(Mr. BLAND—CONTINUED.)

VIRGINIA had a number of marine officers and sailors which were employed in her state vessels; these had also been put on the list of her public creditors, and had received certificates for pay and depreciation. In short her military debt for continental purposes amounted to three millions three hundred thousand dollars principal, on which she had regularly paid an interest in specie annually of six per cent. This fund arose from arrangements in her revenue, of which she had then the entire possession. Her impost was pledged for the payment of this interest, and was competent thereto; has she not given up to the continent, to the general government this rich source of revenue—and this debt, or others of a like nature is now charged on her lands and negroes. From the commencement of the war, great, nay enormous emigrations have taken place and still continue. Kentucky is said to contain fifty or sixty thousand souls, nine-tenths of which have emigrated from Virginia. It is said, and I believe with truth, that more than one half of Georgia is peopled from Virginia by recent emigrations. The state of Franklin, the cession of which this house has just accepted, has been also chiefly peopled from Virginia, and is said to contain more than twenty thousand people. Large numbers have emigrated to other states, to avoid either being called into service, to obtain lands on easy terms, or to avoid taxation. What is now to be the situation of Virginia? The remaining citizens are to pay (unless the assumption takes place) the whole debt, while she, who has been termed the elder of the states, and not improperly may be termed the mother of those just mentioned, may not unaptly be compared to the peltican, who is represented as feeding her young with her life's blood, i. e. with her citizens. And how are these citizens employed? Why, in Georgia, helping to pay their state debt, and in Kentucky and Franklin, hitherto out of the reach of taxation, or unable to contribute any thing towards this purpose from their own exposed situation, being engaged in their own defence ever since the war with Great-Britain.

Virginia may on this occasion be divided into two parts, independent of Kentucky; that from the sea coast to about the heart of the state, through which the army marched, both friends and enemies, as one part; and that near and beyond the mountains, as another. The first was subject to have their houses and towns burnt by the enemy, their plantations laid waste, and their negroes carried off. 'Tis beyond all doubt, that not less than 7000 of these the best of our laborers were carried off by the enemy, or left their masters; those inhabitants who suffered this loss are also the greatest creditors to the state and the United States, having loaned money, had their property impressed for the use of their armies, or contributed voluntarily to their support. By emigration, vast quantities of vacant land belonging to the emigrants have been brought to market, so that the lands in all parts of the state have fallen perhaps 60 per cent. in value; and these lands thus depreciated, are now loaded with a heavy tax to pay this continental-state debt. The burthen has become almost intolerable, and this burthen is aggravated by the lands being depopulated of their laboring hands, which have been either taken off by the enemy, or by emigration.

I am not surprized (continued Mr. Bland) that Georgia has declared herself against the assumption, or that the members even from Virginia, who came from far west should do so; but I own I am a little surprized that North Carolina should have taken up that opinion, especially as what has been said of Virginia with respect to emigrations applies in a certain degree to her case also. In short, when Virginia contracted her debt she had reason to think her resources were adequate to the payment, but now those resources are gone, she has not only parted with her revenue from impost and tonnage, but she has parted with her immense territory North-West of the Ohio. This fir, is deemed a respectable fund for the discharge of the continental debt. What proportion of this fund will fall to her share as a state? She will partake of it exactly as her citizens are creditors of the United States; and I believe it may be safely asserted, that the military debt which she has taken on herself as a temporary measure recommended by Congress out of the question, her citizens will be found as lenders to the continent or holders of continental securities, not more than upon a par with some of the smallest states in the union. [Mr. Bland here stated the amount of the state debts of Virginia; four-fifths of which if not nine-tenths might justly be placed to the account of the United States.]

Some gentlemen are very desirous to sever the funding of the debt of the United States from that of the states, though both of them have been incurred for the same purposes, viz. the payment