Jno White

LIFE

OF THE

HON. NATHANIEL MACON,

OF NORTH CAROLINA;

IN WHICH THERE IS DISPLAYED

STRIKING INSTANCES OF VIRTUE, ENTERPRISE, COURAGE, GENEROSITY AND PATRIOTISM.

HIS PUBLIC LIFE:

Illustrating the blessing of political union,—the miseries of faction,—and the mischiefs of despotic power in any government.

HIS PRIVATE LIFE:

Furnishing lessons upon the science of social happiness and religious freedom, of greater value perhaps, than are to be found in the biography of any other character, either ancient or modern,—"having lived and died without an enemy."

BY EDWARD R. COTTEN,

OF NORTH CAROLINA.

BALTIMORE:
Printed by Lucas & Deaver.

1840.

TO THE READER.

An author, who produces a book, be it good or bad, in some measure exhibits his heart to the world, provided this book contains thoughts which, if he has not invented, (and indeed in our days there is little left for invention,) he has at least *found* and made his own. He not only reveals the subjects, that have employed his thoughts at certain periods, the doubts that have occurred to perplex him in his journey through life, and the solutions, with which he has removed them; but he reckons upon some minds in unison with his own, be they ever so few, to which these or similar ideas will prove of importance in the labyrinth of life. This is the most estimable merit of authorship, and a man of good heart will feel much less pleasure from what he says, than from what he excites.

He who reflects, how opportunely this or that book, or merely this or that hint in a book, has sometimes fallen in his way; what pleasure it has afforded him, to perceive a distant mind, yet actively near him in his own, and how such a hint has often occupied for years, and led him on still farther: will consider an author who converses with him, and imparts to him his inmost

thoughts, not as one who labours for hire, but as a friend who confidentially discloses his yet imperfect ideas, that the more experienced reader, who may think in concert with him, may improve upon them. This invisible commerce of hearts and minds is the one great benefit of printing, without which it would be of as much injury as advantage to a literary nation.

It was a custom among the ancient Romans, to preserve, in wax, the figures of those, among their ancestors whose personal merits and rare exploits had procured them the honors of their country; that their countrymen by beholding those likenesses might have enkindled in their breast so ardent a thirst after virtue as could not be extinguished, till by the glory of their own actions they had equalled the illustrious objects of their emulation.

The good sense of mankind, confirmed by the lapse of ages, have fixed this point, that example is that sort of rhetorick which at the same time convinces and persuades,—constraining the assent of the judgment to that fine remark, "could we see virtue in all her charms, she would ravish all our hearts,"—while vice and ignorance, seen in all their horrid deformities, would dispose us to turn away from them with loathing and abhorrence; hence the biography of meritorious men, correctly portrayed, must be of universal consequence. Well might Dr. Johnson say, "no species of writing seemed more worthy of cultivation than biography, since none can be more delightful or more useful, nor can more certainly enchain the heart by irresistible interest, or more widely diffuse instruction to every diversity of condition."

The author of the present work considering himself in the circle of those, who actually felt themselves interested in the subject on which he wrote, and on which he was desirous of calling forth and participating their better thoughts,—in offering to their patronage and the public, the present volume, intended as a tribute to the personal virtues and public services of the distinguished individual who is the subject of it,—flatters himself that he performs a service which will obtain their approbation and support. That his incapacity to do entire justice to such a subject, and that his design and its execution have not received that high finish that he wished and of which the subject was susceptible, he readily acknowledges. Yet he trusts it will be acceptable to the public, from the consideration, that every tribute of this nature, paid to a public benefactor, is a public good. And the severity of their censures and the asperities of their criticisms should be some what mitigated, from the motives of the undertaking.

That historians generally have written under the impulse of a thousand different passions, the author is well aware. That the politician has heretofore represented man, as divided into nobility and commonality, into papist and hugurnots, into soldiers and slaves,—the moralist into avaricious, hypocritical, the debauched the proud,—the tragic poet into tyrants, and their victims,—the comic into drolls, and buffoons,—and the physician into the pituitous, billious and the plegmatic, exhibiting them as subjects of aversions, of hatred, or of contempt, until man universally dissected by them, nothing now is shewn of him, but the carcase. He is also well aware, that by the perversion of his reason

in educating him, man too, has also been degraded,—being originally born good, society has rendered him wicked, and our mode of education prepares the way for it,—by teaching him to deduce false consequences,—he is also convinced. The regent or president of the college informing him that Jupiter and Appollo are Gods. The parish minister telling him that they are demons. The professor assures his pupil, that Virgil, who who has so nobly supported the doctrine of a providence, is got at least to the Elysian fields, and that he enjoys in this world the esteem of all good men. The curate informs him that this same Virgil was a pagan and must certainly be damned. The gospel holding a contradictory language, recommending to the young man to be last; his college urging him by all means to be first; virtue commanding him to descend; education bidding him rise. And what renders the contradiction still more glaring to the poor lad, it frequently proceeds, especially in the country, from one and the same mouth. For the same good ecclesiastic, in many places, teaches the classics in the morning, and the catechism at night. Thus even the master of our creation, like every thing else in nature, has been degraded by our learning. But the author flatters himself that the reader, by an attentive perusal of the following pages, will discover the perfectability of our nature,—and in this true and faithful representation of the character which is the subject of them, that man is not that "degraded mass of animated dust" as heretofore represented. The object of this book then, is to instruct the ignorant, to reform the vicious and relieve the miserable. And to render it more worthy of public approbation, the author when he sat down to

write, did not hesitate to express himself fully without a tutor or examiner. For he who sits down to write being apprehensive he should drop a scism, or something of corruption, has no advantage over the school boy at school, who has only escaped the ferular, to come under the fiscue of an imprimatur. He who cannot trust himself with his own actions, his drift not being known to be evil, and standing to the hazard of law and penalty, has no great argument to think himself deserving of public favour.

The author is of an opinion, when a man writes to the world, he should summons up all his reasons and deliberations to assist him; he should search, meditate and be industrious, and after this he should take himself to be informed in what he writes, as well as those who might assume to instruct him. But if in this, the most consummate act of his fidelity and ripeness, he should still distrust himself, unless he carries all his considerate diligence, all his midnight watchings and trouble, to the hasty view of some valued friend, perhaps licensed critic, much his inferior, perhaps one who never knew the labour of book-writing, and if he be not repulsed or slighted must appear in print, like a puny, as a celebrated author says with his guardian, and his censor's hand on the back of the title to be his bail and surity, that he is no idiot or seducer, it cannot but be a dishonor and derogation to the author, to the book, to the privilege and dignity of learning. With these views of the duties of authors generally, the present author has not presented the world with a book already examined and corrected by literary hirelings and learned friends, foregoing its taste and judgment; and had he been so dis-

posed, he had neither money to procure the former, nor means of access to the latter,—but assuming to himself that he was sufficiently qualified with a knowledge of the most material facts essential to its accomplishment, he set about it with a confidence with which he believed all authors should possess.

As to the style in which this book is written, the author has nothing to observe. Its merit must be tested in the crucible of a discriminative taste and cultivated intellect. That wherever he conceived it would be more useful or better fitted in its composition, he has adopted the thoughts and language of others, will be easily discovered by readers of extensive memory. In doing this, he has copied them *verbatim et literatim;* nay, *punctatim*, without disguise,—viewing it as a literary compliment to the authors quoted, rather than any disparagement or positive injury.

Finally,—as the present obscurity of the author renders it impossible he should have the presumption from this humble production, to aspire to that elevated niche in the temple of fame which some men have been allowed to occupy by universal consent,—he here begs leave to tend this address to the reader to supply the formalities of a preface and introduction.

LIFE OF

NATHANIEL MACON.

CHAPTER I.

It has been said, that there are always some admirable traits of character that are almost inseparable from the youth of a person, destined hereafter to play an illustrious part upon the theatre of mankind. Nathaniel Macon, the subject of the following pages, a native of Warren county, North Carolina, whose ancestors emigrated from Virginia, and stood as high in their day as any people in the state, was born in 1757,—and manifested at an early period of his life a curiosity incessantly engaged in pursuing enquiries, and accumulating a knowledge, which to common observers might have frequently appeared to be an obstinate, self-will principle of mind, wasting itself, in unprofitable speculations, and refusing to bring its energies to bear upon a pursuit pointed out to it by another. Owing to this investigating and combining quality of mind, this activity and spirit of observation, (the inseparable concomitants of the curious) it may be inferred, he compressed more experience in a given period of time, when a youth, than any of his ordinary associates,—and each day in his his-

tory, furnishing him with a comment on the last, he would so often have detected his mistakes, so frequently contemned the absurdities of youth, and felt with so much anguish the miscarriages to which early life is subject, that he could scarcely fail, when the first effervescence of his youth was over, to become diffident, self-suspicious, and, in the best sense of the term, modest.

Another characteristic of his early life, was sincerity. A generous and intrepid frankness, was found to occupy perhaps the first place in the catalogue of his virtues when a boy. This temper pervaded the whole course of his reflections and his actions. It was acted upon every day by him, and its propriety, confirmed by every night's experience. There was nothing which he thought he ought to reject with more unalterable firmness than an action that by its consequences reduced him to the necessity of duplicity and concealment. No boy was ever more eminently either respectable, or amiable or useful, among his youthful companions than Nathaniel Macon, for which distinction he was indebted mostly for the frankness and candor of his manners. This was the grand fascination also, by which he laid hold of the hearts of all the neighbors of his parents at an early period of his life, and conciliated their attention forever afterwards. His example rendering this virtue an irresistible object of imitation to all who knew him.

He was never guilty of any of those excesses of conduct and offences against morality so common to the frivolity and inexperience of youth. But even when a pupil, seemed to have chosen his own favorite field of distinction, and would often appear to be callous to allurements which were to invite him to another. Gross

flattery, and still more the spiritless and tedious eulogium of superannuated kindness, or that which is dictated by a left-handed purpose of stratagem and bribery, would tire his impatience or excite his disgust. Though he looked upon the conceit of young persons generally, as a frigid, selfish, unchastened, and unpolished sentiment; yet he possessed enough of it himself, as he ascended to manhood to give him confidence in all his opinions formed from reflection; and as it was modified by the better affections and charities of his heart, its coldness was so animated, and its asperities so subdued, that it was never disagreeable or disgustful, to the company he might be in, to express those opinions, when he thought proper.

Of all the characteristics of early life, tameness is the characteristic of the most fatal augury. A young man of spirit just arriving at the age of puberty, will like a high bred, well mettled horse, champ the bit, and spurn the earth, impatient of restraint. And though young Macon, from information, never was known to refuse to submit to or disobey, the commands or dictates of the anxious parent or Cassocked pedant; yet he was never considered one of those sober, dull, obedient lads that had no will, and no understanding of their own. Where there were no positive enactments, his conduct was generally guided by the dictates of the principles of truth and his own good judgment. Free to speak his sentiments impartially whenever called upon, and the occasion required it, he was frequently the arbiter of the differences arising out of the juvenile sports of his school fellows, whose universal submission to his decisions was the strongest evidence they could give of the high respect they entertained of his judgment and the un-

bounded confidence they had in his impartiality. He excelled in most of the athletic exercises himself, but whenever vanquished by an adversary, always yielded without controversy, consequently he had none of those quarrels and broils so common to boys of his age. He was always remarkably diligent in his attention to all the duties of the schools to which he was sent, and was seldom if ever called upon by his masters without being prepared to recite.

To conclude:—the characteristics of Nathaniel Macon's mind and pursuits, when a youth properly investigated, appear to be totally different from what even his cotemporaries ever conceived them to be. For it seemed as if nature being more than ordinarily solicitous about the future nurture and discipline of such a mind, that in the plentitude of her dalliance, she bestowed upon it an impress at its birth, that protected and guided it forever afterwards against the danger of being deceived or of deceiving any of his fellow creatures. All in it was order. Every thing in it was subject to the most inflexible laws,—regarding things in a state of clearness, discrimination, and arrangement, altogether uncommonly critical. Cultivating its own powers, and generating its own habits, it conduced to the making him a man superior to ordinary rational beings, and accustomed him to a closeness of deduction, that is not easily made the dupe of ambiguity, and carries on an eternal warfare against prejudice and imposition. Initiated from its infancy in the practice of close investigation, his opinion was its own standard, which was neither at the mercy of his age, his country, the books he chanced to read, or the company he happened to frequent. It was not a fea-

ther for every wind that blew; but instead of floating impotently before the capricious current of fashion and opinion, it had thrown out all anchors and taken a position from which nothing could move it but reason and truth.

A mind capable of application and perseverance, a project once formed had its associate resolution and power, to carry it to its completion; so it may be affirmed to have consisted in analysis and dissection; the turning a thing on all sides, and examining it in all its varieties of views. An ordinary man would see an object just as it happened to be presented to him, and see no more; whilst the mind of Nathaniel Macon would take it to pieces, enquire into its cause and effects, remark its internal structure, and consider what would have been the result, if its members had been combined in a different way, or subjected to different influences. It was a whole magazine of thought;—where the ordinary man had received only one idea, its powers were multiplied in proportion to the number of ideas, upon which they were to be employed. Sobriety, an awful and wide spreading tranquility, that might in one point of view be compared with that of the grand Southern ocean, were its prominent characteristics, and like the waters of that mighty ocean, it was not ruffled by every puff of air, but held its way with a majestic course. It was self-balance and self-centered; always great, always poised, it could never be the seat, sometimes of ridiculous, sometimes dangerous irregularities. In short it was a mind so conscious of its strength, it was never presumptuous, dogmatical, fierce, hard, unkind, tempestuous or unduly severe in its judgment of the character or talents of

others. Filled to the very brim with charity and philanthrophy it carried along with it the affections and good wishes of all who knew him, even when a youth; and presaged what has taken place in after life, that he should live and die in such a manner, that it may be said of him, that which cannot be said of any other character either ancient or modern,—that he lived and died, without an enemy.

CHAPTER II.

HAVING occupied the whole of the first chapter of this book in portraying the principal traits of Nathaniel Macon's mind as well as deportment, during his juvenile years, in which even the severest scrutiny of impartial justice cannot discover one vicious prognostic, the reader will scarcely fail to acknowledge that he adopted at an early period of his life, a different course for the most part, from those youths of every country and every age, whose habits so often, not only leave an unfavorable stain upon their reputation, but corrupt their dispositions and debase their characters, in such a manner that it is often our duty to regret, whilst our charity compels us to forgive.

It is not every youthful folly that men shake off when they arrive at years of discretion. The wild and inconsiderate sallies of the boy will often entail some of the worse features of their character on the man.

Owing to this, it is, that we frequently meet with that mixed character in the adult over which humanity itself weeps,—and we often have occasion to observe the most admirable talents and even the most excellent disposition, in men, whose talents and virtues are nevertheless rendered abortive by some habitual indiscretion. These men, a well formed mind cannot fail to love;—their very weakness causing a peculiar kind of tenderness to

mix itself with our love. But they go out of the world, having excited its admiration, not added to the stock of good; or their usefulness, if useful they have been, falls infinitely short of that which their great qualities would have enabled them to produce.

Sometimes, however, the ill consequences that remain from the impressions of youthful follies, is much worse than this. The talents remain, but the character becomes debauched. The men excite our admiration, but we view their powers with less of hope, than terror. The ingenuousness, the simplicity of a good heart, are extinguished. They become crafty and deceitful. Possessed with an unhallowed spirit of ambition, the purity and fervour of benevolence in them are lost. They are launched perhaps upon the ocean of affairs; they mix with the giddy scene of fashion; they are initiated in all the degrading arts, by which extravagance is supported and sudden fortune is acquired; and they prey upon the unwary and industrious, unless opportunity and policy should call them to prey upon the vitals of their country.

The evidences of correct demeanor and examples of prudence, during his progress at the schools to which he had been sent in his native state, together with the influence of some of his contemporary associates, induced the parents of young Macon, to give him a collegiate education. All could see and all believed who were acquainted with the character of Nathaniel Macon, even at that time, that with proper opportunities he was bound to be a blessing to his parents, and at some future day an honor to his then oppressed country. Oppressed we may say, because it is conceded by historians of every party, that from the earliest settlements in America, to

the period of the revolution, the parent country, so far as her own unsettled state would permit, pursued towards those settlements a course of direct oppression. Besides, in the settlement of the colonies, three forms of government were established. These were severally denominated, charter, proprietary, and royal governments. This difference arose from the different circumstances which attended the settlement of the different colonies, and the diversified views of the early emigrants. The charter governments were confined to New England. The proprietary government were those of Maryland, Pennsylvania, the Carolinas, and the Jerseys. The two former remained such, until the American revolution; the two latter became royal governments long before that period. From this then it appears that Nathaniel Macon's native state, North Carolina, was at that time under the royal government of Great Britain, and undergoing a course of arbitrary exactions and lordly oppressions, that rendered it a difficult matter for any private gentleman, without patronage from the government, to accumulate a fortune sufficient to give his sons a college education. The estate of old Mr. Macon, the father of Nathaniel Macon, was at that time somewhat limited from these circumstances, and having several other sons besides Nathaniel, whom as an impartial parent and as a good man he believed to be equally entitled to the same advantages of a liberal education, which his pecuniary situation debarred him from bestowing upon all, it was a task of no ordinary accomplishment, for the friends of Nathaniel to pursuade the old man to send him to college. At length however the old man yielded, upon the promises of some of his neighbours to assist him, should he have need of

any, to carry on his education; and Princeton College, New Jersey, was the one fixed upon to which young Nathaniel was to be sent.

It is something to be remarked, that if one after he has arrived to the age of manhood should give evidences of uncommon talents, it is immediately supposed that he has been through life an extraordinary creature; that the stamp of divinity was upon him; that a circle of glory, invisible to profaner eyes, surrounded his head, and that every action he breathed contained an indication of his elevated destiny. That a man brings a certain character into the world with him, is a point that must readily be conceded. And the reason why we are so apt to impute the intellectual differences of men to some cause operating prior to their birth, is that we are so little acquainted with the history of the early years of men of talents. Slight circumstances at first determined their propensities to this, or that pursuit,—and when the early life of a man of talents can be accurately traced, these circumstances generally present themselves to our observation. If we will examine the private memoirs of Gibbon the historian, we will be able to trace with considerable accuracy the progress of his mind. While he was at college, he became reconciled to the Roman Catholic faith. By this circumstance he incurred his father's displeasure, who banished him to an obscure situation in Switzerland where he was obliged to live upon a scanty provision, and was far removed from all the customary amusements of men of birth and fortune. If this train of circumstances had not taken place, would he ever have been the historian of the decline and fall of the Roman

Empire? Yet how unusual were his attainments in consequence of these events, in learning, in acuteness of research, and intuition of genius. May it not be said that the unexampled assurance of what would be his progress at college, from his previous conduct and success at the other schools to which he had gone, was the only circumstance which inclined Nathaniel Macon's friends to influence the old man to give him a college education. And that this circumstance alone had the only direct bearing in making Nathaniel Macon that which he afterwards became the man of talents, usefulness and patriotism,—as was the reconciliation to the Roman Catholic religion, whilst at college, the circumstance, which banished Gibbon to an obscure retreat in Switzerland, and caused him to become the historian of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire.

Every preparation being made the day was fixed upon, for Nathaniel's departure,—on which day the friends and relations in his neighbourhood met at his father's to take their leave and witness the separation between him and his parents. For it was not in those days as it is at present so small a matter to take a trip across the continent through the conveniences of rail-roads, steam-boats &c.,—but a journey from North Carolina to Princeton was really a subject for serious consideration, both as regarded the expences as well as other difficulties attending it. Besides there was so little travelling carried on, that when one was about to leave his home to be absent for any length of time, it was part of the fellowship of neighbours and friends to assemble on the occasion to sympathise with the relations and to inquire whether

any assistance was needed, and to take a pleasure in rendering it if necessary. A further account of his actual departure being unnecessary, we shall here take our leave of the reader until the next chapter, when we shall find Nathaniel safely arrived at the place of his destination.

CHAPTER III.

It has been found in the history of several eminent men, as we observed in the last chapter, and probably would have been found much oftener, had their juvenile adventures been more accurately recorded; that the most trivial circumstances has sometimes furnished the original occasion of awakening the ardour of their minds and determining the bent of their studies.

It was the plan of many of the Grecian Philosophers, and particularly one of them, to show to mankind how very limited was the supply that our necessities required, and how little dependent our real welfare and prosperity were upon the caprice of others. Among innumerable incidents upon record that illustrates this principle, a single one may suffice to suggest to our minds its general spirit. Diogenes had a slave whose name was Menas, and Menas thought proper upon some occasion to elope. "Ha!" said the philosopher, "can Menas live without Diogenes and cannot Diogenes live without Menas." It was with this spirit of fortitude and independence, that young Macon, separated from his parents and friends;—it was with this spirit he was supported on his way to Princeton, in reflecting upon those friendships and pleasures, of his youth, once dear to him as life, but now past and gone, were soon to be forgotten. And it was with this spirit he entered into, and become acquainted

with all the ceremonials of the college and its inmates on his arrival. To a mind like his, needing but little foreign aid to assist its energies, the lesson conveyed by this separation from all his friends and relations, and placed as we may say amidst a people of new manners, new customs, and in many particulars different laws, must have been truly important, and have taught him at this early period, that, that man is incapable of inconstant and inflexible virtue that does not known himself not to be at the mercy of other men,—that does not feel that he is invulnerable to all the vicissitudes of fortune. It must have taught him that he, to whom the rest of his species can reasonably look up with confidence, must be firm, because his mind is filled with the excellence of the object he pursues; and cheerful because he knows that it is out of the power of events to injure him,—and that no man can be entitled to our confidence, who trembles at every wind; who can endure no adversity, and whose very existence is linked to the artificial character he sustains.

Nothing can more reasonably excite our contempt, than a man who, if he was once reduced to the genuine and simple condition of man, would be driven to despair, and find himself incapable of consulting and providing for his own subsistence. Fortitude is a habit of mind that grows out of a sense of our own independence. If there be a man, who does not even trust his own imagination with the fancied change of his circumstances, he must necessarily be effeminate and irresolute. Till we are acquainted with the meaning of terms and the nature of the objects around us, we cannot understand the propositions that may be formed concerning them. Till we

are acquainted with the nature of the objects around us, we cannot compare them with the principles we have formed, and undertake the modes of employing them. There are other ways to be sure of attaining wisdom and abilities, besides the school of adversity, but there is no way of attaining them but through the medium of experience. That is, experience brings in the materials with which intellect works; for it must be granted that a man of limited experience will often be more capable than he who has gone through the greatest variety of scenes; or rather perhaps, that one man may collect more experience in a sphere of a few miles square, than another who has sailed round the world. Nathaniel Macon was well acquainted with these principles and had long before this period of his life, intimately examined into the very nature of the mind of man; he observed it for himself, and observed it in its greatest variety of situations. He had seen it without disguise, when no exterior situation puts a curb upon its passions, and induces the individual to exhibit a studied, not a spontaneous character. He had seen persons in their unguarded moments, when the eagerness of temporary resentment tips their tongue with fire, when they were animated and dilated by hope, when they were tortured and anatomised by despair, when the soul pours out its inmost self into the bosom of an equal and a friend. Lastly, he had often himself been an actor in the scene, had his own passions brought into play, and known the anxiety of expectation, and the transport of success. With such preliminary preparations of mind, how much better qualified must he have been to receive the education of the true philosopher, the genuine politician, the friend

and benefactor of human kind, than one of those sons of the nabobs of his country, the first step of whose parents in their education, is the extreme tenderness of their persons. The winds of heaven not being permitted to blow upon them, from their infancy. Dressed and undressed by lacqueys and valets. Their wants carefully anticipated, their desires without any effort on their part profusely supplied. Their health of too much importance to permit them to exert any considerable effort either of body or mind. Whose ears never hear the voice of repremand or blame. In all things, the first to be remembered, that he is the son of a gentleman of fortune; that is, some rare and precious creature, far above the rest of his species. And as he is the heir to an estate more than the most of his fellows, it is never forgotten by those about him, that considerable importance is to be annexed to his favour or his displeasure. Accordingly they never express themselves in his presence frankly and naturally, either respecting him or themselves. They play around him altogether under a mask, at the same time anxious to appear generous, disinterested and sincere. All his caprices are to be complied with. All his gratifications are to be studied. From his habits, they find him a depraved and sordid mortal, and the gratifications they recommend serve to sink him deeper in folly and vice.

What is the result of such an education? Having never experienced contradiction, such a young man is always arrogant and presumptuous. Having always been accustomed to the slaves of necessity, or the slaves of choice, he does not understand even the meaning of the word freedom. His temper is insolent, and impatient

of parley and expostulation. Knowing nothing, he believes himself sovereignly informed, and runs head-long into danger, not from firmness and courage, but from the most egregious wilfulness and vanity. Like Pyrrho among the ancient philosophers, if his attendants were at a distance, and he trusted himself alone in the open air, he would perhaps be run over by the next coach or fall down the first precipice.

His violence and presumption are strikingly contrasted with the extreme timidity of his disposition. The first opposition terrifies him; the first difficulty seen and understood, appears insuperable. He trembles at a shadow, and at the very semblance of adversity is dissolved into tears. Above all, simple and unqualified truth is a stranger to his ear. It either never approaches; or if so unexpected a guest should once appear, it meets with so cold a reception, as to afford little encouragement to a second visit. The longer he has been accustomed to falsehood and flattery, the more grating will it sound. The longer he has been accustomed to falshood and flattery, the more terrible will the task appear to him, to change his tastes, and discard his favourites. He will either place a blind confidence in all men, or, having detected the insincerity of those who are most agreeable to him, will conclude that all men are knavish and designing. As a consequence of this last opinion, he will become indifferent to mankind, callous to their sufferings, and will believe that even the virtuous are knaves under a craftier mask.

In this picture, are indeed contained all those features which obviously constitute the early education of most of the young men of birth and fortune of our country.

In real life it will be variously modified, but the majority of the features, unless in very rare instances, will remain the same. And in no case can the education of a friend and benefactor of human kinds, as sketched in a preceding page, by any speculative contrivance, be communicated to them.

CHAPTER IV.

To obtain honor at court, it is thought neccessary to pay a servile court to the men in power, to bear with unaltered patience, their contumely and scorn, to flatter their vices, and render ourselves useful to their private gratifications. The true courtier must arrive at such a proficiency in his art, as to have neither passions nor attachments of his own. Personal kindness and all considerations for the merit of others, must be swallowed up in a narrow and sordid ambition, not that generous ambition for the esteem of mankind, which reflect a sort of splendor upon vice itself, but an ambition of selfish gratification and illiberal intrigue.

Such is not the process to acquire college honors; by college honors, we do not wish to be understood those A. B.'s and M. A.'s that may be so highly prized by the fashionable part of the literary world;—No. We look upon these as mere adventitous circumstances,—the glittering evidences of things unseen, and in many instances do not exist,—and believe that they are the appendages of many who the least deserve them. We have too often detected such impositions ever to be again deceived by them. But the college honors which Nathaniel Macon was now to acquire, was that character which a young man soon attains after his first initiation into any college. The character of attending to his

studies, be them whatever they may assigned him, and his proficiency in which, always procures him. These duties we may naturally infer from his experience and the previous character we have given him, he discharged with so much promptness, fidelity and ability, it not only soon procured him the love, favour and notice of all his tutors, but likewise the friendship, respect, and confidence of all his collegiates.

It was never Nathaniel Macon's ambition from his boyhood to claim a superiority over any of his associates. He recognized no distinctions in society, but what merit gave. He believed for the most part there was no essential difference between the child of the lord and the porter; provided he does not come into the world inflicted with any ruinous distemper, the child of the lord if changed in the cradle, would scarcely find any greater difficulty than the other, in learning the trade of his foster father and becoming a carrier of burthens.

This truth will be brought to our minds with much additional evidence, if we compare in this respect the case of brutes with that of men. Among inferior animals, breed is a circumstance of considerable importance, and a judicious mixture and preservation in this point is found to be attended with the most unequivocal results. But nothing of that kind appears to take place in our own species. A generous blood, a gallant and fearless spirit is by no means propagated from father to son. When a particular appellation is granted, as is usually practised in the existing governments of Europe, to designate the descendants of a magnanimous ancestry, we do not find even with all the arts of modern education to assist, that such descendants are the legitimate

representatives of departed heroism. With this republican principle deeply impressed upon his mind, which he always acted out boldly,—it can scarcely be doubted, his deportment was such as to have insured the universal respect of all classes at college as soon as they become acquainted with him. And being above those little meannesses practised sometimes by young men at those institutions for ascendency, none ever associated with him, but felt as if they were in company with their equal, if not their superior.

Nathaniel Macon was a student at Princeton College in the ever memorable year of 1776, and though it was thought at the commencement of our revolution, by numerous individuals, whose talents, wisdom and enterprise were necessary to its success, that they could derive but little if any advantage,—that instead of gain they would be subjected to great loss and suffering; that the comforts of their families would be abridged, that their property would be destroyed; their farms desolated; their houses plundered or consumed; their sons might fall in the field of battle; and should the struggle be vain, an ignominious death would be their portion. Yet burning with ardour and fixed with holy enthusiasm in the cause of public liberty, he abandoned his collegiate studies, and performed a short tour of duty in a company of volunteers. Thus in his youth evincing an attachment to those principles which in after life he supported with so much firmness, ability, and undeviating consistency.

The history of the world cannot furnish an instance in which there was a nobler exhibition of true patriotism than is presented in the history of the American revolu-

tion. The contest respected rights which God had given them; it respected liberty, that dearest and noblest privilege of man; it respected the happiness of generations yet to succeed each other, on this spacious continent, to the end of time. Such considerations influenced the patriots of the revolution. Nathaniel Macon with the rest of his countrymen thought comparatively little of himself in this struggle, his views being fixed on the happiness of others, and future glory of his country. At the commencement of the aggression of the British ministry upon the rights of the colonies, he perceived, that the only alternative of the latter would be a resort to arms or absolute slavery. He was not of a disposition to be as easily roused to adopt strong measures, as some others, still he was not backward to express his abhorrence of the unjust conduct of the mother country, nor to enter upon any well matured system of opposition to her designs. And though at this time, but a youth of eighteen or nineteen years, there were few men in the community, who felt more intensely each succeeding month the magnitude of the subject, and who were more and more convinced of the necessity of an united and firm opposition to the British government. He was particularly disgusted with the stamp-act. Not that he feared pecuniary loss from its exactions, it was an inconsiderable tax; but trifling as it was, involved a principle of the greatest importance. It gave to the crown a power over the colonies, against the arbitrary exercise of which they had no security. They had, in truth, upon the principles claimed by the British government, little or no control over their own property. It might be taxed in the manner and to the extent, which parliament

pleased, and not a single representative from the colonies could raise his voice in their behalf. It was fortunate for the Americans, that they understood their own rights, and had the courage to assert them; for just as was the cause of the colonies, it was doubtful how the contest would terminate. The chance of eventual success was against them. Less than three millions of people constituted their population, and these were scattered over a widely extended territory. They were divided into colonies, which had no political character, and no other bond of union than common sufferings, common danger, and common necessities. They had no veteran army, no navy, no arsenal filled with munitions of war, and no fortifications on their extended coast. They had no overflowing treasuries, but in the outset, were to depend upon loans, taxation, and voluntary contributions.

Thus circumstanced, could success in such a contest be reasonably anticipated? Could they hope to compete with the parent country, whose strength was consolidated by the lapse of centuries, and to whose wealth and power so many millions contributed? A country directing in a great measure the destinies of Europe, her influence extended to every quarter of the world. Her armies were trained to the art of war, her navy rode in triumph on every sea, her statesmen subtle and sagacious, her generals skilful and practised. And more than all, her pride was aroused, by the fact, that all Europe was a spectator of the scene, and was urging her forward to vindicate the policy she had adopted, and the principles she had advanced.

But what will not union and firmness, valour and patriotism, accomplish? What will not faith accomplish?

The colonies were indeed aware of the crisis at which they had arrived. They saw the precipice upon which they stood. National existence was at stake. Life and liberty, and peace, were at hazard; not only those of the generation which then existed, but of the unnumbered millions which were yet to be born. To heaven they could with pious confidence make their solemn appeal. They trusted in the arm of Him, who had planted their fathers in this distant land, and besought Him to guide the men, who in his providence were called to preside over their public councils.

CHAPTER V.

NATHANIEL MACON had to leave college before he completed his education; whether from the unsettled and troublesome condition in which the revolution had involved the country, or the pecuniary situation of his father, or both, we are not informed. One thing is certain it was not on account of any conduct of his own—for on leaving, he sustained a high reputation, not only in respect to his classical attainments, and knowledge of those sciences, which with his usual industry for improvement were to constitute him an useful man to his country hereafter; but for many virtues which adorned his character during his whole residence at Princeton.

There is no period of a young man's life that is frought with half so many dangers, and for the most part so much determines the character of the future man, as when he first becomes master of his own actions, and chooses his avocations and associates. He will necessarily become acquainted with many things of which before he had very slender notions. At this time the follies of the world wear their most alluring face. He can scarcely avoid imagining that he has laboured under some species of delusion. There is, and always will be a numerous class of young men at this period of life, who though rich with brilliant talents and sublime vir-

tues, with affability, superior polish and elegance of manners, have a secret consciousness, as they imagine, that they possess nothing by which they can so securely assert their preeminence and keep their inferiors at a distance, as the splendour of their equipage, the magnificence of their retinue and the sumptuousness of their entertainments. The only chance which remains for this misstep; is, that after a time, they may be recalled and awakened by some accidental circumstance; and against this chance, there are the progressive enticements of society; sensuality, ambition, sordid interest, false ridicule, and the incessant decay of that unblemished purity, which attended them in their outset. The best that can be expected, is, that they should return at last to sobriety and truth, with a mind hackneyed and relaxed by repeated errors, and a moral constitution in which the seeds of debility have been widely and irretrievably sown,—and the natural and wholesome complexion of their minds much defaced if not totally destroyed.

Imperfectly do they judge, who judge of real happiness or misery from external appearance. They will ever be seduced and deceived by that false glare which prosperity throws around bad men, and will be tempted to imitate their crimes, in order to partake of their imagined felicity. The pageant of grandeur, displayed to public view, they will be convinced too late, is not the ensign of certain happiness. They should recollect hood-winked by pleasure, the *strong man* himself, never saw any object clearly, after he went to Gaza. For on laying his head in the lap of voluptuousness, his wit evaporated, his wisdom turned babbler, he lost his vigilence, his eyes and his life. He could not see the sev-

en locks of his head, scattered on the toilet of a woman. The scissors of the gipsey proved sharper than the sword of his enemies; and the flowing hair of the hero, once covered with laurels, was now tortured into meretricious ringlets or perewigs for some pimp in Delilah's anti-chamber.

It is greatly to be lamented, genius is invariably connected with strong passions. When men exquisitely organized, indulge pleasure, it is with that species of fervour, which is never the associate of dullness; it is with all their hearts, and all their souls, and with all their strength and with all their mind. The insensible lounger, the self-engrossed coxcomb, may sleep upon the knees of a Delilah, and awake again to puny life. But of that opiate of joy, of that golden cup of abomination, which the harlot presents, if the man of feeling once sips, he will, "drain the chalice to the lowest and foulest dregs;" though it is to conduct him to some vale of Sorek, beneath whose roses are the serpent and the dagger, that awaits his ruin.

The frailty of youth often gives way to vicious habits, which extend their influence to the remotest scenes of life. Like characters engraved on the tender bark, which open and appear more plain as the tree grows larger, these habits will have a more palpable and becoming appearance as near approaches are made to the closing scenes of life. It must certainly be the wish of every rational creature to spend the latter part of their days with satisfaction and comfort. This can never be the case unless an attentive regard be paid to the conduct in the first part of the drama; to see that every thing may be properly carried on;—for a young man of

irregularities entails misery on old age, renders it a burden to itself and to others; and an object of pity and disgust.

Improvement of the mind, has ever been observed by the judicious to be one of the noblest employments of an intelligent being;—not only because this part constitutes the true dignity of man; but because by such pursuits, the rational being receives the most sublime and permanent ideas. To see the fatal effects, arising for the want of rightly improving the mental powers,—cast our eyes upon the human race, and take a view of certain societies and individuals,—among men. Behold the tawny savage;—to what cause shall we impute his inhuman cruelties and want of sensibility? Is it not to this? His not cultivating and calling into exercise the softer feelings of the soul.

View the intemperate and infamous course of the debauchee, which sinks him below the common herd of the plain. And why! Because his reason sacrificed to his passions, and his passions controled his appetites.

Why does the griping miser live an hermit, and pine away over his delicious hoard? Because blinded by ignorance and sordid passion, he views the means of happiness as the object itself. By the auspicious aid of education the mind is freed from these baneful effects; it is the influence of its beams, which nourishes the young and tender plants, and brings them to maturity. To its shrine we may fly for redress of the many ill constructed and effeminate ideas instamped upon our minds from our early infancy, and under its protection improve the talents put into our hands, in a manner which shall be

most conducive to our own interest and beneficial to the community.

Education in one sense, is the affair of youth, but in a stricter and more accurate sense, the education of an intellectual being can terminate only with life. Every incident that befalls us is the parent of a sentiment, and either confirms or counteracts the pre-conceptions of the mind.

Nathaniel Macon, differing from most young men, and thoroughly convinced of the truth of the latter sentiment, on his return home to his native state, immediately turned his attention to the acquisition of a store of political knowledge, which with an activity of observation, and a certainty of judgment, he was soon to turn to the very best account. He made himself well acquainted both with the history and constitution of the mother country and his own, and studied with almost professional accuracy the elements of law as a science.

In his person, at this time, he was above the middle size, and of a florid but fair complexion, and carried in his appearance the indications of a sound frame and an easy mind. No man of more symetry of form, or more activity and strength of his weight. With a keen, sensible, penetrating blue eye, and a countenance expressing great animation and at the same time deep thought, constituting an intelligent and benevolent aspect, that caused him to be universally admired.

His manners remarkably plain and easy, and might be thought by some to border on bluntness, yet they had their charms in an eminent degree upon those who were in his company. They appeared to be the manners of a just man; of one who knew no disguise, or of a gene-

rous spirit that scorned to practice duplicity. He looked as if he could speak to the proudest despot upon earth, with a consciousness that he was speaking to a man, and a determination to yield him no superiority to which his inherent qualifications did not entitle him. Notwithstanding all this, his conversation was very agreeable, and had in it a conciliatory attraction, which had frequently the effect of subduing the prejudices of those with whom he conversed; and which seldom failed to increase the ardour and inflexibility of steady friends. He took so lively an interest in every thing that concerned those around him, that each of them believed himself a favourite, whilst he was only the common friend of them all. His observations were often original; and when otherwise, far from insipid,—for as has been said of the late Dr. Rush of Philadelphia, "he had an uncommon way of expressing common thoughts." His language was simple and always intelligible, and his method so judicious, that a consistent view of the subject was always communicated, and the recollection rendered easy, and generally so full of anecdote and illustration, that his hearers carried away with them something worth recollecting. Disdaining the pride of power,—dispising hypocrisy, as the lowest and meanest vice,—with an honest simplicity, and Roman frankness of manners, he gave to intercourse an ease and freedom which made his society and conversation sought after by all who knew him. Such is a description of Nathaniel Macon's person and manners and general bearing in society, on his arrival home from New Jersey.

CHAPTER VI.

The loss of Charleston, in South Carolina, by general Lincoln, on the 4th of May, 1780, excited a considerable alarm in America about this time; and their popular writers, particularly the author of the celebrated performance, entitled Common Sense, in some other pieces, made use of it as a powerful argument to lead them to more vigorous exertions against Great Britain, that they might the more effectually and certainly secure their independence. Whether Nathaniel Macon's participation in this excitement, which was so general among his countrymen at the time, or his real patriotism, induced him to believe his country stood in actual need of his personal services, notwithstanding he was thus engaged in preparing himself for future usefulness, as mentioned in a previous chapter, he immediately joined the militia troops of his native state as a common soldier, and continued with them till the provisional articles for peace were signed at Paris, on the 30th of November, 1782.

Long before this, and whilst he was at college in New Jersey, the royal governor, Martin, of his native state, North Carolina, on a charge of attempting to raise the back settlers, consisting chiefly of Scotch Highlanders, against the colony, had been obliged to leave the province and take refuge on board of a man of war. And though in this situation he did not despair of reducing

it again to obedience. For this purpose he applied to the regulators, a daring set of banditti, who lived in a kind of independent state; and though considered by government as rebels, yet had never been molested on account of their numbers, and known skill in the use of fire arms. To the chiefs of these people the governor sent commissioners in order to raise some regiments; and a colonel McDonald was appointed to command them. He erected the king's standard, issued proclamations, &c., and collected some forces, expecting to be soon joined by a body of regular troops, who were known to be shipped from Britain, to act against the southern colonies. The Americans, sensible of their danger, dispatched immediately what forces they had to act against the royalists; at the same time they diligently exerted themselves to support these with suitable reinforcements. Their present force was commanded by general Moore, whose numbers were inferior to McDonald's, for which reason the latter summoned him to join the king's standard, under pain of being treated as a rebel. But Moore being well provided with cannon, and conscious that nothing could be attempted against him, returned the compliment, by acquainting colonel McDonald, that if he and his party would lay down their arms and subscribe on oath of fidelity to Congress, they should be treated as friends; but if they persisted in an undertaking, for which it was evident they had not sufficient strength, they could not but expect the severest treatment. In a few days general Moore found himself at the head of eight thousand men, by reason of the continual supplies which daily arrived from all parts. The royal party amounted to two thousand, and they were des-

titute of artillery, which prevented them from attacking the enemy while they had the advantage of numbers. They were now therefore obliged to have recourse to a desperate exertion of personal valor; by dint of which they effected a retreat for near eighty miles to Morris' creek, within sixteen miles of Wilmington. Could they have gained this place, they expected to have been joined by governor Martin and general Clinton, who had lately arrived with a considerable detachment. But general Moore, with his army, pursued them so close, that they were obliged to attempt the passage of the creek itself, though a considerable body of Americans, under the command of colonel Caswell, with fortifications well planted with cannon, was posted on the other side. On attempting the creek, however, it was found not to be fordable. They were obliged therefore to cross over a wooden bridge, which the provincials had not time to destroy entirely. They had, however, by pulling up part of the planks, and greasing the remainder, in order to render them slippery, made the passage so difficult, that the royalists could not attempt it. In this situation they were attacked by general Moore, with his superior army, and totally defeated, with the loss of their general and most of their leaders, as well as the best and bravest of their men. Thus was the power of the Americans established in North Carolina at a very early period of the revolution, and having secured herself against any attempts from these enemies, they proceeded to regulate their internal concerns in the same manner as the rest of the colonies. Nor were they less successful in the province of Virginia; lord Dunmore having long continued an useless predatory war, was at last driven from every

creek and road in the province. But South Carolina had a more formidable enemy to deal with. At Cape Fear, a juncture was formed between Sir Henry Clinton and Sir Peter Parker, the latter of whom had sailed with his squadron directly from Europe. They concluded to attempt the reduction of Charleston as being, of all places within the line of their instructions, the object at which they could strike with the greatest advantage.

The author thought it necessary to relate this portion of the history of our revolution, to show the relative situations of North and South Carolina at the time Nathaniel Macon entered into service, and that probably, the importance of the capture of Charleston was the principal consideration, that influenced him to sacrifice his ease and security and favorite pursuits, which were much more congenial to his habits and natural disposition, and take up arms as a volunteer. Be that as it may; during this eventful period he gave proofs of that indifference for office and emolument, and that unaffected devotedness to his country's good, which his future history so conspicuously illustrated. He served in the ranks as a common soldier, and though command and places of trust and confidence were often tendered him, he invariably declined them, desiring only to occupy the station and to share the hardships and perils common to the greatest portion of his fellow soldiers. In those times too, were developed those noble traits of character which attracted to him, the confidence and esteem of his countrymen. He became generally known throughout the state, and won for himself a popularity, to which his country is indebted for his long and useful and illustrious services in the public councils. He believed that gen-

tility was neither in birth, manner, nor fashion, but in the mind. A high sense of honor, a determination never to take a mean advantage of another, an adherence to truth, delicacy, and politeness towards those with whom we have dealings were the essential and distinguished characteristics of a gentleman. And making it a principle during his whole services in the army, to extend the hand of fellowship to every man, who discharged his duty, maintained good order, who manifested an interest in the general welfare and success of their country's independence,—whose deportment was upright, and whose mind was intelligent, without stopping to ascertain, whether the use of the hammer or thread procured them their livelihood before they left home,—he gained a popularity that few private soldiers were ever known to acquire in any army.

What a field for improvement must have been the life of a soldier to such a man as Nathaniel Macon; whose ability to extract information for the guidance of his own conduct, from every subject that fell within his notice, we have all along mentioned.

It is not in diving into metaphysical subtleties, and ranging over the intricacies of strict philosophical discussion, that real knowledge is alone to be obtained; much, and what perhaps is the most valuable and useful for the purposes of life, is to be gathered from those subjects, which are, or ought to be, interesting to every man. To contemplate man in the abstract, divested of all those appendages of character and taste, which generally take their rise from circumstances, through which he is called to pass, may seem to be the task of the philosopher alone;—but to consider him as he actually is in

society,—to view the dispositions which influences his conduct—the diversified habits which he assumes while passing through this stage of existence—the manner in which he is liable to be wrought upon by various incentives, and to mark with attention the different feelings which actuate him,—is the business of every one who wishes to regulate his own conduct aright, and to act from rational and consistent motives.

CHAPTER VII.

THE regiment in which Nathaniel Macon enlisted, had no actual engagement, whilst he was in service, that we are informed. We have then no splendid instances of personal courage to record of him,—more than he truly possessed that boldness and resolution which were common to the American character of the times. That he was truly brave there is no doubt. But his was a courage of too noble a quality to be generated by every casual accident. It did not only appear in the storm, but during the mildest calm it had an existence also. Men are frequently found adventurous and daring merely in consequence of never having calculated the hazard,—and are seemingly brave only because they are ignorant. But this was not the character of Mr. Macon. Judgment was the companion of his bravery, and his courage was the more to be admired as it was always directed by wisdom. He was a man who in times of danger and alarm, saw the difficulties by which he was surrounded, and rightly appreciating the strength, he was to contend against; would bring into the field an equal force, in his own courage and decision; who would be alarmed by no danger and intimated by no distress; would meet with firmness what it would be dishonorable to avoid; resist while strength remained for the contest, and enjoy victory with moderation, or suffer defeat without disgrace. Although he

was in very humble circumstances as to property, about the time he left the army, he never would consent to receive one cent for his services. He gave his heart and soul to the cause in which he had embarked. He loved his country, and like a dutiful son, gave her, in time of need; 'twas all he had, his personal services; and notwithstanding that, that country afterwards smiling with prosperity, had with a munificence deserving all praise made a liberal provision for the soldiers of the revolution, still did he decline the proffered bounty. Often has he been heard to say (disclaiming all imputation upon others) that no state of fortune could induce him to accept it. Here we may remark, it does not follow, because we are sometimes inclined to be selfish, that we must never be generous. He that sees nothing in the universe deserving of regard but himself, is a consummate stranger to the dictates of immutable reason. He that is not influenced in his conduct by the real and inherent nature of things, is rational to no purpose. Admitting that it is venial to do some actions immediately beneficial to our country from a partial retrospect to ourselves, surely there must be other actions in which we ought to forget or endeavour to forget ourselves. This duty is most obligatory in actions most extensive in their consequences. If a thousand men, or a whole nation, be to be benefitted, we ought to recollect that we are only an atom in the comparison, and to reason accordingly. Such may have been the considerations which influenced Nathaniel Macon in his decision upon the article of bounties for public services, as regarded himself. Further, if we pay an ample bounty to him who is employed in the public service, how are we sure that he will not have more

regard to the bounty than to the public. If we pay a small bounty, yet the very existence of such a payment will oblige men to compare the work performed as the reward bestowed; and all the consequence that will result will be to drive the best men from the services of their country, a service first degraded by being paid, and then paid with an ill-timed parsimony. Another consideration of great weight in this instance with Nathaniel Macon might have been, that of the source from which bounties are derived; from the public revenue, from taxes imposed upon the community;—if it is said, they might be paid out of the superfluities of the community, the answer is, there is no practicable mode of collecting the superfluities of a community. Taxation to be strictly equal, if it demand from the man of an hundred a year, ten pounds, ought to demand from the man of a thousand a year, nine hundred and ten. Taxation will always be unequal and oppressive, wresting the hard earned morsel from the gripe of the peasant, and sparing him most, whose superfluities most defy the limits of justice. We will not say that a man of as clear discernment and as independent mind as Nathaniel Macon, would rather starve than be subsisted at the public cost, but we can venture to say, that it is scarcely possible to devise any expedient for his subsistence, that he would not rather accept.

Besides the foregoing considerations, Mr. Macon might have been influenced in refusing pay for his services at the time, from the depreciation of the paper currency of the country. For at the time when the colonies were engaged in a war with Great Britain, they had no regular civil governments established among

them, of sufficient energy to enforce the collection of taxes, or to provide funds for the redemption of such bills of credit as their necessities obliged them to issue. In consequence of this state of things, their bills increased in quantity far beyond the sum necessary for the purpose of a circulating medium: and as they wanted at the same time, specified funds to rest on for their redemption, they saw their paper currency daily sink in value. The depreciation continued by a kind of gradual progression, from the year 1777 to 1780; so that at the latter period, the continental dollars were passed by common consent, in most parts of America, at the rate of thirty-nine forty-sixths below their nominal value. And not only the insurmountable embarassments in ascertaining the value of property, or carrying on trade of any kind with any sufficient certainty, those who selling, and those who buying, being left without a rule whereon to form a judgment of their profit or their loss,—and every species of commerce or exchange, whether foreign or domestic, being exposed to numberless and increasing difficulties, the consequences of the depreciation of the paper currency, were also felt with peculiar severity by such of the Americans as were engaged in their military services, and greatly augmented their hardships. The requisitions made by the congress to the several colonies for supplies, were also far from being always regularly complied with; and their troops being not unfrequently in want of the most common necessaries, which naturally occasioned complaints and discontent among them.

At the age of twenty-four years, whilst he was yet in the army, his countrymen elected Mr. Macon a member

of the Legislature of his state, without his solicitation or even his knowledge. And here it is related of him, that such was his attachment to his comrades in arms, that it was not only with reluctance he separated from them, but it was with great difficulty he was induced to accept the station by the most pressing persuasion of his commanding officers.

Mr. Macon's early entering with spirit into the controversy between Great Britain and the colonies, and so warmly espousing the cause of his country, felt the paramount importance of the union among the colonies, and the entire separation of American and British interest. His being no enthusiast, nor one of those feverish spirits, which in their zeal injure rather than benefit any cause they undertake. His not being easily seduced from the paths of duty, by motives of wordly ambition or love of applause. His patriotism being of a singularly elevated character. And the sacrifices which he showed a willingness to make, besides what he had done for the good of his country,—sufficiently recommended him to the confidence of his fellow citizens. Besides a quick and penetrating mind, and at the same time sound and accurate judgment,—a scrupulous justice marking his dealings with all men, and exhibiting great fidelity in his engagements,—qualified him for any office within the gift of the people of that day.

CHAPTER VIII.

Mr. Macon served several years as a member of the legislature of North Carolina, and acquitted himself in that capacity so much to the satisfaction of his constituents,—he soon began to be looked upon as one of the most popular men of his age in the congressional district in which he lived. About this time also, he courted and married a Miss Plummer, of the same county, a young lady of one of the first families in the country.

It is thought, generally, that men possessed of uncommon talents, are apt to trust so much to their intrinsic merit, that they acquire the habit of despising, as beneath their regard, those acquirements which is so necessary to render a man agreeable in female society. It seems that most of them consider themselves as gold; though not always highly polished, will always be valued; they seem to think they may rest secure upon their sterling merit, as sufficient to procure them the esteem and consideration of both sexes. Mr. Macon differed very much in this particular from such men; there was something of a placid dignity in his aspect; of a politeness, not of form, but of sentiment, in his manner; of a mildness undebased by flattery; in his conversation, equally pleasing and equally respectable, which always constituted him a great favourite among the ladies; though his attentions and deportment towards them were entirely different

from what is generally termed a lady's man. In his intercourse with them there was none of the airs of that foppishness and ceremony which is thought by many to succeed with them best. He treated them as if they were rational beings,—and conversed with them as intellectual creatures, whose difference of sex had created no difference of respect in his mind towards their understanding and worth. He knew there was in the female character a fear of offending, a self diffidence, a delicate sense of propriety, which rendered a woman unhappy when she said or done, or thought she had done or said a thing not perfectly as it ought to have been;—a quick perception and a delicate sensibility, rendering her feelingly alive to the opinions of those around her; from which proceeded that modest shyness, that bewitching softness, the most attractive charm which heaven has bestowed on woman-kind. He knew, that afraid of inferiority, a woman of sensibility felt a certain degree of uneasiness in the company of men of high ability and profound learning. Diffident of being able to converse with such men on equal terms, she fancies she is contemned by them; she feels a disagreeable restraint in their presence, from which she is glad to be relieved, and to find herself in a circle where, though she may meet with less genius, less knowledge, and less wit, she is more upon a footing with those around her, and less afraid of betraying any defect in herself. Pefectly aware of these characteristics of the softer sex, he possessed a way which was peculiar to himself alone of removing such restraints and delicacies; and familiarising in a manner almost all the females with whom he at any time associated. Many of them feeling so easy in his com-

pany, they could scarcely suppress showing a predilection to it, to the company of those frivolous men of fashion and etiquette to which they are thought by some to be so much more attached, and in which particular, we hear the sex daily blamed; their conduct affording matter for much severe censure. But were we to admit that women are apt to prefer the society of men of light and showy parts to that of men of more cultivated minds; we cannot for our part allow, that they merit all the obloquy that has been thrown upon them on that account. This injustice of our sex towards the other, often arises from a want of duly considering the different conditions of each. Females are necessarily under the tutelage of circumstances and of situation, governed by the decorum of sex, by the forms of the world. If we picture to ourselves a woman divested of that pliability of mind, firm in resolve, unshaken in conduct, unmoved by the delicacies of situation, by the fashion of the times, by the fear even of common-place obloquy, or of flippant censure; in the delineation of such a character, we immediately change the idea of the sex, and behold under the form of a woman, the virtues and qualities of a man. It may also be observed, that there is something in the female mind which delights more in the beautiful than the sublime; more in the amiable than the splendid; more in what engages and captivates, than in what awes with its grandeur, or astonishes with its vastness. May not the same softness and delicacy dispose her to prefer those gentle manners and amiable qualities which adorn private and domestic scenes, to the more splendid talents which fit a man to shine in public life; in the senate, in the field; or which qualify him to instruct and inform

mankind by philosophical inquiry or deep investigation. Were the regard, the esteem, the confidence of the women confined to such alone, (it falling to the lot of a very small portion of the human race, to possess those talents which enable a man "to read his history in a nation's eyes,") the bulk of mankind would be deprived of the best, the purest source of happiness which this world affords,—viz: the felicity flowing from a union with a virtuous woman, who pours out her soul into the bosom of him she loves; who reposes in him with unbounded confidence, and whose great object of ambition it is to soften every care, to alleviate every calamity and to diffuse happiness on all around her.

Politeness has been said to be the growth of courts;—but Mr. Macon's politeness was not precisely that scheme and system of behavior which can only be learned in the fashionable world. He knew there were many things in the system of the fashionable world, that were practised, not to encourage but depress, not to produce happiness but mortification; and that these by whatever name they were called, were the reverse of genuine politeness. His politeness therefore was of a character that cannot conspicuously exist, but in a mind, itself unembarrassed, and at liberty to attend to the feelings of others; and distinguished by an open ingenuousness of countenance and an easy and flowing manner. By politeness, many persons understand artificial manners, the very purpose of which is to stand between the feelings of the heart and the external behaviour. The word immediately conjures up to their mind a corrupt and vicious mode of society, and they conceive it to mean a set of rules, founded in no just reason, and ostentatiously practised

by those who are familiar with them, for no purpose more expressly, than to confound and keep at a distance those who, by the accident of their birth or fortune, are ignorant of them. Mr. Macon's politeness was seldom or never at variance with sincerity. In its principle, it was nearer, and in a more direct communication with, the root of virtue and utility, than the artificial manners just described—its original purpose being to provide for the cardinal interest of human beings, the great stamina of their happiness, as well as to be the gleaner in the field, and pick up and husband those smaller and scattered years of happiness, which the pride of stoicism, like the pride of wealth, condescends not to observe. It was owing to this peculiarity in his politeness, that he was so much indebted for his success among the ladies as well as gentlemen of his day.

It has often been remarked, that men are apt to display more of their real character in circumstances apparently slight and unimportant, than in the greater and more momentous actions of life. Our behavior, or even the remark we may drop upon some seemingly trifling occurrence, will often strongly denote the real complexion of our mind; and it is upon this account that we admire so much the happy talents of those writers who, by a well chosen circumstance, contrive at once to paint and make us acquainted with the character of the persons whom they wish to describe.

The great passions which actuate men in the pursuits of life, present little diversity of features to afford any just discrimination of character. Besides, in conducting the pursuits to which these passions incite, men are taught to be upon their guard: they are restrained by the

customs and opinions of the world, and, under a kind of disguise, are constantly acting an artificial part. But in the more trifling circumstances of manner and behaviour, and in the more ordinary occurrences of life in private circles, and in which therefore men are less upon their guard, any disguise is forgot to be assumed, and we give way to the natural cast of our mind and disposition. It is there we are apt to betray these peculiar features of character, and those often nice shades of distinction, that discriminate us from one another, and even in what may be deemed very slight circumstances of outward deportment and manner, can be distinctly traced something of the peculiar character of the man. Such being the case, in many instances; it may not be amiss here in the conclusion of this chapter, by way of exemplification, to insert an anecdote from one of Mr. Macon's youthful associates concerning his courtship with Miss Plummer.

It appears that Mr. Macon and one of his rivals met at the house in which Miss Hannah Plummer resided, at the same time. Mr. Macon after the ordinary ceremonies of the meeting were settled, proposed to his rival in the presence of the object of their mutual admiration, that they should take a game of cards for Hannah; and that the vanquished should surrender her to the other and never more be in his way—told him that he could think of no better way than this—and that it was certainly the shortest way to decide their controversy. The expedient was agreed to, by the two rivals—and the result of the game was, that Mr. Macon lost Hannah—upon which he raised up his hands, with his eyes fixed upon Hannah, sparkling with beams of affection, exclaiming, Hannah! "notwithstanding I have lost you fairly,—

love is superior to honesty,—I cannot give you up. It is said the manner in which he made this declaration, inclined the scale in his favour; and that him and Hannah were shortly after married. Mr. Macon seldom indulged in humour, but when he did, his remarks were always directed with philosophical skill, to the accomplishment of the object which he had in view.

CHAPTER IX.

From this period of Mr. Macon's life to its close, the reader will find his biography much more instructing and amusing than in the preceding pages, in which he has only been traced in those minute and ordinary actions, from which, to many minds, no consequences could arise, but to the private circle of his own family and friends; and in the detail of which, they can see no passion excited, no character developed, nothing that should much distinguish them from the common occurrences "which daily took their course and were forgotton." But the author is of an opinion, that in the perusal of the limited pictures which biography generally presents to us, there will be but few readers, who will not take a warm interest in every thing that regards a truly deserving character; who will not feel a sensible pleasure in those instances, where the benevolent purposes of such a person have been attended with success or his virtuous actions followed by reward.

Shortly after Mr. Macon's union with Miss Plummer, he retired to his residence near Roanoke river, in his native county, (Warren,) where he resided the remainder of his life, only when he was called off in the service of the public councils of the nation. He was now between twenty-five and thirty years of age, and being particularly attached to all the enjoyments of domestic

life,—it may be inferred that few men were ever happier or had brighter prospects of happiness before them. His union with Miss Plummer appeared to be a union of two kindred souls, that were created to make each other happy. Educated and raised pretty much in the same respectable sphere of life, their tastes, their sentiments and ambition were so nearly the same in every thing,—that a failure in affection on the part of either were almost impossible. But it was their lot to enjoy the blessings of this happy union, but for a few years,—it being the will of Heaven to take from him, the most valued of all earthly blessings, a good wife; leaving behind her, two little daughters to his care and raising, as pledges of her former affection. Amidst this, the severest of all his trials, he ever experienced, he maintained a philosophical firmness, and a calm resignation to this dispensation of Providence, which in similar circumstances belong to but a few, and to but one class of men in this world.

There is a certain speculative philosophy held forth by some in the world, which regards all sensible pleasures as a deduction from the purity and dignity of the mind, and which does not abstain even from invective against intellectual pleasure itself. Teaching men to court persecution and calamity, it delights to plant thorns in the paths of human life, representing sorrow, anguish, and mortification as the ornaments and honour of existence. Preaching the vanity and emptiness of all earthly things, and maintaining that it is unworthy of a good and wise man to feel complacency in any of the sensations they can afford. These notions may sufficiently accord with the system of those who are willing to part with all

the benefits of the present scene of existence, in exchange for certain speculations upon the chances of a world to come. But they cannot enter into that liberal and enlightened philosophy understood and practised by such men as Mr. Macon; where a less pleasure is not to be bartered but for a greater, either to ourselves or others, nor a scheme attended with the certainty or probability of considerable pleasure for an air-built speculation.

To be sure there can be nothing more contemptible, than the man who dedicates all the energies of his mind to indulgences of any kind. But it is more necessary that we should not proscribe them altogether, than that we should make them one of the eminent pursuits of our lives. We ought not only confine them within limits considerably narrow, as to the time they should occupy, but should also be careful they do not confound and inebriate our understanding. This is indeed necessary, in order to the keeping them in due subordination in the respect last mentioned. If they be not held in subjection as to their place in our thoughts, they will speedily usurp upon all other subjects, and convert the mind into a scene of tumult and confusion. It is from such discipline as this, that such men as Mr. Macon always possesses a certain calmness of temper, superior to the ordinary classes of mankind; which causes their minds always to rest upon its proper centre, and prepares them to meet some of the greatest calamities of this life with an apparent self-indifference, which many take for want of that absolute sympathy in common with the rest of their fellow creatures.

The man who is anxious to maintain his contentment of mind, and be always guarded against the misfortunes

of this life, ought steadily to bear in mind how few are the wants of a human being. It is by our wants that we are held down, and linked in a thousand ways to human society—they render the man who is devoted to them, the slave of every creature that breathes. They make all the difference between the hero and the coward. The man of true courage can cheerfully dispense with any of the blessings of this life, when either duty, public good, or the will of an all-wise Providence demand it. The coward is he, who wedded to such blessings, is not able so much as to think with equanimity of the being deprived of them. Such is the genuine philosophy of such men as Mr. Macon; it teaches them to look upon events, not absolutely with indifference, but at least with tranquility. It instructs them to enjoy the benefits which they possess, and prepares them for what is to follow. It smiles upon them in the midst of poverty, and cheers them in the most adverse circumstances. It enables them to collect and combine comforts, which may be extracted from the most untoward situation, and be content.

Mr. Macon after the loss of his wife, employed his time mostly in reading, meditation, and attention to his plantation; being always particularly attached to the latter employment. He excelled most men in domestic industry and economy. His great object being to live independent; the whole of his plans were directed to that particular object. We do not pretend to say that he was any thing like a proficient in agriculture as a science, at this early period of its history in the United States. For the knowledge of agriculture both practical and acquired at the close of the revolutionary war, were in a

state almost demi-barbarian, with some solitary exceptions. The labours of only three agricultural societies in America, at that epoch, conducted by ardent patriots, by philosophers and gentlemen in the state of New-York, Philadelphia, and Boston, kept alive a spirit of inquiry, often resulting in useful and practical operations: and yet these measures did not reach the doors of practical farmers, to any visible extent. Nor was their plan of organization calculated to infuse a spirit of emulation, which county or state should excel in the honorable strife of competitions in discoveries and improvements, in drawing from the soil the greatest quantum of net profits within a given space; at the same time keeping the land in an improving condition, in reference to its native vigor.

The early neglect of agriculture in our country, may be traced to very obvious causes. The first settlements in the country were made along the shores of the sea, or on the banks of navigable rivers. Population was thin and scattered, and the ocean with its tributary waters offered by far the easiest means of subsistence. The fisheries and navigation naturally attracted their active attention, and the cultivation of the earth was limited to the supply of the necessaries of life, and a scanty surplus to answer the humble demands of colonial commerce. The circumstances of the country, down to the very era of the revolutionary struggle, were such as tended unavoidably to reduce agriculture below its just consequence in the scale of useful employments, and to elevate all the arts connected with navigation, above their proper estimation. Capital was drawn off from the pursuits of agriculture, and devoted to the more lucra-

tive pursuits of commerce. When to this is added the unceasing drain upon the agricultural population, by the prospects which the extent of the interior, and the cheapness of lands, opened to their enterprise, and the consequent effect upon the demand for labor, there is more cause of surprise that the actual state of cultivation was so good, than of reproach that it did not receive a higher improvement.

The agriculturist is said to possess more of the means of living within himself, than any other profession. He is not under the disagreeable necessity of fawning for patronage, or stooping to flattery for a livelihood; or bartering opinion, reputation or confidence for gold. His occupation is therefore such as naturally to produce independence of thought, of feeling and action; and by means of this acknowledged influence, no class of the community are so free from deceitfulness. The main pillars of a republican community, they constitute the nerve of war, the stability of peace, and the grand fountain head of a country's prosperity. And the proposition, that no where can domestic quietness and happiness be discovered, so pure from an alloy of misery, as amid the rural scenes and bowers of the farmer's home, cannot be contradicted. Mr. Macon possessed all the essential habits which is said to constitute a good farmer. He never undertook to cultivate more land than he could do thoroughly. He never kept more cattle, horses, sheep or hogs, than he could keep in good order. He never depended on his neighbour, for what he could, by care and good management, produce on his own farm. He never would beg fruit, while he could plant trees; or borrow tools, while he could make or buy. He never

was so immersed in political matters, as to forget to sow his grain, gather his crop or manure his land,—nor so inattentive to them, as to be ignorant of the great questions of national and state policy, that were agitated in his day.

CHAPTER X.

INDUSTRY, economy and temperance distinguished the character of Mr. Macon, during every portion of his life, and he was at this time truly exemplary in his neighbourhood in the discharge of every social and domestic duty. His love of justice and truth (as before mentioned) and his integrity of heart, commanded universal confidence, esteem and respect. In his dress, his manners, his habits and his mode of life, he indulged no fondness for superfluities, but he never denied himself the use of what was necessary and convenient. The vanity of ostentation and the littleness of pride, were alike disgusting to him. The society of his neighborhood embracing an unusually large circle, seemed as it were to constitute but one family, of which he was the head and the guide; and the rich stores of his mind were common property. His neighbours, even the humblest, visited him without ceremony; and in all their difficulties, applied to him for advice and comfort, which he never failed to afford, in a manner the most acceptable. His hospitality at his own house amounted to almost a superabundance; yet when applied to for a favour he never failed to consider of the importance it might be to the applicant; and in proportion to the benefit to be bestowed upon the petitioner, it was either granted or withheld: This rigid adherence to his principles of economy from which he would never

depart on any account, might have induced many from want of capacity to understand his motives, to judge hard of his liberality. But it was a favourite maxim with him, that profusion in any thing, (that by an economical application might be a service to mankind,) was a crime, both of such a moral and political character, that he who patronised habits of prodigality and waste, as well as he who practised it, himself was equally responsible to his God and his country. Hence his adoption of the method of "saving the fragments that nothing might be lost." And indeed when we come to consider, which character deserves our preference, the man of economical habits or of profuse ones? Which of the two conducts himself in the manner most beneficial to society? Which of the two is actuated by motives the most consonant to justice and virtue. We will find that the arguments in favour of the latter is scarcely worth enumerating.

Riches and poverty are in some degree necessarily incidental to the social existence of man. There is no alternative, but that men must either have their portion of labour assigned them by society at large and the produce collected into a common stock; or that each man must be left to exert the portion of industry, and cultivate the habits of economy, to which his mind shall prompt him. The first of these modes of existence deserves our fixed disapprobation. It is a state of slavery and imbecility. It reduces the exertions of a human being, to the level of a piece of mechanism, prompted by no personal motives, compensated and alleviated by no genuine passions. It puts an end to that independence and individuality, which are the characteristics of an intellectual existence,

and without which nothing eminently honourable, generous or delightful, can in any degree subsist.

Inequality, therefore, being to a certain extent unavoidable, it is the province of justice and virtue to counteract the practical evils which inequality has a tendency to produce. It is certain that men will differ from each other in their degrees of industry and economy. But it is not less certain, that the wants of one man are similar to the wants of another, and the same things will conduce to the improvement and happiness of each, except so far as either is corrupted by the oppressive and tyranical condition of the society in which he is born. The nature of man requires, that each man should be trusted with a discretionary power. The principles of virtue require, that the advantages existing in a community should be equally administered: or that the inequalities which inevitably arise, should be repressed and kept down within narrow limits as possible. Does the conduct of the strict economist, or the man of profusion, best contribute to this end?

That we may try the question in the most impartial manner, we will set out of the view the man who subjects himself to expences which he is unable to discharge. We will suppose it is admitted, that the conduct of the man whose proceedings tend to a continual accumulation of debt, is eminently pernicious. It does not contribute to his own happiness. It drives him to the perpetual practice of subtifuges. It obliges him to treat men not according to their wants or their merits, but according to their importunity. It fixes on him an ever gnawing anxiety that poisons all his pleasures. He is altogether a stranger to that genuine lightness of heart,

which characterises the man of ease and independence. Care has placed her brand conspicuous on his brow. He is subject to occasional paroxysms of anguish which no luxuries or splendour can compensate. He accuses the system of nature of poisonous infection, but the evil is in his own system of conduct.

The pains he suffers in himself are the obvious counterpart of the evils he inflicts upon others. He might have forseen the effects of his own conduct, and that foresight might have taught him to avoid it. But foresight is in many instances, to such men, impracticable. They suffer not in consequence of their own extravagance. They cannot take to themselves the miserable consolation, that if now they are distressed, they have at least lavished their money themselves, and had their period of profusion and riot.

There is no reason to be found in the code of impartial justice, why one man should work, while another man is idle. The spendthrift is not merely content that other men should labor, while he is idle—he has reconciled himself to that. But he is not satisfied that other men should labor for his gratification; he obliges them to do this gratuitously; he trifles with their expectations; he baffles their hopes; he subjects them to a long succession of tormenting uncertainties.

Setting, therefore, out of the question, the man who subjects himself to expenses which he is unable to discharge, it may prove instructive to us to inquire into the propriety of the maxim so currently established in human society, that it is the duty of the rich man to live up to his fortune.

Industry has been thought a pleasing spectacle. What more delightful than to see our country covered with corn, and our ports crowded with vessels? What more admirable than the products of human ingenuity? Magnificent buildings, plentiful markets, immense cities? How innumerable the arts of the less favored members of society, to extract from the wealthy some portion of their riches? How many paths have been struck out for the acquisition of money? How various are the channels of our trade? How costly and curious the different classes of our manufactures? Is not this much better than that a great mass of society should wear out a miserable existence in idleness and want?

It is thus that superficial observers have reasoned, and these have been termed the elements of political wisdom. It has been inferred, that the most commendable proceeding in a man of wealth, is to encourage the manufacture of his country, and to spend as large a portion of his property as possible in generating this beautiful spectacle of a multitude of human beings, industrously employed, well fed, warmly clothed, cleanly and contented. Another view of the subject which has led to the same conclusion, is, that the wealth any man possesses is so much of pleasure and happiness, capable of being enjoyed, partly by himself, partly by another, that it is his duty to scatter the seeds of pleasure and happiness as widely as possible; and that it is more useful that he should exchange his superfluity for their labor, than that he should maintain them in idleness and dependence. These views of the subject are both of them erroneous. Money is the representative and the means of exchange to real commodities; it is no real

commodity itself. The wages of the laborer and the artisan have always been small; and as long as the extreme inequality of conditions subsists, will always remain so. If the rich man would substantially relieve the burthens of the poor, exclusive of the improvement he may communicate to their understanding, or their temper, it must be by taking upon himself a part of their labor, and by setting them task. All other relief is partial and temporary. Three or four hundred years ago in England, there was little of manufacture, and little comparatively, of manual labor. Yet the great proprietors found then, as they find now, that they could not centre the employment of their wealth entirely in themselves. They could not devour to their own share, all the corn and oxen, and sheep, they were pleased to call their property. There were not then commodities, decorations of their persons, their wives and their houses, sufficient to consume their superfluity. Those which existed were cumbrous aud durable, a legacy handed down from one generation to another; not as now, a perpetual drain for wealth and spur to industry. They generously gave away what they could not expend, that it might not rot upon their hands. It was equitable, however, in their idea, that they should receive some compensation for their benefits. What they required of their beneficiaries, was, that they should wear their liveries, and by their personal attendance contribute to the splendor of their lords. It happened then, as it must always happen, that the lower orders of the community could not be entirely starved out of the world.

The commodities that substantially contribute to the subsistence of the human species, form a very short cat-

alogue. They demand from us but very slender portion of industry. If these only were produced, and sufficiently produced, the species of man would be continued. If the labour necessarily required to produce them were equitably divided among the poor, and still more if it was equitably divided among all, each man's share of labor would be light, and his portion of leisure would be ample. There was a time when leisure would have been of small comparative value. It is to be hoped that the time will come, when it will be applied to the most important purposes. Those hours which are not required for the productions of the necessaries of life, may be devoted to the cultivation of the understanding, the enlarging our stock of knowledge, the refining our taste, and thus opening to us new and more exquisite sources of enjoyment. It is not necessary that all our hours of leisure should be dedicated to intellectual pursuits; it is probable that the well being of man would be best promoted by the production of some superfluities and luxuries, though certainly not such as an ill-imagined and exclusive vanity now teaches us to admire; but there is no reason in the system of the universe or the nature of man, why any individual should be deprived of the means of intellectual cultivation.

It was perhaps necessary that a period of monopoly and oppression should subsist, before a period of cultivated equality could subsist. Savages perhaps would never have been excited to the discovery of truth and the invention of art, but by the narrow motives which such a period affords. But surely after the savage state has ceased, and men have set out in the glorious career of discovery and invention, monopoly and oppression can-

not be necessary to prevent them from returning to a state of barbarism. Thus much is certain, that a state of cultivated equality, is that state which in speculation and theory, appears most consonant to the nature of man, and most conducive to the extensive diffusion of felicity.

It is reasonable, therefore, to take this state as a sort of polar star, in our speculation upon the tendency of human actions. Without entering into the question, whether such can be realised in its utmost extent, we may venture to pronounce that mode of society best, which most nearly approaches this state. It is desirable that there should be, in any rank of society, as little as may be of that luxury, the object of which is to contribute to the spurious gratifications of vanity, that those who are the least favored with the gifts of fortune, should be condemned to the smallest portion of compulsory labor; and that no man should be obliged to devote his life to the servitude of a galley slave and the ignorance of the brute.

According to this doctrine, which upon a close philosophical investigation, will prove illustrative of the question before us, how far does the conduct of the rich man who lives up to his fortune on the one hand, and that of the strict economist on the other, contribute to the placing of human beings in the condition in which they ought to be placed.

Every man who invents a new luxury, adds so much to the quantity of labor entailed on the lower orders of society. The same may be affirmed of every man who adds a new dish to his table, or who imposes a new tax upon the inhabitants of his country. Mr. Macon was clear of those sins. "It is a gross and ridiculous error,"

said he, on a certain occasion, "to suppose that the rich pay for any thing. There was no wealth in the world, except this, the labour of man. What was mis-named wealth," said he, "was merely a power vested in certain individuals by the institutions of society, to compel others to labour for their benefit. So much labour was requisite to produce the necessaries of life; so much more to produce those superfluities which at present exist in any country. Every new luxury," said he, "was a new weight thrown into the scale. The poor were scarcely ever benefitted by this. It added a certain portion to the mass of their labour, but it added nothing to their conveniences. Their wages were not changed for the better. They are paid no more now for the work of ten hours than before for the work of eight. They support the burthen, but they come in for no share of the fruit."

If a rich man employ the poor in breaking up land and cultivating its useful productions, he may be their benefactor. But if he employ them in erecting palaces, in sinking canals, in laying out his parks, and modelling his pleasure grounds, he will be found, when rightly considered, their enemy. He is adding to the weight of oppression and vast accumulation, by which they are already sunk beneath the level of the brutes. His mistaken munificence spreads its baneful effects, on every side, and he is entailing curses on men he never saw, and posterity yet unborn.

Such is the real tendency of the conduct of that so frequently applauded character, the rich man, who lives up to his fortune. His houses, his gardens, his equipages, his horses, the luxury of his table, and the number of his servants, are so many articles that may assume the

name of munificence, but that in reality are but added expedients for grinding the poor, and filling up the measure of human calamity.

Mr. Macon recognised that great principle of austere and immutable justice, that the claims of the rich man are no more extensive than those of the poor, to the sumptuousness and pampering of human existence. He watched over his expenditures with unintermitted scrupulosity; and though enabled to indulge himself in many luxuries, he had the courage to practise a self-denial.

It may be alleged, that if Mr. Macon did not consume his wealth upon himself, that it would follow as a natural consequence, that he did not impart it to another, and therefore pertinaciously withheld it from general use contrary to his professed general principles concerning the use of property. But this point may not be rightly understood by the censorious. They do not apply the true development and definition of the nature of wealth, to illustrate it. Wealth consist in this only, the commodities raised and fostered by human labour. Mr. Macon's corn, and meat, oxen and houses, were used and enjoyed by his cotemporaries as truly and to as great an extent, as he believed were conducive to their well-being and happiness. He never hoarded up what is called money. He was too profound a philosopher, and too great a friend of mankind, to so wretchedly have deceived himself.

His conduct was much less pernicious to mankind, and much more nearly conformable to the unalterable principles of justice, than that of the man who disburses his income in what has been termed, a liberal and spirited style.

It remains to compare their motives, and consider which of them has familiarised himself most truly with the principles of morality. It is to be supposed, when a man, like the person of splendour and magnificence, is found continually offending against the rights and adding to the miseries of mankind; and when it appears in addition to this, that all his expences are directed to the pampering his debauched appetite or the indulging an ostentatious and arrogant temper, that he is actuated by no very virtuous and commendable motives. Whilst on the other hand, the man who like Mr. Macon, regulates his expenditures by the good that may result from them to his fellow creatures, is a pattern of benevolence; strips the world of its gaudy plumage, and views it in its genuine colours. He estimates splendid equipages and costly attire, exactly or nearly at their true value. He feels with acute sensibility the folly of wasting the wealth of a province upon a meal. He knows that a man may be as alert, as vigorous, and as happy, whose food is the roots of the earth and whose drink the running stream. His system drives out of the world that luxury, which unnerves and debases the men that practise it, and is the principal source of the oppression, ignorance and guilt, which infests the face of earth.

After every deduction, it will be found, that a man who lives the life of Mr. Macon, considers himself as a man, entitled to expend upon himself only what the wants of man require. He sees, and truly sees, the folly of profusion,—and it is this perception of the genuine principles of morality; it is this consciousness of unassailable truth, that supports him in the system of conduct he has chosen. Were it not for this he could not submit to

the uniform practise of self-denial, and the general obloquy he encounters from a world of which he is comparatively the benefactor. Such appears to be the genuine result of the comparison between the votary of judicious economy, and the man of profusion.

The use of wealth is no doubt a science attended with uncommon difficulties. But it is not less evident that by a master in the science, it may be applied, to cheer the miserable, to relieve the oppressed, to assist the manly adventure, to advance science, and to encourage art. Such was the use, which Mr. Macon manifested in the application of his superfluities. And though the poor imagine they can very easily tell in what manner, a rich man ought to dispose of his wealth, yet the poor in Mr. Macon's neighbourhood never could impute to him, if he did not act towards them in this respect as they would have him, the want of will to perform his duty or knowledge as to what that duty prescribed.

A rich man guided by the genuine principles of virtue, would be munificent, though not with that spurious munificence, that have so often usurped the name. It may however be doubted whether the conduct of the miser, who wholly abstains from the use of riches, be not more advantageous to mankind, than the conduct of the man who, with honorable intentions is continually misapplying his wealth to what he calls public benefits and charitable uses. It deserves to be remarked, that the prejudice and folly of the world has frequently bestowed the epithet of miser upon a man merely for the parsimony and simplicity of his living; who has been found whenever a real and unquestionable occasion occurred,

to be actuated by the best charities and the most liberal spirit in his treatment of others. Such a man might answer his columniators in the words of Lewis the twelfth of France, "I had rather my countrymen should laugh at my parsimony, than weep for my oppression and injustice."

CHAPTER XI.

Possessing those expansive affections that open the human soul, and cause one man to identify himself with the pleasures and pains of his fellows, Mr. Macon's treatment to his slaves was an example to the whole surrounding country. Never had slaves a kinder master. In every thing connected with their health and comfort, he made ample provision;—in food, in raiment, in bedding, and dwellings. In their sickness, his attentions to them were those of a kind and tender friend; nor did he neglect their moral instruction and discipline. He established, at an early period, regular rules by which they were to be managed and governed, of which rules they were well informed and from which he never departed.

To a man who had studied philosophy in the school of science and retirement, who had drawn his lessons from this store-house of reason, and was unacquainted with the practices of mankind, the plantations of the rich in our country would afford an impressive spectacle. Inhabited by two classes of beings, or more accurately speaking, by two sets of men drawn from two distant stages of barbarism and refinement. He would see the rich man with the members of his family, persons accomplished with all the elegance, taste and the variety of useful and agreeable information,—whilst his servants, destitute of all these blessings, disturbed not the tranquility of their

master who pass them with as little consciousness of true benevolence, and as little sense of unrestrained sympathy, as the mandarins upon his chimney-pieces. His fortune to be expended between two different classes of beings dwelling upon the same premises: The first class consisting of the members of his own family; the second, of the servants. The individuals of the first class have each a purse well furnished. There is scarcely a luxury in which they are not at liberty to indulge. There is scarcely a caprice which crosses their fancy, that they cannot gratify. They are attired with every thing that fashion or taste can prescribe, and all in its finest texture and its newest gloss. They are incensed with the most costly perfumes. They are enabled to call into play every expedient that can contribute to health, the freshness of their complexions, and the sleekness of their skin. They are masters of their time, can pass from one voluntary labour to another, and resort as their fancy prompts them to every splendid and costly amusement. The wealth of each servant perhaps not often amounting to ten dollars. He can scarcely obtain for himself an occasional amusement; or if he were smitten with the desire of knowledge, the means of instruction are beyond his reach or daring. But bound to be content with his sordid meal, the purchase of which for a whole week, would not furnish out the most insignificant dish for his master's table.

This monstrous association, and union of wealth and poverty, of want and plenty together, is one of the most astonishing exhibitions that the human imagination can figure to itself. It is voluntary, however, at least, on the part of the master. If it were compulsorily imposed

upon him, there is no cheerfulness and gaiety of mind, that could stand up against the melancholy scene. It would be a revival of the barbarity of Mezetius, the linking a living body and a dead one together. It would cure the most obdurate heart of its partiality for the distinction of ranks in society. But, as it is, and as the human mind is constituted, there is nothing however monstrous, however intolerable to sober and impartial reason, to which custom does not render us callous.

There is another circumstance, the object of the senses, characteristic of this distinction of classes living on the same premises, which though inferior to the preceding, deserves to be mentioned. We amuse ourselves, suppose, with viewing the mansion of a man of wealth and rank in our country. We admire the splendour of the apartments, and the costliness of their decorations. We pass from room to room, and find them all spacious, lofty and magnificent. From their appearance, our minds catch a sensation of tranquil grandeur. They are so carefully polished, so airy, so perfectly light, that we feel as it were impossible to be melancholy in them. We are even fatigued with their variety.

We will imagine that after having surveyed the whole of this mansion and its appurtenances, the fancy strikes us of viewing the servants' offices, dwellings and modes of living. We will pass at a small distance perhaps to the entrance of some little dirty, smoky hovel, scarcely deserving the name of a dwelling, and in creeping along some dark passages, will go from room to room; where nothing presents itself but gloom and despondency. The light of day never having fully entered the apartments. Where the breath of heaven could not freely play among

them. Where there would be in the very air something that felt musty and stagnant to our senses. The furniture frugal, unexceptionable in itself, but strangely contrasted with the splendour of the master's mansion, and a general air of slovenliness and negligence, that amply represents to us the depression and humiliated state of mind of its tenant.

No such pictures as these, which are almost sufficient to drive the truly benevolent to the depths of groves and the bosom of nature, to weep over the madness of artificial society, could be drawn from a visit to Mr. Macon's plantation. There we should have found instead of the lofty and magnificent mansion of splendid apartments and costly decorations, a neat little single-storied framed house, sixteen feet square, with an up-stairs and cellar, furnished in the plainest and least costly style, for his own dwelling, with a sufficient number of out-houses to accommodate visitors comfortably. And on examining the dwellings of his slaves, instead of the smoky hovel of dirt and gloom and discontent, we have described above, we should there have found, snug, well-built log houses about the same size, furnish'd with all the common necessaries of convenient living,—much better by far than many of the poor classes of the whites, who live in many parts of our country. Mr. Macon was as compunctious in his duty to his slaves, as he was inflexible in enforcing the discharge of theirs to himself.

The rule of placing ourselves in the several situations of the persons concerned, and enquiring what we should expect, is of excellent use for directing, enforcing and restraining our actions, and for producing in us a steady, constant sense of what is fit and equitable. This rule of

duty, comprehends every rule of justice without exception. It comprehends all the relative duties, arising from the more permanent relations of parent and child, of master and servant, of magistrate and subject, of husband and wife, or from the more transient relations of rich and poor, of buyer and seller, of debtor and creditor, of benefactor and beneficiary, of friend and enemy. It comprehends every duty of charity and humanity and even of courtesy and good manners. Mr. Macon whose intention was invariably to be guided by this rule, never deviated from the principle of his duty in any of these relations, unless from an error in his judgment which seldom happened.

The evil of slavery itself is incurable at the present day—and all the fanaticism of the North cannot apply its remedy. Those persons are to be commended who like Mr. Macon endeavour to diminish its sting. But others will excite in an enlightened observer a smile of pity for their simplicity, when they pretend they can totally extract the evil. It is a radical defect, originating in the political institutions of our British ancestors. England had been actively engaged in the slave trade nearly fifty years, when the first settlements were effected in Virginia. Slavery was early introduced into the American colonies. The first, about twenty in number, were brought to Virginia, in 1619. The importation of them gradually increased, and although principally bought by the southern planters, slaves were soon found in great numbers, in all the colonies. A disgust towards this traffic appeared very early in the colonies; but it was countenanced and patronized by the English government, and thus introduced into and fastened upon the

country without the power on the part of the colonies to arrest it. These are facts for foreigners, particularly the English, who are always canting and pratling (to use one of their common-place phrases) upon the "unnatural and unaccountable custom of enslaving mankind."

Then, so far as a comparison between Europe and America is concerned, a moment's reflection and examination will shew the exceedingly negative merit of the former. Is it not a fact, that the policy of all America was for more than a century controlled by Europe, and was not this scourge introduced under that policy? Has this policy, in Europe, been yet abondoned? Does England or France, for instance, at this moment, own a foot of land on earth, where black slaves can be profitable, and where they do not use them? It is absurd for France or for England to say, we have no slaves in our respective kingdoms, properly so called, when every body knows that the one is at this moment filled with white beggars, and the other with paupers who are supported by the public purse, and both for the simple reason that they are overflowing with population. It is true, that two centuries ago, when they had more room, they did not import negroes from Guiania; but it is also, just as true, that they sent their ships to convey them to colonies which are situated in climates where they might repay them for their trouble. It is puerile as it is unjust, therefore, for these two countries (most others might be included) to pretend to any exclusive exemption from the sin or shame of slavery.

Slavery has existed from the foundation of society, and will ever continue to exist in all countries if not absolute, in some shape or other. And as to making it an

abstract question at this late period, is out of season and shows a great want of reflection and sound sense. Its existence as a state institution is acknowledged by the federal constitution of our country, and the laws by which we are governed. In the spirit of conciliation and fraternal feeling, which actuated our fathers in the establishment of our confederacy, the rights of the southern states, in their slaves, were guaranteed and secured. A federal union could have been formed on no other basis. Those people of the North, therefore, who, regardless of these considerations, and of their obligations as parties to the federal compact, engaged as they say in this great controversy between freedom and slavery, should recollect that they are not answerable, morally, legally, or constitutionally, for slavery in the Southern states. They have less right to interfere with it here, than with slavery in a foreign land, because they are not only under the obligations of the law of nations, but under the constitutional obligations of a compact of non-interference, irreversibly interwoven with the most glorious result of the American revolution. The people of the Southern states have granted them no jurisdiction over the subject within their limits. They had jurisdiction over it within their own limits, and by a gradual and slow process, they abolish'd it. Beyond that they are not answerable. But if, rashly, madly, in violation of their constitutional obligations, they undertake to interfere with what is not rightfully under their control, they are answerable for the consequences, and the responsibility will be such as no man, in full view of them when fully developed, will in his calmer moments of sober reflection, be willing to lie under. The efforts

which they are engaged in, could they be successful, would subvert the domestic institutions of their Southern neighbours. They are certainly under the influence of a misdirected philanthropy. This disregard of every consideration due from one portion of the union to another, must be lamented by every friend of his country, no matter in what portion of it he may live. It tends to disturb the relations created by the federal compact, and is at war with its spirit and design.

CHAPTER XII.

We have mentioned in a previous chapter that Mr. Macon began to be looked upon as the most popular man of his age in the congressional district in which he lived. His popularity continued to increase, until he became a candidate, and was elected to congress in 1791. This was the second congress held under the constitution of the United States; and many of the difficulties necessarily incident to the first arrangements of a new government, for an extensive country, had been happily terminated by the zealous and judicious exertions of his predecessors. Congress met on the 24th of October, Mr. Macon took his seat on the 28th; and his early respectability in the house of representatives is manifest from his being appointed on the 15th of November, together with Mr. Page and Mr. Murray, the former from Maryland, and the latter from Virginia, to prepare and bring in a bill, pursuant to a resolution fixing the number of representatives in proportion of one representative for every thirty thousand inhabitants. We mention this circumstance to show that he appeared to have attracted attention and made an impression almost on his first arrival.

Mr. Macon's unchequered consistency,—the frank and manly avowal of his opinions on all proper occasions,—the prominent and distinguished part it was his duty to take in support of every republican principle, whilst

serving as a member in the legislature of his own state, sufficiently proclaimed his political creed at that day. His political principles were deep rooted. He became attached to them from early examination, and was confirmed in their correctness from mature reason and serious reflection. They were the principles of genuine republicanism; and to them through life he gave a hearty, consistent, and available support. With them he never compromised; and the greater the pressure the more pertinaciously he stood by them. Adopting, to the fullest extent, the doctrines which allowed to man the capacity and the right to self-government, he never would consent, however strongly the law of circumstances might demand it, to exercise any of the doubtful powers of the constitution of the United States. Jealous of federal authority, his most vigilant efforts were directed towards restraining it within due limits. A democrat by nature, as well as education, he was persuaded that on the popular part of every government depends its real force, its welfare, its securities, its permanence, and its adaptation to the happiness of the people.

The character of the federal constitution, and the origin of the two political parties which then divided and will probably forever divide the American people, may be learnt from the following concise history of its formation.

A portion of the members of the convention which formed the federal constitution, from a strong partiality for the British form of government, desired to approximate as near that system as public opinion in America would allow. From them came propositions for a president

and senate for life, elections for long terms, and other fundamental arrangements, which should remove the government as far as possible from popular control. Another portion of its members, having more confidence in the intelligence and virtue of the people, advocated the principle of making the executive and legislative branches elected for short terms. After the constitution was formed, those two parties differed widely in the views they took of the tendency of the government; the one believing that it was towards consolidation, and the other to disunion; and the one accordingly believing that the danger was despotism in the head, and the other anarchy in the members. Hence the radical differences of opinions, and the different light in which the two parties viewed the character of the system. The republican party held it to be federative in its character, and formed by the states in their sovereign capacity, and adopted for their mutual security and happiness,—while many of their adversaries regarded it as a great national republic formed by the American people in the aggregate, to promote the interest of the majority, instead of the several states composing it.

When the government was put in operation under the new constitution, each party adopted rules of construction calculated to secure their peculiar objects, and advance their cherished principles, in its practical operation. Unfortunately the execution of certain vital parts of the system was entrusted to men who had no faith in its stability, without essential changes, removing it further from the influence of the people and the states; and they immediately set themselves to work to accomplish, by a broad construction, that which was in their

opinion, essential to the continued existence of the government; but was unattainable through a direct appeal to the states and people for amendments to the constitution. The other party maintaining their faith in the constitution as it is, insisted that the constitution should be construed strictly according to its honest meaning as adopted by the states; and that changes in the system when found necessary, should be sought through applications for amendments, rather than through new, vague, and latitudinous constructions which, in effect would accumulate unlimited powers in a government notoriously limited by those who had created it. Mr. Macon was of the latter party, which finally gained the entire ascendency, and have maintained it ever since, with some few deviations. He was opposed to yielding to the general government any powers except those expressly granted by the constitution. He believed in a definition and limitation by law, as far as practicable of the duties of public functionaries; a strict system of accountability in all public servants, and a rigid system of economy in all public expenditures,—that they should be confined to the absolute wants of the government. This policy Mr. Macon believed was indispensible to keep the government within the limits necessary to secure and perpetuate liberty to the people. He believed that there is nothing that can so much endanger the free institutions of a country, and the freedom of its citizens, as a rich and powerful government. If the people be rich and happy, the government must be poor. If the government be rich and powerful, the people will be poor and weak; for the simple reasons that all rich governments are made so by the wealth of the people, and

whatever is taken from them to enrich the government, must make them proportionately poor; and in proportion to the wealth of the government, so will it be powerful; and in proportion to its power, so will the people be weak. If the government is the master, the people will be slaves; for both cannot be rich; both cannot be powerful; nor can both be masters.

Mr. Macon was thirty two years of age when he was elected to the house of representatives, and served in that capacity uninterruptedly under successive elections, from 1791 till the winter of 1815;—when he was chosen by the legislature of his state, a senator in congress, without his solicitation, and in one sense against his wish, for his maxim was "frequent elections and accountability at short intervals." He resigned his seat as a member of the house of representatives whilst he was at Washington, and assumed his new station as senator in January, in 1816. On that occasion he declined and rejected double pay for travelling, although abundant precedents entitled him to it. The legislature continued to him this honourable distinction and high trust, till November, 1828, when he was induced by a sense of duty, springing out of his advanced age and infirmities, to resign,—resigning also at the same time his offices of justices of the peace, and trustee of the university of North Carolina, both of which he filled for many years. During his congressional career he was chosen, 1801, at the first session of the 7th congress, speaker of the house of representatives, and continued to preside over the deliberations of that body till the tenth congress. The duties of the chair were discharged by him with distinguished abilities, and an impartiality which secured the esteem

and affection of his political friends, and won the confidence and admiration of his political adversaries. Not being able, from severe indisposition, to attend at the commencement of the tenth congress, a new incumbent was elected to the chair. He was several times elected president *pro. tem.* of the senate; and the last time chosen to that station, he declined its acceptance. The office of post master general was twice offered him;—but office, however high, or emolument however great, had no charm for him. In 1835 his fellow citizens again called him from his cherished retirement, by electing him a member of the convention, charged with the important duty of revising and reforming the constitution of his native state, of which body he was chosen president by an unanimous vote. In 1836, he was chosen an elector of the president and vice president, on the republican ticket; this was the last of his public services.

In this catalogue of the important public duties, all of which were so faithfully discharged by him, it is something very remarkable, that he never sought any of them himself. He was never known to use any intrigue, management or flattery, or to adopt any of the common means of procuring any man's support during his whole career of matchless popularity. Conscious of possessing the virtues that deserved their favours, he was not so meanly ambitious of public trust, or so intent on personal distinction, as to forget the ends for which it was worth possessing.

CHAPTER XIII.

During the twenty-five years which Mr. Macon served in the house of representatives, we find him constantly supporting the true and genuine principles of democracy—supporting the constitution, as derived from the people, directly expressed by their free suffrages; where the principal executive functionaries, and those of the legislature, were removed by short periods; where under the character of jurors, they exercise in person, the greatest portion of the judiciary powers; where the laws are constantly so formed and administered as to bear with equal weight and favor on all, restraining no man in the pursuit of honest industry, and securing to every one the property which that acquires.

Mr. Macon was never, what is called at the present day, a thorough-going party man. He was of a different order of politicians. In political associations, he knew the object of each man was to identify his creed with that of his neighbor.

To learn the cant of a party, we dare not leave our mind at large in the field of inquiry, lest we should arrive at some tenet distasted by our party. We have no temptation to inquire. Party has a more powerful tendency, than perhaps any other circumstance in human affairs, to render the mind quiescent and stationary. Instead of making each man an individual, which the in-

terest of the whole requires, it resolves all understanding into one common mass, and subtracts from each the varieties that could alone distinguish him from a brute machine. Having learned the creed of our party, we have no longer any employment for those faculties, which might lead us to detect its errors. We have arrived, in our own opinion, at the last page of the volume of truth; and all that remains, is by some means to effect the adoption of our sentiments, as the standard of right to the whole race of mankind. The indefatigable votary of justice and truth, will adopt a mode of proceeding, the opposite of this. He will mix at large among his species; he will converse with men of all orders and parties; he will fear to attach himself in his intercourse to any particular set of men, lest his thoughts should become insensibly warped, and he should make to himself a world of petty dimensions, instead of that liberal and various scene in which nature has permitted him to expatiate. In every numerous association of men there will be some portion of rivalship and ambition. Those persons who stand forward in the assembly, will be anxious to increase the numbers of their favours and adherents. This anxiety will necessarily engender some degree of art. It is unavoidable, that in thinking much of the public, they should not be led by this propensity to think much also of themselves. In the propositions they bring forward; in the subjects they discuss; in the side they espouse of these subjects, they will inevitably be biased by the reflection, what will be most acceptable to their partizans, and popular with their hearers. There is a sort of partiality to particular men that is commendable. We ought to honor usefulness and adhere to

worth. But the partiality which is disingenuously cultivated by weakness on both sides, is not commendable. The partiality, which grows out of a mutual surrender of the understanding, where the leader first resigns the integrity of his judgment, that he may cherish and take advantage of the defects of his followers, bears an unfavourable aspect upon the common welfare. In this scene, truth cannot gain; on the contrary, it is forgotten, that error, a more accommodating principle, may be exhibited to advantage, and serve the personal ends of its professors.

In the assembly of a set of people for the purpose of establishing and propagating party principles, contentions, disputes, and long consultations about matters of the most trivial importance, are the prominent features attendant on such associations. Every human being abounds, and ought to abound, in his own sense. The business upon such occasions, is to twist and distort the sense of each, so that, though they were all different at first, they may in the end be all alike. Is any proposition, letter, or declaration, to be drawn up in the name of the whole,—perhaps it is confided to one man at first, but it is amended, altered and metamorphosed according to the fancy of many; till at last, what once perhaps was reasonable, comes out the most inextricable jargon.

The appetite perpetually vexing the mind of political associators, is that of doing something that their association may not fall into insignificance. Affairs must wait upon them, and not they wait upon affairs. They are not content to act, only when some public emergence seems to require their interference, and point out to them a just method of proceeding; they must make the

emergence to satisfy the recklessness of their disposition. Thus they are ever at hand to mar the tranquility of science, and the free but unobserved progress of truth. They terrify the rest of the community from boldness of opinion, and chain them down to their prejudices, by the alarm which is excited by their turbulence of character.

Could an adequate example of the advantages of political discussion, undebauched by political enmity and vehemence, be set by the wise men of any nation, the beauty of the spectacle would soon render it contagious. Every man would commune with his neighbor. Every man would be eager to tell and hear what the interest of all require them to know. The bolts and fortifications of the temple of truth would be removed. The craggy steep of science, which it was before difficult to ascend, would be levelled. Knowledge would be accessible to all. Wisdom would be the inheritance of man, and none would be excluded from it but by their own heedlessness and prodigality. Truth, and above all, political truth, is not hard of acquisition, but from the supercilliousness of its possessors. It has been slow and tedious of improvement, because the study of it has been relegated to doctors and civilians. It has produced little effect upon the practice of mankind, because it has not been allowed a plain and direct appeal to their understandings. Remove these obstacles; render it the common property; bring it into daily use; and we may reasonably promise ourselves consequences of the most inestimable character.

The indiscriminate adhesion to party, and uniform support of party arrangements, encourage the leaders to pro-

ceed to extremities, and to adopt violent and pernicious measures which the good sense of their followers may reprobate, but from which they have not fortitude enough to withhold their support. This has been, in all countries, the most frightful of the consequences of the unholy and deleterious spirit of faction. Men originally of the purest hearts and best intention, are by this *ignis fatuus* gradually corrupted, and led, step by step, to unite in acts, at which they would, at the commencement of their career, have recoiled with horror and affright. It is a sound political maxim, that a thorough going party man never was a perfectly honest politician; for there, perhaps, never yet was a party free from errors and crimes, more or less gross, in exact proportion to the folly or the wickedness of its leaders.

This blind and uncompromising adherence to party has always been looked upon by such men as Mr. Macon, as one of the worse features in the situation of our country.

United, we are able to protect ourselves without any foreign aid, against all attacks from abroad. But agitated by factious opposition to our government, which is our only rallying point against danger, and weakened by internal dissentions, we invite the invasion of foreign powers; expose ourselves to fall an easy prey, or to form unequal alliances for our safety. Let us seriously ask ourselves who is it that do most towards increasing our expenses and our taxes; inviting the invasion of foreign powers; weakening our means of defence, and driving us to form European alliances? Whether they who are active to promote union, to support government, to prepare to repel hostility; or

those who busily engender divisions; revile our own government, indiscriminately censure, and (as far as they dare) oppose all its acts, and endeavor to paralize all its efforts.

The nation, previous to the operation of the federal government, was in a prostrate and abject state. Arts, trade and commerce languished. Industry had little or no encouragement. Tender laws, and other measures, impolitic and unjust, had banished confidence between man and man. An unfavorable balance of trade had exhausted the country of its metallic medium. The states were hostile to and jealous of each other. In a word, the prospects of the nation, for want of a general controlling government, had been so extremely gloomy, that good men began to doubt whether in its consequences the revolution would deserve to be styled a blessing. But the establishment of our most noble and most excellent form of government worked a rapid and incredible change. Confidence was completely restored. Arts, trade and commerce revived. State jealously was disarmed of all its powers to retard or destroy public prosperity. And would it not now be an attempt worse than political suicide, to seek a dissolution of this happy union, or to endanger the destruction of the government by a blind and indiscriminate adherence to party prejudices. Violent partizans have in all ages believed the monstrous doctrine, that the end sanctifies the means; a doctrine, the fruitful parent of numberless crimes. This frequently leads parties to adopt measures at which each individual would have shuddered. They should use their utmost energy to oppose all impolitic, injurious, or unjust measures,—but let them yield a cordial

and hearty support to every one calculated to promote the public good. This is what would constitute a noble and dignified political party. Let them, if they choose, if they be out of power, use all their efforts to regain the power they have lost, by fair and honorable means. Let them charitably regard their political adversaries as intending to promote the public good, even when they believe them in error. Let them make allowance for human imperfection, from which they are no more exempt than their antagonists.

The position which each of the states occupies as members of this union, should never be lost sight of by any party. For whilst, as to all the purposes not delegated to the general government, each is an independent sovereignty, yet, as to all granted to the confederation or union, each must exercise her authorities in subordination to the general government, evincing a proper regard for, and subordination to that government in all things properly pertaining it. The government of the states should ever exercise a careful vigilance for the preservation of their own rights, that the object of the confederation may be fairly effected, and the harmony of a system of government without parallel in modern times be preserved in all its beauty and symetry. "It is not sufficient that there should be a cold compliance in terms with the letter of our constitution;" there should be a proper national feeling of brotherhood kept up. We should exhibit in all our conduct that we are members of a great and powerful union of free states, who have made certain terms and conditions by way of mutual concession and compromise in order to promote the general good of the whole. The old articles of confederation, as well

as the present constitution of the United States, were the results of these feelings and these concessions and compromises,—and a due regard to that good faith which should ever characterize the conduct of a republican, would seem to require that a contract or compact of union thus formed, should be kept not only inviolate in terms, but in spirit also.

CHAPTER XIV.

In our last chapter, we mentioned that Mr. Macon was never what might be called a thorough-going party man. We attempted to give our ideas of what constituted that character, to enable the reader to discover the difference between him and those politicians who so frequently suffer their ambition and prejudices to lead them to such extravagant, unnecessary, and dangerous results. In the whole history of Mr. Macon's political career, he never has been charged with any inconsistency, or the smallest departure from the true republican doctrine but on one occasion. He was charged by some, since the close of our last war with Great Britian, with having voted for the war, but voted against appropriations to carry it on. This is the only political inconsistency we have ever heard of his being accused; and had it been true, was certainly of a character that placed him, as a politician, in a very ridiculous point of view. But upon an examination of the journals of congress, it will be found an accusation without any foundation.

Matthew Carey in his first edition of the Olive Branch, enumerated, among the errors of Mr. Madison's administration, the neglect to make due preparations for the war "previous to the commencement of hostilities." But says, in his second edition, that he deeply regrets to have cast such a superficial glance at the subject; to have al-

lowed himself to be so grossly deceived, and to have contributed to lead his readers estray. There were ample preparations made, he afterwards says, as might be seen in a list of acts inserted in his book, passed during the session of congress, towards the close of which war was declared. He further says, like an honest man (as we believe he was) that he should not easily forgive himself the very extraordinary error of which he acknowledges himself guilty on the subject. He stated he should regard it as a monition as long as he lived against precipitate decision. And took the liberty of hinting to his readers, whoever they might be, that they might derive a useful lesson from the fact? If, with the attention he had been in the habit of paying to public affairs,—reading two or three news-papers every day,—and perfectly convinced of the justice of war, he had nevertheless fallen into such a palpable, such a monstrous error, on so plain a point—if he had brought so unjust an accusation against the congress which declared war, how difficult must it be for persons remote from opportunities of judging correctly, and liable to be mislead by interested or factious men, to form accurate opinions. And here we would remark, if those persons had taken the trouble to have examined, who accused Mr. Macon of voting against appropriations to carry on the war, they probably would have found themselves in Matthew Carey's predicament; and we are in hopes would have been equally penitent, and cautious of falling into similar errors in future, as they discovered how utterly fallacious and unfounded was the allegation.

This accusation against Mr. Macon originated, from his adherence to a rule which he had prescribed for

himself,—"that of voting for the expenditure of no money other than was required by public necessity." From this rule he was never known to depart;—it was the epitome of all his political principles—the grand centre point from which all the rays of his political worth eminated—and his adherence to it, he looked upon as a moral engagement he was always under to his constituents, that he was determined to fulfil to the letter. No lure could have tempted him to lay it down—there was no passion he would gratify at the expense of this duty. He always sought with great earnestness and untiring industry, the path that led to it; and when discovered, fearlessly pursued it—obliging no one from favour or affection, and yielding nothing to the suggestions of resentment or enmity. This tenacity to principle, then, must have disqualified him from filling the character as we have before stated of that thorough-going party-man to whom sometimes may be attributed so many evil consequences.

It appears that the whole of Mr. Macon's votes in congress preparatory to and during the progress of hostilities with Great Britian, were governed (as they should have been) by the principles of defensive war. The principles of defensive war in his opinion were so simple as to procure an almost infallible success. Fortifications, therefore, according to these principles are considered, a very equivocal species of protection, and will oftener be of advantage to the enemy, by being first taken, and then converted into magazines for his armies. Whilst a moving force on the contrary, if it only hovered about his march and avoided general action, would always preserve the real superiority. The great engine

of military success or miscarriage, is the article of provisions; and the farther the enemy advanced into our country, the more easy would it be to cut off his supply; at the same time, that so long as we avoided general action, any decisive success on his part would be impossible. These principles, if rigidly practised, would soon be so well understood, that the entering in a hostile manner the country of a neighbouring nation would come to be regarded as the infallible destruction of the invading army. Perhaps no people were ever conquered at their own doors, unless they were first betrayed, either by divisions among themselves, or by the abject degeneracy of their characters. Not less inevitable, from these principles, is that the operations of war should be limited as accurately as possible to the generating no farther evils than defence inevitably requires. Calamity should as entirely as possible be prevented to every individual who is not actually in arms, and whose fate has no immediate reference to the event of the war. This principle condemns the levying military contributions, and the capture of mercantile vessels. Each of these atrocities would be in another way precluded by the doctrine of simple defence. We should scarcely think of levying such contributions, if we never attempted to pass the limits of our territory; and every species of naval war would perhaps be proscribed.

In the examination of Mr. Macon's votes on the various measures preparatory to the declaration of war in 1812, it appears he considered a navy adequate to the protection of our own coast, sufficient, until further exigences required its increase,—and when that time arrived, we might be better prepared to make appropriations for

that purpose. The resolutions, as reported by the committee of the whole house on the state of the union, the 6th December 1811, and his votes thereon clearly uphold this inference. There were six of these resolutions which we feel it our duty to lay before the reader at full length that he have a fair opportunity of being in possession of all the facts out of which arose the accusation of inconsistent voting against the subject of these pages.

1st.—*Resolved*, that the military establishment, as authorised by existing laws, ought to be immediately completed, by filling up the ranks, and prolonging the enlistments of troops; and that to encourage the enlistments, a bounty in lands ought to be given, in addition to the pay and bounty now allowed by law.

2nd.—*Resolved*, that an additional force of regular troops ought to be immediately raised to serve for three years; and that a bounty in lands ought to be given to encourage enlistments.

3rd.—*Resolved*, that it is expedient to authorise the president, under proper regulations, to accept the service of any number of volunteers, not exceeding fifty thousand, to be organized, trained and held in readiness to act on such service as the exigences of the government may require.

4th.—*Resolved*, that the president be authorised to order out, from time to time, such detachments of the militia, as, in his opinion the public service may require.

5th.—*Resolved*, that all the vessels, not now in service, belonging to the navy, and worthy of repair, be immediately fitted up and put in commission.

6th.—*Resolved*, that it is expedient to permit our merchant vessels, owned exclusively by resident citizens, and

commanded and navigated solely by citizens, to arm, under proper regulations to be prescribed by law, in self-defence against all unlawful proceeding.

Mr. Macon voted for the four first of these resolutions and against the two latter,—carrying out his opinion as we before stated, that he considered the navy as it then stood amply sufficient to the protection of our coast and for defensive war; and until further exigencies required it, he was in favor of its remaining as it was; looking upon appropriations for its increase at that time as unnecessary expenditures. He voted, in a large majority, on the 20th December, 1811, on the bill from the senate "for completing the military establishment." He voted against (in minority of 34,—94) raising an additional force; which vote was no doubt given by Mr. Macon, on account of the amendments, to the bill from the senate by Mr. Bibb of Georgia and John Smilie, the purport of which amendments were to make the president judge, whether the appointment of any officers to those regiments were necessary or not; and if any, what number should be appointed.

He voted against the bill entitled an act concerning the naval establishment, 29th January 1812.

He voted for the bill supplementary to an act making provision for arming and equipping the whole body of the militia of the United States.

He voted for the embargo, 1st of April, 1812.

This is the history of Mr. Macon's course in congress, preparatory to the war. We will next examine his votes, from its declaration to its close on the 24th December, when peace was made at Ghent.

Mr. Macon voted for the act declaring war between Great Britian and her dependences and the United States, and their territories, on the 4th of June 1812, and was appointed in conjunction with Mr. Finley of Pennsylvania, as a committee to carry the bill to the senate to request their concurrence. And to show his manner of informing his constituents, after it was sanctioned by the senate on the 17th, he wrote to the different post masters in his district, as follows:

WASHINGTON, 18th June, 1812.

Dear Sir:—

War was declared against Great Britain yesterday.

Yours, &c.

NATHANIEL MACON.

Mr. Macon voted for the "act to lay and collect a direct tax within the United States," 8th January, 1813,—and no people, with a local and transitory exception never to be wholly avoided, were more able than the people of the United State to spare for the public wants a portion of their private means; whether regard had been had to the ordinary profits of industry, or the ordinary prices of subsistence in our country at the time, compared with those of any other. And in no case could stronger reasons be felt for yielding the requisite contributions. These contributions rendered the public resources certain, and commensurate to the public emergencies, the constituted authorities able to prosecute the war more rapidly to its proper issue,—whilst every hostile hope of the political party opposing the war, founded on a calculated failure of our resources, was cut off, by

adding to the evidence of bravery and skill, in combats on the ocean and on land, an alacrity in supplying treasure necessary to give them their fullest effect; and thus demonstrating to the world, the public energy which our political institutions, combined with personal liberty, distinguishes them, to be the best security against future enterprises on the rights or the peace of the nation.

Mr. Macon was on the committee for public expenditures the 26th February, 1814—5th of March, 1814, Mr. Macon voted for the bill from the senate, "in addition to an act entitled an act allowing a bounty to the owners, officers, and crews, of the private armed vessels of the United States." On the same day voted for a bill making appropriations for the support of the navy of United States, for the year 1814. And voted on the same day again, for a bill making appropriations for the support of the military establishment of the United States, for the same year.

Here we have a plain and simple history of all the foundation of that inconsistency with which he has been so unjustly charged, and which must have first had its birth in misrepresentations, and its propogation afterwards sustained only by ignorance and misguided prejudice. And though the author is well aware that its perusal will be rather tedious, perhaps insiped, to some of his readers, yet for those who may take an interest in political subjects—he felt it his duty as his biographer not to overlook so important a matter in so great a man's life. Indeed, when we come to give his conduct in congress at this period, a full investigation, we are bound to come to the conclusion, that any other course but the one pur-

sued, would have been a departure from the political principles he prescribed for himself,—and his strict compliance with which on all occasons as well as the one just under review, procured him the character of being one of the standards of republicanism in the nation, and a never-failing criterion of the true democratic faith.

CHAPTER XV.

When a statue had been erected by his fellow citizens of Theses to Theagenes, a celebrated victor in the public games of Greece, we are told, that it excited so strongly the envious hatred of one of his rivals, that he went to it every night, and endeavoured to throw it down by repeated blows; till at last, unfortunately successful, he was able to move its pedestal, and was crushed to death beneath it on its fall. This, if we consider the self-consuming misery of envy, might have happened to those accusers of Mr. Macon of the political inconsistency of which we treated in our last chapter, had they been successful.

There are minds of which the chief wishes of evil are not to those whom it is virtuous to view with disapprobation, but to those whom it is vice not to view with emotions of esteem and veneration. Eager for distinction in that great theatre of human life, in the wide and tumultuous, and ever varying spectacles of which they are at once actors and spectators; and when the distinction for which they hoped, is occupied or about to be occupied by another of greater merit, their own defect of merit seems to them not so much a defect in themselves, as a crime in him who had previously occupied the seat to which they aspired. The feeling of their inferiority is thus forced upon them, and they who have

forced it upon them by their superior merit, they look upon as having done them an injury to the extent of the uneasiness which they have occasioned; and an injury, perhaps, they do not feel more, as it has affected them in the estimation of others, than they feel it in the mode in which it has affected them in their own estimate of themselves. An injury is then done to them in their own estimation; and the feeling which heaven has placed within their breasts, as necessary for repelling injury, arise on this instant feeling of evil which they have been made to suffer. But what were necessary for repelling intentional injury, arise where no injury was intended. And though the minds in which they thus arise must be minds that are in the highest degree selfish, and incapable of feeling that noble love of what is noble, which endears to the virtuous, the excellence that transcends them. There still are minds, and many minds so selfish, and so incapable of delighting in excellence that is not their own. Upon this principle, the conduct of the Athenian who *ostracised* the just man of his country, may be accounted for.

Mr. Macon occupied a seat in the hearts of his country-men, surrounded by so many virtues, that entirely protected him, from the puny attacks of such minds as we have just described; and was so far above the reach of the arrows used by them on this occasion, that they fell harmless at the feet of those who aimed them. There are situations in life in which it is necessary to submit even to the dispraise of men for imputed vices, from which we know that we are free, rather than by the sacrifice of our duty, to appear more virtuous by being less worthy of that glorious name. This was Mr. Macon's

situation at this period. For it was a favourite maxim with him in our republic, "if the people were let alone, they would always do right." The purport of which maxim was, that upon all questions coming before them where they were not interfered with by the intermeddling demagogue, a majority would generally decide in favour of justice. It was therefore a condescension that his conscious rectitude and sterling worth would not bend to, to notice such imputations,—and he never was known, that we are informed, ever to have made the least public effort to acquit himself of them, notwithstanding they inflicted but little if any injury upon his popularity at the time of their propagation. Mr. Macon never sought office, either of profit or honor. His popularity was not a thing that he had to chase down by dint of indefatigable pursuit, which at some unwary moment was to elude his grasp for the hands of another lucky *hunter*. But it was a popularity that was founded upon good and virtuous conduct,—upon principles, to the purity of which the bestowers graciously gave it as its due. His tenure, therefore, to the donation, was of too much strength to be broken by ordinary human efforts.

There is a power capable of being coveted by minds which are incapable of feeling and appreciating moral and intellectual excellence, also, which he never sought or wanted. This is the power which high station confers. The power of forcing obedience even upon the reluctant, and in many cases of winning obedience, from that blind respect which the multitude are always sufficiently disposed to feel for the follies, as for the virtues, of those above them. Much of the pleasure attached

to the conception of this power, like that which attends every other species of power, arise, it must be admitted, from the glory which is supposed to attend official dignities;—but the desire of power itself would be one of the strongest of the passions of men, though this *mere power* were all which station conferred. To know that there are a number of beings, endowed with many energies, which nature seemed to have made absolutely independent of us, who are constantly ready to do whatever we may order them to do, in obedience to our very caprice, is to us very nearly the same thing, as if some extension of our faculties had been given to us, by the addition of all *their* powers to our physicial constitution. If these instruments of power were mere machines, which subserviency to us could not in any degree debase, and which could be kept in order without any great anxiety on our part, and without occupying that room which the living instruments occupy, we should all probably, feel the desire of possessing these subsidiary faculties; since not to wish for them, at least, would be like indifference whether we had two arms or only one, distinct or indistinct vision, a good or bad memory. For none of us are like that marvellous runner in the fairy tale, with respect to any of our faculties, who was so very nimble as to be obliged to tie his legs that he might not run too fast. Our powers, bodily or mental, never seem to us to require any such voluntary retardation; and however well fitted they may be for the circumstances in which we are placed, we are yet desirous of being able to do more than, as individuals, we are capable of doing; and would gladly, therefore, avail ourselves of the supplemental machinery, or of such parts, as would

suit best our particular wishes and purposes. But the parts of the machinery of power of which we are speaking, are living beings like ourselves, and fond as we are, of the purposes which we may be desirous of executing by means of them. There are men like Mr. Macon, who have moral affections that preclude the wish; and it was on this account he constituted (in the eyes of all those who were capable of analysing his character) the substantial republican, for which he had so much credit. He did not covet so much the pride of him who sees a whole multitude busy only in furthering his frivolous and ever-changing desires, as the serenity of him whom the world counts far humbler; who sees around him a multitude happy in their own occupations, feeling for him only that friendship which the heart spontaneously offers, and assisting him only with those social services which it is delightful to give; and which as given with delight, it is delightful also to receive. He felt within himself the talents which were to render his exaltation eminently useful to mankind, and that there might be more virtue and more happiness in the world, than if he had not been elevated; therefore, he would have been guilty of criminal self-indulgence, if he had resigned himself to the enjoyments of private life, and neglected the honorable means of rising to a station which his virtues and talents would render truly honourable. To his mind, however, ambition presented no anxieties; because, though there might not be the happiness of attaining a more useful station, there was still the happiness of being useful in the station already possessed; and it presented no disgrace, even in failure, because the disgrace which the heart feels, is only for

those who have failed in dishonourable wishes, or who have sought what is honourable in itself, by the use of dishonourable means.

Of the multitude of the ambitious, how few are there of this noble class;—how infinitely more numerous they who seek in power only what the virtuous man does not wish so much, as consent to bear in it for the greater good which may attend it! How many, who labour, perhaps, through a long life of ignominy, to be a little more guilty than it is possible for them to be with the narrow means of guilt which they possess, and who die at last without attaining that wretched object for which they have crawled and prostrated themselves, and been every thing which a good man would not be, even for a single moment, for all which kings, or the favourites of kings, could offer! If they fail in their ignoble ambition, it is easy to see what misery they have earned; and if even they succeed at last, what is it which they gain? There is no pleasure in what they possess, while it is inferior to something which they wish, with a still more ardent appetite to acquire. "The passion which torments them is like a flame which burns with more violence the more fuel there may have previously been added to the conflagration."

The happiness enjoyed by one who has risen to power by ignoble means, is perhaps less than that of the most abject of those who depend on him,—and the dignity which he has attained, and knows not how to enjoy, however splendid it may be as a mark of distinction, a mark of nothing so much as of the unworthiness of him who possesses it; a memorial of crimes or follies, which in another situation would have been unnoticed or for-

gotten,—but which are now forced on the continued execration or contempt of mankind; and in the consciousness or dread of this general feeling, are forced, too, more frequently than they would otherwise have arisen, on the shame and remorse of him who feels, that in purchasing with them every thing else, he has not purchased with them happiness.

In the great scale of power, which ascends from the lowest of the people to the sovereign; to whom all are submitted; in which the inferior, at every stage, is paying court to his superior, and receiving it in his turn, from those who are inferior to himself, it is not easy to say at what point of the scale the pleasure of the homage is most sincerely felt. There is much truth in one of Fielding's lively pictures of this sort of homage, in which he reduces the difference of power to the different hours of the day, at which we are great men. "With regard to time, it may not be unpleasant," he says, to survey the picture of dependence like a kind of ladder. As, for instance, early in the morning arises the postillion, or some other boy, which great families, no more than great ships, are without, and falls to brushing the clothes, and cleaning the shoes of John the footman, who being dressed himself, applies his hands to the same labours for Mr. second-hand, the squire's gentleman—the gentlemen in the like manner, a little later in the day, attends the squire; the squire is no sooner equipt, than he attends the levee of my lord; which is no sooner over, than my lord himself is seen at the levee of the favourite, who, after the hour of homage is at end, appears himself to pay homage to the levee of the sovereign. Nor is there, perhaps, in this whole ladder of depend-

ence, any one step at a greater distance from the other, than the first from the second; so that to a philosophical mind, the question might only seem whether you would choose to be *a great man* at *six in the morning*, or at *two in the afternoon*.

That there is more true happiness in the enjoyments of private life, than in the pursuits of ambition, is one of those common places of morality, which the experience of every day confirms. Yet the poor man's son, says Dr. Smith, whom heaven, in its anger, has visited with ambition, when he begins to look around him, admires the condition of the rich. He finds the cottage of his father too small for his accommodation, and fancies he should be lodged more at his ease in a palace. He is displeased with being obliged to walk a-foot, or to endure the fatigue of riding on horse-back. He sees his superiors carried about in machines, and imagines that in one of these he could travel with much less inconveniency. He feels himself naturally indolent, and willing to serve himself with his own hands as little as possible; and judges that a numerous retinue of servants would save him from a great deal of trouble. He thinks if he had attained all these, he would sit still contentedly, and be quiet, enjoying himself in the thought of the happiness and tranquility of his situation. He is enchanted with the distant idea of this felicity. It appears, in his fancy, like the life of some superior rank of beings; and in order to arrive at it, he devotes himself for ever to the pursuit of wealth and greatness. To obtain the conveniences which these afford, he submits, in the first year, nay, in the first month of his application, to more fatigue of body, and more uneasiness of mind, than he could

have suffered through the whole of his life from the want of them. He studies to distinguish himself in some laborious profession. With the most unrelenting industry he labours night and day, to acquire talents superior to all his competitors. He endeavours next to bring those talents into public view; and, with equal assiduity, solicits every opportunity of employment. For this purpose, he makes his court to all mankind; he serves those whom he hates, and is obsequious to those whom he despises. Through the whole of his life, he pursues the idea of a certain artificial and elegant repose, which he may never arrive at; for which he sacrifices a real tranquility, that is at all times in his power, and which, if in the extremity of old age, he should at last attain to it, he will find to be in no respect preferable to that humble security and contentment which he had abandoned for it. It is then, in the last dregs of life, his body wasted with toil and diseases, his mind galled and ruffled by the memory of a thousand injuries and disappointments, which he imagines he has met with from the injustice of his enemies, or from the perfidy and ingratitude of his friends, that he begins at last to find, that wealth and greatness are mere trinkets of frivolous utility, no more adapted for procuring ease of body or tranquility of mind, than the tweeser-cases of the lover of toys; and like them too, more troublesome to the person who carries them about with him, than all the advantages they can afford him are commodious. To one who was to live alone in a desolate island, it might be a matter of doubt, perhaps, whither a palace, or a collection of such small conveniences as are commonly contained in a tweezer-case, would contribute most to his happiness and

enjoyment. If he is to live in society, indeed, there can be no comparison; because in this, as in all other cases, we constantly pay more regard to the sentiments of the spectator, than to those of the person principally concerned; and consider rather how his situation will appear to other people, than how it will appear to himself. But in the languor of disease, and weariness of old age, the pleasures of the vain and empty distinctions of greatness disappear. To one in this situation, they are no longer capable of recommending those toilsome pursuits in which they had formally engaged him. In his heart he curses ambition, and vainly regrets the ease and the indolence of youth, pleasures which are fled forever, and which he has foolishly sacrificed, for what, when he has got it, can afford him no real satisfaction. From this picture, well may power and riches appear to such minds as Mr. Macon's, to be what they really are, enormous and operose machines, contrived to produce a few trifling conveniences to the body,—consisting of springs the most nice and delicate, which must be kept in order with the most anxious attention, and which, in spite of all our care, are ready every moment to burst into pieces, and crush in their ruins their unfortunate possessor. Immense fabrics, which it requires the labour of a life to raise, which threatens every moment to overwhelm the person that dwells in them; and which, while they stand, though they may save him from some smaller inconveniencies, can protect him from none of the severer inclemencies of the season. They keep off the summer shower, not the winter storm, but leave him always as much, and sometimes more exposed, than be-

fore, to anxiety, to fear, and to sorrow, to diseases, to dangers, and to death.

It has been as truly, as eloquently said, that "when providence divided the earth among a few lordly masters, it neither forgot nor abandoned, those who seemed to be left out in the partition." These last too, enjoy their share of all that it produces. In what constitutes the real happiness of human life, they are in no respect inferior to those, who would seem so much above them. In ease of body and peace of mind, all the different ranks of life are nearly upon a level; and the beggar, who suns himself by the side of the high-way, possesses that security which kings are fighting for.

CHAPTER XVI.

In the account which Swift gives of his Academy of Projectors in Ladago, he mentions one project for making things supply the place of language, and he speaks only of the difficulty of carrying about all the things necessary for discourse. "There was a scheme," he says, "for entirely abolishing all words whatsoever," and this was urged as a great advantage in point of health as well as brevity.

We cannot but think, that to a genius like that of Dean Swift, a finer subject of philosophical ridicule, than the mere difficulty which his sages felt in carrying a sufficient stock of things about with them, and their awkward attempts to make these things supply the place of abstract language, might have been found in some satirical demonstration of the doctrine of a certain other class of great men, who appear to have thought from ages past, that the greater number of words used on any occasion, whether in the senate chamber or the pulpit, the nearer approaches they were making to the enviable character of an accomplished orator. Much speaking appears to be the reigning vice of the present age, and the consequences deducible from it, as of old, will as readily apply to many of those who are guilty of it. And in the great field for political irony, for example, how many subjects of satire might we find more deserving of

the shafts of our ridicule, on this account, than in the *emblems*, to which the patriots and courtiers of this Academy of Projectors, in their most zealous professions of public devotion, might have been obliged to have recourse, viz: the painful awkwardness of the political expectant of places and dignities, who was outwardly to have no wish, but for the welfare of his country, yet could find nothing but mitres, and maces, and seals, and pieces of stamped metal, with which to express the purity of his disinterested patriotism; and the hurrying eagerness of the statesman, likewise, to change instantly the whole upholstery of language in his house, for mere political furniture, in consequence of the mere accident of his removal from office.

The highest knowledge can be nothing more than the shortest and clearest road to truth; all the rest is pretention, not performance; mere verbiage, and grandiloquence, from which we can learn nothing, but that it is the external sign of an internal deficiency. Mr. Macon, who frequently took part in the debates of congress, was celebrated for his faculty of conveying many ideas in a few words. He was not of that order of orators, who could rouse a senate, too apt, perhaps, to think of the privileges of a few, or of the interest, or supposed interest, of one people, to the consideration of the great rights of mankind of every color and country,—forcing, as it were, upon their eyes, atrocities which they had, perhaps, at a distance, long sanctioned or permitted; and absolving, or at least finishing, by the virtuous triumph of a single hour, the guilt of many centuries. Orators upon whom it appears, the happiness and misery, virtue and vice, the glory and infamy of nations are depending on

their voice,—before whom every heart that does not gladly yield to their influence, shrinks, as from something dreadful and irresistible; that sweeps away all subterfuges of hypocricy, and leaves nothing behind but conviction and joy and dismay. But he was the patriot and the philosopher, with a clear head and distinct voice, whom the corrupt might well tremble to see arise,—and whom though he "possessed neither wit, nor words, nor speech, to steal men's hearts," was a plain, blunt man, that spoke right on, and told them things that they themselves did know." And whenever employed in speaking upon the freedom, and peace, and prosperity of his own land, alluded also to the happiness which the land that was dearest to him, could diffuse to every nation that was within the sphere of its influence or example. His laconic manner of doing this, being an evidence to the world, that truth always lies in a small compass; and if a well has been assigned her, for a habitation, it is as appropriate from its narrowness, as its depth.

No sciences have exercised so many quills, as those that have no certainty; hence it happens that those that are capable of being demonstrated, are never voluminous; for clearness is intimately connected with conciseness, as the lightning which is the brightest thing, is also the most brief; but in proportion as certainty vanishes, verbosity abounds. To foretell an eclypse, a man must understand astronomy; or to find out an unknown quantity by a known, he must have a knowledge of calculation; and yet the rudiments that enable us to effect these important things are to be found in a very narrow compass. But when we survey the ponderous folios of the schoolmen and the metaphysicians, we are inclined to ask a

very simple question. What have either of these plodders done, that has not been better done by those that were neither? A similar reasoning may be drawn in reflecting upon the difference of the public speakers of the United States; and as it may be gratifying to the curiosity of some of our readers, we will here subjoin Mr. Macon's acknowledgement to the house of representatives on the appointment of speaker of that body being announced to him, the third time he was elected. We do this the more readily on account of comparing its short, comprehensive and philosophical sufficiency, to the verbose and pedantic fulsomness of some other great men of the nation on similar occasions.

We have before stated in a preceding chapter, that Mr. Macon was elected speaker of the house of representatives in the year 1801, in the first session of the seventh congress, held under the constitution of the government of the United States—he was elected speaker also in 1803, first session of the eighth congress; and likewise in 1805, first session of the ninth congress, under the administration of Thomas Jefferson. It was on this last occasion he made the acknowledgments, of which the following is a copy:

"*Gentlemen:*

Accept my sincere thanks for the honor you have conferred on me. Permit me to assure you that my utmost endeavors will be exerted to discharge the duties of the chair with fidelity, impartiality and industry; and that I shall rely with confidence on the liberal and candid support of the house."

We have selected his third address on account of its being somewhat longer than the other two, made to the house in 1801, and 1803.

The following is an acknowledgment made by a gentleman several years afterwards, on his appointment to the same office, which I here introduce for the purpose of the contrast above mentioned:

"*Gentlemen:*

In returning to the station in which am replaced by a continuance of your favor, whilst I am sensible of the honor which I have received, I am sensible also of my inability to fulfil the expectations justly raised by so elevated a distinction; but gentlemen, the experience I have had, limited as it is, has satisfied me that in the maintainance of the order of the house, less depends upon the presiding officer than upon a sense of the necessity of decorum being generally diffused throughout the body. Then only will a deliberative assembly be well governed, and its business agreeably transacted; when each member, identifying the reputation of the body to which he belongs in his own, shall make the preservation of its order an affair of personal and individual concern, and shall render to the chair a candid, liberal and unbiased support. Under the hope and persuasion that you participate with me in these sentiments, I shall proceed to administer the duties you have been pleased to assign me."

This address, made by one of the most celebrated men for talents in the nation, has been here presented to the reader, to show that Mr. Macon, on precisely a similar occasion, made his acknowledgments to the house in an

hundred and thirty-five words less, employing only fifty-two words, (whilst the other used one hundred and eighty-seven) equally intelligible and expressive, and conveying the same number of ideas.

Now, suppose the calculation was to be made of the difference in the cost to a nation, both of time and money,—when A, a statesman would consume four whole days in giving his sentiments upon the various subjects that might come before a legislative body during a session; and B, a statesman consuming only one-fourth of that time for the same purpose, and furnishing as much information and argument upon the same subjects. The advantages to the nation in favour of the latter statesman, would almost be incredible.

Many public speakers are in the constant habit of saying too much, no matter what may be the subject or occasion upon which they speak. But it is a truth worthy of notice and imitation, that Franklin, Washington, and a number of other truly great men, were remarkably laconic in their public speeches, keeping close to the question under debate. They sought to inform, not to dazzle their audience. They were more anxious to despatch the business of their constituents than to outshine each other in the galaxy of eloquence. If all our public speakers would follow in the same path, they would secure the same they so much desire, much sooner, and the people's business would be more promptly and better done, and at much less expense, than it has been for years past. The legislator or the advocate, who without circumlocution or parade, comes to the subject matter at once; who seizes upon the strong points of argument, and presents them clearly, impartially and honestly;

who says all that is proper to say, and nothing more; whose sentences are charged with the arrows of conviction, calculated to reach the heart and inform the mind; and who leaves off when he has just said enough, will exercise an influence, and be listened to with an attention unknown to those whose whole aim and ambition appears to be to show their talents by flights of oratory, plucking flowers from the regions of fancy, instead of gathering the more substantial fruits of sound logic and common sense.

But notwithstanding all this, it is one of the fashionable errors of the present age, in forming our opinions of the abilities of public men, to fix upon those who make the most noise in our public councils,—and this error has grown to such a pitch that unless some pains are taken to correct the public mind upon this subject, there is no knowing where it will end,—the number of their words being the standard by which we measure their talents and usefulness.

It is well known to those who have any acquaintance with the philosophy of mind, that in the minds of some persons, thoughts and circumstances crowd upon each other by the slightest connexions,—which is ascribed to the bluntness in the discerning faculty; for a person who cannot accurately distinguish between a slight connexion and one that is more intimate, is equally affected by each;—such a person must necessarily have a great flow of ideas, because they are introduced by any relation indifferently; and the slighter relations without number, furnish ideas without end. The most ignorant of the vulgar, in describing a single event, pour out a number of suggestions of contiguity, which may astonish us in-

deed, though they are proofs not that they remember more, but only that their prevailing suggestions take place according to one almost exclusive relation. It is impossible to listen to a narrative of the most simple event, by one of them, who are accustomed to pay much attention to events, but as they occur together, without being struck with a readiness of suggestion of memory, if we did not take into account the comparatively small number of their suggestions of a different class. They do not truly remember more than others, but their memory is different in quality from the memory of others. Suggestions arise in their minds, which do not arise in other minds;—but there is at least an equal number of suggestions that arise in the minds of others, of which their minds in the same circumstances would be wholly unsusceptible. Yet still, as to common observers, their memory will appear quick and retentive in a peculiar and far surpassing degree. A man of accurate judgment therefore, cannot have a great flow of ideas, because the slighter relation making no figure in his mind, have no power to introduce ideas. And hence it is that accurate judgment is not friendly to declamation or copious eloquence.

It is not from a defect of memory, that fewer of the ideas which prevail in common conversation arise to a mind of accurate judgment, but because the prevailing tendency to suggestion in such a mind, are of a species that have little relation to the dates, &c., of the occurrences that are the ordinary topics of familiar discourse. The memory differs in quality not in quantity, or at least the defect of those ordinary topics is not itself a proof that the general power of suggestion is less vigorous. In

the case of extemporary eloquence indeed, the flow of more words may be more copious in him who is not accustomed to dwell on the permanent relations of objects, but on the slighter circumstances of perception and local connexion. Yet this is far from proving that the memory of such a person, which implies much more than the recurrence of verbal signs, is less comprehensive. On the contrary, there is every reason to suppose, that unless, probably, in a few very extraordinary cases, which are as little to be taken into account, in a general estimate of this kind, as the form and functions of monsters in a physological enquiry. The whole series of suggestions, of which a profound and discriminating mind is capable, is greater, upon the whole, than the number of those, which rise so readily to the mind of a superficial thinker. The great difference is, that the wealth of the one is composed merely of those smaller pieces, which are in continual request, and therefore brought more frequently to view. While the abundance of such minds as Benjamin Franklin, George Washington and Nathaniel Macon, consist chiefly in those more precious coins, which are rather deposited than carried about for current use, but which when brought forward, exhibit a magnificence of wealth to which the petty counters of the multitude are comparatively insignificant.

Perhaps in this attempt of convincing the reader that Mr. Macon was a man of extraordinary talents, and that he displayed as much wisdom in his short, comprehensive speeches on all occasions, as he did in the display of his judgment in all other things when it was exercised, we may succeed better by giving the opinion of others, than ourselves.

The honorable John Tyler, of Virginia, in an address delivered by him, before the two literary societies of Randolph, Macon College, June 19, 1838, in speaking of Mr. Macon, he says: "Of *Nathaniel Macon*, I cannot well speak too highly. There was a beautiful consistency in his course, from the moment of his entering public life, to the moment of his quitting it. Nothing sordid ever entered into his imagination. He was the devoted patriot, whose whole heart and every corner of it, was filled with love of country. He was a moralist, who set forth his precepts, not in ponderous volumes, but in daily actions. Not remarkable for the brilliancy of his intellect, he was most distinguished by the solidity of his judgment. Called by the state of North Carolina to a high political station, he presented in his person and conduct a true type of the state and people he represented; nothing gaudy; nothing glaring; no fret-work or curiously wrought mosaic; but all about the building betokened strength and enduring strength. He united in his person the meekness and humility of the christian, with the calm and unpretending dignity of the philosopher. In the house of representatives he was the firm and unflinching republican; and in the senate chamber, the venerable patriarch; cotemporary, in fact, of Washington and Franklin, and most worthy to have lived in the same century with them. He had no regard for those forms and ceremonies which constitute the pageantry of what is called high life. They appeared to him an unreal mockery, a mere show of friendship, the shadow of social intercourse. And the plain republican who had been reared amid the realities of the revolution, dispised them heartily. And yet I doubt whether there ever lived a man who possessed or

practised more of the genuine hospitalities of life, or whose heart was more entirely filled with the christian charities or the christian virtues." Mr. Tyler said in the same address, "that if the minds of John Randolph, of Roanoke, and Nathaniel Macon had been properly blended together, they would have almost been a model of absolute perfection; wit, genius and fancy would have been placed in close connexion with a judgment so inflexible and so erect as rarely ever to have been shaken. The first adorns and beautifies, the last shelters from the storm and protects from the blast. The first spreads over the earth a carpet enamelled with the brightest and sweetest flowers,—people seach star, and fills earth and heaven with harmonious and dulcet sounds. The last sees in each floweret, and every blade of grass, as well as in the glorious heavens, evidences of a power unseen, infinite in wisdom, and boundless in benevolence. The one creates, the other preserves. The one embellishes and adorns the judgment seat with the gayest and brightest garlands, the other holds the scales with an untrembling hand, and weighs out the decrees of good and evil to mankind. The one, if I may so speak, is the capital to the pillar, the other the pillar itself, which upholds the edifice."

Mr. Macon was always a great favourite of the celebrated John Randolph of Roanoke, and though they differed in politics, yet their intercourse all their lives were of the most intimate and friendly character. They resided about sixty miles apart, but frequently visited each other, and when in company with each other appeared to manifest all the feelings of the nearest relations. An anecdote concerning them whilst in congress in 1812, suffice to give the reader some idea of the in-

fluence of Mr. Macon over the virginia orator. During the session of congress, and towards its close of 1812, Mr. Randolph became involved in an unpleasant controversy with the speaker of the house. The circumstances were these: on Thursday, the 28th of May, one of Mr. Randolph's personal and political friends happening to be in conversation with the speaker, enquired of him on what day the administration party would attempt a declaration of war. The speaker replied that the measure would probably be attempted on the following Monday. This intelligence was immediately conveyed to Mr. Randolph; who rose in his place the next morning, and after stating that he had a motion to make, commenced a speech upon the subject of our relations with Great Britain and France; he had not proceeded far, before he was called to order upon the ground that there was no motion before the house. The speaker overruled the objection, as Mr. Randolph had signified his intention to make a motion, and it was usual to admit prefatory remarks. Mr. Randolph continued his speech till it wholly lost its prefatory character,—when he was again interrupted by the same member with the observation, that the question of war was not before the house; and he was therefore speaking without affording others an opportunity to reply. A proxy who then occupied the speaker's chair, decided that Mr. Randolph was in order. The speaker then returned to the chair, and in a few minntes, the member again interrupted Mr. Randolph, and demanded that he should submit the motion he intended to make. The speaker then said, unquestionably the gentleman should submit his motion in writing. Mr. Randolph then said, "my proposition is, that it is not expedient, at this time,

to resort to a war with Great Britain." And after much "courteous-retort and counter-check quarrelsome," between Mr. Randolph and the Speaker, all to Mr. Randolph's prejudice, Mr. Randolph said, then I am compelled to submit my motion in writing; and under that compulsion I offer it. Another controversy ensued between them with much stormy debate, and Mr. Randolph could only be influenced to withdraw his appeal, merely at the suggestion of his friend Mr. Macon. This shews the high, respectable, and influential standing of this venerable man, with the political Ajax of the house of representatives, as he has been called by some, who was certainly superior to all law or argument, courtesy or rule, when heated in debate. But even in the height of his fury, a suggestion from Mr. Macon had more weight in calming him down to reason, than all these considerations. Mr. Randolph has been frequently heard to observe, "that if wisdom consisted in properly exercising our judgment upon the value of things desirable, Mr. Macon was certainly the wisest man he ever saw."

And here permit us to remark, in the conclusion of this chapter, that the friendly and respectful feelings felt and extended towards each other, by these two great men, is one of the strongest evidences that can be adduced; that a difference of opinion may be entertained between friends without hostility. They knew that the mind was not so constituted as to ensure unanimity of opinion upon any subject; and that it was no more to be expected that men should think alike, than that they should look or act alike. While therefore, each was tenacious of his own entire freedom of thought and opinion, they permitted that freedom to be enjoyed by

each other, with all the charitableness towards one another, which a sense of justice, and an enlightened toleration, would seem to require.

This spirit of charitableness and courtesy, it appears to us, is in no wise incompatible with the most ardent attachment to one's principles and party. Uniting then, with such feelings, though on many points with antagonist principles, may we not oftener find a common ground upon which we can cheerfully and successfully co-operate in the promotion of public good.

CHAPTER XVII.

BEING apprehensive that we may weary some of our readers with too many of Mr. Macon's speeches, before we get through the whole of his public life, we have thought to omit saying any thing more concerning him whilst he was a member of the house of representatives; and in the few examples which we shall give during his services in the senate, have selected the first that came to hand in the register of debates, of the second session of the eighteenth congress.

On the 21st December, 1824, a bill for making provision for general Lafayette, (by way of gratitude to him, for his assistance in our revolution, who was then the nation's guest) was taken up:—and no amendment being opposed thereto, the question was about to be put on ordering the bill to be read the third time, when Mr. Macon rose and said:

"It was with painful reluctance," he said, "that he felt himself obliged to oppose his voice to the passage of this bill. He admitted, to the full extent claimed for them, the great and meritorious services of general Lafayette; and he did not object to the precise sum which this bill proposed to award him; but he objected to the bill on this ground: he considered general Lafayette, to all intents and purposes, as having been, during our revolution, a son, adopted into the family; taken into the

household, and placed in every respect, on the same footing with the other sons of the same family. To treat him as others were treated, was all in this view of his relation to us, that could be required, and this had been done. That general Lafayette made great sacrifices and spent much of his money in the service of this country, (said Mr. Macon) I as firmly believe as I do any thing under the sun; I have no doubt that every faculty of his mind and body were exerted in the revolutionary war, in defence of this country; but this was equally the case with all the sons of the family. Many native Americans spent their all, made great sacrifices, and devoted their lives in the same cause. This was the ground of his objection to this bill, which he repeated, it was as disagreeable to him to state, as it could be to the senate to hear. He did not mean to take up the time of the senate in debate upon the principle of the bill, or to move any amendment to it. He admitted that, when such things were done, they should be done with a free hand. It was to the principle of the bill, therefore, and not to the sum proposed to be given by it, that he objected. With regard to the details of the bill, however, he was rather of the opinion that it would have been better to have given so much money, which we have in the treasury, than to have given stock to the amount."

The passage of the bill was defended very eloquently by several orators. Stating that by inviting and bringing Lafayette to the United States, we placed him in a new and extraordinary situation in society. We had connected him with our history. We had made him a spectacle for the world to gaze on. He could not go back to France and become the private citizen he was

when he left it. We had, by the universal homage of our hearts and tongues, made his house a shrine, to which every pilgrim of liberty, from every quarter of the world, would repair. They asked at least, let him not, after this, want the means of giving welcome to the Americans, who whenever they visit the shores of France, would repair in crowds to his hospitable mansion to testify their veneration to the illustrious compatriot of their fathers. They said Lafayette would be a connecting link between the old world and the new. By our voluntary act, we had placed him in this extraordinary situation; and if, after all that has been done and said, we permitted him to return home, without passing the bill which was then on the table, we must suffer a loss of reputation at home and abroad which time could not repair. It was said, that national character was national wealth; it gave a tone to the public sentiment and feeling, which added strength and energy to the country. It was said, what would be thought of us in Europe, if after all that had passed, we should fail to make a generous and liberal provision for our venerable guest? It was repeated, that, we had under circumstances calculated to give to the event great eclat, invited him to our shores. We had received him with the utmost enthusiasm. The people had every where greeted him in the warmest terms of gratitude and affection. The attention of the civilized world had been drawn to the event, as one even of national importance. It was said also, that it was unfortunately too well known that the object of our affectionate attachment had spent his fortune in the service of mankind, and that we ourselves had received a large portion of the wealth which he had never hesi-

tated freely to surrender in the holy cause of freedom. It was again asked, now what will be thought of us in Europe; and what is much more important, how will we deserve to be thought of, if we send back our venerable guest, without any more substantial proof of gratitude, than vague expressions of regard.

Notwithstanding this powerful appeal; dwelling upon the magnimity, the refinement of feeling, the noble delicacy of sentiment, which prompted general Lafayette, wholly regardless of his interest, during our revolution, to look only to the interest of our country,—and this too, made in the most impressive and touching manner, Mr. Macon rose the second time; and after disclaiming the belief that general Lafayette had ever furnished any document, or made to any person any intimation whatever, on the subject of the measure now before the senate, said: "As for himself, he wished it to be understood that, in opposing this bill, he discharged what was to him a painful duty. His objection was not to the details, but to the principle of the bill, and the arguments of the gentlemen had not satisfied him that the objection was not well founded. Not that he had any doubt of the truth of the statements which had been made by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. Hayne.) With respect to Europe, Mr. Macon said, that he had no doubt that all the respect which had been shown to general Lafayette here, was unpleasant to the rulers of that country. On this side of the water, all were glad to see him; even the tories who were yet living would be glad to see him. Among a nation of strangers to his person, general Lafayette could go no where in this country without meeting with friends. No hand, in any part of

this country, touches his, but he may feel the heart's blood beat in its fingers. Mr. Macon said he should regret it if the South, when he goes there, should be behind any other part of the union in their demonstrations of regard for this distinguished man. He did not believe they would be. Wherever he moves, among the mountains, or on the plains, he receives a heartfelt welcome. This, Mr. Macon said, would sufficiently satisfy Europe, if any doubt remained on the point, what is the opinion which this country entertains of the services of Lafayette."

Here was the Roman virtue completely displayed in Mr. Macon's character, which induced Mr. Jefferson to observe, that when he died, it would be the last of the Romans in our government. Here he manifested, in these two short speeches, that no consideration whatever could force him to depart from the principle of equal rights,—and what he would not give to the poorest American soldier, he would not give to a king upon his throne, should he ask it of him.

The next example we shall present to the reader, is his remarks in the senate, on December 30th, on the bill for the relief of the Columbian college. The foundation of this bill appears to be, that the incorporated company for the purpose of establishing this institution, had become indebted to the government, by contract, for the purchase of two houses on Greanleaf's point, in the District of Columbia,—the amount $25,000 dollars;—the relief sought, was simply to release this debt. Stating, that they had nothing to answer this claim, but the two houses for which the debt was contracted;—representing

that the college had not as yet received the least advantage from this property.

When their application for a charter came before the senate, all intention of asking pecuniary aid from congress was disavowed. They came forward, and prayed, that an act of congress might pass for their incorporation, for the better management of the funds that had been raised by individual subscription in the different parts of the union, for erecting a college in that district. This made it purely an eleemosynary institution; and government had no control over it except the power to modify or change, or if necessary, repeal their charter. It possessed no visitorial power, or any control over the funds. They selected the spot themselves for its erection in the District of Columbia, and their locating it in that district, by their own will, no more entitled them to aid from government, than if they had located it in Illinois or Maryland. Notwithstanding these considerations, the release had been very ably supported; when Mr. Macon rose and observed: "That claims on congress were something like wine and spirits; they improved by age. He agreed to every word the honorable gentleman from Kentucky had said on the subject of education, and the freedom with which students of all religious persuasions were admitted in this college. But that had nothing to do with the question. It appeared to him that by some bargain or other, the college was indebted to the United states. This bargain was made between the secretary of the treasury, and the trustees of the college, and was like all other bargains. They thought they had made a profitable one, but they were mistaken. Congress might lay a tax on the district for the purposes of education. In all the

states there were taxes laid for the purpose of education; and there was not a college in the union but received students of every denomination of religion. They never asked what was his creed; but, if he was moral and studious, he was admitted. Although this district had no representative, Mr. Macon said, it was in a better situation than any other part of the union, from the quantity of public money expended in it; and the people of it were as able to pay for the education of their own children, as any state in the union. Their advantages were immense. This bill did not go so far as it did last session; it asked now only for $25,000; but, if it were for only 25 cents, his objections to it would be the same."

Mr. Macon, on the 17th January, 1825, made the following remarks on the engrossed bill to abolish imprisonment for debt,—saying: "That he should oppose any bill that deprived any man in the United States of a right; but did not understand how this bill would have that effect. This bill would be well understood, and would be taken into consideration in all contracts made after the 4th July next; therefore, he could not understand that any right was touched by the bill. The law gave notice, and all persons making contracts after the time fixed by the law, would do so with their eyes open. They would know the remedy they must apply; and, therefore, on this point, no difficulty could possibly occur. Every body was agreed upon the abstract principle, that an honest man should not be imprisoned for debt, but objections were made to the details of this bill for its accomplishment. The real question, Mr. Macon said, was, whether this bill was better than the existing system? The gen-

tleman (alluding to Mr. Vandyke, of Delaware,) said that there were not many persecuting creditors; but if there were only ten in the nation, who thought they had a right to persecute, not to prosecute, he would endeavour to deprive them of that power. Creditors, some-how or other, generally contrived to find out the condition of debtors. There would be no more difficulty after this bill was passed, in ascertaining their condition, than there is now. No difficulty could in his opinion possibly arise. Mr. Macon concluded by saying, that he did not know what those, who were not professional men, were to do on this occasion, when the gentlemen of the bar differed in opinion on the subject of the details of the bill. For his part, approving of the principles of the bill, he should vote with those who were in its favour."

On the 1st of February, 1825, the senate proceeded to the consideration of the bill for the suppression of piracy in the West Indies. The motion to strike out the third section, (which authorised a blockade of the ports of Cuba, under certain circumstances) being still pending, it was stated by some of the members, at the time, that the documents on the table disclosed the facts, that the island of Cuba was occupied by pirates; that from their secure asylums on shore, they issued forth, and attacked the merchantmen, murdering the crew, and converting the property to their own use; that these depredations were committed by men known to the Spanish authorities in Cuba, and suffered with impunity to live in their cities, and openly to sell their plunder,—affording, beyond contradiction, all the protection that was in their power to these plunderers. This information influenced some of the members to be in favour of adopt-

ing the measure of blockade as being the best method of their extermination, which was thought to be indispensible on account of the importance of trade with that island. Mr. Macon was one of those who thought differently—giving his reasons, as follows, he said: "That there was something in this business which he could not understand. Insurance from New York to New Orleans, the senate was informed, was but one to one and a half per cent. How insurance could be so low, whilst so many piracies were committed, was more than he could comprehend. During the wars between France and England, when a great many captures were made, insurance was not so low as five per cent." Mr. Macon then said, "he thought that no necessity could justify a breach of the public law. We had endeavored, and successfully, to preserve that law; and he knew but one instance of its violation, that one he always thought very doubtful. We had constantly maintained, to the broadest extent, neutral rights with every nation with whom we had come in contact. This blockade, to say the least of it, was of doubtful character, and he therefore did not like it. It had struck him as a curious question, what would be the condition of a French or English vessel if taken breaking this blockade; would she be a prize, or what? He was not willing to consent to any act which would jeopardise the character of the country. National character was like individual character; it ought never to be doubtful; it ought ever to be so pure as to command respect. It was to his mind as clear as the light of day, that the president had the power of suppressing piracy. Mr. Randall had proved, that, as long as vessels of war were there, no piracies had occurred; and he was afraid

that carrying money had produced all these evils. As long as the vessels of war were there, the pirates were invisible; but as soon as they were gone, they came out. This following the pirates on shore, was a much more difficult matter than gentlemen had represented it to be. How were the pirates to be known when they got on shore? They might change their clothes, or any thing else. The true way was to catch them on the water, by sending a sufficient force to Cuba, and to hang all that were caught; and when they found that catching and hanging were the same thing, there would soon be an end to piracy." Mr. Macon then asked, "why would gentlemen wish to go farther than was necessary? What could be better than possessing the power of doing all they wanted? It seemed to him to be a race, which should go farthest in his particular way. What more was necessary than to order the vessels to be taken and the men to be hanged?"

On the subject of arming merchantmen, Mr. Macon "did not think the comparison of the assassin a just one; in individual rencounters the consequences fell on themselves alone; but here, the consequences would be much more serious if the power were abused. He did not suppose that merchantmen generally, would seek to abuse it, but they were no better than any other class of men, nor did he believe them worse. As to the effect these measures would produce on Spain, they were not worth thinking of. He considered Spain out of the question. What was Spain? No human being could tell—there were people there, and a sort of government—but the French were there to keep their own people down." With respect to the people of Cuba, Mr. Macon, said "he

knew little or nothing. He always had understood that the trade to that island was a most profitable one to the United States. It appeared quite impossible to him that such a state of society could subsist as was described in Cuba; he should hope to find there as many pure as would have saved Sodom and Gomorrah." Mr. Macon said, "if he were to liken this blockade to any thing, it would be to the attack on Copenhagen by the British. Britain was afraid of the navel power of her rival and enemy, and said as Rome did, Carthage must be put down! It was ludicrous to talk of arming a whole nation against four or five hundred bandits, after the late contest with the British. He saw no necessity for arming the merchantmen. If the navy could not protect the merchantmen, particularly in the American seas, we ought to have neither navy or merchantmen. He recollected Preble had put an end to the Tripolitan war, and Decatur soon ended the Algerine war. Both of these people were pirates by trade, by education, and he had almost said, by religion. Our vessels went there at once; and cannot our vessels catch these Cuba bandits, without our attempting to make an interpolation in the law of nations? It was, he thought, a most difficult thing to alter public law. During the American war, all the powers of Europe assembled to do it—Great Britain withstood it, and the public law is now as Great Britain then said it should be. It appeared to him, from Mr. Randall's report, that nothing but ships were wanting. He had no opinion of stuffing an administration. If they obtained what they wanted, they ought to be held responsible for the success of the means employed. They did not want either armed merchant vessels, or a blockade. Of the

latter, the president speaks with great delicacy; and from the former, the secretary of the navy thinks mischief may arise. Therefore, he thought it would be wise to give the administration what they wanted, but not more; and that he was willing to do now. He did not wish to make any profession of his wish to see the robbers exterminated; for we were to be judged, not by our words, but by our deeds. There was not a civilised man in the world, but would wish it; and he could not call that inhabitant of Cuba, a civilised man, that encouraged piracy. They waged war against the whole human race; a war of the most disastrous kind. They could be governed by no rule towards them, but that of extermination; and as they could be repressed most efficiently without either blockading them, or arming the merchantmen, he was opposed to both measures."

On the 11th of February, 1825, the senate, on motion of Mr. Smith, took up the bill making appropriations for the military service for the year 1825.

The committee of finance of the senate, to which this bill had been referred, reported it with a proposition to amend it by striking out the following clause: "For making surveys, and carrying on the operations of the board of engineers, in relation to internal improvements, and in addition to an unexpended balance on hand, $25,567." On this occasion, Mr. Macon begged leave to offer a few remarks:

"In the begining of this government," he said, "nobody believed congress had any thing to do with internal improvements. Now every body almost was for it. The history of the Cumberland road proved this. When that road was commenced, the states were to

give their consent, and nothing could be done without it. Now, when the road is proposed to be carried through the states beyond the river Ohio, and through Ohio, no consent is deemed necessary: and it seemed now, that congress could survey states, and make roads, and there was nothing but what they could do. These roads were to be, too, for the transportation of the mail, and for the purposes of war and commerce; but they managed to effect all these objects without the exercise of this power. If this government, said Mr. Macon, is to begin this road system, it ought not to be accomplished indirectly, by small appropriations, but should be done at once. By granting appropriation for surveys, they did not pledge themselves to do any thing more, after these surveys should be accomplished; but notwithstanding, they were going on, step by step, just like the building of this capital, he no more knew what was to be accomplished in this great plan, than he did when he saw the first foundation of this capitol. He was opposed to the whole system, and let congress vote as much as they pleased in its favour, he should always vote against it as often as it came up. He did not pretend to lay down his opinion as a rule for others, but he should continue to follow it till he found it was wrong. Mr. Macon said he regarded this system of internal improvement, as one of the most dangerous that had been established in the United States. The states should not, he thought, come to the general government, for their internal improvement. Every state had been going on with internal improvements, and he was of opinion that the general government should leave them to go on in their own way, without intermeddling at all."

It was stated in opposition to these sentiments of Mr. Macon, that internal improvements were the grandest objects that could engage the attention of this country; and they were so felt by all who engaged in so praiseworthy a pursuit. That last session, this subject was fully discussed. The subject of internal improvement had been sanctioned by both houses of congress, and an appropriation had been made for the purpose of procuring surveys: the present appropriation was for a similar purpose,—and they should not stop in full career. Congress would not exhibit the strange inconsistency of adopting an important proposition one session, and throwing it aside the next—it would not, it was said, be compatible with the dignity of that assembly, thus to stop short. If they really wished to attain the object proposed by passing the act of last session, how could they now arrest its progress by refusing the small appropriation of $28,000. It was thought to be acting very disrespectfully towards the president to refuse this appropriation, which was to enable him to complete the surveys, which he had commenced, or contemplated, in obedience to their law. As to the constitutionality of the subject, it was insisted, that that had been most fully discussed at the last session,—but on the present occasion, gentlemen had asserted that congress did not possess the power. It was stated, that a majority of both houses stood committed on this subject; they owed it to the nation to make this small appropriation, because they had expressed their opinion in the most solemn and deliberate form; and they had made an appropriation for the purpose, by law. And even those gentlemen who now hesitated, and those who originally hesitated, ought to join with them and

vote in its favour. All this, had no effect upon Mr. Macon's opinion; he rose and expressed his opinion:

"That whatever conversation had been held with any department, could not be delivered to the senate, unless it came officially from that department. He certainly did not understand the constitution as some gentlemen seemed to do, that because a thing was once done, it must become constitutional—that was not his understanding of it. He did not recollect, in the United States, that a single law had been adjudged unconstitutional. If this were the fact, that the passing of any law made that subject constitutional, then they would be like Great Britain, where the parliament was omnipotent, and its acts were the constitution of the country. One remarkable case had been judged one way, and the constitutional authority was all the other way. This case had never been settled in any other way, and the decision of the people seemed to have given a character to the constitution in that particular. Mr. Macon enquired of what use these surveys would be, if congress were not prepared to go the full length. Every state was endeavoring to do something for itself, and if the plans proposed by the general government did not accord with the views of the states, the states would never do any thing in it, and all the surveys made concerning roads would be useless. It had been urged that if this law were not passed, an act of congress would be repealed by the refusal. Mr. Macon said, that the sum appropriated, would be expended under the law; but one congress could not bind the hands of another, to make any appropriation; they were at all times free and independent to do, or not to do, as they thought proper. If the doctrines he had

heard this day were true, there was no one thing the government could not do—they were making roads and canals, and before long he should not be surprised if they made a canal for the benefit of the navy. They managed to accomplish all these things under some clause or other of the constitution, and by and by they would be mixed all up together into a kind of a pot-pie. Let any man examine the federalist, or the debates of the Virginia convention, and they would find that no such extension was given to any article of the constitution. How are we progressing? said Mr. Macon. We get power faster than the people get money. It appears to me, that the whole of this thing bears a most extraordinary character—the country is involved, the people are not able to pay their debts; and I do maintain, that this country is not in a condition to go on with expensive projects. The appropriation now asked for, is only $30,000, say gentlemen; but to me whose dealings at home are in the small way, this appears a very large sum. There is not one man in an hundred; no, nor in a thousand, throughout the union, who is worth that sum, unincumbered with debt—he is a rich man in the interior of the country who is worth so much."

Referring to the subject of estimates, Mr. Macon said: "The chairman of the committee on finance, with all his sagacity and acknowledged abilities, could not tell him without counting them, how many the committee had received, or whom they were from. Every thing was changing in this government, and they were in his opinion, doing all business in a very loose manner."

"Mr. Macon said, he had another objection; these engineers were designed for army purposes. They had

no right to divert them from their legitimate duties, by making them civil engineers; that formed no part of the contract of the government with them; it would be like enlisting soldiers to fight, and then to force them to make roads. Could they suppose their high-minded officers would like to be going about the country carrying the chain, and taking levels? No. They were raised for fighting, if fighting were necessary; not for making roads. It was argued, that it was necessary to enter into detail. Mr. Macon said they fixed on the places for light houses and buoys, and they established post routes; they acted from the best information they could get, and in that way they did legislate in detail. He was for less discussion and more legislation, and yet he thought they now legislated ten times as much as they ought to do. He had advised them to legislate concerning West Point; to fix the number that should be there, and apportion them amongst the states. They said it was useless, and he acquiesced, because he knew he had no chance of standing against that committee."

"Mr. Macon said he would fix every thing he could by law, and leave nothing to discretion. The natural end of all discretion, in his opinion, was favouritism. He should like to see these details published. If the sovereignty were in the people, as was often boasted in that house, why not let them see every thing, if it was only a bargain of 75 cents a day. In his part of the country, a man could be hired for 25 cents a day, and work hard too all day long. Let the people see how their money went. The more we legislate in detail, said Mr. Macon, the better it will be for the people and for the executive. Nothing could, in his opinion, embarrass the

executive more, than leaving too much to his discretion. If he had law for his guide, he would be sure to be safe; but if things were left to his discretion, that might not probably agree with the discretion of other people, which might produce some trouble and inconvenience."

"Mr. Macon considered this question as one of the utmost importance to this nation; and he should consider it his duty to stop it, under the full belief that the sooner it was stopt, the better. He had stated some time ago, that he had relinquished all hopes of seeing the taxes lessened on the people. Every thing appeared as if they were going to be increased—a certain sum must be kept for the sinking fund; that only kept up the credit of the public debt, or it would not otherwise sell; and he began to think now, that the debt would never be paid."

"Mr. Macon concluded by saying, that he wished to see that day come when this government would follow the examples set by Britain, (and he did not often go there for example,) who, during the last few years, had taken off taxes to the amount of eight and a half millions sterling."

The senate next took up the bill authorising a subscription on behalf of the United States, of fifteen hundred shares of the capital stock of the Delaware and Chesapeake Canal. Upon which Mr. Macon, said: "He rose with a full heart, to take his last farewell of an old friend that he had always admired and loved; he meant the constitution of the United States. On this occasion, he said, he had experienced a difficulty in expressing his feelings. Perhaps old people thought more of what took place when they were young, than of the occurrences of after times; but in times of old, whenever any question

touching the constitution was brought forward, it was discussed day after day; that time was now passed. Gentlemen say it is not necessary now to enter into the constitutional question in this measure. The first time he had ever known them refuse to discuss the constitutional question, involved by a proposition, was, when the act was passed incorporating the present bank of thirty-five millions; from that time the constitution had been asleep.

"Every scheme that was proposed, was with a view of tying the people together. The late Bank of the United States was to give them a currency alike throughout all the states. It was said at the time that this was impossible; the friends of the bank insisted they could do it; but had they done it? Then they got into a system of manufacturing, and every body was to get rich by it. The next thing was the system of a great navy and fortifications, which was to make them one people from the Atlantic to the Rocky Mountains; from the bay of Passamaquoddy to Florida; but had it done so? And now the people were to be tied together by roads and canals. He thought the plan of the gentleman from Maryland, (Mr. Smith) was as wise a one as ever was devised to add power to the government. Do a little now, and a little then, and, by and by they would render this government as powerful and unlimited as the British government was. We go on deciding on these things without looking at the constitution; and I suppose we will, in a few years, do as was done in England—we shall appoint a committee to hunt for precedents. My heart is full when I think of all this; and what is to become of us I cannot say. This government was intended to be a limited one; its great objects were war and peace, and now we are en-

deavoring to prove that these measures are necessary, both as war and peace measures. Mr. Macon said he would beg leave to call the attention of the senate to a celebrated report, made in Virginia in 1799, for a true exposition of the constitutional powers of this government. If there was reason to be alarmed at the growing power of the general government, how much more has taken place since? Congress now stopped at nothing, which it deemed expedient, and the constitution was construed to give power for any grand scheme. This change was brought about, little by little; so much had never been attempted at one time, as would agitate the people. Compare these things with those which had, in old times, been done under the constitution, and the change would be most astonishing. The end of them all would be in the vulgar tongue, taxation. He had before expressed his belief that the public debt would never be paid off. They were following Great Britain, step by step, and the final result would be, they would cease to look to the debt itself, but think only of the interest. The history of the British government would prove that every war had increased the public debt and added to the burthens of the people; and what was the result in America? At the time of the revolution, the war produced eighty-four millions of funded debt; this was now increased to ninety millions, and instead of paying it, they were following the example of Great Britain, and turning it into four and an half per cent. stock, which like the three per cent. stock, no one would buy at par.

"Mr. Macon said he was against this government connecting itself with any company. He would have it get clear of the Bank of the United States. Let it ap-

point no officer; and if it cannot dispose of its stock on good terms, let it get rid of it at any rate. His idea of internal improvement in this country, was, to take from the people all unnecessary burthens. Let them have plenty of wholesome food and good clothing, and he doubted not they would continue to raise boys and girls who would become men and women. These were the sorts of internal improvements he desired to see. It was in vain to talk of any other internal improvements strengthening the country, when there was ninety millions of public debt, and above a hundred of private debt, owing. Much of the latter, indeed, was called accommodation paper, but he knew it was false. These schemes, he thought, were monstrous strides, considering the character of the government. The gentleman from Maryland, (Mr. Smith) was for laying the constitution aside on this bill, but that was nothing new in that gentleman, for he had constantly pursued that plan ever since he had known him. Mr. Macon was afraid they were going to follow the system recommended by a member of a certain foreign legislature. When he was asked what measures he would adopt to make the people peaceable and submissive, he replied, 'tax them heavily, and collect it rigidly; give them enough to do, and they would never plague the government.' This was the practice in Europe, and it had succeeded very well. As to the meaning of the constitution, Mr. Macon said, those who composed the convention that formed it, certainly must have known what they intended, and all the writers of the day referred to no powers of this kind; but it seemed the people of the present day understood what the framers of the constitution intended better than they did themselves.

He could give no other names to his feelings than fears. It was true he had no fears for his personal liberty, but he feared his descendants would be taxed up to the nose, so that if they got breath, it would be as much as they could do. The country now was not in a sitation to pay direct taxes. In time of war, there was fifteen per cent. difference in the taxes of the different states; but the same thing would not be suffered now. He was certain the government could neither lay them nor collect them at this time. His fears might be groundless; they might be nothing but the suggestions of a worn out old man, but they were sincere, and he was alarmed for the safety of this government."

On the 20th December, 1825, the resolution submitted by Mr. Woodbury, relating to bounty lands, being taken up:

"*Resolved*, That the committee on the public lands be instructed to inquire into the expediency of requesting the president of the United States to cause to be published a detailed statement of the names, rank and line, in the continental army, of such persons as have not applied for the revolutionary land warrants issued, and remaining for them in the bounty land office, and of such other persons as appear on the records of said office, now entitled to have revolutionary land warrants issued to them."

Mr. Macon said, "he had his doubts as to the beneficial effects proposed to be derived from the resolution. It appeared to him, that instead of preventing speculation, it would encourage speculators to ride over the country, buying up these claims. In early life, in congress, Mr. Macon said, he remembered there was one

question that bordered on this; it was to get the statute of limitation suspended for revolutionary services. Speculators went out and administered all over the union, on the property of persons having claims, and in one case, two administrators came forward upon the same estate, and the man himself, the original claimant, upon whose estate they pretended to have administered came afterwards. He was thought by some to be an impostor—but his captain happened to be in Philadelphia, to prove his right, and the man received his claim. Publishing these names, Mr. Macon said, would be to set all the speculators abroad throughout the nation. If the law had expired, allowing these people time to obtain their warrants, he would submit whether it would not be better to revive it, that they might get their warrants, without any speculation on the subject."

February 14th, 1826, the senate took up the bill for the survey of a route for a canal, between the Atlantic and the gulph of Mexico.

"Mr. Macon said, the opinion had been expressed, that, while the territories remain as such, it was competent for the government to make improvements in them; but, suppose improvements begun, and before they are finished, the territory becomes a state,—what is to be the consequence? The moment a territory becomes a state, the general government must cease to act; and if it cannot go on, all the money and labor expended may be thrown away. In the work now proposed, Mr. Macon said, they ought to have proceeded as in all other similar objects—they ought to have estimates of the cost, before they begin the work. As for himself, he did not now, and never did like these territorial governments;

and by this course of making improvements in them, it only retards their becoming states: for when they require the requisite population, they will still put it off, until all the improvements they desire are made. One wants a canal, another a road; and when they get all they want, they come into the union flourishing states, with nothing more to ask. Mr. Macon thought gentlemen in an error, when they spoke of ten per cent. being charged for insurance to Cuba; he was under the impression it was never so high as that; and now, he understood, it was from one to one and half per cent., and this includes the dangers of the coast, particularly the two capes of North Carolina, &c. Mr. Macon did not agree with Mr. Homes, about sinking this territory in the gulph of Mexico; he had rather have the land than so much more water. This territory of Florida was, by the way, a strange country; sometimes it is very good—no country like it—then again, it is not worth having, and to be sunk in the sea. Mr. Macon said, he did not like to go on in this way—the government was constantly gaining power by little bits. A waggon road was made under a treaty with an Indian tribe, twenty odd years ago; and now it becomes a great national object, to be kept up by large appropriations. We thus go on by degrees, step by step, until we get almost unlimited. Little things were often of great importance in their consequences. The revolution in this country was produced by a trifling tax on tea. There were five or six different ways found out of getting power,—by construction, by treaty, by implication, and so forth. He was not willing to take any of them. He was willing to execute the constitution just as it was understood by those who made it, and

no other. Mr. Macon concluded by saying, there were constant applications before congress, for these objects; yet nothing was more clear to him, than that, if they could be executed with profit, they would be done by private enterprise; and that it was only when the case was different, that congress was appealed to."

Here several gentlemen took the floor, and some of them having dropt a remark concerning liberal voting, Mr. Macon rose and said, "That, whether he voted liberally or not liberally, he would willingly leave it to his constituents to decide on his votes. The fact was in regard to the anticipated augmentation of the value of lands, in consequence of making the canal in the territory, that the highest lands ever sold by the government were sold where there was no improvement; not even a road,—he meant (so he was understood) Madison county, in Alabama. As to voting the public money liberally, Mr. Macon said, he wished to see every thing saved that could be saved, to meet those 16,000,000 of the public debt which fell due this year, the secretary of the treasury had said we must borrow to meet. Mr. Macon thought it best to husband our resources, and pay off as much as we could, and satisfy every body that there is a prospect of paying the debt off. He repeated, he did not think it was necessary to expend money in the territory in this way, to advance the value of the lands. He had no doubt the land would sell as fast as the Indian title was extinguished. It was the country where sugar and other valuable articles would be produced, and the bounty on sugar would make the lands sell fast enough."

Here his colleague, Mr. Branch, said: "He had ever yielded to the force of the arguments of his worthy colleague (Mr. Macon,) and to his long tried experience; and he should examine well the ground on which he stood, before he ventured to differ from him. He took it a little unkind in Mr. Macon, to put the construction he had done on the remarks he had made to the senate. He should have considered the different grounds on which they stood; a patriotic devotion of thirty years had placed him (Mr. Macon,) firmly in the confidence of his friends at home. His friend, in the course of his remarks he had made to the senate, had alluded to the vote given yesterday in relation to authorizing the opening a road from Tennessee to Mississippi; and he did vote for that appropriation."

"Mr. Macon protested that he meant no improper reference to his colleague, in the few remarks he had made. He never entertained a thought that any one was to be influenced by the opinion of another. He was very sorry that his colleague had misunderstood him."

We have here given all the speeches Mr. Macon made in the senate, which we had in our possession,—and given them precisely as they came to hand in our examination of the register of debates of 1824, 5 and 6.

In these speeches, the reader not only will discover that pride of truth, which knew no extremes, and preserves, in every latitude of life, the right-angled character of man—but he will see also, that Mr. Macon was made to be himself, to think his own thoughts and speak them; and not that flitting, following things, that is but the shadow of what others say and do. And that when-

ever any subject came before the senate in which the principles of his government was involved, he always boldly expressed his opinion upon it, in the spirit and language of the philosopher, as pure as Aristides, and as patriotic as Regulus,—paying but little attention, to a learned style or the beauty of words, which he looked upon, as the money of fools, the machine and material which the lawyer, the priest, the doctor, the charlatan of every sort and kind, pick the pocket and put the fetters upon the planters of this country—and who in their attempts frequently to talk and write finely, only betray their poverty, like the fine ladies in the vicar of Wakefield, by their outrageous attempts to be very genteel.

It is evident from the political principles advanced by Mr. Macon in these speeches, in so plain, simple and unvarnished a manner, that they must be intelligible even to the humblest capacity—that the safety of our government depends upon keeping up a proper jealousy of state rights, and state sovereignties, and distinctly tracing and preserving the lines of demarcation between federal and state powers—and every step towards consolidation is a step towards monarchy, and evey step towards monarchy is a step towards consolidation. They will be found to be mutually the cause and effect of each other.

It is not strange, that about fifty years ago, the approach of an elective and limited monarchy should have been looked upon with less dread, than it was fifteen or twenty years afterwards, when we had experienced the advantages and tested the strength of our present system. Nor is it strange, that, as our heads are turned with the magnificence of our general government; when

we are contemplating the making of canals and roads through every part of the continent,—and driving tunnels through the Allegany mountains, by the strong arm of the union. Considering these things, it is not strange we say, that many in this government may look with some degree of complacency upon the disappearance of the jealous cautions and calculating principles of democracy, which have a direct tendency to check such magnificence. Neither is it strange that they view without apprehension, the progress of measures calculated to increase the federal government in its incipient, insidious steps towards monarchy.

The history of our government, traced to its origin, will show, that, when the colonies dissolved their connexion with Great Britian, the sovereign power devolved upon the people of this country. The people of each state formed or adopted a constitution, with more or less power. Some states invested their government with entire sovereignty; others with limited powers. During the war of the revolution, the states took a part of the powers, of a general nature, from their state constitutions, and, with them, formed a confederate government for the thirteen states, to enable congress to carry on the war, and to form treaties with other nations; the states retained the power over commerce and taxation; congress supplied the public treasury by quotas on the states.

This mode of supplying the treasury proved inefficient, and led to the formation of the present constitution on the basis of the confederation. The only essential powers that were added, were those over commerce and taxation; the government of territories; the dispo-

sition of the public land, and national judiciary; and the government was made to have a national operation.

Why did the people of the several states divide the powers of sovereignty between the two governments? The history of the times shows that it was done from a conviction that a single national government was unsafe, and would prove hostile to liberty; that a single government, for a country of such extent and diversity of interest, must be invested with so much energy, as would lead to despotism.

The people of the several states divided those powers which they thought fit to delegate, between the two governments, in such a manner as to adapt them to the respective ends for which they were designed.

The state governments were intended to protect the rights of their members, within their respective limits, from injuries, without force. The general government was intended to protect the rights of the citizens of all the states from internal and external force, and upon the ocean. The people of each state, in relation to the state government, are to be considered in a seperate federal or political capacity, as citizens of that particular state of which they are members; and in relation to the general government, they are to be considered in an aggregate or national capacity, as citizens of the United States. The rights and interest of the people, in one capacity, are not opposed to their rights and interests in their other capacity, but are in perfect harmony. What is necessary for the security of their liberties, in one capacity, is necessary in the other. The safety of the people, in both capacities, depends on the preservation of each government within its proper limits. The only opposi-

tion in the case, is, between those who wish to deprive the states of a portion of their power, and those who wish to prevent it; between those who wish to disturb the present adjustment of powers between the two governments, and those who are opposed to it; between those who wish to transfer a part of the power of the states to the general government, and those who wish to retain it. The framers of the general government seem to have anticipated that the possession of the sword and purse with the patronage it must command, would give that government a preponderating influence, which might become dangerous to the states; and they endeavored to provide means to counteract this tendency to enlargement, which they foresaw, by giving the states the appointment of a portion of the officers who were to administer it; by limiting its powers to a few enumerated objects; and by a prudent distribution of its powers.

The preservation of the public liberty of this country requires that the boundaries of the two governments should be observed. The objects of the general government, and the nature of its powers, are calculated to give it a preponderating influence over those of the states. It is our shield in war; its offices have more attractions for talent and ambition than those of the states, and its public expenditures embrace a wider range, and are more diffusive in their benefits. The beneficent character of the public expenditure facilitates the transition from legitimate objects to such as are of a more doubtful character; it adds to the means of citizens; it relieves their burthens; it multiplies their accommodations; it facilitates their means of intercourse; it stimulates their industry and enterprise, and enhances the value of their

property. Its influence is seductive; its benificent character silences inquiry; paralyzes resistance, and obliterates the memory of state rights and state obligations. Every appropriation for internal improvement is a *cornucopia* to the surrounding country; it is the medicated cake of Jason, by the soporific influence of which he eluded the vigilance of the watchful sentinel that guarded the golden fleece. Roads, bridges and canals are the subjects of internal improvement. Their use is to facilitate intercourse and transportation from one place to another. If any subjects, whatever, require municipal regulation more than others, these are those subjects. Roads and bridges and canals are altogether of a local nature; they require local taxation, local superintendence, and local protection. Internal improvement was not among the purposes for which the general government was instituted, nor is it the object of any one of its enumerated powers. If the general government has any power over the subject, what are its limits? How is it to be carried into effect, without interfering with the legislative and judicial authority of the states?

Then it appears that Mr. Macon upon this subject, was always right, and that the general subject clearly belong to the states; and that the cases, if there should be any, in which it may possibly become necessary to the execution of the enumerated powers of the general government, are exceptions to the rule, and a confirmation of it.

If we will trace the history of the present government of England to its origin, we shall see there developed also, this plan of accumulating power by little and little, to use one of Mr. Macon's phrases; but there it was on the side of liberty, instead of monarchy.

Liberty was established in England by the Saxons, before the feudal system was introduced, by William the Norman. The spirit of liberty and feudalism have been in perpetual conflict, from that period to the present time, and every revolution in that country has terminated in favor of public liberty. It was the spirit of Saxon liberty which produced the representation of the people in parliament, and procured the great charter, trial by jury, the habeas corpus act, a free press, and all the limitations on the royal prerogative. The same spirit has made great inroads on the feudal system of landed property; has contrived means to unfetter inheritances, and remove the restraints against alienations.

These innovations in the laws of real property in England, with the immense accumulation of personal property, created by the exertions of an industrious people, vigorously employed in agriculture, commerce and manufactures, countervail, in a great degree, the influence of the feudal organization of society; and the power of the representatives of the people over the public supplies, forms a balance to the hereditary principles of the constitution, and renders the English people, compared with other countries, where the feudel system prevails, a free people.

An equality of rank and property, the virtue and intelligence of the people, and the freedom of their constitutions, make the United States the freest nation on earth. The first settlers brought with them the free principles of the English constitution. The war of the revolution was undertaken in defence of the doctrine, that taxation and representation were inseperable; and that, where there was no representation, there could be

no taxation. The constitutions of the several states are predicated upon the principle, that the will of the majority must rule. They recognise an equality of political rights; the freedom of opinion in religion; the trial by jury; the habeas corpus act, and a free press. They improve the doctrine of representation, by apportioning it to the number of people in different districts; and secure the influence of responsibility, by periodical elections of all public officers.

To prevent the possibility of danger, from the accumulation of property in a few hands, the several states very early abolished entails, and provided for equal division of estates among all the children in cases of intestacy; and the courts of law, in accordance with the same principle, refuse to sustain any disposition of property that would lead to a perpetuity.

The people of the several states framed the confederation to manage the affairs of peace and war, and to regulate their intercourse with other nations. In framing the present constitution of the general government, to the powers of peace and war, they added the power over commerce and taxation, and gave it a national operation. They rely upon the state governments for the protection of their rights against injuries without force, and upon the general government for protection from external and internal violence. Then the security of our liberties depends on the concurrent operation of the two governments in their respective limits. The tendency of things is to give a preponderance to the general government. The invasion of the powers of the states by the general government, and the corruption of manners, are the principal sources of danger to the public liberty. An

ambitious spirit for national aggrandisement and national glory, leads to the first evil, and faction to the second.

What is the vital principal of a republic, without which it cannot exist? Submission to the will of the majority, constitutionally expressed. This is the vital principle of a free government, and as necessary to its existence as the heart of man in the animal economy, to his existence. This is in perfect accordance with the doctrine of Montesquieu, when he alleges that virtue is the principle of a popular government; his meaning is, that no people can endure a free government, or are capable of self government, who have not virtue and intelligence enough to submit to the will of a majority. History proves that no free people ever lost their liberties while they were able to submit to the will of a majority, or ever retained them after that period.

The want of the prevalence of these principles is the very souce from which it springs, it is the fountain head of faction, and a careful inquiry would probably prove that the violence of faction, which has forever been the bone of free States, has generally been in proportion to the deficiency of the people in these qualifications. It has been called the disease of republics; it arose from a diseased state of the moral constitution of society, and like all other diseases, tends to the dissolution of the body it affects.

What is its history in all ages? The people are divided in opinion between the candidates for office; the contest is settled by the election, and acquiescence becomes the duty of the minority; and this would ordinarily be the case, were it not for those who keep alive divisions, in order to make them subservient to the purposes of

their ambition. The acquisition of power, however it may be disguised, is forever the ultimate object of faction. To effect its purposes, combinations are formed, all the ignoble passions are enlisted and inflamed, and measures and motives are misrepresented or discoloured, in order to create distrust, and to weaken the confidence of the people in the integrity and patriotism of those in power. The publication of the proceedings of government, and a free discussion of public measures in the public papers and in private circles, are at all times desirable; they are necessary to keep the people informed of the state of public affairs, and to enable them to judge of the character and fidelity of their public agents.

These means of public information differ as much from the operations of faction, contrived to control the public mind, and enlist the public passions, as wholesome food from poison. The operations of faction have a most pernicious influence on the moral character of society. By a law of our nature, all passive impressions impair our moral sensibility. Familiarity with misery renders us callous to its impressions; a constant view of vice lessens its deformity, the frequent recital of vicious acts has a corresponding effect. The constant calumny of the motives of public men, not only lessens the veneration for them in the minds of the people, but by the principle of association, lessens their general estimate of character; lessens their own self-respect, and thus removes one of the strongest guards of virtue, and lowers the standard of the public morals.

It is this trait in the moral constitution of man that gives to education its power in forming the moral character of youth; and an intelligent writer contends that,

by a wise improvement of this faculty, it is in the power of the public rulers of a state to improve the moral character of the nation; that the public policy may be so modified, in relation to our moral feelings, as to render a people humane or cruel, brave or timid, high-minded or mean-spirited, virtuous or vicious.

It can hardly be doubted that the influence of an organized faction, for a given period, would be more injurious to the moral character of the nation, than a war of the same duration. War often brings great virtues into exercise, to compensate for the evils it inflicts. The object, the means, and the effects of faction, are alike devoid of any honorable trait of distinction.

Faction is at war with the vital principle of freedom. It destroys independence of sentiment, and the freedom of election; it subjects the understanding of the people to the influence of their passions; its tendency is to render them venal, to accustom them to leaders, and to prepare them for a master. It accelerates the corruption of manners, leads to civil broils, to political changes and revolutions; and in its progress, tends as directly to despotism as gravity to the centre.

A recurrence to the history of faction in Athens and Rome, will furnish a proof of the correctness of this representation. The Greeks enjoyed an equality of rank and property, and, in the early period of their history, were virtuous and intelligent; but they were ignorant of the advantages of a representative government, and their constitutions were extremely defective in their organization. The contest between those among whom the different powers of government were allotted, generated factions. These made the people venal and licentious, and

rendered them incapable of self-government, and the admission of Philip of Macedon to a seat in the amphictyonic council, put a period to their independence.

The Romans were divided into ranks. The people in the early stages of the republic, were virtuous, but the government was badly organized. Although the people had a share in the choice of their magistrates and public officers, and in making their laws, yet they never understood the true principles of representation, nor did they apply them to the case of legislation. After the expulsion of the kings, the principal power was lodged in the senate, which was composed of the patricians, and became an iron-handed aristocracy. The rigorous measures of that body forced the people to retire from the city to the sacred mount, and the establishment of the tribunitial authority was the condition of their return. The tribunes had a negative upon the acts of the senate; the boundary between the powers of the two bodies was indefinite, and the contest between them for power generated factions, and corrupted the people. The armies, by being suffered to plunder the provinces, became licentious, and the republic became the spoil of ambition, and a victim of faction. Ceasar did not aspire for the empire until the people of Rome had become incapable of self-government, and were prepared for a master. In England, when the will of the people has, through the representative principle, been employed as the governing force, it has, though incumbered with rotton boroughs and with royalty, achieved wonders. It has secured to the people as much happiness and liberty, as were compatible with their condition and form of government.

In Rome, in Greece, and wherever else the people have been free, they have been happy and powerful while their freedom continued. But in those places, and wherever else, in all time past, freedom has been found, it has been found, in the possession of a people occupying a comparatively small territory.

While, therefore, the states can maintain the free and unfettered exercise of their own will, in the management of their own interior concerns,—while the federal government will be content to exercise the powers conceded to it by the states, in the constitution of the United States, and leave to the states, respectively, the exercise of their will as sovereigns in the regulation of their internal policy, the people of the states will be free and happy; and the states will be strong in the vindication of the rights of the union, in proportion to the freedom and happiness of their citizens. Their strength upon an emergency, will be the strength of giants refreshed by sleep. And permit us here to ask, if it is not more in accordance with the nature of our complex government, that the union should depend upon the states for its vigor, than that the states should look to the union for their strength? Does not the theory of our government enjoin that we should look rather to the good of the whole by taking special care of the parts, than that we should look to the good of the parts, by taking special care of the whole. Can we hesitate upon this question, when we consider that the liberty and prosperity of every citizen is in the exclusive keeping of his state, and not of the Union? That the citizens owe their happiness to their respective states, and derive their liberty from them. That it is in the states that patriotism, to

whatever extent it may exist, must be found? It is in the states, and under their protection alone, that the family altars are reared, and the family firesides consecrated by family endearments; and that it is under the protecting toleration of the states that temples are erected to the living God, and public and social devotion conducted.

In all free governments, there always have been, and there always will be, some under the cover of patriotism, forming schemes for overturning the liberties of the people, and establishing themselves in arbitrary power. Such men are generally at first the *idols* of the people, and before their *latent* designs come to be discovered, they prevail with the people to enter into such measures, or to make such regulations, as may contribute to the success of their schemes. But, if the people of the states will be wise enough, and sufficiently jealous of their liberties, they will never fail to discover *these* designs upon our government before they are ripe for execution. And in case a Ceasar should ever obtain the executive chair, and should attempt to remove the obstructions which the states government would interpose to his ambition, the states, by the bare refusal to act, may, within four years, arrest his course, and reduce him to a private station.

CHAPTER XVIII.

We have before mentioned that Mr. Macon resigned his seat in the senate of the United States' congress in November, 1828,—induced from a sense of duty springing out of his advanced age and infirmities.

Soon after this he returned to his residence on Ronoake, where absolved from all the troubles attendant on public life, he remained, until 1835; when his fellow citizens again called him from his cherished retirement, by electing him a member of the convention charged with the important duty of revising and reforming the constitution of his native state. Mr. Macon was at this time about seventy-five years of age; and when this convention assembled, of which he was a member, on the 4th of June, he was appointed president, unanimously; and being conducted to the chair, briefly addressed the meeting in terms as follows:

"*My friends and countrymen:*

"My powers are weak, and I fear I shall not be able to fulfil the arduous duties of presiding over this important deliberative body, either satisfactorily to myself or acceptably to you. It being some time since I retired from public life, I am sensible that I shall be found rusty in the rules of the proceedings; and will therefore in advance, invite correction from my friends in the conven-

tion, which I shall always thankfully receive. I would respectfully, though earnestly press upon the attention of every member of the convention, the necessity of mutual forbearance and good temper in the prosecution of the business committed to this body by our constituents, who have selected us to act not only on their behalf, but for the benefit of posterity; and I pray that each of us, with an eye single to the welfare of our common country, may cordially unite in such measures as will redound to the glory and happiness of North Carolina."

As is customary in the proceedings of deliberative bodies, a committee was appointed by the convention, on the 8th of June, to consider and report the manner in which it would be expedient to take up the business of the convention. The plan of operation was drawn up and presented by Mr. Gaston, which amounted to nineteen resolutions. The third resolution being under consideration on the 10th; it being whether to abolish borough representation in whole or in part, some member moved to strike out the whole of the resolution after the word resolved, and insert, it is expedient to abolish borough representation entirely. The question being called for on this amendment, the debate was carried on to some length by sundry gentlemen, when some gentleman moved to accept the towns of Newbern, Wilmington and Fayetteville, from the above motion. Another gentleman moved to strike out Fayetteville, and add Edenton to the amendment proposed. The president immediately declared the motion out of order. Upon which a debate was carried on by several gentlemen upon the second motion excepting the above towns, when a gentleman from Buncombe appeared to take enlarged views of the subject;

remarking "that the basis of representation which he desired to see established, was that, and that only, which would secure the largest share of intelligence and liberality to the legislative councils in the state—recurring to the catalogue of the illustrious dead and the illustrious living, that have, throughout the whole period of our political existence, constituted the borough representation; and if they would reflect upon this, they would find, said he, little reason to disfranchise them."

To which remarks, it appears from the register of debates, that Mr. Macon answered: "He should go hand in hand with the gentleman from Buncombe, as regarded education, but he differed with him in his notions about internal improvement. He doubted the capacity of North Carolina to become a great commercial state. She had no good port, and the lower part of it was sickly. For the same reasons, New Orleans never could rival New York. But we could diffuse the blessing of education, and become a virtuous, if not a great people. He expressed a wish that the university of the state was located at Raleigh, for he did not believe in that kind of education that was obtained in cloisters. The manners of boys should be attended to as well as their minds. He referred to the city of Williamsburg in Virginia, which was said to have been the most polished in America, and whose college had turned out more celebrated men than any other institution within his knowledge. He was opposed, he said, to the amendment. If the people had not virtue to select their most talented men, this provision would not insure it. Before the revolution, our legislative halls were graced with distinguished men, as well from counties as from towns. He instanced governor

Caswell, from the small county of Lenoir; who, he said, was certainly one of the most powerful men that ever lived in this or any other country."

The next resolution on which Mr. Macon made any remarks, was resolution fourth, relating to the abrogation or restriction of the right of free negroes or mulattoes to vote for members of the house of commons;—resolving, that to entitle any free person of color to vote for members in the house of commons, he shall be possessed of a freehold estate of the value of $250, free from all incumbrances. This resolution was debated at considerable length, by gentlemen of talents, when Mr. Macon rose, and said, "Perhaps he went further in his opinions in relation to this subject than other gentlemen. He would say, that free persons of color never were considered as citizens, and no one had a right to vote but a citizen. The revolution in this country was made by British subjects. The crown cannot make subjects; it makes what are called denizens. No one can say that a colored man was ever naturalized, or called upon to take the oath of allegiance. They have been employed to fight, but were never made citizens. They made no part of the political family; the negroes were originally imported in the way of trade, like other merchandise.

"Mr. Macon said, as he did not approve of the land qualification for voters. Suppose two respectable neighbors had each a son; that one of them had fifty acres of land, perhaps not worth more than twenty-five cents an acre, and the other had no land, but was a good blacksmith or shoemaker, and his standing in society irreproachable; why will you allow one to vote, and not the other? If any qualification is necessary he would pre-

fer age; it is age that makes the man. He would rather take age than property. He know respectable families of free negroes who had no property; but he believed that none of them had any right to vote."

"The opinion of New York had been mentioned, said he; if the clause which had been referred to, were to be again considered in that state, it would now be rejected. We are in a very different situation from that—they have but few persons of this description—we have large numbers. What, said he, can we do with these people? They are amongst us—we have no Moses to undertake their cause. He supposed they must remain with us. It is doubtful whether our southern country can ever be cultivated by white men, or that the vast quantity of our swamp lands can ever be drained, or other internal improvements be made without them. It is proper that these colored people, whether free or in bondage, should be well treated; but he was opposed to any of them being allowed the right of suffrage."

On Monday, June 15th, in the register of debates, we find the next remarks of Mr. Macon. When the convention resolved itself into a committee of the whole, Mr. Shober in the chair, on the resolutions reported by the general committee, in relation to the number of members to compose each house. During the debate upon these resolutions, some member moved and supported his motion "to reduce the senate from 50 to 34—if 48 was sufficiently large for the senate of the United States, he thought 34 would do very well for the senate of North Carolina." The question was put on the motion to strike out from the resolution, fixing the number of which the senate was proposed to consist, the word fifty, and nega-

tived, without a division. The question then came before the committee for striking out the words one hundred and twenty from the resolution prescribing the number of the house of commons.

Upon this question, Mr. Macon rose and delivered his sentiments pretty much at large on the subject; but from his distance from the reporter, and owing to the low tone of his voice in which he spoke, he was very imperfectly heard. In referring to the compromise, which it is understood was made by members from the eastern and western parts of the state, at the session of the legislature, which passed the act calling the convention, "he expressed his disapprobation of all compromises and concealments. He disapproved of any plan of internal improvement in which government was to take any part. All improvements of this kind, he said, ought to be the work of individuals, as they could always have it done at a cheaper rate than the government. In noticing a remark which had fallen from some member, derogatory to the character of this state, he said, for his part, he had never seen a state in which he had rather live than in North Carolina; nor any, where the people were in general more happy. There might not be so many two and four horse carriages amongst them, but there were plenty of good horses. Nor so many splendid houses; but the people generally had comfortable dwellings and good plantations. The term farmer, he said, was seldom heard in North Carolina, and he was glad of it, as it always indicated to him a state of tenantry; he preferred the term planter, which conveyed to his mind more of independency and plenty." Mr. Macon did not approve of the proposed plan of amending the constitu-

tion, and read a resolution which he said he wrote at home, on the subject, but in so low a tone that the reporter could not distinctly hear it. We believe it proposed to refer the whole subject to committees, to be appointed in each county, by the next general assembly. We presume he was opposed to biennial sessions of the legislature, as he quoted the following maxim from Mr. Jefferson, "where annual elections end, tyranny begins." In the course of his remards, Mr. Macon observed, that he believed all changes of government were from better to worse.

On Saturday, June 20th, we find others of Mr. Macon's remarks; on a resolution introduced by Mr. Daniel, (the convention being in a committee of the whole) "That it is expedient that their be annual sessions of the general assembly." After several speeches had been made by different gentlemen, some for and others against this resolution,

Mr. Macon rose and said, "Democracy was dead in North Carolina. He understood a Democracy to be a government of the people. Public opinion runs in that current. It runs from the principles of the revolution. He did not believe that there was one of the thirteen original states in the legislature, that did not meet annually. That his memory was gone, the gentleman from Craven, Mr. Gaston, had convinced him by the statement of certain facts, whose existence he had forgotten. If you can put off the meeting of the legislature for two years, you may extend the time to four, six, or ten years. Mr. Jefferson said, he preferred the tempest of liberty to the calm of despotism. On the subject of long sessions, every one knew his opinion. But if you say the legis-

lature shall not pass private laws, you destroy the right of petition. He had listened to the gentleman from Craven, on his theory of government, and had expected him to come out on the other side, but was disappointed. He seemed to have some doubts which side he should take. Complaint is frequently made that many of the difficulties arise from our not being better acquainted with each other. The best opportunity afforded for forming this acquaintance, is the annual meetings of the legislature. As to the expense of the civil list, he never considered that as any thing. It was jobs that swallowed the public money. It was complained that legislators debate too much. He believed no man spoke on any subject who did not tell you something you did not know before. This he said, is a talking government. The gentleman from Iredell had complained of quarrels and suits growing out of annual elections. He had never found this a greviance in his part of the state. When he first went to the general assembly, that man was counted the best speaker who said the most in the fewest words. This merit was now lost sight of. The most thrifty planters would not employ overseers for too long a time; and he thought the conduct of the legislature should be passed upon annually. If they had done well, they should be re-elected. He thought an annual election was as good a tenure as any other. He did not believe that men were either as good or as bad as they are generally represented. He knew most of the men that formed the constitution at Halifax in 1776, and they would have been an ornament to any age. They had a different task to perform. They were not only surrounded by a foreign foe, but they had a domestic enemy to

contend with, which composed about one third of the whole population. These patriots formed this venerated constitution, and we ought to approach it with awe. It was the great work of our fathers; but we are about to treat it as many of the thoughtless young are about to treat their parental estates. It is perhaps the nature of man to cling to long established opinions,—gentlemen seem yet to cling to British notions. The parliament of Britian has much power; the sword has also great power. Their magna charta has been called a grant of power,—but he denied that part—it was power won by the sword. There are different ties in all governments. What power will you trust? He thought the best part of government, is the legislature. He hoped this convention would not feel force and forget right. He had hoped, that after amending the constitution, every member would have gone home satisfied, and recommended its adoption to the people; but he began to despair of doing so."

On Monday, June the 22d, after some preliminaries, some member moved the following resolution. "That it is expedient so to amend the constitution of this state, that in all elections of officers, the members of the general assembly vote viva voce."

Upon which Mr. Macon made the following remarks: "He said, there was but little difference between voting by ballot and viva voce. He preferred the latter. He thought men were better than they are generally represented. If a man had the misfortune to have his house burnt, you will always find his neighbours ready to help him to re-build it. And he did not think our government was so vicious as it is represented, or we should not have

kept it so long. If all were honest, we should want no government. Living under a good constitution, he felt unwilling to change it, but when the people determined to change, the change must be made. With respect to voting, he thought no man should be unwilling to tell how he voted, on any occasion. Voting by ballot, a man might call on a neighbour to vouch for him; but he would appeal to the gentleman from Craven, if the record was not the best evidence. He therefore was in favour of voting viva voce. He believed the vote by ballot was introduced, when voters were kept from voting publicly for fear of the merchants' books, for they were in debt. But we had nothing to fear on that ground. And as to a difference of opinion on politics, destroying long existing friendships, he did not believe it. He had differed in opinion with some of his best friends, and it made no breach in their friendship. Every agent should be responsible to his principal; and he thought the best evidences in such cases was the record."

Concerning modes of election, in support of Mr. Macon's opinion, we believe it is scarcely possible to conceive of a political institution that includes a more direct and implicit patronage of vice, than that which carries on its elections by ballot. It has been said, "that ballot may in certain cases be necessary to enable a man of a feeble character to act with ease and independence, and to prevent bribery, corrupt influence and faction." Vice is an ill remedy to apply to the diminution of vice. A feeble and irresolute character might before be accidental; ballot is a contrivance to render it permanent, and to scatter its seeds over a wider surface. The true cure for a want of constancy and public spirit, is to inspire

firmness, not to inspire timidity. Truth, if communicated to the mind with perspicuity, is a sufficient basis for virtue. To tell men that it is necessary they should form their decisions by ballot, is to tell them that it is necessary they should be vicious. Ballot teaches us to draw a veil of concealment over the performance of our duty. It points to us a method of acting unobserved. It incites us to make a mystery of our sentiments. If it did this in the most trivial article, it would not be easy to bring the mischief it would produce within the limits of calculation. But it dictates this conduct in our most important concerns. It calls upon us to discharge our duty to the public, with the most virtuous constancy; but at the same time directs us to hide our discharge of it. One of the most admirable principles in the structure of the material universe, is its tendency to prevent us from withdrawing ourselves from the consequences of our own actions. Political institutions that should attempt to counteract this principle, would be only true impiety. How can a man have the love of the public in his heart, without the dictates of that love, flowing to his lips? When we direct men to act with secrecy, we direct them to act with frigidity. Virtue will always be an unusual spectacle among men, till they shall have learned to be at all times ready to avow their actions and assign the reasons upon which they are founded.

If, then, voting by ballot be an institution pregnant with vice, it follows, that all social decisions should be made by open vote; that wherever we have a function to discharge, we should reflect on the mode in which it ought to be discharged; and that whatever conduct we

are persuaded to adopt, especially in affairs of general concern, should be adopted in the face of the world.

On Friday, June 26th, Mr. Edwards of Warren, moved that the convention go into a committee of the whole, on the resolution in relation to the 32d article of the constitution; which "prohibited all but those of the Protestant religion, from serving as members of the legislature." This article in the old constitution of North Carolina, created more excitement than had been before in the convention, or was likely to be during its sitting; and to say the truth, it was a singular article in the constitution of any republic. Truth is the only fair antagonist of error; and the latter "may be safely tolerated, while the former is left free to combat it." This article in their constitution, proclaimed that a particular faith should be the price of office—that all who did not conform to it should be punished by an exclusion from the honors, emoluments and distinctions, which the humblest should be permitted to aspire. The province of political assemblages have always been thought by the wise, was to regulate the intercourse between man and man,—and not between man and his maker. But it appears that the framers of this constitution, forgetting this sublime truth, introduced into our organic law, interdictions on account of religious opinions,—and such interdictions being introduced, what is more natural than to suppose, they should be fenced round in order to prevent them from violation, that obedience should be coerced by pains and penalties,—and consequently a resort then must be had to legislative enactments; and they in time, may render ecclesiastical or spiritual courts indispensible; for who can be so well qualified to sit in judgment, as

those who teach the favoured faith. Much debate took place in the convention upon this article, by some of the ablest men in the state,—and it was not before the second day of the debate, June 27th, that Mr. Macon rose for the purpose of giving his opinion upon this subject. Much attention was paid to him as he took his attitude to make his remarks.

Mr. Macon said: "That he should take the broad ground that man was alone responsible to his creator for his religious faith, and that no human power had any right to interpose in the matter or to prescribe any particular opinions as a test of fitness for office. If a Hindoo was to come amongst us, said he, and was fully qualified to discharge the duties of any office to which he might aspire, his religious belief would not constitute an objection, in his opinion, why he should be debarred. Who made man a judge, that he should presume to interfere in the sacred rights of conscience? He had always thought that a mixture of politics and religion was the very essence of hypocrisy. Mr. Macon said, some gentlemen had expressed the opinion that this article, as it now stood, could do no harm. Who can tell to what the spirit of proscription, on which it is based, may lead. A spark may fire the world. Events push each other along, and one passion but serves to enkindle another. So far as he was individually concerned, it mattered not what provisions were incorporated in the constitution. His time had most come. But this article was the only feature in the old constitution which he had ever heard objected to, out of the state; and the objection was coupled with an expression of surprise that it could have got foot-hold in a state where the principles of liberty was

so well understood. These were times, when a man, if a true patriot, must stake himself for the good of his country. The present was a crisis of that kind. When our country was in distress, said Mr. Macon in our revolutionary struggle, we applied to Catholics for assistance, and it was generously extended. Without foreign assistance, we never should have acheived our independence. Mr. Macon said, a part of the article referred to Atheists. He did not believe there ever was an Atheist, whatever his nation or color, It was impossible for any man to look at himself,—at the water,—at the animal and vegetable kingdom,—at the sun,—moon or stars, without acknowledging the existence of a great first cause."

"What gave rise to the first settlement in North Carolina? The persecutions in New England and Virginia. New England, to use the language of a great man, was settled by Puritans of the Puritans—Virginia was settled by Episcopalians. These two states never had any intercourse until the revolution. This goodly land, we inhabit, was discovered by Catholics. Should not this occur to us, when we talk about disfranchising them."

"To him, it appeared too plain a question to argue, that every man may worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience. But it is a practical denial of its truth, to debar a man from office, because he may entertain certain religious opinions. There was one member of this convention, whose father had been inhumanly murdered by the tories in our revolutionary struggle; he begged pardon for the allusion, but it was history; and shall it be said, his son, baptised, as it were, in the blood of his father, is unworthy to be in the legislature of our country? No sir, no gentleman would say this.

The Christian religion was founded on good will and peace to man. Examine the redeemer's sermon on the mount. Is there any persecution there? And who made us greater than he, that we should proscribe our brethren for opinion's sake? You might as well attempt to bind the air we breathe, as a man's conscience. It is free—liberty of thought is his unalienable birth-right. He never heard this great outcry against religious freedom, but what he was forcibly reminded of the Pharisee and Publican. He said he was too tired to repeat it; but every body remembered it."

"Roger Williams, of Rhode Island, Mr. Macon said, was the first man to establish toleration in North America—he was a puritan. Charles Carroll of Carrolton, the man who staked more by signing the declaration of independence than any other individual, was a Catholic. As he stepped up to sign, some person remarked, "There goes two millions with a dash of a pen." Another freind remarked, "Oh, Carroll, you will get off, there are so many Charles Carrolls." He stepped back and added "of Carrollton." Mr. Macon alluded also to the character of Bishop Carroll, a man so pure, that even sectarian bigotry could find nothing to allege against him. It was not, therefore, the particular religious notions, which a man entertained, that made him a good citizen or a good man."

Mr. Macon said: "Fears seemed to be entertained by some gentlemen that the Roman Catholics would overrun the country. They might do it, but he did not think it was half as probable as that a mouse would kill a buffaloe. Let them come when they will, Mr. Macon said, he would lay a wager that the Protestants convert-

ed two to the Catholics one. As for himself he was inclined to the Baptist church, and he did not care who knew it; but he was far from believing in all their doctrines. Neither did he believe it essential, that a man should attach himself to any particular church. If he faithfully discharged all his duties on earth, and obeyed the precepts of the gospel, he would not be asked, when he reached heaven, to what sect he belonged. Mr. Macon said, in conclusion, he would not have troubled the committee, but he did not wish any one to believe that he was disposed to skulk from responsibility. He was not vain enough to believe his opinions would have any weight in that body, but he must be allowed to say, that he considered the decision of this question, as involving the future character of North Carolina."

The reader will perceive that this speech of Mr. Macon's was made upon one of the most important subjects that ever came before any deliberative body—upon the subject of religious toleration. And that the sentiments here expressed by him on account of their liberality, will be an honor to his memory in every country and in every age hereafter, wherever liberty of conscience have any share in political institutions.

These sentiments go to prove, that the interference of organised society for the purpose of influencing opinion and manners, is not only useless, but pernicious.

This property, in political regulations, is so far from being doubtful, that to it alone we are to ascribe all the calamities that government has inflicted on mankind. When a regulation coincides with the habits and propensities of mankind at the time it is introduced, it will be found sufficiently capable of maintaining those habits

and propensities, in the greater part, unaltered for centuries. In this view, it is doubly pernicious.

To understand this more accurately, let us apply it to the case of rewards, which has always been a favourite topic with the advocates of an improved legislature. How often have we been told, "that talents and virtues would spring up spontaneously in a country, one of the objects of whose constitution should be to secure to them an adequate reward?" Now, to judge of the propriety of this aphorism, we should begin with recollecting, that the discerning of merit, is an individual, and not a social capacity. What can be more reasonable, than that each man for himself should estimate the merits of his neighbour? To endeavour to institute a general judgment in the name of the whole, and to melt down the different opinion, appears at first sight so monstrous an attempt, that it is impossible to augur well of its consequences. Will this judgment be wise, reasonable or just? Wherever each man is accustomed to decide for himself, and the appeal of merit is immediately to the opinion of its contemporaries, if there were not for the false bias of some positive institution, we expect a genuine ardour in him, who aspired to excellence, creating and receiving impressions in the presence of an impartial audience. We might expect the judgment of the auditors, to ripen by perpetual exercise, and the mind, ever curious and awake, continually to approach nearer to the standard of truth. What do we gain in compensation for this, by setting up authority as the general oracle, from which the active mind is to inform itself what of excellence it should seek to inquire; and the public at large, what judgment they should pronounce upon their contemporaries? What

should we think of an act of congress appointing some particular individual president of the court of criticism, and judge in the last resort of the literary merit of dramatic compositions? Is there any solid reason why we should expect better things, from authority usurping the examination of moral or political excellence? Nothing can be more unreasonable than the attempt to retain men in one common opinion by the dictate of authority. The opinion thus obtruded upon the minds of the public, is not their real opinion; it is only a project by which they are rendered incapable of forming an opinion. Whenever government assumes to deliver us from the trouble of thinking for ourselves, the only consequences it produces, are torpor and imbecility. Wherever truth stands in the mind unaccompanied by the evidence upon which it depends, it cannot properly be said to be apprehended at all. Mind in this case robbed of its essential character and genuine employment, and along with them must be expected to lose all that which is capable of rendering its operations salutary and admirable. Either mankind will resist the assumptions of authority undertaking to superintend their opinions, and then these assumptions will produce no more than an ineffectual struggle; or they will submit, and then the effects will be injurious. He that in any degree consigns to another the task of dictating his opinions and his conduct, will cease to inquire for himself, or his inquiries will be languid and inanimate.

Further regulations, will originally be instituted in favour of falsehood or truth. In the first case, no rational inquirer will pretend to alledge any thing in their defence, but even should truth be their object, yet such is

their nature, that they infallibly defeat the very purpose, they were intended to serve. Truth when originally presented to the mind, is powerful and invigorating; but when attempted to be perpetual by political institutions, becomes flaccid and lifeless. Truth, in its unpatronised state, strengthens and improves the understanding; because in that state it is embraced only so far as it is perceived to be truth. But truth when recommended by authority, is weakly and irresolutely embraced. The opinions we entertain are no longer properly our own; we respect them as a lesson appropriated by rote, but we do not, strictly speaking, understand them, and we are not able to assign the evidence upon which they rest. Instead of the firmness of independence, we are taught to bow to authority, we know not why. Persons thus trammelled, are not strictly speaking, capable of a single virtue. The first duty of man is to take none of the principles of conduct upon trust; to do nothing without a clear and individual conviction that it is right to be done. He that resigns his understanding upon one particular topic, will not exercise it vigorously upon others. If he be right in any instance, it will be inadvertently and by chance. The consciousness of the degradation to which he is subjected, will perpetually haunt him; or at least, he will want the consciousness that accrues from independent considerations; and therefore will equally want that inteprid perseverance, that calm self approbation that grows out of independence. Such beings, are the mere damps and mockery of men; their efforts comparatively pusillanimous, and the vigor, with which they should execute their purposes, superficial and hallow. Strangers to conviction, they will never be able to dis-

tinguish between prejudice and reason. Nor is this the worse. Even when the glimpses of inquiry suggest themselves, they will not dare to yield to the temptation. To what purpose inquire, when the law has told us what to believe, and what must be the termination of our inquiries? Even when opinion, properly so called, suggest itself, we are compelled, if it differ in any degree from the established system, to shut our eyes and loudly profess our adherence, where we doubt the most. This compulsion may exist in many different degrees. But supposing it to amount to no more than a very slight temptation to be insincere, what judgment must we form of such a regulation, either in a moral or intellectual view? Of a regulation inviting men to the profession of certain opinions by the proffer of a reward, and deterring them from a severe examination of their justice, by penalties and disabilities.

A system like this, does not content itself with habitually unnerving the mind of the great mass of mankind through all ranks, but provides for its own continuance by debauching or terrifying the few individuals, who, in the midst of the general emasculation, might retain their curiosity and love of enterprise. We may judge how pernicious it is in its operation in this respect, by the long reign of papal usurpation in the dark ages, and the many attacks upon it that were suppressed, previously to the successful one of Luther. Even yet, how few are there that venture to examine into the foundation of mahomitism and christianity; or the effects of monarchy and aristocracy, in countries where those systems are established by law. Supposing men were free from persecution for their hostilities in this respect, yet the investiga-

tion could never be impartial, while so many allurements are held out, inviting men to a decision in one particular way. To these considerations may be added, that what is right under certain circumstances to-day, may by an alteration in those circumstances become wrong to-morrow. Right and wrong are the results of certain relations, and those relations are founded in the respective qualities of the beings to whom they belong. Change those qualities, and the relations become altogether different. The treatment we are bound to bestow upon any one depends upon our capacity and their circumstances. Increase the first, or vary the second, and we are bound to a different treatment. We are bound at present to subject an individual to forcible restraint, because we are not wise enough by reason alone to change his vicious propensities. The moment we can render ourselves wise enough, we ought to confine ourselves to the latter mode. Universally, it is a fundamental principal in sound political science, that a nation is best fitted for the amendment of its civil government by being made to understand and desire the advantages of that amendment; and the moment it is so understood and desired, it ought to be introduced. But if their be any truth in these views; nothing can be more adverse to reason or inconsistent with the nature of man, than positive regulations tending to continue a certain mode of proceeding when its utility is gone.

If we would be more completely convinced of these truths, we ought in the last place explicitly to contrast the nature of mind and the nature of government.

It is one of the most unquestionable properties of mind to be susceptible of perpetual improvement. It is the

inalienable tendency of a positive regulation, to retain that with which it is conversant, for ever in the same state. Is then the perfectability of the understanding an attribute of trivial importance? Is it to be believed, that if the interference of positive institutions were out of the question, the progress of mind in past ages would have been so slow, as to have struck the majority of ingenious observers with despair? The science of Greece and Rome upon the subject of political justice, was in many respects extremely imperfect; yet could our ancestors have been so long in appropriating their discoveries, had not the allurements of reward, and the menace of persecution, united to induce them not to trust to the first and fair verdict of their own understandings.

One of the most striking instances of the injurious effects of the political patronage of opinion, as it at present exists in the world, is to be found in this system of religious conformity. Let us take our example from the church of England, by the constitution of which subscription is required from its clergy to thirty-nine articles of precise and dogmatical assertion upon almost every subject of moral and metaphysicial inquiry. Here then we have to consider the whole honors and revenues of the church, from the archbishop who takes precedence next after the princes of blood royal, to the meanest curate in the nation, as employed in support of a system of blind submission and abject hypocrisy. Is there one man through this numerous hierarchy that is at liberty to think for himself? Is there one man among them that can lay his hand upon his heart, and declare, upon his honor and conscience, that his emoluments have no effect in influencing his judgment? The declaration is literally

impossible. The most that an honest man under such circumstances can say, is, "I hope not; I endeavor to be impartial."

This system of religious conformity is a system of blind submission;—in every country possessing a religious establishment, the state, from a benevolent care, it may be, for the manners and opinions of its subjects, publicly encourage a numerous class of men to the study of morality and virtue. What institution, we might obviously be led to inquire, can be more favorable to public happiness? Morality and virtue are the most interesting topics of human speculation; and the best effects might be expected to result from the circumstance of many persons perpetually receiving the most liberal education, and setting themselves apart for the express cultivation of these topics. But unfortunately, these very men are fettered in the outset, by having a code of propositions put into their hands in a conformity to which all their inquiries must terminate. The direct tendency of science is to increase, from age to age, and proceed from the slenderest beginnings to the most admirable conclusions. But care is taken in the present case to anticipate these conclusions, and to blind men by promises and penalties, not to improve upon the wisdom of their ancestors. The plan is to guard against degeneracy, and decline, but never to advance. It is founded in the most sovereign ignorance of the nature of mind, which never fails to do the one or the other. Ignorance is not necessary to render men virtuous. If it were, we might reasonably conclude that virtue was an imposture, and it was our duty to free ourselves from its shackles. The cultivation of the understanding has no tendency to cor-

rupt the heart. A man who should possess all the science of Newton, and all the genius of Shakspeare, would not, on that account, be a bad man. From this course of reasoning, we may be assisted in detecting the error of the elder Cato, and of other persons who have been the zealous but mistaken advocates of virtue. It is like the taking to pieces an imperfect machine, in order, by reconstructing it, to enhance its value. An uninformed and timid spectator would be alarmed at the temerity of the artist, at the confused heap of pins and wheels that were laid aside at random, and would take it for granted, that nothing but destruction would be the consequence. But he would be disappointed. It is thus that the extravagant sallies of mind are the prelude of the highest wisdom, and that the dreams of Ptolemy were destined to precede the discoveries of Newton.

As long as inquiry is suffered to proceed, and science to improve, our knowledge is perpetually increased. Shall we know every thing else and nothing of ourselves? Shall we become clear sighted and penetrating in all other subjects, without increasing our penetration upon the subject of man? Is vice most truly allied to wisdom or to folly? Can mankind perpetually increase in wisdom, without increasing in the knowledge of what is wise for them to do? Can a man have a clear discernment, unclouded with the remains of any former mistake, that this is the action he ought to perform, most conducive to his own interest and the general good; most agreeable to reason, justice and the nature of things, and refrain from performing it? Every system which has been constructed relative to the nature of superior beings and gods, amidst all other errors, has reasoned tru-

ly upon these topics, and taught that the accession of wisdom and knowledge, led not to malignity and tyranny, but to benevolence and justice.

It is a mistake to suppose that speculative differences of opinion, threaten materially to disturb the peace of society. It is only when they are enabled to arm themselves with the authority of government, to form parties in the state, and to struggle for that political ascendency which is too frequently exerted in support of or in opposition to some particular creed, they become dangerous. Whenever government is wise enough to maintain an inflexible neutrality, these jarring sects are always found to live together with sufficient harmony. The very means that have been employed for the preservation of order, have been the only means that have led to its disturbance. The moment government resolves to admit of no regulation, oppressive to either party, controversy finds its level, and appeals to argument and reason, instead of appealing to the sword or the stake. The moment government descends to wear the badge of a sect, religious war is commenced, the world is degraced with inextricable broils, and deluged with blood.

What is the language, that in strictness of interpretation belongs to the act of a legislature, imposing religious test which is to qualify a man to receive all the privileges and immunities of the society in which he should live? To one party it says, "we know that you are our friends; the test as it relates to you, we acknowledge to be altogether superfluous, nevertheless you must undergo it, as a cover to our indirect purposes in imposing it upon persons whose views are less unequivocal than yours." To the other party it says, "it is vehemently suspected that

you are inimical to the cause in which we are engaged: this suspicion is either true or false; if false, we ought not to suspect you, and much less ought we to put you to this corrupting and nugatory purgation; if true, you will either candidly confess your difference, or dishonestly prevaricate; be candid, and we will indignantly banish you; be dishonest, and we will receive you as our bosom friends." Duty and common sense oblige us to watch the man we suspect, even though he should swear he is innocent. Would not the same precautions which we are still obliged to employ to secure us against his duplicity, have sufficiently answered our purpose without putting him to his purgation? Are there no method by which we can find out whether a man be the proper subject in whom to repose an important trust, without putting the question to himself? Will not he who is so dangerous an enemy that we cannot trust him, discover his enmity by his conduct, without reducing us to the painful necessity of tempting him to an act of prevarication? If he be so subtle a hypocrite that our vigilance cannot detect him, will he scruple to add to his other crimes, the crime of perjury?

It is impossible to construct a test in such a manner as to suit the various opinions of those upon whom it is imposed, and not to be liable to reasonable objections.

When the law was repealed imposing upon the dissenting clergy of England, a subscription with certain reservations, to the articles of the established church, an attempt was made to invent an unexceptionable test that might be substituted in its room. This test simply affimed "that the books of the old and new testament, in the opinion of the person who took it, contained a revelation from God,"

and it was supposed that no christian could scruple such declaration. But is it impossible that a man should be a christian, and yet doubt of the canonical authority of the amatory eclogues of Solomon, of certain other books contained in a selection that was originally made in very arbitrary manner? Still however he may take the test, with the persuasion, that the old and new testament contain a revelation from God and something more. In the same sense, he might take it, even if the Alcoran, the Talmud, and the sacred books of the Hindoos were added to the list. What sort of influence will be produced upon the mind that is accustomed to this looseness of construction in its most solemn engagements?

To conclude upon this subject of political restraint on account of religious tenets. Can there be any solid ground of distinction except what is founded in personal merit? Are not men really and strictly considered, equal, except so far as what is personal and inalienable makes them differ? To these questions there can be but one reply, "such is the order of reason and absolute truth; but artificial distinctions are necessary for the happiness of mankind. Without deception and prejudice, the turbulence of human passions cannot be restrained." Let us then examine the merits of his theory; and these will be best illustrated by an instance.

It has been held by some politicians, that the doctrine which teaches that men will be externally tormented in another world, for their errors and misconduct in this, is "in our nature unreasonable and absurd, but that it is nevertheless necessary to keep mankind in awe. Do we not see, say they, "that notwithstanding this terrible denunciation, the world is overrun with vice? What

then would be the case if the irregular passions of mankind were set free from their present restraint, and they had not the fear of this retribution before their eyes?"

This argument seems to be founded in a singular inattention to the dictates of history and experience, as well as those of reason. The ancient Greeks and Romans had nothing of this dreadful apparatus of fire and brimstone; and a torment, "the smoke of which ascends for ever and ever." Their religion was less personal than political. They confided in the gods as protectors of the state; and this inspired them with invincible courage. In periods of public calamity, they found a ready consolation in expiatory sacrifices to appease the anger of their gods. The attention of these beings was conceived to be principally directed to the ceremonials of religion, and very little to the moral excellence and defects of their votaries, which were supposed to be sufficiently provided for by the inevitable tendency of moral excellence or defect, to increase or diminish individual happiness. If their system, included the doctrine of future existence, little attention was paid by them to the connecting the moral deserts of individuals in this life with their comparative situation in another. The same omission ran through the systems of the Persians, the Egyptians, the Celts, the Phenicians, the Jews, and indeed every system which has not been, in some manner or other, the offspring of the christian. If we were to form our judgment of these nations by the above argument, we should expect to find every individual among them cutting their neighbour's throat, and hackneyed in the commission of every enormity without measure, and without remorse. But they were in reality as suscepti-

ble of the regulations of government and the order of society, as those whose imaginations have been most artfully terrified by the threats of future retribution; and some of them much more generous, determined and attached to the public weal.

We do not intend, by the foregoing remarks, to incense the feelings of intolerants, but to reason with them upon the subject, and produce the conviction in their minds, that any and every thing savouring of dictation or restriction in matters that concern liberty of conscience, is diametrically at war with republican institutions; and when a true republican, such a one as Mr. Macon was, reads that provision in the old constitution of North Carolina, which proclaimed "that no person who should deny the being of God, or the truth of the Protestant religion, or the divine authority either of the old and new testament, or who should hold religious principles incompatible with the freedom and safety of the state, should be capable of holding any office, or place of trust, or profit, in the civil department within this state." He must pronounce an anathema—a political excommunication,—far more terrible and grating to the ears of a freeman, than were "the thunders of the Vatican," formally, to the blind and ignorant devotee at the shrine of papal power and supremacy.

Persecution never did effect the object for which it was intended; it seldom fails to create a strong and powerful sympathy in favour of its victim; and instead of crushing its unhappy subject in its infuriated pangs, it gives additional life, power and activity to its progress. If this spirit is permitted to prevail, probably Mr. Macon was not so far wrong when he declared in this conven-

tion, that he did not believe the revolution of 1688, had done any essential good,—for, from that, had sprung the bigotted intolerance, which every one must acknowledge has descended to the present generation, and was too plainly manifested in that body. If the Catholic was excluded from the offices of honor and emolument, is there any justice or honesty in subjecting him to the taxes and drudgery of the Government? To our mind the exclusion from the one, and the exaction of the other, was a violation of his rights; and if he be this poor deluded being, occupying this nondescript position in the community, the Protestant zeal might have been manifested in more strict conformity to the charity of his gospel, by sending to him the missionary heralds of the cross, to call him back from the errors of his ways; to lead him to pure fountains of living water, and beseech him to abjure the heresies of his mother church! Common charity would induce us to believe this would have been their course, but it is much to be feared, that a bitter spirit of malignant jealousy and sectarian rivalry, has rather prompted and engendered this uncharitable and senseless persecution. Why do we think so? Because such a course of conduct, was in conflict with the religious doctrines of the Protestant faith,—does not accord with the charitable disposition and tender commiseration which they evince even for the heathen and those who deny the existence of God, and is an implied admission of the weakness, fallibility and want of truth of their own faith. The first settlements of this country were produced, and the broad foundations of this republic were laid by this same spirit of religious persecution towards our forefathers, which the bigoted zealots of the present

day here evince against the Roman Catholic. It was a boasted birthright, to be born in a land of civil and religious freedom. The persecuted of all climes were invited to the asylum of the oppressed, where each man might "sit down under his own vine and fig tree," and worship Almighty God according to the dictates of his own conscience. Restraints upon conscience, and civil disqualifications in consequence thereof, were denounced as violations of the great fundamental rights of man; taxation, without the enjoyment of its con-comitant, civil rights, was pronounced odious and oppressive; our pulpits, legislative halls and popular assemblies, rang with denunciations against this violent invasion upon our civil and religious rights, until this noble and indignant spirit, no longer controlled by the fear of such oppressive power, produced our great and mighty revolution. Then we felt our own weakness and inability to breast the storm, and thought it then no heresy to seek the aid of a Catholic king—the current of popular good will and affection ran strong in favor of our Catholic brethren of France, and the dominant political party of our country, even after the attainment of independence, was openly and loudly charged with being under French influence. It was not even whispered then, that our Catholic friends and allies entertained religious principles incompatible with the freedom and safety of the country; and the charge then, would have been deemed base and treasonable ingratitude. Who periled his life, his fortune and his all, in the establishment of civil and religious freedom on this side of the Atlantic? Need we mention the name of Lafayette, and with him, his associates in deeds of noble daring, in behalf of that sacred cause,

Rochambeau, Pulaski, De Kalb and others, the Catholic defenders and supporters of civil and religious liberty, whose gallant exertions in our revolutionary struggle, to maintain these inalienable rights of man, give the lie to the assertion that their religion is dangerous to the cause of freedom? Our country cannot too often remember and too highly appreciate these important services, and let us not slander the memory of the illustrious dead, by imputing to their religion, a motive so utterly variant from the cause which they so nobly and manfully espoused.

In England, there is an union of church and state, and the king is recognized by law, as the supreme head of both; and the Catholics acknowledge the pope as the supreme head of their church. Here is an obvious conflict for supremacy, which is repudiated as belonging either to the king or the pope, by subjects of the same realm, according to their different religious persuasions or predilections. The Protestant Episcopalian claiming it for the king, and the Catholic for the pope. So intimate is this connection in England, between the Protestant Episcopalian church and the state, that the king, upon his coronation, when asked by the archbishop or bishop—"will you, to the utmost of your power, maintain the laws of God, the true profession of the gospel, and the Protestant reformed religion, established by law? And will you preserve to the bishops and clergy of this realm, and to the churches committed to their charge, all such rights and privileges as by law, do and shall appertain unto them, or any of them?"—is bound to answer on oath; "all this I promise to do." And moreover, he is compelled to repeat and subscribe the declaration against

popery, according to the statute of Charles. And this is not all—the Catholic, before he is permitted to enjoy office, was required to pass through the fiery ordeal of the corporation and test acts; which may safely be pronounced as amounting to an odious and tyrannical proscription. They demanded of him a violation of the rights of conscience, and a repudiation of some of the favourite and long cherished doctrines of his church; they required him to receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper, according to the rites of the church of England; and they enjoined upon him the absolute necessity of taking the oath of allegiance and supremacy, and of making the declaration against transubstantiation. Here then is the test of his allegiance—in accepting office, he must acknowledge the king as the head of the church, and thereby repudiate the pope; he must receive the holy eucharist from the hands of those whom his conscience taught him to believe "had no authority," and in a manner totally repugnant to his long cherished notions of that sacred rite; and to close the scene of this warfare upon conscience, he must deny the doctrine of transubstantiation. The Catholic in England does deny this supremacy of the king, and therefore may be said to refuse to acknowledge an unqualified allegiance; but in this free and happy country, where no connexion between church and state exist, and there is no religion established by law, the charge becomes a slander upon his religious character, and is unfounded in truth and fact. If the Protestants would turn their attention to their own denominations, they would find more to regret in them, and less to criminate in the Catholic church, than their

over-wrought and phrensied zeal will permit them to believe.

We would not have it understood, that because we advocate the unrestricted rights of conscience, and the abrogation of all civil disqualifications on account of religious opinions, that we entertain any unfriendly feeling, or could be guilty of the slightest disrespect to any Protestant denomination. But is the persecution of the Catholic for conscience sake, required of them in the bible, or by their faith? Or, are they not, like the Pharisee, conscious of their own self-righteousness, and glad that they are not, like that sinful and perverse denomination? Whence arises the diversity in their faith,—the dissention in their religious opinions,—the great variety of other sects,—and the want of conformity among themselves to any uniform standard of orthodoxy? May it not be found in the uncontrolled exercise and freedom of conscience and opinion,—in the untrammelled adoption of a reasonable and popular construction of the bible, and in the want of unity, in adhering to that excellent Catholic rule of referring all disputed and doubtful points of faith and interpretation, to a council of the great, the learned and pious? And yet, they who have no common and uniform standard of faith, require of the Roman Catholic, before he can be permitted to enjoy office, that he must not deny the truth of the Protestant religion. "This tyranny, and depotism of opinion, may well have flourished during the existence of the dark ages, but in all future time, it will hardly be credited, that in the enlightened period of the nineteenth century, there could have been found bigotry, fanaticism, and prejudice enough, to have cherished and supported so intolerant a doctrine. There

can scarcely be an intelligent and high-minded inhabitant of the state of North Carolina, entirely free from this spirit, but what must blush, for the honor of his native state, when he reflects that with the sole exception of New Jersey, her constitution is the only one of these United States, that contained so illiberal, intolerant and proscriptive a gag law upon the consciences of men. And when he reflects that there are one hundred and sixteen millions of Catholics in the world, and only fifty four millions of Protestants, and these split up into as many sects and denominations as "construction, contortion and distortion" can give to the disputed points of faith, and having as little charity for each other, as some of them have for the Catholics, he cannot but regard this puny effort to put down the Roman Catholic religion, as truly characteristic of the spirit that conceived it, and every way unworthy of a great and high-minded state."

The question is, ought there to be any religious test in the constitution? Shall any man be debarred from office, merely because of his opinions on matters of religion? To us it seems, if there can be any certainty in moral or political science, the answer must be in the negative. Yet, notwithstading all the efforts that could be made by the most talented members in that convention,—the only change that could be effected in this abominable article, was to substitute the word christian for that of Protestant.

This changing one word for another, has not in the least affected the political principles upon which the great objections to the article rested. It has made the matter worse,—for there is nothing perhaps that has contributed more to the introduction and perpetuating of bigotry in the world, than some of the doctrines of the

christian religion. A religion which enters into no compromise with other systems; which represents itself as the only religion now in the world, having God for its author; and in his name, and by the hope of his mercy, and the terrors of his frown, it commands the obedience of faith to all people to whom it may be published. Throwing every other religion that pretends to offer hope to man, into utter insignificance. It first caused the spirit of intolerance to strike deep root. And it has entailed that spirit upon many who have shaken off the direct influence of its tenets. It is the characteristic of this religion, to lay the utmost stress upon faith. Its central doctrine is contained in this maxim:—he that believeth, shall be saved, and he that believeth not, shall be damned. What it is the belief of, which is saving, the records of the religion have left open to controversy; but the fundamental nature of faith, is one of its most unquestionable lessons. Faith is not only necessary to preserve us from the pains of hell; it is also requisite as a qualification for temporal blessings. When any one applied to Jesus, to be cured of any disease, he was first of all questioned respecting the implicitness of his faith. In Gallilee, and other places, Christ wrought not many miracles, because of their unbelief.

In those governments which undertake to prescribe a religious faith to their subjects, and command its profession as a part of civil duty, there is at least a congruity in visiting disobedience, by appropriate penalties. Incapacitation for office is *there* a punishment for disloyalty; and if it be supposed not adequate to its end, it is followed up by imprisonment, fine, confiscation, exile, torture and death. The principle is the same in all these grades

of punishment. It is a visitation of the vengeance of the state upon those who offend against its institutions. But where a state is avowedly based on religious freedom, where it proclaims that every man has from nature a right, which he cannot surrender, and which none may take away,—a "natural and unalienable right" to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of his own conscience,—a right, of the correct exercise of which, his conscience is the sole judge,—how can that state without a violation of first principles, punish him by degradation, because of the exercise of that very right? Civil rights have no dependance on our religious opinions, more than our opinions in physics or geometry; therefore, the proscribing any citizen as unworthy the public confidence, by laying upon him an incapacity of being called to the offices of trust and emolument, unless he profess or renounce this or that religious opinion, is depriving him injuriously of those privileges and advantages to which, in common with his fellow citizens, he has a natural right: it tends also to corrupt the principles of that very religion it is meant to encourage, by bribing, with a monopoly of worldy honors and emoluments, those who will externally profess and conform to it—and though, indeed, those are criminal who do not withstand such temptations, yet neither are those innocent, who lay the bait in their way.

"The bestowal of an office by the community on one of several competitors for distinction in this government, ought not to be felt as a wrong by those who have been disappointed, because their claims have been fairly presented to, and fairly passed upon by that community; yet an interdict to become a candidate and present his

claims for distinction, would be felt by every man of sensibility, as an act of arbitrary power. What is punishment, but pain or inconvenience inflicted, because of something done or intended? Is there no punishment but that which causes corporeal sufferings? Are there not pangs "sharper than what the body knows?" Is an *incapacity* to be called to an office of public trust or emolument, no penalty? Is it not a putting down of those, declared incapable, below the rest of their fellow citizens? And is reproach, is loss of rank in society, no privation,—no injury? The oppressors scorn and the proud man's contumely, are classed by him, who of all mere mortals, seems to have best understood human nature, and to have most thoroughly read the human heart, as among the sorest ills which flesh is heir to. Insult is, of all injuries, the hardest to be borne. And what can be a more direct insult to any man, than a deliberate declaration that he is utterly unworthy of confidence? Why, the miserable wretch who is whipped for larceny, writhes less under this torture, than under the disabilities which the conviction produces. It is no punishment to any individual not to be called on to give testimony; but to be declared infamous and incapable of giving testimony, is more than he can bear."

Reason is the proper umpire of *opinion*, and argument and discussion its only fit advocates. To denounce opinions by law, is as silly, and unfortunately much more tyrannical, as it would be, to punish crime by logic. Laws call out the force of the community to compel obedience to its mandates. To enforce an opinion by law, is to enslave the intellect, and oppress the soul,—to reverse the order of nature, and make reason subservient to force.

But of all the attempts to arrogate unjust dominion, none is so pernicious as the efforts of tyrannical men, to rule over the human conscience. Religion is exclusively an affair between God and man. If there be any subject upon which the interference of human power is more forbidden than all others, it is religion.

No sentiment is more prevalent than that which leads men to ascribe the variations of opinion which subsist in the world, to dishonesty and perverseness. It is thus that a papist judges of a Protestant, and a Protestant of a papist; such was the decision of the Hanovarian upon the Jacobite, and the Jacobite upon the Hanovarian; such the notion formed by the friend of monarchy concerning the republican, and by the republican concerning the friend of monarchy. The chain of evidence by which every one of these parties is determined, appears to the adherent of that party, so clear and satisfactory, that he hesitates not to pronounce that perverseness of will only could resist it.

No character is more rare than that of a man who can do justice to his antagonist's argument; and till this is done, it must be equally difficult to do justice to an antagonist's integrity. Ask a man, who has been the auditor of an argument, or who has recently read a book adverse to his own habits of thinking, to re-state the reasoning of the adversary. You will find him betraying the cause he undertakes to explain in every point. He exhibits nothing but a miserable deformity, in which the most vigilant adversary could scarcely recognize his image. Nor is there any dishonesty in this. He tells as much as he understood. Since, therefore, he understands nothing of the adversary but his opposition, it is

no wonder that he is virulent in his invective against him. This sort of uncharitableness is to be expected under the present condition of human intellect.

The ordinary strain of partisans, both in politics and religion, are like the two knights, of whom we are told that in coming in opposite directions to a head fixed on a pole in a cross-way, of which one side was gold and the other silver, they immediately fell to tilting; the right champion stoutly maintained that the head was gold, and the other indignantly rejoining that it was silver. Not one disputant in ten ever gives himself the trouble to pass over to his adversary's position; of those that do, many take so short and timid a glance, and with an organ so clouded with prejudice, that for any benefit they receive, they might as well have remained eternally upon the same spot.

There is scarcely a question in the world that does not admit of two plausible statements. There is scarcely a story that can be told, of which one side is not good till the other is related. When both sides have been heard, the ordinary result to a careful and strict observer, is much contention of evidence, much obscurity, and much scepticism. He that is smitten with so ardent a love of truth, as continually to fear less error should pass upon him under some specious disguise, will find himself ultimately reduced to a nice weighing of evidence, and a subtle observation as to which scale preponderates upon almost every important question. Such a man will express neither astonishment nor unbelief, when he is told that another person of uncommon purity of motives, has been led to draw a different conclusion.

It would be difficult to confer a greater benefit upon mankind, than would be conferred by him who should persuade them to a discarding of mutual bigotry, and induce them to give credit to each other for their common differences of opinion. Such persuasion would effect an almost universal rout of the angry passions. Persecution and prosecution for opinion would rarely exist in the world. Much of family dissention, much of that which generates alienation in the kindest bosoms, much even of the wars which has hitherto desolated mankind, would be swept away for ever from the face of the earth. There is nothing about which men quarrel more obstinately and irreconcilably, than difference of opinion. There is nothing that engenders a profounder and more inveterate hate.

If this subject was once understood, we should then look only to the consequences of opinions. We should no more think of hating a man for being an atheist or a monarchist, though these opinions were exactly opposite to our own, than for having the plague. We should pity him, and regret the necessity, if necessity there were, for taking precautions against him. In the mean time there is this difference between a man holding erroneous opinions, and a man infected with a contagious distemper. Mistaken opinions are never a source of tumult and disorder unless the persons who hold them are persecuted, or placed under circumstances of iniquitous oppression. The remedy, therefore, in this case is to remove unjustifiable restraints, and then leave the question to be fairly decided in the lists of argument and reason.

We are rarely in the right in allowing ourselves to suspect the sincerity of others in the cause to which they profess adherence; for nothing can be more various than the habits of different minds, or more diversified than their modes of contemplating the same subject. We can never, then, have a just view of the sincerity of men in opinion, we deem to be absurd till we have learned to put ourselves in their place, and to become the temporary advocates of the sentiment we reject.

On Thursday, July the 2nd, a resolution was before the convention to settle how the governor should be elected; whether by the legislature, as in the old constitution, or changed by giving his election to the people.

Mr. Macon in making his remarks upon this subject, "did not think it made much difference or was of much importance, whether the governor is elected by the legislature or the people. He had but little power. If he had a negative power over the laws he passed, as the governors of many of the states have, he should say he ought to be elected by the people. Where the governor has next to nothing to do, it is of little consequence who elects him. He thought he might as well be elected in the old way, by the general assembly. It is impossible in any government to get clear of caucusing; they will be held either publicly or privately. In all public bodies every one tries to get his friends elected. He had heard a good deal said about consistency of conduct. We are, said he, none of us consistent. Consistency is perfection, and we are none of us perfect. It is the man that dignifies the office, and not the office the man. Dick Henderson, who died a judge and filled the office with dignity, dignified the office of a constable, when he first

entered into public life. Give a sycophant an office and he will still be a sycophant, and give an honest man an office and he will be an honest man still. He believed the officers in this government did their duty as well as those in any of our neighbouring states. An officer here must act much out of the way, if he be not re-elected when his term is out."

"Saturday, July 11th, was the close of the convention, and Mr. Gaston of Craven, said, that before the convention performed the last act which it had to do, he would call up the resolution that he yesterday laid on the table. He said, I am about to offer to the convention a resolution on which I know I shall meet with perfect unanimity. However, said he, we may have been divided on other subjects, in returning our acknowledgments to our venerable president, for the able manner in which he has presided over this body, there will be no difference of opinion. The following resolution was then read:"

"*Resolved, unanimously,* that the thanks of this convention are due, and are hereby respectfully and affectionately tendered to the hon. Nathaniel Macon, their venerable president, for the distinguished ability, dignity and impartiality, with which he has discharged the duties of his station."

The resolution being read, Mr. Carson instantly rose and expressed a hope, that this mark of well-deserved respect to their venerable friend, for probably the last public act of his life, would be testified by the members of the convention standing. The word was no sooner spoken, than every member in the convention was on his feet.

The president who had resumed his chair, addressed the members as follows: (Mr. Swain being temporarily in the chair just before.)

"*Gentlemen* :—

"The merits which you have ascribed to me, in the performance of my duty in the chair, belong to you. I have been for a long time engaged in public business; and though no one will charge me with being a flatterer, I must say that I have never witnessed so much good order, and decorum of conduct, in any public body with which I have been connected. When I entered upon the important duties to which the convention in their kindness called me, I was fearful that I should not have been able to discharge them with any satisfaction to myself or to the convention; nor should I, without attention, aid, and assistance. To you, therefore, my thanks are due for all your kindness."

"This, continued Mr. Macon, I expect, will be the last scene of my public life. We are about to separate; and it is my fervent prayer, that you may, each of you, reach home in safety, and have a happy meeting with your families and friends, and that your days may be long, honorable and happy."

"While my life is spared, if any of you should pass through the country in which I live, I should be glad to see you."

This valedictory address of Mr. Macon's was the last he ever made. In it, all must acknowledge, that philanthropy, benevolence, and good feeling, which can only eminate from the heart of a good man. For its simplicity, perspicuity and modesty, it has seldom, if

ever, been excelled. The effect it produced at the time, was scarcely ever witnessed. Here in this short address, he has displayed all those qualities, both of mind and heart, which we have in previous chapters so feebly attempted to ascribe to him. And though he looked upon this as the last of his public services, yet in 1836, the year following, he was chosen an elector of president, and vice president, on the republican ticket,—and at the proper time, repaired to the seat of government and performed the duty required of him. This was the closing act of Mr. Macon's public life. And we must be permitted to remark,—if the public estimation of a man be a just criterion by which to judge of, Mr. Macon was excelled by none of his contemporaries, since; from the time almost that he was eligible, he was honoured with offices of trust and responsibility by his fellow citizens, until nearly the close of his life.

CHAPTER XIX.

Mr. Macon in his life time, had been frequently applied to, to have his likeness taken;—his objection always was, that it should not be taken by his consent, because in after time, it might so happen, it might be sold to the highest bidder; and he had no idea that any thing that should be said to represent him, should ever be so jeopardized, if he could prevent it. Whilst he was a member of the convention of North Carolina, in 1835, an application was made to him for this purpose, and upon his peremptory refusal, the portrait painter asked him, if he might not take it, whilst he was sitting in the chair as speaker of that body, provided, he, Mr. Macon, did not know it? His answer was, no sir; and if you do, I will prosecute you for a libel. A similar disposition was manifested, whenever he was consulted upon the subject of his life's being written. Posthumous fame said he, never done a man any good, and he who worshipped it in anticipation in his life time, would always be deceived after his exit; for if he was a good man, his rewards in futurity would so far out weigh the breath of common fame in this world, that it should never be taken into consideration. If he desired, any thing of posthumous honour, it was, that he might be regarded with affection and esteem by all those who know him; beyond that, said he, he had no ambition.

Moral fame, said he, was subject to a great variety of disadvantages, which are not incident to the fame of literature. In the latter instance, posterity has the whole subject fairly before them. We may dispute about the merits of Homer and Shakspeare, but they have at least this benefit, that the entire evidence is in court. Whoever will, may read their works; and needs only a firm, unbiased and cultivated judgment, to decide upon their excellences. A story of sir Walter Raleigh has often been repeated by him on these occasions, and its peculiar aptness to the illustration of the present subject, will excuse its being mentioned here. When sir Walter Raleigh wrote his history of the world, he was a prisoner in the tower of London. One morning, he heard the noise of a vehement contention under his window, but he could neither see the combatants, nor distinguish exactly what was said. One person after another came into his apartment, and he enquired of them, the nature of the affray; but their accounts were so inconsistent, that he found himself wholly unable, to arrive at the truth of the story. Sir Walter's reflections on this, was obvious, yet acute. What, said he, can I not make myself master of an incident that happened an hour ago under my window; and shall I imagine, I can truly understand the history of Hannibal and Caesar.

History in reality is a tissue of fables;—and there is no reason to believe, that any one page in any one history extant, exhibits the unmixed truth. The story is disfigured by the vanity of the actors, the interested misrepresentations of spectators, and the fictions, probable or improbable, with which every historian is instigated to piece out his imperfect tale. Human affairs are

so entangled; motives are so subtle and variously compounded, that the truth cannot be told. What reasonable man then can consign his reputation to the Proteus-like uncertainty of historical record with any sanguineness of expectation.

Suppose we are told, time will clear up the obscurity of evidence, and posterity judge truly of our merits and demerits. Suppose we are bid to look forward, patiently, to the time when party and prejudice shall be stripped of their influence. There is no such time. The feuds and animosities of party contention are eternal. The vulgar, indeed, cease to interest themselves in a question, when it ceases to be generally discussed. But, of those who curiously inquire into its merits, there is not one in a thousand that escape the contagion. He finds, by unobserved degrees, insinuated into him, all the exclusive attachments, sometimes all the polemical fierceness that ever fell to the lot of contemporaries and actors.

A few years before the commencement of the christian era, Cicero and Caesar entered into a paper war, respecting the real worth of the character of Cato. Is this controversy yet decided? Do there not still exist on the one hand, men who look upon Cato with all the enthusiastic veneration expressed by Cicero, and on the other, men, who, like Caesar, treat him as a hypocritical snarler; and affirm, that he was only indulging his pride and ill humor, when he pretended to be indulging his love of virtue.

Perhaps there never was a man that loved fame so much as Cicero himself. When he found himself ill treated by the asperity of Cato and impatience of Brutus, when assailed with a torrent of abuse by the par-

tizans of Anthony, he also comforted himself that this was a transitory injustice. While he stretched out his neck to the sword of the assassin, he said within himself, in a little time the purity of my motives will be universally understood. Do we not hear, at this hour, the character of this illustrious ornament of the human race, defamed by every upstart school-boy? When is there a day that passes over our heads (when his name is mentioned,) without a repetition of the tale of his vain gloriousness, his cowardice, the imbecility of his temper, and the hollowness of his patriotism?

There is another curious controversy strikingly illustrative of the present subject. What sort of men were the ancient Romans? It was not to be wondered at, that, amidst the dregs of monarchical government, great pains should be taken to dishonour them, and to bring them down to the miserable level of men of modern times. One would have thought that no man could have perused the history of Rome, and the history of England, without seeing that in the one was presented the substance of men, and in the other the shadow. But no, the received maxim now is, men in all ages are the same. And there are many, even among the professed republicans of our own country, that join the cry, and affirm that the supposed elevation of the Roman character is mere delusion. This is so extensively the case, that a man diffident in his opinions, and sceptical in his inquiries, dares scarcely pronounce how the controversy may terminate, if indeed it shall have any termination. This uncertainty, it is illiberal and unjust to impute to the mere perverseness of the human mind. It is owing, however paradoxical that may seem, to the want of facts. De-

cisive evidence could not fail to produce a decisive effect. We should have lived first with the ancient Romans, and then with the men of the present day, to be able to institute a demonstrative comparison between them. This want of facts is a misfortune much more general than is ordinarily imagined. A man may live for years next door to a person of the most generous and admirable temper, and may, by the force of prejudice, transform him into a monster. A given portion of familiar intercourse would render this mistake impossible. The evil, however, does not stop here. It has been found, for example, that two persons of opposite sexes may be lovers for half their lives; and afterwards, a month of unrestrained domestic and matrimonial intercourse, shall bring qualities to light in each, that neither previously suspected. No one man ever completely understood the character of any other man. Our most familiar friends exaggerate, perhaps, some virtues in us. But there are others which we know we possess, to which they are totally blind. For this reason, it should be laid down as a maxim, never to take the report of a man's zealous and undoubted advocate, against him. Let every thing be examined, as far as circumstances will possibly admit, before it is assumed for true. All these considerations, however, tend to check the ardour of such a man as Mr. Macon, for fame, which is built upon so uncertain a tenure.

There is another circumstance of considerable moment in this subject, and that is the fickleness of reputation and popularity. We hear one man praise another today; what security does that afford for his opinion a twelve-month hence? Often the changes are sudden

and abrupt; and he has scarcely put a period to the exuberance of his eulogium, before he passes to the bitterness of invective. Consistency is one of the virtues most applauded in society, and as to his reputation for which every man is most anxious, yet no quality is more rare; nor ought it to be frequent. There is scarcely any proposition, as to which a man of an active and reflective mind, may not recollect to have changed his sentiments at least once in his life. But though inconsistency is no serious imputation, levity undoubtly is. If we are right in changing our opinion, at least we were wrong in the hasty manner in which we formally adopted it. Particularly in the case of reputation, no man can, without pain, realize as to himself, the facility with which partialities are discarded, friendships dissolved; and the man who was your warmest advocate, subsides into indifference or worse.

Before we take our leave of this subject, it may be amusing, perhaps instructive, to some, to add a few more instances to those already cited, of the doubtfulness and obscurity of historical fame. There is scarcely any controversy that has been agitated within the last half century, which has been distinguished by more fierceness of assertion, than that respecting Mary, Queen of Scots, and the English Elizabeth. If we ask the two first inquisitive persons we meet, (who appears to be acquainted with this subject,) what has became of this controversy? they will each of them tell us that the question is completely decided; but one will affirm that the issue is in favour of Mary, and the other of Elizabeth. How shall we determine between their opposite assertions? A few incidental points have been cleared up, but the main

question is where it was. Was Mary accessory to the murder of her husband? After his death, is she to be regarded as a chaste and noble-minded woman in the hands of an audacious free-booter, (Bothwel,) or must she be considered as an abandoned slave to the grossest passions, and classed with the Missalinas and Julias? Was Elizabeth incited to consent to her death, from low motives of rivalship, and jealousy, or because she conceived the public safety would allow no longer delay? (Was her reluctance to consent, real, or only a well concerted fiction?) Was she a party to the execrable intrigue of which Davidson was a tool; and were her subsequent indignation and grief merely a scene that she played, to impose upon the understandings of mankind? All these are questions that never can be determined by posterity. While some are influenced in their judgment by the talents of Elizabeth, by the prosperity and happiness of her reign, and by certain instances of the moderation and rectitude of her domestic counsels, others find themselves unable to devise terms of abhorrence and infamy to express their aversion against her. Such a thing is fame! There are even some, ridiculous as it may appear, that are bribed by Mary's personal charms, which more than two centuries ago were consigned to putrefaction and dust; and would feel it an imputation on their gallantry if they could side with a woman so little attractive as Elizabeth, against the most accomplished beauty of her age.

The character of Charles the first is in like manner a subject of eternal contention; and he is treated as a model of intellectual grace and integrity; or, as frigid,

austere and perfidious, according as his judges shall happen to be tories or whigs, monarchical or republican.

Henry lord Bolingbroke was one of the greatest ornaments of the beginning of the century before the last. He has been admired as a statesman, an orator, a man of letters and a philosopher. Pope the poet, in the eagerness of his reverence and devotion, foresaw the time when his merits would be universally acknowledged, and assured the world that the "sons" of his personal adversaries would "blush" for the malignity and injustice of "their fathers." But Pope, though a poet, was no prophet. We every day hear Bolingbroke spoken of by one man or another, with as much contempt as could have been expressed by the most rancorous of his political rivals. Doctor Johnson is a memorable instance in support of our position. Never have so many volumes been filled with the anecdotes of any individual. If the character of any man be decided by a record of facts, certainly his ought to be decided. But the case is otherwise. Each man has an opinion of his own respecting it; but if the subject be started in conversation, it would be totally impossible to predict whether the favourers or the enemies would prove the greater number, were it not that the mass of mankind are generally ready to combine against excellence, because we cannot adequately understand that of which we have no experience in ourselves. Nor will it be any presumption to foretel, that unless the improvement of the human species shall prove rapid beyond all former example, the same dispute about the character of Johnson will remain a century hence; and posterity will be still unborn that are to pass an unanimous verdict upon his merits.

Mr. Macon was too great a historian not to have been acquainted with all these examples; and whenever his mind led him to reflect upon this subject, not to have known that the distribution of personal reputation was determined by principles, nine times in ten, altogether capricious and absurd. And those who undertook to be the benefactors of mankind from views of this sort, were too often made in the close of their career to devour all the bitterness of disappointment, and are ready to exclaim, as Brutus is represented to have done, "Oh virtue, I followed thee as a substantial good, but I find thee to be no more than a delusive shadow." He knew also that it was common, however, for persons overwhelmed with this sort of disappointment, to console themselves with an appeal to posterity; and to observe that future generations when the venom of party is subdued, when their friendship and animosities are forgotten, when misrepresentations shall no longer disfigure their actions, will not fail to do them justice. To posterity he applied what Montaigne has remarked of antiquity, "It is an object of a peculiar sort; distance magnifies it." And if we are to judge from experience, it does not appear that that posterity upon which the great men of former ages rested their hopes, have displayed all that virtue, that inflexible soundness of judgment and marvellous perspicuity of discernment, which were prognosticated of them, before they came into existence.

He was too well acquainted with the tangled skein of human affairs and sentiments, both ancient and modern, not to have known that he who would gain, in any valuable sense, the suffrage of the world, must shew himself in a certain degree, superior to this suffrage. He knew

that the world was imbued with a secret persuasion that its opinions is too little discerning to be worth the courting, and that an habitual regard to this opinion, is a motive that degrades the men that submit to it, to have suffered his conduct to have been influenced in any essential particular, by a consideration of it. His erect and dignified virtue, therefore, led him to consider chiefly the intrinsic and direct nature of all his actions, and to pay a very subordinate attention to the accidents that might attend them. His elevated temper induced him to act from his own reflections, and not from the judgment of others. He knew that he that suffered himself to be governed by public opinion, substituted the unsteadiness of the weathercock, instead of the firmness of wisdom and justice.

CHAPTER XX.

HAVING gotten through Mr. Macon's public life, we will now turn the attention of the reader to his domestic habits, or rather the life which a man leads at home, from which we can generally form a better idea of his real character, than when he appears abroad at levees, courts, and other public places; where it is no more expected he should show his real character, than it is the contents of his purse.

We have before stated, Mr. Macon was particularly attached to agricultural pursuits. He was always an early riser at home; and if company did not prevent, would generally attend to seeing all his stock fed, and his people at their respective employments for the day, before he eat his breakfast. He supervised the business of his plantation himself, when at home, until age and infirmity disqualified him. He carried on every thing by system; and his main object appeared to be to live by rule, altogether. He said there was a rule for every thing, and the great object of life was to find out what these rules were, and when discovered never to depart from them. One of his rules were that nothing on his plantation was to suffer for any thing to eat—his sympathy for an hungry dog and an hungry horse being the same; for it was not on account of the value of a thing that it should be well or indifferently treated; every thing

was valuable after its kind. Hence he appeared more anxious to live plentifully than to accumulate property.

He was very remarkable for his exercise of body; believing our complexly organized bodies, with all their senses and limbs, have been bestowed on us for use; for exercise. Without this, our fluids stagnate; our organs become languid; and the body, a living corpse, dies long before its decease; it perishes by a slow, miserable, unnatural death. If nature, therefore, would secure us the first indispensable foundation of happines, health, she must bestow on us exercise, toil, and labour, and rather compel man thereby to a state of well-being, than leave him to dispense with it. Hence, as the Greeks say, the gods sold every thing to mortals as the price of labor, not out of envy, but from kindness; for the greatest enjoyment of existence, the sensation of active, striving powers, lies in this very struggle, in this striving after the comforts of ease. Human nature languishes only in those climates, or conditions, in which enervating idleness, in which voluptuous indolence entombs the body alive, and renders it a pallid carcase, or a burden to itself; whilst in other countries, in other modes of life, even in the most severe, the most energetic growth, the healthiest and most beautiful symmetry of the limbs, prevail. Nations, to whom we are inclined to think nature has played the step-mother, are, perhaps, her most favoured children; for if she has prepared them no idle feast of pleasing poisons, she has presented to them from the hard hand of labor the cup of health, and an internal invigorating vital warmth. Children of the rosy morn, they bloom to the last; a frequently careless serenity, an internal sensation of well-being, is to them

happiness, is to them the end and enjoyment of life; could any other, could happiness more sweet and durable be conferred upon them?

Hence, the truths of which every heart must feel, a few lines may be drawn, which determine at least many doubts and mistakes concerning the destination of the human species. How, for instance, can it be, that man, as we know him here, should have been formed for an infinite improvement of his mental faculties, a progressive extension of his perceptions and actions? Nay, that he should have been made for the state, as the end of his species, and all preceding generations, properly, for the last alone, which is to be enthroned on the ruined scaffolding of the happiness of the rest? The sight of our fellow-creatures, nay even the experience of every individual life, contradicts this plan attributed to creative providence. Neither our head nor our heart is formed for an infinitely increasing store of thoughts and feelings; our hand is not made, our life is not calculated for it. Do not our finest mental powers decay, as well as flourish? Do they not even fluctuate with years and circumstances, and relieve one another in friendly contest, or rather in a circular dance? And who has not found that an unlimited extension of his feelings enfeebles, and annihilates them, while it gives to the air in loose flocks what should have formed the cord of love, or clouds the eyes of others with its ashes? As it is impossible that we can love others more than ourselves, or in a different way; for we love them only as part of ourselves, or rather ourselves in them; that mind is happy which, like a superior spirit, embraces much

with the sphere of its activity, and in restless activity deems it a part of itself; but miserable is that, the feelings of which, drowned in words and thoughts, are useful neither to itself nor others. The savage, who loves himself, his wife and child with quiet joy, and glows with limited activity for his tribe, as for his own life, is a more real being than that cultivated shadow, who is enraptured with the love of the shades of his whole species, that is of a name. The savage has room in his poor hut for every stranger, whom he receives as his brother, with calm benevolence, and asks not once, whence he comes; whilst the deluged heart of the idle cosmopolite is a hut for no one. See we not, then, that nature has done all she could, not to diffuse, but to circumscribe us, and accustom us to the sphere of our lives? Our senses and our powers have their measure. The hours of our days and lives take hands only in rotation, while those that come relieve those that depart. It is a trick of the fancy, when the old man still dreams that he is a youth. Is that concupiscence of the mind, which, forerunning even desire, is momentarily changing to disgust, the pleasure of paradise? Is it not rather the hell of Tantulus, the bottomless buckets of the vainly labouring Daniads? The sole art below of man, is moderation. Joy, the child of Heaven, for who he pants, is around him, is in him; the daughter of temperance and calm enjoyment, the sister of content and satisfaction, with his being in life and death.

No where upon earth does the rose of happiness blossom, without thorns. Yet every where the happiness of life consists not in a tumultuous crowd of thought and

feeling, but in their relation to the actual internal enjoyment of our existence, and what we reckon as part of our existence. We should not think, therefore, that a premature disproportionate refinement or cultivation is happiness; that the dead nomenclature of all the sciences, the holiday use of all the arts, can secure to a living being the science of life. The feeling of happiness is not acquired from words learned by rote, or a knowledge of the arts. A head stuffed with knowledge, even of golden knowledge, oppresses the body, straitens the breast, dims the eye, and is a morbid burden to the life of him who bears it. The more we divide our mental powers by refinement, the more the inactive powers decay; stretched on the scaffold of art, our limbs and faculties wither while displayed, with ostentation. The blessing of health arises only from the use of the whole mind, and of its active powers in particular. Experience teaches us, that every refinement does not promote happiness; as many instruments become unfit for use, by their very delicacy. Contemplation, for instance, can form the pleasure only of a few idle men; and to them, like opinion to the asiatics, it is frequently an enervating, consuming, stupifying, visionary pleasure. The waking, healthy use of the senses, an understanding employed about the real concerns of life, vigilant attention, accompanied with active recollection, quick determination, and happy effect, alone constitute what we call presence of mind, real mental vigour, which repays itself with the consciousness of a present active power, with happiness and joy.

It was this healthy use of the senses and employment of the understanding about the real concerns of life,

which constituted Mr. Macon, whilst at home, one of the happiest of mortals. Seeking to acquire and maintain health of body, and soundness of mind, the happiness of his house, and his heart, by his own industry and attention to his business, there was but few intervals for the intrusions of those wild vagaries and useless speculations, which so frequently disturb the repose of the indolent and contemplative.

CHAPTER XXI.

It is an erroneous system of morality which would teach us, that "we judge not, lest we should be judged, and that we speak evil of no man." Falsehood is vice, whether it be uttered to a man's commendation or censure; and to suppress that which is true, is to be regarded as a species of falsehood. We ought not to desire for ourselves not to be judged, but that we may not be judged unjustly; and the like equal measure we ought to deal to others. We feel no exultation in that man's appplause who is not endowed with a republican boldness to censure. Frankness is, perhaps, the first of virtues; or, at least, is that, without which, virtue of a manly and liberal dimension, cannot exist. To give our thoughts their genuine and appropriate language, is one of the most wholesome exercises in which we can be engaged. Without this exercise, it is scarcely possible that we should learn to think with precision and correctness. It teaches us to review our thoughts; to blush for their obsurdity, their groundless singularities, and their exaggeration. It ripens, what at first was merely opinion, into system and science. The fault for the most part, when we speak of the merits of our neighbor, is not that we say what we think, but for want of practice and skill, we do not say what we think; we do not suit our words to the measure of our sentiments; we do not call

our minds into operation to compare our opinions with the grounds of our opinions, and our phrases with both. We communicate to our hearers sentiments that we do not entertain. We debauch even our own judgments, while we speak; and instead of analysing, arranging and fashioning our conclusions as we ought, become impassioned by listening to the sound of our own voice, subject our matter to our words, and not the words to the matter, and talk ourselves into extravagances, which we did not think of in the outset, but which we have not afterwards the courage and candor to retract either to others or to ourselves. Mr. Macon's philosophical mind guarded him against all such absurdities. He conceived his duty obliged him to a certain conduct respecting his admonitions and advice towards his neighbors; and reproached himself as being guilty of an omission on this point, if he failed to employ every means in his power for the amendment of their errors; and would have recourse for that purpose, as often as occasion would justify, to the most unreserved animadversion upon their propensities and conduct. He believed that a man was bound to form the best judgment he was able, respecting every circumstance that fell under his observation. What he thought, he was bound to declare to others, if the occasion required it; and if to others, certainly not less to the parties concerned. The worst consequences, through every rank and department of life, have arisen from men's supposing their functions, in any case, to be so sacred, that every one, except the actual principal, was bound to be wholly blind and dumb in relation to them. Mr. Macon's advice was always administered with simplicity, disinterestedness, kindness and moderation. He

would advise moderately, without pertinaciousness, but he would not dictate. He would censure freely without reserve, but recommend to the person censured, to act by his own deliberations, and not his. In short he emphatically exercised a republican boldness in judging, but he would not be peremptory and imperious in prescribing. He advised that all men should consult their own reason, draw their own conclusions, and conscientiously conform themselves to their own ideas of propriety; without this, they could be neither active nor considerate, nor resolute, nor generous.

The duty which leads us to seek the reformation of our friend or neighbor, whenever we perceive an imperfection that requires to be removed, is the highest duty of friendship, because it is a duty that has for its object the highest good which it is in our power to confer; and he who refrains from the necessary endeavor, because he fears to give pain to one whom he loves, is guilty of the same weakness which, in a case of bodily accident or disease, would withhold the salutary potion, because it is nauseous; or the surgical operation which is to preserve life, and preserve it with comfort, because the use of the instrument, which is to be attended with relief and happiness, implies a little momentary addition of suffering. To abstain, therefore, from every effort of this sort, on account of a mere fear of offending, is from the selfishness of the motive, a still greater breach of duty, and almost, too, a still greater weakness. He, whom we truly offend, by such admonitions as friendship dictates; admonitions of which the chief authority is sought in the very excellence of him whom we wish to make still more excellent, is not worthy of the friendship which we have

wasted on him; and if we thus lose his friendship, we are delivered from one who could not be sincere in his past professions of regard, and whose treachery, therefore, we might afterwards have had reason to lament. If he be worthy of us, he will not love us less, but love us more; he will feel that we have done that which it was our duty to do; and we shall have the double gratification of witnessing the amendment which we desired, and of knowing that we have contributed to an effect, which was almost like the removal of a vice, from ourselves, or a virtue added to our own character.

Mr. Macon's manner, in administering advice to his neighbor or friend, was not that, if a man conducted himself in a manner he disapproved, instantly to express his contempt towards him, personally, and in the most unquallified terms. For then the question might be asked, said he, who made us a judge over him? From what source did we derive our patent of infallibility? Toleration, and freedom of opinion, said he, is scarcely worth accepting, if, when our neighbour differs from us, we do not indeed burn him, but we take every occasion to insult him. There could be no freedom of opinion, if every one conducted himself thus. Toleration in its full import, requires, not only that there shall be no laws to restrain opinion, but that forbearance and liberality shall be moulded in the manners of the community. Correcting our neighbour or friend as often as we see them going astray, Mr. Macon believed to be one of our chief duties in life; and every effort which it is in our power to use for this emendation, he employed sedulously, anxiously, urgently, but with all the tenderness which such efforts admit. Therefore, if we perceive

our neighbour mistaking in some important question, we may pity him; a madman only would be filled with the bitterness of personal resentment. To reclaim him, it must be done with kindness and love, without having recourse to measures of insolence and contumely. Loud censure, and the "slow moving finger of scorn," drive many men to despair, who might have been amended, perhaps rendered the ornaments of their species. Why is admonition so frequently unpalatable? Not so much, because few people know how to take advice, as because still fewer know how to give it. The monitor usually assumes the tone of a master. At this usurpation, human independence reasonably spurns. The countenance composed to unusual gravity, and a peculiar solemnity of voice fitted to the occasion, cannot fail to alarm and revolt every man of an ingenious temper. Why this parade, this triumphal entry, as if into a conquered province? Why treat a moral or practical truth, in a way so different from truths of any other kind? There is a difference of opinion between us and the person whose conduct we apprehend to be imprudent or erroneous. Why not discuss this difference upon equal terms? Why not suppose that we may be ignorant of a part of the question? Why not, as is reasonable, offer what occurs to us, rather as a hint for inquiry, than as a decision emanating from an oracle of truth! Why not trust rather to the reason of the case, than to the arts or the passion with which we may enforce it.

Many inconveniences arise from the prevailing practice of insincerity in speaking of a man's character, when he is absent and present, in the same terms. Yet every man seems to have a just right to know what his neigh-

bours think, or to use a more appropriate phrase, how they feel respecting him. The knowledge of this opinion is of high importance, both for correction and confidence. Ignorance in this respect, corrupts the very vitals of human intercourse. Mr. Macon, as all wise men should do, would speak of the qualities of his neighbour as he found them; "nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice." He would not, even in his neighbour's absence, indulge in sarcastic remarks at his expense; he would not exaggerate his errors; he would not speak of them with anger and invective. His neighbours all knowing this to be his character, would bear to be told of their errors by him, in plain terms, without softening or circumlocution. So that the language he used, when he spoke to them, if present; or of them, if absent, was reduced to one common standard.

CHAPTER XXII.

We have mentioned, elsewhere, the courtship and marriage of Mr. Macon with Miss Plummer. The duties involved in conjugal obligations, the complication of which it is less easy for the ethical inquirer to state and define, than for the heart which feels affection, to exercise them all with instant readiness, we have mentioned also were faithfully discharged by him, during the lifetime of his consort. He who loves sincerely the object of any one of those relations, which bind us together in amity, and who is wise enough to discern the difference of conferring a momentary gratification, which may produce more misery than happiness, and of conferring that which is not merely present happiness, but a source of future enjoyment, needs no rule of duty, as far at least as relates to that single individual, for the direction of a conduct of which love itself, unaided by any other guidance, will be a quick and vigilant director.

The relation between man and wife, was a subject upon which Mr. Macon frequently conversed freely and unreservedly. He believed that the husband should always have, as his great object and rule of conduct, the happiness of his wife. Of that happiness, the confidence in *his* affection is the chief element; and the proofs of this affection on his part, therefore, constitute his chief duty,—an affection that is not lavish of caresses only, as

if these were the only demonstrations of love, but of that respect which distinguishes love as a principle, from that brief passion which assumes, and only assumes the name,—a respect which consults the judgment, as well as the wishes of the object beloved,—who considers *her*, who is worthy of being taken to the heart, as worthy of being admitted to all the counsels of the heart. Therefore, if there be any delights, of which the husband feels the value as essential to his own happiness; for instance, if he considers the improvement of his own understanding, and the cultivation of his own taste, as a duty, and one of the most delightful duties of an intellectual being, he will not consider it as a duty or a delight that belong only to man, but will feel it more delightful, as there is now another soul that may share with him all the pleasure of the progress. In the general circumstances of conjugal life, there should be absolute equality, because where love should be equal, there should be that equal desire of conferring happiness, which is implied in equality of love; and he, who, from the mere wish of gratifying his feeling of superiority, can wilfully thwart a wish of her, whose wishes, where they do not lead to any moral or prudential impropriety, should be to him like his own, or even dearer than his own, if they did not truly become his wishes, when known to be hers, would deserve no slight punishment, as the violator of one of the principal obligations of an husband.

Mr. Macon has been frequently heard to observe, that the great evil in matrimonial life, is the cessation of those cares, which were regarded as necessary for obtaining love, but which are unfortunately conceived to be less necessary, when love is once obtained. There can be

nothing truer than this remark. The carelessness of a husband are not less severely felt, however, because they are the neglects of one whose attentions are more valuable, as he who offers them is more valued; and frequent inattentions, by producing frequent displeasure, may at last, though they do not destroy love, wholly, destroy the best happiness of love. No advice can be more salutary for happiness, than that which recommends an equal attention to please, and an anxiety not to offend, after twenty years of wedlock, as when it was the object of the lover to awake the passion, on which he conceived every enjoyment of his life to depend. For it is said as much can be gained in preserving a heart, as in conquering one.

The cessation of these cares would be, of itself, no slight evil, even though love had originally been less profuse of them than it usually is, in the extravagance of an unreflecting passion. She who has been worshipped as a goddess, must feel doubly the insult of the neglect, which afterwards disdains to bestow on her the common honour that is paid to woman; and with the ordinary passions of a human being, it will be difficult for her to retain, I will not say love, for that is abandoned,—but the decorous and dignified semblance of love, for him who has cared little for the reality of it. It is not easy to say by how insensible a transition, in many cases, this conjugal resentment, or forced indifference, passes into conjugal infidelity; though it is easy in such a case, to determine to whom the greater portion of the guilt is to be ascribed.

There are duties of marriage, it is said, which begin before the marriage itself, in the provision that is made

for matrimonial virtue and happiness; and he who neglects the means of virtuous love, in a state of which, virtuous love is to be the principal charm, is far more inconsiderate, and far more guilty, than the heedless producer of misery, who forms a matrimonial connexion, without the prospect of any means of subsistence, for one who is to exist with him, only to suffer with him in indigence, and for the little sufferers who are afterwards to make indigence still more painfully felt.

If, however, it be necessary for man to be careful to whom he engages himself by a vow so solemn, it is surely not less necessary for the gentler tenderness of woman. She, too, has duties to fulfil, that depend on love, or at least that can be sweetened only by love, and when she engages to perform them where love is not felt, she is little aware of the precariousness of such a pledge, and of the perils to which she is exposing herself. It is truly painful, then, to see, in the intercourse of the world, how seldom affection is considered as a necessary matrimonial preliminary—at least, in one of the parties, and in the one to whom it is *more* necessary; and how much quicker the judgment of fathers, mothers, friends, is to estimate the wealth or the worldly dignity, than the wisdom or the virtue, which they present as a fit offering to her, whom wealth and worldly dignity may render only weaker and more miserable, but whom wisdom might counsel, and virtue cherish. It is painful to see one who has in other respects, perhaps, many moral excellences, consent as an accomplice in this fraud, to forego the moral delicacy which condemns the apparent sale of affection, that is not to be sold,—rejoice in the splendid sacrifice which is thus made for her peace,—consign her *person* to one whom she despises, with the

same indifference as she consigns her *hand;* a prostitute for gold, not less truly, because the prostitution is to be for life; and not less criminally a prostitute, because to the guilt of a mockery of tenderness, that wishes to deceive man, and the still greater guilt of a perjury, that in vows which the heart belies, would wish to deceive God, on whom it calls to sanction the deceit.

When marriages are thus formed, it is not for the sufferer to complain, if she find that she has acquired a few more trappings of wealth, but not a husband. She has her house, her carriage, and the living machines, that are paid to wait around her and obey her; she takes rank in public spectacles, and presides in her own mansion, in spectacles as magnificent; she has obtained all she wished to obtain. And the affection and happiness, which she scorned, she must leave to those who sought them.

"There is a place on the earth," it is said by St. Lambert, "where pure joys are unknown—from which politeness is banished, and has given place, to selfishness, contradiction, and half-veiled insults. Remorse and inquietude, like furies, that are never weary of assailing, torment the inhabitants. This place is the house of a wedded pair, who have no mutual love, nor even esteem! And to conclude this chapter, if there was a place upon earth, to which vice had no entrance,—where the gloomy passions had no empire,—where pleasure and innocence lived constantly together,—where cares and labours were delightful,—where every pain was forgotten in reciprocal tenderness,—where there was an equal enjoyment of the past, the present and the future, it was in the house of Mr. Macon, during the life-time of his wife.

CHAPTER XXIII.

After the death of his wife, the raising and education of his two little daughters, of which we have also spoken, appeared to engross Mr. Macon's principal attention and care. The duties of the parent, in all their relations to the beings to whom he has given existence, and the nature of the primary obligation, of which the children are the objects as soon as they begin to breathe, and which death only can dissolve, was fully considered by him. The duty of exercising with kindness the parental power; of imposing no restraint which has not for its object some good, greater than the temporary evil of the restraint himself; of making the necessary obedience of the children in this way, not so much a duty as a delight,—and of thus preparing them, in other years, the grateful and tender friends of a parent whose authority, even in its most rigid exactions, they have felt only as the watchful tenderness of a friendship, that was rigid in withholding only what it would have been dangerous to grant, was also well understood and practised by him. Mr. Macon, in the discharge of these parental duties, was not the father who had no voice but that of stern command, the tyrant to all the extent of his power, who excited only such feelings as tyrants excite; a ready obedience, perhaps, but an obedience that is the trimbling part of a slave; not the still quicker fondness of an

ever ready love; and that will be withheld in the very instant in which the terror has lost its dominion. He knew that it was impossible to have, in a single individual, both a slave and a dutiful child; and he who chooses rather to have a slave must not expect that filial fondness, which is no part of the moral nature of a bondman. He knew that such a one in thinking he increases his authority, he truly diminishes it; for more than half the authority of the parent is in the love which he excites; in that zeal to obey, which is scarcely felt as obedience, when a wish is expressed, and in that ready imitation of the virtues that are loved, which does not require even the expression of a wish, but without a command, becomes all which a virtuous parent could have commanded. With these views of the duties of a parent, Mr. Macon entered upon the rearing and educating of his two daughters, after the loss of their mother. And it can scarcely be doubted but what they received that kind of nurture and education which was best suited to their condition in life, and the society in which they were to move when they arrived to years of maturity.

That such an education is to be given in every case, as is suitable to the pecuniary circumstances of the parents, and to the rank which the child may be expected afterwards to fill, there is probably no one who would deny,—however much individuals may differ as to the meaning of the term education. In the lowest ranks of life; at least in far the greater part even of the civilised world, it means nothing more than the training of the hands to a certain species of motion, which forms one of the sub-divisions of mechanical industry. In the higher ranks, it implies, in like manner, a certain train-

ing of the limbs to series of motions, which are, however, not motions of mere utility, like those of the artisan, but of grace,—and in addition to those bodily movements, a training of the mind to a due command of certain graceful forms of expression—to which, in a few happier cases, is added the knowledge, more or less extensive and accurate, of the *most striking truths* of science. When all this is performed, education is thought to be complete. To express this completion, by the strongest possible word, the individual is said to be *accomplished;* and if graceful motions of the limbs, and motions of the tongue, in well-turned phrases of courteous elegance,—and a knowledge of some of the brilliant expressions of poets, and wits, and orators of different countries,—of a certain number of the qualities of the masses or atoms which surround him, were sufficient to render man what God intended him to be, the parent who had taken every necessary care for adorning his child with the bodily and mental graces, might truly exult in the consciousness, that he had done his part to the generation which was to succeed by *accomplishing*, at least one individual, for the noble *duties* which he had to perform in it. But if the *duties* which man has to perform, whatever ornament they may receive from the corporeal and intellectual graces that may flow around them, imply the operation of principles of action of a different kind—if it is in the heart that we are to seek the source of the feelings, which are our noblest distinction,—*with which*, we are what even God may almost approve, and *without* which we are worthy of the condemnation even of beings frail and guilty as ourselves; and if the heart require to be protected from vice, with

far more care than the understanding itself, fallible as it is, to be protected from error,—can he, indeed, lay claim to the praise of having discharged the parental office of *education*, who has left the heart to its own passions, while he has contented himself with furnishing to those passions, the means of being *more extensively baneful* to the world, than with less accomplished selfishness, they could have been.

How many parents do we see, who, after teaching their children, by example, every thing which is licentious in manners, and lavishing on them the means of similar licentiousness, are rigid only in one point,—in the strictness of that intellectual discipline, which may prepare them for the worldly stations, to which the parental ambition has been unceasingly looking for them, before the filial ambition was rendered sufficiently intent of itself! How many who allow to the vices of the day, full liberty, if the lesson of the day be duly meditated; and who are content that those whose education they direct, should be knaves and sensualists, if they only be fitted, by intellectual culture, to be the leaders of other knaves, and the acquirers of wealth, that may render sensuality more delicately luxurious! To such persons, the mind of the little creature, whom they are training to worldly stations, for worldly purposes, is an object of interest only as that without which it would be impossible to arrive at the dignities expected. It is a necessary instrument for becoming rich and powerful; and if he could become powerful and rich, and envied without a soul,—exhibit the same spectacle of magnificent luxury, and be capable of adding to the means of present pomp, what might furnish out a luxury still more

magnificent,—they would scarcely feel that he was a being less noble than now. In what they term education, they have never once thought, that the *virtues* were to be included as objects; and they would truly feel something very like astonishment, if they were told, that the first and most essential part of the process of educating the moral being, whom heaven had consigned to their charge, was yet to be begun, in the abandonment of their own vices, and the purification of their own hearts, by better feeling than those which had corrupted it,—without which primary self-amendment, the very authority that is implied in the noble office which they were to exercise, might be a source, not of good, but of evil, to him who was *unfortunately* born to be its subject.

Happy were the daughters of Nathaniel Macon, that they had a parent so different in quality and understanding from the pictures here drawn! Happy were they, that they were taught by this parent, at an early period of their lives, not only by education, but by example also; the value of truth, and the importance of sincerity, "all the qualities of the heart, as well as the qualities of the head."—So that when they became grown, those who visited Mr. Macon's, found two interesting, sensible, unassuming young ladies, well qualified to converse upon any subject becoming their sex—modest, though not ashamed, proud, but not arrogant—full of life, without levity,—sufficiently talkative, without loquacity. And, in short, who had been brought up and educated in such a plain republican manner, that rendered them conscious that they had no superior, whilst at the same time claiming no superiority

over others. Thus *accomplished*, (if this word is not derogatory to their character,) to make any gentleman suitable companions for life, it is no wonder that they were sought after as uncommon acquisitions, by many of the young gentlemen of the surrounding country, almost at the very birth of their maturity. The eldest marrying Mr. William Martin of Granville, the younger Mr. William Eaton of Warren, both gentlemen of unexceptionable characters and family; the former of moderate fortune, the latter very wealthy. Upon the marriage of Mr. Macon's eldest daughter with Mr. Martin—it is said, in order to do exact justice to both of his daughters and himself likewise, he divided his estate into three equal parcels or shares, alloting to each daughter their respective shares, telling them at the same time, he felt then as if he had done equal justice towards them and himself, and that the share or parcel which he held, he should consider as his own, to dispose of as he might hereafter think proper.

This singular act of justice of Mr. Macon's, is certainly deserving of imitation by all parents. The wants of the children are obviously equal in all; and if the merits of all be equal, the affection of the parent should be the same, and his duty equal to all, who, with equal wants and equal merits, are consigned to his equal love. It is vain, now, to look for a justification of breaches of this equal duty, to periods of violence, in which it was necessary for the happiness of all, that inequality of distribution should take place, that there might be one sufficiently powerful, to protect the scantier pittance of the many. The father of many virtuous children, may

safely be to all, what he is to one; and if he lay aside this equal character, and, sheltering himself in the forced manners of barbarous and tumultuous ages, make *many* poor, that he may make *one* rich, he is guilty of a gross violation of his duties as a parent,—and the more guilty, in exact proportion to the value which he attaches to the possession of the wealth so unequally distributed. Nor is it only to those whom he directly wills to impoverish, that he is guilty of a breach of duty; he is equally guilty of it, in many cases, to the single individual whom he exclusively enriches,—if in estimating what he confers, we consider the virtue and happiness, or vice and misery, that may arise from it, and not the mere wealth, which, in itself, is nothing. The superiority which is thus bestowed on a single individual, is a superiority that may, indeed, like every possession of power, lead to the exercise of corresponding virtues; to the generous mind it may present, as it has often presented, only wider occasions of generosity; yet beautiful as such examples may be, it is not what the general circumstances of our nature authorise us to expect; and the power of being thus generous, when, without that dubious generosity, those who have been made dependent on it, may suffer, what perhaps it was not intended that they should suffer, is a power of too great peril to human virtue, to be rashly imposed upon human weakness. Therefore the duty of affording to the child such a provision of the means of worldly comfort and usefulness, as is suitable to the circumstances of the parent, and of affording this provision to the different members of a family, not in a manner which may seem best

fitted to gratify the personal vanity of the provider, but in the manner that is best fitted to contribute to the happiness of all who, with a relationship that is precisely the same, if their merits and wants be equal, have a moral claim to equal regard, in the distribution that is to provide for those wants.

CHAPTER XXIV.

After the marriage of his two daughters, Mr. Macon continued, as before, in his public services in congress, in the winter and spring,—and on his return, in his attention to his plantation in summer and autumn.

Of his public life, we have sufficiently spoken,—it is of his habits at home, that we are now acquainting the reader. We have stated that he generally attended to his plantation when he was at home himself, until he was disqualified by age,—but he always employed some of his neighbours on whom he could depend, to supply his place when absent. His rule was, on the eve of his departure to Washington, to deliver to the person thus employed, a memorandum of instructions what he was to do, during his absence; and it was always understood between them, that he was to be guided entirely by this bill of instructions, and not to depart from it on any account. A good story is told concerning the rigid fidelity of one of these proxies. He being an old gentleman, a near neighbour of Mr. Macon's, and one who on account of his honesty and strict adherence to truth, had been employed by Mr. Macon for many years, to the supervision of his business in his absence. The story goes, that on a certain occasion, Mr. Macon directed that his flock of sheep should be put in a certain enclosed pasture, and there remain until he returned from congress, the ensu-

ing spring,—it so happened that during this time, Mr. Eaton, who married Mr. Macon's younger daughter, passed by, and discovered that the sheep were dying for the want, as he thought, of better pasturage, and directed the old man to turn them in the woods—the old gentleman replied, he should do no such thing,—that Mr. Macon had directed when he left home, that the sheep should remain in that place, until he returned from Washington, and they should remain there, if every one of them died, before he would disobey his instructions. Never was a man better pleased, it is said, than Mr. Macon, when this story was first told to him, by Mr. Eaton, at a dinner table, on his return home from congress; saying, on this occasion, that he would much rather have lost the whole flock of sheep, than his confidence in the fidelity of his old friend, Lewis Shearin; for that he had tried Lewis, in a variety of instances, for many years, and that he had never known him, in one solitary instance, to betray his trust, to act the least dishonestly, or to be guilty of a falsehood.

This anecdote is here introduced, to show to the reader the great value Mr. Macon always placed upon men of such traits of character, as those ascribed to his old friend Shearin; and no matter in what grade of society he met with them, he always felt it his duty to extend to them the hands of patronage.

Of all the principles of justice, there is none so material to the moral rectitude of mankind as this,—that no man should be distinguished, but by his personal merit. It was Mr. Macon's endeavour, always, to reduce to practice, this simple and sublime lesson. He was always in favour, therefore, when a man had proved himself wor-

thy of notice by certain qualities which he possessed in an eminent degree, or when he had by laudable perseverance cultivated talents, which needed only encouragement to bring them to maturity, to let that man be honoured.

Let us, for a moment, give the reins to reflection, and endeavour accurately to conceive, the state of mankind where such justice as this, should form the public and general principle. In that case, our moral feelings would assume a firm and wholesome tone, for they would not be perpetually counteracted by examples that weakened their energy, and confounded their clearness. Men would be fearless, because they would know that there were no legal snares lying in wait for their lives. They would be courageous, because no man would be pressed to the earth, that another might enjoy immoderate luxury; because every one would be secure of the just reward of his industry, and prize of his exertions. Jealousy and hatred would cease, for they are the offspring of injustice. Every man would speak truth with his neighbour, for there would be no temptation to falsehood and deceit. Mind would find its level, for there would be every thing to encourage and to animate. Science would be unspeakably improved, for understanding would convert into a real power, no longer an *ignis fatuus*, shining and expiring by turns, and leading us into sloughs of sophistry, false science, and specious mistake. All men would be disposed to avow their dispositions and actions: none would endeavour to suppress the just eulogium of his neighbour, for, so long as there were tongues to record, the suppression would be impossible; none fear to detect the misconduct of his neighbour, for

there would be no laws converting the sincere expression of our convictions into a libel. Let us consider, for a moment, what is the amount of injustice included in the institutions of that aristocracy, which have brought about a different order of things in the world, as it now stands. You are born, suppose, a Polish prince, with an income of £300,000 per annum. Another is born a manerial serf or a Creolian negro, attached to the soil, and transferable by barter or otherwise, to twenty successive lords. In vain shall be his most generous and his unwearied industry, to free himself from the intolerable yoke. Doomed by the law of his birth, to wait at the gates of the palace, he must never enter, to sleep under a ruined weather-beaten roof, while his master sleeps under canopies of state, to feed on putrified offals, while the world is ransacked for delicacies for his master's table; to labour without moderation or limit under a parching sun, while his master basks in perpetual sloth, and to be rewarded at last with contempt, reprimand, stripes and mutilation. In fact, the case is worse than this. He could endure all that injustice or caprice could inflict, provided, he possessed in the resource of a firm mind, the power of looking down with pity on his tyrant, and of knowing that he had within, that sacred character of truth, virtue and fortitude, which all the injustice of his tyrant could not reach. But a slave and a serf are condemned to stupidity and vice, as well as to calamity. And let it be recollected, that for this distinction there is not the smallest foundation in the nature of things,—there is no particular mould for the constructions of lords, and that they are born neither better nor worse, than the poorest of their dependents. It is this structure of aris-

tocracy, in all its sanctuaries and fragments, against which such republicans as Mr. Macon have ever declared war. It is alike unjust, whether we consider it in the east of India, villanage of the feudal system, or the despotism of the patricians of ancient Rome, dragging their debtors into personal servitude, to expiate loans they could not repay. Mankind will never be in an eminent degree virtuous and happy, till each man shall possess that portion of distinction, and no more, to which he is entitled, by his personal merits.

Another anecdote concerning Mr. Macon, may not be amiss in this chapter, in order to give the reader an idea of his intercourse with his neighbours. It appears that one of his neighbours had borrowed of Mr. Macon, his cart and oxen,—that of his own accord, he had promised Mr. Macon to return them at a certain specified time,—but that it so happened he failed to do so, until several days after the time specified—when he returned them, nothing was said by Mr. Macon concerning this blunder in his calculation. But on a subsequent occasion, when he had a use for the oxen and cart again, upon application for them, he was told by Mr. Macon, that he could not have them,—that he could have his waggon and horses, if they would answer his purpose; but as to the cart and oxen, he could never borrow them again; for that he had voluntarily told him one falsehood concerning the return of them, and he should never have it in his power to repeat it.

This story has been frequently told by the gentleman himself, who is the subject of it, and who always added, he preferred going to Mr. Macon for a favour, to any man he ever saw; for it was either granted or refused without

any hesitation; and leaving it to the borrower, if granted, to discharge his duty without any troublesome prescriptions.

Mr. Macon's refusal on this second application for the cart and oxen, was evidently to make the impression upon his neighbour, that he considered a man to be morally bound to perform the engagements which he has undertaken to fulfil; whether there be, or be not, in the individual with whom the engagement was made, any power of enforcing the fulfilment. And though in an obligation, where it has been voluntarily made, there are truly no limits, but the physicial power, and the independent morality of that which is undertaken to be performed,—but when that which we have engaged to do, is truly within our power; when it is undertaken voluntarily, and when the performance involves no violation of our moral duty,—it would be a violation of our duty not to perform it,—or though, perhaps, with more verbal exactness, to perform it less fully, than we know to have been understood and intended, in the original spirit of the undertaking.

Mr. Macon seldom let an opportunity pass, without endeavouring to instil into those minds where it was most needed, such lessons as the above; until many years before his death, it could scarcely be said, that there was a neighbourhood in the state, where there was more moral rectitude, than in the one in which he lived.

CHAPTER XXV.

Mr. Macon was remarkably fond of the company of young people, and many who were acquainted with him in the county in which he lived, took a delight in visiting him at least once a year. It was really a spectacle, that was worth a day's ride, to witness the cordiality with which he would receive, and the genuine hospitality with which he would entertain a company of the sons of his relations and friends on these occasions. His manners being so plain and easy, they all felt at home as soon as they entered his door,—nothing he had was too good for them; and being one of the very best providers, he always had every thing that was good. It was not less amusing than interesting, on these occasions also, to witness how easy it was for him to produce a lively conversation among them, by his inquiries concerning their habits and favourite pursuits in life, their partialities and prejudices to particular men and things, amusements at home, &c.; and as soon as he happened to hit upon one who appeared to have more intelligence than his fellows, to enter in conversation with him upon subjects of more import. The writer of these pages was present on one of these occasions, when the subject of conversation, after dinner, between Mr. Macon and one of his young visitors, happened to turn upon a comparison between the moderns and ancients. The young

man was one of extraordinary talents and first led to this conversation by a remark upon the improvement that was daily going on in the world in every thing—in architecture, in the fine arts, in literature, &c.—at the same time comparing the present generation to the ancients, much to the disparagement of the latter, and concluded by ridiculing their ignorance and stupidity in a way well calculated to rouse a man of Mr. Macon's universal benevolence, to espouse their cause. Mr. Macon observed, that it was strange, and he had frequently reflected upon it, what different views young people and old ones took of the same subject. That for his part, he could never discover this monstrous disparagement to the ancients by a just comparison with the moderns, in any thing. For instance, he said, in architecture; let us look at the temple of Solomon,—the ancient cities, Tyre, Ninevah, Babylon. Are there any thing in modern times to be compared to them. Can we find, from the creation of the world to the present day, any thing to be compared to that sacred edifice, said he, which was reared on Mount Moriah, surrounded by spacious courts, making a square of half a mile in circumference—which was entered through nine gates, which on every side was thickly coated with gold and silver; the gate without the holy house being of Corinthian brass, the most precious metal in ancient times, and which far surpassed the others in beauty. This gate, he said, is described to be much larger than the rest, its height being fifty cubits. Josephus, he said, represented the royal portico of this temple as the noblest work beneath the sun, being elevated to such a prodigious height, that no one could look down from its flat roof to the valley below,

without being seized with dizziness; the sight not reaching to such immeasurable depth. Josephus, Mr. Macon said, says that the city of Tyre was built about two hundred and forty years before the temple of Solomon. As commercial cities, some historian says, said Mr. Macon, that ancient Alexandria and London may be considered as approaching the nearest to Tyre. But he went on to shew that neither of them could, by any possible stretch of the imagination, be compared to Tyre in point of commerce. For Alexandria, he said, during the whole of her prosperous days, was subject to foreign rule; and London, great as her commerce and her wealth, and possessing as she does, almost a monopoly, of what has in all ages been the most enviable, and most lucrative branch of trade, that with the east, does not centre in herself as Tyre did, without a rival and without competition, the trade of all nations, and hold an absolute monopoly, not of one but of every branch of commerce. For a long period of a thousand years, not a single production of the east passed to the west, or of the west to the east, but by the merchants of Tyre. Her merchants, it is said, said Mr. Macon, were princes, and that lived in a style of magnificence unknown in any other country. This city too, it is said, said Mr. Macon, possessed scarcely any territory beyond their own walls, maintained a seige of thirteen years against the whole power of Babylon, and another of seven months against Alexander, whose successes had afforded no instance of similar delay. Mr. Macon proceeded likewise to describe, as well as his memory served him, the splendour and magnificence of Ninevah and Babylon—he said that some historians represented Ninevah to be forty-eight miles in

circumference, and its walls to be an hundred feet high, and so broad that three chariots could drive on them abreast; and on the walls were fifteen hundred towers, and each two hundred feet high. Its population, historians say, said Mr. Macon, was more than six score thousand persons that could not discover between their right hand and their left. Reckoning the persons to have been two years old and under, and these were a fifth part of the whole, the population would amount to six hundred thousand. When Mr. Macon came to the description of Babylon, I do not recollect that I ever saw him look half so interesting. Is there any thing, said he, rising from his seat, that can be compared to the magnificence of the city of Babylon, under the reign of Nebuchadnezzer, which at that time rendered it the wonder of the world and posterity. He described its circumference, its shape, the number of its squares. He described the terminating of its streets at each end by gates of brass, of prodigious size and strength,—its walls, their height and breadth,—the materials out of which they were made; the banks of the river which run through the city being lined with the same materials. And in short, almost every thing connected with it, with so much exactness and correctness, that one would have thought he had studied it as a geographical lesson the day previous. He asked the young gentleman if Homer was ever excelled in poetry, Demosthenes, in oratory, Sampson in strength, or Solomon in wisdom. Extending his remarks to a much more considerable length in favour of the ancients, than my recollection at this time will serve me in relating correctly. But from what is here related of this conversation, the reader can judge

how useful and entertaining the conversation of such a man must have been to young men who were disposed to improve by it. Mr. Macon was seldom, if ever, the orator of the company he was in, for he seemed only to consider himself entitled to a share in common of the conversation,—and preferred, generally, to be entertained by others, to entertaining them himself.

CHAPTER XXVI.

In several of the last foregoing chapters, we have been engaged in giving the reader examples of Mr. Macon's domestic qualities, as a neighbour, a friend, a husband and a parent. We could have adduced many more of similar character—but the limits we prescribed for ourselves, prevented such indulgence.

Mr. Macon, after he had last served the public in 1836, in the capacity of elector, seldom ever left his residence, unless to visit his immediate neighbours, which was done generally on the sabbath, and returned home at night. During the week his time was employed, (except when company prevented,) in riding over and examining his plantation; in giving directions and carrying on that economical system of agriculture, to which, from an early period of his life, he had been so remarkable for his attachment. This was nearly the general character of his life, at this period, until about three or four weeks before his death, he was attacked with a spasmodic affection of the chest and stomach; but it was not so severe as to interrupt his usual exercise and employment. About four days before his death, he was partially confined to the house, enjoying, however, with his usual flow of spirits, the society and conversation of his numerous friends, who visited him daily, and watched with anxious solicitude, every symptom which threaten-

ed to snatch from them their dearest and best friend and benefactor. He retained his intellectual faculties to the last; his conversation was cheerful, his mind tranquil and composed, until the scenes of life closed upon him on the 29th of June, 1837, in the 79th year of his age. The morning of his exit, he rose at his usual hour, shaved and changed his clothes, entertained his company as usual, until about ten o'clock, when he was suddenly attacked, (whilst sitting in his chair,) with spasms, in his chest and stomach, and on being assisted to his bed, expired without a struggle. A few days before his death, he inquired of his physicians what were their prospects of giving him assistance, who honestly informed him that his case was beyond the reach of medicine. He immediately asked them for the amount of their bills, observing at the same time, that as he wished to die without leaving his estate incumbered, it was best he should know all the charges against it in his life-time, that he might so provide for them, that his executor might be at as little trouble as possible. He appointed the Hon. Weldon Edwards, of the same county, executor to his will. Precluding his legatees in the codicil from any recourse either in the courts of law or equity, upon any of the acts of his executor in the management or distribution of his estate,—believing, as he stated, from long acquaintance with Mr. Edwards, he possessed both the capacity and honesty to do justice, it was his wish he should not be interfered with in any thing he should think proper to do, as his executor.

He directed, that on the day of his funeral, preparations should be made both for the eating and drinking, for as many of his friends as might think proper to attend.

He selected two of his neighbours to make his coffin, directing how it should be made, in the very plainest manner, and that they should be paid for it before his interment. He had selected his place to be buried, some distance from his residence, in the woods, on the wayside, many years before,—a spot of land, from the poverty of its soil, least likely ever to be cultivated. He directed, after his interment in the usual way, that a parcel of rock should be brought from a certain one of his fields, and piled upon the grave in such a manner as to prevent the molestation of cattle or other intruders. All of which instructions were strictly attended to after his death. On the day of his funeral, which was preached by the reverend Mr. Hudgings of the Baptist order, to whom he had spoken in his life-time for that purpose, there were between twelve and fifteen hundred people collected on the occasion. And after the funeral ceremonies were over, a plenty of every thing was furnished for their accommodation, as was directed. Thus lived and died, and was buried, Nathaniel Macon; and if sociality, friendship and an active participation in the pains and pleasures of others, be the principal end for which we are created, being one of the finest flowers of human life, he must certainly attain that vivifying form, that, overshadowing height, for which all our hearts thirst in vain, in every earthly situation.

The cast of mind which appeared to be most natural to Mr. Macon, made him look forward into futurity, and consider what would be his condition, millions of ages hence, as well as what it was at present. He knew that the misery or happiness which was reserved for him in another world, loses nothing of its reality by being placed

at a great distance from him. Objects did not appear little to him, because they were remote. He considered those pleasures and pains which lay hid in eternity, approached nearer to him every moment, and would be present with him in their full weight and measure, as much as those pains and pleasures which he felt at any one instant of his life. For this reason, he was careful to secure to himself that which was the proper happiness of his nature, and the ultimate design of his being. He carried his thoughts to the end of every action, and considered the most distant, as well as the most immediate effects of it. He superseded every little prospect of gain and advantage, which offered itself here, if he did not find it consistent with his views of an hereafter. In a word, his hopes must have been full of immortality; his schemes were large and glorious, and his conduct suitable to one who knew his own interest, and how to pursue it by proper methods.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Could we draw aside the veil which conceals the motives of action,—were we able to pull off the mask from that numerous order of men who have pretended at least to be the benefactors of their fellow-beings, which hides from our notice, those springs of conduct by which they are actuated, and prevents our inspection of that source from whence their actions originated; we should find that, in the great majority of instances, those who have most *seemed* to be friends of human kind, have in reality most wanted the essential ingredients of friendship, and exhibited the most powerful regard to their own aggrandizement. It is not by those only who have been the most capacitated for improving the condition of the species, but who have been too perversely inclined to attempt such a task, that the evil has been wrought, which has so often desolated the world;—but it has been by those, who, covering the natural deformity of their character by a fair disguise, have proclaimed themselves the friends of virtue and freedom. Such characters assuming to themselves qualities utterly incompatible with their natures, have made those qualities the means of raising them in the opinion of others, and have then employed their elevation to trample upon the victims of their fraud; and claiming kindred and alliance with those illustrious devotees of liberty, with whom thay have not one thing in common,

save the *semblance* of goodness;—have cajoled mankind into the belief that they too were the worshippers of liberty, and have made that belief the instrument of treading under foot, every thing which has been esteemed sacred and venerable.

It is not the less true, because it has been often times remarked, that the characters who have the most benefitted mankind, and improved the condition of the species, have been, not those who have blazoned their names by conquest, and who, to spread abroad the lustre of their achievements, have not scrupled to violate all the duties of humanity, and to burst asunder all those ties which have been imposed upon the race, for the purpose of linking them together in one common brotherhood,—but it has been those, who like Mr. Macon, have exerted all their talents to tame down that nature which so often arise, in order to assert the dominion of vice. Those who forsaking the pursuits of ambition, and the paths of that which is falsely termed glory, have employed their talents towards improving the moral and political condition of their fellow-beings, and towards dispelling those thick clouds of error and prejudice, which so much obstruct their mental vision. Those who were qualified by their abilities to lead their country-men forward in the race of improvement,—in that race, by the means of which, those blessings which are truly valuable are alone to be obtained; in teaching them to elevate themselves above the minor objects, which too much engross the attention of the greater portion of their fellow-men; in showing them that liberty of thought and liberty of conduct, which can alone arise from a consciousness of their importance on the scale of being, are the objects which

are, above all others, worthy of their pursuit; and that setting themselves free from superstitious reverence, and enslaving notions, they should be bent upon the attainment of something above those debasing objects which keep the spirit bound, and the mind *fettered.* Those who, according to the original constitution of their nature, appear as though they were really fated to trample under foot, all those systems which have in any way, tended to keep men chained by the iron bands of despotism, and by the still more enduring fetters of perfidy and fraud, which have been but too often the instruments which tyrants have used to enslave them. And if it be lawful to bend the knee to any thing human, it surely arises in that case, where we see such men attempting to mitigate the evils attendant upon this life, and trying to counteract the baneful and pernicious effects of vice, by the more salutary influence of virtuous example; elevated above that regard to the opinions of the world, which are but too often the source whence spring many of the actions, which are looked upon as honourable and useful, and the means by which they have made wisdom their choice, can abstract themselves from all association with those more grovelling pursuits which characterize the many; and looking abroad upon the face of things, can "follow the even tenor of their way," regardless of every thing which might tend to interrupt their progress, to shut out from their sight the scene of beauty and loveliness, which their fancys may have lighted up, and by seeking an alliance with which they might in any way have their prospects obscured, or their vision darkened. And if mankind would be careful to trace the mental history of such mighty ones of the

earth; if they would but mark the gradual unfolding of the principles, the powers and the passions, of those great master spirits, that give form and pressure to the age in which they live, each generation would be furnished with an amount of moral power, by which, it might elevate itself into a nobler sphere of being, and leave behind it, a long train of glory for the illumination of posterity. That Nathaniel Macon, was one of those, one whose moral and mental history should be regarded as a portion of the common riches of the human race, one of those noble minded existences, from whom the world's happiness and glory are yet to spring, there can be no doubt; and there is more profit in scanning the mind of such a being, in marking the origin, the combination, and the development of its powerful elements, than in contemplating the successes of all the military conquerors, from Alexander to Napoleon. "By the side of such a man, Alexander is degraded to a selfish destroyer of his race; Cæsar becomes the dazzled votary of power; and Bonaparte, a baffled aspirant to universal dominion." Had he lived in old Grecian times, he would have been qualified to have been a Solon, for the Athenians; and a Lycurgus, for the Spartans. He would have taught them, like those great men, that liberty, valour, patriotism, industry, economy, and even frugality, were the greatest virtues of a nation. His life, was the perfection of man's moral nature. He possessed an integrity, which, however tempting, or however secure against detection, no selfishness nor resentment, nor lust of power, place, favour, profit or pleasure, could cause to swerve from the strict rule of right. Integrity was the pervading principle of his soul; it regu-

lated, guided, controlled, and vivified every impulse, desire and action, of his existence.

Then, in looking back upon his past life, it will be found, that there was something more animating to cheer him through the scenes of this life, than are to be obtained from the idle applause of the world;—something more inspiring, than that admiration which may be obtained, by a successful course of enterprise and ambition;—something, in fact, more satisfactory and soothing to the mind, than any thing which can be gathered from the short-lived pleasures, which in this state, so much engage the attention. That he cherished that virtue, which always shrinks from the gaze of vulgar eyes; that he took lessons of wisdom, which are here, only, valuable; that he pushed forward, the career of doing good to his fellow beings, to the end of his days,—inattentive to the giddy and illusive objects, which surrounded him; and with a brighter satisfaction in the contemplation of the misfortunes of this life, than a consciousness of being the mere subject of wonder and admiration, could possibly afford; he carried about with him, a principle which served at all times to soften every perturbation, and alleviate every painful feeling. That he could tame down prejudices,—overcome that spirit of domination and rule, which all are so prone to exert, in questions concerning the rights of conscience; that he could master those feelings in the breast, which so often incline one man to assume the perogative of judging, as if he was infallible in matters which properly can alone interest him, for whom he is desirious of exercising his judgment, may be seen also, from the history of his whole life. And notwithstanding, envy has been cast

as a shade upon the glories of the most illustrious heroes of past ages, and that there has been a thousand exceptions to characters, which have made the nearest approach to perfection,—yet, having best accomplished the end for which he was called into existence, envy herself, in contemplating his character, became disrobed of her malicious nature, and was struck with admiration. So it may be said, in the end of the last chapter of his life, as we have said in the end of the first, that he has lived and died, without an enemy. Go thou, reader, and do likewise.

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