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Discourses on Davila.—No. 32.

BUT amidst all these scenes of anarchy, carnage and desolation, and amidst so many pretensions to reformation, were there no projects to change the form of government?—Yes, there were; and some persons appeared as zealous to destroy the monarchy and nobility at that time, as any of the national assembly, any of the men of letters, or public creditors of the present day in France. One of these has left an essay so very curious that it is worth preserving: It contains all that can be said or thought, as far as I know, against monarchy and nobility, and shows that the doctrines which now prevail in France are no new discoveries or inventions: They are nearly two hundred and fifty years old. Neither Turgot, Rochefoucault, or Condorcet, have the merit of these inventions. Stephen Boetius, as we learn from his friend Montaigne, died in 1563. His vehement Philippic against monarchy and aristocracy, must have been written therefore more than 230 years ago—it must have been written an hundred years before Marchmont Nedham's Right Constitution of a Commonwealth. Instead of taking praise to themselves, the men of letters in France, if their present systems succeed, and prosper, ought to erect statues and strike medals to Boetius and Nedham, whose political disciples they certainly are.

If by divine power a man should be miraculously formed of mature reason and full information of every thing, but men, nations and governments: and you should ask him, what he thought of twenty-five millions of men, composing the whole of a great nation, surrendering the whole sovereign legislative and executive power over themselves to one individual, and ordaining that all that power should descend to his male posterity forever; he would probably think it the most irrational, and ridiculous idea imaginable. If you were to tell him that almost all the nations of the earth had done it, he must be astonished and very inquisitive to be informed of the causes, physical, moral or political, which could have prevailed upon reasonable creatures to consent to such an institution. Is there any other answer that could be given to him than this? Mankind found by experience, government necessary to the preservation of their lives, liberties and properties, from the injustice of one another. That they had tried all possible experiments of elections of Governors and Senates: But that they had found so much diversity of opinion and sentiment among them. So much emulation in every heart, so many rivalries among the principal men, such divisions, confusions and miseries, that they had almost unanimously been convinced that hereditary succession was attended with fewer evils than frequent elections. This is the true answer, and the only one, as I believe.

It is to be regretted that Boetius, who discovered so much ingenuity in reasoning against the one, and the few, had not told the many, how they should govern themselves. He is for pulling down, but shows not how to build up. That he who abates a writ should give a better, is as reasonable a rule in legislation as in law. If Boetius, or the National Assembly had proposed a sovereignty in three branches forming a mutual balance, which would have prevented the one, the few and many from running into the sins that most easily beset them; they would have been justly applauded: but to throw the whole power into the hands of a majority of that multitude against which Boetius raves with more intemperance, if possible, than he does against Kings, is an experiment which must be fully tried and found beneficial before it can be approved. But as the reader will be more entertained and instructed by the discourse of Boetius, than with the discourse on Davila, he shall be no longer detained from it.

L O N D O N, March 3.

Extract of a letter from Paris, January 7.

[Translated from the Leyden Gazette.]

THE oath to be taken by the Ecclesiastics, is the cause of much disturbance, and it is, as yet, difficult to determine, what turn this affair may take, or what may be the final consequences. To form a just idea of what may be the effects, one must go back to the original cause of this procedure. When the clergy were first deprived

of their property, that is to say before their civil government was determined on, several Bishops began to thunder forth their Anathemas against the proceedings of the National Assembly, under cover of certain writings called Mandates, or Pastoral letters. The refusal of the National Assembly to establish the Roman Catholic religion, furnished them with an occasion for writing and circulating their inflammatory productions, the whole view and design of which was to alarm weak understandings, and by universally spreading discontent throughout the Nation, to oblige the Assembly to desist from their determination of granting freedom of conscience. In the large cities, and even in the Provinces, where the people were not wholly unenlightened, the poison of those HOLY MEN could do no harm; but in the cantons where ignorance and superstition still maintain their influence over the minds of men (places, fortunately, at this day no more than insignificant spots in the vast extent of France) there it was that disquiet took possession of every bosom, and the interested cause of these gowned hypocrites was made the cause of the God of peace and purity!—If the disturbances at Nimes and Montauban had not been extinguished at their first appearance, again should we have witnessed those horrid scenes which disgraced France in the sixteenth century; but thanks be to God, the vigilance and zeal of some neighboring towns, more enlightened by the benevolent philosophy of the present age, and principally Bourdeaux, had the ability to prevent those cruel excesses. No sooner were these tumults allayed than the Civil Constitution of the Clergy afforded another pretext for insurrection. The National Assembly having divided the Kingdom into departments, to destroy, root and branch, those former divisions called Provinces, had thought proper also to direct a new division of Dioceses. They had remarked that the Bishops had always exercised over the Clergy of the second order a degree of authority little short of despotism, and which appertained neither to the spirit of religion nor the Constitution; In consequence of which they decreed that the Bishops should establish permanent and regular courts, but should pass no acts of authority till the second order had been admitted into a share of their deliberations. It was to no purpose that the Bishops strenuously opposed those innovations (as they termed them) and complained of an invasion of the spiritual jurisdiction and that the Assembly encroached upon the authority of the Church. They were deaf to their complaints and remonstrances; and referred them for an answer to the authority of Charlemagne and the ancient discipline—Upon this the Episcopal Mandates and Pastoral letters suddenly made their appearance again, stuffed with complaints more violent, and reflections more bitter than ever; but the discontented Clergy perceiving their letters disregarded and not answering the purpose intended, fell upon other means of blowing up the flames of discord. They flattered themselves that a Protestation, worded equivocally, and with a plain title, and signed by some of the more strict Clergy would have both a surer and readier effect. And hence originated the famous DECLARATION, which at first was only signed by those refractory Bishops, who were deputed to the National Assembly. This piece proposed a coalition, and by that means gained some attention; but altho' it was published throughout the Kingdom to a degree of satiety, it made few converts, and only received in general terms the approbation of those whose opinions were already fixed on the side of the Bishops—So much clamour, secret machination, self-interested opposition, and the apprehension of still greater evils, have at length determined the Assembly to take effectual measures to humble the High Clergy. For this purpose they have decreed, that all Ecclesiastics and public officers of the Church should be compelled to take an oath "to support not only the general government of the Kingdom, but also their own particular constitution on penalty of being deprived of their places and livings." This seems to be the last remedy in a desperate case, the only probable means of accelerating and consolidating the re-establishment of order in the Kingdom.—However (to speak the truth) there is no EXTREME REMEDY without danger; and it is possible that some recent proceedings in the Assembly may be followed by a violent concussion. All the Bishops (excepting only the Bishop of Autun) have persisted in refusing the oath—The As-

sembly refuses to give them any longer time: and thus all the High Clergy, and not a few of the second order also, are upon the point of seeing themselves deprived of all their places and of all their revenues."

[From Vol. 3, of "Memoirs of the Manchester Literary Society," just published.]

I REMEMBER it was some years since, mentioned in this Society, that a method had been recommended, but where or by whom I do not recollect, of preventing the necessity of using spectacles in advanced age. It consisted in the practice of reading a very small print by the light of a small candle. By this means the humours of the eye being protruded, the crystalline lens was supposed to be hindered from losing its convex form, and assuming that flatness which it acquires in old persons.

I lately met with a gentleman, who, contrary to what generally happens to men as they advance in life, was, at the age of fifty, become short-sighted; whereas, when younger, his eyes had not that fault; and who, instead of being obliged to use convex glasses, had found it necessary to employ concave ones, and to procure them still more the older he grew. This change in his sight, he informed me, he first observed after having for some time accustomed himself to read a book printed in a small character, and that frequently in the close of the evening, when the light was not favorable for the purpose.

As this is an uncommon fact, and may serve to confirm the propriety of the doctrine I have alluded to, I thought it might be proper to communicate it to the Society.

The sermon preached by the Bishop of Landaff, before the Humane Society, at St. Martin's in the Fields, on Sunday last, was one of the finest and most impressive examples of Pulpit Oratory we have ever heard. His Lordship's discourse was a most happy composition of theological learning, philosophical disquisition, Christian instruction, and philanthropic exhortation, aided by the powerful influence of the most graceful delivery.

The Queen has just established a Botanic Garden, with forcing houses at Frogmore, where her Majesty and the Princesses frequently pay visits.

HOUSE of COMMONS,

Monday, February 8.

AMERICAN LOYALISTS.

Sir Henry Clinton presented a petition from the American Loyalists, praying for farther relief.

Mr. Pitt said he had no objection that this petition should be granted; but he was much afraid it would not avail them. The time for receiving such petitions had already been three times enlarged. He did not know after all, but that there might be cases which would deserve the attention of the house.

Sir Henry Clinton said a few words upon this petition; after which it was received, and ordered to lie on the table.

UNCLAIMED DIVIDEND BILL.

The bill for appropriating to the public service 500,000*l.* of the unclaimed dividends was read a first time, and was ordered to be printed.

Wednesday, March 2.

AMERICAN INTERCOURSE BILL.

Mr. Pitt brought in a bill for continuing the laws regulating the trade between his Majesty's subjects of this country, and the inhabitants of the United States of America.

This bill was read a first, and was ordered to be read a second time to-morrow.

Almost all the clergy in Brittany, (France,) whose influence on the people is very great, are resolved not to conform to the decrees of the National Assembly, respecting the civic oath, and the civil constitution of the church.

Between the people and the National guards, who vainly attempt to conquer this refractory spirit, desperate battles have already been fought attended with bloodshed.

In Alsace, the Cardinal de Rohan, the clergy, and vast numbers of the people are entirely of the same disposition as the Bretons, and resolved not to submit to the decrees of the National Assembly.

From the Leyden Gazette, of February 1.

Mr. LUZAC, the Editor, after giving extracts from the British papers on the subject of the

WAR IN INDIA,

such as have been published, adds, With these accounts, taken from English papers, it may be