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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 2, 1790.

[WHOLE No. 119.]

DISCOURSES ON DAVILA. No. VIII.

*This mournful truth is every where confel'd,
Slow rises Worth by Poverty depress'd.*

Upon this subject, we shall find, that the expressions we have hitherto used, *attention, consideration and congratulation*, comprehend with sufficient accuracy, the general object of the passion for distinction, in the greater part of mankind. There are not a few, from him who burned a temple to the multitudes who plunge into low debauchery, who deliberately seek it by crimes and vices. The greater number, however, search for it, neither by vices nor virtues: But by the means which, common sense and every day's experience shows, are most sure to obtain it; by riches, by family records, by play, and other frivolous personal accomplishments. But there are a few, and God knows but a few, who aim at something more: They aim at approbation as well as attention; at esteem as well as consideration: And at admiration and gratitude, as well as congratulation. Admiration is indeed the complete idea of approbation, congratulation and wonder united. This last description of persons is the tribe out of which proceeds your patriots and heroes, and most of the great benefactors to mankind. But for our humiliation, we must still remember, that even in these esteemed, beloved and adored characters, the passion, altho refined by the purest moral sentiments, and intended to be governed by the best principles, is a passion still: And therefore, like all other human desires, unlimited and insatiable. No man was ever contented with any given share of this human adoration. When Cæsar declared that he had lived enough to glory, Cæsar might deceive himself; but he did not deceive the world, who saw his declaration contradicted by every action of his subsequent life. Man constantly craves for more, even when he has no rival: But when he sees another possessed of more, or drawing a way from himself a part of what he had, he feels a mortification, arising from the loss of a good he thought his own: His desire is disappointed: The pain of a want unsatisfied, is increased by a resentment of an injustice as he thinks it: He accuses his rival of a theft or robbery, and the public of taking away, what was his property, and giving it to another. These feelings and resentments, are but other names for jealousy and envy; and altogether they produce some of the keenest and most tormenting of all sentiments. These fermentations of the passions are so common and so well known, that the people generally presume, that a person in such circumstances, is deprived of his judgment, if not of his veracity and reason. It is too generally a sufficient answer to any complaint; to any fact alleged; or argument advanced, to say that it comes from a disappointed man.

There is a voice within us, which seems to intimate, that real merit should govern the world: And that men ought to be respected only in proportion to their talents, virtues and services. But the question always has been, how can this arrangement be accomplished? How shall the men of merit be discovered? How shall the proportions of merit be ascertained and graduated? Who shall be the judge? When the government of a great nation is in question, shall the whole nation choose? Will such a choice be better than chance? Shall the whole nation vote for Senators? Thirty millions of votes, for example, for each Senator in France! It is obvious that this would be a lottery of millions of blanks to one prize, and that the chance of having wisdom and integrity in a Senator by hereditary descent would be far better. There is no individual personally known to an hundredth part of the nation. The voters then must be exposed to deception, from intrigues and manœuvres, without number, that is to say, from all the chicanery, impostures and falsehoods imaginable, with scarce a possibility of preferring real merit. Will you divide the nation into districts, and let each district choose a Senator? This is giving up the idea of merit, and annexing the honor and the trust to an accident, that of living on a particular spot. An hundred or a thousand men of the first merit in a nation may live in one city; and none at all of this description in several whole provinces. Real merit is so remote from the knowledge of whole nations, that were magistrates to be chosen by that criterion alone, and by an universal suffrage, dissensions and venality would be endless. The difficulties arising from this source are so obvious and universal, that nations have tried all sorts of experiments to avoid them. *(To be continued.)*

EDENTON, May 8.

Copy of a letter from a gentleman in New-York, to his friend in Virginia.

NEW-YORK, April 14, 1790.

LAST Monday Mr. Sedgwick delivered a funeral oration on the death of Miss Assumption. When this child was born, although her mother only went seven months with her, she was promising indeed—was uncommonly large, appeared healthy, could lisp Papa and Mama, displayed a good set of teeth, and could bite a crust of bread—was fond of molasses, and her principal food was cod's head—her voluptuous manner of living caused her to outgrow her age—she was seized with a consumption, which carried her off last Monday.

Her death was much lamented by her parents who were from New-England. Mr. Sedgwick being the most celebrated preacher was requested to deliver her funeral eulogium.—It was done with puritanic gravity. This orator being manly and grave, and the language being alternately threatening and soothing, caused unusual sensations—a pause ensued—her southern relations bore the loss with fortitude (except her aunt South-Carolina) reflecting, that if she had grown to womanhood, that her disorder might have been contagious, and a general consumption in the family the consequence.

Sixty-one of the political fathers of the nation were present, and a crowded audience of weepers and rejoicers.—Mrs. Speculator was the chief mourner, and acted her part to admiration: She being the mother of Miss Assumption, who was the hope of her family, the picture of herself, and her youngest child.—Twenty-nine of the political fathers cried out aloud—Thirty-one bore the loss with manly fortitude, being in full hope of a glorious resurrection, when she might appear again in angelic shape and virgin innocence, unattended by any monstrous appendage.

Her near relations suppose she had a premature death, and intend to try their magic art to raise her from the dead; but as the days of witchcraft are over, and its presumable they have not supernatural powers, it is hoped by those who suppose her death will produce no ill effect, that they will cease their exertions for the present and suffer the dead to rest, lest by disturbing her manes, the whole family be involved in fresh calamities.

Mrs. Excise may have cause to rejoice, because she will be screened from much drudgery—as she must have been the principal support of Miss Assumption, as well as of her mother and all her other relations.—Mrs. Direct Tax may rest more easy in Virginia, as she will not be called into foreign service.—Madam Impost will have additions to her burthen, she is however well supported, and can better bear it than any other of the domestics, being much of a woman, and having the support of Mrs. Luxury and Madam Extravagance, who are well-born dames, and above the paltry considerations of economy or reputation.

Fenno's Gazette of this day * will detail the oration.—Mr. S—k after delivering the sermon, took his leave for the east to mourn with the rest of the family.

* See Gazette of April 14.

BOSTON, May 26.

DR. FRANKLIN'S DONATION.

At the Town-Meeting yesterday, the Hon. THOMAS DAWES, EZEKIEL PRICE, STEPHEN HIGGINSON, WILLIAM TUDOR, and THOMAS DAWES, jun. Esquires, were appointed a Committee to report to the measures necessary to be adopted, for carrying into effect the benevolent intentions of the late Dr. FRANKLIN, in the Donation left to this his native town, in his Will.

CURIOUS MECHANISM.

Every friend to his country, to science, and the liberal arts, must feel the most pleasurable sensations in observing the rapid improvements, which are made in the various branches of mechanic arts.—It is with pleasure we announce, that our countryman and townsman Dr. JOSIAH LEAVITT, has lately constructed and completed an Organ under a Harpsicord;—a piece of mechanism so curious, was never before attempted or executed in America: Either instruments may be played upon separately, or with the greatest ease, be connected together. The tones are exceedingly sweet, and when combined, afford a most rich and pleasing variety. Those Ladies and Gentlemen of taste and knowledge, who have seen and heard it, have not hesitated to express their approbation; and Mr. SELBY, whose superior knowledge is too well known to be doubted, has pronounced as his opinion, that it is superior to any instrument of the kind he ever saw.

CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. TUESDAY, MAY 11.

On the proposition to encrease the duty of tonnage on foreign bottoms.

MR. FITZSIMONS said, he should state some particulars to the Committee, and leave them to decide what is best, without giving an opinion at present. He observed the agricultural interest of the United States was fully represented in Congress; but if it was not, he did not conceive there was any disposition to burden any part of the Union unequally. He observed that the Agriculture of the country, notwithstanding the duty on foreign tonnage, had not suffered; on the other hand, he could appeal to gentlemen from all quarters, whether the produce of the country had ever been in greater demand, or had sold for a better price.

He observed, one object of the report was to encourage the important business of ship-building. He enlarged on the great advantages of prosecuting this branch of Manufactures, than which, perhaps there is not one more useful and profitable pursued in the United States, considering the small value of the materials, in themselves, and contrasting this with the price of a ship when completed.

He observed, that the operation of the tonnage laid last session, had been advantageous to the trade of the United States. He shewed how this had been the case. He then said, the benefits of the revolution are yet to be realized by the Eastern States; the Southern States have the ports of the whole world open to them; the Eastern States are excluded from the ports to which they were formerly admitted, with their most important exports. He was not however in favor of a duty which would prohibit foreigners from coming to our ports; he was for encouraging ships from all nations to visit our shores, by which a competition would be created in purchasing our produce. But at the same time he should lament, as a very great misfortune, to have the carrying trade of this country monopolized by foreigners. He did not doubt that the Southern States would soon see it as much for their interest, as it is for the interest of the Eastern States to have our own vessels principally employed in carrying off our produce. He took notice of the objection, from the low price of rice, and said, this was a fact, which could not be accounted for from any other cause but this, that in the article of rice, of which there is no competition, the demand cannot be extended beyond a certain supply. He added many other observations, to which the committee appeared to be particularly attentive.

Mr. Livermore contrasted the former and present situation of the merchants and traders of Portsmouth; they have been reproached for their poverty, said he—this however if true, is their misfortune, not their fault; it is true, many of them are reduced by means of the loss of that trade, which they now petition Congress to interpose their authority, that it may be restored—among many other observations he said that the number of ships which are now building in several States, has been mentioned—but before the revolution the then province of New-Hampshire, built more ships annually than all of these together.

Mr. Bloodworth, observed that there had not been sufficient time to determine respecting the question; let us patiently wait the operation of the law as it now stands—he was for accommodation, but the accommodation should not be expected all on one side.

Mr. White said he was sorry the question was brought on, we have once determined the matter after a thorough discussion—and I could have wished said he that we had been satisfied.

The influence of the commercial interest was anticipated by the opposers of the constitution—will not this prove an additional burthen on agriculture? Will it not justify their predictions? Would it be just to lay an extra duty on any particular article that a particular part of the continent could not do without? The Southern States cannot export their produce without foreign ships, this shews the injustice of the proposition; he observed that the measure would have an unequal operation—it would tend to discourage agriculture—he shewed the impracticability of the Eastern States carrying the Southern produce; can they purchase that produce with specie? Have they goods to credit the Southern States for? Can they sell this produce in foreign countries upon terms equally advantageous with foreigners? I think it is evident they cannot.—He said he thought sufficient had been done to encourage the shipping of the Eastern States.

Mr. Page, I differ much, Mr. Chairman, from my colleague (Mr. White) for I think the tonnage proposed by the committee, being the very same which Virginia actually laid on British bottoms, cannot be too high, as that experiment was attended with happy effects although made by that state alone, British merchants immediately giving that freight to Virginia ships, which till then was refused them, and without encreasing the freight in British bottoms. Indeed I thought the freight was rather lowered by it, until a gentleman from Virginia, who was here when I mentioned these circumstances in the last session, told me I was mistaken. I believe, sir, that our constituents would be pleased with the retaliation proposed in the memorial on which the report of the committee now under consideration is founded; and I confess that, did we not stand in need, of every means of encreasing our revenue, and did not a proper tonnage furnish one considerable branch of it, I should join heartily with the memorialists. The advantage of the carrying trade, and the propriety of encouraging it, has been stated to the committee; but, independent of every other consideration, I should vote for encreasing the tonnage, as the house has agreed to encrease the duties on many enumerated articles.

Sir, if Congress will go that length to encrease the revenue, it will be unpardonable not to have recourse to such an obvious source of revenue as tonnage; and that too, when instead of being a grievance, it must be highly advantageous to the United States. One dollar is the sum I wished to have voted the foreign tonnage at last session; I have heard no arguments to alter my opinion, and shall therefore, Mr. Chairman, vote against the motion before the committee, because I think as I did when the question respecting tonnage was before us last session, that the fears of the gentlemen from South-Carolina and Georgia are groundless.

I believe it the interest of the southern states, that ship-building should be encouraged to the utmost extent in the United States. The fine timber which they have would then be sold to advantage, in the form of ships, instead of being destroyed or thrown away under the name of lumber or in trifling slaves: Much I know has been destroyed in Virginia, much wasted in slaves. Sir, it is their interest that their sister states should carry for them, instead of foreigners. Under the late confederation, when each state was proud of its separate sovereignty and independent interest, and viewed each other with a jealous eye, I heard harsh expressions respecting the growing naval strength of the eastern states: But under the present government, there is no reason for such reflections; their strength is the strength of the union; and in this respect they are to the United States, what Holland is to the united Provinces. I affirm, again, sir, that we are in no danger from the retaliation of Britain; and we may with more propriety raise the tonnage, than encrease the duties on articles.