



"Ours are the plans of fair, delightful Peace,
"Unwar'd by party rage, to live like Brothers."

AGRICULTURE.

To the Editor of the Raleigh Register.

I propose communicating to the public, through the medium of your paper, such information on the subject of Agriculture as I may be able to obtain, either from my own experience, that of others communicated personally to me, or from the most approved works written on the subject.

I shall avail myself of either, or a combination of the whole of these resources, in writing each number, according to the nature or importance of the subject; with regard to the latter resource, to wit, Agricultural Books, I promise that they shall be diligently consulted, and that all information scattered over many volumes which may be valuable to farmers, shall be faithfully collected, properly arranged, and presented to them. This information, perhaps, will deserve some attention, when it is considered that it will be drawn from books that are expensive and voluminous, and some of them scarce, and therefore, not easily to be acquired by the great body of the people in any other way. It shall also be clothed in language plain and perspicuous, so as to be adapted to the capacities and attainments of the great body of the people called Farmers, for whose benefit I write; and as I am one of them, and have devoted my talents, interests and efforts in the pursuits of agriculture, it is not to be supposed, that I shall recommend practices to them which are at variance with our common interests. The only reward which I desire, for the time and labor which must necessarily be bestowed in acquiring and communicating agricultural information to the public, is, that it may have a tendency to awaken our farmers to a better sense of their interest, to excite in them a spirit of enquiry and research, and a thirst for acquiring better information than they now possess on the subjects of their pursuit.

Should such a tendency be effected, may we not confidently hope that prejudice, the great bar to improvements in agriculture, will be destroyed, and that farmers, when convinced of their present imperfect modes of husbandry, will be disposed to enquire after and adopt better.

Nothing is so well calculated to eradicate these prejudices as well written books on the subject of agriculture. But how few of these books are to be found in the houses or libraries of our farmers; perhaps we may find in their possession a well written work on medicine, law and some of the sciences, but not one on the subject of agriculture, the most important and interesting to them of all temporal pursuits, one upon which not only their subsistence, comfort and happiness depends, but also that of their posterity.

It is from an ignorance of agriculture, that farmers in general take so little interest in and feel so little emulation for distinction in their pursuits. By many it is supposed, that agriculture is the only profession which requires little or no skill or previous knowledge, and that a man becomes a farmer as soon as he enters on the possession of a farm. Hence, without doubt, arises the miserable state of agriculture among us, and the many unsuccessful attempts by individuals, who have failed from no other cause, than the want of sufficient knowledge and experience.

In North-Carolina, the state of agriculture is at the lowest ebb; I speak not this with reproach, but with the deepest regret. But I am happy to behold a spirit for improvement, and improvements making in some sections of the State, which I hope will not be local, but will in time extend to every part of it.

There is a wide space between the present and a more permanent state of agriculture. Much is to be done to arrive at this desirable state. Our present, is a land-killing system, which must be altered for the better: for if persevered in, it must alternately issue in want, misery and depopulation. Agriculture, as an art, consists not in the impoverishment, but in the continual improvement of the soil.

To effect these improvements, it behoves men of liberal fortunes and enterprise (whose means and whose intelligence enable them to seek after and adopt improved modes of agriculture, and to recommend them to the

attention of their fellow-citizens, by teaching their utility & practicability) to step forward in so laudable an undertaking. Nothing can be more worthy of the liberal and patriotic mind; for improvements made in agriculture are not only to affect those now living, but descend to future ages, and dispense happiness and wealth to generations yet unborn.

AGRICOLA.

ENGLAND.

FROM THE BOSTON CHRONICLER AND PATRIOT.
Sixth Letter on the present state of England.

Further enquiry into the value of the British Constitution. Conclusion—that it is radically faulty in sacrificing the interest of the people to that of the privileged orders.

In my last letter I entered into an examination of the value of the British Constitution, and endeavored to shew that it was defective, in the first place in not providing for the welfare of the extensive and populous dependencies of the British Islands; and secondly, in not providing for the welfare of the great mass of people at home—that political inequality was the corner stone of the system—that this inequality was first introduced by force—and that a compulsory system was still necessary, and in fact actually made use of, to keep it in existence—and that the arguments of Montesquieu in favor of it were not conclusive. It is not sufficient, however, to shew that a single writer has failed in defending the cause. I shall now take up the subject a little more at large, and suggest some reasons why the existence of hereditary aristocracies is altogether indelible. It will be found that Montesquieu has not urged his own arguments in all their force, and that the additional reasons on which his system has been defended are also insufficient to prove it.

The consistent advocate of hereditary rank and fortune will endeavor to maintain these two points.

1. That in every community there is a natural aristocracy—that is, a natural inequality of talents and industry, which in the progress of society, will grow up into inequality of wealth and influence.

2. That this inequality of wealth and influence, ought for the good of society, to be made perpetual and definite by organising its possessors into a privileged class.

The first of these points it is not necessary to contest, and the experience of what is passing around us every day confirms it. We constantly see that individuals placed in nearly the same external circumstances and possessing about the same advantages, succeed very differently in the same pursuits. A part of this difference must be resolved into disparity of original powers, and a part into the effect of accidents operating upon the development of original powers by education and the successful exercise of them in the acquisition of objects.—The fact, however, is certain, that a part of every community will be more able and industrious and will acquire more wealth and influence than the rest, and those who like the term may denominate this portion a natural aristocracy. The second point, therefore, is the one deserving most attention, whether it be proper to erect this natural aristocracy into an hereditary and privileged class.

Now it may be observed, in the first place, that this is naturally impossible to be accomplished, however advisable it might be. It may be admitted, after making all proper allowances for extraordinary good fortune and even for successful intrigue, art and villainy, that the personal acquisition of wealth and influence, does, generally speaking and upon an average of cases, pre-suppose talents and some degree of virtue—such virtues I mean as activity and industry. Now if any political regulation could be made by which the possession of these good qualities should be made hereditary, as well as the wealth and influence which they confer, and a very considerable share of power should be given to the owners of this joint stock, the institution would probably be very beneficial. What state could be better governed than that in which talents and virtue had contracted a perpetual alliance with wealth & power? Unfortunately the effect of heredi-

tary distinctions is the reverse of all this, and tends directly to unite wealth and power with imbecility and vice. Suppose the real natural aristocracy, the possessors of talents and virtue, to be ennobled and invested with hereditary rank and wealth, and suppose them, which is itself very doubtful, to possess so much virtue as to stand the shock themselves and avoid corruption, their children, the very next generation, instead of being born to industry and action, and trained up to wholesome temperance and self-denial, are nursed in the bosom of indolence and luxury—What is the consequence? They are weak and vicious, and by the continued operation of the same causes, their characters degenerate from generation to generation—Meanwhile the entail of wealth and power goes on unbroken, and the care of the state falls into the hands of a heartless, effeminate and vicious nobility. They are of course incapable of transacting the business of the state themselves. They have quite different things to think of from making themselves statesmen or warriors. They must act by deputy—and their deputies will be taken from the number of those who are mean and depraved enough to obtain their favor.

Thus we see that in attempting to perpetuate the natural aristocracy, by making wealth and power hereditary in families, you accomplish the direct reverse of your object. Nature herself has a tendency to continue the possession of power and wealth in the hands of talents and virtue—for no reason can be given why the same causes which effected this union in the first generation should not effect it in the second. It is true that they would all pass from family to family, but they would still exist together. But by giving to vice and imbecility nearly all the power in the state, you make it impossible for talents and virtue to obtain it. Instead of perpetuating, you destroy the natural aristocracy and erect an artificial aristocracy on precisely the opposite principle. I have thought it proper to dwell at some length on this point, because it has been either an art or an error with some to confound the cause of the natural and artificial aristocracy, and persuade themselves of others, that because power and virtue might concur in a natural state of society, the possession of the former would in all cases suppose the possession of the latter. I conclude that it is impossible to erect the natural aristocracy into an hereditary nobility—that is, to make talents and virtue hereditary.

But, say the advocates of privileged classes, since we cannot confer hereditary nobility on talents and virtue, let us at least have it some way or other in the state, and that for two reasons—1. To defend the distinguished few, who are in danger from the violence of the jealous many, and this is the reason given by Montesquieu. 2. To defend the people from themselves—to have a fixed and permanent body in the country that may arrest the rash enterprises of the fickle and changeable people who are their own worst enemies. Let us examine both these reasons.

1. Who are this distinguished few that require to be protected? Do we mean the nobility themselves—the artificial aristocracy? That would be absurd, since it would suppose them to exist before their institution. Do we mean the natural aristocracy—those who have acquired distinction by their personal merit and talents? It has been shewn already that the artificial aristocracy instead of protecting this class of people, are their worst enemies. They take out of the field of competition a great part of the wealth and power that would otherwise be accessible to all; and thus diminish very much the number of persons who can acquire these objects and their influence in society. In addition to which there will always be an active and inveterate opposition between vice and imbecility invested with wealth and power on the one hand, and the influence of the honest and active part of society on the other.

2. But the people must be protected from themselves—from the effects of their own rash and unthinking resolves, and for this purpose, if for no other, we must have an hereditary nobility—we must have something firm and stable—we must found the state

upon a rock, that the storms of sudden passion may spend their rage upon it in vain—we must have a class of men that may be able to say, in the language of the beautiful fragment of Alcaeus,

From side to side the waves of party roll,
As pass on prompts or interest sways the soul;
But we, regardless, grasp the helm of state
With steady hand and laugh at chance and fate.

If, however, we analyse this reasoning a little, we shall find that instead of securing the people from the danger apprehended, this scheme of relief delivers them over at once to the very enemy we wish to avoid. Your object is to guard against the machinations of unprincipled men of talents, who may aim at exciting popular commotions or acquiring power for selfish purposes. Now nothing can be a better engine for such persons to use in the accomplishment of their views than a body of men, powerful in the state by circumstance and accident, but effeminate and weak, and liable to be duped by every artful intriguer that chooses to attempt it. In a state where equality of rank and fortune prevails to the degree that it naturally will, where no positive regulations are introduced to the contrary, a turbulent man has very little stuff to operate upon. As there is no very great number of overgrown fortunes, so there is on the other hand no starving populace ready to take fire at the smallest excitement. Industry is necessary for a living, and almost every body has something to attend to more important than joining in a popular commotion at the solicitation of an interested individual. But after all it is said popular governments are subject to fluctuation; and there is really a greater stability and permanency in monarchical institutions. We find by the histories of the ancient Republics that they were hardly ever quiet.—Rome, for instance, the most powerful and distinguished of them all, was constantly harassed by civil dissensions, till her liberties sank under military despotism. From the last of the kings to the first of the emperors, the interval is filled up without interruption by a series of disputes between the Patricians and the Plebeians—and so of all the other Republics of which we have any historical record. These examples, however, properly understood, are directly opposed to the establishment of hereditary orders instead of being in favor of them. The existence of such institutions in the state has been the untailing cause of all these troubles and disorders. It is natural and necessary that the people should be jealous of a privileged body invested with distinctions and advantages to which they have no personal claim. Such a thing is in itself a just and reasonable cause of complaint, and it needs no argument to shew how ready and fine a topic it is for a popular declaimer. You may indeed, repress in a great degree the public expression of such discontents by strengthening the arm of the privileged classes, till they are able to beat down the people to the dust, and till public opinion itself is debased to the level of the general degradation. Such is the state of things in the despotisms of the East. But unless such a system is introduced, there is no other security from popular commotion and discontent, but giving to the people their just and fair rights. Thus you remove the source of real complaint as far as it exists, and with it the pretences of demagogues and declaimers.

It may be shewn indeed by laborious induction that no government ever existed, at least in Europe, in which there were not hereditary distinctions of some kind or other. Instead, however, of drawing from this induction of facts the conclusion that such distinctions were necessary, and that no government could get along without them, I should be disposed to argue very differently. I should say that as all the European governments had admitted these distinctions, and as all of them had evidently failed in securing the rights and happiness of the people, and as this system of distinctions was almost the only thing they had in common, it was fair to conclude, that this was the principal reason why they had failed in securing their objects, and that it was at least worth while to try the experiment of

a government where no such feature should exist.

The approbation which has been given to the idea of a balanced government seems to be the effect of that sort of error, by which we make a mere illustration conclusive as to the principles or facts—a mistake very common, very dangerous and very carefully to be avoided in all abstract reasoning. The truth is, that in a natural state of society, the interests of all are the same—Of course there are no clashing and contending interests to be weighed against each other. The objects of government are very simple—To make and provide for the enforcement of the few regulations necessary to secure individual rights, and the more natural the state of society the fewer and the more easily enforced will these regulations be. It is by setting up artificial interests that you introduce into society a chaos of clashing views and passions, and in their train ambition, intrigue and foreign and domestic wars. Yes, political ambition, the great source of national evil and the principal thing whose operation you wish to neutralize by introducing hereditary distinctions, is itself occasioned by the effect of these distinctions. You talk of taking the highest prizes out of the lottery of life, because they are too dazzling, and the competition for them too dangerous and troublesome to be safe for society, and you put them into the hands of hereditary possessors. Now in truth it is only the artificial splendor that these public offices receive from being associated with the hereditary possession of rank and wealth, that makes them high prizes. A public office is in itself, in a natural state of society, a burden—it is neither profitable nor agreeable. It affords a situation where activity and talents united with honest intentions may be very useful—but this we know is not the sort of situation that ambition covets.

The fact really is, that though hereditary distinctions have found persons ready to defend them on principle, they were never in reality instituted on principle, or with any view to a beneficial result for a society at large.—They are the effect of a barbarous and unnatural state of society, when force made the law, when the government was entirely military, and when it was so far from being thought necessary to consult the good of the whole, that the people at large formed in reality no part of the body politic. These harsh & tyrannical systems have been softened down into the forms which hereditary power now assumes in Europe, and the prejudice which naturally arises in favor of old establishments—the danger that would probably attend rash and hasty attempts to abolish them—have engaged individuals to undertake their defence on principle. But as far as they still exist, they appear to me to be a great positive evil without any counterbalancing good, monopolizing a large proportion of the wealth & influence which would otherwise be a fair object of competition for talents and industry, misruling countries, as far as they have a connexion with their government, and instead of repressing the tendency to popular commotion, acting as a perpetual stimulus to uneasiness and tumult. Nor do I believe that any collection of enlightened statesmen employed in organising a government *de novo*, would left fairly to themselves, would think of introducing them into a social system. Let any body of this, ask himself, whether enlightened Englishmen would be employed to arrange political institutions of this kind, or would begin by giving land and nearly all power to a privileged class, and then by demanding the body of the people to be bound and pe-

But it may be asked, whether a Constitution a profane like an aristocracy is not utterly necessary to guard against popular tumult and disturbance? Not the Senates in all our institutions and in that of substitutes for an hereditary and to a certain degree, a character? This notion, itself inconsistent with fact, is probable in the view of an observer, is, I believe entertained by many, and may therefore be worth