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[WHOLE No. 122.]

THE TABLET.—No. CXXII.

"One might suppose that the Christian religion would have been worn out, by passing through so many contending parties, unless it had some inherent solidity to give it duration."

(Continuation of the arguments in support of the position, that the universal diffusion of literature will precede and prepare the way for the universal prevalence of religion.)

THE facts already mentioned may perhaps be deemed sufficient to establish the point in question, as far as facts can do it.—There are however other historical traces, equally pertinent with those that have been cited, to illustrate the main purpose of our argument. It deserves to be noticed that about sixty years before the glorious era of the reformation in Europe, Constantinople, which had been the residence of learning and religion, was taken by the Saracens, and the religion of Jesus Christ was swallowed up in that of Mahomet. By this conquest, great numbers of eminent doctors were driven from Constantinople and other parts of the East. These Doctors settling in Germany and Italy introduced the Grecian literature; the study of which soon occasioned a revival of knowledge in almost every part of Europe. This happened but a few years after the invention of the art of printing;—a fortunate circumstance which greatly accelerated a general diffusion of literature. These preparatory events, concurring with other causes of less extensive and less visible influence, rendered the publication of a rational theology both practicable and natural. And for want of these causes only, it is obvious the efforts of Wickliff in the 14th, and of Huss and Jerome in the 15th century were less successful in refuting the torrent of pontifical encroachments, than those of Luther and Zuinglius in the 16th. But when the human mind was once enlightened and rendered capable of distinguishing between the precepts of religion and the impositions of fraud, a single pen could do more to reform mankind than the great, the amiable Alfred, or the powerful Charlemagne; and a single voice from the desk was listened to with more attention than the trumpet of Charles the 5th. Assisted by these favorable circumstances, Luther, before his death, had the felicity of beholding millions of wretched mortals emancipated from delusion and slavery—he saw one half the huge fabric of anti-christian* dominion tumbled to the ground, and the other half tottering to its foundation.

A candid survey of these facts will convince us how fruitless an attempt must prove, to introduce a rational system of religion among savages and slaves, without paving the way by a cultivation of the mental faculties. In addition to these let us observe, that the inhabitants of the Highlands in Scotland and the neighboring islands, notwithstanding their vicinity to the most polished nations on earth, and all attempts to detach them from the idolatrous customs of antiquity, still remain firmly wedded to the druidical superstition. Let us also advert to the various efforts that have been made, without success, to christianize the savages upon our own frontiers. A reflection of a moment will point us to the reason. Unless the savages can be crowded into so small a compass of territory, as will compel them to have recourse to agriculture and commerce for a subsistence, they never can be civilized; and all attempts to instruct them in religion, while they remain in the savage state, ever have, and probably ever will prove as idle and chimerical, as an attempt to introduce civil institutions among the fowls of Heaven.—This leads us to the real cause of the otherwise astonishing success of the Jesuits in converting savages; and of that decisive influence they have acquired, wherever they have established themselves, particularly over the nations of Paraguay in South America. The profound policy of that society of ingenious and learned men, has been to prepare the way for a reception of their religion by a cultivation of the mind; and by this policy, and their indefatigable industry, they have

* It is possible some of our readers may suppose that the writer of these remarks, on the comparative influence of learning and religion, means them as an attack upon some particular denomination of christians. The Editor however is confident that the writer had no sect specially in view, in his reflections upon the state of religion, during those periods, when learning had made little progress. It is evident his object was to shew, that, in an unenlightened age, a rational system of religion could not prevail. The superstition of those times, when the people were generally ignorant, was not confined to any single religious sect, but pervaded the worship of all denominations.

One religious sect will neither be more or less superstitious than another, if all are equally favored with the means of literature.—The Editor has now in his possession an Essay written by the au-

made more converts of savages, than all other denominations of christians; and larger acquisitions to the Spanish dominions, than the arms of Cortez and Pizarro. (To be continued.)

thor of this discussion, on the subject of universal toleration, and from this he is persuaded the author is not partial in his attachments or aversions to any sect whatever. The term anti-christian does not exclusively belong to any sect of christians; but it may be applied to the errors of every one. In every sect there are good and bad men.

On the immortal MILTON.

A PART, and on a sacred hill retir'd,
Beyond all mortal inspiration fir'd,
The mighty Milton sits; an host around
Of list'ning angels guard the holy ground;
Amaz'd they see a human form appear,
To grafp with daring hand a seraph's lyre,
Inly irradiate with celestial beams,
Attempt those high, those soul-subduing themes,
(Which humbler denizens of heav'n decline)
And celebrate with sanctity divine,
The straggling field from warring angels won,
And God triumphant in his victor son.
Nor less the wonder and the sweet delight,
His milder scenes and softer notes excite,
When at his bidding Eden's blooming grove,
Breathes the rich sweets of innocence and love,
With such pure joy as our forefather knew
When Raphael, heavenly guest, first met his view,
And our glad sire, within his blissful bower,
Drank the pure converse of th' aetherial power,
Round the blest bard his raptur'd audience throng,
And feel their souls imparadis'd in song.

DISCOURSES ON DAVILA.—No. IX.

Continued from our last.
Tis from high life, high characters are drawn,
A faint in crape, is twice a faint in lawn.

TO any one who has never considered the force of national attention, consideration, and congratulation, and the causes, natural and artificial, by which they have been excited, it will be curious to read in Plato's Alcibiades, the manner in which these national attachments to their kings, were created by the ancient Persians. The policy of the modern monarchies of Europe, seems to be, an exact imitation of that of the Persian court, as it is explained by the Grecian philosopher. In France, for example, the pregnancy of the queen is announced with great solemnity to the whole nation, her majesty is scarcely afflicted with a pain, which is not formally communicated to the public. To this embryo, the minds of the whole nation are turned, and they follow him, day by day, in their thoughts till he is born, the whole people has a right to be present at his birth; and as many as the chamber will hold, crowd in, till the queen and prince are almost suffocated with the loyal curiosity and affectionate solicitude of their subjects. In the cradle, the principal personages of the kingdom, as well as all the foreign ambassadors, are from time to time presented to the royal infant; to thousands who press to see him, he is daily shewn from the nursery; of every step in his education, and of every gradation of his youthful growth, in body and mind, the public is informed in the Gazettes; not a stroke of wit, not a sprightly folly, not a trait of generous affection, can escape him, but the world is told of it, and very often pretty fictions are contrived, for the same purpose, where the truth will not furnish materials. Thus it becomes the national fashion, it is the tone of the city and the court, to think and converse daily about the dauphin. When he accedes to the throne, the same attention is continued, till he dies. In elective governments, something very like this always takes place, towards the first character; his person, countenance, character and actions, are made the daily contemplation and conversation of the whole people. Hence arises the danger of a division of this attention—where there are rivals for the first place, the national attention and passions are divided and thwart each other; the collision enkindles fires; the conflicting passions interest all ranks; they produce slanders and libels first, mobs and seditions next, and civil war, with all her hissing snakes, burning torches, and haggard horrors, at last. This is the true reason, why all civilized free nations have found by experience, the necessity of separating from the body of the people, and even from the legislature, the distribution of honors, and conferring it on the executive authority of government. When the emulation of all the citizens looks up to one point, like the rays of a circle from all parts of the circumference meeting and uniting in the centre, you may hope for uniformity, consistency and subordination; but when they look up to different individuals or assemblies, or councils, you may expect all the deformities, eccentricities and confusions, of the ptolemaic system.

CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.
DEBATES ON TONNAGE, CONTINUED.
FRIDAY, MAY 14, 1790.

MR. FITZSIMONS observed, that notwithstanding all the gentleman, (Mr. Madison) has said, he could not help considering the measure as a very bold one. Great Britain maintains her West-India islands at an expence, which no other nation can support: This system she must persevere in, at all risks and hazards, and she will do it. The ships of this country are not, and will not for several years, be sufficient to export the produce of the United States, and if we exclude the British shipping, our produce must remain on our hands. This would be productive of consequences which every one must contemplate with distress.—The ships of Great Britain comprehend almost entirely what is called foreign shipping; by adopting this measure we shall in effect cut off the Southern States from all opportunity of exporting their produce—and as I think it must be a long period, if ever it should arrive, before the Southern States will become manufacturers or ship builders, it appears necessary that till such time as the American shipping shall be sufficient to carry off their produce, that we should not exclude this navigation, especially as the present capital of this country is not sufficient to furnish a present supply.—He said, to encourage our own shipping he thought the enhanced duty on tonnage was prudent; but beyond that could not think himself justified in going.

Mr. Williamson stated some particulars respecting the treaty of peace, and said that a commercial treaty was on the point of being concluded at that time; but the British minister having received information that our ports were opened to her ships, broke off the negotiation, as she enjoyed all that a treaty could give, without binding herself.

Mr. Lawrence thought the information of the gentleman last up of the highest importance, and therefore wished the business now under consideration to be postponed until such time as this information could be more completely laid before the house. We have not yet, said he, furnished the President with the means to send a person to Great-Britain to negotiate any treaty; the bill has not yet passed the Senate empowering him to nominate ambassadors, &c. He thought the same arguments which had been used against the duty on tonnage might have been applied against laying a duty on rum, coffee or sugar. To prohibit British vessels from exporting our produce, he did not believe would be thought so very disadvantageous to them: they might find other employ in exporting for other countries, even from Ireland to the West-Indies. If we exclude their vessels, we exclude their capitals; and it is well known that a great many of the British merchants have their capitals invested in the trade with America.

Mr. Lawrence further called on gentlemen to remember that this country had many indulgences allowed her in Great-Britain, which she did not allow to other countries; and influenced the articles of iron, flaxseed, potand pearl ashes, &c.

Mr. Jackson agreed with Mr. Lawrence in his observation that this was not a proper time to adopt the measure proposed, as he was apprehensive that if British bottoms were prohibited, our produce would be left upon our hands. He agreed with Mr. Hartley, in his observations respecting the western posts. He viewed the retention of these posts with indignity, as much as he viewed the carrying trade in any but our own vessels; but he said time was necessary to bring about a proper regulation. Shall we go to war with ourselves? said he.

He said he fully approved the sentiments of the gentleman from Virginia, yet such is the present situation of the United States, that he could not assent to adopting the proposition, as we are by no means prepared for the consequences.

Mr. Page remarked that the whole stress of the arguments against the resolutions before the committee, still rested on a supposition that Britain would retaliate. He reminded the committee of the different arguments which he and other members had adduced; to shew the improbability of that supposition; and remarked, that those gentlemen who had agreed to raise the tonnage on her ships to one dollar, but refused to do this unless we made our allies pay the like sum, expressed fears very unbecoming members of this house. Sir, said he, we are supposed to dread what is called a commercial war with Britain: how much more will the not suppose we must dread a war of another denomination? If we are thus timid, we shall shudder at Britain's resentment: if she sees this, she should not only hold the posts she now has within our territory, but she should advance and augment them; she should insist upon our taking off the duties which we have laid on her commodities. These fears, added he, would scarcely become us in our old colonial capacities; they are highly unbecoming in our present independent situation, and are extremely impolitic. But if some gentlemen are so much afraid of disobligeing the English, should they not have some fears lest they disoblige the French? Is it wise to disgust that nation, and our other allies, and bring down at least their contempt upon us, if not a restriction of our commerce with them? Can it be prudent to make no distinction between the nation which views our rising greatness with mortification, and which against its most obvious interest restrains our commerce; and that nation which at this moment is exulting in the enjoyment of liberty, for which they gratefully acknowledge they are in a great measure indebted to America, whom they had first rescued from the tyranny of that nation, to whom, contrary to the present interests of their own merchants, they open a beneficial commerce? The French must be exceedingly hurt by the observations which some gentlemen have made on our connection with France, and the preference they seem disposed to give to Britain.

But, sir, who can suppose that what are called indulgences of Britain are any thing more than what her own interest evidently dictates? She increases her revenue nearly 700,000l. per ann. by a duty on tobacco alone. The importance of the tobacco trade to her was evident in the late war, when her merchants gave 25 6d. sterl. per pound for it in this city, and afterwards paid 15d. duty in England. It was proved by Mr. Glover, when he appeared at the bar of the House of Commons in support of the merchants petition against entering into the war with America, that one third of the whole trade of Britain depended on the thirteen colonies, now the United States; and it is certain that at this day, although she has lost much of that trade she enjoys a great proportion of it, and, as my colleague clearly proved, advantages result from it which she has with no other nation. As to her turning her trade into another channel, as has been insinuated, she must be a loser by it.

It is said that Britain gives us a generous preference to Russia; but the balance of trade with Russia, and every other country in Europe, I believe, except Portugal, is against her.

But, sir, it is said that we may hurt the feelings of the British, who otherwise would conclude a treaty which they seem now disposed to make, now they have a power in America with which