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For the National Intelligencer.

The public will recollect that among the papers left by Dr. Franklin, to his grandson Temple Franklin, was his own life written by himself. At the time of his death it was universally understood in this Country, that this life contained political statements of the most interesting nature. And so impressed was Temple Franklin with their importance that he repaired to England, with the view of publishing them in an advantageous manner, having previously made arrangements for having printed in this Country an edition copied from the English one.

For several years the public curiosity was highly excited, and every man who revered the talents of Franklin was anxious to see his works. At length it was announced, not it is granted from authority, but with strong accompanying evidences of authenticity that Mr. Dilly, an English Bookseller, had purchased the copy right for *five thousand guineas*, and that the publication would be immediately made. Year after year has since elapsed, without either the appearance of the works, or any apology for the delay, until the public curiosity has almost entirely subsided.

But though the public have, for the greater part, lost the interest they felt, yet a number of intelligent citizens have not ceased to recollect with undiminished interest all the circumstances attending this extraordinary transaction. Well knowing that a suppression of Doctor Franklin's works could not flow from a *common cause*, they have diligently endeavoured to investigate its true source. The result of their enquiry is this.—

Temple Franklin actually sold the copy right of Dr. Franklin's works to Mr. Dilly of London. According to the common course of events Mr. Dilly would have immediately published them in order to remunerate himself for the purchase money. Before, however, this publication was made, the British ministry, apprised of the great importance of withholding from the public eye writings which developed the origin, the nature, and the tendency of measures, which presented in an unfavourable view the conduct of the British cabinet during the American war, purchased from Mr. Dilly his right to the work by giving him a larger sum than he had paid Temple Franklin; hoping, by these means, *altogether to suppress the works*.

If this statement be true, it will at once be seen to involve the most interesting considerations; considerations which do not flow merely from a regard to the reputation of Dr. Franklin, from a laudable solicitude to have justice done to the memory of a departed sage; but such as are connected with historical truth, such as disclose the secret and real views of foreign nations, such as might enable the United States to know who are its friends, and who its enemies.

What motive could induce the English government to obtain the suppression of such a work, but its containing a detail of facts injurious to itself? Such an act cannot be traced to a common cause. The extraordinary nature of the means used fully and clearly evinces the high value of the object effected.

When we consider the knowledge of human nature possessed by Dr. Franklin, the elevated rank he held in the scale of society both in England and France, whereby he gained access to the most authentic sources of information, and his bold and inflexible republicanism, can we avoid the inference, that his writings expose a scene of political events calculated to exhibit British measures at war with the principles of honor and truth. When we further consider that the name of Dr. Franklin has been treated with invariable contempt by men in this country high in political consideration, and that no opportunity has passed unimproved of depreciating his moral character, and impairing the value of his public services, can we help pausing to enquire whether there does not exist *some secret causes*, developed probably in the doctor's works, for their unceasing persecution. We possess unequivocal evidence of the fertile resources of the British cabinet in the seduction of public agents from their duty; nor can we implicitly rely, however strong our confidence in American probity, on its superiority *in all instances*, to foreign corruption.

If the ideas I have suggested be considered as incorrect, it will at any rate be allowed that the subject is highly interesting, and that it claims the attention of every American, of every lover of truth, & of every friend to genius. I hope the subject *will* receive this attention. If doubts are entertained, there are men still alive who can dissipate them. Let Temple Franklin himself be appealed to. He cannot be insensible to the memory of an illustrious ancestor and benefactor; nor can he be regardless of his own reputation, which some men will consider as implicated in the foregoing statement.

In order to attract the attention of the nation to the subject, that the enquiry may be made with effect, let every newspaper admit these remarks or such others as shall promote similar views. By this means the most correct information may be expected, justice rendered to one of the greatest men the world has ever produced, and facts interesting not only to America, but to Europe, be disclosed.

A FRIEND TO TRUTH.

The following remarks from SIDNEY, *shew the superiority of Republican over Royal Governments.*

For the information of the unlearned reader, it will be necessary to state that the discourses of Sidney on Government were occasioned by a defence of monarchy written by Filmer, to which Sidney replied.

Our author delighting in strange things, does in the next place, with an admirable sagacity, discover two faults in popular governments, that were never found by any man before him; and these are no less than ignorance and negligence. Speaking of the care of Princes to preserve their subjects, he adds, 'on the contrary, in a popular state, every man knows the public good doth not wholly depend upon his care, but the common-wealth may be well enough governed by others, though he only tend his private business." And a little below, 'nor are they much to be blamed for their negligence, since it is an even wager their ignorance may be as great. The magistrates among the people being for the most part annual, do always lay down their office before they understand it; so as a prince of a duller understanding must needs excel them.' This is bravely determined, and the world is beholden to Filmer for the discovery of the errors that have hitherto been epidemical. Most men had believed, that such as live in free states, are usually pleased with their condition, desire to maintain it; and every man finding his own good comprehended in the public, as those that sail in the same ship, employs the talent he has in endeavouring to preserve it, knowing that he must perish if that miscarry. This was an encouragement to industry; and the continual labours and dangers to which the Romans and other free nations exposed themselves, have been taken for testimonies that they thought themselves concerned in the businesses that passed among them, and that every one did not neglect them through an opinion that they would be done well enough by others. It was also thought, that free cities, by frequent elections of magistrates, became nurseries of great and able men, every man endeavouring to excel others, that he might be advanced to the honour he had no other title to than what might arise from his merit or reputation; in which they succeeded so well, that one of them may be justly said to have produced more eminent men, than all the absolute monarchies that have been in the world. But these were mistakes. Perhaps Brutus, Valerius, and other Roman senators or magistrates, for the space of three hundred years, might have taken some care of the common-wealth, if they had thought it wholly depended upon one of them. But believing it would be well enough governed by others, they neglected it. Camillus, Cincinnatus, Papirius, Fabius, Rullus, and Maximus, Scipio Africanus, Amilcar, Hannibal; Pericles, Themistocles, Alcibiades, Epaminondas, Philopoemen, and others, might have proved able men in the affairs of war or government; but they were removed from their offices before they understood them, and must needs be excelled in both by princes, though of duller understanding. This may be enough to excuse them for performing their duty so slackly and meanly: but it is strange that Tacitus, and otheres should so far overlook the reason, and so grossly mistake the matter of fact, as not only to say, that great and excellent spirits failed when liberty was lost, and all preferments given to those who were most propense to slavery; but that there wanted men even to write the history. They never applied themselves to understand affairs depending upon the will of one man, in whom they were no otherwise concerned, than to avoid the effects of his rage; and that was chiefly to be done, by not falling under the suspicion of being virtuous. This was the study then in request; and the most cunning in this art were called "scientes temporum:" no other wisdom was esteemed in that and the ensuing ages, and no more was required, since the paternal care, deep wisdom, and profound judgment of the princes provided for all; and though they were of duller understandings, they must needs excel other magistrates, who having been created only for a year, left their offices before they could understand the duties of them. This was evidenced by that tenderness, and sincerity of heart, as well as the great purity of manners, observed in Tiberius; the clemency, justice, solid judgment, and frugality of Caligua; the industry, courage, and sobriety, of Claudius; the good-nature, and prudent government, of Nero; the temperance, vivacity, and diligence of Vitellius; the liberality of Galba and Vespasian; together with the encouragement given by Domitian, Commodus, Heliogabalus, and many others, to all manner of virtues, and favours conferred upon those that excelled in them. Our author, giving such infallible proof of his integrity and understanding, by teaching us these things that would never have come into our heads, ought to be credited, though that which he proposes seem to be most absurd. But if we believe such as live in those times, or those who in later ages have perused their writings, we cannot but think the princes before-mentioned, and the greatest part of those, who possessed the same place, not only to have been void of all virtue, and to have suffered none to grow up under them, but in baseness, sottishness, and malice, to have been equal to the worst of all beasts. Whilst one prince, polluted with lust and blood, sat in his grotto at Capreæ, surrounded with an infamous troop of astrologers; and others were governed by whores, bardaches, manumised slaves, and other villains; the empire was ruined through their negligence, incapacity, and wickedness; and the city that had flourished in all manner of virtue, as much or more than any that has been yet known in the world, produced no more; the discipline was dissolved that nourished it; no man could hope to advance a public good, or obviate an evil, by his diligence and valour; and he who acquired reputation by either could expect no other reward than a cruel death. If Germanicus, and Corbulo, who were born when liberty was expiring, be brought for examples against the first part of my assertion, their ends will justify the latter; and no eminent Roman family is known to have brought forth a man that deserved to be named in history since their time. This is as probable in reason, as true in fact. Men are valiant and industrious, when they fight for themselves, and their country; they prove excellent in all the arts of war and peace, when they are bred up in virtuous exercises, and taught by their fathers and masters to rejoice in the honours gained by them: they love their country, when the good of every particular man is comprehended in the public prosperity, and the success of their atchievements is improved to the general advantage: they undertake hazards and labours for the government, when it is justly administered; when innocence is safe, and virtue honoured; when no man is distinguished from the vulgar, but such as have distinguished themselves by the bravery of their actions; when no honour is thought too great for those who do it eminently, unless it be such as cannot be communicated to others of equal merit; they do not spare their persons, purses, or friends, when the public powers are employed for the public benefit, and imprint the like affections in their children from their infancy. The discipline of obedience, in which the Romans were bred, taught them to command: and few were admitted to the magistracies of inferior rank, till they had given such proof of their virtue as might deserve the supreme. Cincinnatus, Camillus, Papirius, Mamercus, Fabius Maximus, were not made dictators, that they might learn the duties of the office; but because they were judged to be of such wisdom, valour, integrity, and experience, that they might be safely trusted with the highest powers; and, whilst the law reigned, not one was advanced to that honour, who did not fully answer what was expected from him. By this means the city was so replenished with men fit for the greatest employments, that even in its infancy, when three hundred and sixty of the Fabii, "quorum neminem," says Livy, "ducem sperneret quibuslibet temporibus "senatus," were killed in one day, the city did lament the loss; but was not so weakened as to give any advantage to their enemies: and when every one of those who had been eminent before the second Punic war, Fabius Maximus only excepted, had perished in it, others arose in their places, who surpassed them in number, and were equal to them in virtue. The city was a perpetual spring of such men as long as liberty lasted; but that was no sooner overthrown, than virtue was torn up by the roots; the people became base and sordid, the small remains of the nobility slothful and effeminate, and their Italian associates becoming like to them, the empire, whilst it stood, was only sustained by the strength of foreigners.

The Grecian virtue had the same fate, and expired with liberty: instead of such soldiers as in their time had no equals, and such generals of armies and fleets, legislators and governors, as all succeeding ages have justly admired, they sent out swarms of fidlers, jesters, chariot drivers, players, bawds, flatterers, ministers of the most impure lusts; or idle, babling, hypocritical philosophers not much better then they. The emperors courts were always crouded with this vermin; and notwithstanding the necessity our author imagines, that princes must needs understand matters of government better than magistrates annually chosen, they did for the most part prove so brutish as to give themselves, and the world, to be governed by such as these, and that without any great prejudice, since none could be found more ignorant, lewd, and base, than themselves.

It is absurd to impute this to the change of times; for time changes nothing; and nothing was changed in those times, but the government, and that changed all things. This is not accidental, but according to the rules given to nature by God, imposing upon all things a necessity of perpetually following their causes. Fruits are always of the same nature with the seeds and roots from which they come, and trees are known by the fruits they bear: as a man begets a man, and a beast a beast, that society of men which constitutes a government upon the foundation of justice, virtue, and the common good, will always have men to promote those ends; and that which intends the advancement of one man's desires and vanity, will abound in those that will foment them. All men follow that which seems advantageous to themselves. Such as are bred under a good discipline, and see that all benefits, procured to their country by virtuous actions, redound to the honour and advantage of themselves, their children, friends, and relations, contract, from their infancy, a love to the public, and look upon the common concernments as their own. When they have learnt to be virtuous, and see that virtue is