

The AERONAUT. No. 1.

By CADWALLADER FITZ-ENG, Gent.

In vena fert agitur.—ORID.

THE immortal author of the Spectator has observed that "A man who publishes his works in a volume has an intrinsic advantage over one who communicates his writings to the world in loose tracts and single pieces."—Perhaps the justice and propriety of this remark can never be more sensibly experienced by the author of any periodical publication than in the composition of his first paper, at that period of his work anxiety for its reception, with the consequent expectation of criticism, are unavoidable, yet there are not the only difficulties which he has to encounter, there are others which tho' at first thought they may appear trivial are yet extremely perplexing; and among these may be ranked the choice of a subject suitable to the occasion, for should he dive at once into his work it would be deviating so widely from the first principles which custom in such cases has established, and so great a neglect of every precedent that from this circumstance his plan would be deemed incomplete and himself ignorant even of the rudiments of his understanding.

Having acknowledged the absolute necessity of a preliminary number, I must own that I have experienced the difficulties attending it, but in compliance with those rules which I have regarded as indispensably established, I cannot but take notice of a few circumstances relative to the present attempt, particularly how peculiarly obvious the tide is to punsters. I am sensible some will observe that my work is *lighty*, others especially in the present state of politics, that my pieces may prove but *inflammatory* productions, or that I cannot hope to *raise myself* in the public estimation by such *airy* expedients.—But I protest myself no friend to punning.—The title under which it is proposed to publish the following essays, &c. I acknowledge requires indulgence and necessity must be pleaded for its fashion. The country in which I write is a new one, the materials which it furnishes must very soon be exhausted, and under any other but a similar name I must have been excluded from an infinite variety—from these motives I have been induced to adopt the "Aeronaut," and to request the indulgence of the public for the necessary improbabilities rather than confine myself to restrained limits and matters which could be only local.

I will not trespass any longer upon the reader's patience in the present number than to state the general outline of my plan.—The first and principal aim of the Aeronaut is the instruction, the next the amusement of its readers; to enable me to attain these objects I must request the assistance of the literary part of the community; those who are inclined to favor me with their correspondence are requested to direct for me to the care of Mr. Sower.—Subjects of immorality, politics, and party-disputes, are entirely excluded.

Perhaps the undertaking requires some apology—I am sensible that it does.—But I consider myself only as a humble gleaner in the rich field which Addison and his successors have so thoroughly reaped—employed in collecting the few blossoms which they have overlooked—and under this idea I submit my first paper to the public inspection "with all its imperfections in its head."

MR. SOWER.

IT was with astonishment I read in Melius, Lewis & Ryan's paper of Wednesday last, the pitiable article of W. Barclay. I too am a citizen of St. John—have resided here more than two years—an one of upwards of 500 legal *bona fide* voters, who gave their suffrages for the gentlemen who now represent this county and city in General Assembly—these gentlemen have on a fair and righteous scrutiny by the Sheriff in open court, publicly noticed for the purpose, and in the face of day, been found duly elected by a clear decided majority, and were returned accordingly. What has passed in the Assembly on the subject will appear from the journal of the House.

It is I confess among the weaknesses incident to human nature, to be elated at success or depressed at disappointment in matters, whether of great or small moment—few can bear, with a good grace, to lose an election and some are weak enough to be very sad and exceedingly sorrowful at being returned—this has it seems been eminently the case of poor W. Barclay. He fights and sorrows most bitterly, lest his *opponent* should hear of his misfortune, and predicts, that it will bring her *gray hairs with sorrow to the grave*—had the tables been turned and had I been out-voted, on that occasion as he has been, what alas! would have become of my poor old mother? for altho' women are not allowed to vote, they are

undoubtedly deeply interested in the choice of members—the then must have gone weeping and sorrowing to her grave! and she is as dear and as good to me as his mother has to him. She too, God bless her! has *cherished me in the principles of virtue and industry*. Had I been unfortunate, as Barclay has, I could not hold up my head in public—my case would have been indeed infinitely more distressing than that of Mr. Barclay: I am a native of America, he is a British born inhabitant. I have no country to fly to or home or hut to go to but must have remained here and submitted to and been *taunted by laws made by a large, in the election of which I should have had no share*; or justly hanged for disobedience. Who can suppose it right, that unscrupulous electors should be bound by laws made by an assembly chosen by others? None but tyrants can suppose this. Was it ever known in England or elsewhere, that out-voted citizens were bound by Parliaments elected by a majority of citizens at large?

But Mr. Barclay complains that his vote was declared void, be it so. By the English constitution the validity of votes is to be found on a scrutiny by the returning officer, if such scrutiny be demanded—it is the duty of the candidates interested in such votes to attend the scrutiny and support the controverted votes. The returning officer cannot be supposed in all cases to be personally acquainted with the qualifications of voters, the candidates are to be presumed to know their friends, they therefore ought to attend the scrutiny, if they refuse or neglect this, the Sheriff will undoubtedly be justified in adjudging the unsupported votes to be void, especially when the voter is wholly unknown to him; this was the case with Barclay and perhaps with others; he was unknown to the Sheriff, tho' sought out and brought forward by the candidates for whom he voted, but when the validity of his vote was questioned in the Sheriff's court, his friends deserted him and suffered judgment to go against him by default. Had Barclay been employed in a court of justice and intrusted his cause to a lawyer, and had his lawyer neglected to have appeared for him, judgment would of course have been rendered against him by default—who in this case would have been culpable? As Barclay was an entire stranger to me I can easily suppose the Sheriff had no personal knowledge of him—I did not know, until I saw Wednesday's paper, that such a person as W. Barclay existed. I am indeed hurt at his apparent chagrin, but am consoled on finding that if he inclines to quit this province, he has his native country to go to, or if he should remain here, the way is pointed out to him by *Brutus* to communicate his grievances to his relations all the way from *Juba & Grus Hays to the Land's End*.

This last *Brutus* stands convicted the sturdy champion of the factious band of malecontents, who have deservedly acquired the name of veterans, having kept the field of opposition incessantly and without ever having been relieved since the very commencement of the settlement of this city. I will not pretend to answer the last production of that vile declaimer, as it contains neither plausibility nor argument. I cannot however forbear taking notice of the only specific grievances he states, namely, the division of the province of Nova-Scotia, and the death of the late chief justice of that province. The first is a sedition raising at a vile ordinance of his earthly sovereign, the other an impious repining at a just and righteous dispensation of the King of Kings. The first has manifestly promoted the happiness of thousands. Of the latter it becomes all good Christians to say, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord."

SAINT JOHN.

A DISQUISITION ON RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS. (Continued.)

THESE imputations on religious establishments are certainly just, but no reasons for disquisitions, because the inference which makes the latter proposition is entirely a mistake; for no man can be bound in duty to desert a national religion, on account of defects congenial to its nature, nor to search for perfection, which is no where to be found. Some religious establishments are absolutely necessary to the existence of every state; but it is necessary that this should be perfect, and free from all errors and corruption, not even that it should be so esteemed by those who conform to it: it is sufficiently perfect for this purpose, if it contains nothing repugnant to the principles of sound morality, and the doctrine of Christ. The mass of the people in every country, being incapable of making any accurate enquiry into religious subjects, must have a religion ready made, or none at all; and in this, tho' of superior abilities may conscientiously join, without impeding their further researches into the dispensations of Providence, and the duties of man. Great and

numerous must be the inconveniences of any religious establishment in the hands of men; but what would be the condition of any nation in which there was none? No uniform mode of public worship could there be adopted; no edifices built or repaired for the celebration of it, nor ministers maintained to perform it, except at the will of an ignorant and dissolute multitude, the majority of whom would rather chafe to have neither worship, churches, or ministers, than to incur the expenses which must attend them. Every man, who had any sense of religion, would make out for himself; from whence innumerable sects would spring up, each of which would choose a minister for themselves; who, being dependent for subsistence on the voluntary and precarious liberality of his congregation, must indulge their humors, submit to their passions, participate of their vices, and learn of them what doctrines they would chafe to be taught; and consequently none but the most ignorant and illiterate would undertake to teach and beguile an employment. A people thus left to the dominion of their own imaginations and passions, and the instructions of such teachers, would split into a variety of sects and parties, divisions and subdivisions, as knavery and folly, artifice, abridging, and enthusiasm, can produce; each of which would be attacked with violence, and supported with obstinacy by all the rest. This evidently demonstrates, that some religious establishment must be annexed to every civil government; the members of which are so far from being bound in duty to desert it, because it falls short of their ideas of purity and perfection, that they are obliged by all the ties of benevolence and society to conform to and support it, unless it requires any concessions positively criminal.

Should it still be insisted on, that every man is obliged to profess and exercise that religion which appears to him most consonant to reason, and most acceptable to God, with which no government can have a right to meddle, or power to controul, in answer I shall only say, that all this is undoubtedly a mistake, which arises from applying propositions to men, as members of national communities, which are applicable to them only as individuals. Mankind, so long as they reside on this terrestrial globe, ought always to be considered in a two-fold capacity; as individuals, and as members of society; that is, as men, and as citizens; in which different situations, so different are their relations and duties, that there is scarce a proposition which we can affirm of them with truth in one, which is not false if applied to them in all the other. It is by this misapplication that the zealous advocates for unbounded liberty, civil and religious, deceive their followers, and sometimes themselves, and draw conclusions equally destructive of all government and religion. Thus, for instance, they assert that all men are by nature free, equal, and independent; thus, when applied to men as a general species, is true; they then apply this assertion to men who are members of civil communities, to whom subordination is necessary, and obedience to their superiors an indispensable duty, and therefore in regard to whom it is absolutely false; and yet from hence they endeavour to prove, that government is an infringement of the natural rights of mankind. In like manner they affirm, that every man is obliged to make choice of that religion, and to adhere to that mode of worship, which appear to his judgment to be the purest, and most acceptable to his Creator; this proposition, likewise, with regard to men considered as individuals, is true; but this again they apply to members of national communities, and established churches; with regard to whom it is not true; for, as such, they are bound in duty to profess that religion, and profess that mode of worship, which the laws of that community require, provided they find nothing in them positively evil; yet from hence they would persuade us, that every individual has a right to desert, or even to oppose, the established religion of his country, whenever he finds, or fancies he can find a better. Thus are their unwary admirers deceived: the truth of these propositions they cannot deny, and have not perhaps frequently sufficient to discover their misapplication.

It is remarkable, that Christianity consistently addresses us as men, never as citizens; the only duty it requires of us under that character, is submission to power in general, but prescribes no rules for our political conduct: all those divine precepts of patience, meekness, long-suffering, non-resistance of evil, contempt of the world, and indifference to the things of it, are given as individuals, but not as members of national communities; because in that character they would have been impracticable; for no line can administer her internal policy, and much less regulate her conduct with regard to foreign powers, in conformity to those precepts; because the imperfections, the passions, and the vices of mankind will not permit it. Any one

as an individual may pay obedience to them; to those who have little to do with the busy occupations of the world, it is an easy and a pleasing task; for those who are deeply and earnestly engaged in the most innocent of them, it is extremely difficult; but for those who are employed in the great concerns of political communities, in carrying on war, negotiating peace, and managing the intrigues of contending factions, it is absolutely impracticable. This I take to be the cause of those frequent declarations from the Apostles of this religion, that neither himself nor his doctrines are of this world; but adverse to all its pursuits; and this perhaps may be the reason of that assertion, that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God; because, rich men being usually engaged in their pursuits, most attached to the world, and most involved in the business of it, the extreme difficulty of their admission is thus forcibly expressed; or, if by a rich man, is here meant a great man, that is a conqueror, a hero, or a statesman, this declaration may perhaps be literally true; and that it should in this place be so understood, seems no improbable conjecture, as a rich man, and a great man, in most languages are synonymous terms. The first Christians find their religion in this light, and refused to have any concern with government, unless to obey it; they inquired not into the rights of those who ruled, nor their own liberty, and wished for nothing, but to pass thro' this life untroubled with its business, and well prepared for a better: so long as they were a small sect, dissenting from the religion of the countries in which they lived, this inoffensive conduct was easily preserved; but, when princes and nobles adopted their religion, and by such illustrious examples it became almost universal, their principles of inactivity were no longer tenable, without the total dissolution of all government; for if no man would govern, there could be none: necessity therefore obliged them to take a part; a part soon awakened ambition, and love of power, their passions to nature; to the human heart, and induced them to seize the whole; Christianity was established, in consequence corrupted, and little more of it remained, except the name.

To this opinion of the incompatibility of Christianity with the occupations and customs of the world, were all those numerous monastic institutions, which every way accompanied its progress, indebted for their origin; institutions certainly favorable to the genuine spirit of that religion, but, like the religion itself, so adverse to the nature of man, that they can never be made fit for general use; could they have been confined to those few, who are capable of employing solitude in devotion and religious contemplation, they would undoubtedly have been conducive to the practice of every Christian virtue; but, as all were indiscriminately admitted, who pretended to sanctity, or who mistook enthusiasm for piety, and a quarrel with the world for the love of God, they could not fail very soon to become nothing better than retreats for laziness, and seminaries of superstition and vice; yet, notwithstanding all these abuses, I am inclined to think there are still within their walls some few instances of patience and resignation, devotion and charity, carried to a higher degree of perfection than they are or can be in any other situation, in which the passions, the pleasures, and business of life, and the corruptions of national establishments, stand more or less obstruct their progress; where our virtue must be endangered by continual temptations, our meditation diverted from celestial objects by worldly pursuits; our devotions interrupted by amusements and impertinences; and that serene Christianity and happy complacency, so essential to the Christian profession, must frequently be disturbed by injuries and disappointments. The voluntary hardships which many of these recluses imposed upon themselves, were probably derived from a mistaken notion, that suffering was an essential part of their religion; a notion which they had perhaps contracted from that constant connection between them, which they had so long observed and felt during their persecutions, and were not able suddenly to abandon, in happier and more indulgent times.

But why then establish a religion, which is so improper for the purpose? Because it is less improper than any other. The establishment of some religion is necessary to the existence of every state, and it is as necessary that this should be, or be thought, a revelation from God. Mere Deism never was, or can be, the established religion of any country; for, as all its principles must be derived from the reason of men, they will always be controverted by the reason of others, and can therefore never obtain a general acquiescence. The philosopher, by learned investigations, and the facts of his own understanding, may be convinced of the great truth of natural religion; but without the sanction of supernatural authority,