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## The Tablet.—No. 148.

[The last number was by mistake put 149.]

*“There is unavoidably a congeniality of character between the tone of government and the state of society.”*

IN calculating the force of those reasons which have a favorable aspect upon the freedom and prosperity of a community, we should first look to the character of the inhabitants, and fix that as the most essential point on which the question turns. The state of society, more than the form of government, is to be regarded in estimating the chances in favor of public liberty. For, though one political constitution may have a preference over another, yet none that can be imagined will render liberty secure, unless there be a predisposition of other causes to make it so. In the United States the form of government is supposed to be as perfect, as can be framed by any light that can at present be derived from human wisdom; but our situation would be far less eligible than it is, if the duration of our freedom did not rest on a better foundation than words and stipulations defined on parchment. While it is the personal interest of the great bulk of the inhabitants to pursue such a system of conduct as will best comport with the views of the government, there is the strongest pledge, both on the part of the people and their rulers, that each will regard the prosperity of the other. Every class of citizens is, in some measure, a check upon other classes; and every individual of the same class is a check upon other individuals. No man can prosper in his occupation, and to do which is the main desire of his heart, unless he be honest and industrious; and while he is so, the government can calculate upon him as a safe and useful citizen. The legislature must be formed of men who participate of the national character; and as our inhabitants have so many motives of a personal nature, to prefer a virtuous life to a vicious one, we may expect good men, and of course a good government. That circumstance, which more than any other, promises duration to a government, is that the citizens feel and acknowledge their private interest to be connected with that of the public. This at once removes those sources of discontent and insurrection which flow from the belief, that the views of the government are at variance with the interest of individuals.

The smallest deviation from rectitude in any public officer, or a want of abilities to execute his trust with propriety, can never elude the public discernment. It is therefore a thing to be always expected that our public administration will be able and virtuous. There is little danger that any person, from intrigue or powerful connections, can long sustain an office which he does not fill with some degree of reputation to himself, and advantage to the community. Perhaps some worthier man may be left out of office, but he who fills it, must possess some share of merit. The body of electors, in this country, are too numerous to be bribed in any instance, and they generally have too independent a temper to second the views of vile and mercenary candidates. The most that is to be feared from cabal and party influence, is that the very best men may not always succeed against characters of inferior pretensions; but he who does succeed must be a person far removed from the basest of mankind.

Few of those causes, which kept the ancient republics in such tumult and agitation, exist in this country. Our notions and regulations respecting property are well known and defined. The laws are generally understood and approved of; and the citizens are apt to view a man as their enemy, who avows himself an enemy to law and justice. A defect of knowledge in points respecting property, and an imperfect system of laws, were the principal causes why the turbulent temper of ancient times could not be restrained. There were less energetic motives for peace and tranquility, than for war and confusion, according to the ideas which the ancients had imbibed of happiness and dignity. But a turn of thinking very different from that prevails among our citizens. And while they are so solicitous to pursue their various callings, undisturbed by factions or wars, it must be their most ardent desire that the laws should be equal and energetic, and that their execution should, under no pretence, be impeded. *(To be continued.)*

*[The following beautiful, and animated description of the “ADVANTAGES OF COMMERCE,” written by a justly celebrated English author, can never be read without pleasure.]*

### ADVANTAGES OF COMMERCE.

THERE is no place in town which I so much love to frequent as the Royal Exchange.—It gives me a secret satisfaction, and in some measure gratifies my vanity as an Englishman, to see so rich an assembly of my countrymen and foreigners consulting together upon the private business of mankind, and making this metropolis a kind of emporium for the whole earth. I must confess, I look upon high change to be a grand council, in which all considerable nations have their representatives. Factors, in the trading world, are what ambassadors are in the political world. They negotiate affairs, conclude treaties, and maintain a good correspondence between those wealthy societies of men, that are divided from one another by seas and oceans, or live on the different extremities of a continent. I have often been pleased to hear disputes adjusted between an inhabitant of Japan and an alderman of London, or to see a subject of the great Mogul entering into a league with one of the Czar of Muscovy. I am infinitely delighted in mixing with these several ministers of commerce, as they are distinguished by their different walks and different languages. Sometimes I am jostled among a body of Armenians; sometimes I am lost in a crowd of Jews; and sometimes make one in a group of Dutchmen. I am a Dane, a Swede, or Frenchman, at different times; or rather fancy myself like the old philosopher, who, upon being asked what countryman he was, replied, That he was a citizen of the world.

This grand scene of business gives me an infinite variety of solid and substantial entertainment. As I am a great lover of mankind, my heart naturally overflows with pleasure at the sight of a prosperous and happy multitude; in so much, that, at many public solemnities, I cannot forbear expressing my joy with tears. For this reason, I am wonderfully delighted to see such a body of men thriving in their own private fortunes, and at the same time promoting the public stock; or, in other words, raising estates for their own families, by bringing into their country whatever is wanting, and carrying out of it whatever is superfluous.

Nature seems to have taken a particular care to disseminate her blessings among the different regions of the world, with an eye to this mutual intercourse and traffic among mankind, that the natives of the several parts of the globe might have a kind of dependence upon one another, and be united together by their common interests. Almost every degree produces something peculiar to it. The food often grows in one country and the sauce in another. The fruits of Portugal are corrected by the products of Barbadoes; the infusion of a China plant sweetened with the pith of an Indian cane. The Philippine islands give a flavour to our European bowls. The single dress of a woman of quality is often the product of an hundred climates. The muff and the fan come together from the different ends of the earth. The scarf is sent from the torrid zone, and the tippet from beneath the pole. The brocade petticoat rises out of the minds of Peru, and the diamond necklace out of the bowels of Indostan.

If we consider our own country in its natural prospect, without any of the benefits and advantages of commerce, what a barren uncomfortable spot of earth falls to our share! Natural historians tell us, that no fruit grows originally among us besides hips and haws, acorns and pig-nuts, with other delicacies of the like nature; that our climate, of itself, and without the assistance of art, can make no farther advances towards a plum than a sloe, and carries an apple to no greater perfection than a crab; that our melons, our peaches, our figs, our apricots, and our cherries, are strangers among us, imported in different ages, and naturalized in our English gardens; and that they would all degenerate and fall away into the trash of our own country, if they were wholly neglected by the planter, and left to the mercy of our sun and soil.

Nor has traffic more enriched our vegetable world than it has improved the whole face of nature among us. Our ships are laden with the harvest of every climate; our tables are stored

with spices, and oils, and wines; our rooms are filled with pyramids of china, and adorned with the workmanship of Japan; our morning's draught comes to us from the remotest corners of the earth; we repair our bodies by the drugs of America, and repose ourselves under Indian canopies. My friend, Sir Andrew, calls the vineyard of France, our gardens; the spice-islands, our hot-beds; the Persians, our silk weavers; and the Chinese, our potters. Nature, indeed, furnishes us with the bare necessities of life; but traffic gives us a great variety of what is useful, and at the same time supplies us with every thing that is convenient and ornamental. Nor is it the least part of this our happiness, that, while we enjoy the remotest products of the north and south, we are free from those extremities of weather which give them birth; that our eyes are refreshed with the green fields of Britain, at the same time that our palates are feasted with fruits that rise between the tropics.

For these reasons, there are not more useful members in a commonwealth than merchants. They knit mankind together in a mutual intercourse of good offices, distribute the gifts of nature, find work for the poor, add wealth to the rich, and magnificence to the great. Our English merchant converts the tin of his own country into gold, and exchanges his wool for rubies. The Mahometans are clothed in our British manufactures, and the inhabitants of the frozen zone are warmed with the fleeces of our sheep.

When I have been upon Change, I have often fancied one of our old kings standing in person where he is represented in effigy, and looking down upon the wealthy concourse of people with which that place is every day filled. In this case, how would he be surpris'd to hear all the languages of Europe spoken in this little spot of his former dominions, and to see so many private men, who, in his time, would have been the vassals of some powerful baron, negotiating, like princes, for greater sums of money than were formerly to be met with in the royal treasury! Trade, without enlarging the British territories, has given us a kind of additional empire; it has multiplied the number of the rich, made our landed estates infinitely more valuable than they were formerly, and added to them an accession of other estates as valuable as the lands themselves.

### AMERICAN ANTIQUITY.

ON the eastern shore of the Mississippi, in near 47 degrees north latitude, and some miles below Lake Peppin, is a level open plain, on which is an elevation, which, even at a distance, has the appearance of an entrenchment; and, upon the strictest examination, it appears that it has really been intended for this purpose many centuries ago. Notwithstanding it is now covered with grass, it is plainly to be discovered that it was once a breast work about four feet in height, extending the best part of a mile, and sufficiently capacious to cover five thousand men. Its form is somewhat circular, and its flanks reach to the river. Though much defaced by time, every angle is distinguishable, and appears as regular, and fashioned with as much military skill as if planned by Vauban himself. The ditch though not very visible, yet there are evident marks of there certainly having been one. From its situation there can be no doubt that it must have been designed for a fortification. It fronts the country, and its rear is covered by the river, nor is there any rising ground for a considerable way that commands it, and only a few straggling oaks are to be seen near it. They who observe this work with a skilful eye, see in it evident traces of very great antiquity; but it is hard to tell how it could have been produced in a country that has hitherto, according to the generally received opinion, been the seat of warlike untutored Indians alone, whose whole stock of military knowledge has only, till within two centuries amounted to drawing the bow, and whose only breast work, even at present, is the thicket. It is hoped the time is not far distant when persons of skill will be enabled by the bounty of the public, to investigate not only this but many other American antiquities, and by this means give us some idea of the ancient inhabitants, and state of regions, that we at present believe to have been from the earliest period only the habitation of savages.

LONDON, August 28.

*Extract of a letter from Warsaw, August 3.*

AMONG the different objects occupying the diet latterly, they have decreed the suppression of Abbeys, of which the revenues, amounting to 300,000 florins, are applied to the invalids and the hospitals.

“In order to attach the united Greeks of Volinia and the Ukraine to the republic, they have agreed to admit their archbishop into their senate.

“For those yet disunited, they reserve themselves to form such resolutions as may make them cordially co-operate at length.

“The ancient yoke of aristocracy shackling the people, is about to be broken forever, and the heretofore fettered subject, come forward and boldly assert and maintain the dignity and independence of his being.”