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## TERMS

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## POLITICAL.

FROM THE KENTUCKY REPORTER.

The politician and philanthropist will peruse with interest the following extract of a letter from a gentleman in England, descriptive of the condition of that stupendous fabric of splendor, misery, and corruption. Who that has contemplated this bulwark of royalty and slavery will not feel his heart pained at this picture of wretchedness and folly? We can add, that it is s'etched by a distinguished whig, who has devoted himself for some time past to the amelioration of the unhappy condition of his countrymen—one who acts a conspicuous part in the work of Reform, now going on.

"It is very unlikely I shall ever have the pleasure of seeing you, unless you come to England. For although every measure of our government tends to the subjugation of the people, yet it is impossible that such a people should relapse into slavery while there is a public press; and I feel it to be my duty to remain on the soil which gave me birth; even if I should be the last of its freemen—the first of its slaves I will not be."

"I cannot turn my thoughts towards America without reflecting on her political institutions, and anticipating her future greatness. She must become the most powerful nation on the earth, and she will deserve to remain so if she secure her liberty on private virtue, and carefully avoid perpetuating exclusive rights. Our corporations, and charters, and patent privileges, hang upon us and prevent our attaining to the height which the spirit of the age would place us at; these are the curses of our social state; they repress improvement and render unavailing the wisest efforts of the enlightened. You have, however, admitted into some of your states a canker which will eat its way at last to the vitals of your system, if you do not instantly root it out. I mean a compulsory assessment for the relief of the poor. The most obvious effect of it here, is a subdual of independence in the workman and laborer which palsies his efforts for life. The man who accepts parish charity feels himself degraded by the boon; he is no longer a free citizen, but a pauper; a burden, as often as he chooses to be lazy, upon his fellow citizens; and a mere slave. The great land owners and manufacturers here take advantage of our poor laws to cultivate the soil and work their factories with these poor creatures. They are permitted to marry and get children, and thus a breed of white slaves is kept up in England, who are not so well fed as your negro slaves. (By the way, black slavery is a foul blot in your legislation.) This compulsory system withal does not prevent distress; the rich are rendered callous and selfish by a continued succession of miserable objects; they know not how to distinguish the helpless from the idle; the misery is too great to relieve in detail; it is left to the parish officers, and many of the destitute die in the open street, or crawl from the public gaze, and perish in holes and corners."

"The curse of the poor laws is in full operation here. Ten millions of pounds sterling is raised by law every year upon the inhabitants of England to support or relieve the poor, and one out of every eight individuals in the nation annually receives parish charity, in some shape or other. Recollect, too, that this is where there is an immense stream of private bounty continually flowing; that there are societies in almost every parish which contribute largely to the wants of the poor, not supplied by parish rates; and that there are, at least, one hundred national institutions supported by public subscriptions for various charitable & benevolent purposes; never forget that all this, arising from a small beginning, ends at last in this policy of the land owners and capitalists:—"We can get our work done cheaper by perpetuating the breed of paupers than by allowing men to offer us their labour as their stock in trade and taking it of them at a fair market price." Upon this policy they act at this time; and, owing to its growth and extent, we are no more in condition to escape from its operation, and turn to entirely sound principles, than we are to insist upon a fall of prices and reduced rents; both

which have been unnaturally increased by an enlarged circulating medium, under the present system of paper money. Again, I say, beware of the poor laws. In the infancy of your country you can have no real ground for thinking of any measure of compulsory relief. Individual feeling, left to itself, may not perhaps, in more advanced stages of society, be equal to emergencies; but then, "sufficient for the day is the evil thereof;" expedients may and will, in such cases be resorted to, by the community; but not a thought of legislating permanently or prospectively should be entertained, for a moment, to any period.

Guard, too, against over-legislation. Leave every thing to itself as much as possible: especially in trade and commerce. You have the best security against luxury in the economy of your government, and the public spirit of the people. Here we have legislated for every thing. I believe the law is yet un-repeated under which I have seen a man taken into custody for wearing a button mould covered with cloth by his wife, instead of a covering regularly manufactured. The accursed game laws and tythe laws, perpetuated and increased by endless modifications, are a fruitful source of demoralization and crime. They make men criminal, and then punish them for being so.

I presume that, as your resistance to an excise tax was the germ of American liberty, you will never suffer one to originate in your legislature. An Englishman's house is no more his castle under the operation of our excise laws, than his person is free under the laws of debtor and creditor.

Avoid these, and a property tax, and the law of primogeniture, and the establishment of one religious sect above the rest, and aristocratical distinctions; confer rewards for merit in your public men, but not privileges; above all *perpetuate nothing*.

Keep your engagements rigidly, to the very letter; let no inducement warp your legislature in this respect; no advantage, however great, should tempt you to swerve for a moment. The credit of state depends on its honesty and good faith; these constitute its character. The individuals of a state without character, feel themselves degraded and quickly become corrupt, and as base as their government. "Honesty is the best policy," for nations as well as subjects.

Perhaps I ought to have confined myself to a simple acknowledgement of your civility; yet I could not refrain from expressing my desires and hopes for the welfare of the U. S. by the few hints which the reading of your handsome letter of congratulation to me suggested to my mind. If it is natural and fitting in a man who loves liberty to wish that all those who have it may preserve it, my earnest prayer is, that America may preserve hers. If the government here was as free as our press, I think it likely that I should make an effort to visit America, for the purpose of seeing her people and her institutions. But I cannot do this with satisfaction to myself, whilst my native land is in its present state. I think, with the late Mr. Horne Tooke, that "if we can do no better for our country, our carcasses should at least manure the soil that fed us," and that "our ancestors, who, in the 17th century, fled from slavery, loved liberty well; they who staid, and by their sufferings and exertions vindicated and established it, loved liberty well; but they who staid, and by their sufferings and excursions vindicated and established it, loved liberty better, and deserved better of posterity."

## MISCELLANEOUS.

ON IMPRISONMENT FOR DEBT.

From the Boston Centinel.

Mr. Editor.—The interesting subject of Imprisonment for debt has often arrested the customary attention of the Legislature of this commonwealth; but, as yet, all attempts to abolish it, have been defeated, and principally by the arts, or the undue influence of men interested in the business, which the existing abuses afford, against the clearest convictions of justice, and the policy of a free and christian country.

It is a well known fact, that in no commercial country of Europe, except Old England, is the wanton exercise of the power of imprisonment for debt permitted to exist; and even in England the poor debtor is now admitted to his oath in a fortnight after commitment; whereas in New-England he is not until thirty days. In Scotland, too the right of the creditor is limited to the property of the debtor with a power, to an impartial judge, to inflict punishment in cases of fraud. In Holland, the most naturally

commercial community in the world Imprisonment for debt is unknown; and credit is not there found to be affected by the omission.

On this subject the pens of the wisest and best of men have been employed; and in many countries, with the happiest effect. Why then is it that in Massachusetts where so large a majority of the Legislature is composed of enlightened landholders, liberal merchants, ingenious mechanics, and friends of humanity, they have made so little impression! And how long are a narrow self-interest and proud tyranny to hold a slavish dominion over numbers, reason, humanity, and sound policy?

As this subject will no doubt be renewed at the ensuing session of the Legislature, permit me, sir, thus early, to call the attention of the members to it; and to the arguments of some of the wisest and best of men who have employed their talents in its investigation. The limits of a news-paper are too narrow to admit many quotations on the subject; but as a sample, let me beg the publication of the following.

The great philanthropist and sturdy moralist, Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON, says, speaking of imprisonment for debt:

"The end of all civil regulations is to secure private happiness from private malignity, to keep individuals from the power of one another; but this end is apparently neglected, when a man irritated with loss is allowed to be the judge of his own cause, and to assign the punishment of his own pain; when the distinction between quiet and happiness, between casualty and design, is entrusted to eyes blind with interest, to understandings depraved by resentment."

And the celebrated Edmund Burke, in his address to the Members of Bristol, says:

"The inflicting of this punishment is not in the opinion of an equal and public judge, but it is referred to the arbitrary discretion of a private, nay, interested and irritated individual. He who formally is, and substantially ought to be, the judge, is in reality no more than ministerial, a mere executive instrument of a private man, who is at once judge and party. Every idea of a judicial order is subverted by this procedure. If insolvency be no crime, why is it punished with arbitrary imprisonment? If it be a crime, why is it delivered into private hands to pardon without discretion, or to punish without mercy, and without measure?"

Other writers could be quoted, but let the above suffice.

All the reasons which have been given for the allowed incarceration of debtors have been the following:

1st. "That imprisonment is the proper mode to compel the debtor to surrender his property for the payment of his debts."

2d. "That imprisonment is a proper punishment for the fraudulent conduct of a debtor."

And 3d. "That imprisonment is a proper punishment for the protection of public credit."

It is admitted that the relinquishment of all the property of the debtor, excepting enough to afford the necessities of life to himself and family, ought to be enforced; but, after the relinquishment is made, the person of the debtor ought to be free.

As to the second reason, if a right distinction is observed between a breach of trust and fraud, scarcely any doubt can be entertained; every debtor, who through fraudulent representations obtains possession of property, ought to be punished for his fraud.

On the head of the third reason, the great moralist, and the profound statesman, I have quoted, says:

"The motive of credit is the hope of advantage. Commerce can never be at a stop while one man wants what another can supply; and credit will never be denied, whilst it is likely to be repaid with profit. He that trusts one who he designs to sue, is criminal by the act of trust; the cessation of such insidious traffic is to be delivered."—Johnson.

credit has little or no concern in this cruelty; credit is given because capital must be employed: men calculate the chances of insolvency; and they either withhold the credit, or make the debtor pay the risk in the price. The counting house has no alliance with the jail. Holland understands trade as well as we.—There was not when Mr. HOWARD visited Holland, more than one prisoner for debt in the great city of Rotterdam."—Burke.

These are general sentiments of enlightened disinterested men on this subject. Let me now descend to a description of the practical effect here, on the exercise of the right to imprison the bodies of persons for debt.

A few days since, I was led by the contemplation of the subject, to enquire into the state of the Boston jail. I found in the month of June last, no less than one hundred and thirty-five persons were committed to it for debt; in July, one hundred and eighty seven; and in the month of August, no less than two hundred and seven; male and female, making a total of FIVE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-NINE commitments for debt, in a loathsome prison, in one of the hottest summers ever experienced in this country. Of the number of those committed in August, 114 were for sums under 20 dollars; 19 of whom were females; & 22 from 20 to 30 dollars!

Do not these facts call aloud for legislative attention; and for a revision at least, of the laws on this subject? And is there no BURKE or a SIR SAMUEL ROMILLY, in the General Court of Massachusetts, who will become the foster parent of measures to remedy such flagrant and growing evils? I trust there is, and that his voice will be heard with effect.

MERCY.

## INTELLIGENCE.

During the conversation on Saturday evening at Dr. Mitchell's, several original letters of the late eloquent and reverend GEORGE WHITEFIELD were produced and read to the company—They had been written to a kinsman of his in Georgia, between the years 1755 and 1762. Piety and affection appear in every paragraph. Prudence and honesty are strongly inculcated.

Four manuscript books of the famous Asiatic traveller James S. Buckingham, Esq. of Bombay, were laid upon the table. The author is an English gentleman of fortune and enterprise, who has perfectly acquired the Arabian language and manners; and who, when dressed in the Oriental costume, passes for a Mahometan. He meditates a publication of his travels, and there is reason to believe they will be highly instructive and entertaining. It is expected Mr. B. will print them in London—there would therefore be an impropriety in forestalling his intentions. Nevertheless, fair dealing and a friendly disposition allow a few remarks.—The first volume or number contains the Journal of his journey from Bagdad to Babylon—The second, his encampment at Hilla, and his excursions over and among the ruins of that famous and ancient city—The third, the History of the Wahabee religion; and of the Pirates and Pearl-fishers of the Persian Gulf—The fourth describes the war between the Pirates and the East India Company; and the unavailing proceedings at Rea-El Hhynia relative to a peace. They are as late as 1816. The part that relates to the stupendous antiquities and ruins, fully confirms the historical and prophetic text of holy scriptures, and the descriptions of Herodotus.

Pieces of the Earthenware of the North American natives, were produced for examination.—These fragments of aboriginal pottery were found seven hundred miles up the river Orleansaus, several feet below the soil, in a forest of heavy timber. The composition seemed very much to resemble that of the post and vases occasionally found in old Indian settlements east of the Alleghany Mountains.

A modern Greek discoursed with great intelligence on the opinions prevalent at Smyrna concerning the plague; on the place where the home of Homer is said to be; and on the pronunciation of the Greek tongue.

A correct and elegant figure of the new Fish, discovered by Capt. H. Coffin, in the North Atlantic Ocean, lat. 42, long 30, was produced. There being no genius to which this extraordinary animal could be referred, he has been placed in a new one, under the name of SACCO-PHARYNK, from the dilatibility of his jaws, and the bag-like size of his throat.

Two recent publications from Stockholm through the Swedish Consul, were observed by the company in the Swedish tongue—one was the fifth volume by the Medical Society of that kindom, in an octavo of nearly 500 pages. It contains, among many other important papers, a very particular and respectful notice (p. 328—344) of the New-York Philosophical Transactions. The several memoirs and their authors are duly announced to the learned in the North of Europe. The other was a book printed late in 1818, by Gadeius, for the learned, friendly and excellent Mr. CARLANDER, Secretary of the, &c. &c. whose liberal and enlarged mind merits the highest commendation. [N. Y. Mer.

The notion is idle, that a man will live easier on a small income, or grow sooner rich if he remain unmarried. Every thing desirable is furthered by a good wife. [N. Y. Mess.

From the New-York Columbian.

## PHENOMENON.

The extraordinary appearance of the Aurora Borealis, as seen last Tuesday evening, and in particular the white belt or bow, stretching from east to west, and moving rapidly to the south, has excited no doubt the attention of our readers. We avail ourselves of the following correct description of the phenomenon, from a correspondent:

## AURORA BOREALIS.

Last evening after sunset, we witnessed in New-York the appearance of an Aurora Borealis, or northern light, the vivid fulgency of which, and the extent on the horizon, we have never witnessed in this or the other hemisphere, during 45 years recollection.

The phenomenon, at half past 7, reflected its light more toward the west, on clouds which were magnificently illuminated by it, while those of the north remained dark and interspersed seemingly over a rising sun. At half past 8, splendid rays were projected divergingly from the focus of light, and nearly reached our zenith; a field of pale red colour, on the horizon, from west to east was distinctly formed at the extremity of these white rays. At 10 o'clock, the rays had much vanished, and their projection could scarcely be perceived, but they were at their extremity replaced by a belt encircling the whole section of Heaven that was lightened by the Aurora Borealis; it surpassed the beauty of the Galaxy, & was better projected from west to east; it was really like a night white rainbow. This appearance was not intersected by clouds, but did not last longer than half an hour. At 11 o'clock the northern light continued very strong without rays or colors; at one o'clock the shades of the night were dispelled even from the recesses of dark rooms. I saw it once more at 2 o'clock in the morning, soon after the rise of the moon, it seemed, perhaps, somewhat stronger than before. The reflection of the solar rays on the polar regions of ice, are, by the learned, supposed to produce the Aurora Borealis. Others prognosticate from it a severe winter, in the regions of the earth which it reaches.

## PHENOMENON—AURORA'S BOW.

Philadelphia, Oct. 13.

At half past eight o'clock yesterday evening, was observed in this city, one of the most sublime and beautiful appearances ever witnessed in Philadelphia. A silver bow stretching from west-north-west to east-south-east, filling the whole arch of the heavens, with its base resting on the eastern and western horizon.

This beautiful arch is what some would call a lunar bow, but we presume it was produced by the northern light, or Aurora Borealis shining upon a dark cloud to the north, and which, at the time, must have discharged some rain.—Thus by the reflection of light the bow was produced to an observer in the place. It was visible eight or ten minutes.

Daily Adv.

The emperor of China, it appears by our public papers has been very much alarmed by the appearance of a hurricane. In his royal gazette, he has thought proper to censure the astrologers belonging to his court, for not having foretold this event in their almanacs. His astrologers in reply to some queries propounded by his majesty, declared, that this hurricane was occasioned by the dismissal of his favorite minister. This explanation was rejected by his majesty, as an interference with his royal prerogative, and they received his majesty's commands, to try their hands at another interpretation of this phenomenon. The mathematical board presented their solutions, and stated, that if the whirlwind was accompanied with dust it shewed that there was dissension between the sovereign and his ministers. This explanation was intended, we presume, to make a whirlwind of majesty, and dust of his ministers. This is the nation whose example has been so often cited by visionary theorists, as furnishing a proper model for American adoption.

[Balt. Morn. Chron.

## INSANITY.

The late English newspapers give an account of a singular case of insanity. An unhappy woman by the name of Elizabeth Lunham, who by adversity was deprived of her senses, stole every key with which she came in contact—three thousand were found in her possession. She stole the keys of the Court of Chancery, and when desired by the Lord Mayor to explain her object, she answered that she wished to keep justice under lock and key. [Ibid.